

**The Past as Refuge:
Gender, Migration, and Ideology
Among the Kosova Albanians**

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DISSERTATION

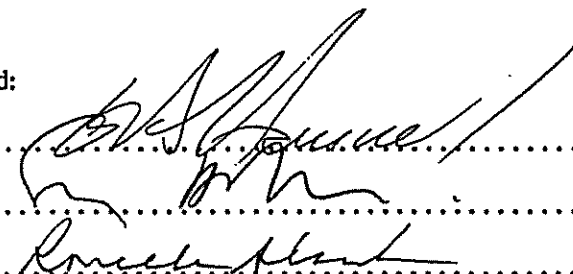
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Foreword

The "Traditional" Rural Family: Delimiting The Subject of Inquiry

The Albanians referred to in the present study are those who inhabit the province of Kosova* in southwestern Yugoslavia. These people share many social and cultural characteristics with the northern (Gheg) Albanians living in Macedonia, Montenegro and in the country of Albania, and some of the descriptions in this study can be generalized to these other groups.

The research focuses specifically on a small community of Albanians who live in Opoja, an ethnographic region in the south of the province of Kosova. In some cases the description of behavior and world view found in Opoja can be applied to other village Albanians. Some conclusions, especially those concerning migration and the education of women, are somewhat unique to Opoja and cannot necessarily be generalized to the other regions. When this is the case, it is made clear that the reference is to the *Opoja* Albanians.

It must be emphasized from the outset that in focusing on Opoja, this study singles out one of the most "traditional" populations in the province, among the most highly committed to upholding customs of the past. It does not necessarily reflect the customs or world view of urban, nuclear families in Kosova. The study looks primarily at families and individuals whose behavior and ideas typify those of the region, not at individuals who have rebelled against the status quo.

Some urban Albanians and Albanians living outside of Kosova will doubtless be appalled at the data presented here. While some aspects of the rural tradition have been appropriated by Albanian ideologues as a symbol of ethnic identity, many urbanites (or long-term migrants) are unaware of the realities of village life or choose to ignore the existence of the rural woman—unschooled, betrothed to a boy she has never met, living in service to the men of her natal and affinal families and confined within her home against the scrutiny of outsiders. To city dwellers attempting to distance themselves from labels of backwardness and fanaticism assigned to them by other Yugoslavs, the rural stereotype is an anachronism, an obsolete

* "Kosova" is the definite form of the Albanian name for the Province. The Serbo-Croatian spelling usually used by non-Albanians is "Kosovo." In the present study the Albanian form of all geographical names is used. When these names are substantially different from the Serbo-Croatian spelling, the latter form is placed in brackets after the Albanian.

curiosity. In truth the traditional lifestyle is alive and well in villages and among conservative urban families throughout Kosova. The purpose of this study is to shed some light upon its current form and content.

Preface

Research Strategies

The research for this thesis was conducted from May 1987 to December 1988 under a joint Fulbright-IREX grant. During this period interviews were made, questionnaires filled out, video-footage shot, statistics gathered. But my acquaintance with Albanian life began in 1981 when I went to Kosova for the first time. From 1981 to 1989 I spent a total of over four and a half years in Kosova, initially doing research on ritual and expressive behavior for my master's thesis (Reineck 1985) and later working on smaller projects. Extensive field experience in Kosova worked to my advantage in acquiring access to people and information. In addition to giving me legitimacy on official and non-official levels, prior fieldwork prepared me in two ways for dissertation research: giving me fluency in Serbo-Croatian and in colloquial and literary Albanian, and teaching me to behave with respect to local moral codes. Most importantly, in the sensitive political climate of the 1980s in Yugoslavia, earlier contact proved to be essential in gaining repeated entrance into the province.

The timing of my fieldwork coincided with the greatest economic and political upheavals in Kosova since World War II. I arrived in Yugoslavia in May 1981 during a period of extreme tension following a spring of demonstrations, military intervention and political and academic purges. I departed for the last time in December, 1989 during economic and political stagnation and outright ethnic hostility between Serbs and Albanians, the first wave of open hostilities since the spring of 1981.

From May to October 1981 Kosova was off-limits to foreigners and I waited in Beograd for permission to enter the province. When I was finally allowed to go to Kosova, my work was restricted to areas which were considered "safe," that is, distant from the Albanian border and with no evidence of recent civil unrest. During this first year I lived in the provincial capital, Prishtina, making sojourns to towns and villages in western Kosova. My goal was to work in Opoja and Has on the Albanian border in southwest Kosova, but due to their location near a military zone, I was not given permission to visit these areas until January 1982, fourteen months after arriving in Kosova. The political climate was unstable, and I was still an unknown quantity to the authorities. Through the years, I slowly gained the trust of local people, academics, administrators. Several interviews on television and radio and in popular

journals were a great boon to my work, clarifying and legitimizing my identity to the people of Kosova. During my last fieldwork period (May 1987 to December 1988) I had the official green light—freedom of access to all regions of Kosova.

Beginning dissertation research in Kosova in the summer of 1987 I faced a dilemma: which social strata and which aspects of social life to study. As there had been virtually no modern ethnography done on Kosova, I felt the responsibility of representing a cross-section of Albanian life, from western-style city lives to the entrenched conservatism found in villages. I wanted to address the popular misrepresentations of Albanians held by other Yugoslavs, to confront stereotypes of backward, fanatical, illiterate, hot-headed Albanians. I wanted to tell the untold story about modern Albanian life-style and world view, to characterize Albanian lives without creating caricatures.

I also felt the responsibility of analyzing the social and psychological anomie plaguing the lives of many present-day Albanians, and of addressing critical issues simmering in the mainstream of Albanian life: the denial of high school education to many village girls, problems of high natality and infant mortality, the increasing reliance on male out-migration, ideological conflicts between past and future, belief and apathy, fanaticism and skepticism, and the perceived correlation between "progress" and materialism.

The choices: to study a cross-section of Albanian lives in various regions of Kosova or to do in-depth local research; to write a monograph on traditional social structures or to focus on change and social issues. The solution was a compromise: a regional study informed by contrasts with other regions and social strata and a depiction of traditional lifestyles together with strategies for fending off or assimilating change.

To realize this solution I became part of a family and neighborhood network in Prishtina, the provincial capital with 150,000 inhabitants, from which I could make frequent trips to villages throughout Kosova. This arrangement gave my research both depth and breadth. It allowed me on the one hand to become intimately involved in the domestic relationships, rituals and intrigues of Albanian villagers negotiating city life. On the other hand, by developing long-term relationships with village families throughout the province I could gain an understanding of pan-Albanian culture informed by regional variation. Living in Prishtina also allowed me to compare the culture of different social classes with different relationships to change, from newly arrived villagers to first-generation urbanites mimicking western ways to the elite strata of officials and intellectuals. What I lost in an in-depth study of one family in one village I gained in my ability to recognize the significance of regional diversity.

Several times a month I visited various village regions. While I concentrated on Opoja and Has in southwest Kosova, I also spent time in Gollak in the east, Llap in the north and Rugova in the west. During previous fieldwork I had developed a network of contacts throughout the province, and made my visits to families I knew or had introductions to. I participated in daily life, interviewed and filmed.

The video camera proved to be more than a way of documenting daily life and ritual events. By playing back the footage on my informants' televisions I learned from their reactions and comments. When I returned from each village trip I showed the footage to my family and neighbors in Prishtina. This was particularly enlightening. Though born in the village themselves, the young people watching were at once fascinated and appalled at the life-styles and customs of Albanians from other regions which they considered primitive and bizarre. The Albanians they saw on the screen represented an "Other" with whom they did not wish to identify. Older people were interested in seeing what reminded them of their earlier life in the village and expressed a nostalgic sense of, "Oh yes, that's how it used to be." The footage evoked fascination and, indeed, some degree of discomfort when viewed by urbanites who have convinced themselves that traditional village life is a thing of the past or the bane of a minority of Kosova Albanians.

My 1987-88 fieldwork yielded 125 one to two-hour taped interviews with women and men, old and young, from different social classes and regions. The interviews took on several forms. Most frequent were open-ended conversations with individuals about their family history, experience of the social structure, with comments on personal life and community. Specific topics included kinship, property and inheritance, marriage exchange, family economy, domestic power relations, village vs. city life, and labor migration. As patterns emerged in the conversations, questionnaires were developed and continually made more specific, until, in my last months of fieldwork, personal profiles could be distilled into a series of short questions and answers. While continuing to record open-ended conversations, I used these questionnaires to survey a large cross-section of people. This objective method made sense only at the end of fieldwork as the result of many months of research.

During the latter half of my stay I began to record group discussions. Whereas I had previously sought one-on-one conversations to encourage frankness, I now found group discussions/debates to be an excellent way of eliciting views on controversial subjects: women's roles in the 1990s, limiting girls to elementary school educations, migrant labor, interpretations of the past and outlooks on the future.

The impressions and data which make up the ethnographic report depend in large part on the personal experience of the anthropologist in the field: the role assumed in the society, the rapport established with informants, the particular routes of access to cultural knowledge. I was fortunate in finding an ideal family to live with in Prishtina who gave me the foundation for my field experience in Kosova. I had a dual identity in the family. In one sense I was an American who did not stay within the confines of the home as their daughters did, who drove a car and ventured alone to parts of Kosova unknown to the family. In another sense I was an unmarried, childless woman who sought and reveled in their warmth and intimacy and constant touch, and who fit smoothly into some, not all, of their customs. I was one of them, and yet I was apart; another actor in the domestic scene, yet acting, some of the time, under a parallel set of rules. The family at home consisted of Feride and Feriz, their sons Tefik and Fatmir, and their last unmarried daughter, Sadete, and was continually augmented by visits from a large group of extended family and fictive kin. Half-way through my fieldwork the sons were married and their wives entered our household. Nine months later Agnesa was born.

During the seventeen months I lived with this family they experienced an entire spectrum of life-cycle rites: the engagement of sons, a joint wedding (both sons taking a bride), the incorporation of their wives into the family, the daughter's engagement and her fiancé's departure for the army, childbirth, a godparent ceremony, son Fatmir getting work in a factory, son Tefik, with a college diploma, enduring his third year of unemployment, and the departure of various family members for migrant-work abroad. And illness, death and grief.

My life with this family was in two parts: Before and After the wedding. The wedding brought two "foreign" women into our family, and with them great changes in lifestyle for all of us. Rooms were reassigned and newly furnished. We moved from life spent on floor cushions around the fire to seats on couches. Tin plates were replaced by ceramic ones. My jobs--setting the table, clearing it, washing it, sweeping the rug, washing dishes, serving guests--became the duty of the brides whose skill at these tasks was evaluated at all times. The early morning hours when only Feride and I had been awake was now the time for brides to show what they were made of, to exhibit their willingness to get up at dawn to wash down the pavement, polish everyone's shoes and shine woodwork and enamel until they gleamed. Guests came often, necessitating a constant readiness for hospitality and display. All attention centered on the behavior of the brides, their appearance, propriety, and skill in performing symbolic duties. All household activities were subordinated to the projection of the "right" image to visitors.

The intense, painstaking incorporation of the brides into the intimate and precisely regulated life of their husbands' family taught me a great deal about patrilocality, the central dynamic in Albanian social structure. Other family tensions between father and son, mother and daughter, between brothers and between brides provided me with ongoing instruction about the Albanian versions of propriety and shame, obligation, acquiescence and resistance, and the clash between an elemental devotion to conservatism and a passion for innovation simmering within the confinement of conformity.

Acknowledgments

I begin my acknowledgments by thanking my Kosova family, the Sadiku's. I thank especially Feride and Feriz, my surrogate mother and father, who saw me through thick and thin, nourished my body and soul, and taught me about the meaning of pain and joy, family, desperation, fortitude and honor as experienced by Albanians. Feride was the central player in my life in Prishtina. Unable to read or write, steeped in hard-line, traditional Albanian mores, having grown up in mountain poverty and isolation in endless service to natal and affinal families, Feride's reality was the furthest from mine; yet, far and away, it was Feride who best understood me, and who, at the break of dawn on snowy mornings, helped me carry cameras and bags to the car, wishing me well on a trip to the field, who understood my exhaustion, coming home from the village, and brought me leftovers of food she had saved. She knew when I was frantic, or sick, or despairing, and brought me soup and talked to me as she warmed her hands by the fire. While her adult children mocked my desire to record village life, Feride caught the meaning, watched me, fed me, trusted me.

My appreciation for ongoing emotional and practical support extends to my neighbors, the houses of Azizi, Rexhepi and Rexhepagiç, and to the Prishtina and Prizren families of Abrashi, Aliu, Hashani, and Prekadini. Regional research was made possible by the limitless hospitality and generosity of the families Billaca (in the region of Llap), Gjevulekaj (Rugova), Sopi (Gollak), Totaj (Has), and Shefiku, Bahtijari, Dauti, and Spahiu (Opoja). Very special thanks go to Nurie, Rafete, Sadete, Sherine, Zymrie and the other Kosova women who most graciously permitted my excavation of their thoughts and feelings.

Deepest thanks to Igballe Rugova and to Bajram and Bujar Berisha who were my most trusted and beloved companions, who were always ready to share their time, energy and enthusiasm for my Kosova projects. A native of Opoja, Bajram accompanied me on visits to Has, Gollak and Rugova and stimulated interactions with local people which were of tremendous help in discerning regional variation. Steeped in the mind-set of a conservative village

family, through our many conversations on gender, migration, tradition and values, Bajram refined the articulation of his own world view while eliciting debates with Albanians of diverse ideological persuasions.

In the U.S. I wish to thank Eugene Hammel, the chairman of my dissertation committee, for his great enthusiasm about my research, his steadfast support during my fieldwork, and his comprehensive critique of the manuscript. I wish also to thank Stanley Brandes for his valuable comments on matters of content, and Ronelle Alexander for her scrupulous editing of the text. I am deeply indebted to Robert Chung for his technical wizardry and generous assistance in the statistical analysis and in bringing the work into its final form.

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Finally, I thank Xhemali for exploring with me the deeper layers of Albanian consciousness, and for supporting me through months and years of adversity and discovery.

Introduction

Setting the Stage

As one travels south through Serbia in eastern Yugoslavia, lush green rolling hills eventually give way to plains. Further on, something appears on the landscape which immediately strikes the eye: high stone walls surrounding the houses, protecting them from the scrutiny of passers-by. These walls, hiding the lives within from view, tell travelers that they have entered the province of Kosova. They have entered a world dominated by Moslem Albanians. As one travels further, there are more tell-tale signs of the Albanian world: women in pastel-colored raincoats with headscarves drawn forward over the forehead; men in white felt skull-caps. These signs: the walls, the scarves, the white hats, are the three most striking visual markers of Albanian identity. But they signify not only ethnic identity. They also mark a moral, social conservatism infamous throughout Yugoslavia.

In a high mountain village it is the morning after a wedding. A rooster crows. It must be day, but still dark. And cold. December. Her eyes sting, her head aches from too little sleep, from the cold. She isn't groggy. She wakes into a chilling awareness of her new life, and her new name, "Bride." The awareness stings her, rushes her pulse. The awareness, the sting, will hit her, wrench her from sleep, day after day, for months, for years, gradually diminishing, becoming ritual, habit, as she molds herself to fit her new persona.

The room is cold and dank from the frost, the wood in the small pot-bellied stove having burned out hours ago. Quiet, all around, except for the rooster and the heavy dull banging of the hammers of the *valavice* powered by the rushing stream, beating at white wet raw wool, turning it to felt. That pounding is her companion now, in these lonely minutes, the sound testifying to a world outside these rooms, beyond the garden wall. To this world, for a long time to come, she will be a stranger.

She has slept wearing her new wrist-watch from Germany, one of many gifts to her, a small compensation right now for getting up before dawn. The watch tells her it's four a.m., the hour of brides and roosters. Lifting off two lead-weight quilts of cotton-batting, she moves carefully away from her husband, from the boy/man whom, until yesterday, she had known only as a face in a well-guarded photograph.

She takes from a hook her *dimia*, twelve meters of white satin gathered into long pantaloons, finds in the billows of fabric the footholes, arranges this sea of satin around her ankles and waist tucking in the luminous folds to flatten her stomach and accentuate her hips. She draws her long black hair, still sticky from layers of hair-spray, into a puffy pile on the top of her head, covers it with a sheer white scarf, and ventures out into the pre-dawn blackness to sweep the courtyard and stoke the stove.

This is a story about the people of Opoja, a region of twenty villages nestled in the Sharr mountains of southwest Kosova. It is the story of a girl who wakes one morning to find that she has a new identity, and, dressed in white satin, high-heeled sequined bedroom slippers and gold jewels, is up at four a.m. to chop kindling, stoke the fire and sweep the dirt courtyard. It is a story of a boy who runs free until the day he finds himself on a train, a thirty-hour journey north, to Switzerland, to Austria, to find a job, any job, to earn the money that will buy the satin and gold for the bride his parents have found for him.

It is a tale of women who still, in 1988, rarely leave their courtyard, and of men who rarely come home. It is a place of brilliant green spring meadows set against five months of deep winter. A place of poverty and luxury. It is the story of Sherine, Zymrie, Kimete, Sadete, Sehare, and all the women like them who believe in, and acquiesce to, their fate. It is the story of Bajram, Ridvan, Bujar, Gezim, Flamur, and the men like them who may question fate, but who, in the end, accept and perpetuate a morality of the past.

Albanian women in Opoja live a life of what for us would be stark contrasts, sad ironies. Dressed in expensive fabrics and adorned in hundreds of dollars worth of gold jewelry, many women prepare food in unheated outbuildings, cook on wood stoves and carry water from wells for the washing done by hand. While their houses may lack indoor plumbing or hot water, they may have a VCR, a new car, and may have spent \$2,000 on a recent wedding. While they are cognizant of other Albanian women who are urban, college-educated and employed, since 1981 few Opoja girls have been allowed to go to the school beyond the eighth grade and are kept at home instead to work on their trousseaux. While up to date on the latest intrigues of *Dynasty* and *Dallas* they follow on television, and while cognizant of modern marriages taking place outside of Opoja, it is not unusual for a woman to see her husband for the first time on their wedding night. While acknowledged and respected as the pillars of family continuity, cohesiveness and honor, in the presence of family men women are to be seen and not heard; when male guests arrive they remain out of sight. Though an Opoja woman may have visited or have lived in Beograd, Ljubljana, Munich or Zurich, back in Opoja she may spend months at a time without leaving her courtyard. Though she may have traveled by train or plane to Europe with her husband, she has never bought a bus ticket. Without a proper chaperon, she cannot go to the local market, the doctor's, or to her parents' village.

The Opoja woman knows she is the product of an extremely conservative, "fanatical" local culture. While very much aware of the lifestyles of women outside of Opoja, she accepts a life which is strictly confined and completely manipulated by parents and affines. How does she react to this? Typically, a woman says she has no choice but to accept what she considers

her fate. In a community rigidly controlled by public opinion, she knows that by rebelling against the system she only stands to lose. Her only option is to leave Opoja. But with inadequate education and facing a jobless rate of twenty-five percent among women seeking work in Kosova, she has little chance of economic survival on her own. She is destined to be economically and emotionally dependent on her husband and his family. In order to live peacefully among them she must earn the respect of the family and community. To earn this respect she must fulfill the cultural expectations which inform every part of her life. She recognizes that the more she lives up to the norm, the more "successful" she will be.

As in most societies, her authority in the family and social circle depends on the extent to which she excels in the one role the society has designated for her. To be valued as a young woman, and in order to be matched with a worthy young man, she must demonstrate industriousness, modesty, and guard her virginity as a girl. Once married, in order to be treated well by her affines she must prove herself to be an obedient, agreeable, hard-working bride who displays poise and propriety. To gain respect as a woman, within a year or two of marriage she must bear children, eventually sons. Failing this, she must accentuate her other talents, and accept the consequences of her shortcoming. She must consistently maintain the virtues of modesty, industriousness and self-sacrifice. She must at all times demonstrate that she respects and abides by the system. This is her formula for success.

Thus far, we could be describing a woman's life in a village of Tunisia, Uzbekistan, or Turkey. The emphasis placed on modesty, virginity, fertility and gender segregation is, of course, common in many patriarchal settings, especially in the Moslem world. In a sense, the lives of these Albanian women represent but a variation on a well-known theme. The purpose of this study is not to contribute yet another testimony to the perks and perils of a woman's lot in a no-nonsense patriarchy. Of interest here is what this lifestyle means in 1988, in Europe, in western-looking, socialist, "secular" Yugoslavia, in families where many men are leading "modern" lives as migrant workers outside of Kosova.

The Roots of Conservatism

Opojans attempt to follow specific laws of conduct in their daily lives: submission to the will of the collective, the observance of behavioral taboos associated with *havale* (the symbolic veiling and seclusion of women) and obedience to strict hierarchies of age and gender. It is this set of customs and attitudes that most saliently links Opojans to their past and distinguishes them from neighboring societies which have begun to sever themselves from the hold of tradition.

During my research I tried to find out how the Opoja Albanians explain what they call their "fanatical" obedience to custom. I found that when they were asked to carefully consider their region's conservatism, they arrived at several consistent lines of reasoning: the physical remoteness of their region, their obedience to Islam, and the threat of hostile neighbors. Though effective as fuel for behavioral continuity, all of these factors fall short as explanations for conservatism, and are appropriated, I would argue, as handy justifications for behavior.

Many blame their region's "backwardness" on their distance from urban centers. Tucked away in their mountain fastness and burdened with centuries of economic hardship and political instability, currents of change which have taken hold elsewhere in Kosova have passed them by. Opoja is indeed set apart geographically from the mainstream of lowland culture, but with a paved road connecting it to the town of Prizren and with postal services, telephones and other infrastructural advantages, it is far less isolated than other mountain regions in Kosova that are less "fanatical."

The Opojans also explain their behavior on religious grounds; a whole system of taboos and customs are subsumed under the rubric of Islam. But the defense of traditionalism in terms of religious zealousness loses force in the consideration of non-Moslem Albanian communities in Kosova. Catholic villagers tend to display the same conservative behavior as many Moslems. Many of the customs which are considered part of Islamic tradition are characteristic of other non-Islamic societies with similar ecological and social configurations. The Christian Sarakatsani of the Greek highlands, for example, share the Albanian devotion to honor, sexual modesty, clan loyalty and hospitality.

Some people explain the seclusion of women as the direct or indirect consequence of a threatening political environment. During armed conflicts of the past and in the present environment of ethnic hostility, women have to be protected, hidden from untrusted outsiders. Restrictions on women's freedom of movement and expression as a defensive stance in the face of ethnic hostilities may hold true as the explanation for the insurmountable stone walls enclosing the domestic space, the relegation of women to the household sphere, and the denial of education to many village girls. But it does not explain the continuity of conservatism in periods of relative security and stability. It also fails to address the myriad of customs unrelated to the vulnerability of women.

Opojans offer other explanations of conservatism which seem to be more plausible. These include: the social control exerted by the immediate social circle, a common desire (especially among males) to stay in the village, the prevalence of extended family structures, economic marginality and its associated tradition of out-migration.

The power of public opinion functions more than any other factor to perpetuate traditional values and behavior in Opoja. People are acutely aware of the pressure to live up to the expectations of their social circle, the *rreth*, and avoid any transgression of customary law which might flaw their collective or individual reputation in the community. People have no faith in the potential of individuals to break from the status quo and bring about change. There is instead a vague assumption that one day everyone, all at once, will change the way they live, that at the same time all parents will send daughters to high school or let sons choose their own wives. No one believes that one individual or family can challenge the force of public opinion.

An important link to traditionalism is the Opojans' attachment to their land and a desire to remain in their mountain home, a phenomenon somewhat unique in Kosova. While the natives of other Kosova villages long to escape the poverty and isolation of their birthplace, the goal of a majority of Opojans, especially males, is to procure the means to live in Opoja or to maintain their families there either through local employment or seasonal migration. Those who do settle in the nearby town of Prizren usually attempt to keep a house in Opoja and often remain active members of their village communities. This desire to remain in Opoja has much to do with fueling the spirit of conservatism among the local people. The need to be a respected member of the collective mandates respect for a system of values and behavior gleaned from the past and supersedes an individual's desire to assert his or her independence from the system.

Opojans also attribute their conservatism to an economic backwardness which has impeded change in several ways. Population density and inadequate economic resources have resulted in the perpetuation of the large extended families. The family is composed of parents, grandparents, brothers and unmarried sisters, of in-married women vying for favor and of nuclear families sharing limited resources. In this situation harmony is a sometimes a fragile commodity, preserved only, it is thought, at the expense of individual desire and innovation. Family members try to conform to a protocol of the past in the interest of maintaining balance in this potentially caustic arena. Economic hardship and unemployment in the 1980s have brought about a decline in the faith in education. Girls are prevented from attending secondary

school and kept at home to work on their trousseaux to perpetuate the values held by their mothers and grandmothers. Boys give up on the dream of college and local employment, hoping instead for work abroad.

I argue that a reliance on out-migration brought about by Opoja's weak economy has had a profoundly negative impact the accomodation of social change in the area. Other remote regions (such as Gollak, Has and Rugova) have depended more on rural-urban migration which has offset their isolation and inspired a response to the changes taking place around them. The steady chain of male out-migration in Opoja has impeded social change in several ways.

One effect of this labor migration has to do with the prolonged absence of men from the home. It is felt that families with husbands and fathers away in foreign lands for the better part of the year are more vulnerable to harm than families whose men are present. Rigid codes of behavior are imposed on the migrants' families, especially on the women, as a form of "protection." The absence of family heads also means that there is no one present to assimilate or implement the incremental changes taking place in other regions.

Opojans believe that the money sent home by migrants also tends to perpetuate the status quo. Luxury items such as televisions, cars, clothes and jewelry purchased with migrant remittances appeases family members left behind, neutralizing their desire for change. Coupled with an unhopeful job market at home, the imagined promise of work abroad also reinforces passivity on the part of young people who grow increasingly fatalistic about their futures and uninterested in acting as catalysts for change in the community.

There is another aspect of this resistance to change that is not consciously articulated but which, I would argue, is decisive in the perpetuation of traditionalism. This is the appropriation of the past to elevate personal and ethnic identity in times of social and political dis-ease.

Opojans are relegated to an inferior social status within and outside of Yugoslavia. As villagers, they are seen as backward and are considered peripheral to a Kosova society grappling with change. As Albanians in Yugoslavia, they are considered a disparaged minority. As Moslems in a land of Christians they are seen as an uncivilized "other." As migrants abroad they form an ethnic "underclass." As residents of Yugoslavia, part the last strongholds of socialism in Europe, they are members of a declining political community which is becoming increasingly contrite vis-à-vis the capitalist West.

It is my understanding that the people of Opoja have responded to this compromised social position by seeking refuge in the one thing that offers them a sense of personal and collective dignity: Tradition. By grounding their behavior in the customary law considered passé in other parts of Yugoslavia, they see themselves as part of a unique moral community. By appropriating the absolute authority of the past, they dignify their lives.

This defensive conservatism is of course a characteristic of disadvantaged or socially marginalized communities all over the world. It occurs in rural communities challenged by their urban counterparts and among ethnic minorities fighting for political and social equality. The phenomenon is particularly radical when it occurs in religious contexts. It is the dominant social force in those Islamic societies which are retreating to religious fundamentalism in response to the encroaching hegemony of western secularism. It is also alive and well in the American Bible Belt, where refuge is found in revivalist Christianity.

The defensive retreat into conservatism is a part of what Edward Said calls "positional superiority" (1978). By exaggerating the negative aspects of another culture a society is able to boost its own morale. Westerners are able to disregard the gender inequality in their own social system by focusing on what they consider the oppression of women in the Moslem society. Moslems comfort themselves by denouncing western society as immoral, decadent and dangerous (see Nader 1986 and 1989).

Marginalization in the overlapping arenas of ethnicity, economics and religion brings about the Albanians' stubborn adherence to tradition. I would argue that the subordination of women is a product of historical circumstances which have subordinated the Albanians as a minority population. Women are victimized in two ways. On one hand men rely on a customary law which reproduces a hierarchical patriarchy and male hegemony. On the other hand, men compensate for their economic and social impotence in Kosova, in Yugoslavia and abroad by monopolizing power and control in the domestic sphere. Men's public impotence becomes women's private impotence (Dimen 1986:63). Thus men's burden vis-à-vis the world outside becomes women's burden at home. Women become the oppressed of the oppressed.

The conservatism engendered by oppression is transformed into a symbol of strength. Men make a virtue out of their fanaticism. Women make even more of a virtue out of stoic servitude. And again, the Opojans ennoble themselves through their resistance to change.

This is the unvoiced, unconscious aspect of the social system in Opoja. There is also a conscious sense of subordination to superior authority which is regarded as a fact of life in Albanian society. Women's symbolic submission to men, acted out in a myriad of daily rituals,

is explained by many Opojans simply as one rung in the ladder of subordination and power which runs throughout the social system. Women yield to men, but younger brothers also yield to elder brothers, men to the family patriarch, the heads of families to village elders. Young wives stand always ready to serve family members and guests—to light cigarettes, make coffee, to pour water for ablutions. But in the absence of women young men take on this role. Gestures of submission are explained by Albanians—to themselves and to outsiders—as gestures of respect, as a function of every person's social role. People gain authority by showing respect for others, by abiding by custom, and the past is reproduced.

To an outside observer, Opoja is replete with anachronisms and inconsistencies. The society is anachronistic in the context of a modernizing, industrializing state, in the context of Europe reaching toward the twenty-first century. It is inconsistent in the discrepancy between the lives of Opoja men, the migrant laborers who live and work in this modern world, and their families back home whose behavior calls to mind centuries past. These are the discrepancies explored here through the eyes of Albanian women and men, young and old. The Opojans will tell their own stories, voicing consensus and dissent on the social and ideological issues which they now face.

Synopsis

This study presents an outline of fundamental social institutions, a description of the way in which individuals perceive them, and a discussion of the currents of conservatism and change operating within the context of these institutions. The treatise begins with a brief introduction to Kosova and to the ethnographic region of Opoja (Chapter I). The discussion which follows considers social issues central to the negotiation of continuity and change such as marriage arrangement, the acceptance of narrowly defined gender roles, honor and shame as social control, the preference for rural vs. urban life and for nuclear vs. extended families. These issues are discussed as part of an general examination of Albanian social life as experienced through kinship and family (Chapter II), marriage and patrilocality (Chapter III) and in the emic perception of gender roles (Chapter IV).

Following this look at social organization is an analysis of one of the main determinants in the social life of Opoja: male labor migration. Chapter V is an overview of out-migration in Opoja: its history, its present structure, and the wide range of views about migration held by women and men. Chapter VI looks at how this "temporary" form of out-migration informs perception and world view in the sending community.

Chapter VII turns to an examination of a prime indicator of conservatism and one of the central issues in the discourse surrounding traditionalism and innovation in Opoja: the debate over women's education. After a consideration of historical and contemporary patterns, the focus turns to the Opojans' own interpretations of the problem, through a contrast of the opinions and feelings offered by different segments of the population.

The study concludes with a summary discussion of continuity and change in social life (Chapter VIII). A final look is taken at the feelings of frustration and resignation in the face of formidable obstacles to change. Some light is shed upon the Albanians' reliance on the past as a strategy in coping with present.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- to put a hitherto under-studied population on the ethnographic map;
- to report on the local version and on individual perceptions of women's roles as a basis for comparison with other Moslem and Mediterranean societies;
- to uncover contrasting interpretations of the same reality--by women, by men, by conservatives and innovators;
- to test the relationships between economic hardship, ethnic marginality and the out-migration of men, and the degree to which traditionalism is fostered and intensified.

The data call into question relationships between ideological conservatism, gender roles and labor migration. These relationships suggest the following hypotheses:

1. The migrant's experience abroad increases his moral conservatism at home.

The migrant seeks to cope with economic and social marginalization in his host country by identifying with his indigenous culture, which gives him access to dignity and honor. He maintains self-esteem by taking refuge in conservative ideologies of the past and by condemning western lifestyles. His home community ascribes him status based upon the appearance of control and order and the adherence to gender and age hierarchies in the extended family back home. Inspired by the "myth of return," the notion that his stay abroad is temporary, the migrant comforts himself during tenure abroad with the knowledge that when he returns home to visit his family the lifestyle, social roles and values will be as he left them six or nine months ago. His negative perception of women's emancipation in the west and view of it as leading to family degradation further inspires an insistence on restraints on women's actions back home.

2. Migration becomes a self-perpetuating economic and ideological force reinforcing conservative trends.

With the increase in material comfort brought by migrants' remittances, a vicious circle is created: needs and expectations grow, and a subsistence-level economy is no longer adequate. The perceived necessity for hard currency is thus perpetuated. Women's acquiescence about the patriarchal structure is reinforced by increasing material comfort. Recent innovations such as the introduction of indoor plumbing, hot-water heaters, electric stoves, washing machines, the acquisition of status symbols (cars and videos), and the huge investments in wedding costumes and gold jewelry "pacifies" women and tells husbands and fathers that they are providing a "good life" for their families and encourages out-migration.

3. Families prevent girls from finishing school due to growing ideological conservatism compounded by economic constraints and ambiguity about the future.

Moral conservatism is most striking in the issue of female education. While a son's education is supported in the hope that the boy will be employed locally and avoid the need to migrate, it is unlikely that a daughter will be sent to high school. This corresponds to the relationship between migration and conservatism mentioned above. It is rationalized on economic and religious grounds, but in the end is acknowledged as serving the need to support the return to a more traditional moral order.

Some social trends in Kosova mirror the forces of conservatism and change in other Mediterranean and Middle Eastern societies. The analysis will provide a basis for comparison with these societies in the convergence of ideology and institutional frameworks: social structure (patrilineality, patrilocality and gender hierarchies), economics (an insufficient subsistence base, state policies which inhibit investment in productive private industry, and dependence on western currency for subsistence and prestige), and religion (Islam as practice, as ideology, as rationalization).

The Ethnographic Voice

The goal of this work is not simply to describe social structures and the behavior associated with them, but to understand how individuals process and interpret personhood in the context of their culture and to examine the dialectic between structure and experience. An attempt is made to distance the analysis from the common view of social structure as "cause" and individual reaction as "effect." Culture does not create binding rules which the individual

doggedly follows, but rather "defines a continuum along which lie a range of acceptable actions or choices that can be taken by individuals in order to achieve their separate ends" (Brettell 1986:8). Social transactions are understood "not as determinants of social organization or ideas but rather as moments when practice and meaning are negotiated together" (Yanagisako and Collier 1987:43). "Emotional structure and a sense of self are thus a dynamic becoming, not something created at a point in time by a ritual" (Marcus and Fischer 1986:62). Social reproduction is seen as a dialectical process involving reflexivity and conscious deliberation on the part of individuals.

This study allows the Albanians to express their own ideas about their society. The ethnography is seen as a cultural text, a dialogue between informants and ethnographer which challenges the privileged, all-knowing voice of the ethnographer. The informants make their own contributions to the theoretical discourse rather than being treated as 'ethnographic subjects' (Herzfeld 1985:xvii). Informants have been encouraged to be reflexive about their society, to critique their own system of meanings. The emphasis is away from "proving the rationality of exotic customs for the benefit of ethnocentric readerships" (Marcus and Fischer 1986:48), and towards an exploration of "indigenous epistemologies, rhetorics, aesthetic criteria, and sensibilities" (ibid.). I am interested in the informants' own representations of their culture to themselves, to each other, and to outsiders (Herzfeld 1983:162). The text reflects the voices of individuals as they interpret the social institutions and the ideology which inform their lives, and as they express their feelings about the past and future. The ethnographer's role has been to provide a textual forum for the statements of informants, for their own analysis of the social issues affecting their lives.

Where functionalism and orientalism have led Westerners to view Moslem societies as static, this study sees social institutions as structures in flux. Change results from the process of individuals negotiating their circumstances and solving personal problems. When individuals come into conflict with the moral code, there are numerous tried-and-true ways of beating the system. The research seeks to determine to what extent people's thoughts and behavior digress from social norms and in what sense these digressions help to weave the fabric of change.

Chapter I

The Ethnographic Setting

Kosova: A Brief Political History

The examination of social structures, ideology and perception in this study is prefaced by an outline of the geographical, historical and demographic character of the Province of Kosova.

Kosova is one of two provinces within the Republic of Serbia in eastern Yugoslavia (see Figure 1: "Yugoslavia"). Located in the southern part of Serbia, it is bordered in the south by the Republic of Macedonia, in the east and north by Serbia proper, in the northwest by the Republic of Montenegro, and in the southwest by the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. Its heartland of fertile plains, hills and valleys is almost completely surrounded by dramatic mountain ranges chiseled by gorges.

Historically Kosova was part of the north-south link from Beograd to Thessalonik and the east-west route from Istanbul to the Adriatic coast and to Bosnia-Hercegovina. It has served as a frontier between the eastern and western Roman empires, between Serbian, Bulgarian and Byzantine states, between Christianity and Islam, Greek Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, and between the modern states of Albania and Yugoslavia. Its strategic economic and political position, fertile land and plentiful mineral resources have made Kosova a desirable possession for a succession of invaders throughout its turbulent history.

The Albanians are believed by many scholars to be descendants of the Illyrians who lived throughout much of the territory of present-day Yugoslavia and Albania until the fifth century B.C.¹. Throughout their turbulent history Albanians experienced the successive rule of Greece, Rome, Byzantium, the Celts, Slavs and Ottoman Turks. The Turkish occupation lasted five hundred years and had the most profound effect upon Albanian life. The Ottomans began their domination of the Balkan Peninsula in 1389 after a victory over the Serbs at the famous "Battle of Kosovo" near the present-day capital of Prishtina. Prior to 1389 the medieval Serbian monarchy ruled Serbia from the heartland of Kosova. During this period the highland Albanians were beginning their descent into the lowlands of Kosova in response to population pressure in the mountains. This descent accelerated when the Ottomans invaded and the Serbian lords and their subjects moved northward. During the fifteenth century the Albanians

staged a massive resistance against the Ottomans led by their greatest national hero, Gjergj Kastriot (better known as "Skenderbeg"). After his death resistance weakened and the occupation forced the emigration of lowland Albanians into the mountains.

In the sixteenth century the conquered territories inhabited by Albanians were divided into provinces (which the Ottomans called *eyalets* and *sanjaks*) which were ruled by Ottoman representatives. The conscription of soldiers and collection of taxes were overseen by the *spahi*, Albanian military men who received land holdings (*ziamet* and *timar*) in exchange for their services. By the end of the seventeenth century this *timar* system had broken up into private estates of feudal Albanian landlords, the *çiflik*.

Toward the end of the seventeenth century the Ottoman government created *bajraks* ["banners"] in the mountainous regions of Albanian lands. These were administrative units set up to provide the Turkish army with squadrons of military personnel, the *çetas*. The Albanian highlanders were subject to constant attacks by Turks until the establishment of these *bajraks* which gave the peasants some autonomy and tax exemptions. An indigenous leader called the *bajraktar* was appointed for each *bajrak*. The title was usually won in battle, but became hereditary. It was the duty of the *bajraktar* to call a soldier from each house and to act as a liaison between the Ottoman administration and the local community. Sometimes the *bajraktar* became very powerful in the local Albanian community, usurping the traditional leadership of the clan elders, the *pleqesia*.

The defeat of the Turks at Vienna in 1683 marked the beginning of their political decline. As the empire lost its hold over the Balkans the power of Albanian feudal lords, the *beys* and *pashas*, became entrenched. Population pressure in the mountains due to former immigration and natural increase had pushed the highland peasants back down to the plains where they became sharecroppers under the feudal lords. During this period there were continuous conflicts: *beys* and *pashas* fought each other using peasants as soldiers, sometimes in alliance with Istanbul, sometimes against it. The Albanian peasants were continuously in feuds with other clans, with feudal lords or with the Turks. As Ottoman power declined during the last half of the eighteenth century, local Albanian lords were brought together for the first time under powerful Albanian landowners.

In 1839 Istanbul instituted the *tanzimat* reforms which took power away from local lords and confiscated local feudal properties. The new mandates increased the peasants' taxes, initiated a compulsory military service of seven to nine years for all Albanian males, and took away the rights of civilians to bear arms. The Ottoman administration replaced *beys* and *pashas* with

Turkish overseers, the *mutezarif*. The Albanian peasantry was nominally free under the Turkish lords but went bankrupt on their small plots from over-taxation, a dearth of male labor owing to military recruitments and feud casualties, and the low prices for agricultural products set by the Ottoman administration. Many peasants were forced to migrate or to become sharecroppers again on the Sultan's land. While the peasants (especially highlanders) did their best to ignore these harsh "reforms," the changes inspired continual armed uprisings. By end of the century local feudal lords regained power by buying up liberated peasant land and mounted resistance against the Turks with the help of local peasants.

The growing nationalism of eighteenth century Europe was lost on the Albanians. In Europe nationalist movements were being nurtured by religious and linguistic unity, the leadership of one class, the influence of foreign intellectuals and discontent with foreign rule. Through the centuries fierce clan and regional loyalties and the absence of the incentives for unification present in European nations prevented the emergence of an Albanian nationalist consciousness which would unite the Albanians against their oppressors. Finally in 1878 Albanians united against foreign manipulation when the Congress of Bucharest gave the Albanian regions of Gusinje and Pllav to the Montenegrins. Leading Albanian writers met at the fabled "League of Prizren" to make their will known to Berlin. They demanded autonomy within the Ottoman empire, a right to the taxes collected, schooling in the Albanian language and religious freedom. But because Albanians sought autonomy under Istanbul rather than independence, the European powers saw them as an Ottoman tool. It was not until the revolt of the Young Turks in 1908 and the harsh, repressive measures of their new policies of "Ottomanism" that Albanians finally began a unified revolt against the Turks.²

In 1912 the Ottomans were defeated and Albania was proclaimed a republic. With the withdrawal of the Turks in 1913 the European powers constructed the "Treaty of Berlin" which created an independent state of Albania. This new state excluded the ethnic Albanians in Kosova who then became part of the "Serbian Kingdom," and in 1918 part of the "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes." By this time there was a new united Balkan front against the Ottomans and against an autonomous Albania which would claim precious lands. In 1915 the secret "Treaty of London" was written which granted Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia parts of greater Albania. Serbia and Montenegro divided Kosova and today's western Macedonia between them. Albania faced World War I in political anarchy, once again hosting foreign troops and fighting off the territorial ambitions of its neighbors. New Albanian borders were set in 1926 which left a half-million Albanians in Yugoslavia. Kosova was now underpopu-

lated from decades of war and the Yugoslav government encouraged Serbians to colonize the lowlands. This created new pressure on Albanians who began to migrate out of Kosova as seasonal laborers.

In the inter-war era Albania suffered economic stagnation under an unpopular King Zog and grew dependent on Mussolini's Italy. In Kosova this was a period of poverty and persecution. Fascist Italy's occupation of Albania, Kosova and Albanian parts of Montenegro inspired a wave of unified resistance against Mussolini and later against German occupiers. Cooperation between Albania and Yugoslavia during the war broke down in 1944-45 as Albanians faced new persecutions under the Yugoslavs. The Kosova Albanians revolted and martial law was declared. After several years of improved treatment another era of persecution ensued under Rankovic, head of the Yugoslav secret police. The 1950s were a time of nationalism and forced assimilation in Kosova.

In the 1960s a new federalism emerged in Yugoslavia which promised equal rights to the minority populations. The post-Rankovic era had inspired Albanians to agitate for greater autonomy. In 1968 widespread demonstrations in Kosova called for an independent university, the replacement of the name "Kosova-Metohija" with "Kosova," and Republican status. This last demand was rejected, but as compensation Tito offered greater autonomy and economic aid to Kosova. The 1974 constitutional amendments made Kosova a "Socialist Autonomous Province" with its own university, the right to fly the Albanian flag, and the equality of Albanian, Serbo-Croatian and Turkish languages. Albanians were put in positions of authority in the administration and police force.

The 1960s and 1970s were decades of tremendous social change in Kosova wrought against a backdrop of poverty, widespread illiteracy,³ a population explosion and a deepening national economic crisis.⁴ As the economic and social gap between Yugoslavia's more prosperous north and poorer south widened, ethnic tensions increased and in 1981 culminated in massive Albanian demonstrations in Kosova followed by a period of purges and repressed hostilities.⁵

The political dispute over Kosova centers on the fact that both Kosova Albanians and the Serbs claim historical rights to the province. Kosova was the center of the Serbian medieval kingdom with many of Serbia's most important monuments located there. The Serbian defeat at the hand of the Turks in the "Battle of Kosovo" in 1389 is at the heart of Serbian epic literature. As such Kosova plays a deep emotional role in the identity of contemporary Serbs. In

addition, while it is clear that Albanians have always inhabited parts of western Kosova, the length of time they have been in other parts of the province is unclear, making historical claims on territory a source of perpetual enmity between Albanians and Serbs.⁶

In the spring of 1988 new constitutional amendments were adopted in Serbia aimed at reducing Kosova's autonomy by giving Serbia jurisdiction over Kosova's courts and police. These changes, seen by Albanians as a regression to pre-1974 statutes, coupled with skyrocketing inflation, unemployment and renewed ethnic hostility between Albanians and Serbs, catalyzed another wave of demonstrations in the spring of 1989. These were followed by purges of Albanian academics and administrators and a general state of repression and tension in Kosova⁷ (see "Postscript"). It is in this political context that the social structures and processes described in this study must be understood.

Vital Statistics

The Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosova has a population of 1.8 million (1986 figures). The ethnic distribution in 1981 was 77.4% Albanian, 13.2% Serbian, 3.7% Moslem, 2.2% Rom, 1.7% Montenegrin (Enti Krahinor i Statistikës 1987). The steady exodus of Serbs and Montenegrins which began in 1966 and accelerated in the 1980s due to political pressures has increased the percentage of Albanians to 90%.⁸ Kosova has the highest natality and infant mortality rates in Europe, with 29.9 live births per thousand, and 55.2 infant deaths per thousand live births.⁹ Kosova's rate of population increase is 24.7 per thousand with an annual population growth of 2.4% (1987 statistics).

The province covers an area of 10,908 sq. km. which is divided into twenty-two *komuna* (counties) (see Figure 2: "Ethnographic Regions"). Until its establishment as an autonomous region in 1946, Kosova was considered as two regions: "Kosova" (also known as Fusha e Kosovës [The Kosova Field]) in the east and Metohija (or Rrafshi i Dukagjinit [The Plain of Dukagjin]) in the west. This division was based upon geographical relief and consequent patterns of economic subsistence resulting in cultural patterns unique to each region.

The Kosova Field in the east, with its eleven ethnographic sub-regions, is the larger of the two areas. Due to relatively poorer agricultural conditions this region relied on its mining industries which date back to the medieval period. Since World War II the growing industrial centers of the east have attracted steady migration from villages. Older forms of social organization and cultural patterns based upon rural subsistence patterns have given way faster here than in the more rural west. These trends have meant a somewhat steadier move toward nuclear families, smaller scale houses and the education and employment of women.

In The Plains of Dukagjin, with its twelve ethnographic subdivisions, signs of an older life-style are more evident. The most visible indications of this are the presence of many *kulla*, multi-storied dwellings in medieval fortress style designed to house enormous extended families and livestock and to defend against intruders. Especially in the central plains area between Istog and Gjakova [Djakovica] and in the southwest mountains of Has, dress adapted from pre-Ottoman elements is worn by many women.

Today the three official languages of Kosova are Albanian, Serbo-Croatian and Turkish. There is also a large population of Romany speakers. Many people are bi- or tri-lingual. There are newspapers, periodicals, radio and television broadcasts in all four languages. Modern Albanian is an Indo-European language and is said to be the sole surviving relic of ancient Illyrian. It is not part of any other family of languages in the Indo-European tree, but is replete with borrowings from Latin, Turkish and Serbo-Croatian. There are two major Albanian dialects groups: Gheg, represented principally in Kosova, northern Albania, Montenegro and parts of Macedonia (Shkup [Skoplje], Tetova, Gostivar and Dibër); and Tosk, spoken in southern Albania, southern Macedonia and northwestern Greece. The Albanian literary language introduced in Kosova in 1968 is a standardization based on the Tosk dialects (see Newmark 1982:6). The use of this non-indigenous dialect in academia, in the media, and in official discourse has created a condition of diglossia in Kosova, a "high" and "low" language which puts Gheg speakers at a disadvantage. Many teachers and administrators, while speaking the "literary" Tosk dialect in official public settings continue to write in a hybrid of the two dialects.

The majority of Kosova Albanians are Sunni Moslems. There are also some Shi'ite sects concentrated in and around Prizren and Gjakova and Catholic communities in Has and around the towns of Gjakova, Klina and Janjeva. While most Balkan Christians resisted the encroachment of Islam, many Albanians were converted to the foreign faith during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.. Their conversion to Islam is attributed to the Albanians' relative religious indifference and their desire for the social and economic advantages which could be gained by being Moslem in the Ottoman empire. Some of these advantages were the right to bear arms, to pay lower taxes, the possibilities of upward social and economic mobility and the tolerance of certain customary practices which the Catholic church proscribed such as polygyny, the levirate, blood brotherhood and trial marriages.¹⁰

While Albania remained Catholic in the least accessible mountain areas, especially in those closest to Rome, conversion to Islam was greatest near towns and along main roads. In many cases Albanians who did convert became only nominally Moslem, appropriating a

unique mixture of Islamic, Catholic and tribal customs to suit their political and social structure. A passage from High Albania written in the early 1900s gives us some insight into the nature of the conversion:

The North Albanian tribesman is an Albanian first. [The masses have] never absorbed the higher teaching of either Christianity or Islam.

With the help of Islam, the Albanian has regained much territory. The magic of Mohammed has given him fat lands, ruling posts in the Government, has not exacted compulsory military service, has paid him well when he chose to fight, and has never troubled to teach him Mohammedanism properly, but has left him free to keep his old customs. All has been done by persuasion and heavy bribes. The beggarly methods of Christianity, compared with the open-handed liberality of Islam—the wretched hovel of the church and the new mosque—were enough alone to convince [the people] that the one was a dying, the other a living, cause (Durham 1909:313).

The Ethnographic Region of Opoja

While this study portrays some aspects of Albanian life-style and world view found throughout Kosova, it focuses on the region of Opoja in southwest Kosova. I chose Opoja for several reasons. In one sense it is representative of economic, social and ideological structures found throughout rural Kosova. It is typical with respect to the influence of Islam on customary behavior and on perception, the reliance on internal and external labor migration, and the prevailing hopelessness about non-migration solutions (education, jobs in the public sector) to economic hardship. While it typifies some of the social and cultural patterns of Kosova, Opoja displays extreme versions of these structures in terms of the economic marginality, the depth of the Islamic legacy, the importance and universality of labor migration and the recent increase in moral conservatism characteristic of the region.

I also chose Opoja because of previous fieldwork I had done in the region which provided personal contacts through whom I gained the cooperation of local authorities. Another advantage to working in Opoja was the topography of the area. Since it is situated in a mountain valley, most villages are accessible by car and there are dependable bus connections with the town of Prizren.

Opoja lies in a valley of the Sharr mountains near the Macedonian border in southwest Kosova (see Figure 2). Its 108 sq. km. of plains and river valleys are bordered in the north by the city of Prizren and environs, in the south by the ethnographic region of Gora, in the west by Mt. Koritnik on the Albanian border, and in the east by the Sharr range (see Figure 3: "Opoja"). Ethnographically Opoja extends into the region of Luma in northeast Albania.

Climbing up to Opoja by car from the town of Prizren, after forty minutes of switch-backs which draw the traveler higher and deeper into the majesty of the Sharr mountains, one reaches the edge of the valley. From here one feasts one's eyes on a dazzling expanse of meadows and fields dotted with small villages drawn against a spectacular backdrop of snow-capped mountain peaks. In any season the Opoja landscape is dramatic. In spring and early summer the meadows and hillsides are green and lush with grasses and new wheat, brilliant blue skies giving way in the evenings to awesome spectacles of thunder and lightning. In late summer and autumn the land is gold with ripening grains. From November to March the landscape is carpeted with deep snow. Though sheltered from harsh winters by the mountains to the west and east, Opoja's alpine climate makes parts of the area impassable in winter months.

Demographics

Administratively Opoja lies within the county of Dragash. The town of Dragash is situated between the ethnographic regions of Opoja and Gora, serving as the administrative, commercial and civic center for both territories. Gora's twenty villages line a rocky mountain pass between Opoja and Macedonia. While Opoja is strictly Albanian, Gora is populated by a Slavic-speaking Moslem minority group of shepherds and migrant laborers. The population of the entire county (Opoja and Gora combined) is 37,400 (1987 statistics) with eighty-four inhabitants per square kilometer and the highest natality in Kosova. The number of "houses" (extended families) per village in Opoja ranges from thirty-eight to 290 houses with an average of 117. The average household size is ten members.

Opoja's twenty-one villages fall into three main groups (see Figure 3). The villages within each group have been linked historically through economic exchanges and marriage alliances and are identified as having a unique character within Opoja. Buqe, Brezne and Pllav along the Albanian border on the western side of the main road form their own group. In the past they were linked most closely with the Luma region of Albania. They also show some linguistic and cultural similarities to the villages known as the *vrri* at the foot of the Sharr range, especially to the village Zhur with whom they share grazing land. With the exclusion of Shajna and Rrenz located closest to the town of Dragash, the remainder of Opoja villages are grouped together as *rrafshi i Opojës* [the Opoja flatlands].

Infrastructure

Opoja villages began to be equipped with electricity in the early 1960s after the installation of a hydro-electric plant in Gora in 1953. Though travel between the villages of Opoja and

Dragash is still frequently by foot or horse-drawn wagon, a thirty-two kilometer paved road between Dragash and Prizren was opened in 1973 and now has several bus connections daily. Roads to half of the villages were paved between 1978 and 1988. Most villages have running water brought in by canal systems developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but many houses still collect water from courtyard wells. Each village has one or more small dry-goods stores and its own mosque. There are public telephones in Dragash, Bellobrad (1953) and Brodosanë (1974).

Infrastructural improvements were financed by provincial funds for underdeveloped counties, local county funds, UNICEF (until 1983 when Yugoslavia went from "underdeveloped" to "developing" nation status), and by the villagers' own investments. The ability of each village to procure funds depends to a large extent on the energy and political skills of village leaders, the solidarity of the community in contributing funds to match government grants, and the number and financial support of migrants willing to contribute to the projects.

Opoja's only industry is the yarn factory, "Drateks," located in the county seat of Dragash. Opojans lament the dearth of employment in their region. They blame this on two major social dilemmas—the out-migration of males and the unwillingness to send girls to high school in the absence of employment opportunities for them—on the failure of the local county seat to build other industry. For a decade there has been talk of building a shoe factory in Dragash, but nothing has come of it. Since 1953 plans have been generated to create an artificial reservoir in the meadows of villages Buqe, Brezne and Lopushnik in the center of the Opoja valley to furnish water for a hydro-electric plant in the foothill village of Zhur. Since 1983 villagers in the vicinity of the future reservoir have been told not to build houses there, as the entire area will be flooded. As yet no steps have been taken to implement these plans.

Dragash boasts the largest medical facility in rural Kosova. It is estimated by health care professionals that before World War II more than half of infants and children in Opoja succumbed to infectious diseases within the first seven years of life. With the introduction of vaccinations in 1950 this decreased to 25%. Most infant mortality occurs in the first year of life; the most common causes are diarrhea, tuberculosis and internal infections. Having been singled out for special funds as one of the most underdeveloped regions of Kosova, Opoja has received substantial aid for health services. There are three types of medical facilities in Opoja. First are the *punktët shëndetsore* [health posts], four small village clinics built in the early 1960s which share a doctor and a few nurses between them. There is one *stacion shëndetsor* [medical station] built in 1970 in Brodosanë, largest of the Opoja villages, with a full-time doctor, medical assistant, dentist and midwife. Unlike many rural counties in Kosova which have only

small clinics, Opoja has its own forty-bed hospital built in 1969 in Dragash. The hospital has twenty-nine doctors, several dentists and eighty nurses. Nurses also make regular visits to outlying villages to vaccinate children and disseminate information.

Prior to World War II the only educational facilities in Opoja were the four-year primary schools in one-third of the Opoja villages. Instruction was mandatory for boys and was given in Serbo-Croatian. After the war in 1945 the remaining villages built four-year schools and for the first time children were educated in Albanian. Attendance was mandatory for girls and boys. While one-third of the villages now have eight-year schools, the only high-school is in Dragash; it was built in 1969.

House Types

There are four house types in Opoja reflecting the transition from primitive pre-war adobe-type structures to modern houses of cement block. Prior to the 1950s dwellings were constructed of *plita* [mud and hay] with roofs of stone slab. The houses were usually two-story, five-room structures with an indoor "kitchen" and with livestock usually kept inside the house. Floors were of bare earth except in the upper-level receiving room, the *oda*, where the ground was covered with straw and loom-woven carpets. Each sleeping room had its *hamamxhik*, a corner partitioned off for washing with a drain hole leading to the outside, and an outhouse some distance from the house.

In the mid-1950s new houses were built of *gur me loç* [mud and stone] with tile roofs. The houses were constructed "*me plan*" [according to a set plan] of four or eight symmetrically situated rooms on an upper and lower floor. In this model the "kitchen" and cellar for dairy products were in outbuildings. Livestock were for the first time kept in an outside barn. This first wave of reconstruction was not inspired by migrants, who, during the 1950s, were earning wages in other cities in Yugoslavia simply in order secure the survival of families back in Opoja. Rather, the houses tended to be built by people who worked in the public sector and were able to get loans from the state. Innovations were inspired by travels in other parts of Yugoslavia. In the mid-1960s "mud and stone" construction materials were replaced with "cement and stone" but the plan was the same: symmetrical rooms, *hamamxhiks*, outhouses, outdoor kitchens and outdoor barn.

In the mid-seventies new *lüksuz* [luxurious] houses built of concrete blocks were introduced by migrants working abroad and bringing home hard currency. These houses are usually designed to have indoor toilets and showers which in many cases are non-functional pending the installation of adequate running water in the neighborhood. While there is some-

times an indoor electric stove and refrigerator, cooking is often still done on a wood-stove in the traditional kitchen in a separate outbuilding. Thus aside from the indoor toilets and showers the house plan is essentially the same as in the older houses. One or more rooms are decorated with modern furniture—couches and elaborate armoires—though these furnishings are often reserved for the receiving room [*oda*] and the brides' bedrooms. Families tend to gather in the more informal rooms seated on foam pads set around the periphery of the floor.

Most Opoja neighborhoods display a mixture of the three most recent house types: mud and stone, cement and stone and cement and concrete block. Families of long-term out-migrating men have usually built the new concrete-block houses. Many other families are now in the process of constructing new houses but in many cases older homes coexist in the same courtyard with newer ones, housing part of the extended family.

Agriculture

Opoja is considered to be one of the poorest agricultural regions in Kosova. A small amount of arable acreage yields meager crops but the land and climate are more suitable to a pastoral economy.¹¹ Opoja families own an average of 1.5 hectares of land on which they grow beans, potatoes, corn, and small quantities of wheat, rye and barley. With a high population density, a long tradition of partible inheritance and a dearth of fertile fields, arable land is at a premium. The small, scattered parcels yield only enough for private consumption, and even that must be augmented by purchases of grain and vegetables. Many families still under the directorate of an aging patriarch maintain their crops for his satisfaction, for a sense of security in the knowledge that the family is still linked to their land, *sa për me u gjet* [just enough so its there]. While each village has one or two families who depend completely on farming and sheep-raising for their livelihood, most families combine gardening and limited animal husbandry with of wage labor and out-migration.¹²

Each group of villages has its own communal grazing land and each family has one or two cows which, for a nominal fee, they send each day with the village shepherd to graze on the village pastures. Many families keep around ten sheep for their own milk and cheese production, and, in part, as a reassuring link to lifestyles of the past. Some also keep a pair of oxen as beasts of burden. Though Opoja's ecology is best suited to the pastoral economy which once dominated the region, today only about ten Opoja families are full-time private pastoralists, sending one nuclear family from the extended family to the Opoja highlands in summer months with their sheep and in the winter to lowlands in Macedonia or the area around Prizren. If they do not own land, they must pay for the winter feed. When there are three or

four *qehaj* [owners of more than one-hundred sheep] together, they form a *kompani*. About one hundred families are part of the state run pastoral cooperative through which they obtain feed, credit priorities, medical benefits for their families and social security in exchange for sales of their meat, lambs, wool and milk to the coop. While state officials place much pride and hope in these cooperative ventures, people who are part of the cooperative say organization is poor and they do not get the feed and other support they need. They remain with the cooperative for the social security and pensions it provides and to avoid having to take their own products to market.

While there has been some increase in the number of sheep raised in Opoja since 1980 due to the dismal prospects of economic gain in other local ventures, local officials are not hopeful that a pastoral economy can be revived in Opoja in the near future. This is explained in part by marginal profits offered by sheep-raising. It can be profitable for those who own their grazing land, but if they must buy food for their animals, there is only minimal gain. While in the past many families owned lowland pastures for winter grazing, this land has in many cases been sold and shepherds are forced to buy food, making the venture unprofitable. In addition to economic marginality, shepherding as a way of life has become unpopular since the 1960s and the beginning of high school education in Opoja. Almost all Opoja boys consider shepherding a lowly job, something they would never do even in the face of unemployment and even when their family owns substantial pastoral resources. Returning migrants do not become shepherds again or invest their money in this enterprise.

Labor Migration

Due to poor agricultural resources and economic isolation, Opoja is one of the most underdeveloped regions of Kosova. As a result, for centuries the area has been known for its migrant workers (*kurbetxhi* in the literary form and *gyrbetxhi* in the popular form), men living outside of Opoja for most of the year. In the past, as today, Opojans sought work as shepherds, in restaurant trades, in ice cream and pastry selling, and in a wide variety of semi-skilled jobs. Formerly work was found principally in Istanbul, Ankara, Thessalonika and Sofia. After the Second World War, work was sought in Belgrade and other newly industrializing Yugoslav cities. In the 1960s migrants began to seek greater financial rewards in western Europe.

The material culture of Opoja reflects this contact with other societies. The centuries-old trade connection with urban centers meant that imported commercial goods were present relatively early in the region. Hence, for example, the loom-woven, long chemise worn by women throughout Kosova until the First World War early gave way in Opoja to the Turkish-

style floor-length, full pantaloons [*dimia*] which require twelve meters of purchased fabric. Other purchased goods such as western-style men's clothing and porcelain coffee cups were introduced in Opoja earlier than in other regions.

While poor in agricultural resources, Opoja has gained some economic advantages over other rural areas of Kosova through the constant supply of capital from the remittances of migrants. As a result of this capital, Dragash County was able to help meet the expense of installing electricity in all villages by 1965 and a paved road by 1973. Other mountain regions such as Has, Rugova and Karadak are still without a paved road and have only recently acquired electricity.

The men of Opoja tend to leave their families behind them when working away from home. A young man typically brings a bride into his family and subsequently seeks work where one of his relatives has established himself, returning once or twice a year for brief visits usually during the harvest and wedding season. Men typically work away from home for periods of ten to twenty years, finally returning home to retire in Opoja. Going to work outside of Opoja with the sole intention of bringing economic security to their families, the men usually view their stay abroad as an economic proposition and tend to remain Opojan in world view and behavior. They do not usually settle together in large groups and assimilate only minimally into the temporary, new cultural environment.

Interestingly, in spite of Opoja's stronger links with urban culture via radio, television and paved roads, in some important ways Opoja remains more dutifully committed to upholding traditional norms than other regions with more recent urban contact and a less developed infrastructure. This may be due to the fact that Opoja families have traditionally been maintained by the remittances of one or more members. In other areas such as Rugova, Gollak and Drenica which have stressed rural-urban migration over out-migration there has been a somewhat faster rate of social change. The strict observance of customary behavior in Opoja is reinforced by the periodic visits of the men who usually participate fully in the traditional life-style and ceremonial events. Those who live abroad often become the most active participants in the older layer of customs, reaffirming ethnic and local identity.

Notes

1. See "The Ethnogenesis of the Albanian People in the Light of History" Tirana: Albanian Telegraphic Agency, July 3, 1982, the report of Aleks Buda.

2. With reference to this period see Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening 1878-1912*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967.
3. Illiteracy percentages in Kosova: (Statistical Yearbook, Prishtina 1988:34)

	1961		1981	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Average	29.8	58.4	9.4	26.4
10-19 years	8.7	19.2	1.0	4.3
20-34	18.6	57.4	2.0	10.5
35-64	52.6	86.1	15.2	51.9

It was reported that in 1988 70% of illiterate people in Kosova are women (Rilindja, 28 March 1988).

4. In 1988 Kosova had the highest unemployment in Yugoslavia, with only one able-bodied worker employed (compared to the Yugoslav average of one in five). In the first six months of 1988, Kosova Province recorded 133,097 seeking employment out of a total social sector labor force of 366,000—a rate of over 30%. 80% of unemployed workers are under thirty years of age, and the bulk have finished at least secondary school (Provincial Employment Association, Prishtina 1988). The average wait for employment in Kosova is five years, while some people wait ten years or more. In 1982 there were thirty-three applicants per job, three times the national average (reported by the American Embassy, Belgrade). Unemployment rates in Kosova rose in the following increments (Nin, 28 February 1982):

1971	18.6%
1981	27.5%
1988	36.3%

5. The following table based on 1987 data gives some indication of the economic and social gap between the north and south and trends over a thirty year period (Yugoslav Statistical Yearbook, 1988:437-439):

		Kosova	Slovenia	Yugoslavia
Population	1987	1,802,000	1,882,000	22,499,000
Family size	1953	6.24	3.66	4.29
	1981	6.92	3.18	3.62
Live births per 1,000 inhabitants	1955	43.6	21.0	26.9
	1987	29.9	14.2	15.3
Infant deaths per 1,000 live births	1955	164.0	56.7	112.8
	1987	55.2	13.0	26.2
Deaths per 1,000 inhabitants	1955	18.2	9.9	11.4
	1987	5.3	10.8	9.2
Natural population increase per 1,000	1955	25.4	11.1	15.5
	1987	24.7	3.1	6.1
Life expectancy:men women men women	1954	48.64	63.00	56.92
		45.29	66.10	59.33
	1987	68.06	67.34	67.66
		71.48	75.16	73.23
Percentage of economy based in agriculture	1948	80.9	44.1	67.2
	1981	24.6	9.4	19.9
Percentage of people unemployed	1988	36.3	2.4	14.2%

The per capita income in Kosova relative to the Yugoslav national average was:

48% in 1954

33% in 1975

28% in 1980

In comparison, in 1961 Slovenia's GNP was six times that of Kosova, growing to seven times that of Kosova in 1979 (Tanjug Domestic Service, 4 December 1980).

6. See Atanasije Urosevic, *Toponomia Kosova* [The Toponomy of Kosova], Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1975.
7. For background and analyses of recent events in Kosova, see: Zanga 1967, Prifti 1969, Rusinow 1980, Artisien and Howells 1981, Kolsti 1981, Ramet 1981, Biberaj 1982, Pavlovitch 1982, Baskin 1983, Meier 1983, Prifti 1984.
8. The percentage of Albanians in Kosova has increased at the following rates: (The Counties of Kosova in 1986, Prishtina:Statistical Bureau 1988).

1948 68%

1953 65%

1971	67%
1981	73%
1988	90%

9. Additional data on natality in Kosova: (Islami 1987)

- 1953 47.5% of children born in Yugoslavia were Albanian, 28.0% were Serbian.
- 1978 34.0% of children born in Yugoslavia were Albanian, 15.4% were Serbian.
- 1981 30.4% of Kosova women had 6 or more children (12.9 among Serbs)
6.9% of Kosova women had 2 or more children (8.0 among Serbs)
- 1981 the largest group (20.7%) of working women had 2 children the
largest group (29.4%) of unemployed women had 6 or more children
- 1971 the average number for women who had not been to school was 6.4%
(3.1 children in Vojvodina)
- 1981 the percentage of Albanian women with 6 or more children...
who had no formal education: 52.0%
who had a college education: 1.6%
- 1981 the percentage of Albanian women with 1 child...
who had no formal education: 3.8%
who had a college education: 35.3%

The high birth rate in Kosova is usually blamed on the perceived need for a substantial number of sons to work the land, "protect" the family, ensure the continuity of the patriline and project an image of collective strength. In the past the high infant mortality rate and a history of blood feuding and wars which took a toll on the male population meant that women were expected to bear many children so that an adequate number would survive. This tendency toward large families has continued in Kosova despite the decline in the number of premature deaths after World War II. The current propensity for large families (relative to the European standard) is due to several factors. One is a woman's desire to secure her place or increase her authority in her husband's family by producing sons. If daughters are born first many families keep producing children until they have a son. There is also an undercurrent of desire, especially among males, to help increase the number of Albanians.

The issue of high natality among Albanians is highly politicized. Other Yugoslavs fear the rapid expansion of the Albanian population; officials in Kosova seek to "rationalize" the number of children to increase the potential material and infrastructure support for each child. But in their anxiety over this issue "intellectuals" and administrators have been androcentric in their analysis, overlooking some basic facts about the women's side of the problem.

My research indicates that many Albanian women, city and village women alike, desire only two or three children (41%). Women are the ones caring for the children (especially in the absence of migrant husbands) and are acutely aware of the hardship associated with large families. But in many cases women don't have enough information about birth control. In other cases their desire for small families is thwarted by their husband's indifference in the matter or his determination to have many sons. This creates practical barriers to women's interest in having only a few children. It is difficult for city women to get contraceptives surreptitiously without being seen at the local clinic. Village women can't get to the clinic without being chaperoned by a man of the house. Most village gynecologists will not dispense contraceptives without the husband's consent.

10. With reference to Albanian conversion to Islam see: Coon 1950:36; Durham 1928:295; Gordon 1927:50; Hasluck 1954:9; Lane 1923:30.

11. Opoja's 8,695 hectares are divided into the following proportions:

4,832	pasture (4,378 high pasture, 454 in the mountain valley)
2,580	arable land for grain and vegetable crops
956	meadow
265	forest
62	not arable

(Katastër [Agriculture Registrar], Dragash)

12. Out of 2,483 families in Opoja,

48	(1.9%)	are farmers
425	(17.1%)	do not farm
2,010	(81.0%)	have a mixed economy (farming and wage labor).

(Katastër [Agriculture Registrar], Dragash)

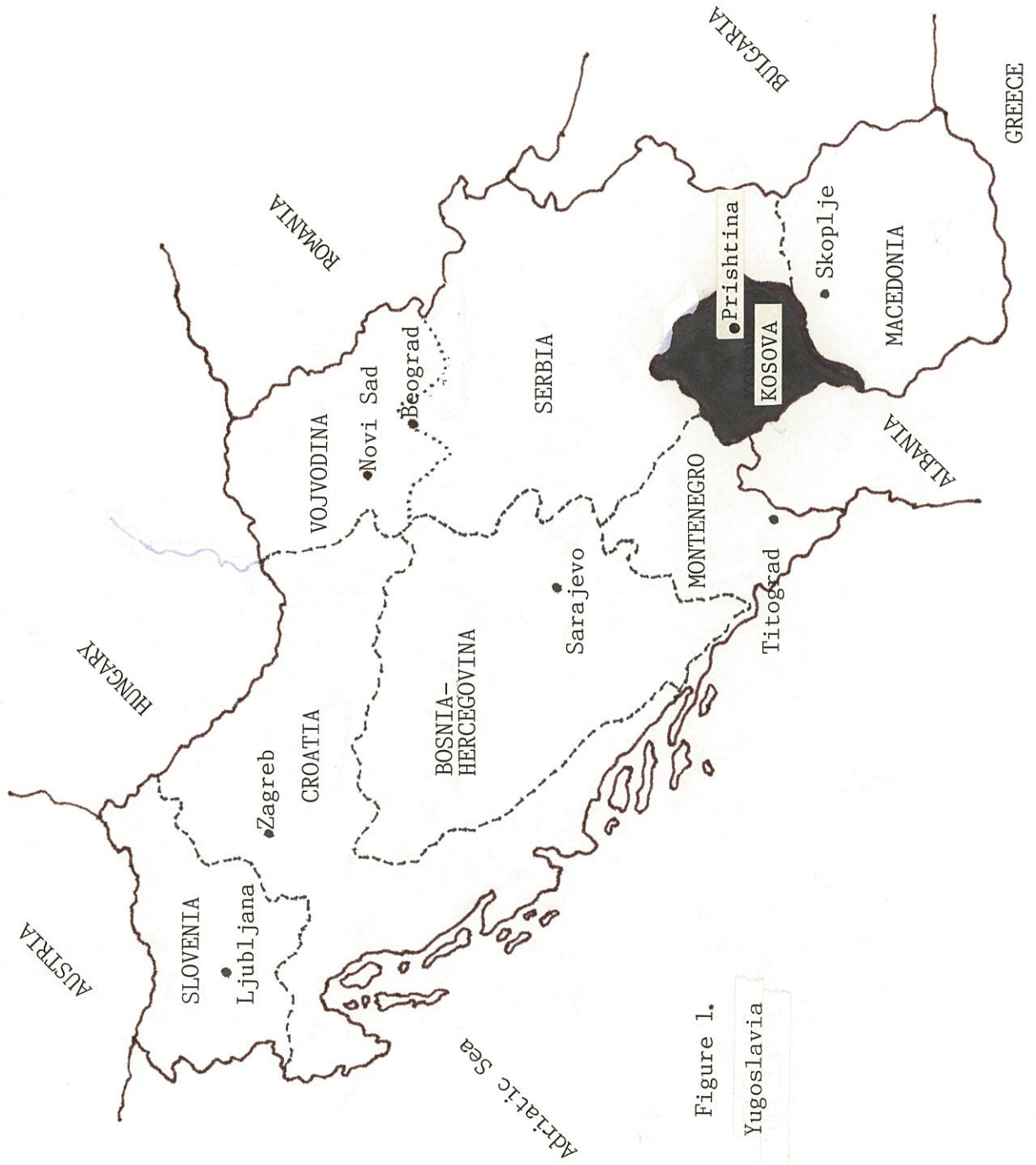


Figure 1.

Yugoslavia

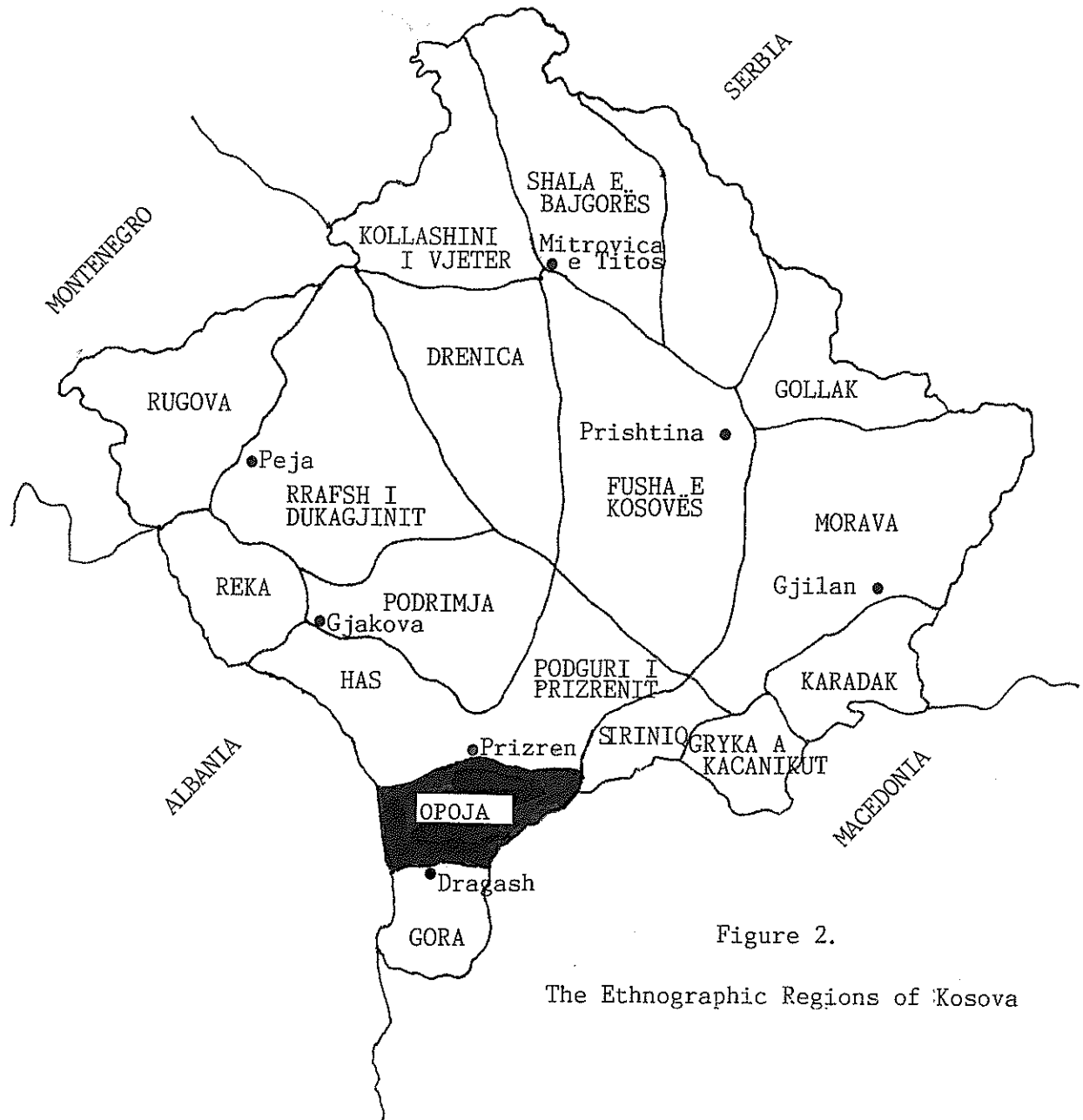


Figure 2.
The Ethnographic Regions of Kosova

Figure 3.



Chapter II

Contours of the Social Landscape

Customary Law: *The Canon of Lekë Dukagjin*

The explanation for all habits was, 'It is the Canon of Lekë'. The teachings of Islam, Christianity and the Sheriat Moslem laws all yield to *The Canon* (Durham 1909).

The law of Lekë Dukagjin serves to crystallize forms of behaviour and inhibit change in those who are trained from childhood to believe in its infallible authority (Coon 1950:37).

The customary laws which inform virtually every aspect of Albanian social life are codified in *Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit* [*The Canon of Lekë Dukagjin*]. *The Canon* is a collection of the laws which were operative in the Mirdita region of northern Albania from the fifteenth century. The collection was named posthumously after Lekë Dukagjin (1410-1481) who is believed to be a compatriot of Albania's most legendary hero, Gjergj Kastriot (Skenderbeg). In 1933, Shtjefan Gjeçovi, a Jesuit priest from Has, transcribed the laws in his native Gheg dialect.

The Canon rules on a vast array of family and inter-family matters, from the protocols of marriage arrangement to the regulations concerning blood revenge. The twelve Books of *The Canon* include: The Church, The Family, Marriage, Property, Labor, Inheritance, Oath-Taking, Honor, Assault, Criminal Wrongdoings, The Council of Elders, and Exceptional Cases.

Though relatively few contemporary Albanians have actually read the work or could quote its contents, many defer to *The Canon* as the ultimate authority on the "true" Albanian tradition. It represents to Albanians "the way things used to be," the ideal code of social order and decorum. The dictates of *The Canon* are included in this study as a guide to the ideology which continues to shape certain aspects of social behavior. (Numbered entries refer to Paragraphs in *The Canon*. The translations are mine.) (See Durham 1909, 1928, Hasluck 1954 and Pupovci 1968.)

Territory and Clan: The Major and Minor Regions

In the family is included the people of the household; when these increase, they divide into Brotherhoods, Brotherhoods into Clans, Clans into Tribes, Tribes into Banners, and these all together are gathered into one greater Family, which is called the Nation, having one homeland, one blood, one language, and one tradition (*The Canon of Lekë Dukagjin*, Paragraph 19).

We begin our examination of the ideological constructs and social landscapes which shape the Albanian's sense of self and community by outlining the hierarchy of territorial and lineal inclusiveness and exclusiveness which places each Albanian in the social universe. Though the average Albanian does not mentally catalogue these groupings in terms of a hierarchical system, the terms which mean "clan," "cousins," "father's brothers," "household" and "nuclear family" are common expressions frequently used to identify actors in the social arena. The following are the levels of inclusiveness and identity from broadest to most narrow:

Dialect Regions (Gheg in the north, Tosk in the south)
Major Geographical Regions
Minor Geographical Regions

Fis - The Clan
Fshat - The Village
Farefis - The Patrilineal Descent Group (Maximal Lineage)
Kusherinjtë - The Cousins (Major Lineage)
Axhallarët - The Father's Brothers (Minor Lineage)
Shtëpia e Madhe - The Extended Family
Familja e Ngusht - The Nuclear Family

Before the establishment of a stable national government in the region, the Albanian world was defined according to various levels of inclusiveness and exclusiveness based upon kinship, territory and local administration. Some of these definitions still have meaning for modern Albanians; others have lost importance as the administration of the modern nation-state has taken the place of indigenous territorial organization combined with Ottoman administrative districts. Albanians are classified into two major groups based upon language dialects: the Ghegs, living north of the Shkumbin River in Albania, and the Tosks in the south. The Kosova Albanians fall into the northern group.

The next level of grouping is the "Major Region" [Krahina e Madhe]. The Kosova Albanians are related to the Major Regions of Gegnia, Dukagjin, Mirdita and Malesia in northern Albania.

Prior to statehood, each Major Region was divided into sub-regions called by different names and organized in different ways in the various territories. Gegnia (not to be confused with Ghegni, the dialect region) was divided into Krahina të Vogla [Minor Regions]. In Gegnia clan identity was weak due to ongoing migrations within its territory and immigration from the neighboring region of Dukagjin. More than in any other region, inhabitants of Gegnia derived their identity from territory rather than clan. Dukagjin, west of the south bank of the Drin River, was divided into *bajraks* [Ottoman administrative units] and Minor Regions based on clan groupings. Mirdita, sometimes considered a sub-region in the western portion of

Dukagjin, was divided into twelve *bajraks*, some based on clans, some strictly territorial. Malesia, in the alpine mountains of northern Albania, was divided into territorial districts called Male [Mountains]. "Upon the foundation of the *fis* [clan] system based on blood ties between people, was born a new system based on territorial ties. New groups of people were formed which were no longer called *fis*, but *mal*" (Zojzi 1962:41). In Malesia sometimes the *fis* was a territorial unit, identified with and confined to one area, sometimes the *fis* was spread over several *mal*" (ibid).

There is some discrepancy among historians as to the number of "original" Albanian clans within these territories. Popular knowledge puts the number at twelve or thirteen¹. According to *The Canon of Lekë Dukagjin* (and to other historical sources including Zojzi) there were twelve original Gheg clans: Berisha, Bytyçi, Gashi, Gruda, Hoti, Kelmendi, Krasniqi, Kuçi, Merturi, Shala, Shoshi and Thaç. At one time Albanian clans were associated with specific territories. Sometimes clan segments broke off from the main group and settled in new areas due to population density, conflict over pasturage and water resources resulting in blood feuds, and economic pressure from the Ottomans. In some cases the original clan name was kept, while in others the group adopted a new name. Sometimes larger clans assimilated other clan segments into their own territorial stronghold. At the same time in some areas the Ottoman Turks imposed their own organizational structure upon this clan and territorial system, dividing geographic regions into various administrative units.

Albanians have attained notoriety in Balkan lore as a "tribal" people. To many students of European culture the word "Albanian" conjures romantic images of an enduring race of feuding, wild mountaineers—the last "tribesmen" of Europe—the last people to come under the sovereignty of a modern state. But used in the Albanian context, the concept of tribe is a slippery one due to the diversity of local organization among the clans. (See discussions of the use of "tribe" in Colson 1986 and Fried 1975.) In some cases a clan was an exclusive territorial entity exercising relative autonomy. In this sense the clan acted as a "tribe"—a political unit arbitrating in the activities of the lineage segments of which it was composed. In other instances a *bajrak* was the administrative unit organizing the activities of segments of different clans within its jurisdiction. Thus when applied to Albanians the notion of a "tribal people" stands as an evocative image but is misleading as a descriptive term. (For discussions of the Albanian *fis* see: Hasluck 1954:181, Zojzi 1962:41, Ivanova 1973, Dojaku 1974:44, Marmellaku 1976:82. For material on related tribal systems see: Hammell 1968 and Boehm 1984.)

While the distinction between the dialect regions of the north and south continue to demarcate the two major cultural and dialect groups of Albanians, during this century the significance of the other regional groupings has decreased for Kosova Albanians as personal identity comes to rest on lower orders of lineage segmentation. Some people identify strongly with their Minor Regions, referred to by modern Albanian ethnologists as Ethnographic Regions (see Figure 2). Some ethnographic regions are further subdivided into groups of villages based on lineage or topography. The orders of segmentation which retain the most ideological and practical significance in the lives of contemporary Albanians extend from the clan to the nuclear family.

The Meaning of *Fis* [Clan]

Zoti një, fisi dy, njeriu tre.
God first, clan second, man third.

The concept of *fis* carries great weight in Albanian society both as an ideological construct and, in certain situations, as an "on the ground" organizational principle in people's lives. Albanians take pride in what they consider to be one of their unique and enduring characteristics: "*fis* identity." For many Kosova Albanians, the first marker of ethnic identity is *ndera* [honor], the second is *besa* [the oath], and the third is *fis*. Before the awakening of Albanian nationalist consciousness in the late nineteenth century, Albanians thought of themselves exclusively in terms of *fis* and territorial affiliations. These loyalties were so strong that for centuries they inhibited the formation of a unified front against external domination. During the Ottoman period, clan relations were used directly for political purposes. The major functions of clan identity were in clan exogamy and the obligation of fighting for one's clan in feuds.

Although one of the foundations of Albanian identity is one's sacrosanct link to a long patriline, most present-day Albanians who can identify their *fis* cannot trace their lineage back to a founding ancestor. Though some ethnographers have translated *fis* as "tribe," as it is used among present-day Albanians in Kosova its meaning is closer to "clan," indicating members of a group who believe themselves to be descendant from a founding ancestor, but who cannot trace direct links to this ancestor or to distant members of the clan.

Some Kosova families and villages are indeed steeped in a collective knowledge of origin tales about founding fathers. In spite of the pervasive ideology that the individual is but

a link in his or her patriline, most Albanians have relatively shallow genealogical recollection, usually to five or six generations in the male line. To most Kosova Albanians the concept of lineage is more evocative as a marker of ethnic identity than as a fact of life.

Many Kosova Albanians can identify their clan even if their surname is no longer the clan name. Some people whose surnames differ from their clan names have no knowledge of the point of division from the clan or of the origin of their present surname. Those who do have knowledge about this division tend to be those who changed their surnames either between the two World Wars or immediately after World War II. Under Slavic domination in the inter-war period Albanians had to Slavicize their surnames. Many families took the given name of the father's father, adding the Serbo-Croatian patronymic-possessive "ović" as a suffix. Thus, for example, if Zymer was the grandfather's given name, the family might change their surname from their clan name, say Shala or Krasniqi, to "Zymerović." In 1947 the new Yugoslav government allowed Albanians freedom in determining surnames. At this point some families dropped the "ović" they had added to their name, while retaining the grandfather's given name in its definite form (e.g. Zymeri). Other families, especially those who had migrated from another area, took on the name of their original home. Thus, for example, migrants from Draguča in Serbia to Kosova took on the surname "Dragusha."

The Serbian suffix which had been added during the inter-war period did not disappear entirely. Extended families may still be referred to by the father's or grandfather's given name with two possessive suffixes added to the end: the Serbian "ov" and the Albanian "it." Thus, a family whose father's name is Azizi is often referred to as "Azizovit."

***Farefis*: The Seeds of the Clan (Maximal Lineage)**

The *farefis* is the first level of descent smaller than the clan. It is an "on-the-ground" patrilineal descent group, the widest group of "relatives" whose blood ties are, in principle, known. All individuals, whether or not they know their clan, place themselves within a group of "relatives." They are all *farefis*—literally "seeds of the clan."

The timing of differentiation from the clan and the knowledge of this division varies for each family. Many families acknowledge a tale of origin associated with a set of brothers, the *vllazni* [brotherhood] which constituted one segment—a *bark* [belly] of their clan. These brothers are said to have founded their section of the clan, their *farefis*. In many cases the brothers founded the section together in what is now the family's village. In other cases the

brothers went their separate ways, founding sections in different areas. An example of awareness of origin would be a tale of three founding brothers who, in the 17th century, came from Mirdita in Albania to settle in a village of Kosova where their descendants now live.

The guiding principle which serves to define the group of *farefis* is exogamy. On an ideological level Albanians practice clan exogamy. Most likely clan exogamy was indeed maintained in days of yore when the clans were smaller and territorially bound. Today the Kosova clans are territorially disperse and the linkage to original families goes far beyond anyone's geneological reckoning. Thus in common practice exogamy is practiced on the level of the *farefis*: the relatives. While most people assert that custom mandates exogamy "to the seventh generation" of their patriclan and matriclan, in truth one does not marry anyone to whom one can trace any blood tie. In other words, exogamy follows the boundaries of the *farefis* which follow the boundaries of geneological knowledge.

People's insights about their kinship system do not necessarily describe an objective reality, but rather show us their particular "take" on the world. Thus, although the *farefis* is a key symbol in Albanian consciousness and expression, this wide circle of relations does not play a significant role in daily life. It is most important as a metaphor for identity, and manifests itself most clearly during ritual events. As Bourdieu tells us:

Lineage models are not objective, factual statements about perceived biological and affinal connections, but depictions of the "universe of theoretical relationships within which individuals or groups define the real space of...practical relationships... [It is] "practical kin who make marriages; it is official kin who celebrate them" (1977:33,34).

***Kushërinjtë*: The Cousins (Major Lineage)**

The definition of *kushëri* (literally "cousin") varies slightly throughout Kosova. Among some people it is a vague concept referring generally to the paternal relatives one actually knows from meetings at weddings, funerals and other ritual occasions. In other regions *kushëri* refers specifically to paternal relatives who live in one's own village and the patrilineal females who have married into other villages. In Opoja *kushërinjtë* (the *-njtë* ending indicating the definite plural form) usually include the descendants of a man in the patriline five or six generations distant from ego (ego's paternal FaFaFaFaFa). In small villages of thirty to fifty houses one's "cousins" may make up the whole village. In other cases, the "cousins" make up one subdivision (*mahalla*) of the village or one section of the mahalla. (This term comes from the Arabic *mehalla* meaning military camp but is generally used in the Balkans to mean "section" or "ward.")

Axhallarët: The Father's Brothers (Minor Lineage)

The term *axhallarët* usually includes people descendent from ego's paternal great-grandfather. Albanians consider the people in this group to be very close relatives. They tend to occupy one section of the *mahalla*. In some regions this section is referred to by the possessive form of great-grandfather's given name (e.g. "that person is from *të Xhemës*"—the area of the *mahalla* occupied by the descendants of Xhemali).

Shtëpia e Madhe: The Large House (Extended Family)

The extended family is usually referred to simply as *shtëpia* [the house]. In the literary language it is the *familja e bashkuar* [the united family]. The "house" ideally includes a man and wife, their sons, their unmarried daughters, and the sons' wives and children. If it is a large group the nuclear families may live in separate houses sharing one courtyard [*oborr*], but the extended family usually prepares and takes meals together and has a joint economy of production and consumption.

Familja e Ngusht: The Nuclear Family

The *familja e ngusht* includes the father, mother, and married and unmarried sons and daughters. As residential arrangements, even in towns, often include the father's parents and brothers' children, they are often named as part of one's nuclear family.

The Tree of Milk and the Tree of Blood: The Matriline and the Patriline

Generations of *gjak* [blood] descend from the father, generations of *gjini* [uterine relatedness] descend from the mother's side. The generations from the father's side are called "The Tree of Blood." The generations from the mother's side are called "The Tree of Milk" (*The Canon*, Paragraphs 698-701).

Albanians see their social world as a patrilineal one in which name, property and "blood" are passed on through males in the father's line. Theirs is a classic example of a society in which relationships within the agnatic group "are the means of achieving human purposes, of getting a livelihood, of marrying and procreating, of expressing emotional attitudes, and of organizing the intercourse of people" (Fortes 1945:233).

This emphasis on patrilineality among Albanians has been documented by the travel writers and ethnographers of earlier decades fascinated by a European people living in the twentieth century who maintained that women function only as vessels in childbearing, that

the child's essence derives exclusively from the father. "[Highlanders believe] that the son inherits body and soul from the father alone, the mother being merely a vehicle of reproduction" (Coon 1950:23).

A knowledge of modern genetics notwithstanding, many Kosova Albanians state that, indeed, their "blood," their essence, derives from their father and his agnatic line. Children "belong" to the patriline. According to customary law, and to common practice, the patriline claims exclusive jural rights to its descendants. In the case of divorce or at the death of the father, children usually remain with the father's extended family regardless of whether or not the mother returns to join her natal kin. The levirate is still practiced in some areas to accommodate this custom.

This exclusive emphasis on patrilineality has been supported by the Albanians' shallow geneological recollection in the maternal line.

Society in the Albanian mountains was patrilineal, and took so little account of women that whereas the names of ancestors in the male line might be known for as many as twenty generations, those in the female line were forgotten after two or three (Hasluck 1954:25).

My data tends to corroborate this. Among the males I interviewed the depth of knowledge averaged five or six generations in the patriline, three in the matriline; among females, three generations in the patriline and two or three in the matriline.

Early writers also found evidence of strict patrilineal ideology in their observation of the prohibition of marriage exchanges with the mother's line.

[The highlanders say] that it is dishonorable and unthinkable to marry any kin whatever. Since the mother's family is no relation, sons can continue to take their brides from it for generation after generation. The Law of Lekë Dukagjin, which the Gheg father would quote on such an occasion, has taken care of this subject once and forever (Coon 1950:23).

While Coon's research may have led him to believe the Ghegs allowed marriage exchange with the maternal relatives indicating a strictly unilineal system, my data suggests otherwise. Contemporary Kosova Albanians prohibit marriage with anyone remotely related to them in the patriline or the matriline. If Albanians believed that they had no biological link to their mother's family, exogamy would apply only in the patriline. Most Albanians say that exogamy applies to both father's and mother's clans to the seventh generation. In practice, the prohibition extends to anyone to whom one can trace any paternal or maternal link. (Given that geneological reckoning is usually more extensive in the patriline, exogamy extends further on that side.) A typical exchange on the subject:

Blood is from the father. I carry the baby, but the blood is from the father. Why don't we marry on the mother's side? *Po bjen llafi*² [It would cause bad words]. *Mos kofsha me gjak, jam se bep m'atë anë* [Even if I am not the same blood, I am related to that side]. We do not take relatives in marriage. We take only outsiders (Fikrije)³.

There is another striking contradiction to the notion of exclusive patrilineality. Albanians hold that "Blood comes from the father," but while you are sure who gave birth to you, you can never be entirely sure who your father is! Here we see that the concept of "blood" has more to do with a statement of social belonging than with genetic descent. True to this discrepancy, while continuing to maintain that "Blood is from the father," Albanians often comment on how a child resembles its mother.

In fact, most societies which appear to be strictly patrilineal actually demonstrate some degree of complementary filiation whereby a specific set of rights and obligations descends through the uterine line. Like most patrilineal groups, Albanians acknowledge important affective ties to maternal relatives. This phenomenon is epitomized in Fortes' classic description of the Tallensi society of West Africa.

The two principles of patrilineal descent and maternal origin always work together. The two ideas are inseparable in native thought and run like a cry and its echo through the whole social structure. Whenever I have discussed these matters with informants they have generally begun by enumerating all the things that make 'paternal parentage' the most important fact of one's life, and have usually concluded by pointing out that, of course, 'maternal parentage' is also of the greatest importance, though in a different way (Fortes 1949:30).

Similarly, the Albanian saying that "*Gjaku vjen prej babës*" [Blood comes from the father], a central theme in Albanian rhetoric and world view, masks their deep, if less articulated feeling of connection to the matriline. The feeling of bonds to the mother's side is real if ambiguous, and it is often difficult for people to explain the nature of maternal relatedness. The attempt to articulate this made by one of Durham's informants nearly a century ago could be heard in Kosova today.

A man said to me, 'She is sort of a relation of mine. Her mother and mine were sisters.' I said, 'Then she is very near. She is your first cousin.' He considered and said doubtfully, 'Yes. Like a first cousin certainly, but on my mother's side' (Durham 1909:21).

Regardless of the affection and devotion one feels toward one's matriline, this bond does not define social identity (see Abu-Lughod 1986). Relations within the patriline are imbued with authority because they "transcend" mortal action (Bloch 1987). They impart the individual

with history, legacy, honor. As in most "patrilineal" societies, one's link to the father's blood is exclusive in the ideological sense. In the experience of daily life, Albanians feel matrilineal ties in important ways, especially in the individual's relationship to his or her maternal kin.

Relations to Maternal and Paternal Kin

The most striking evidence of complementary filiation in Albanian society is in the relationship between boys and their mother's brother. The contrasting relationships with father's brothers and mother's brothers reveals much about the nature of the patriline and matriline among Albanians.

Axha [father's brother] and *daja* [mother's brother] are potent, compelling words in Albanian which invoke a myriad of personal and cultural meanings. Most village Albanians (and many rural-urban migrants) live, at least as children, in an extended family which includes their father's brothers and their wives and children until the house becomes too much of a *kollobëllëk* [crowd], and the brothers divide their households. The *axha* (Arabic: 'amm; Turkish: *amca*)⁴ is an extension of the father. He commands unquestioned authority over his nieces and nephews, authority equal to that of their own father. Indeed the *axha's* authority may be stronger than the father's, undiluted by parental affection. Many girls I spoke with would have been able to attend high school, or to exercise personal freedom in other ways, had it not been for their *axha's* interdiction. The *axha's* authority may also be greater than that of the child's father if he is higher in the household's male hierarchy. Often the *axha* wields tremendous power over the lives of children whose fathers work abroad.

The *axha's* authority over his nephews and nieces is an ideal which helps project the collective strength of the household. A household boasting several well-respected, authoritative males projects an image of impenetrability to the outside. As in the notion of patrilineality, reality sometimes contradicts the ideal. Many children have very close relationships with their paternal uncles, sometimes counteracting a formal, distant relationship with their own fathers.

In contrast to this, the word *daja* [mother's brother] (Turkish: *dayı*) is imbued with a deep sense of affection and ease. A visit to one's mother's natal home is, both for nieces and nephews, a respite from the duties and constraints imposed in one's own home. While the relationships at one's own home must contribute to a family reputation of order and control, the mother's natal household is not judged by the behavior of its nieces and nephews, who are given freer reign there. The mother's brother has no legal power or economic rights over his sister's son and is outside quarrels over inheritance. He is usually physically distant from the everyday problems and the hierarchy of authority the boy lives with, and may be looked to for

support and affection. As Radcliffe-Brown would have it, if the father's brother is an extension of the order and control represented by the father, so the mother's brother is an extension of maternal closeness and tolerance. The relationship is a classic manifestation of complementary filiation in patrilineal descent groups as described by Fortes.

The maternal uncle's home is a person's second home. He has a quasi-filial status there; and in addition to close bonds of sentiment with his uncle and his uncle's close kin, he has specific ceremonial rights and duties in relation to them. Though he has no property, succession, or inheritance rights in his uncle's home, a man has special material privileges there... The kinship tie between sister's son and mother's brother is an important breach in the genealogical fence enclosing the agnatic lineage; it is one of the main gateways of an individual's social relations with members of other clans (Fortes 1949:30).

The close relationship which characterizes the dyad is symbolized in the nephew's freedom to help himself to food at his maternal uncle's home, "to open the *maxha* [flour bin] for himself." Popular expressions about the *daja*-nephew relationship reflect the evocative, ideal quality it holds for Albanians:

Nipi për dajë është si pëllumi i bardhë.

The nephew for his mother's brother is like a white dove.

Nipi te daja, si pula n'kollomoq, si bleta n'mjaltë.

The nephew at his mother's brother's is like a hen loose in the corncrib, like a bee set free in the honey.

The emphasis is always on the relationship between *daja* and the nephew, not the niece. This is because village girls, usually confined to their father's house, visit their *daja* only on special ritual occasions and have less contact with the men there than their brothers do.

Albanians often attribute the special quality of one's relationship to the *daja* to the fact that a man knows that his sister's children are indeed her children, he knows (contrary to the notion of "blood through the father") that they are indeed "related" to him. In contrast, while a man regards his brother's children as part of the all-important patriline, ultimately he is never sure if they are really his brother's offspring, hence his affection for his sister's children.

Kinship Terminology

Northern Albanian kinship terminology is a system which groups together ascending and descending lines of relatives, calling them by the same name. In the patriline the relatives are grouped in the line ascending from ego. All collateral men in ego's patriline ascending

from father's brother (FaBr, FaFaBr, FaFaFaBr, etc.) are called *axha*. All sisters of collateral men ascending from father's sister are called *halla* [father's sister] (Arabic: *hale*, Turkish *hali*). This grouping of relatives is even more extensive in the matriline where ascending and descending collaterals are equated. Ascending and descending collateral men (MoBr, MoFaBr, MoBrSo, etc.) are called *daja*. Ascending and descending collateral women in mother's patriline and matriline (MoSi, MoFaSi, MoSiDa, etc.) are called *tezja* (Turkish: *teyze*).

The important point here is that many relatives of different generations are merged under the same name, and that, by extension, the names tend to indicate the kind of relationship implied in the name. As Radcliffe-Brown argued, the terms reflect actual relationships between dyads.

The actual social relation between a person and his relative, as defined by rights and duties or socially approved attitudes and modes of behaviour, is...fixed by the category to which the relative belongs. The nomenclature of kinship is commonly used as a means of establishing and recognising these categories (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:63).

Thus the term *axha* carries a feeling of patrilineal solidarity: "*Jemi ndamë prej një zjarrit*" [we are descendant from one fire] (Ruzhdi). Using *daja* expresses warmth and informality with the men in one's matriline. The difference between one's relationships to *halla* [father's sister] and *tezja* [mother's sister] is not as striking as the difference between relationships to *axha* and *daja*. This is because, though imbued with some of the connotations of patriline and matriline, *neither* group of women lives in ego's village. Father's sister married out of the village; mother's sister has never lived in ego's village.

Rules of Inheritance

So when a man married, his house belonged to him exclusively and not at all to his wife, neither priest nor law having bound him to endow her with his worldly goods (Hasluck 1954:25).

The concept of patrilineality is intrinsically related to the principles of inheritance. Among Kosova Albanians the estate of the father is divided equally among his sons, his daughters receiving no share. This practice is spelled out in the form of customary law in Sections 36 and 41 of *The Canon of Lekë Dukagjin*:

88. The Canon recognizes as heir the boy and not the girl.

89. The unwed boy the Canon does not recognize as an heir.

90. Nephews and grandsons of the trunk or of the blood [descendants in the patriline] are entitled to inheritance, and not nephews and grandsons of the milk [descendants in the matriline] or of women of the patriline.

91. Neither at her parents nor at her husband's does the woman claim a part of the inheritance.

92. If no males are born of a house and if one hundred daughters have been born from that door, they have no right to meddle in the inheritance of their parents, neither they, nor their daughters' daughters.

98. If the house is left with only daughters, the closest cousin [on the father's side], either goes to live at her house, or takes her to his own house, and there and at that moment claims domination over the livestock, wealth and property.

108. The father, even if he has no sons, may leave to his daughters neither land, nor property, nor house.

109. The father, while he is alive, has the right to give his daughters money, kitchen utensils, agricultural implements; after the death of her father the daughter does not have the right to ask for the gifts her father promised.

Among Kosova Albanians, females have no inheritance rights. This customary law, set forth in the Canon, ignores the mandates of the Koran (which entitles a daughter to one-half the share of her male counterpart) and the Yugoslav constitution (which stipulates equal inheritance among children).⁵ Women usually feel that, according to Albanian "custom," none of their father's estate is rightfully theirs. They are conditioned through childhood to expect to leave their father's home and join their husband's extended family, something they consider to be the inevitable lot of women. When questioned on this matter, women often respond that while they know they are entitled by law to a share of the estate, in support of family solidarity they defer to customary law and let their brothers have their share. In fact, it is assumed that a woman who insists on taking her share (taking the matter to court according to her legal rights) risks alienation by her family. "*Eshhtë turp më i madhe*" [It is the biggest disgrace] for a girl to seek her portion of the estate. Referring to Moslem societies, Pastner writes, "the acquiescence of women in this regard is related to the security of their statuses as kinswomen (1972:256).⁶ This pattern is changing in the towns. Some urban families do give daughters a share in the estate. Urban women have begun to go to court to obtain their share, sometimes alienating themselves from natal kin in the process.

Albanian women in Kosova do not receive a dowry.⁷ While it is fashionable now for both urban and rural men to "show their affection" for their daughters by giving them gifts of gold jewelry, clothing or furniture at marriage, the practice is considered to be an act of generosity rather than an obligation.

Usually a woman's only personal property consists of the gifts she receives from her own relatives and from the groom's family during her engagement and at her wedding. The groom's family gives gold jewelry, clothes and supplies for making the trousseau. The valuable gifts of gold jewelry and clothes given to the bride throughout her engagement remain hers. But in practice, the clothes eventually deteriorate and the gold is either sold in hard times or lost, and there is rarely property of any value to pass on to daughters. In cases of divorce, if the husband has sent his wife away, he must return to her everything she received as a bride. If she chooses to leave, she takes nothing with her.

The fact that Albanian women neither own nor control any real property is extremely significant in understanding the difference between Albanians and other Moslem and Mediterranean peoples.⁸ The property given to women through dowries or shares of the family estate in neighboring societies is called in Albanian *miraz* (from the Arabic *mirat*, "to divide.") It is thought that in these societies the *miraz* empowers women. It shapes the strategies a woman pursues in marriage, providing some measure of security in the event she wishes to leave her husband (see Medick and Sabeen 1984). Lacking this kind of security, Albanian women are in an extremely vulnerable position if they wish to diverge from the norm of patrilocality. With no substantial property of their own it is almost impossible for women to remain unmarried, to divorce, or to escape patrilocality.

Inheritance and Matrilocality

In the event there are no sons to inherit the father's estate, it is usually divided among the father's brother's sons. In very rare instances the rule of patrilocality is broken and one of the daughters' husbands comes to live on her land. In this case the land is inherited by her sons. The custom presents an alternative to out-migration for a man with a meager inheritance. Many Albanians can tell tales of at least one case of matrilocality in their region. In a society unequivocally oriented toward patrilineal inheritance and patrilocality, an in-marrying man is hard-put to establish full-fledged male status in the community. Dependent on his wife's wealth, he is seen, until he proves otherwise, to be "less than a man." Even though the community tries to be tolerant of the in-marrying man and to show him respect, "*Deri në vdekje e nin vetin si i huaj*" [Until death he feels himself to be a stranger] (Ruzhdi). In one instance of matrilocality in Opoja, an in-marrying man has for years been sarcastically called *ambasadori* [the ambassador] because he is identified with another place. When queried about the value of the solution of matrilocality for families with no sons, Albanians usually deride the practice.

They would give the estate to their daughter, but she doesn't want it, her husband won't want it. It suggests that he is not capable of providing for the family himself (Ruzhdi).

In the case of matrilocality, it is assumed that a daughter (with no brothers) who takes her inheritance forfeits her relationship with her paternal cousins.

When she takes the estate, what further relationship does she expect (from her agnates)? [*Kur e merrë hisën, çka lyp ajo?*] (Hasan).

Dividing the Estate

Article 39: The Canon of Lekë does not recognize testaments.

66. Land passed down through the family will be divided evenly between the brothers, to be measured off by cords... Mountains and hills are not to be divided; they are to be held collectively—as are the wood and hay found upon that property

80. If the brothers get a notion to divide the estate while their father is alive, they have no right to meddle in the division of land or property and each will go to the parcel his father gives to him.

81. After the death of the father the law of division does not differentiate between the brothers, but, the property of the father will be divided between the brothers.

Each share of the family estate is called a *hise*. Usually the shares of movable and immovable property are divided upon the death of the father. Inheritance is equal among brothers, regardless of their monetary contribution or the size of their nuclear families. In most regions this is accomplished by what Albanians call *short* [luck/lottery]. The brothers agree to the composition of each allotment. These are written down on slips on paper, and each brother draws one slip. Often a *pleqsi* [group of elders] made up of close male agnates or official village elders attends the ceremony to arbitrate in the event of a disagreement or to assist in the creation of equal allotments. Ideally, there is no discussion once the lots have been drawn: *Short t'ka ra pa shpi, pa shpi ke del, pa fjalë* [The lottery left you without a house, without a house you went on your way, without words] (Teuta).

According to the cultural ideal the youngest son, the *sugari* inherits the father's house. But ultimogeniture is not always preferred or possible. As most families have one or more sons living in town or employed as migrant workers outside of Kosova, the son who inherits the parents' home is simply the one who, for whatever reason, finds himself living in the village. If the brothers divide their households before the father's death (usually building separate houses in the same courtyard or nearby each other), the parents remain in the home of the son who has inherited the parents' house.

The Corporate Extended Family

The communal sense was fostered by every art the mountaineers knew. Each member of the household was encouraged to regard everything in it and everything its other members said and did as his own (Hasluck 1954:11).

The era when [the village] was a political corporation has formed his consciousness. A career was then made contingent upon support from a strong united group of men—either the household or the village. What was good for [the village] was good for each individual. People met the world as representatives of these collectives (Backer 1979:52).

Most Kosova villagers still live in extended families while the children in the family are young. Most brides marry into families with one or more other nuclear families present. The ideal of moral and economic unity is still upheld in the majority of families. The family is a corporate group par excellence: property is held in common, the group acts as one body in the face of disputes with outsiders, there is a leader who represents the group to other groups (the *zoti i shtëpisë*), all members are to outsiders "jurally equal" and are considered representatives of the group, and the structure has, in a sense, a life of its own independent of the members. It is, following Fortes' definition of the corporate group, "a social structure which determines the status, rights and obligations of individuals and defines units—both territorial and associational—that transcend the domestic group and outlast changes in membership" (1960:24). The group is economically self-sufficient, controls its own surplus, and transfers wealth through partible inheritance. It displays a division of labor consisting of organic solidarity (in the male sphere) and mechanical solidarity (in the female sphere). Men have, to a certain degree, non-interchangeable roles: the farmer, shepherd, carpenter and headman [the *zoti*] in the past; the farmer, the wage-worker, the migrant, and headman in post-war decades. Women's obligations to the corporate group (food preparation, clothing maintenance, agricultural tasks, cleaning, etc.) are for the most part interchangeable.

The Master of the House

Each extended family is led by the *zoti i shtëpisë*—the master of the house. Ideally he is chosen by the acting *zoti*, but should his predecessor die before a successor is appointed the next leader is elected by the men of the house. While the eldest brother in the house is usually selected, if the eldest does not demonstrate the shrewd judgment, even temper and fairness required of the *zoti*, another brother will be chosen. If there are enough hands for work, the *zoti* confines himself to the supervision of labor and property. In the past his word was absolute: *S'kanë dit me kundërshtu* [They didn't know to contradict] (Prugovc). For the most part his authority is still unquestioned. What Coon wrote in 1950 holds true today: "so strong is the

feeling for age-grading in Albania that men will obey their fathers as faithfully at forty and fifty as in their teens" (1950:30). The *zoti* personifies the unity and strength of the estate. He "designs the ideological profile of the family" which constitutes the "proper way of life" for each member (Backer 1979:77). His will extends into every aspect of communal life. In addition to making all final decisions about marriage, education and relations with non-family, his personal ideology affects the lives of all members.

The role of the *zoti* is spelled out in detail in Section 21 of The Canon. His duties are "to care for the good of the people of the house; to hold by the reins the people of the house so that they do not cause damage or ruin; to maintain a proper course in the house, and not to lean more toward one or another... The obligations of the family members toward the *zoti* are made clear in Section 25: "the people of the house may not contradict the *zoti* in performing housework or physical labor; they must obey and go anywhere at the command of the head of the household."⁹

The Mistress of the House

The *zoti's* control over the women is through the *zoja e shtëpisë*—the mistress of the house—who directs their activities. The *zoja* is either the headman's wife or the senior woman of the household capable of leadership. Her role is defined in Section 22 and 23 of The Canon.

The mistress of the house has rights:

over all things which are kept in the house;

to give and to ask for loans of flour, bread, salt, cheese and lard;

to order the women of the house, to send them for water, for wood, to take food to the laborers, to irrigate, to carry manure, to reap, to hoe and to peel the vegetables.

Her duties are:

to prepare the midday meal and supper, to cook, to spread the table and to divide up the food;

to take care about the milk products that they do not go bad;

to look after the direction of the upbringing of the children of the house, not to favor one above the other;

to look after the children, when the women are working.

The mistress of the house does not:

make bread, does not go for water, does not carry wood, nor manure, neither does she reap or peel, neither does she take food to the workers.

The household consists of specific categories of individuals.

Females:

<i>plaka</i>	["the old woman"] the eldest woman of the household
<i>robët</i>	["the slaves"] the women and children
<i>gratë</i>	the married women
<i>magjetorja</i>	the wife whose turn it is to see to meal-preparation
<i>nuset</i>	["brides"] the in-married women
<i>kunatet</i>	the husband's sisters and brother-in-laws' wives
<i>vajzat</i>	the post-pubescent unmarried daughters
<i>fëmijët</i>	the children

Males:

<i>plaku</i>	the eldest male
<i>pleqët</i>	the elder men of the household
<i>burrat</i>	the men of working age
<i>kunatët</i>	the husband's brothers
<i>djemt</i>	literally "the boys," used for adult men in relation to the elders

The *Oda*

Before the increase of wage labor and out-migration changed most households from a pastoral-agricultural subsistence to a mixed economy in the 1950s and 1960s and introduced other forms of recreation and obligation, the primary social institution among men was their evening gathering in the *oda* [living room]. Here the *zoti* would assign each man his duties for the next day. Men would visit the houses of the *farefis* on different nights, exchanging news, smoking cigarettes and playing music.

Oda is still a deeply meaningful and evocative term among Albanians. Literally it refers to the living room of all homes, rural and urban, where men gather and guests are entertained. But it embodies more. It is where important verbal transactions take place, where the family's honor in the form of hospitality and *muhabet* (conversation and rapport) is created and represented. It was the "schoolroom" of the past where sons acquired knowledge of history, politics, family lore and custom. In the past small boys were not allowed into the *oda* because important, tactical things were discussed which were not to be divulged. Only the three or four wisest older men might bring their boys to be "educated" in the *oda*.

In most Albanian homes, rural and urban, a strict protocol is maintained in the *oda*. A hierarchy of seating is observed. The place of greatest importance (*më naltë* - highest), is opposite the entrance which in older homes is next to the *oxhak* [fireplace] or *koftor* [pot-bellied stove]. The men are seated on thick sheepskins or *shilte* (foam pads) along the walls or on couches. Traditionally the eldest or most important guest sat to the left of the fireplace, with the host (*zoti*) on the right where he could reach an inset in the wall which contained coffee and smoking utensils. The rest of the male family members and guests sit next to the main actors in order of descending age. Young men and boys sit near the door where they can run in and out to fetch things for the others.

Traditional homes, both urban and rural, follow a specific protocol at mealtime. First, plastic basins and pitchers are brought in to wash the hands of each person in order of rank. The *sofrabez* [tablecloth] is then laid on the carpet and over the guests laps. The *sofra*, a foot-high round wooden table, is placed on top of the cloth. A large chunk of bread is placed before each person, followed by communal dishes. The meat is divided by the senior person at the *sofra* and tossed on the table in front of each person in turn. After the meal hands are again washed, the rug is swept clean, the group relaxes into a ritual of tea or coffee and cigarettes, and the *Imuhabet* resumes.

Women and men eat separately when there are more family members than one *sofra* will accommodate, or when there are guests from outside the family. Typically men eat first followed by women and children. In most village homes, when men from outside of the household are present women remain out of sight and the young men wait on the others. At these times, while the men are in the *oda*, the women typically gather in the family's more informal living area sometimes called *dhoma e nejtës* [the sitting room].

The *oda* is still the quintessential symbol of the "good life" of the "old days" when order, discipline and respect dominated the Albanian imagination. The following reminiscence gives some sense of this idealized past time:

It was so good before. There was order. There was no fighting.

When the house had twenty-five people, that was nothing. When we were eighty-five, then that was something, then the *zoti* was really in command. The *zoti* directed everyone's work, everyone's lives. When he spoke, we just said, "Amin!" Men woke at 4:30 a.m. to pray, each alone, and then went about his chores. At the end of the day the *zoti* asked, "Are you assembled? Have all the men gathered?" You were asked, "Have you finished your work?" If you said no, you had to go back next day to finish. It was *turp* [shame] to refuse your work, or not to finish your job.

Women's lives were hard, very hard. The brides were up first in the morning. It is shameful for brides to sleep! Shame! Before there was greater respect from the brides. For the *zoti* to wake and find a bride sleeping? No, that was unthinkable. She always knew what time to get up because she was in a state of fear, shame. In the morning she heated water for the *zoti* and her husband to do their ritual washing. That was the kind of respect we had here. In evening the most recent bride washed everybody's feet, including the children's. This was not considered demeaning. Everyone thought it good that she respected others in this way. She wasn't spiteful about it at all.

If there were five women in the household, each had three days of work at each job: the flour bin, the cows, the housework, the fields. Many husbands were migrants in Turkey or Greece. Those who had husbands here didn't see them all day. It was shameful for women to talk with their husband in front of people during the day. They only talked when they were alone. Such was the respect during that time...(Sylejman).

Division of the Extended Family

A large, united extended family consisting of parents, their adult sons, in-married brides and grandchildren, is a cultural ideal among Albanians. In the past a large family represented strength in defense and a cooperative, productive economy. Incorporation into the Yugoslav state decreased the Albanians' propensity toward blood feuds and the need for a strong defensive front at the family level. After World War II, the increase of profitable labor migration lessened the dependence on subsistence economies and reduced the importance of a large household labor force. Today in Kosova villages, families of fifteen to twenty-members are common; households boasting forty or fifty members are noteworthy, but still numerous. While a household of forty or fifty souls is no longer necessarily an economic advantage, it still captures the Albanian imagination as a key symbol. But as economic stability associated with wage labor and labor migration has increased, an early "division of brothers" before the death of the patriarch becomes increasingly feasible and desirable for many families.

Albanians give four different reasons for what they see as the break-up of families: "too many people," internal conflicts described in terms of conflicts between children or wives, the unequal incomes of brothers, and increased economic prosperity allowing the brothers to set up independent households. Most respondents are fairly insistent that, based upon their experience, one of these is the real reason for division, the other explanations being peripheral or unfounded.

The most common explanation for fission is that high fertility has made the house into a *kollobëllëk*: a crowd. There are simply too many people to keep in order. It is said, "When the hive is full the bees must swarm." Until recent years, the absolute authority of the patriarch

suppressed discord and unruliness incompatible with the Albanian ideal of behavioral control. In some homes this rigid discipline has weakened, fueling antagonisms. "*Më mirë i dam, se krye qam* [Better divided then with heads broken]" (Besim).

Quarreling and jealousy between females and children is also given as a catalyst for division. The literature has made much of the contention that women in extended families are falsely blamed for causing family fission. Denitch argues that women become the scapegoat for division due to the family's need to present an indomitable, unified image to the outside world. In the past the group could not survive or recruit political allies unless the strength of its males was unquestioned. "They diverted the realities of conflict among the men themselves onto their attached women" (Denitch 1974:250). After a long acquaintance with extended Albanian families and after discussing family fission with many Albanians, I no longer believe that this model applies to Albanians. In the first place, Albanians tend to downplay conflict between adult men or women in the family, attaching blame instead to jealousy between children. On the other hand, the conflict between young wives vying for status and motivated by the needs of their own children is very real, yet tends to be downplayed in representations of the family by its members.

Kurbet, labor-migration, is also a major cause of fission. A brother earning substantial wages in West Germany may be tempted by the dream of what his earnings could do for him if they were not dissolved into the collective economy. The discrepancy between brothers' earnings causes division between them. When this has happened, it is said, *U prish muhabeti* [Rapport has broken down]. It is commonly held that money breeds greed and blinds the migrant to the superior moral rewards of collective life.

Before division, the extended family must build an additional house for each brother and his family. Labor-migration, more than any other factor, has made fission more feasible by allowing families to do this.

Nonetheless, even if dissent is in the air, the brothers try to remain together until the death of their father "out of respect" for him. If they want to divide earlier, they appeal to their father who must ultimately decide on the break-up. As in the case of post-mortem inheritance, the family holdings are divided equally between the brothers by lottery unless disagreements necessitate arbitration by the "elders." All aspects of production and consumption are divided: *Me ndamjen e sofrës ndahet edhe fitimi* [With the division of the dining table the profits are also divided] (Riza).

Most families attempt to secure apartments in town or build additional housing before division of the household is in the air. If there is space, the houses are built adjacent to the existing one. Due to the population density of many villages it is often necessary to buy land and build apart. Typically, when the brothers decide to divide, one remains in the old family dwelling, one moves into any other dwelling that have been acquired or built, and any remaining brothers live in these houses until their own houses are made ready (a process which may take many years). Those who do not receive finished houses are compensated in land during partition. After division, men living abroad usually let brothers or paternal cousins living in the village work their land and keep the profits.

Some of the organizational principles which structure the lives of Albanians are clan identity, relationships to agnatic and uterine kin, rules of inheritance and the ordering and division of the corporate family. But the social institution which shapes these structures and ensures their continuity is marriage. It is the character of marriage negotiations, the relationship drawn between two families and the dynamics of patrilocality which, more than any other factors, contour people's lives. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

Notes

1. The number twelve is noteworthy. There are also twelve Books of the Canon and a council of twelve elders required to settle disputes; it is intriguing to compare this with the twelve apostles and the twelve lunar cycles in the year.
2. Quotations in this text are rendered in the Gheg dialect which is spoken in Kosova and which differs substantially from the standard literary language which is based on the Tosk dialect.
3. The names of Albanians participating in interviews have been changed.
4. It is noteworthy that the terms for nuclear family members (mother, father, sister and brother) are Albanian words, while collateral kin terms have their roots in Arabic. These roots are noted in the text for the edification of readers interested in Albanian kinship terminology.
5. The pre-Islamic rationale for withholding inheritance from widows and daughters was that property should be passed only to mature male agnates who could defend their possessions. "None can be heirs who do not take part in battle, drive booty and protect property" (Smith 1903:65). Davis provides a functionalist argument against female

inheritance, maintaining that propertied women marrying into a *zadruga* (Slavic extended family) create a focus for sectional, nuclear interests which lead to fission (1977:191).

6. Pastner also state that women in Islam may forfeit their right to property to ensure security at their parents', and it is said that the gifts to the bride by her own family are to make up for this forfeiture of property rights (Pastner 1980:150).
7. Early writers make some mention of dowry practice in northern Albania. The *Canon* states: "If the bride dies three years after marriage, without bearing children, her parents have the right to take her dowry jewelry, but the hopechest and key are to remain with the parents of the groom" (Paragraph 57). Hasluck states that in northern districts, the girl's father gave her in dowry up to one-half what her husband had "paid" for her (1954:42)
8. "The one area in which Islam grants equality and independence to women is the economic sector, namely, women's rights to own personal property and to possess an income" (Ferdows 1980:60). The Koran granted rights of inheritance to female heirs: one-half that of their male counterparts whose responsibility to family subsistence justified their larger share (Esposito 1982:39). The dowry is payable not to the father but to the bride. In some cases it inhibits a man's zeal for divorce: he must repay the entire dowry if he divorces her before consummation, half after consummation.

Under Moslem law, according to Pastner's research, bridewealth and indirect dowry were both common in pre-Islamic Arab lands. During Mohammed's time, these were amalgamated and paid directly to the girl. The Koran makes no specific mention of dowry. A man has the right to manage his wife's property, but she is to retain the right of disposal. In addition, part of the *mahr* (dowry) is withheld, to be paid to a woman in the case of divorce (Pastner 1980:150).

A comparison to Turkish law and practice concerning female inheritance is noteworthy, given the degree to which Turkish culture influenced Albanian life in other ways. When the new Ottoman laws of 1917 liberalized marriage rules, inheritance continued as under Sheriat law: when a man died his widow had the right to one-eighth of his estate, the remainder being divided among his children. Each daughter had the right to a half the share of each male. Starr (1984) maintains that in practice in rural Turkey women

rarely obtained their inherited land, even into the 1960s. Interestingly, where Starr did her study, husbands often helped their wives sue for their inheritance while their fathers were still living.

9. Here are some of the further explanations of the rights and responsibilities of family members from the Canon:

Section 9:

The head of the household has the right:

1. To sit at the head place in his own house, even if there are older ones than he in the house;
2. over his own weapons, even if they are worth one-hundred qese; over his saddle-horse; over his own bed and bedding; over the coffee utensils, not even the canon of the separation of brothers has jurisdiction over these things;
3. over the earnings of the people of the house, from salary and gifts;
4. to buy, to sell and to exchange land, such as arable fields, pasture, the fields adjacent to the house, forest, irrigated fields and livestock;
7. to put to work and to find work for the people of the house;
10. to punish the people of the house, if they do not act as the well-being of the house demands.

Section 21:

3. to be the first to work, which it is his obligation to perform;
4. to watch over the land, that it not go fallow; over the herds of livestock, that they not be wasted;
5. to work wisely and modestly inside and outside the house and not lead it toward ruin and extinction;
6. to take care about the clothing and shoes of the people of the house from the earnings of the house;
8. to buy weapons for the boys, when he sees that they are fit for it.

Section 20:

10. The punishments [imposed by the master of the house] are these:
 - a. to leave without food;
 - b. to take away shoulder and belt weapons for one or two weeks;

c. to bind and imprison in the house;

d. to expel lunatics with the property that belongs to them, to rid the house of trouble and danger.

Chapter III

Marriage

I would like to talk about a few things with you, friend,
 About some customs of old, some relics of the past,
 Which are rotting away in our land,
 But which have stayed at our door,
 Lingering with us even today.
 I want to talk about engagements,
 Arranged with words.
 I want to touch on a custom,
 Which has been with us for a hundred years:
 Selling the girls, exiling them,
 Engaging them, selling them while still in their cradles.
 Some say it is fate.
 It is not fate, nor is it written,
 But is decided on a winter's night,
 Near the fire, near the coals,
 While drinking brandy like water from the Drin.
 There is talk of one thing and another,
 And then the matchmaker begins to drive his bargain.
 "Do you know, dear friend,
 Why I have come this evening?
 That you may give me your daughter."
 Oh honored friend,
 When the matchmaker speaks his voice is heard,
 As he gestures to the rooftop,
 That all may know what a devil he is.
 This matchmaker is a devilish one.
 A good hide he calls bad,
 He who is old, he calls young,
 He who is a scoundrel, he calls honorable.
 "Oh dear friend,
 How much do you give me for my daughter?"
 "A million dinar,
 And another five-thousand for the wedding guests!"
 Now the girl has become a bride,
 For fifteen gold pieces she was bought.
 These things are against our faith,
 We must cast them to the clouds.
 When the girl returns to visit her kin,
 Her friends go out to wish her well.
 "Have you come to see us, dear girl?
 Are weary, are you forlorn?
 And with your husband, how have you fared?
 Has he hit you, has he hurt you?
 Or has he loved and caressed you?
 Tell us of all these things."

("Some Words About the Buying and Selling of Girls," a popular Kosova song
 written in 1960 by Xhemali Berisha.)

Alliance and Exogamy

Marriage under the Canon means to create a family, to increase the household by one more servant for work, and to increase the number of children (The Canon, Paragraph 28).

Traditionally, the function of marriage among the Kosova Albanians, both in villages and towns, has been to provide an extra arm for work, to ensure that there are enough women to see to the needs of men, guests and aging parents, and to increase the size and strength of the family by creating an additional nuclear unit.

Beyond this, the purpose of marriage is to create an enduring bond with another family. Before incorporation into the socialist state, these bonds guaranteed alliance in times of conflict, provided a friendly outpost on a hostile potentially landscape, and supplied economic links, all essential to the survival and growth of the family. It is said that, "*Miku i mirë është krahu i djathtë*" [A good in-law is like a right arm]. This type of marriage alliance is common in other societies facing a threatening environment. Campbell describes the same phenomenon among the Sarakatsani in the mountains of northern Greece:

[Marriage] is peculiarly significant in a community where men unrelated by kinship are associated mainly through institutionalized forms of hostility and rivalry. The contract of marriage is normally the only instrument which may bring two unrelated families into positive association and co-operation (1964:50).

"The family represents lower-level, socially fragmenting, particularistic sorts of concerns, as opposed to interfamilial relations representing higher-level, integrative, universalistic sorts of concerns" (Rosaldo and Ortner 1974:79). Women are associated with the nuclear family, men with the corporate household, but women provide the structural links to other families. Women are also an essential source of information about other families for future human and economic exchanges. In-marrying women ensure the continuity of the clan lineally through reproduction and laterally as the key to alliance. They are the biological and structural links to the family's survival.

In order to create bonds that produce the largest possible number of allies outside of their own families, Kosova Albanians bar marriage to anyone to whom a genealogical tie can be traced. Strict exogamy in the patriclan was dictated by customary law and spelled out in *The Canon*. "Four-hundred fires to be separated [descendant], they are not given or taken, which is to say they do not have weddings together" (The Canon ?19/102).

Coon says that the degree of exogamy was reduced in northern Albania among the more peaceful clans. Contrary to clan exogamy dictated by the Canon, less warlike Moslem areas maintained exogamy to the seventh generation in the patriline, and did away with village exogamy (1950:28). Coon also noted that a group prone to conflicts could also extend the degree of exogamy, and consequently their range of allies, by including relatives of blood-brotherhoods and god-parents in the marriage prohibition. In Kosova exogamy applies to the limits of genealogical reckoning in families related through these types of "fictive" kinship. (In Kosova one's god-mother [*ndrikulla* or in Opoja *nuna*] is the one who cuts the umbilical cord, the god-father [*kumbari*] performs the first haircut. Among Catholics the god-parents are also the marriage witnesses and baptismal sponsors.)

Albanians remain steadfast in adhering to their own rules of exogamy even when they exceed the demands of Catholic or Koranic law. Commenting on this tendency among other Mediterranean groups, Davis writes:

Where local systems of kinship reckoning deviate from the strictly bilateral ecclesiastical ones, it is the local custom which prevails: marriage is, in these cases, usually more extensively impeded than the [church] law requires (1977:231).

Durham was impressed by this tendency among the Catholics of northern Albania:

Tribal instinct is far stronger than Church law. The Catholic Church prohibits the marriage of second cousins—but not further. I asked an Albanian Franciscan, a tribesman himself, how he reconciled this with his strongly expressed opinion that to marry "one's own blood," however remote, was incest. "Suppose some fourth or fifth cousins asked you to marry them, could you, as priest, refuse?" He supposed he could not; but that such a case had never occurred, and he hoped he should never have to do anything so horrible (1928:15).

When asked about the specifics of their exogamy rules, most Kosova Albanians say they think The Canon prohibits marriage with anyone less than seven generations away in the patriline, but that as a "rule of thumb" they never marry a person to whom any genealogical link can be traced. How distant do they trace the linkage? "*Sa dihet*" [as far as it is known].

What is striking here is that this exogamy rule extends to the limits of the matriline as well as the patriline. At first glance this contradicts the notion that one is not related to one's mother's clan through blood. If this is true, whence the prohibition? Some say it stems from the underlying feeling of relatedness to the mother's family, even though strictly speaking this is a relationship through milk, not blood. Others maintain that it is because children are so free in their mother's village; girls have not been kept inside and have been too exposed to the scrutiny of young men. In regions and among families where a bride and groom are not to

have seen each other before the wedding night, this familiarity is intolerable. I would argue that, like the inclusion of fictive kin in the marriage prohibition, it probably a function of the desire to create affinal bonds as far afield as possible.

The extreme marriage prohibitions observed by Albanians are interesting in light of the occurrence of endogamous marriages in Middle Eastern societies so similar to Albanian society in other ways. While the Koran does not advocate endogamy, the practice of cousin marriage, specifically patrilateral parallel cousin-marriage (marriage to father's brother's daughter), occurs with some frequency in the Middle East.¹ Some of the reasons given for endogamy in North Africa and Turkey are: to prevent the fragmentation of estates, to strengthen the position of individuals within the lineage and to maintain the solidarity of the group (see Davis 1977:211). With reference to the Bedouin, Abu-Lughod reports that marriage with father's brother's son (*bint 'amm*) is consistent with ideas about the importance of agnation. The marriage has the advantage that it is built on prior bonds of paternal kinship. From the man's point of view, a father's brother's daughter cares about him and his things because they are also hers. The marriage is thought to be more affectionate, based on childhood closeness and shared interests. Women feel more secure and powerful in the marriage, surrounded by their own families to protect them (Abu-Lughod 1986).

Why is it that the Albanians did not adopt this habit of cousin marriage when they assimilated so many other customs brought by the Ottomans? Why are they so vehemently opposed to it? Coon offers two functionalist explanations for the Albanian preference for exogamy. First is the desirability of bringing a woman from a great distance to avoid tension between local males. Owing to economic pressure and competition over resources, including reproductive resources, tensions run high among neighboring men resulting in rivalry over women and in potential violence. To avoid this, marriage with local women becomes taboo. Secondly, if a marriage is in trouble, a woman is less inclined to run home and her family less likely to meddle in the affairs of her husband's family if they are far away (Coon 1950:22). In explaining exogamy among Albanians I would place more emphasis on the theory that "The marriage prohibition is consistent with the need to have many kinsmen in many places" (Campbell 1964:50). Families are simply better off if they have dependable allies throughout the area as sources of information and aid in a country where "connections" [*lidhje*] are essential in social, political and economic transactions.

When asked to explain their obsession with exogamy in contrast to Middle Eastern endogamy, Albanians say, "*S'di—neve s'na ka met traditë q'ashtu*" [I don't know—we were not left that kind of tradition] (*Fikrije*). Asked about their knowledge of endogamy in other

Moslem societies, a typical Albanian response is: "*Kam ni për ta. Po dalin krejt deftum*" [I've heard of that. The offspring come out deformed]. They express profound revulsion at the idea of marriage with anyone to whom one can trace a genealogical link.

After reviewing the literature on cousin marriage in the Middle East, and after many conversations on the subject with Arabs and with Albanians, given similar ecological and political circumstances I still find the striking difference between the two systems to be a mystery. It is unclear how it has come to pass that completely different sets of functional explanations seem to apply in the two types of societies. Clearly a complex web of historical, ecological and psychological factors are at work here.

Most Kosova Albanians also marry someone from a different village. "Isniqians never marry Isniqians. Before the war [World War II] they used to burn the house and slaughter the animals of a man who attempted to break the rule of village exogamy" (Backer 1979:87). In the past village exogamy was widespread probably because smaller villages were often made up of the members of one patriline, making any potential marriage incestuous. It has also been considered taboo because of the physical proximity implied by residence in the same village. Since it is forbidden for the betrothed boy and girl to see each other or become acquainted before the marriage, spouses must be sought from a greater distance.

Some villages are straining toward a change in this rule. The larger villages in Opoja, Shajna and Brodosanë, have practiced endogamy for some time. In Shajna village endogamy is explained simply in terms of the advantages it has for the bride: her life is easier because she is close to her natal family, she is not called upon to do as much field work as in other villages, etc. "We consider women who have to marry out into Opoja less worthy than those who were able to marry into Shajna" (Merxhon). These larger villages do indeed consist of a greater number of unrelated lineages than other villages, which explains their earlier switch to endogamy. Today many Opoja villages composed of several unrelated clans are beginning to allow marriages between unrelated villagers, but in many cases an appeal to do this is met with resistance because of the likelihood that the boy and girl have seen too much of each other. "No family wants to be the first to break the rule" (Besa).

There is a tendency among Albanians, while marrying outside their village, to marry within their ethnographic region. "*Çdo kush e lyp vendin e vet*" [Everyone seeks (someone from) their own place] (Nexhmi). To marry with someone from a different region (e.g. a man from Opoja with a woman from Has, or a man from Gollak with a woman from Dukagjin), is said to be like like marrying someone of a different "faith"—*me tjeter fe*. This custom is maintained

even when the marriage is not arranged, and is the result of the bride and groom's own choice. A young man's extended absence from home during labor migration or university studies does not alter this tendency.

One reason this pattern prevails is that the network of women previously married into these other villages provides the information essential to finding new brides there. Another is the sense that the girls there "know how things are done." Following these principles, the three major groups of Opoja villages ("Opoja" [the villages of the flatlands on the eastern side of the main road], Brezna, Buqe, Pllavë and Zhur [along the Albanian border], and Shajna and Rrenc [the southernmost villages]) usually take brides from within their own group (see Figure 3 "Opoja").

The pattern of these exchanges has changed through time. Before World War II brides were taken from more distant villages, those a day's ride apart. Following the supposition that village exogamy was exercised in order to install "connections" throughout the district, a family sought brides from far afield. Nowadays brides tend to come from nearby villages. I was told that the reason they were chosen further away in the past was because in those days visits between families were less frequent. "Today we have to go to the miqët [in-laws] for the smallest thing" (Bedri).

The Exchange of Women [*Martesa Dyfishtë*]

In the *martesa dyfishtë* a woman of one patriline is given to another patriline and at some later time one of their women is given back to the first group. Among present-day Albanians this exchange occurs fairly frequently; most people know of one instance in their extended group of relatives or have heard of such an arrangement. The practice is controversial. It is generally held that the existing relationship between in-laws, good or bad, will be amplified by further exchange. If relations are good, exchange in the opposite direction will reinforce the positive nature of the alliance. If relations sour in one marriage, the alliance stands to suffer throughout.

Durham observed that the custom of repeatedly exchanging women from a neighboring group resulted in inbreeding.

As for centuries the tribes have been accustomed to marry mostly with the tribe next door (provided it had not a common male ancestor) backwards and forwards, or with a near group of tribes, it necessarily follows that these so-called exogamous tribes were closely intermarried on the female side. The child, I was told, has none of its mother's blood. Whence it follows that tribes which continually intermarry because they have not a common male ancestor are, in fact, often very closely

related on the female side, having given daughters to, and taken wives from, each other for generations. But they jeered at me heartily when I suggested this (Durham 1928:148;15).

According to my information, in present-day Kosova the practice of exchanging women between families is not repeated beyond one exchange. If it were repeated, as Durham points out, the groups would be taking women related to them.

Rituals Associated with the Marriage Process

In Opoja, as in many societies, the most salient manifestations set of tradition are the rituals associated with marriage. The ceremonies involved in matchmaking, the engagement and wedding and the formal exchanges between the families of the bride and groom bring the past into the present for every Albanian. In these times of severe economic hardship the tremendous expense of these rituals is seen by the villagers as the unfortunate but unavoidable price of membership in the community. It is the most visible way an Albanian can make a statement about identity and commitment to the ideology of traditionalism.

Bride Selection

The majority of Kosova marriages are still arranged by the couple's parents. A bride [*nuse*] and groom [*dhëndër*] are chosen, first and foremost, based on the quality of affinal bonds [*miqësi*] which the marriage will create. Affinal alliances with large, strong, influential families are crucial in the construction of a family's social status. A family seeks in-laws who are of high moral reputation, who have no scandals in their history, who "don't lie, don't steal, are true to their word [*besa*], and are not argumentative" (Hasan). A history of physical strength and health in the family are also important.

It is preferable that the wealth of the two families be comparable, though sometimes a boy of lower economic status who shows potential for economic mobility seeks a girl of greater wealth. The wealth and social connections of potential affines are important considerations, but are not to supersede the importance of their moral reputation. This is clearly an ideal which has been compromised, especially in times of economic hardship. During the economic and political crisis of the 1980s, secure employment and connections to employment abroad became increasingly important family assets.

The profile of the two families takes precedence over the qualities of the boy and girl themselves. Sometimes this custom produces unhappy consequences when the preference for

bonding with a "good" family obscures potential problems in the marriage. Poor matches may be overlooked in the zeal for family alliance. Sometimes research into family reputation is completed without adequate research into the individual profiles of the bride and groom.

When a boy's engagement age approaches (usually in his late teens), relatives of the boy's family, hearing of an eligible mate, inquire in detail about her family and pass the word on to the boy's father. While fathers are primarily interested in family reputation, mothers tend to take a greater interest in the boy and girl themselves, attempting, through relatives, to discover all they can about them.

During the 1970s the girl's family typically sought an educated young man who would find local employment and not have to leave the area in search of work. This is changing. Today many families want a groom who works abroad and will secure an adequate standard of living for their daughter and potential links to work abroad for members of their own family. This desire overrides the dismal prospect of sending one's daughter off to her in-laws and an absentee husband.

Brides are sought who are of high personal reputation, untouched and unseen. Beyond moral integrity, the girl should be of proper bearing [*e sjellshme*] and industrious [*punëtore*]. Lacking other ways of demonstrating her talents during adolescence a girl represents herself to her community through her handwork, in the preparation of her trousseau (the *çejz* or *paja*). In this way a girl exhibits diligence and industry (see Schneider 1985). "If you have a good *çejz*, it means that you will be good at other things—at housework, at raising children" (Melije). Requiring months and years of work, the completion of the *çejz* also shows that a girl has been at home, inside, during her adolescence. It symbolizes her state of confinement and purity.²

The qualities of honor and industriousness accounted for, it is considered a bonus if the girl is good looking: "pretty, tall and fair." Physical beauty is important because the appearance of the bride reflects directly upon the family, "So that when people gather, the groom's family can proudly say, 'That's our bride'" (Sevdije). Her physical and moral virtues affect the status of the boy's family, indicating their ability to bring a girl of quality into their home. Of foremost importance is how she will "measure up" to the other brides procured in the vicinity. "The establishment and breaking of alliances is expressed by women in terms of women's qualities and behaviour. Women thus do not seem to see themselves as pawns that men move around, but as active participants in the system of marriage relations" (Makhlouf 1979:42).

Marriage Arrangement

Even if the girl refuses to go to the husband who has been chosen for her, she will be forced to; and if it is discovered that the girl has escaped, her husband can kill her with the bullet her parents sent with the hopechest, and no blood is owed over it (The Canon: Paragraph 43).

There are three types of marriage engagement in Kosova today. Girls from the "progressive" tip of urban nuclear families openly date different men before choosing their own husband upon the approval of their parents. In transitional families (somewhere between "traditional" and "modern") and in most nuclear families, boys and girls tend to choose their own spouses, but betrothal is still subject to the formal negotiations of the two families through an intermediary. Ideally the girl has gone out with no other men and is a virgin on her wedding night. According to the ideal, in an arranged marriage the boy and girl never meet before their wedding night. In reality, many couples manage secret rendezvous or in some families meet openly.

Modern constitutional law penalizes parents who force their daughters into arranged marriages with six months to one year prison (Kosovo Penal Code, Article 85). Nevertheless, traditional extended families still arrange marriages through a matchmaker. There are no official statistics on the percentage of arranged marriages. While elite urban Albanians tend to believe that arranged marriages are a relic of the past which has all but disappeared, in villages they are still the norm. The frequency varies greatly from region to region, depending to a large degree on the number of girls attending high school (the more attending high school, the fewer instances of arranged marriages). In a research project in which 537 families from 12 districts were studied, 25% of all marriages were arranged (Halili 1987:228). Based on a survey of 850 informants from different regions of Kosova, my data suggests that [STATS] of rural marriages are still arranged. In Opoja this percentage rises to [STATS].

In many villages marriage arrangement is of central importance in the negotiation of social change. In the following section we will discuss the incidence of arranged marriages and the influence of this social institution upon family life. We will look at the divergence of attitudes about marriage arrangement held by young Albanians.

A traditional Albanian betrothal is a contract between two extended families which does not take into consideration the desires of the prospective bride and groom. The Canon states that neither the girl or the boy have the right to choose their mate, to meddle in the engagement process or to concern themselves with property exchanges (Paragraphs 30 and 31). The boy

and girl are not to have seen each other prior to marriage. If the Koran raised the status of women in this regard "by making her a party to the marriage agreement rather than an object for sale" (Esposito 1982:16), this did not affect the customs of Moslem Albanians.

Our religion says that the girl may find her own husband, that the girl should be asked where she wants to wed. But our tradition has it that the parents choose. We don't go to school beyond the eighth grade. And we marry where our parents send us. We are used to this. We follow our fate (Naile).

While there are "nonconformist" families in every region of Kosova who follow their own rules when it comes to the issue of marriage arrangement, each region tends to follow a standard practice. In some areas young people have, since the 1980s, begun to make known their desires for a certain mate and are able to convince their parents to do their bidding. They spot prospective mates at weddings or at school and inform their mothers who eventually break the news to their fathers. First the couples meet secretly, then openly. Often the parents feel that they have no choice but to allow them to marry. They know if they don't give the girl to the boy she wants she will elope.

In more conservative regions young people who have seen their betrothed are the exception. Among the Moslem Albanians of Has (southwestern Kosova) a considerable number of people are still engaged by their parents as children or in their teens. A local metaphor sums up this philosophy: "*Venja këmbët! Mos e lenë me lujt hiç!*" [Tie the legs! Don't let them move at all!]. Up until five or ten years ago virtually all marriages were between young men and women who had never seen each other. A boy of eighteen from the region of Has explains:

Nowadays many boys are able to spot their betrothed if they have seen a photo and know the girl's house. But there are no secret meetings. We can't! A letter could be passed to arrange a meeting, but you're afraid it will be intercepted. If a girl's father hears that she has done this, he tells her she is no longer his daughter. Meeting a fiancé before the wedding is considered among the lowest things a young person can do. It is immoral. It is shameful. After you've been engaged three or four years you finally see her when she gets out of the wedding car. It's quite a surprise. Maybe you've heard her name, but you don't know who she is. Maybe you know where her house is, but out of five or six girls there you don't know precisely which one is for you (Haki - engaged 1986).

A girl from Has describes her experience of engagement:

I found out from my sisters that I had been engaged. I felt terrible. If I had ever seen him, it would have been fine. And I won't see him, because now he's a soldier. I have no photographs, no letters. If he were to send a letter now, people would talk. The women, not the men. That's the way it is here. If a girl's parents find out she has seen her fiancé, there is big trouble. They don't let her out anymore (Lumnije - engaged 1987).

In most Opoja villages parents arrange the marriage, sometimes guided by their son's suggestion, more often not. The girl and boy typically find out about the engagement through siblings or cousins. In the past the subject was so taboo that they were not apprised of their betrothals until many months later.

When I was eighteen I was out one day watching the cows and my friend said, "Hey, they've caught a bride for you!" I said, "Don't kid me! What are you talking about?" I had been engaged since fifteen but hadn't known it. We didn't know anything then. We were just thinking about the cows, how to keep track of them. Honestly! We weren't thinking of girls, even of the shepherdesses. We didn't talk to them (Ismet, engaged in 1948).

In Opoja girls and boys from nearby villages may have seen each other at grammar school, but after the eighth grade (and often before) the girls are taken out of school and their contact with unrelated boys is minimal. After they become betrothed the boy and girl usually manage to meet secretly once or several times during the period of engagement. Close relatives are recruited to pass letters which fix a time and meeting place, usually at night in a meadow or in a remote corner of the village.

Five months after the engagement I saw my fiance secretly. He had met a boy from my village and send letters through him to me. I returned the letters. I didn't look at them at all. If people know that you receive letters or have any contact with the boy they consider you a prostitute. Finally I gave in, and agreed to meet secretly. No one knew. It was when I went to get wood at a certain place with my sister. My fiance and his friend were waiting. We spoke ten minutes, not more. We met three more times. I went on the pretext of gathering wood or hoeing. No one knew. Only my sister (Shpresa - engaged 1979).

Most Opoja girls accept the custom of arranged marriages but they express a burning desire to have at least seen the boy.

All girls want to see the boy they're engaged to, but criticize others if they do. If a girl sees the boy, she tells only her closest friends, and hides it from all others. After the engagement I wasn't thinking about the gifts from my fiance's family. I was just wondering what he would be like. I thought of marriage with trepidation. I would have been happy if only I had seen him. I had a picture, but you never know from that. They told me he was a good catch, but I didn't believe them. Why didn't I meet him secretly? It's the boy's place to arrange the meeting and he was afraid to send a message because we didn't have a trustworthy contact in our villages. He was afraid it would get into the wrong hands (Merita - engaged 1986).

The character of spousal relations and of family and community life is determined to a large extent by whether or not a person has seen or become acquainted with his or her betrothed before the wedding. Whether or not a family insists on an arranged marriage is a primary indicator of the social and ideational makeup of that family. Marrying *me msit*—through the matchmaker—usually implies the observance of a set of other social institutions.

First and foremost the marriage is understood to be based not upon the relationship between man and wife, but upon a contract between two families which bonds two lineages. Secondly, it is assumed that the boy and girl have had only limited, formal contact, if any, before marriage. Finally, in most cases the girl in an arranged marriage has not attended school beyond the primary grades and will not seek employment.

This social configuration carries with it a set of ideal behavioral patterns. Most importantly, it is assumed that when young people agree to an arranged marriage they agree to subordinate their individual desires to the will of the collective on many levels. Wives are to obey their husbands, all adult family members and senior in-married women. Husbands obey their elders. Everyone obeys the will of the head of the household. All behavior involved in interpersonal exchanges, the decorum used in serving others, all domestic labor and one's conduct with people outside the family, are to reflect the dedication of each individual to maintaining the reputation of the collective. Because of the centrality of the institutional and behavioral norms implied in arranged marriages, it is a central issue in the changing lives of individuals and families throughout Kosova.

Attitudes About Marriage Arrangement

Given the social mandates implied in the institution of marriage arrangement, most young people who know they will continue to live in an extended family believe that they should have their marriages arranged for them in order to ensure harmony in the family. Finding one's own spouse implies a myriad of attitudes and conduct antithetical to peace in the collective.

Local employment or money from out-migration make it possible for some boys to choose whether or not they wish to leave the collective and start a separate nuclear family, usually in town. If this happens the boys find their own wives. In the 1980s many boys in Kosova would have preferred to live in a nuclear family but unemployment or underemployment made this impossible. Saddled with the prospect of communal living for an indefinite amount of time, many of these boys chose to have their marriages arranged for them by their fathers to avoid discord in the collective group. Thus in the 1980s most Opoja boys were not coerced into an arranged marriage, but in accepting life in an extended family they consciously chose it. Their decision not to have seen their fiances is usually in observance of the social significance of this in the eyes of the community, and not out of insistence from their fathers. A boy of nineteen gives his view on marriage arrangement:

If we go out with a girl, we cannot take her for a wife. That's our tradition. As migrants we have seen every kind of woman, we know people who have married without the matchmaker, by elopement, but according to tradition we cannot do this. You have an arranged marriage so you are guaranteed she will be there to help your family, not just be there for you. If you are still with your parents, you have to marry the girl "by the matchmaker" so you know she'll listen to your parents. I could find a girl anywhere to fall in love with and marry, but she wouldn't necessarily come and be a help to my parents. She would help, but not enough. When you marry "by the matchmaker," you know how things will be. And if my family divides, in order to survive I have to have a wife who really knows how to work.

Of course I would like to see my fiance, to talk with her, to see what kind of girl she is. But your mother wants the best for you, wants a good daughter-in-law, and usually finds a girl and indirectly makes suggestions to your father. I accept the decision my father makes, as long as the girl is "normal." If she is not normal, if she is not a good worker, then I can send her back to her parents after the wedding (Haki).

Most Opoja girls do not enjoy the option of whether or not they will have an arranged marriage. Owning no property and unprepared for employment, they are dependent upon their husband's economic future as to whether or not they will live in nuclear or extended families. The girls are conditioned from childhood to expect an arranged, "blind" marriage. Appropriately, Albanians use the same word, *fati*, to mean both "destiny" and "husband."

Ideally, and typically, girls and boys both publicly and privately accept the marriage planned for them: "*Po pajtohen me fatin e vet*" [They agree to their fate]. *Pajtimi*, "acceptance/acquiescence," is the operative word. But while the word has central symbolic and behavioral meaning to all Albanians, among women it is the critical state of consciousness, the key to social and psychological survival, and one of the most common words in their vocabularies. When asked whether they are satisfied with the husband chosen for them (or, for that matter, with any aspect of their lives), they invariably respond, "*S'ke care pa me pajtu*" [You have no choice but to reconcile yourself to it]. They see themselves as part of a system that will change and is changing—but for other women, not for them. Economically dependent on others, they dare not defy the system. They know that as long as they remain within their "slice" of the social reality, they will only cause themselves misery by going against their families. The girl who makes the best of her lot in life is considered to be the wiser one.

I had always said I wanted to know the boy I would marry, but found out about my engagement six months after it had taken place. Once you're engaged, what can you do? You know life is better at your father's house, but your obligation is to go. You accept it. You know your parents want the best for you (Sevdije).

In regions where arranged marriages are common, many young people not only acquiesce to the custom, but consider this form of marriage superior to "love matches." Many believe that love matches are less harmonious than arranged marriages. If the marriage is not arranged there is more give and take between partners, an ongoing process of defining the relationship. "When it's not arranged, they're always fighting and making up. There's no peace." These assumptions are usually based upon a few local incidences of love matches which ended up in discord between the spouses or even in the dismantling of the extended family.

There is also a sense that the harmony in an arranged marriage is a self-fulfilling prophecy. The relationship is destined to succeed because the boy and girl are conditioned into believing that the arrangement must, by definition, endure. Divorce is extremely rare among Albanians.³ It is assumed that a marriage is a match for life.

When you see your bride for the first time on the wedding night, you're ready to love, to be forever with her. There's no alternative but for it to be successful. It is almost impossible to break up a marriage with a woman you never saw before the wedding night. When you see each other before the marriage, even if you don't talk, or don't talk much, you have broken down a barrier, you have opened up all kinds of possibilities for problems (Nexhmi).

This feeling is reinforced by the fact that the success (or at least permanence) of an arranged marriage is, in a sense, guaranteed by the families of the bride and groom. A girl's family "guarantees" her moral purity (hence their desire to restrict her movement outside the home and to keep her out of high school). The boy's family "guarantees" that the girl and her future offspring will be provided for (barring any major transgression on her part). People are conditioned to expect this security. It is one of the main advantages of opting for an arranged marriage. People give up their free will in the choice of a mate so that they may enjoy this security.

Another factor in a man's desire for an arranged marriage is the belief that it gives him more control over his wife. A young village-born man living in an extended family in Prishtina elected to have his bride chosen for him and married her in 1984 sight-unseen. He wanted the appearance of "control" over his wife which is believed to be part of an arranged marriage.

What's most important to me is to be at peace with my family, with the people around. I weighed the alternative of having an arranged marriage with a village woman or a bride of my choosing from the city. I realized I couldn't abide a woman asking me where I was going, controlling me. When a marriage is arranged some things are guaranteed. A husband tells his wife the rules the first night, and she has no choice but to accept. If she later complains, he can say, "I laid down the law the first night and you agreed." From the beginning, you make

things clear. You don't promise her control over things. Conflict comes when you promise she will have freedom and you don't fulfill your promise. If you find your own bride, she's like your sister, your friend; you don't have leverage. You have no choice but to give in to her ["*Pa lëshu pe s'ke çare*"] (Zefki).

Actually both men and women gain authority vis-à-vis the family and community when their marriage is arranged for them. In order to fulfill the cultural mandate both have restrained their behavior and have not allowed themselves to become morally blemished. In doing so they have demonstrated strength of character and are thereby rewarded with respect. A girl who has been taken sight unseen is prized by her affinal family because, having had no contact with other men, she is completely theirs. By one misplaced glance or uncontrolled gesture encouraging the attention of another man, a woman can stain her husband's honor and the honor of his family by demonstrating their inability to control her. Her purity at marriage is a powerful affirmation of their control over family members, their strength as a family, their honor. A man tends to trust that a wife who has honored him prior to marriage by remaining unseen will continue to honor him through her confined behavior.

At this point the reader may be curious about the emotional and sexual relationship between a man and woman who have never met or become acquainted before their wedding night. This part of the social picture is somewhat obscure due to the emotional distance most couples display in public. It is not the custom among Albanians, even in "modern," urban marriages, for husbands and wives to show affection to each other even in the company of immediate family. To do so would be considered *marre*—shameful. In more conservative families this is taken to the extreme: people avoid addressing spouses by their first names. The expression of affection is confined to the privacy of the couple's bedroom. My own conclusions about the affective dimension of arranged marriages comes from discussions on the subject and from my observation of spousal relationships in my host family and among friends and neighbors.

According to the cultural ideal relationships in arranged marriages are affectionate and warm. People say that this affection comes from the respect and trust which are "written in" to such a marriage (as discussed above). The ideal seems to hold true in the couples I know well. Strictly defined by custom and regulated by the demands of extended family organization, most arranged marriages that begin with any degree of attraction or compatibility between the husband and wife tend to remain harmonious. Incompatibility at the start of an arranged marriage usually results either in an immediate "annulment" (if the enmity is extreme) or (more commonly) resignation to one's fate. In these marriage love and affection are deflected onto children and family.

There is some ambiguity in the matter of sexual relations in these marriages. On one hand it is assumed that the male dominance symbolized during the marriage rituals and throughout married life extend to the bedroom. Added to this is the cultural injunction against any woman's admission that she takes pleasure in sexual contact. It is *marre* for a young girl to express any happiness about the prospect of going to her husband. This attitude is symbolized in her visible struggle against being turned over to the groom's family during the wedding. In most situations married women talk about sex as a burden they must bear. I have been told on more than one occasion that a benefit of having a migrant husband is that "you can role over in bed and no one is there to bother you."

Part of the negation of a woman's sexual appetite is simply a function of the cultural taboo on the subject. Certainly many women have fulfilling physical relationships with their husbands but this is something that is not discussed. On the other hand in some cases the negation reflects truly unsatisfying, even repugnant sexual experiences which result from the couple's initial lack of experience, the taboo on discussing sex, or from a couple's physical incompatibility.

Though the subject is taboo, it should be noted that the "madonna/whore" syndrome functions in Albanian society. A man's bride must be a virgin, but he hopes she will be a sensuous, eager woman when they enter into intimate relations. Albanians always agree that the most cherished qualities in a woman are industriousness, decorum and agreeability. But I have been told in confidence that men really want a woman who is a good cook, knows how to behave in public, and knows how to "let her hair down" when they are alone.

Elopement

If a man takes a woman out of wedlock: his house will be burned and his land will lie fallow; he will be expelled from his land and will not be entitled to set foot there until he is rid of her; if children are born out of wedlock, they are considered unlawful and are not entitled to any inheritance (The Canon, Article 32).

Contrary to the absolute dictates of customary law, Kosova Albanians use elopement as a structured alternative to arranged marriages and formal weddings. (Albanians use the word, *ikje* [departure/escape] when a girl secretly leaves her family of her own volition. This is not to be confused with *grabitje* [abduction].) Up until recently elopement was primarily a means of avoiding the brideprice [*hupsa*] and/or the expense of a wedding. With the payment of the *hupsa* less common today, the main economic reason for elopement is the highly inflated cost of

weddings. The more common reason for elopement, especially in conservative village regions, is a boy's inability to wed the girl he loves because she has been engaged elsewhere or because the boy or girl's father, knowing of their prior acquaintance, refuses to condone the marriage.

Some say that elopement has become more common since the 1970's because with most girls attending primary school there are more chances to see girls and fall in love. "In the old days you never saw a girl from outside your family. And people had high walls—you never saw anything in the courtyard. Now we can see everyone who passes" (Haki).

When the couple elopes, the boy, accompanied by a close male friend or relative, takes the girl from her home by night. The boy's success in carrying out this deed is an assault against the girl's family, exposing their weakness. In the past was considered an act of courage as it sometimes brought a feud upon the boy's family. Today, while the two families usually reconcile [*pajtohen*] with one another after one or two years, in some cases they remain estranged for a decade or more. A girl who elopes runs the risk of alienating her family indefinitely, of being treated as a non-entity until they see fit to readmit her to the family. Sometimes reconciliation is precipitated by a major event in the lives of the families such as the circumcision of the couple's son.

If it is discovered that a girl has attempted to elope she is often engaged elsewhere without delay. Most people agree that elopement does not damage a girl's status in her affinal family. On the other hand some argue that more "conservative" families think she is worth less because she came "without a wedding" and she must work harder than other brides to prove herself within the collective.

Negotiations for the Bride

Negotiations for a bride follow a fairly standard protocol throughout Kosova. The boy's father usually sends a close male relative called the *msit* (in Opoja the *shkus*) to the bride's home to arrange the marriage. Today some fathers act as their own emissary to avoid the obligatory payment to the *shkus*. One Opoja man's description of his efforts in obtaining a bride for his son illustrates the protocol:

Negotiations Between Families

I was the *shkus* for my son. Though other family members had seen the girl, neither my son nor I had ever seen her—only a photograph. I succeeded in finding out through relatives that she was pretty, well-behaved [*e sjellshme*] and well-bred [*e edukume*]. I talked to my son about her, and he accepted. He didn't want to find his own wife.

I went twice to ask for the girl, the second time two weeks after the first. It is not our custom to ask a guest what they have come to your house for, so after I arrived at the girl's home the subject of marriage didn't come up right away. They knew me, and knew why I was there, but as we sat and drank coffee we did not discuss the girl. I told them about myself, who I am and who I am not [*kush jam, kush s'jam*]. I told them I wanted to be a mik [in-law] with them. I described my situation, my job, my son's education. I told them that what I had found out about their family had pleased me, and now it was time for them to find out about our family. "Now it's up to you, whether you give her to us or not." They don't ask directly anything about us, our house or our standard of living. They find out themselves. That's why we must have at least two meetings, so that family has time to research our family. They ask their own *miqtë* [in-laws], and people who have daughters married into our village. Why would they ask us? We would say only good things about ourselves!

At the conclusion of my first visit the girl's father said, "I have no girl to offer—she's still young." In other words, "get lost." I said, "*Ku koftë hajrë koftë kismet*" [Wherever she has the good fortune to go, may fate be with her]. By my second visit they had researched our family, and everything had changed. Her father said he had heard nothing bad about us; our family had been praised. "*Ndoshta do të jetë kismet*" [Perhaps it is fate that I should give my daughter to you.]

Fjala: The Word is Sent

We usually seek several girls for a son at the same time, and the first one whose father sends the *fjala* [the word] is the one we take. After two months when the girl's family had made their decision, her mother's brother came to us and congratulated me, saying, "*Të kanë dhanë çikën*" [They have given you their daughter]. Then I returned to the girl's house to set a date for the *marhama* ["the scarf" - the engagement announcement party] four months hence. And I left them money "for the coffee" which would pay for the presents they would give our family at the *marhama*.

Marhama: The Engagement is Announced

The girl's father's brothers and mother's brothers came to the *marhama*. We put on a feast for them, and all the girls sang. They brought the scarf [symbol of the engagement promise] and a needlepoint from the bride and presents for our family, our father's brothers, our mother's brothers, and all the women and children— socks, towels and shirts.

Marrja e Penit: The Wedding Date is Set

Four months before the wedding we go to the bride's *me marrë penin e nusës* [to take the bride's string], *me këput penin* [to break the string]. During this visit we decide when to have the wedding. We also decide how much money will be sent to the bride to purchase the gold and other large gifts for the wedding. Once the "string is broken," we reserve the wedding drummers. If this is not done in advance, there will be no music, no wedding! (Ferat).

An Opoja girl summarizes the negotiations made for her:

My husband's father acted as his own go-between. He had never seen me, but someone from the other *mahalla* had told him about me. He had come asking for my hand seven times. My father didn't want to engage me then because he loved me very much. The last time my father-in-law said he wasn't leaving without the *marhama* [the scarf]. My father said, "I don't have her older brother here—I can't." My brother was there, but he was trying to buy time. Finally my father went outside and asked my mother. She said no. And my brother said no. But my father-in-law wouldn't leave, and my father gave in. That very day he gave them the *marhama* (Merite).

The *marhama* is an extremely important ritual occasion in Opoja: the first contact between a set of male representatives from the two families. The handing over of the scarf symbolizes the *miqësi* [friendship] bond between the families which permanently joins the houses in a complex system of reciprocity. The groom's family may host either a "small" or "large" *marhama*, depending on the number of people it can afford to feed. Typically a large group of men from the groom's relatives are present to greet the representatives from the bride's family: her "go-between" and two "assistants" (father's brothers, mother's brothers, etc.). Her father never attends. Girls from the groom's *mahalla* provide a constant background of *marhama* songs which extoll the virtues of groom's family and tell of the bride's beauty and strength. The songs cast aspersions on the bride's home, telling how much better her life will be with her husband's family. The songs also tease the go-between for being a greedy and shady character.

The *marrja e penit* ceremony is similar to the *marhama*, involving a dinner for male representatives from the two families, formal discussions and a further cementing of the bonds of *miqësi*.

The Economics of the Marriage Bargain

After a girl's father agrees to give his daughter to another family, the two sides begin to bargain for the value of the gifts to be given to the girl and her family. Throughout the engagement years and during the wedding itself the groom's family delivers gifts to the bride's family. It has been said that through these gifts an Albanian man "purchases" his bride and in exchange receives the rights to her and to her future children. If this were the case, the valuables would belong to the bride's family and would be called "brideprice" or "bridewealth." This is not the case. In fact, most of the gifts from the groom are for the bride herself. These gifts, called the *teshat* or the *këpucët*, include gold jewelry, clothes, fabric, and supplies for making her trousseau of embroidered linens and decorative objects. The gifts constitute the bride's personal property and represent enough clothes and personal effects to last her into the near future. These items return to the groom's family when the bride comes to live with them.

The gifts to the bride may be called an "indirect dowry." The groom's family gives gifts to the bride's father who in turn passes them on to her. In that sense it is a "disguised dowry": a gift from a father to his daughter but not directly from his wealth (see Pastner 1980; Goody 1973). (In Turkey this same custom of indirect dowry is practiced, but when the items have been purchased, a title deed is drawn up and given to the bride as a guarantee that the groom's family will never attempt to reclaim the items [Engelbrektsson 1978].)

In spite of the fact that the bulk of the gifts for the bride and her family actually make their way back to the groom's house at the time of the wedding, the girl's father (via the go-between) lobbies for expensive gifts from the groom in order, in the first place, to ensure some measure of material security for his daughter. "It is important that the bride receive substantial gifts for her marriage, because it is her last chance to have something fine for herself" (Fikrije). "A father wants this for his daughter so that she will not have a hard time, so that she will have gold as her property" (Enver). "With those things she is taken care of until she dies. It is her security [*për ta siguruar jetën e saj*]." (Hasan).

The girl's father is also interested in raising the ante in the negotiations to demonstrate his daughter's worth as a sign of their family's status. The groom's family attempts to produce extravagant gifts in order to increase their own prestige. The value of these gifts becomes common knowledge in the community. The process of bargaining for this wealth and the subsequent series of gift exchanges involve important displays of honor and status for both families and at the same time create a bond of reciprocity between the families of the bride and groom.

In addition to the presentations made to the bride and her family there is among some Kosova families an institutionalized form of "payment" for the girl known as the *hupsa* [that which is lost]. The *hupsa* is an amount paid directly to the girl's father, a "dividend" which a father may demand for the loss of his daughter. The *hupsa* may be a very substantial amount, the equivalent of five or six month's local wages. It may also be demanded in the form of hard currency which, if the family has no one working abroad, must be borrowed.

Some people believe that the *hupsa* was more common (if more secretive) in the past (prior to 1965) when times were harder. "In the old days people didn't look at the kind of family a girl was marrying into, or at the boy, but at whether they were wealthy so they would gain more in the *hupsa*" (Vlora). "In the past it was the biggest worry a boy's father had—how he was to get together so much money at one time." In certain regions of Kosova some fathers still demand payment for their daughters. Some boys still elope with their fiances to avoid

paying for the *hupsa* and the wedding. Most people agree that the institution of direct payments will decline with the decrease in the number of arranged marriages (a change which, as we will see, is very slow in coming to Opoja).

Some say it is the poor man who is forced to demand a payment for his daughter; some insist that families of wealthy migrants are the greedy ones. In general the practice is looked down upon. Sometimes this part of the marriage bargain is made in secret, the girl's father threatening to break off the negotiations if it is made known that he demanded a cash payment for his daughter. It is a matter of pride among Albanians that their family did not seek a *hupsa*. "My father didn't want to 'eat the money' [*me hangër pare*]. Other fathers here do, but not mine" (Merite). "For money we are not desperate" [*Për pare na nuk jena lazem*] (Mihane).

In the 1930s Hasluck reported that in northern Albania the "gifts" from the groom to the bride often become a form of "buying and selling" when the girl's father pockets a share of the money destined for the bride herself.

She is supposed to expend the money on her trousseau; namely, the clothes she makes for herself, the bedding she makes or buys for herself and husband, and the handkerchiefs and small articles of clothing which she must bring on her wedding day as presents for her husband and his relatives; but in point of fact her father is the one who spends the money (1933:192).

This may happen today in Kosova, especially in Opoja where the groom's family delivers the cash with which the bride's family purchases the jewelry and clothing themselves. In most regions of Kosova gifts are bought by the groom's family and given to the girl, and no substantial amount of money changes hands. Given in the form of cash, the gifts destined for the girl can more easily be pocketed by her father.

As mentioned above in the discussion of inheritance, an Albanian bride does not receive a dowry in the formal sense, but today many fathers give their daughters presents to supplement gifts from the groom. "The 130 million dinar the groom's family gave to us all went for the things I take with me back to their house—none of it stays here. My father had to contribute his own money to finish it, because it wasn't enough. He himself gave thirty million and this still wasn't enough" (Merite). "You have no choice if the groom doesn't provide enough, and this is how it is perceived in Opoja, that what the groom gives is never enough" (Bajram).

Most people believe that the gifts from the father to his daughter are both for the well-being and financial security of the girl and to increase her father's authority in the community. He does not want to appear "stingy" in comparison to other fathers. This form of competition

for status has become entrenched with the influx of hard currency sent by family members working abroad. Whether or not the bride's father has an external source of income, he attempts to match the investments made by fathers who have family members working abroad. If a man is dependent on his family's earnings from local employment the gifts must be financed either through loans or through the sale of livestock or land. "My friend in Gollak just gave 5,000 Swiss francs for his daughter. He will work for the next ten years and still not be able to pay back that money" (Hyri).

One village woman whose father paid for the bulk of her trousseau preparation (amounting to the equivalent of \$2,000) describes the gifts as payment for the work she performed at his house. He compensates her so as "not to be left indebted to his daughter" [*mos me t'met borxh*] (Drita). An Opoja man concurs: "She worked eighteen or twenty years for that house—she should get something in return" (Besim). This presents a contrast to the system found in other unilineal societies. Instead of the groom compensating the bride's family for the loss of her labor, her father compensates her for the work she has done.

Wedding Expenditures

Before the 1960s, when most Kosova Albanians had even less surplus cash than now, the amount invested in the bride was more modest. A village woman from Gollak married in the 1950s recounts, "For the making of my trousseau they brought me a sack of wool; for me, a gold piece, a few *dimia* [pantaloon], a quilt, and a rug" (Feride). Until recently supplies for trousseau preparation included wool for rugs and socks and thread for the weaving of shirts, blouses and ceremonial towels. Today thread, fabric and needlepoint patterns are provided for the embroidered and tatted ornamental pieces used to decorate the house.

Nowadays the spectrum of gifts from the groom's family typically includes: gold jewelry (four to ten rings, two pairs of earrings, one gold chain, one necklace, a gold piece, two to four bracelets, and a watch), clothes (several pairs of handsewn *dimia* and matching vests, a *jelek* [gold braid vest], numerous long dresses and dress fabric, several pair of high heels and elegant bedroom slippers, and, [in regions less conservative than Opoja] a wedding dress), a quilt, and a furnished bedroom in the groom's home.

In the "old days" (prior to the 1960s) there were only a few gift exchanges during the course of the engagement. Today the boy's family brings gifts to the bride and her family on most holidays, when her father and close male relatives working abroad are likely to be home: Shingjergj (St. George's Day - May 6th), "Woman's Day" (May 8th), and Bajram (the end of the Moslem month of fasting). In Opoja, gifts may also be sent on regional holidays: Verza (the

beginning of summer - March 13th), Jeremia (May 14th), Shimitri (November 8th), and Shinkolli (May 24th). Gifts may also be given to mark important rites of passage in the bride's house: births, deaths, a young man's entrance into the army, the procurement of employment, etc.

During the engagement and at the time of the wedding the groom's family presents gifts (shirts, blouses, socks, towels, fabric and underclothes) to the bride's extended family. These presents constitute part of a ceremonial exchange, the bride's family making similar prestations to the groom and his extended family when the engagement is announced and during the wedding. The first important delivery of gifts is at the *marhama* celebration. In the past the bride simply sent a hand-tatted scarf as a sign of engagement. Now she sends decorative handmade scarves, socks and aprons to the women and store-bought shirts to men of the groom's extended family. As an illustration of the nature of these prestations, the *marhama* gifts given by a recent Opoja bride were worth ten million dinars. A gift was sent to each person in the groom's household, the groom's father's sisters, father's brothers and their daughters and wives, mother's brothers and their daughters and wives. The representatives of the bride's family (father's and mother's brothers and the go-between) bring the gifts in a suitcase, each labeled for the appropriate person.

The main expenses for a typical wedding are for the food (one cow, four-hundred loaves of bread, coffee, sugar, oil, bread, etc.), and the the music (two shawm players and two drummers and hundreds of dollars in tips for them). A typical village wedding in 1988 cost \$800 for the bride's gifts, \$2000 for the wedding itself.

Attitudes About Wedding Expenses

*Me u nda prej tjereve s'po guxojmë,
e po duhet me fukarëllëk q'ashtu, me hi.*

We do not dare to be different from the others,
even if it means that we must enter into poverty (Bajram).

Most Albanians I spoke with see the importance of the marriage expenses as an enduring representation of the family's status in the community. "No sacrifice is too great in the staging of a memorable wedding. A wedding is a symbol which lasts forever; it is never forgotten. It is not a shame to sell land for your son's wedding. He is worth the cost: he enlarges the family" (Nehat).

Albanians defend the practice in terms of their family reputation and material security for the bride. They experience it as an indelible part of their "tradition"—part and parcel of their ethnic identity, their social persona. "*Te na, q'ashtu është* [For us, that's the way it is]. "The great expense spells financial ruination for many, but the tradition has been left to us" (Fuat).

While men bemoan the tradition which binds them to the devastating expense of the wedding, some say that they are obliged to uphold it because the women insist on it. "The custom would change if the women became emancipated. For a cultured woman, you would need only a small necklace, a pair of earrings, a ring and a watch" (Ferat). It is true that women tend to defend the importance of substantial spending, especially on gifts for the bride. They are poignantly aware that usually a girl's only chance of amassing personal property is through the marriage gifts. Enclosed within a world in which personal identity is strictly defined by their immediate social circle, women also encourage large expenditures as a part of the system of prestige. It is also important to the bride's mother, that people are aware of the value attached to her daughter and thus to her family. It is important to the groom's mother whose prestige will be represented daily by the public scrutiny of the costume, jewelry and demeanor of "her bride."

Girls are concerned that the money spent for them by the groom's family matches or exceeds the amount spent for their peers.

With great impatience they wait to see how much gold they will get, so they won't feel inferior to their friends. If a girl has one more gold piece than the others, there is jealousy. A girl doesn't want to go outside her house unless she has nice things to show off (Bajram).

Opening the suitcase full of gifts to her and her family, a bride-to-be exclaims proudly, "These are just the beginning! They bring so much! Here a bride gets millions!" (Alie).

Their devotion to "tradition" aside, most men agree, at least in principle, that the wedding expenses have grown too great, and that the custom should be changed. In times of financial hardship, the money spent on gold and satin is considered obscene. But all agree that no one can afford to be the one to break the tradition. The following comments are typical:

The time has come for us to say 'Stop!' to this custom. It's gone too far. Everyone is starting to think about it. But no one wants to be the first (Ferat).

You in America sleep eight hours, with no worries, because you don't have these customs. I sleep two hours, because I have to be thinking all the time of how to pay for this. But for me to be the first to change, everyone would say, 'Hey, what's the matter with that guy?' (Miftar).

That's the way my parents and my father's brother did it—I can't be the one to change all this. It would be a good idea to change, to make life easier, but I can't be the one (Fuat).

You ask why we do this. Why indeed! It is because no one can say, 'Stop!' to it; it's just too hard. Each man says, 'Look at the wedding that guy put on! Why not me? I'll out-do him!' (Ramadan).

In truth, while almost no one in Opoja has been able to exercise restraint in the amount spent on the bride, the amount spent on the wedding is changing. In light of the financial havoc wrought by financing three-day weddings, the elders' councils in several Opoja villages have agreed to limit the wedding to one main day of food and music. Other villages are discussing the possibility of confining the wedding to the groom's *mahalla* [his immediate relatives] rather than having it open to whole village as is customary. "The tradition was created when our villages only had ten houses and you could invite everyone to the wedding. Now there are two hundred houses, and still the whole village comes" (Ilaz). Some villages, especially those with a high incidence of out-migration and remittances, have tried to institute these changes but cannot reach accord. "One guy says, 'I'm going to marry off my son this summer, so let's keep it the old way until next year'" (Ilaz). Endogamous villages say that they cannot change because so many people in the village are in-laws, "and you must never disappoint your in-laws."

Migration and Wedding Expenses

Even in times of severe economic depression Albanians have made huge investments in weddings, but the high incidence of labor migration in recent decades has inflated the price-tag and intensified the financial burdens created by this investment even more. With high population density, insufficient productive acreage and only one substantial productive enterprise, without labor-migration Opoja would be one of the poorest regions in Kosova. Because of this, out-migration has been very intense here and most families have, or hope to soon have a member working abroad and sending back substantial remittances. A family of fifteen may depend on the wages of one son earning the equivalent of \$150 a month locally. Their neighbors may have one or two family members working abroad and may have a new house and an Opel Kadett parked in courtyard. The intense levels of labor migration produced by a history of poverty and a collective consciousness of scarcity has introduced pockets of wealth in every kin group. In every village, in every neighborhood, poverty and extravagance coexist.

When the time comes to accumulate the a small fortune needed to pay for the bride's gifts and for the wedding, "*Kush ka gyrbeti ka; kush s'ka gyrbet shit tokë ose shtazë*" [He who is a migrant has (the money); he who is not a migrant sells land or animals] (Bedri). A summer's employment in Switzerland might provide the 10,000 francs to cover the cost of the wedding. Typically a family goes into debt with relatives for many years to finance the event.

I think if people really felt the economic crisis, really had nothing to eat, then they would forget the weddings. But in Opoja we don't forget these things, because, though we may be living off beans and pita, there is so much capital all around us. Our family has no one working outside. Everything we have we have made with our own sweat. But even for those with no one outside, to spend less than your neighbor doesn't come into consideration (Bajram).

The migrants put most of their foreign capital into houses and weddings. We will discuss the strategies and perceptions of these investments in more detail in a later chapter. Suffice it to say here that until 1988 it has been extremely difficult to invest in productive enterprises. By investing in the wedding, a man is making one of the only solid investments he can: an investment in his family's honor.

I have asked, again and again, why the money from out-migration is not spent instead on an indoor kitchen, or a washing machine, or indoor plumbing, or a hot water heater. The answer is always the same:

"It would be better, sure. But, in a word: "*Na ka met. Na ka met*" [The tradition was left to us this way] (Agron).

It's stupid, the amount spent. They go and rot in foreign lands just to make the money for a big wedding, to buy the gold. Do people discuss this? Sure! They say, 'I made a big wedding, and lots of people came and they ate and drank well, and we have drowned the bride in gold.' This is the source of their pride (Enver).

The migrants suffer so many months and years away from home for those gold necklaces. It's a big mistake. A sign of an unconscious people. Is the gold bought for prestige or as an investment against hard times? Neither. It's done unconsciously. It is so that a man will not be different from his friends. So that when my son gets married, they don't say, 'The groom's father has been working abroad so many years! Where's the gold?!' (Nehat).

In spite of this deeply entrenched tradition and the impediments to change wrought, in part, by the influx of foreign capital, some believe that the younger generation of Opoja men will opt for change. This applies especially to college students or those who set their sights on education rather than out-migration. These young men, poignantly aware of the economic crises at hand

and their dismal employment prospects, may be inclined toward a rationalization of the custom. This said, they are still their fathers' sons, and will in most cases acquiesce to their families' desires to maintain the tradition.

Notes

1. Western scholars have gone to great lengths to explain this type of endogamy, which seems to contradict the universality of incest taboos. In fact, what has often been characterized as a prescriptive rule may be less common than enthusiastic researchers have reported. It may be that the "rule" has been a construct of Western anthropologists obsessed with this fascinating "social fact." Some scholars argue that the practice is more a metaphor or ideal than a social norm. It is another case in which practice does not necessarily reflect theory.

It should also be noted that the cousin marriages which do occur in the Middle East are found not only among Arabs, but also among Turks, Persians, Kurds, Christians and Jews (Keyser 1974:297). For some pertinent discussions on the subject of cousin marriage in the Middle East see: Ayoub 1959, Keyser 1974 and Murphy and Kasdan 1959).

2. In Opoja, where only a few girls out of thousands go on to high school, the creation of an elaborate trousseau requires years of work and takes on tremendous importance in a girl's life. The *çežz* consists of dozens of gifts for the groom's family and the linens and wall decorations with which the bride will embellish her room in her husband's parent's home. While each ethnographic region of Kosova specializes in certain items according to local taste, a standard trousseau includes bedspreads, pillow covers, wall hangings, needlepoints, tatted table-cloths, napkins and doiles, decorative socks, aprons and scarves and costume pieces according to local fashion.

The *çežz* represents a point of continuity in Kosova. If girls are in college or are employed, their relatives help them produce the trousseau or they purchase the handwork. A diploma or salary is no substitute for the handwork.

3. Kosova's Statistical Yearbook estimates that in 1985, for example, there were a total of 332 divorces out of a total of 12,483 registered marriages, or a failure rate of less than 3%. This percentage would undoubtedly be even smaller if it took into account the thousands of marriages which are not registered with the authorities (Statistical Annual, Prishtina 1987:42).

Chapter IV

Women's Lives and The Perception of Gender Roles

This chapter examines the social principles which structure women's lives in Opoja and the perception of gender roles by men and women. Our point of departure is a woman's transition from her natal to affinal home, her incorporation as a new bride into her husband's family, and customary behavior patterns in the collective household. The story begins with the girl's traumatic severance from her father's home.

A Girl's Separation from Her Natal Home

Kaj moj motër, bëne ujë,
Se po shkon në derë t'huaj.
Dera e huaj shumë e keqe,
Ta thanë trupin, ta bën teneqe.

Cry my sister, cry your tears,
Because you are going to stranger's door.
A stranger's door is a very bad thing,
It starves your body, it dries you up.

Dera e huaj është shumë zamet,
Me t'fol mirë t'doket keq.
Kaj moj motër, në podinë e canës,
Kush ja shtron stratin e nënës?

A stranger's door is a wearisome thing,
They speak well of it but to you it looks bad
Cry my sister, at the foot of the haystack,
Who will to make up your mother's bed?

Kaj oj motër, e niu te ura,
T'kanë mashtru fustanet me lula.
Ani kur t'vin lulat tuj vjetru,
Ani vjen mërzia tuj tu shtu.

Cry my sister, let yourself be heard to the bridge,
You were deceived by those flowered dresses.
And when those flowers start to wither,
Your unhappiness will grow.

Kaj oj motër me lotët sa gruni,
çka pat baba e moj që të përzuni?
Unë babës ju mçrzita,
Bajram e Shingjergj fustan i lypa.

Cry my sister, with tears as big as wheat,
Why did your father throw you out?
I angered my father,
Asking him for dresses on Bajram and St. George's
Day.

Çu oj motër lute nanën,
Mos e le o me ta ngjit kanën.
çu oj motër lute tezën,
Mos e le me ta bo t'zezën.

Get up sister, beg your mother,
Not to let them put on the henna.
Get up sister, beg your aunt,
Not to let them do this terrible thing.

The Albanian wedding is a complicated, elaborate ritual process beginning in the weeks before the actual wedding day and ending in the days which follow. During this time the groom's extended family and kin celebrate the incorporation of a foreign woman into their midst and the creation of a new nuclear unit. In contrast, the bride's family mourns the loss of their daughter. The bride herself experiences a complete personal transformation as she leaves

her parents' home, shedding her identity as "daughter" and "sister," and enters a foreign, unknown household. Her given name is set aside; from the time she enters her husband's household and until middle age she is known simply as *nusja*—the bride.

The bride's most intense period of transformation begins on Saturday during the *kanagjegji* (from the Turkish *kına gecesi*)—"the night of the henna." With her friends and female relatives gathered around her the girl moans and cries until late at night, driven by the sobbing and pained embraces of the women she is soon to leave. She sleeps that night with her sisters and friends. She may be coached by a close female relative, the *telak*, who instructs her as to the behavior expected by her husband and his family.

(Northern Albania, circa 1920)

On the day of the wedding the bride, elaborately dressed, is carried, screaming and struggling, from her father's house, and by her brothers is delivered to the husband's family at a place midway between the lands of the two tribes (Lane 1923:25).

By Sunday morning, the wedding day, the bride has purged herself of tears. The catharsis of the *kanagjegji* has left her drained and numb. In the morning she makes the hour-long journey by car to the beauty salon in town or remains with local women who arrange her hair, her make-up, her costume. This is a period of liminality during which the girl undergoes physical and psychological transformation. She emerges from the chrysalis of familial passion with a new face and persona.

From the moment she is dressed in the bridal costume, the girl takes on the poignant, exaggerated, dramatic appearance befitting a bride. Her long hair, teased and molded into a high nest above her forehead, is topped by a crown of tatted wire flowers. Her face is painted a pasty white, her lips red, her forehead and cheeks adorned with tiny swirls of fine glitter like the sky in Van Gogh's "Starry Night." Several gold rings and a new watch are worn over white gloves. Dazzling gold earrings and layers of gold necklaces and medallions testify to her in-laws' investment in her. Her body is covered in the billows of glaring white satin, the twelve meters of the *dimia* pantaloons and the *minton*, a tightfitting vest with enormous puffed sleeves.

At mid-day on Sunday the girl is placed in her courtyard, flanked by the "brides" (women married into her natal family), to await the arrival of the women from the groom's house. Upon their arrival these women are greeted by the receiving line of brides and are given refreshment as the girl retreats once more into her house. Finally she emerges from the house to enter the car which will transport her to her new life. In some villages the bride screams in

ritual protest as she is put in the car, a sign of her devotion to her family and her resistance to joining her husband. Once in the car, she assumes the mask of stoicism which will be her defense in the exhausting ordeals which await her.

No one from the bride's family accompanies her on the journey or attends the festivities at the groom's house. Shortly following her arrival there she is placed in the line of other "brides" as the women gather to inspect her. She is then brought into the house. Before crossing the threshold her fingertips are dipped in sweetened water and brought three times to the top of the doorway to ensure a harmonious life with her in-laws. She steps across the threshold, right foot first, and so ritually enters her new life. She is on display for several more hours indoors until night approaches. As the groom finishes undergoing his own period of liminality and rites of transformation in a neighbor's home, the bride is placed behind closed doors in the *xherdek*, the bridal chamber. A few girls from the groom's family sit silently by her as the bride waits in a state of exhaustion and trepidation. Finally, from a distance, she hears the thunder and squeal of the drums and shawms in the groom's entourage as he makes his way through the neighborhood, past the mosque, and approaches the *xherdek*. After farewells and blessings from the Moslem priest and the throng of male family members crowded at his bedroom door, the groom is hoisted into the room where the bride stands motionless, speechless, eyes cast down.

At nine they put me in the room. I couldn't eat at all. After a half an hour the groom came in and I was waiting on my feet. He welcomed me to his house and I "took his hand" [performed a ritual gesture]. I said nothing. He told me to make a coffee for him and for myself. I lit his cigarette and three times he blew out the flame. He stepped on my foot and hung his jacket on the nail over mine, to tell me I would be just under his command. He didn't talk much, just told me not to worry. His sister had told me what to do. I didn't sleep at all that night. At four a.m. I got up and dressed to "break the *petlat* [pancakes]" (Shpresa).

Around four o'clock Monday morning the bride is once again groomed and dressed in the full bridal costume. At five family members gather for the ceremony of the *petlat*. Avoiding touch or eye contact, the bride and groom pull at opposite ends of the pancake to see who will get the larger piece—and dominance in the relationship—and then sip from the same spoon of sweetened water so that their union will be sweet. The bride hurriedly and silently exits the room, walking always with her back to the door.

The next event is the "singing of the *temena*" [the ritual hand gesture]. For an hour the girls and women of the groom's patriline, huddled together on the floor, sing songs which tell of the bride's beauty and instruct her to perform variations on her *temena*. After the "groom's dance" at nine o'clock the women gather for another event in which the bride pours water for

each girl to wash her face. This is followed by comical, sometimes lewd inversion plays in which girls perform caricatures of old men or noteworthy family members. After these plays the bride's task is to set things right, rearranging the clothes and hair of the actors to return them to their proper roles. This act of "setting things right" continues as the girls throw corn kernels or pebbles on the ground, goading the bride as she attempts to correct the state of disorder to the amusement of onlookers. The rituals performed on the first days of marriage are condensed enactments of the bride's future activities in the home.

In the hours, days and weeks that follow the wedding the bride is on display, standing or sitting in full bridal regalia as the groom's female relatives come from near and far to examine the patriline's latest acquisition. During every social event from the wedding day on she is placed "against the wall" next to other women married in to her husband's patriline to be judged against these other "brides." She is evaluated on the basis of her bearing, her beauty, and the finery she is wearing. She is representing not only her own worth but the status and honor of her husband's family. The dignity, prosperity and fecundity of the house are embodied in the bride's very presence. Her facial expressions, movements and attitude in the performance of ritual gestures are all intended to project these qualities. While surrendering herself utterly to the scrutiny of onlookers, the bride's most important task will be to present an aura of stoicism, endurance and propriety. She stands *divan, palut*—erect and motionless—eyes cast down, hands folded at the waist. She is unsmiling and mute, exhausted by the catharsis of the night before and the severance from the life she has known.

You cannot cry when you get to your husband's, it's *marre* [shameful]. Nobody does. When you're on display there you're preoccupied with how you look, at looking better than the other women. You forget the other things. You just have to concentrate on how you look, how you are presenting yourself, not on what you feel. If you show your sadness, they give you a bad time. Occasionally it happens that a girl is so unhappy about the marriage, not knowing anyone from the family, that she can't help but express this. Or sometimes a girl can't keep standing up as you're supposed to. Then they all make fun of you. You can't talk to anyone, you must hold yourself in (Vlora).

From the five in the afternoon when I arrived at their house until nine at night I never sat down, and they were impressed. They could see I wouldn't collapse, that I was a strong one (Merite).

Standing or sitting inert, vulnerable, all-surrendering, throughout the passage from her natal to affinal home and during the following months, the bride condenses her entire expression into the ritual hand gestures of the *temena* and "the taking of the hand" [*marrjen e dorës*]. Silent and immobile, the bride has only these means of communicating with the women around her. In the *temena* which addresses a group of onlookers the bride brings her fingertips

to her the heart, lips and forehead, and down again to a folded position. In the "taking of the hand," she brings the right hand of the woman she is addressing to her chin and forehead two or three times. These gestures are ubiquitous throughout Kosova but are more elaborate in Opoja than in any other region. Each bride has created her own trademark style of performing the gestures, of enticing her onlookers like a spider its prey. She fixes her facial expression: a discrete smile, eyes cast low, deliberate. Slowly blinking, low-cast eyes catch and hold her subjects. The contact is enticing, fleeting—a intense moment of empathy and commiseration between the bride and her audience.

While some urban brides see the *temena* as a degrading act of submission, performing it only "for custom's sake" during the first days of marriage, village women tend to see it as a symbol of the bride's respect for the people around her and of her surrender to incorporation within the new family. While an educated urban woman usually has alternative ways of demonstrating her abilities, the village woman in traditional households, especially before the birth of children, has few expressive outlets other than through symbolic gestures and token tasks. The performance of the *temena* gives her the opportunity to show some individuality while at the same time cementing her authority in the household by showing her dedication to the collective. "It is like saying, 'With the heart I love you, with the mouth I speak to you, with the eyes I see you'" (Lumnije). These gestures are powerful symbols in Albanian life, representing the aesthetic of emotional and physical restraint and the moral ideal of surrender to the collective will.

A Bride's Life

(Northern Albania, circa 1920)

When the bride arrives at her husband's house she takes a humble place in the corner, standing, her hands folded on her breast, her eyes downcast, and for three days and nights she is required to remain in that position, without lifting her eyes, without moving, and without eating or drinking. On the second day...she goes about the household, obeying the commands of the elders, always standing until they tell her to sit, and for six months, not speaking unless they address her (Lane 1923:25).

(Western Kosova, circa 1975)

The new bride does not move freely among the other women in the new village, until years later. As a young bride, a stage that lasts for some three to five years, she is on constant trial. She cannot take many liberties and has to be subservient and constantly at the beck and call of the rest of the household. She is permanently performing in order to win the approval of her new family (Backer 1979:147).

Technical innovations of post-war decades have eased the burdens of the Albanian bride, but the essence of her experience—of being on trial—has remained fundamentally the same. While many Opoja girls enjoy the role of "bride" to the extent that they are dressed in riches, made to look beautiful, and almost constantly attended to by the women of their husband's household and neighborhood, most complain about the demands made upon them. "At your mother's you are always free. At your husband's you are always obligated: to get up early, to clean, to serve" (Aferdite). The first year in her husband's house is typically a time of liminality in which a bride is constantly proving her worth in the eyes of her in-laws. "In the first year you're neither on the ground nor in the sky, because you have changed doors [houses]. When you finally sit down, it's like sitting on thorns" (Shpresa). "It is sad, because you are at a stranger's door. What do you know? You don't even know where to put your feet!" (Shyrete).

The bride's first days at her husband's home are filled with emotional extremes, at once anxiety-ridden and ennobling. The trauma is daunting as the bride runs an emotional and physical gauntlet. On the other hand, marriage is the first time in a girl's life when all attention is focused on her. Her every movement takes on profound importance with all eyes on the prize. The constant attention of the groom's sisters and cousins reinforces this duality. From the moment of her arrival one or two girls or women are constantly at her side, squeezing her hands, clutching her waist, adjusting her posture and the angle of her head, grooming her. She surrenders completely to their attentions and instructions. Her attendants' actions are double-edged; they insist on her endurance while comforting and sustaining her. They remind her to keep on her feet and erect while at the same time supporting her body and soul at every moment. They constantly monitor and fine-tune her behavior. They exact impeccable performances of endless symbolic tasks while caring for her as a priceless doll. This duality is not unusual in patrilocal, "patriarchal" societies. In the Greek context Campbell notes:

Her awareness of the odd contradiction in her new situation, the humility required of her on the one hand, the assurance of her ultimate triumph on the other, only increases the bride's feelings of shyness and shame, attitudes which on other grounds she is anyway expected to express (1964:65).

A new bride in Opoja gets up long before dawn. After grooming herself she quickly and silently tends to her morning tasks: stoking the fire in the main stove, sweeping the courtyard, polishing everyone's shoes, setting out fresh clothes for the master of the house and for her husband, pouring water for the morning ablution of family members, folding up bedding, sweeping sleeping rooms, making coffee, and generally transforming the darkness and disorder of the night into order and light. During the day she serves juice and coffee to visitors and

during pauses in activity stands "on display," performing the *temena* in salutation to newly arriving guests. A new bride must be awake before anyone. This is one of the most important symbols of a bride's industriousness, and is in many cases the bane of her existence.

I get up at three or four a.m. They don't tell me to—I just know. That's just the way we do it. I get up automatically because I sleep with worries, and it wakes me up. I was frightened at first, going out in the dark, alone. You rest again at midday. I go to bed at ten or eleven p.m., when my mother-in-law tells me to (Merite).

The bride's ritual duties continue throughout her life, augmented by additional tasks associated with womanhood. Around five a.m. an Opoja woman is the first in the family to rise, to light the fire and prepare water for her father-in-law's *avdes* [ritual ablutions]. When she is not cleaning, attending to children, chopping wood or preparing food, she busies herself with handwork. She is the last to go to bed, after seeing to the needs of others. Her burden is eased to some extent with the arrival of a new bride who takes up many of the symbolic tasks and some of the household labor.

The first major transition in a woman's life is when she begins to help in the preparation of meals. If there are other brides in the family this may be postponed for a year or more after marriage. If there are few women in the house, a bride may begin the "real work," symbolized by meal preparation, two or three months after her arrival. Most Opoja families do not emphasize their daughters' knowledge of meal preparation as it is assumed that future mother-in-laws will instruct the girls according to the protocol of their own houses. If there are several women the brides rotate work on three-day shifts. While one is "*te maxha*"—at the flour bin seeing to meal preparation, the other is cleaning and the third is seeing more to the needs of her own nuclear family. Most families have one or two cows which are milked by the female head of the house.

Ideally, in Opoja, a bride remains within her courtyard and is not seen on the village roads unless visiting her own kin or traveling to ceremonial occasions where her presence is required. While in other regions of Kosova girls commonly tend sheep and help with field work, most Opoja girls are kept close to home if there are others to perform outside labor. Most young brides do not work in the fields unless there is no one else available. It is not until their late thirties that women take an active part in gardening, covering their flowing *dimia* with blue gingham workcoats and their heads with large scarves.

Every bride is provided at marriage with a furnished bedroom in her groom's home. The small, square, whitewashed room is usually the only space a bride controls until her mother-in-law dies and she becomes the head of her own household. The room becomes an extension of the bride's representational role in her affinal family. It is invariably dominated by

an enormous china cabinet covering one wall, and a fancy double bed, often with an ostentatious headboard of velveteen or complete with a built-in radio. Beds are covered with ornate bedspreads with matching curtains. Under the spread there is a naked mattress; all bedding is daily removed to be perfectly assembled in the display cabinet for the viewing of guests. All shelves, walls and door and window frames are decorated with items from the bride's trousseau: needlepoints, tatted doilies, eyelet dust-ruffles. The shelves of the china cabinet are used to exhibit all of the decorative objects the bride manages to acquire during her tenure in the house. Delicate, detailed handwork is juxtaposed against the knick-knacks her husband or brother has brought back from western Europe: flashing Christmas lights, figurines, a Sony Walkman, etc. These are a bride's compensation for having an absentee husband.

A woman's role in the family changes with the birth of her children and the incorporation of younger brides into the family. Changes in status are visible in costume, especially in headgear: unmarried girls wear a long braid down the back, new brides have a high, elaborate coiffure topped by the crown of wire flowers, a mature woman with children wears a pastel scarf with tatted borders, while older women wear plain, tightly bound scarves. The timing of these changes is subjective; many women dress as new brides, donning full bridal costume at social events, for a decade or more, long after the birth of their children.

An in-married woman is under the direct authority of her mother-in-law, the *vjehrra*. While the male head of the household sees that his ideology is enforced in the family as a whole, the *plaka*, the old lady, sees to the conduct of "her brides." While a woman's husband has the last word on major issues which arise with regard to his wife, her *vjehrra* supervises the imponderabilia of daily activities. Her idea of "proper" behavior and the "right" way to do things affects every aspect of a bride's life. She instructs the bride on how to wear her hair, how many children to have, how to swaddle her babies, when to get up and when go to bed, and a myriad of other behavioral patterns.

Your mother-in-law meddles in everything: what you wear, how much electricity you waste, how much soap you use, how much you eat. That's the way mother-in-laws are. What can you do? You're a foreigner in that house. In the extended family they don't miss any chance to contradict your desires [*Pa dal dikush me t'kundërshtu s'e len*] (Drita).

A woman gains authority in the household in part through the impression she makes on her *vjehrra*. In light of the rivalries between a family's in-married women, most women try to ingratiate themselves with their *vjehrras* in an attempt to gain favor. In spite of the implicit tension in the relationship, many brides are very close to their mother-in-laws. Since they are transferred directly from the hands of their own mothers to the hands of their mothers-in-law, for many women the *vjehrra* becomes a surrogate mother. Some girls become attached to their

vjehrra because of the absence of out-migrating husbands or other close female companions in their husband's village. Brides constantly address their mother-in-laws as *nëna* [mother], frequently interjecting the word into speech patterns to underscore the pseudo-filial relationship.

Conflicts between in-married women are used as a scapegoat for the breakup of extended families in this as other societies where each family is intent upon presenting the image of a unified male front to the outside world. "Where male solidarity is of great importance, it is useful to find an ideological mask for the rivalries among males" (Denitch 1974:259). Men may comment that their house divided because of bickering between women or children, when in truth it was the brothers themselves who were in conflict. An Albanian proverb says, "Unmarried brothers never break up. When foreign blood comes, they are divided."

While conflicts between women may be used as masks for larger problems within the family, and while it is true that some women are very close to other brides in the family, competition and back-stabbing between wives are not uncommon and are built into the system. Commenting on this problem in other Moslem societies, Lamphere observes: "Women's strategies revolve around 'working through men,' either husbands or their sons. Women's interests never coincide; competition and conflict are to be expected" (1974:105). From the day she arrives until she herself becomes head of a household a woman is judged on her ability to perform a myriad of symbolic and practical tasks according to a protocol exacted by her mother-in-law. Conflicts arise between in-marrying women from the pressure of conforming to the demands of a foreign household. Far from finding support and camaraderie in each other's company, as might be expected, in-marrying women tend to compete for reputation and favor.

You can talk to the other women in the house, but you can't really trust them. The other women are more interested in creating problems for you than in helping you (Teuta).

When there are other brides in the house there are bound to be conflicts. You divide up the chores, so there is less work, but there is less peace (Shpresa).

A common reason for discord is a woman's feeling that she is working harder than the other brides in the house.

When a new bride comes to live in your house you teach her about *nusnija* [bridehood], about her jobs. In the first year she can make mistakes. In the second year she must take her work more seriously. If she does the senior brides will be satisfied and won't speak ill of her. If she doesn't, there will be conflicts. The bride in my house is doing nothing compared to what I did as a bride. And she doesn't get up early enough. It makes me spiteful (Shpresa).

The other main cause of strife is the perception that another bride or her children are being favored in some way—in the apportionment of food, clothes, furniture, or in opportunities for excursions outside the house. "When we all have equal possessions we get along well, and help each other. If the things are not equal, then we think of a reason to speak badly of each other" (Shpresa).

These problems are exacerbated when one bride's husband is at home while the husband of another is working abroad. Migrants returning home must divide their gifts equally between all brides and children. Nevertheless, inequities may surface. The husband earning hard currency may inadvertently give his wife and children some material advantage over others in the family. More often however, it is the wife with the absentee husband who feels cheated when for five, ten or twenty years she raises her children and works for the family without the help of a man, and yet receives no extra compensation for her sacrifices. Unable to make her needs known to the head of the household through her husband, the wife with a husband abroad is at a disadvantage in lobbying for material goods or other assistance, and this contributes to the jealousy between women.

Given the hierarchical nature of the *vjehrra*-bride relationship, the competition between brides in the same household and limited contact with their husbands during the day, in-married women rely on their husbands' sisters and female cousins for emotional sustenance. From the moment of a bride's arrival in her new home, it is these women who act as confidantes, advisers, spies, emissaries and surrogate kin for the disoriented, insecure outsider in their midst. The role of these girls is especially important among Albanian brides whose social isolation is often exacerbated by the restrictions on neighborhood networks enjoyed by women in other Mediterranean and Moslem communities (see Joseph 1983).

To what extent do women actually become "part of" their husband's family? Ideally, through proper behavior and with the birth of children a woman establishes a secure place in her husband's family and comes to consider his family as her own. Kinship terminology reflects this. Beginning on her wedding day, a woman refers to all affinal kin by the names her husband uses. Contrary to this ideal, according to local wisdom and to the literature a woman remains forever a foreigner in her husband's home.

It is said that the word for girl, *vajza*, derives from *vajtim*, suffering. A woman's life is one of suffering because she is a visitor in her father's home, and an foreigner in her husband's. As soon as she is born she is an outsider (Bajram).

While the husband is a branch of the trunk, the bride is a daughter of the world [of the street, of no one] and is not considered as a member of the husband's family. Her children are considered to belong to her husband's family (Begolli 1974:68).

The lord of the house could reprimand any member of the family, but he could not reprimand the bride, because she was a foreigner (ibid.).

Among Albanians...household organization is geared to the preservation of a group of resident male agnates, and female members are constantly at odds with the system. Women feel no particular loyalty to their husband's *fis* or extended family. Their loyalty crystalizes and develops with the development of their immediate nuclear families (Grossmith 1976:241).

[In-married women] are potential 'Trojan horses' within the household, and have to prevented from acting out that potentiality (Backer 1979:143).

After marriage a woman sees her natal family during formal visits home. The initial visit, called *s'pari* [the first], is usually a week after the wedding and involves an exchange of ritual meetings between the men of the two houses. The bride's brothers, father, and father's and mother's brothers come to fetch her at an appointed time at her in-laws' and after a formal dinner escort her home. After one or two nights the groom and his father, brothers and uncles return the bride to her in-laws and enjoy a feast at her home. During her first year the bride's male relatives come to fetch her for a one or two day visit every two weeks or so without making prior arrangements with the bride or her in-laws. With the birth of children her visits home become less frequent. Typically a wife visits home every few months, and at least twice a year goes for a "vacation" of a week or two. If a woman's husband is a migrant she goes home more seldom, but stays for a longer time. Visits home have become much more frequent with the improvement of roads, an increase in number of cars and the accessibility of public transportation, and the "liberalization" of attitudes in this regard. "In the old days [pre-1970s] we went home for the first time after six months and after that once a year. Before they didn't let you go" (Vjollca).

Sexual Segregation and Seclusion

Catholic, Moslem and Orthodox Albanians all segregated their young women. The Catholics and Orthodox attributed this custom to plain jealousy, and the Moslems, less convincingly, to a desire to obey their Prophet's order (Hasluck 1954:17).

Having taken a glimpse at some of the salient aspects of a women's transition from her natal to affinal family and her incorporation as a bride into the group of agnates, we turn now to one of the aspects of gender relations which orders social life in Opoja: sexual segregation and seclusion. A clearly defined division of labor between men and women, a sense of separate social worlds, pervades Albanian rural society. It is the clearest indicator of the degree to which a family, village or region upholds the standards of the past. Much ado has been made in the West about sexual segregation, the division of "domestic" and "public" space, and the

veiling of women. Outsiders tend to see segregation as a cruel, oppressive confinement of women characteristic of Moslem society. Since the 1970s anthropologists and sociologists have taken great pains to re-examine this interpretation, to understand these customs through the eyes of local women (see Nelson 1973, Ortner 1974, Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974). The issue is central to our discussion of the perception of gender roles in Albanian society.

Inside the home the degree of sexual segregation among Albanians depends upon the size of the family and the formality of a given social event. When only immediate family members are present, males and females eat and socialize together. In large families where more than ten people (the number of people that can sit around the low dining table) have meals, women and children eat after the men have finished. When men beyond immediate kin come to visit, women usually withdraw to separate quarters, typically to the room where food is being prepared in an out-building or on the first floor of the house. The men gather in the comfort of the *oda*, the family's receiving room, attending to the needs of male guests—serving them coffee, pouring water for hand-washing before meals, serving food—so that women may remain out of view. During large social events such as weddings and circumcisions the activities of males and females take place in completely separate houses.

Among villagers contact with men outside the family is kept to a minimum. In Opoja most girls are taken out of school after eight years in the primary grades to avoid unnecessary contact with non-family men. Casual outings of adolescents and adult women are limited to their immediate neighborhood—the adjoining houses of agnates. Women leave the neighborhood only when it is necessary to do so: for ritual events at homes of affinal or natal kin, for formal visits to their parents, or for other important errands. "We don't go out just for our own pleasure." The number of families in each village who allow their daughters to attend high school, work in the local factory, or make casual visits to other villages or town can be counted on one hand.

The word which conveys in Albanian the literal and symbolic seclusion of women is *havale*. This is a key concept in Opoja, used to mean "the garden walls" or "the veil" but conveying a general sense of the restraints placed on women. (In Turkish *havale* denotes the barriers around a house.) It is understood that a woman "with *havale*" is a woman bound within a whole system of customary behavior.

Unlike Moslem women in countries under Islamic law, Moslem Albanians in post-war socialist Yugoslavia are not permitted to cover their faces with veils. Before World War II Albanian women were hidden from public scrutiny behind an assemblage of black scarves and sheets they call the *perdja* [curtain] or *çarçaf* [sheet]. After liberation the veil was banned and the

women substituted a belted coat and large headscarf to approximate, as nearly as they could, the effect of the veil. The lifting of the veil was not welcomed by Albanian women who had grown accustomed to it. Without the veil to "protect" them, they felt exposed and vulnerable out in public.

We liked wearing the *perdja* because we could go out freely and no one saw our faces. Then they called us one night into a room and told us they were going to outlaw it. We just cried. We couldn't take it off. How could we? Without it we felt naked. They offered us money to take it off, but we refused. When we finally took it off the men made us stay home. I remember the first time I went out without it—I couldn't stop crying. For a year we went out only at night (Fikrije).

Contrary to the western notion that veiling imprisons women, some Albanian women who have worn a veil say it creates a kind of freedom by giving them anonymity and symbolic invulnerability when they are outside the home. Some say that the absence of the veil has contributed to their domestic confinement by making it more difficult to go outside in an anonymous, "protected" way. The absence of the veil in Yugoslavia constitutes an important difference between the lives of Albanians and the Moslems of Islamic states. Many women in Arab societies are free to move about because their veiling gives them symbolic impenetrability. Without a veil to give them anonymity, the movement of most Albanian village women is significantly limited. "It is better with the veil, like the Arabs. All the women of God are covered that way" (Naile).

The concept of *havale*, implying segregation, seclusion and metaphorical veiling, carries both negative and positive connotations for Opoja women. On the one hand, *havale* is a symbol of the past representing fanaticism against a backdrop of liberalization taking place beyond Opoja's borders. There is a sense in which seclusion locks women into the past. "As if, by so clearly defining the feminine space, culture were setting women apart into timelessness" (Makhlouf 1979:24). The high stone walls which enclose the domestic space and the raincoat and scarf worn outside symbolize to many Albanians backwardness, ignorance and stubbornness in the face of change. "*Nuk kam havale* [I don't have a veil]...is the unofficial declaration of women's liberation" (Backer 1979:50).

But *havale* also has positive connotations for many women. In the first place those stone walls which enclose Albanian courtyards and the conspicuous raincoat and scarf are perhaps the most visible markers of Albanian identity in Yugoslavia. Surrounded by a hegemonic, Slavic majority, these symbols set the Albanians apart and give them their separate, "special" identity which has become particularly important during recurrent waves of ethnic hostility.

Some women who lead secluded lives also have a sense of pride, of purity, of moral superiority over women who have been exposed to the outside. Even young brides boast about the extent to which they have been sheltered by natal families and in-laws as a sign of their worth. Women speak of remaining within their garden walls (leaving only three or four times during the winter) not with in frustration, but proud of their untarnished reputations and their respect for tradition.

Many women appreciate the privacy which seclusion and sexual segregation afford them. Hidden behind the walls which surround their compounds, women feel free to carry on their business as they please. Separation from men during social gatherings also gives them a sense of freedom. Due to the strict rules of propriety and shame associated with mixed groups, when women are alone they are infinitely freer to express themselves, to relax, to have a good time. And as in other segregated societies where social contact between men and women tends to be sexually loaded, the separation serves "as a 'refuge' from the sexual tensions of male-female relations" (Dwyer 1978:30). Thus while western women tend to see segregation and seclusion as "keeping women in," to Kosova women it usually means "keeping men out" (see Nelson 1974).

Prior to the 1970s western sociologists and ethnologists believed that secluding women rendered them powerless by excluding them from public life, the "locus of power." It was later understood that this argument was ethnocentric; a model had been generated based upon the western assumption of the male, public sphere as the center of power. In the 1970s researchers began to re-study segregated societies where authority and power are created and displayed in the home. Thus it was argued that confinement increases a woman's authority in the domestic sphere which tends to be the center of social interaction in sexually segregated societies. "The more the male imprisons the female in the home and takes himself elsewhere, the more powerful is the female within the home" (Slater 1968:8; see also Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974).

Seclusion and sexual segregation structure the lives of rural Albanians, guiding behavior and perception at every turn. But this separation does not create two opposing worlds. For families in which *havale* is strictly observed, both men and women observe strict, shared rules of conduct. Proper *sjellje*, behavior, is expected of all family members. It is "too extreme to view the male and female spheres as separate worlds. They are complementary halves governed by the same set of rules. As such they are both autonomous and interdependent" (Backer 1979:143).

Like other aspects of conservatism in Opoja, the seclusion of women is rationalized on religious grounds. Many Opojans, both men and women, say that veiling and seclusion are mandated by the Koran. Actually the Koran makes no explicit mention of these practices which were customary before the advent of Islam. Nevertheless, like other Moslems, Albanians believe that one cannot be a believer without observing *havale*. "Because we were Moslems, no man outside our family is supposed to see us" (Fikrije).

Fidone is a woman of twenty-five working as a nurse but living in an extended family with other unschooled, unemployed brides who rarely leave the compound. These are some of her thoughts about the seclusion of women:

Why is it bad for women to be out of the house? Why!? That "why" is something many, many women want to find out. But there is no answer for them. People just always thought it was better that way. They thought the neighbors would talk about her. Girls have that sense of what is shameful from the time they are little. And they thought people would bother her, and this would be a shame to the whole family. It's not that they don't trust her. But there's always something to keep her indoors—children, guests, work. Or her husband says women are not meant to go out, he says "I provide for us, there is no reason for her to leave the home." It is really to preserve the honor [*Me rruejt fytyrën*].

The women are conscious of not going out. But there's nothing they can do about it. They have no one to lead them to do something different. They think it must be that way. The girl's father tells her to stay at home, to be a good girl, that he will find a good husband for her, and he convinces her. Do they ask themselves why? Well, they aren't used to seeing anything different. And so they are satisfied. They have been conditioned about their fate since childhood. People think that women are meant to stay at home, to listen to their husbands. That's our tradition. Women are convinced from the time they are girls that it's normal.

Honor and Issues of Gender Subordination

In a more general sense, the practices of segregation and seclusion are rationalized as a means of preserving the honor of a family through the protection of its women. Much has been written about honor in Mediterranean and Moslem societies where the relations between people are shaped by public opinion, where problems associated with honor dominate the social arena.¹ Among Albanians, honor, *ndera*, is the principle rationalization for upholding customary law. Lineages acquire honor through the reputations of families, families through the behavior of individuals. The honor of a family is equal to the honor of its men as reflected in the chastity of its women. "A child or wife who goes astray is criticized, but the husband is blamed" (Cronin 1970:71). Chastity is a key to social values: it displays the responsibility of women in upholding social mores and the strength of men in controlling the behavior of family members.

A man's honor is created and maintained through generosity, honesty, sincerity, loyalty, in the "struggle of self-discipline over cowardice and sensuality," (Campbell 1964:269) and through the propriety of the women related to him. Men create and maintain honor by projecting family strength through the protection of women's "virtue" and through "control" over their behavior. On one hand men must prevent "real" problems which might come about as a result of a woman's own "sexual appetite" and her vulnerability to men. Seclusion makes her less vulnerable. It is "an element in the cultivation of sexual shame...turning inwards thought and facial expression which otherwise become a threat to her own honour and that of others (Campbell 1964:287). On the other hand, a man's "control" over the women in his family, relegating them to a subordinate status, is a way of symbolizing his strength.

A woman's subservience to men may be explained both as an "appearance" and a "reality." On one hand it represents an actual hierarchy of power between men and women in which a woman's behavior is directly controlled by her husband and his extended family. On the other it is a façade created to project a desired image of family solidarity to outsiders. It is generally agreed that men must appear superior to uphold their honor and the honor of their family. "If guests came over and your wife didn't serve coffee but asked you to, you would immediate damage your authority" (Zefki).²

Women uphold their honor through proper *sjellje* [decorum], and by avoiding behavior which is considered *marre* [shameful]³. A woman shows correct *sjellje* by demonstrating a quiet, controlled demeanor, by performing with zeal the symbolic actions and domestic labor expected of her, by "cherishing her own purity" (Cronin 1977:74), and by showing respect, "if not for the individuals with more authority, then for the system that gives those persons their authority" (Abu-Lughod 1986:117).

All other modes of attaining authority are secondary to *sjellje*. Contrary to what we might expect, the bearing of sons is not the main determinant of a woman's authority in her affinal home. While the number of (male) children a woman produces and other avenues of personal achievement can enhance a woman's status in the family, they cannot create it.

My sister was married three years before she had any children, but she had a great deal of authority. Her father-in-law loved her very much because she woke up early, made coffee for everyone, cleaned everyone's shoes, followed out the guests, and performed a beautiful *temena*. But now that she has children she has changed. She doesn't do all the those things she did before, and they don't understand this. She lost authority when she had her children (Leonora).

Among Albanians, both males and females, the behavior which brings honor by demonstrating commitment to the collective ideal falls into three major categories: work, respect for others, and a non-argumentative disposition. A woman acquires authority to the extent that she is *punëtore* [a hard worker] and *e zoja* [a proper woman] in the home. New brides fulfill their role by rising before dawn, immediately washing and sweeping the walkways and courtyard, and keeping busy throughout the day. Part of the work is necessary, but much of it is at least partly symbolic, with redundant cleaning and attention to miniscule details.

People don't come to visit, they come to check you over, to see how thoroughly you have cleaned, to find any reason to criticize. You may have cleaned thoroughly every day of your life, but if one day you don't polish the stove, and visitors come on the day, your reputation is damaged (Selvie).

Men and women are respected to the extent that they show deference to others. This is demonstrated in numerous acts during the day, from rising to one's feet at the arrival of family elders or guests to observing with extreme care priority of seating and serving of guests according to seniority. People are respected for being non-argumentative, for showing they have the collective interest at heart and are dedicated to promoting harmony in the household.

When a girl goes to live with her husband's family she carries with her the dignity of her home. Her acts of service to her new family are demonstrations of respect. And the family respects her. When the bride does her job with real finesse, when she knows how to serve water in just the right way, she inspires kindness and respect from others. The bride's arrival is a great honor for the family. Everything she does, every move she makes is important to the family's reputation (Xhemali).

As an individual, one has authority to the extent that he or she lives up to the mandates of his or her position in the social structure. By acting according to a clearly defined role, one is accorded respect and honor by the community. The family's authority is equal to the respect earned by individuals within it. Albanians feel that while the deference women show to men may suggest to outsiders an inferior status, there is a sense in which this deference increases their personal authority by elevating the prestige of the family as a whole. "Hierarchical domination is justified through the elaboration of a moral code that rationalizes the privilege of elders and dignifies the deference of dependents" (Abu-Lughod 1986:253).

By regarding gender subordination, both "real" and "apparent," as a the proper order of things, by accepting their socially ordained roles, Albanians claim their place in community. "A woman's membership, as it were, in culture—is evidenced in part by the fact that she accepts her own devaluation and takes culture's point of view" (Rosaldo 1974:76).

Deference is seen in terms of respect, not subordination. The subservience of females is seen as evidence of her respect for those around her. Younger people defer to their elders, women defer to men. An Albanian man tells us,

I have washed the feet of my uncle many times. It's not a degrading act. My sister may wash the feet of my father, my brother the feet of my uncle. It's just a relation of respect in relation to age, not just the obligation of women, but of everyone (Ridvan).

Female deference is seen by men and women as an image created through symbolic behavior which elevates the reputation of both sexes by projecting their strength in upholding the cultural norm (Rogers 1975). It is seen as a contribution to collective well-being which enhances the prestige of both men and women (Salamone and Stanton 1986). Proper behavior by family members projects and image of well-being, solidarity, honor. "The familial idiom downplays the potential conflict in relations of inequality by suggesting something other than simple domination versus subordination. It replaces opposition with complementarity, with the forceful notions of unity and identity" (Abu-Lughod 1986:81).

Women accept their position because it is *marre*, shameful, not to. For my wife it is *marre* not to get up early, not to light the stove, not to serve coffee to her father-in-law. Women are convinced that this is the way things should be. She's proud of it (Bajram).

This fusion of self-regard and the respect of others makes meaningless Goffman's distinction between realizing moral standards and giving the impression of realizing them...Conformity to the code of honor and embodying the cultural ideals set by that code for the individual are not empty acts of impression management but the stuff of morality. This is the great strength of the ideology of honor and modesty as a means for perpetuating a system of power relations: by framing ideals as values, in moral terms, it guarantees that individuals will desire to do what perpetuates the system (Abu-Lughod 1986:238).

Women have their work; men have theirs. That's the way it is among Albanians, and that's the best way. Where people obey the custom, there is order, there is well-being, there is plenty, and the household prospers (Agron).

Opojans justify their conformity to "the system"—rules of segregation and seclusion, the attention to customary decorum, the subordinate status of women (both "real" and "apparent")—as a means to preserve order and harmony in their lives. By respecting the status quo, they earn respect and authority in the family and community. This is the prevailing ideology; this is why traditions of the past carry such force.

Pajtim: The Principle of Resignation and Acceptance

The impassioned defense of the social system heard from men and women of all ages does not mean that all Opojans are content with their anachronistic lifestyles, that they do not yearn for an overhaul of the system; half of all women in my study desire to have been born a boy (see Appendix 1). Many Opoja women with whom I spoke cry out for change, for "emancipation," for an end to their "subordinate" status whether real or apparent. They long for "freedom"—to be able to go outside the home when they want to, to go to high school, to work, to abandon the scarf, to dress *à la franga* [in dresses instead of *dimia*].

Opoja women are forever closed within their courtyard, within the village. We don't go anywhere just for pleasure. What the livestock know, that's as much as the women know. Life passes you by, and you are in locked away. At least when you're in a real prison you know you will get out some day, but for us..." (Mihane).

But lacking the economic means to strike out on her own and subvert the system, a woman makes the best of her situation by accepting her situation. She knows that by contradicting the will of her community, her parents, her in-laws, she only stands to lose. *Pajtim*, acceptance, acquiescence, is a constant part of life. It begins when she must face an arranged marriage and the move to her husband's village, and reaches into all facets of her life as a bride, a wife and a mother. One frequently heard expression sums up this feeling: "*Deshte, mos deshte, s'ke çare pa mu pajtu*" [Like it or not, you have no choice but to reconcile yourself to it].

Most girls live by the principle, *ha çka të japin* [take what you are given] (Sevdije).

We all leave our mothers and fathers and go to our husbands. It isn't a good thing but that's the way it has been passed down to us. If we linger with our parents, people say there's something wrong with us, and no man will take us then (Naile).

Leaving home is a hard thing for girls. Up until eighteen I hated the idea, but then I got used to it. You eventually realize that there's no place for you at your parents' home. That's the way it is. None of this is mine. Why do you think girls regret being girls? Because they have to go somewhere else to live. You have to accept it. If you stay home, your brother takes a wife, your parents die, your brother's wife has no use for you (Selvie).

You have no choice but to go to the husband they find for you. You don't go crazy, because you know that's the way God intended things. You accept it. If you fight against it, you just get old. There's nothing to question. Your friends have it the same way you do (Fikrije).

Most girls aren't really happy with arranged marriages, but right away they have children and then accept the situation. Some don't want to accept it, but she can't go back to her mother's house. If she did, and was married again, she would get

someone even worse...Girls in Opoja envy the girls outside who have more freedom. You think of this for a while, but eventually you accept what you have (Vlora).

But the principle of *pajtim* is not the exclusive property of women. It is an intrinsic part of Albanian world view.

The essential personality component among Albanians is stoicism. It comes from Islam, and from living in the large, extended family. Islam tells us we are guests in this life, undergoing a test for the next life. What's important to people here is endurance and honor (a Kosova psychiatrist).

Most Albanian men are also conditioned to accept their lot in life, settling for arranged marriages, remaining in extended families until their financial situation improves, becoming migrant workers.

Many men see their apparent dominance in family and public life as a cross to bear, another part of life requiring endurance and acceptance. Even though men enjoy greater freedom and are served by women of the house, they believe this is offset by their own burden.

In fact, men are more oppressed than women, they bear the greater burden. They are responsible for defending the house and for making sure that the family survives. The current economic and social crisis weighs heavily on the spirit of each man. Like it or not, you must put yourself under these obligations and you become a slave caring for those who are dependent on you. They don't worry about things, because they know you will take care of them. The fact that my wife cannot take the bus by herself, buy her own clothes, make decisions, creates huge responsibilities for me. That's why she stands and waits to serve me—she knows the pressure I am under, worrying about our well-being (Bajram).

Restriction and repression as such do not comprise the dominant connotations of female seclusion: rather the practice comes to be viewed as one that promotes women's personal well-being. Concurrently, men are not seen as benefiting from the freedoms that they hold: instead they sustain burdensome responsibilities (Dwyer 1978:148).

Male Domination: Emic Views

A metaphor for the oppression of women in their husband's home was expressed in a custom found in northern Albania. The bride's veil was lifted with the butt of the rifle, meaning the bride was given freedom [to open her eyes, to move about, to work], but only under the gaze of the gun (Begolli 1974:62).

There is a general consensus among Opojans that men dominate in all aspects of Albanian life, that this is the cultural legacy, a part of being Albanian. But few men or women attribute the gender hierarchy in Albanian society to the innate superiority of males. When

pressed to seriously consider the issue, most people agree that it is a combination of socialization, formal education and greater freedom of action which have made men appear more capable in their society.

Women and men are not equal in our society. That's the way it has been passed down to us. Some girls are born smarter, but even if a girl goes to school, she never has freedom. The boys have freedom and so they know more. In our family, as in many families, the girls did better in school, but the boys continue their educations, and end up smarter (Lumnije).

A thirty year old college educated man who chose to have his marriage arranged for him makes the following comments in relation to gender hierarchy:

A bride must come to your house and respect your mother. She is under the *rendi* [order] of the house. This means getting up early, making the coffee just right, greeting people in just the right way. Every good bride knows how to do these things. If a bride makes trouble, if she speaks badly of others or contradicts people, if she doesn't respect the other families in the house, then things are different. She has a right to speak, but shouldn't interrupt people. I don't want to order her around; I want her to show respect out of her own initiative.

According to science, women are more capable, smarter, more sensitive. But I think the way things work out, men are superior. An Opojan woman can show her aptitude only through *sjellje* [behavior] and having children.

I myself would like women to have freedom—I don't want them to wear *dimia*, or the scarf, to be isolated. I don't care if someone sees her arms or eyes. For me it is important for women to be educated. But if you want there to be order, harmony in the house, she can't get ahead in the way you want her to.

The people of Opoja, both men and women, bemoan the restrictions on women's lives and the consequent burdens born by men as an unfortunate legacy of the past. But at the same time they defend the anachronistic character of gender relations as a way of preserving order and well-being in the community. "The social system is a 'given,' and the problems that emerge are seen as inevitable components of all lives rather than as the product of contingent social arrangements, and least of all as a matter of unfairness or exploitation (Makhlouf 1979:83).

There is a prevailing sense in which all Albanians, both men and women, are the victims of yet another century of poverty, oppression and social injustice. The appearance of inferior status among women corresponds to a sense of economic and political impotence among many Albanian men. Women and men are both in subordinate roles. Subordination is exaggerated for women who turn their husband's private impotence into their public impotence (see Dimen 1986:63).

Opojans rationalize and defend the gender hierarchy as a part of their "refuge in the past," as a way of coping with political marginalization, the encroachment of "modernity" and economic uncertainty. They do not perceive a viable alternative to the system which, at present, creates order and security in their lives. As to the future, "it's a question of whether or not people become aware of the contingency of social arrangements, the fact that it's not all inevitable" (Makhlouf 1979:85).

Notes

1. For some of the important discussions of honor in Mediterranean societies see Campbell 1964, Schneider 1971, Pastner 1972, Denitch 1974, Peristiany 1974, Black-Michaud 1975, Schneider and Schneider 1976, Davis 1977, Boehm 1980, Herzfeld 1980, Blok 1981 and Gilmore 1987.
2. The idea that women's subservience is an appearance is posited by functionalists who argue that the "apparent" inferiority of females is a result of competition over resources between clans and the need to project an image of strength to outsiders through the deference of females (see Campbell 1964, Friedl 1967, Denitch 1974 and Schneider 1971).
3. In other Mediterranean contexts "shame" is considered an innate female quality. Women must be chaste to offset this "shame." Among Albanians, "shame," *marre* or *turp*, is not generally considered something a woman is born with. The meaning of the word in Albanian is similar to the English meaning. People are not born with shame, but may do something "shameful" or bring "shame" upon themselves. It is *marre* for a girl to speak to boys outside her family or to ask too much about the boy to whom she is betrothed. It is *marre* for a man to steal or lie or cheat on his wife. Honor and shame, *ndera* and *marre*, are opposing concepts in Albanian, concepts that are very much present in social discourse and in the constant surveillance of behavior.

Chapter V

Migration

Introduction

Traveling through the majestic landscape of Opoja, a newcomer is struck by strange contrasts: small, crumbling adobe structures flanked by new or half-finished multi-story brick houses; horse-drawn wagons negotiating right-of-way with Mercedes and Opels bearing license plates from Switzerland, Austria, Germany. These contrasts, ubiquitous throughout Yugoslavia and much of the Mediterranean, are the signs of imported opulence, of money brought home from abroad by the *kurbetxhinjtë*, the migrant laborers. The material contrasts are not unusual in the developing world where marginal local economies and close-knit communities have been inundated by the material and cultural symbols of western affluence brought home by migrant workers.

The 1970s have given us many studies of European migration which emphasize demographic trends, economic cause and effect, and the immigrants' experience in the host country. Until recently little attention has been paid to the impact of migration on the sending community (see Philpott 1970 for review of such studies). Our emphasis here is not on economics or demographics, but on changes in the meaning of migration to the local population and on the impact of long-term, intensive contact with external populations on the world view of a rural community. We focus not on migration per se, but on migration as an arena in which other social processes are taking place.

While there is a substantial literature on the economic and cultural aspects of labor migration for other parts of Yugoslavia,¹ as of 1990 there have been no in-depth studies of Kosova migration. Since much of the migration has by-passed official channels, there is no accurate account of the numbers of migrants, the length of their stay abroad, the number of family members abroad, etc. Because Kosova migrants tend to send their remittances through friends or to bring the money home when they visit, it is impossible to accurately access the size or significance of remittances through the records of bank or postal transactions. To conduct a full-scale census of migration activities in Kosova would exceed the scope of this research. I have therefore depended on my own local surveys and statistical data provided by Kosova's Provincial Employment Bureau corroborated by information from Yugoslav sources and

reports in local journals and newspapers. I have based my understanding of the problem on the opinions of local scholars and administrators, and, most importantly, on the personal accounts of the migrants themselves.

While rural-urban migration in Kosova, out-migration to other Yugoslavia towns and long-term migration to cities abroad are all common throughout Kosova, each region tends to be characterized by one migration strategy. Some pastoral areas (such as Rugova in the northwest) have depended on transhumance, settling in lowland towns during winter months. Other mountain regions (such as Gollak in the east) have developed strong urban ties and are associated with rural-urban migration to local towns in search of education and wage-labor. Regions (such as Llap) located near urban centers have established traditions as day-laborers in the town. In other areas, most notably in Has and Gora in the southwest, the men work almost exclusively as private bakers and food vendors (respectively) throughout Yugoslavia. Since the mid-1960s and increasingly in the last two decades all areas of Kosova have participated in external migration.

This chapter focuses on the character of migration in Opoja: the way it is perceived by migrants and by the sending community and its effects on family life, economic strategies and on the world view of migrants and non-migrants.

The Nature of Opoja Migration

Opojans participate in several types of labor migration: as day-laborers in the local town of Prizren, as rural-urban migrants to Prizren and Prishtina (the capital of Kosova), as private and state employees in other Yugoslav cities, as "temporary" labor migrants in Western Europe and as "permanent" migrants to Europe, the United States and Canada.

In the present chapter we focus on the migration of Opoja men to other cities of Yugoslavia and to Western Europe. Unless otherwise indicated, the word "migration" will be used here to signify temporary labor migration: relocation outside of Opoja to Yugoslav cities outside of Kosova or to Western Europe for a period of several years to a decade or more with the purpose of improving the living standard of the migrant's extended family back in the village. The end goal of this migration is a return to the village after sufficient funds have been raised to build a house, pay for weddings, purchase land, etc. A "migrant" in the present context is a man working "abroad" (outside of Kosova) to support a family he has left back home. Typically he has been engaged in "internal" migration (within Yugoslavia) before moving on to "external" migration (in Western Europe). He has typically relocated and changed jobs at least once during his tenure in Western Europe.

Virtually every extended family in Opoja has at least one member who works outside of Opoja. There is no rule about which son or sons become migrants in the family; economic circumstances and personal profiles decide this. The family does not tell the boy to go; he sees the need and takes the initiative himself. Many boys work abroad for short periods during summers or after finishing the army at twenty years of age. Many embark on longer missions after becoming engaged or shortly after marriage. A man leaves his new bride with his extended family (parents, brothers, sisters, other in-married women and their children). During his absence the bride accustoms herself to her new life, new family and village, remaining for the most part within the family compound except during visits home or attendance at ritual occasions at the homes of affinal or natal kin.

Most migrants intend to stay abroad from one to five years; most actually stay for ten years or more. Migrants within Yugoslavia visit home every few months, staying for about a week. West European laborers return home for two or three weeks about twice a year, typically during May for the holiday of *Shingjergj* (St. George's Day), during the summer wedding and agricultural season or in January for New Year. Otherwise there is usually little contact with home. Letters are written infrequently, are usually addressed to the head of the household and are filled with general greetings to family members. Rarely do wives receive personal letters from their husbands. Most wives do not know precisely where their husbands live or how to get in touch with them. Urgent communication is accomplished through telegrams sent by a man of the house. The migrants attempt to come home for weddings within the kin group; custom mandates their return for funerals.

A Historical Perspective

We turn now to the history of labor migration in Opoja. Opojans themselves distinguish five distinct phases and types of migration in their region:

The Ottoman Period, late 1500s to early 1900s: migration to other Ottoman territories as professional shepherds or, to a lesser extent, as merchants or with food concessions;

The Inter-War Period, 1912-1940: increased migration as professional shepherds in the mountains of Greece, Macedonia, and Albania and as food concessionaires in the Balkans and in other Yugoslav towns;

Post-War Internal Migration, 1950 to the present (peak 1960s): as physical laborers in northern Yugoslav cities;

Post-War "Official" External Migration, 1964-1973: migration to Western Europe through company contracts with west European employers;

Post-War "Unofficial" External Migration, 1975 to the present: undocumented migration to Western Europe for work as physical laborers.

Migration Prior to World War II

The story of migration in Opoja began centuries ago when marginal land productivity, partible inheritance and scattered land holdings forced many men to seek a livelihood in other regions of the Ottoman Empire. During the height of the Ottoman period in the sixteenth century the sons of many Opoja families were conscripted as Turkish Janissaries and were educated in Istanbul. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, when Ottoman expansion was subdued, the Opojans replaced their military occupations with skills they had learned in Turkey, notably trade in sweets, *boza* (a fermented drink) and grilled meats, and started small concessions in Ottoman lands. Other Opojans began to take on work abroad as shepherds.

Following the Balkan Wars a growing population in Opoja and increasing scarcity of arable land brought about a rise in migration as professional shepherds. Beginning during the Ottoman occupation and continuing into the inter-war period many Opojans worked as hired shepherds in Macedonia, Albania, Turkey and Bulgaria. Those working in the neighboring mountains visited home every two or three months. Those in more distant lands were away for years at a time.

Beginning in the inter-war period and increasing after World War II Opojans also capitalized on their skills in making and selling sweets, which they had acquired in Turkey or inherited from fathers or uncles. Many families had an interest in a small sweet shop in another part of Kosova or elsewhere in Yugoslavia. Typically several men and teen-age boys from a family became involved in the enterprise, leaving the rest of the family behind to run the farm. Some families who established a private business in this way prospered. The craft was passed down to sons who forsook education in order to work in the family business.

Internal Migration After World War II

On the eve of World War II Yugoslavia was seventy per-cent agricultural, burdened by high fertility, huge inequalities in wealth, inadequate investments and heavy dependence on external economic aid. The war devastated the country but brought about a new social order under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito. The post-war years in Yugoslavia meant the introduction of a socialist regime and a renewed spirit of confidence and self-reliance in Yugoslavia. It

was also a time of painful reconstruction, decentralized industrialization and attempts at land collectivization. While agricultural collectivization failed in most parts of Yugoslavia, a plan to distribute the wealth of landed peasants meant that Kosova farmers were heavily taxed and forced to give large quantities of their grain to the government, leaving once prosperous village families hungry. Albanian peasants were especially hard-hit by the convergence of economic hardship and political repression under the reign of Ranković, (head of the secret police under Tito). Opojans remember these years as a period of deprivation, but also as a time when the first primary schools were opened in Albanian language. This brought a ray of hope to a hitherto unschooled people: it was the time when *Na u çelin sytë* [our eyes were opened].

At this time Yugoslavia began a massive program of industrialization, creating a labor market for peasants who moved to urban centers from all parts of the country. Beginning around 1950, the greatest wave of rural-urban migration took place from 1961-1971 when thousands of Albanian men became manual laborers in the capital city of Beograd and in other northern cities, especially in Serbia proper, Vojvodina and Croatia.²

The migrants came from farming families with insufficient land holdings, inadequate incomes and surplus labor. Usually one man in the family migrated, often followed by a brother or cousin. Remaining family members were left behind to tend the farm and to guard the moral integrity of the family. Some men were contracted by Yugoslav firms; others followed the lead of a relative or friend who had established himself as a physical laborer in a factory or as an employee in private or state-owned interests. Initially the men endured extremely poor living conditions, sometimes in their company's bunkhouse, sometimes in private rooms with other laborers. Incomes were mediocre and remittances small, but dire economic circumstances at home left unemployed men no alternative but to migrate. Many men left soon after marriage, returning to visit their new brides every few months. Most of these spent the better part of their adult lives as migrants working at menial jobs, and as a result encouraged their sons to pursue an education and avoid the fate of their fathers.

In 1946, at twenty-three, I returned from the army and became engaged. In 1949 I married, and a month later went to Beograd. I had had no schooling, had been a shepherd as a child, and didn't want to be a shepherd anymore. I didn't go through a firm, but through the will of God [taking his chances at finding work upon arrival in Beograd]. I worked in a textile mill, then selling fruits. When I first went, there was never enough room for sleeping. We slept like sardines—everyone slept on one side, then at once we'd say, okay, now everybody turn over. From 1964 to 1977 I worked in a publishing house. Out of four brothers, three of us went to Beograd (Miftar).

The 1960s: Migration to Europe

I had always been the type to go abroad. For some years I worked in sweet shops for Opojans in Croatia and Macedonia. Then I returned to be married and worked on the farm for a year. One day in 1966 I met a friend leaving for Germany, and he invited me to join him. *Q'aty u lidh momenti* - That was the decisive moment. It was fate that I should go abroad (Mustaf).

Yugoslavia's post-war industrialization did not provide sufficient employment for the masses of former peasants seeking work in the cities. A drive to get Yugoslav products into the international market through modernization of the country's industry in the 1960s exacerbated the problem by reducing factory employment. As the baby-boom generation reached working age, employment within Yugoslavia became increasingly competitive. From 1966 to 1970 Yugoslavia's employment services could find jobs for only 13% of some 300,000 seeking work (Baučić 1972). Yugoslavia faced a huge deficit coupled with dependence on imports of energy and raw materials (Baletić 1982).

At the same time migration opportunities were opening in western Europe. Informal external migration (especially to France and Germany), which had begun in the mid-fifties, had reached significant proportions by the early 1960s. Official Yugoslav policy was opposed to external migration, but the outflow could not be stopped once it had begun. By 1964 the administration had accepted migration as necessary, and the economic reforms of 1965 liberalized international cooperation and legalized temporary employment abroad. During the period of 1964 to 1973 external migration was organized in Yugoslavia through local employment bureaus.

By 1971 Yugoslavia had the highest labor migration from southern to northern Europe after Portugal (Baučić 1972). In 1972 the number of Yugoslavs employed abroad or unemployed approached the number employed in Yugoslavia (Halpern 1973:109). Temporary, officially sanctioned migration of Yugoslavs in Western Europe reached its peak in 1973.³ The bulk of migration was to West Germany, with fewer numbers in Austria, France, Switzerland, Sweden and Holland (see Rogers 1985:7).⁴ As of 1981, 85% of Yugoslavs employed outside of the country were in western Europe (Blaku 1987).

During the 1970s the threat of widespread unemployment began to be felt in Kosova. This coincided with an increased demand on the part of European factories for labor from southern Europe and the Albanians' growing disenchantment with farming, which had begun in the 1960s. Interested in cheap, southern labor markets, West European firms began recruiting workers through contracts with established Kosova firms. Having established a stable standard of living through a combination of farming, internal migration and local wage labor,

many Opoja men were able to go abroad in search of work. Unemployed men were able to secure contracted work abroad through their local employment bureaus. By 1973, 38,000 Kosova males had registered for work abroad. During the period of 1964-1977 Albanians constituted the largest proportion of external migrants to domestically employed people (77.9%), followed by Serbs at 15.7% (Blaku 1988). By the mid-1970s a steady chain of external migration was in motion among Kosova Albanians.⁵ Most of the migrants (85%) were between the ages of twenty and thirty-four, with the largest percentage (25.4%) between twenty-five and twenty-nine (Blaku 1988).

Following 1973 the labor policies of European countries became increasingly restrictive and contracts with Yugoslav firms diminished. At this time the number of "unofficial," "private" migrants increased. Men found work through relatives, friends, or through "the will of God." During the 1970s and 1980s, while in other parts of Yugoslavia more men were returning from migration than were leaving (a 7% decrease), the number of migrants from the southern, less developed regions of the country was on the rise. In Kosova the number of external migrants increased by 18.9% (from 24,361 to 28,965) between 1971 and 1981 (Blaku 1987). In the 1980s, compared to other parts of Yugoslavia Kosova had the highest proportion of external migrants relative to the number of men employed at home. In 1981 the highest percentage of Kosova migrants (74.7%) was in West Germany, then in Austria (8.5%), Switzerland (6.4%) and France (4.0%). Of all of the Kosova counties, the lowest percentage of Kosova migrants in West Germany was from Opoja, while Opoja had the highest percentage in Austria (Blaku 1988). In 1979 there were more than 32,000 Kosova Albanians officially employed as temporary laborers in Western Europe and 40,000 others seeking jobs elsewhere in Yugoslavia (Rilindja: June 1, 1979 and December 10 1979).

External Migration in the 1980s

The 1980s were a period of inflation and general economic hardship in Yugoslavia. Unemployment in Kosova rose from 12% in 1960 to 20% in 1970 and to 27% in 1987 (Blaku (1988). Worsening political tensions and ethnic unrest between the nationalities, fueled by economic decline, the death in 1980 of Tito—symbol of Yugoslav unity and minority rights—and widespread disillusionment with the promise of equal rights and prosperity in a united Yugoslavia, filled Albanians with the desire to migrate.

During this decade the migration population changed. Previously almost all migrants were unskilled physical laborers. According to the 1971 census, the majority of migrants (61.8%) were farmers. Most had been in school less than eight years.⁶ In the 1970s and 1980s

Prishtina's university produced masses of college graduates, flooding an already strained labor market now bursting at the seams. In 1988 Kosova's daily newspaper reported that 1,558 college graduates and 1,740 graduates of professional schools were out of work and seeking employment (Rilindja, May 15). College-educated, professional people now swelled the ranks of the migrants desperately seeking work in Western Europe and America. Albanian engineering students dug ditches in Geneva and washed dishes in Munich; Albanian medical doctors drove taxis in New York and sold pizzas in Chicago.

As the number of potential migrants grew, the labor demand in Western Europe decreased. West European countries which once beckoned laborers from the south had officially closed their doors to incoming workers. In 1973 Germany stopped recruiting migrants, and the other European countries quickly followed suit. Switzerland, while officially closed to new permit applicants, was and is seen by many Albanian as the last outpost for migration within Europe. Every month scores of Opojans scrape together the \$100 train fare to Zurich, Bern or Geneva, hoping to meet up with a relative, friend or fellow villager who will help them find undocumented employment which will lead somehow to the acquisition of a work permit. Without a permit or letter of invitation from a prospective employer many men and boys are turned back at the border. Those who are successful in penetrating the frontier face a desperate hunt for employment and lodging. Some, unable to find work after three, six or nine months, must borrow money for a ticket home.

Opoja Migration Statistics

The precise number of Opoja men employed outside of Kosova is not known. Official local statistics are unreliable owing to the large numbers of men who migrate privately, leaving no forwarding address with the state. This problem is complicated by the fact that Dragash county statistics usually combine the numbers of Opoja and Gora, the other ethnographic region in its domain. The county planning commission (Shërbimi i Planet e Komunës) estimates that out of a combined population of 35,000, 4,000 men from Gora and Opoja are employed in 245 towns throughout Yugoslavia, mainly in Bosnia, Macedonia, Serbia, Vojvodina, the Adriatic coast and in Slovenia. While the men of Gora have always been employed principally in private businesses (restaurants, cafes and sweet shops), due to a somewhat more educated populace, Opojans have been employed to a greater extent by the state. It is safe to assume that an official figure of 1,043 men from Gora and Opoja employed outside Yugoslavia is grossly underestimated.

Attitudes About Migration

Migration as "The Only Solution"

Opojali është biri i gyrbetit.
The Opojan is the son of migration.

Opojës ia zbardh fytyrën veç gyrbeti.
Only migration saves the face of Opoja.

How long have the Opojans been migrant laborers?
As long as anybody can remember.

All regions of Kosova are involved in rural-urban, internal and external migration to varying degrees, but a long history of out-migration has led Opojans to identify their territory as the quintessential land of migration. To be an Opojan is to be a migrant, or to be the son, brother, father or the wife, sister or daughter of a migrant. This identification is of course common in many southern European communities. In southern Italy Leman tells us that "emigration is a fundamental Sicilian reality, Sicily being synonymous with emigration. One emigrates because one is a Sicilian" (1980:91).

"Migration" is not a nice word, it is a painful word. But there's nothing we can do about it. It's our fate. Otherwise no one would have become a migrant. Life is hard for a woman with her husband gone. But there's nothing they can do. It's fate. It's the way this place is. We must migrate in order to live. "*S'ke rrugëdalje tjetër*" - You have no other choice (Osman).

While other regions of Kosova share a history of poverty and scarcity, the Opojans see themselves as a people plagued by particularly difficult economic circumstances. Any discussion of the region evokes a reference to poor land and high population density which have made migration inevitable. While it is clear that other regions of Kosova have also suffered, to the Opojan the people in these other places have at least been able to draw a livelihood out of their land; they have an existence—*kanë jetesë*—where the Opojans have none. The ubiquity in Opoja of large homes, tractors, expensive foreign cars and well-dressed passers-by are the product of migrant remittances, and mask a history of poverty and suffering which dominates the Opoja mind. It is not unusual to hear an Opojan say that "Opoja is one of the poorest regions, not just in Europe, but in the world."

In the minds of men and women in Opoja, external migration provides the only hope of escaping poverty. Everyone tells a tale that confirms this.

We were always poor. No one had any schooling at all. When Hitler came to power the wars started, all the countries were arguing, and finally the barriers to other countries were lifted. Then we got the chance to go as migrants to other countries, and we came back and bought land, built houses. Before we had never heard of Australia. Now we are—in America, in Europe, everywhere (Asllan).

There is a man in the neighboring village who was a goatherd. He had seven children, was very poor, and no one would give their daughter to his son in marriage. Five years ago the son went to Switzerland, and in three or four years created a higher standard than anyone in the village. Now he has his pick of brides (Ridvan).

The Discourse Over Migration: Negative and Positive Views

<p>Kush ma së pari mori, More djalë gyrbetin, Mos ja dhashtë allahi, Kurrë selametin! Kur ma së pari dola, Pa bukë më shkoj dita, Jabanxhi qillova, Ku me lyp nuk dita. Larg prej nënës e fmijve, Zemra gjithë m'u dridhke, Për me pa shoqniën, Merhami s'm'u hiqke. Keq kryet ish tuj m'dhimtun, S'kish kush m'freskon ballin, Jabanxhisë së mjerë, Nuk ja din kush hallin.</p>	<p>He who first went out, On the migrant trail, May God never, Give him peace! When I first set out, The days went by with no bread to eat, I found myself a stranger, And knew not where to turn. Far from my mother and my children, My heart was always aching, To see my companions, My desire never abated. How my head throbbed, And there was no one to wipe my brow, Oh pitiful stranger, No one knows his troubles.</p>
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The idea of migration as an existential inevitability is a relic of decades of marginal existence for many Opoja families. Now that most families have secured a solid, if modest, standard of living through a combination of agriculture, wage labor and temporary migration, the question is inevitably posed: is migration necessary for existence? Would it not be preferable to have a lower standard but have the menfolk at home? Some men maintain that it is better to have a lower living standard and keep the family together.

I would never switch places with my brother in Switzerland. To be separated from family, from community, what then is the good of living? I had the chance to go in search of francs, but then where is life? We are aware of the economic crisis here, but we must accept our poor conditions in order to be close to family. Our father told us to finish school so that we would not be dependent on anyone, so that we would not have to be a physical laborer that everyone stepped on. Better to have a modest standard of living than work abroad and be stepped on (Ridvan). [Note: this man is now living and working in Geneva, having left parents, wife and children back in Opoja.]

In contrast to this point of view, most Opojans agree that despite the hardship which migration inflicts on the man living abroad and on his wife and family back home, the sacrifices made are worth the improved standard back home. When asked whether it would be preferable to have a lower standard of living but have the men at home, a typical response is, "No! Everyone is used to the idea that it's normal for one man to sacrifice for the good of the rest. One goes, and the rest live well" (Valdet).

There has always been a sense of conflict, envy and defensiveness between the migrants working within Yugoslavia and those in western Europe. Men working within Yugoslavia have defended their family's inferior economic standard by saying that the sacrifice one makes in living far from one's family is not worth the profit gained. "What good does the money do them if, in the case of illness or death, they are not nearby?" Internal migrants also argue that the infrequent visits home by European migrants put at risk the moral integrity and reputations of wives and daughters. Opposing this, migrants who have gone abroad argue that they have been the visionaries, establishing a foothold which others would follow. They see themselves as having introduced a higher living standard to Opoja and as having exposed Opojans to the meaning of life outside the village.

In the 1980s the attitudes about external migration changed as economic considerations began to pale to moral ones. The ideological conflict between the merits of internal and external migration was overshadowed by a hopelessness about Yugoslavia's economic and political future. It was no longer a question of migrating within the country in order to remain close to kin: anyone who could secure a bed and a job abroad would head straight for the border.

The Perception of Migration Among Opoja's Youth

During the 1970s any Opoja boy who had the ability and the means went on to college or professional school in the hope of securing a stable job in the public sector, preferably in Opoja. Large scale unemployment in the 1980s changed this. Hopeless about an economic future in Kosova, today few Opoja boys continue their education beyond high school. They are resigned to the fact that, like their fathers before them, they must become migrants.

Many Opoja boys get their first taste of migration during high school summers or after military service following high school. Many leave Opoja with a friend, spending two or three months working for a relative or fellow Opojan in a private food concession or at an undocumented job in another part of Yugoslavia. Others pick up undocumented short-term work arranged by a relative in Western Europe.

While most boys consider these brief excursions an adventure, relishing the prospect of going abroad for a short time, they are of mixed minds about long-term migration. For some, the appeal of hard currency earned abroad obscures their awareness of the hardships of a life away from family and community. They consider themselves fortunate in having the chance to go abroad. One-third of all boys in my study wanted to migrate abroad (see Appendix 1).

When young boys are asked why none of them think of becoming farmers, they say it is because there is not enough land in Opoja; every parcel is spoken for. And because of migration. How can anyone seeing the standard of the migrant be satisfied with the earnings of a farmer?

When they built the yarn factory we could have rebuilt a strong pastoral economy in Opoja. But who wants to stay and watch the sheep when everyone is migrating, running after francs and marks? I would go too if I had the chance. If I earn thirty million (\$150) at my job, do you call that money? The people go because they have to be sure about their existence, about securing bread (Bajram).

It is understood that we have to become migrants. The prospect of migrating is a weight on everyone's shoulders. We don't like the idea, but for most families it is reality. Migration is the tradition established by our forefathers. It has always been this way. To maintain your wife and children, it is better for you yourself to go abroad than to leave it up to someone else. We all want to go abroad to work, not for pleasure, but out of an obligation to the family. It's nice to visit Europe, but not to stay (Nexhmi).

The ideal of most Opoja boys is to work in Europe for three or four years to save money for weddings and housing, and then to return to Opoja to live in the village and find a job in the private or public sector. While the boys entertain dreams of creating an economic base for themselves during a few years abroad, many of their fathers, themselves migrants, advise their sons against it. "My father told me, 'You plan to go for a couple of years, but you'll get stuck there, you'll get the taste for money, and will stay as I did, far away from your family.' My father knows the pain of migration. He doesn't want the same for me" (Nexhmi).

Representations of the Migration Experience

Kush s'e ka hângër mërzinë e gyrbetit nuk e din qysh është, kjo jetë.
He who has not tasted the sorrow of migration
doesn't know what this life is about.

I ndam dhe i përquam, veç për një dinar
Separate and exiled, just for one dinar.

Bukë e kryp, por në shtëpinë tëndë.
Bread and salt, but in your own house.

Having endured separation from their family and birthplace for many years, many long-term Opoja migrants lament their lives abroad as strangers in a foreign land increasingly disjointed from their "home." They represent the migration experience to those around them in strictly negative terms.

If there were jobs at home I would go back even if I had only bread and salt to eat there. I would never want to become French. We all want to go back. Our minds are there, our bodies here (Ibadet).

It seems to me that I have grown twice as old as I would have at home. I am longing for even the thorns of my homeland, all of the time. The homes I have built back home and here are nothing, nothing. Material profit isn't important. A person is meant to live in his homeland. I consider these years in France as emptiness, loss. I could have built a house if I'd been living there, it just would have taken longer. And the experience has been no good for the children. The children speak Albanian with many mistakes—this is hard for me (Besnik).

Paris is a jungle. I had never wanted to come here, but had no choice. When we are here we are strangers, and when we return to Kosova we are strangers. We are always nostalgic about going home, thinking it will be better there, but when we return we are not as they are. Now we're neither here nor there. We don't want to stay here anymore, but can't go back because of high unemployment in Kosova (Beqir).

Back in the village migrants sometimes represent their experience abroad in negative terms as part of specific social strategies. If the migrant's home community sees him as emotionally distant from them, he stands to lose his identity and authority there. In this context, in order to preserve his integrity the migrant denigrates life abroad, asserting his preference for the lifestyle back home. When he returns home he tells his fellow villagers that even with small incomes and low living standards they are better off at home within the circle of kin, living under the moral dictates of the past. He presents himself as an indivisible part of his social circle, the *rreth*, demonstrating that his first concern is with home, that his emotional link is there.

While he is proud of his accomplishments, the migrant does not want to inspire envy among his close compatriots and may belittle his experience abroad in order to maintain his place within his close community. Given the fierce competition over jobs in Europe in the 1980s, he may also emphasize the negative aspects of migration in order to discourage others from going abroad.

The representation of the migration experience changes when the migrant is with other migrants or among close confidants. In these contexts the migrant may emphasize the positive aspects of migration in order to elevate his reputation. He may exaggerate the ease of finding

work and the profits to be made abroad. "People believe on the basis of returnees who really were successful. They believe because they want to believe. It helps them in their psychological depression, in their hopelessness, and they tell their friends, to make themselves feel better" (Ridvan). In this way myths are generated and transmitted, inspiring ever more boys to set out on the migrant trail.

The migrant tends to maintain contrasting positive and negative images of migration within himself simultaneously. He denounces life abroad to himself and to his home community in order to maintain social and ideological unity with his compatriots, but at the same he keeps his own peace of mind in the knowledge that he has achieved success by improving the condition of his family. While denouncing migration and life abroad in public contexts back home, in his own mind he is creating plans for the future—for the house he will build, the wedding he will pay for, the tractor he will buy—believing within himself that his contact with the outside world has been for the best.

An Ideology of Ever-Increasing Need

While other Yugoslav migrant groups have been motivated not just by economic need but by "a desire to participate in urban ways of life" (Denitch 1970:125), for the majority of Albanians migration has always been economically rather than socially motivated. While the economic goal of Albanian labor migration within Yugoslavia during the 1950s and early 1960s was to secure an existence for migrants' families, exposure to the potential power of hard-currency remittances brought by external migration has created an ever-increasing hunger for an improved living standard.

Most Opojans who ventured abroad in the 1970s and 1980s planned to stay for a few years, to earn enough money to build a house back home, to buy a tractor, to buy more land, and/or to pay for the wedding of a younger brother. But in most cases the perceived needs of the family grow and the migrant feels compelled to prolong his stay in order to meet these growing needs. After fifteen or more years abroad, the migrant starts anticipating his retirement, and stays long enough to earn the pension which will secure his family's economic future.

We all say we were going for a year or two, but then it's, "Well, and this year, and the next," until we are there for decades (Sabri).

All the migrants I know in Switzerland came with the intention of staying a few years, but when they got a hold of some cash, their desire, their "need" for capital grew and a few years turned quickly into a decade (Xhemali).

In the beginning I thought I would stay two or three years [laughter]. My goal was to build a house back home, to buy a tractor, to put my brothers through school. But when these goals were reached I couldn't stop, couldn't say "that's enough," because I wasn't working for myself, but for the whole family, and their needs are always growing (Esat).

Today the people of Opoja are preoccupied with having a better living standard. They have seen the luxury brought by those who work outside, and are convinced that migration to Europe is the answer. They deceive themselves, they fool themselves with dreams of money. They extend their stay longer abroad as their desire for an ever higher standard increases (Ridvan).

The same sentiment is expressed by Portuguese migrants.

It is the illusion of money which brings us [to Paris]. We can live in Portugal. We have enough money to eat, but not to buy a car or a house. At the end of a year there is never anything to put aside. People know it is all an illusion, a dream, but they still live with it and by it. There are always rich people around. We see what we do not have but might have (Brettell 1979:5).

Migrant Families Abroad

The Migrant's Dilemma: Taking Families Abroad or Leaving Them Behind

Migration is seen by most Kosova Albanians as a temporary means of acquiring money for families back in Kosova. The majority of migrants do not take their wives or families with them except for short periods of time, usually leaving them in the care of fathers, brothers or uncles in extended families back in the village. Of all Yugoslav ethnic groups who work abroad as migrant laborers, Albanians are the least likely to take their wives and children with them when they leave home. According to 1971 statistics, Kosova has the highest percentage of nuclear families (72.6%) who do not join the migrant abroad (compared to 14% in Slovenia). Less than two percent of the total female population of Kosova lives abroad with their husbands (compared to 42.7% of the female population in Vojvodina). Of the females who do live abroad, the lowest percentage (5.3%) of working women are Albanian (compared to 45.1% of Vojvodina women who live abroad) (Blaku 1987).

Most Yugoslav migrants leave home seeking a better life for nuclear families who usually join them abroad. The tendency of Albanian migrants to leave wives and children at home stems from their economic and ideological orientation toward the welfare of the extended family back in the village. The sending community remains the locus of emotional

and social attention. It is still in the village that honor is gained and lost, and self-respect is engendered and maintained. It is this orientation toward the home community which, for several reasons, causes the men to leave behind wives and children.

The first considerations in leaving wives and children home are economic. Most migrants live in primitive accommodations abroad in order to maximize savings to send home. Especially during the first five years abroad, most have very modest living arrangements and cannot provide adequate housing accommodations for a wife or children. Even if the migrant has the means to increase his standard of living abroad, the expense of maintaining family members away from home defeats the migrant's goal of saving as much money as possible to improve life in the village.

The conservative moral orientation of the Albanian compounds this economic dilemma, discouraging him from allowing his wife to work and thus to justify economically her presence abroad. The men of other ethnic groups allow their wives to work abroad, giving the migrants an economic incentive to bring their families with them. Many Opoja men, especially those who migrated before the 1980s, want to limit their wives' contact with foreign men and consequently discourage female employment abroad. In this context a wife and family abroad are seen as a financial burden. Many men rationalize not letting their wives work based on the need for her at home for her domestic services, but moral considerations are always at issue.

I never thought of having my wife work here. Who would care for the children?
Now my children are grown, but someone must be home to take care of the house.
And besides, our tradition doesn't allow a woman to go out and work among
strangers (Ibadet).

After economic and social considerations, ideological motives weigh heavily on the migrant's decision to leave his family at home. In spite of the emotional hardship which living apart inflicts upon all family members, many men believe that women and children are better off at home in Kosova, far from the "immoral," threatening, alienating world outside. The men believe it is harder to protect the honor of one's women, and therefore of oneself, in a foreign country. Women back home live under the "protection" and watchful eye of their husbands' parents. Those with husbands abroad are under closer surveillance by the family and more intense scrutiny by the community. They must overcompensate for their husbands' absence by allowing themselves to be seen outside the home as seldom as possible, by remaining out of sight or in the background when guests are present, and by maintaining very proper behavior. Under these conditions the migrants feel confident that their wives' behavior, and thus their own reputations via-a-vis their wives' respectability, will remain untarnished. This idea is

echoed in other Mediterranean societies. In Turkey "a woman's safety is regarded as secure in the village whether or not her husband is present, since it is taken for granted that fellow villagers will see to it that her husband's sovereign rights over her are fully respected" (Engelbrektsson 1978:22).

Another factor which argues against bringing families abroad is the migrant's desire for his children to marry and settle in Opoja. Migrants considering the prospect of taking their families abroad anticipate the problem of re-assimilating children who have lived in foreign country into life back in Kosova. A foreign cultural and academic education and a compromising moral context during adolescent years abroad are considered detrimental to the goal of settling back in the village. In spite of the perceived low standards of local village schools, it is assumed that a German or French education will leave children ill-prepared for a future in Kosova. This factor dissuades many men with young children and those with children already in school in Kosova from taking them abroad.

Families Abroad

In spite of these incentives to maintain the family back home, long-term migrants or those who anticipate a protracted tenure abroad long to bring their families to join them. If economic circumstances make this possible, some men do bring their families with them. Inasmuch as they are bound ideologically and spiritually to life in Kosova and to Albanian values, their greatest fear is the assimilation of children within the host society. Parents live in profound dread that children raised abroad will lose the language and customs which identify them as Albanian. When asked why her father doesn't send for them, an Opoja girl replies, "*S'po don na fejën me hup*" [He doesn't want us to lose our religion (our customs)] (Naile). The ultimate fear is that children will marry non-Albanians and become "lost" to the foreign culture.

The preoccupation of Albanian parents here is how to go back to Kosova soon and rescue the children from assimilation into French culture. We tell the children to speak Albanian, but they continue to speak French, even with other Albanian children. They are inundated with French culture, especially the boys, despite our efforts to educate them in another way (Beqir).

Our worst nightmare is that the children will stay in France, that they will marry foreigners, that they will lose our tradition. I am completely preoccupied with the engagement of my children. Even in my sleep I'm thinking about it, worrying that they will marry non-Albanians. When I realize I've been here for twenty years and have only that house I built to show for it... I haven't accomplished a thing if the children don't come back to Kosova (Ibadet).

I would never let my son marry a French woman. They would forever be fighting. I wouldn't let her in the house. If he wants to take a French woman, let him stay here and lead a French life, not live with me. And French men don't stay married to a girl; they all get divorced. Albanians don't do that. No Albanian approves of marriage with foreigners. We are Albanians and must marry Albanians. I'm constantly telling my children this (Florie).

Perhaps the greatest dilemma for migrant families centers on the return of adolescent girls to Kosova before their moral reputations are damaged. Most migrant families plan for their daughters to marry back in the village, and it is generally assumed that girls who fail to return to Kosova prior to adolescence will be thought of as morally compromised and will have a difficult time on the Albanian marriage market. Migrants with whom I spoke estimate that eighty percent of long-term migrant families who return home do so to insure that their daughters' reputations will not be compromised by living too long abroad.

Female Migrants: Their Influence on Perception in the Sending Community

We must in this context consider the influence of migrant women on the perception back in the village. While we might expect that migrating women would assimilate new ideas abroad which they would introduce back home, my research indicates that when women who have lived abroad return to visit or live in Kosova they have little impact on local attitudes. This is due in part to the sheltered lives they live abroad and in part to the same issues of identity and "institutionalized nostalgia" which infect male migrants. Whether or not migrant women come to affect world view and behavior back in the village depends on the length of their stay abroad, the frequency of visits home, the nature of their experience outside, and the number of village families who are living abroad.

While an increasing number of Opoja men are bringing their wives to live with them abroad, the majority of women who join their husbands do so on a part time basis, visiting for one to six months. The behavior of different generations of migrant women who visit or live with their husbands abroad varies considerably. Generally confined to a life within apartment walls, the wives of older migrants come home with only a limited experience of the host country. But not all migrant wives live secluded lives abroad. The wives of younger migrants may appropriate the fashions and some of the attitudes of the host country and even go to work. The behavioral norm lies between these extremes. The majority of women remain primarily within the confines of their apartments tending to domestic chores. Most wear the traditional *dimia* indoors, dressing *à la franga* [western style] outside. They may go shopping at local stores

accompanied by children, husbands or neighbors, or in some cases alone. Their range of movement does not usually extend beyond the immediate neighborhood except when they are accompanied by their husbands.

The women's social ties tend to be limited to their immediate neighbors or to other Albanian families in the area. As most men have established themselves abroad following the lead of relatives or fellow villagers, their social lives are often in place upon arrival abroad. Their wives, married to men from other villages or regions, have no organic social network, no blood ties to unite them to other women. It is usually through children that the women have contact with the outside. The women tend to establish ties with only a few other Albanian families who may live some distance away.

Whether or not women have freedom of movement or adopt "modern" fashions, they seldom internalize the local mentality to any great degree. As Berit Backer has observed among Albanian women in Norway, living abroad "does not mean becoming Norwegian, but being Albanian in a new context (Backer 1986:2). Most Opoja women agree that for the majority of women, the restricted nature of their lives is the same at home or abroad.⁷ The Opojans with whom I spoke concur:

Most women's lives are the same abroad as here. Maybe it's different there because there's no cow to care for, the bread is purchased instead of made by hand, there is no farm work to do, there is something to see when you go out. For these reasons women like foreign cities. But for the majority, their behavior and the division of labor are the same away from home as in the village (Vlora).

They are the same wherever they are, even if they take on different habits when they're away (Bislim).

Researchers have found that migrant women coming from societies oriented toward the nuclear family, "while more 'objectively' linked to the culture of origin," come to direct their energy and attention towards life abroad and lose interest in returning home. Their husbands, "the most 'objectively' adjusted to the host country," remain psychologically linked to the sending community (Leman 1980:96). Albanian village women leave extended families back home, and like their husbands tend to retain deep affective ties to home. Those who remain abroad for extended periods of time and who have children in school in the host country eventually adopt some local customs. But most continue to be directed by Albanian values and social relationships. Superficial changes in dress and comportment acquired abroad are shed upon return to the village. Alternative behavioral models observed abroad seldom influence the migrant women's behavior when she is back home and rarely affect the women who remain in the sending community.

Notes

1. The bi-monthly journal *Migracije*, published by the Center of Migration Research in Zagreb, is a primary source of migration studies in Yugoslavia. For other examples of Yugoslav migration research see: Burić 1973, Milić 1973, Simić 1973, Županov 1973, Gardun 1974, Ugljesic and Bokun 1974, Hammel 1977, Morokvasic 1978 and Bennett 1979.

2. Kosova's internal migration was on the increase from the end of World War II through the seventies as indicated by the numbers of Kosova men who migrated to other parts of Yugoslavia during three periods:

1946-1952 - 11,316

1953-1960 - 27,479

1961-1971 - 67,678 (Blaku 1988)

3. The numbers of Yugoslavs working abroad were as follows:

140,000 in 1965

660,000 in 1971

860,000 in 1973

735,000 in 1976

690,000 in 1979 (Baletić 1982:746).

4. The percentage of Yugoslavs in European countries are:

56% in West Germany

19% in Austria

8% in France

7% in Switzerland (Blaku 1987)

Labor agreements were set up at the following times:

1965 with Austria and France

1967 with Sweden

1969 with Germany, Australia and Luxembourg

1970 with Holland and Belgium

In 1969 after the first Yugoslav-German labor agreement, 192,000 Yugoslavs went to work in Germany. In 1971, 54.4% of German jobs for foreigners went to Yugoslavs.

Austria and France paid lower wages than Germany, but Austria was a more favorable venue because of its proximity. Sweden offered high wages and favorable benefits, but was considered too far away (Baučić 1972).

5. According to the 1971 census Kosova had a relatively small percentage (2.9%) of its workers abroad (compared to 9% from Montenegro and 38.4% from Croatia). But Kosova had the second largest percentage (25%) of people employed abroad in proportion to people employed within the country (compared to 10.2% in Montenegro and 34.2% in Croatia (Baučić 1972:13).
6. The distribution of Kosova migrants according to educational background was as follows:

	1988	1971
Less than eight years	31.5%	46.7%
Eight years of school	28.7%	29.0%
High school	23.4%	
College	1%	

The ratio of Kosova migrants with incomplete primary educations to those with college was: 166:1 (1988), 251:1 (1971). This was the widest span in Yugoslavia.

1988 data: Provincial Employment Association, Prishtina

1971 data: Blaku 1988

7. In her research with Turks in Germany, Abadan-Unat has shown that while women who are "permanent" migrants alter their behavior substantially, taking on many traditionally male roles in terms of decision-making and authority, temporary migrants (who are in the majority) change only their consumption patterns (1981:28). While in Turkey the absence of men in the village has changed women's roles there, giving them much greater authority and decision-making power in the family, the lives of migrant women get "frozen" in an effort to maintain allegiance to traditions of the past which reinforce the migrant's ethnic identity.

Chapter VI

Effects of Migration on Social Life in the Sending Community

Effects of Migration on the Migrant's Wife and Children Left at Home

<p>Ka ardh baci prej Gjermanije, Nuk po e gjin-o gruen në shpie. Edhe fmija rrugë më rrugë, Tash sa ditë i kishin hup. E paska marrë dreqi konakun, I madh e i vogël, Kanë marrë sokakun. I dha gas fordit, rentakart, Nuk ka marka me ndej gajtë. More bacë, more i zi, Prishe shpin, trete fmi!</p>	<p>The old man has returned from Germany, And doesn't find his wife at home. The children too are out on the street, No one has seen them for days now. The devil and taken over the house, Large and small ones alike, Have taken to the street. He's put gas into his Ford, his "Rent-a-Car," But doesn't have the money to stay long. Oh old man, you scoundrel, You've ruined your house, you've abandoned your children!</p>
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A migrant's decision to leave his wife and children in the village imposes special social, psychological and practical burdens on the nuclear group left behind to cope with life in the extended family. In the first place it is generally understood that families of absentee men must be particularly scrupulous about their behavior in order to maintain their reputations. The wives and daughters in the migrant's nuclear family are under closer scrutiny by their community than those whose menfolk are nearby, and are expected to exhibit modest, controlled behavior at all times, *me rrujt fytyrën* [to guard their face/honor] lest they be judged dishonorable by their social circle. This extra demand for decorum and modesty stems from the migrant's need to protect his own honor which is based upon the respectability of his family members, and from his need to demonstrate his unbending allegiance to his community. "He insists that his family back home behave in a traditional way as a show, an appearance, to maintain himself as a part of his moral community" (Rami).¹

Some Opojans say that this exaggerated social control in migrants' families began to be applied in the 1970s. They attribute it to a general loosening of moral restraints in the village which have forced migrants to be increasingly vigilant about the honor of their families back home.

As a corollary to the tendency of exaggerated modesty on the part of the migrant's wife and children, the migrant's absence may have the effect of augmenting discipline and order in his house as his father, uncles and brothers attempt to compensate for his absence. But his absence may also have the opposite effect, especially in households where there are no men present. Many Opojans comment on the difficulty of maintaining discipline and order in the absence of adult men.

The migrant's nuclear family may also suffer a disadvantage in the absence of anyone to look out for their particular needs. While the head of the extended family attempts to be fair in his dealings with all family members and to see equally to everyone's needs, the absence of a husband can create special problems for the migrant's wife. I witnessed one example of this in which a woman with a potentially serious gynecological problem was unable to enlist the assistance of her father-in-law in taking her to the doctor in the city for this kind of intimate problem. Unable to go alone or with someone outside the household, an act which would compromise her reputation, she could only wait out the consequences of her inaction. This is an extreme example, but it is indicative of the more subtle type of problems the "women left behind" often encounter.

The migrant's own family does not usually receive material compensation in the form of special furnishings, clothes or gifts for the extra burdens placed upon them. In order to avoid creating disharmony between in-married women and their children in the extended family, a migrant is usually very careful not to favor his own nuclear family with extra presents or attention, such that in most cases there is insignificant material compensation for an absent husband or father. "My father had to take precautions to be fair. If he had apples or pears, he had to give them to the other children first so there would not be bad words between the brides" (Verime).

Effects on the Authority and Economic Role of Migrants' Wives

While in some societies the out-migration of men tends to empower the women who remain in the village in terms of their personal authority in the domestic sphere and in their social network, this is not necessarily the case among Albanians in Opoja. In Opoja when a woman's husband is absent there is usually at least one other man at home—her husband's father, brother or uncle—who directs and controls the household even with respect to the lives of the migrant's nuclear family. In typical extended families the migrant's remittances are given to the male head of the household who controls the family's finances. While a woman does indeed influence the day-to-day activities of her children, decisions about marriage

arrangement, the education of children, visits to kin in other villages, attendance at ritual events and other decisions which affect the children's future or reflect upon the family's reputation, are usually in the hands of the head male of the household.

Another limiting factor on women's appropriation of power in the absence of husbands is the stringent behavioral control imposed by the power of public opinion, the judgment of one's *rreth* or social circle. Unless accompanied by a man of her household, a mother-in-law or at least by a child, an Opoja woman does not go to the local town of Dragash for the weekly market or to see a doctor or dentist, she does not visit kin in other villages, she does not go shopping or on social visits to the nearby city of Prizren. Whether or not a woman's husband is a migrant does not affect this rule. Thus, while in other societies a husband's absence may cause a woman to increase her range of movement and activities in public, this does not tend to be the case in Opoja.

Central to the discussion of the effect of migration on women's roles in the sending community is the impact of migration on the division of labor and on the importance of a woman's economic role as perceived by the family and community. In 1972, an article in the local women's journal lamented:

In the past the mountain woman had to be everywhere: taking care of her many children, working in the fields, caring for the animals, doing the work which would bring honor to her husband's name. Today this has changed little. Many men now turn their backs on their families and travel far to earn a dinar. Still today the men go away and the women are left with the duties which have befallen them for centuries on end (Kosovarja, March 1972:6).

Before the great waves of external labor migration, agricultural and pastoral production played a much larger part in the economy of Opoja families dependent on small-scale farming, local wages or on meager remittances from menfolk working as migrants in other parts of the Balkans or within Yugoslavia. In the past women who lived in households where no men were present did indeed break down the traditional division of labor, going themselves to gather wood, to tend livestock, to plow and to harvest, in addition to performing the agricultural chores usually assigned to women.

Unlike other regions of Kosova where women are responsible for much of the pastoral work and farming, Opojans have always put a premium on keeping women within the family compound except when there is no one else to do the work. While middle-aged women and girls do tend gardens, girls who are engaged to be married and brides in the first years of marriage rarely take part in field labor unless absolutely necessary.

For families today who do not have remittances from abroad, or for those who receive insufficient financing from outside, agriculture may continue to be the household's mainstay. Women with absentee husbands who live in families heavily dependent on agriculture do indeed perform more field labor than their counterparts with migrant remittances or with husbands at home. But a division of labor is maintained. When it comes time to harvest or cut wood for the winter, neighborhood men from the husband's patriline are usually recruited to perform what are considered the "male" jobs.

As reported in other Mediterranean societies, the out-migration of men does have a negative impact on the perceived importance of women's economic roles in the village (see Bućinić and Youseef 1978; Hammam 1981; Sacks and Scheper-Hughes 1986). As remittances from outside overshadow the significance of the domestic economy, the woman's own economic contributions in terms of domestic and agricultural labor are marginalized. Her handwork, once the sole source of clothing, carpets, bedding and other household necessities, has been rendered primarily ornamental and symbolic by the inundation of store-bought items. She still cares for the cow, tends to the milk products, bakes bread, prepares meals, hoes and harvests the vegetable garden, etc. But while it is understood that her labor maintains the daily life of the family, it is not equated with the family's survival as it was in former times. The husband's wages or remittances take care of this.

The Voices of Women Left Behind

E ka lanë nuse, e ka gjet plakë kur u kthye.
He left behind a bride, and found an old lady when he returned.

More diell qi ndrit dynjanë,
A mos i pe ti burrat tanë,
Në Gjermani, o ku vanë?
Gjermani moj e shkretë Gjermani,
Ti naj mlodhe djemt e ri,
Na mbetën nanat me duer n'gji,
Po kthehen nuset në gjini,
Po mbesin jetima shumë fëmi.
Gjermani mori shtrig',
Mlodhe burrat edhe t'rit.
Të raftë zjarrmi te baftë hi!
Naj la pa baba mori kta fmi.

Oh sun which shines over the earth,
Have you not seen our husbands,
In Germany, where they have gone?
Oh miserable Germany,
You have gathered our young men,
The mothers left behind with hands on their breasts,
The brides are returning to their fathers' homes
Many children are orphaned.
Oh evil Germany,
You have taken our men and young boys,
May you go up in flame!
You who have left these children fatherless.

In the early 1970s when external migration was becoming widespread among Albanian villagers, Kosova's only women's magazine, *Kosovarja*, published a number of articles lamenting the fate of women whose migrant husbands had left them behind. These poignant passages, written by and for women, dramatize their plight. For example:

The lives of the Opoja mountain women pass by as they await the return of their husbands from abroad. They wake very, very early and after finishing the housework and feeding the children and elders, still before the first rays of the sun appear and before the sun's eyes meet the peaks of the Sharr, they start out to the fields...

She waits for her husband, or at least for a letter from him. The letter, which she will not be the first to see, will be read in a secret corner. The words never speak to her, but to her father-in-law, the children, and to everyone except the wife. This is the way it has always been, and this is the way it is today (November 1971:21).

The wives of migrant men, the "widows of the living" (Brettell 1986) express a range of opinions about their predicament. Some are resigned to spending the better part of each year apart from their husband while others long for the day they will join them abroad. Some women would rather suffer a low standard of living but have their husbands home; others yearn for a higher living standard and are willing to live apart if their husbands can find jobs abroad. A woman's feelings about this depend on several factors: her reaction to living under the authority of her husband's extended family, the behavioral models in her immediate community, and the depth of the couple's relationship prior to migration. Interestingly, the women with whom I spoke who have joined their husbands abroad tended to be negative or indifferent about life abroad.

In the early days of out-migration most migrants' wives were resigned to the fate of having absentee husbands and did not consider the prospect of going abroad themselves. Many women, even those married in the 1970s and later, while desiring to live with their husbands, still accept this as every other aspect of their "fate."

Your parents send you to live with your husband and his family, and whether he is there or not, there you will stay. What can you do? You accept it. If you go home and complain to your mother, there's nothing she can do. Your husband has gone there to work, to provide for you. You can't complain about that (Fikrije, born 1938).

I had known since my engagement that my husband would migrate. He left three months after the wedding. Now he has been there six years and I have seen him only about twice each year. I don't know exactly where he is—somewhere in Switzerland. I don't write to him—it would be *marre* [shameful]. He has a telephone, but I never get to town to call him. It's not so hard—I'm used to it now (Arlinda, born 1962).

Women who see the absence of their menfolk as "normal" still express bitterness, along with resignation, about their situations. The husband of an elderly Opoja woman left her soon

after their marriage to work in Beograd. He eventually married a Serbian woman and with her moved to Sweden where he still lives. Asked why, knowing this was happening, she did not leave him and remarry, his Opoja wife replies:

Why marry again? It would be the same with the next one. My family told me to leave him, but I refused. I said, "Into this house I was married, and in this house, by and by, I will die." Why get married to another man just to clean the mud off his shoes like you did with the first? I have his pension, what more do I need? I say to the young girls, "Get a diploma, get a job and your own money. Don't get married at all. Marriage is just trouble" (Nazlije, born 1920).

Some women in their thirties and forties, whose husbands have been living away for a decade or more with only occasional visits home, decry their fate and live in the hope that their husbands will send for them, or that the men will soon return, this year or maybe next. While most women are ambivalent about leaving the village, wives of men who migrated within the last few years are hoping their husbands will send for them.

When my husband first left for Germany in 1968 it didn't occur to me to ask when he would return for good, or whether he would send for me. When he first went away women didn't go with their husbands. Things are different now. Later, when he could have sent for me, we had children in school, and you can't take them out. Now I would like to go but he says the family's too big, that he can't support us there. I have no choice but to live for my children and obey my inlaws. My mother-in-law tells me I must live this way, that this is the way life is, that I should be happy there is food on the table (Mihane, born 1949).

Women who have not lived abroad tend to idealize the freedom and the easier life they associate with escape from the village. Almost all of the women interviewed desired to join their husbands abroad (see Appendix 1).

Young girls want a husband who will take them away with them. Who wants to stay in the village? You have to do the harvesting, the fertilizing, you have to care for the cows, to do all the meal preparation. There is less work for women who have left Opoja (Teuta, born 1939).

The women living in Bosnia like it there. They don't even want to come back to visit. There they are freer to go out, and they don't have to work in the fields. The men are the ones who want to keep coming back. The new brides who go there are homesick, but not the women with children there (Merite, born 1966).

Most women outwardly adapt to their lives with absentee husbands, especially those whose husbands left soon after marriage and who never grew accustomed to living with them. Some of these women say that they would not want to leave the village, to be far away from their families. But many women in the 1980s who had lived with their husbands before they left place more importance on being together with their husbands than on where they live.

"You have everything here in the village—family, a good life—but if you don't have your husband at home, you have nothing" (Verime). "Eighteen years of marriage, and I've lived with my husband less than three years total. You call this a life?" (Mihane). Many hope for the best of both worlds, to join their husbands for part of the year abroad and spend the balance of their time at home in the village.

While many young women put a premium on living with their husbands, there is a large group of young wives with inadequate living standards who hope their husbands will find employment abroad even if that means living apart. Several Opoja women whose husbands have always lived at home working at low-paying state jobs implored me to find work for their husbands in the United States or Europe. They foresee this as a temporary hardship of two to five years during which time they are willing to live without their husbands in order to improve their standard of living.

The women with husbands abroad don't suffer too much. Let the men go, let them give us better living conditions. The women don't sit around and talk about it. Most of their husbands aren't educated, can't get a decent job, and the women understand that it is necessary for them to leave. The women expect them to bring home nice presents as compensation. I envy the woman whose husband is away but who has a better standard than me, even if he stays twenty years. By then he'll be getting a pension! We are willing to sacrifice our emotional life, our lives with our husbands, for the sake of the children (Melije, born 1966).

Unlike women who have been left in the village and who long to join their husbands, women who have lived abroad tend to lament migrant life.

When I came to Paris for the first time it felt like going to prison. I thought nothing of the fine houses and big city. I didn't know a word of French, didn't know anyone. I cried like a child all day, watched the clock, waited for my husband to come home. Life is just sadness here, far from kin. You earn more money, but the life is very hard, very expensive, and you save nothing if you take your family with you. It is much better for us back in the village. There is a lot of work, but it is a big house, there are always people coming and going. Back home you're secure about what your children are doing, about their friends. It is so difficult here to prevent your children from escaping your control (Florie).

And this is not the worst: neither the work in the fields nor the care for her children, none of these weigh down her heart as much as the fear that he will marry another woman while he is away. For this reason these women are ready tomorrow, or the day after, or whenever their husbands say so, to join them abroad. This is their desire—a desire that the husbands do not respect and the women do not dare to express (Kosovarja, November 1971:21).

Every village has its horror stories of men who married foreigners and left their Albanian wives to fend for themselves and their children back in the village. Normally however, while many Albanians do have girlfriends abroad, the wives know that they will not abandon their responsibilities to families back home. They are protected by a cultural mandate. Because of this, women express some measure of acquiescence about their husbands' exploits.

Sure, all the men have a wife here and a woman there. We know, and we don't like it, but what can we do? We can only go to the *hoxha* and ask for a *hajmali* [talisman]. We're used to it by now. We have our sons (Nazlije).

The men probably have someone else there—they can't spend all that time alone. But they're sure about their wives back home because of the children they have left here. Even if they have a woman there, they will eventually leave her and come back to their own wives. The wife they have here is no one else's—just his (Shpresa).

Mihane had told me that if she were economically independent and knew her husband had another woman she would never see him again. Since then she has discovered, through one of her daughter's classmates whose father is also in Germany, that her husband has a son by a German woman with whom he has been living for the past eight years. But completely dependent as she is on the livelihood provided by her husband and his family, she believes there is nothing she can do about the situation.

While many wives today want more than good intentions and the economic security offered by absentee husbands, given their economic dependence most feel that there is nothing they can do about their husbands' infidelity, and, as in other aspects of their lives, they attempt to reconcile themselves to the situation.

Some women are unsuccessful in the attempt to reconcile themselves, *me pajtu*, to the hardship of living without their mates. A nurse at Prishtina's psychiatric hospital said that the majority of women who come to the ward have migrant husbands and suffer the stress of living under the thumb of their mothers-in-law, of having no control over their husbands' remittances, of attempting to discipline their children in the absence of fathers, in short, of enduring their existence as "widows of the living."

Children's Reactions to Migration

There is a wide range of reactions by migrants' children to the absence of fathers. The variations in these reactions depend on the length of time the family was united before the father left, the frequency and length of his visits, the degree of his intimacy with his wife and

children, and the overall effect of his presence on life at home. Children of strict, "fanatical" fathers are happier with the less restrictive home life when father is away. This is especially true for daughters.

Our father worked for twenty-five years in Beograd. We really feared him; we didn't dare say two words to him. He would visit for a few weeks three or four times a year. When he came home it was like being in prison, like sitting among thorns. We couldn't go to our friends, we couldn't enjoy the holidays with them. We weren't longing for father to come home (Shpresa).

The children of younger migrants who have closer, more informal relationships with their families miss their fathers and long for their visits, but also consider their absence a natural state of affairs. "He comes and stays a month and as soon as you used to him he leaves, and you cry. But as a child, you get used to it, you accept it" (Bajram).

The Effect of Migration on Attitudes and Perception in the Sending Community

Migration has had a profound effect upon the way in which Opojans evaluate social relations in terms of family organization, status, property ownership and investment. In this section we look how large-scale labor migration in the 1980s has played out in the context of community life in Opoja.

Solidarity and Division in the Extended Family

Prior to the 1970s, extended families in Opoja usually lived together until the patriarch died or the family grew too large to be properly managed or economically efficient. Many Opojans blame the premature break-up of large families on migration.

Ideally, when an Albanian from an extended family goes abroad to work he doesn't go "for himself," but to improve the life of his family, dissolving his remittances into the collective economy. But migration enables a man to provide well for himself without the support of the larger kin network and thus creates a profound dilemma for the individual. It calls into question the most fundamental aspect of traditional Albanian society: life devoted altruistically to the collective interests of the extended family. Each migrant is faced with choosing between the traditional Albanian ideal and a better life for his wife and children. One migrant brother with a substantial foreign income is sometimes hard-pressed to surrender his earnings into the family's joint funds. The migrant knows that he would fare much better financially if he were to invest in the future of his own nuclear family. The increased hardship placed on the

migrant's wife and children puts an additional burden on what may be a competitive relationship between the family's in-married women whose contentiousness is often blamed for family fission.

On the other hand, in families where several brothers are migrants, the potential wealth promised by their combined remittances may inspire the continued unity of large collective families. In extended families which would otherwise be forced to dissolve out of poverty, migration works as a restorative force, providing the economic salvation for collective groups.

The literature about other southern European and Mediterranean societies provides evidence that migration can have both integrative and disintegrative effects on collective households. In the Bedouin context, for example, Abu-Lughod (1986) contends that increased wealth brought by migration has reduced the pressure to divide households into smaller units. Conversely, the trend toward family division as a result of migration has also been observed. Engelbrektsson reports that in Turkey "migration has caused a spirit of egotism and separatism where previously there had been a spirit of care and mutual responsibility" (1978:264). In one village characterized by out-migration, more than half of the extended families divided into nuclear ones in less than four years, and three-quarters of the families broke up in less than ten years (Timur 1981).

Migration also affects life in the extended family by undermining the unquestioned authority of the family patriarch. In the past, economic dependency put social control in the hands of the household leader. Economic independence created by migration threatens this arrangement. Most young men still show respect for their elders, but for some this deference becomes cosmetic. This mirrors the situation described by Schapera for Bechuanaland, Africa in 1947:

Many of the young men who go out to work remain obedient and dutiful sons. They keep in regular touch with their parents at home, send them occasional gifts of money or clothes, and on their return show all the deference and respect that could be desired. But others come back with a different outlook. They realize that their parents depend on them for the money with which to pay taxes and meet other wants, and that in consequence they have acquired a new importance in family life to which the old conceptions of discipline must yield (1947:186). (See also Engelbrektsson 1978 for similarities in the Turkish context.)

In this context it is important to consider the effect of migration on community integration and disintegration. In *Migration, Kinship and Community*, Brandes (1975) provides an extensive theoretical examination of these processes informed by rich ethnographic data from Spain. He contrasts "transformational migration" which undermines the integrity of "peasant"

communities, and "institutional migration" which reinforces traditional life. The Castilian village of Becedas is characterized by "universal" migration—the departure of entire families, the desire on the part of all parents for their children to leave the village. While it might be expected that this large scale exodus would subvert the integrity of the local community, Brandes found the opposite to be true.² The village remains the focus of the migrant's existence. He invests in rituals which allow him to display his material success. He nurtures kin relationships for their potential economic utility. There is a symbiotic relationship between the villager and migrant: "Villagers derive economic benefits and security, and migrants obtain prestige" (1975:129).

Though the economic structure and subsistence patterns differ in Opoja, these kinds of integrative forces are clearly at work. Migrants remain focused on their community, and invest economically and emotionally in the activities there. While every family concentrates on having at least one member working abroad, their values and social attention do not shift to the society beyond their borders. As in Becedas, when the Opoja migrant returns home, he falls right back into the system of roles and obligations which fuels life in the extended family and kin network.

Social Status

Questions about values and social relations triggered by migration extend in important ways to the system by which Opojans rank each other in terms of social status. The tremendous gap between the material standard of local wage earners and migrants has created a profound ambivalence in the society about the basis upon which status is measured.

There is no clear-cut class stratification in Opoja. This is explained by the vicissitudes of wealth and poverty over the post-war decades, the fact that every kin group is cross-cut by family units of varying prestige and authority, that status is based on a combination of moral reputation and material prosperity, and that different generations and neighborhoods put different weight on these factors. Compare this situation in Turkey, where, "the newly rich cannot escape their poorer past, and the rich and the poor are often linked in kinship through those of middle rank. Rich and poor share a common culture and a common loyalty" (Stirling 1974:226).

According to the "traditional" Albanian ethic, personal status derives not from material wealth, but from moral reputation, from the degree to which a family has collectively upheld the community's moral code. On one hand, there is no doubt that material wealth gives people authority. On the other, it is said that the material factor can never be stronger than the moral

factor. If a family is morally weak, wealth cannot create authority. Even if a family acquires great wealth, a stained reputation can never be undone. *Na e dimë kush kanë qenë ata* [We know who they were in the past].

In most cases honor and material success combine to establish authority, the weight of the factors varying with regard to the ideological complexion of a family's immediate social circle. In less "traditional" neighborhoods the material factors count more heavily. Generations born after the 1950s certainly rely more on the material standard in ascribing status. In the older generation a migrant, no matter how successful economically, could not maintain a high reputation in the community if he had contradicted the moral code by having a common-law wife abroad. For younger men this behavior would not be so harshly judged, given that the man provides for his family back in the village. In the event that he forgets his family back home, transgressing a fundamental cultural mandate, he will be categorically denounced.

We had a neighbor who took a German wife and neglected his family here in the village. He was attacked from all sides, and was under pressure not to visit the village for a number of years. When he came back his authority was *rrafsh me tokë* [as low as dirt]. Since then he has settled in the local town, divorced his German wife and rehabilitated himself in the village (Xhemali).

The Perception of a "Limited Good"

Opojans are known to harbor an acute sense of envy and competition both in terms of material success and social status. The community is strongly influenced by a sense of "limited good," the notion that the source of economic and social success is limited, constituting a "closed system" (see Foster 1965) where one person's gain is another person's loss. While not exclusive to "peasant" societies, this concept carries great weight in a place like Opoja, which is characterized by poverty and land scarcity, a place where a shared history of material want has made a commodity out of social prestige in terms of the amount of respect bestowed upon individuals and families by their community.

When a community's economy is improving (as was the case in Opoja in the late 1970s), migration may be perceived of as a passageway out of the "closed system" of limited economic and social resources, reducing the community's ethos of envy and competition. But in conjunction with a deepening economic crisis, the wealth and associated prestige derived from migration have perpetuated a strong sense of "limited good" among the Opojans, both in terms of material gain and honor. According to the Opojans with whom I spoke, the sense of competition for both material success and personal respect have increased in the recent decade of economic decline in Yugoslavia.

Ten or fifteen years ago, when there was not such a crisis, the migrants helped others to get work abroad and in this way elevated their own reputations back home. Now people are jealous when others have money, even in their own families. People don't want others to be successful as migrants. Migrants don't tell each other where they work because they don't want the competition. When I went to Vienna in 1987 the other Opojans told me not to tell people where I worked... (Ridvan).

Attitudes About the Village and Land

The desirability of land in Opoja is rare in other parts of highland Kosova and derives from the unusual attraction Opoja holds for its inhabitants. Some rural areas of Kosova, such as Gollak, Rugova and Dukagjin, have been subject to wholesale out-migration since the 1950s. In other regions mountainous terrain, inadequate village infrastructures, and a dearth of local employment have inspired the exodus of many families. In stark contrast to this, Opoja has remained a desirable region for the majority of its inhabitants. Migrants abroad wait for the day when they will re-settle in their mountain village. Those who have built houses and started small businesses in the nearby city of Prizren maintain their houses, land holdings and community networks in Opoja. Contrary to the situation in other regions, where the local youth are poised for any chance to escape the confinement and dismal economic future which await them in the village, it is the goal of many Opoja boys to settle in Opoja. Despite the economic reality in Opoja, which promises future employment for only a fraction of the population, many boys hope to attain the means, through "temporary" migration or some form of local employment, to marry and settle in their birthplace.

Local residents wax poetic on the subject and attribute the attraction of Opoja to the natural beauty and nobility of their homeland. But the real difference between a population increase here and the decrease in other regions lies in Opoja's political, economic and infrastructural advantages. Since 1960 Opoja, together with Gora, has its own county seat in the mountain town of Dragash. This means that provincial funds go directly to the local administration, which has been able to make improvements lost to other regions peripheral to their county seats. Funds were made available for building the Dragash yarn factory in 1979, a paved main road in 1973, and the installation of electricity in many villages by 1953. Other mountain regions have only recently acquired these benefits or still await them.

The other factor which has made desirable continued residence in Opoja, a region which is agriculturally one of the poorest in Kosova, has been an early history of out-migration (as shepherds and food concessionaires in other parts of the Balkans), leading to early participation in labor migration to Europe. While populations of other areas sought economic salvation

in rural-urban migration within Kosova or labor migration within Yugoslavia, Opojans headed for Europe. For this reason, while Opoja is identified by locals with a history (and future) of poverty and hopelessness, it is bejeweled with elegant houses and cars, signs to all of "progress" and "potential" which migration can bring.

While in other Kosova communities and in other southern European and Mediterranean societies migration may cause the local population to lose enthusiasm for the village, for its maintenance, improvement, and for its future (see Engelbrektsson 1978), Opojans maintain some confidence in their region's viability and in its future.

In the ethnographic regions of Kosova suffering demographic demise land is cheap and migrant men willingly give their holdings to brothers, uncles or cousins who have stayed behind. In Opoja, land prices are at a premium as never before. Increasing population density, the desirability of settling in the homeland and the buying potential of migrants has wildly inflated land prices in Opoja (see Massey 1987). In 1988, one *ara* (ten square meters) of land in less accessible, less desirable hillside villages cost the equivalent of \$1,000 to \$2,000, the equivalent of \$4,000 to \$5,000 in more desirable villages (with an average annual income of \$2,000). Though few Opoja residents or returning migrants are interested in farming as a profession, they are loath to surrender their holdings. They keep the land to build houses, as wealth to be passed down in the patriline, or for small-scale farming which are all considered to be insurance against political and economic instability. Rarely do even long-term migrants sell their land. If the migrants have good relationships with brothers in the village they let them work the parcel and allow them to keep the profits. If relations are bad the migrant usually leaves the land fallow.

In some southern European societies migration has inspired a rationalization and consolidation of holdings for more efficient land usage by removing surplus labor and creating more of a balance between population and land resources (see Behar 1986; Brandes 1975). In other places with partible inheritance and scattered land holdings migration tends to impede the forces of land consolidation. In these societies "a work-force depleted by emigration struggles unsuccessfully to maintain previous levels of agricultural output" (Took 1986:95). Migration interferes with land rationalization and amalgamation by taking potential buyers and sellers out of the market. Migrants don't work the land, but they don't sell it either. Women left behind, the "white widows," work only the fields close to home and distant land holdings are left fallow.

Opoja fits the description of a rural community with scattered, under-productive land holdings which is bent on securing an economic future through other means. The Opoja migrant's primary interest in land is to increase his estate for future generations for building purposes, and, most importantly, as security against political and economic instability. It is said, "*Toka nuk humbet kurrë*" [Land is never lost]. While local officialdom places hope in the future of cooperative farming and pastoral ventures and would like to see the kind of mandatory land consolidation programs which have been imposed on the residents of other counties, Opojans resist investing in cooperative ventures or considering agriculture or sheep-raising in their economic future.

The Effect of Migration Upon Investment in the Sending Community: Consumerism Over Productive Enterprise

The huge influx of migrant remittances has done little to alter basic economic behavior in Opoja. This section explores why money continues to be invested in consumerism and status markers rather than in productive enterprise.

Time and time again it is found that returnees come back with conservative ideas and limited ambitions. Their only desire seems to be to buy themselves a small plot of land and build themselves a new home. They do not engage in improving agriculture, nor do they set up appropriate rural industries (King, Mortimer and Strachen 1984:40).

During the 1970s the countries of Western Europe rationalized migration policies on the basis of the "equilibrium model," the fallacious, self-serving idea that training peasants from the south would close the core/periphery gap by providing skills that would help these people advance their own societies when they returned. In fact it has been found that the sending communities remain as undeveloped as when the migrants left, because of the absence of political, economic and social structures conducive to utilizing the migrants' wealth. Migrants returning to southern climes are not in a position to take advantage of knowledge acquired abroad for various reasons: they have performed primarily unskilled labor abroad; most of the skills which they have learned are inappropriate to the labor market at home; and their aim in returning is not to continue in industry, farming or jobs entailing physical labor, but to use their accumulated wealth to start small business enterprises.

In Kosova these problems are compounded by inadequate local infrastructures and the bureaucratic barriers to investment which are characteristic of Yugoslav socialism. Unable to develop productive enterprises, migrants invest instead in redundant retail businesses or in

conspicuous consumption in the form of housing, consumer goods and public rituals such as weddings. Their economic activities tend to be individualistic and uncoordinated (see Engelbrektsson 1978; Gmelch 1980; King 1986; King, Mortimer and Strachan 1984; Massey 1987).

Returnee values are petit bourgeois, consumerist and essentially conservative... Remittances do not generally act to transform the system but only act within it; they tend to preserve intact the archaic structural features of the Italian rural economy, forestalling the time when they must be rationalized and reorganized (Took 1986:96).

Chayanov (1966) argues that peasants can be characterized on the basis of their economic orientation to subsistence as opposed to productive enterprise. They concentrate on sustenance and employment for family members above output, and on improving economic strategies and technology for profit (in Massey 1987:174). King (1986) observes that among migrants even agricultural investments are linked more to prestige than to productive investment. Returnees tend to depress agriculture by fragmenting the land, buying land for homes, and investing in "hobby" and "prestige" farming. "Land buying is a bid for social position" (1986:26). People buy land for investment, speculation, status and building plots, not for production. Tractors are invested in as prestige symbols. Agriculture becomes over-mechanized, driving labor off the land.

These patterns apply to the situation in Opoja. In Opoja, as elsewhere in Kosova, the migrants attribute their disinterest in or inability to invest in small productive enterprises to a pattern of dependence on the state, bureaucratic barriers, an inadequate infrastructure, and the absence of know-how and initiative on the part of local leaders. The attitude also stems from a historical distrust of ventures which exceed the boundaries of the kin group, and insecurity about long-term investments due to a history of political and economic instability.

In Opoja the impediments to productive investment found throughout southern Europe are exacerbated by the socialist bureaucracy. In Kosova the lack of incentive to invest in private business stems in part from a habit of relying on the state to direct economic activities. For four decades the villagers have been taught to depend on the state for their collective well-being. They do not believe they can take the initiative to start a business with the thousands of dollars they otherwise spend on weddings.

Wedding expenses have nothing to do with having or not having a factory. We can't start a factory ourselves, because we have a socialist system. I just know that the best way is for the state to start a factory. The local delegates go to the meetings and tell them that we need a factory. Half of my salary goes to the state so they can build these factories, so they can ask the experts what is needed. It's in their hands to do it.

The money spent on weddings is not lost--it doesn't go out of the country. The state should be seeing to economic enterprises. The people are poor here. They don't have money to give toward a factory. The wedding money is small compared to what is needed for a factory. People are tired, they are poor. A man has no choice but to put on his son's wedding. Someone needs to come here and educate these people, but not to tell them not to have weddings. It would be different if we were educated beyond eight years.

In 1985 an effort was made among Albanians in Austria to create a fund for productive projects in Opoja. We were interested, but the organizers weren't. We were supposed to start a chocolate factory here, but it went to Gjakova instead. The yarn factory was supposed to be here, but somehow ended up in Dragash. We gave money to Kosova Trans to maintain the roads, but they don't keep them up in the winter (Fuat).

It would be good to be able to invest in a state enterprise, but it's better when we do it ourselves because it takes so long for the bureaucracy to get things done. By the time they do something with our money it has lost its value (Nexhmi).

Asked about the failure of migrants to invest in productive enterprises, many Opojans point first to the dearth of leaders in the extended family or village to direct them. "Through all the generations of our family, there have been no educated men. It takes not only intelligence, but courage to force the issue" (Nehat).

The people don't believe in themselves. Their self-worth, their integrity vis-à-vis the outside world has been denigrated so many times in the past. They believe a person has to have a diploma to lead. And they have lost faith in their representatives. Until recently the village leaders were uneducated. They were responsible for presenting the village problems to the county seat, but didn't have the knowledge, didn't know how to do it, and so there is no belief in local leaders. Recently the regional leaders have been educated men but are often corrupt, favoring their own villages against the needs of the region and deceiving the people, so there is still no trust (Xhemali).

The Opoja village of Bellobrad is pointed to by Opojans as exemplary of a village which was able to institute infrastructural improvements because of the talents, connections and *guxim* [courage, audacity] of one man. Sadri, a locally employed, modestly educated man, stimulated village cooperation which resulted in the installation of a post office and telephone (1956), electricity (1959), underground plumbing (1972) and an asphalted main road (1983), improvements which have only recently come to other villages, if at all. Attempts made at installing running water have been partially successful. It is thought that the projects in this village were successful because the village had a leader who was a *guximtar*.

Another reason for the absence of joint business interests is a reluctance on the part of Albanians, migrants and locals alike, to enter into partnership with people outside of their kinship group or to cooperate in state-sponsored ventures (see King, Mortimer and Strachen 1984:64 and King 1986). This attitude has roots in the legacy of political instability which has conditioned Albanians to a lack of faith in communal enterprises beyond the boundaries of blood.

The lack of investment is a state of mind. The modern idea is that remittances should be spent in productive small industries, on clinics, on schools. But we are still in that primitive phase, accustomed to the idea that a war could come anytime, and the family must be secured. If we were secure in the future of the country, we would make those long-term investments. In America you don't know, you haven't suffered from wars, no one has controlled you, taken your wealth, you have just taken the wealth of others. My father's generation is the big obstacle to advancement. They have opposed fixing the village road, believing it is better to have a road which is impassable to enemies. If the young people were of one mind about advancement, they could destroy this mind-set, but they are not (Bajram).

The Lack of Material Innovation Among Albanian Migrants

In Kosova material innovations from migrants' remittances have come primarily in the form of improved building materials for houses, the construction of houses "with plans" and the introduction of the hardware for indoor plumbing (with or without plumbing lines in the neighborhood). The most prominent sign of material innovation wrought by money earned abroad is the two-story house of unpainted concrete blocks, a symmetrical structure with two or four rooms upstairs and down separated by a central corridor. The idea for this house type and the innovations that go with it have filtered down through models attained abroad influencing styles in northern Yugoslav cities which have in turn been adopted in Kosova towns and finally in Kosova villages. Material innovations evident in the Opoja village cannot be specifically seen as adaptations from ideas assimilated by migrants, but are part of a gradual, general process of urbanization which has been taking place in the past two decades.

Migrants are impressed by the material standard they have seen abroad, by the work ethic and by certain architectural and design ideas. But for the most part their tastes and plans for their own houses are not affected by what they have seen. "It just makes for interesting conversation." Why is it that migrant workers who have lived abroad for many years do not translate material innovations back to their villages?

During the early period of post-war mass migration, primarily to northern Yugoslav cities, the reasons were economic. The migrants' profits were minimal, helping only to secure

the basic living standard of families back home. In the 1970s and 1980s when profits from work abroad increased, impediments to material innovation lay in a tendency toward conformity and in the inadequacy of village infrastructures.

Before the 1970s, when meager remittances meant that very few families had the ability to improve their standards, Albanian village communities looked down upon individuals who made a show of their wealth. A fifty-year old villager reflects on the attitude held when he was a boy.

During that time our house had earthen floors like the other houses around us. Our father was a wood-worker, but how would it have looked if we put down a wooden floor, and the others didn't? Conspicuous! Of course the horses stalls had wooden floors to keep the horses from getting muddy. But the people? Lots of things just didn't occur to us (Qazim).

An insufficient village infrastructure prevents migrants from modernizing their houses as much as they would like. When a migrant returning from abroad attempts to instigate infrastructural improvements, a village meeting is called and all families are asked to contribute equally to the endeavor. But families lacking substantial capital, those not involved in external migration, are unable to make the required contribution, and plans break down. Without paved roads, water and sewer lines, postal services and telephone lines, even the most forward-looking, wealthy men cannot realize their material dreams.

Unable to make real changes in their life-styles, migrants with substantial incomes concentrate on conspicuous consumption in the form of weddings, consumer goods (notably new color televisions, video cassette recorders, stereos) and the construction of houses.

These tendencies are illustrated in the economic strategies of two Opoja migrants. Hajrip's investments exemplify those of a successful Opoja migrant. His migration history began in 1949 when he left his family in the village and went to Beograd to work as a manual laborer "because we had no other choice economically. After sixteen years in Beograd, he worked in the construction industry in Switzerland, moving two years later to Austria (for larger child-support benefits) where he still works as a laborer for the railway. In four years he will be eligible for his pension and will return to settle in Opoja. In 1988 Hajrip earned 12,000 schillings a month. With his remittances he has built two adjacent houses with a total of seven rooms for his extended family. He has purchased one hectare of land, part for a vegetable garden and part for winter wood. Though there is still no running water in his part of the village, he has installed an indoor toilet, hot water heater and shower. He has acquired a refrigerator, but no washing machine. He has purchased an electric stove, but the wood-

burning stove is used instead. He paid for his brothers' weddings and sisters' trousseaus and has put away money for the weddings to come. He plans to buy a car and provide for the schooling of children.

Coming from another Opoja village, Besim works with Hajrip in Austria. After eighteen months of attempting unsuccessfully to obtain employment documents in France, in 1971 Besim tried his luck in Austria where he has worked ever since. In 1988 he earned 13,000 schillings a month. He has one other brother working with him in Austria and a third working as a night-watchman in Beograd. When Besim first set off for Europe he and his extended family lived in a small one-story house in the village. With his remittances he first built another floor on the house, paid for his youngest brother's wedding, his sister's trousseau, bought land for family produce, supported a growing number of children, and finally built a new home for himself. The house still lacks indoor plumbing, but is equipped for an indoor shower, and has a new color television, a chandelier, custom-made windows and an Opel Kadett which is kept in the garden. With reference to future investments, Besim comments:

I can't improve things any more until I marry off my sons. If I had more money I would open a private business here where my sons could work. If I had lots of money I would build a large, Austrian-style house with central heating and a bathtub, not for bathing but for washing babies and clothes.

We have now examined the nature of migration in Opoja and attitudes about migration held by migrants and those who remain behind. We have looked at the effect on family composition, on the assignment of social status in the local community, on attitudes about the village and land-ownership, and on economic behavior. We now turn to the specific relationship between migration and conservatism in Opoja. We look at some of the reasons Opojans seek refuge in traditions of the past.

The Effect of Migration on Attitudes About Tradition and Change

Ujku, kimën e ndron, e adetin s'e nd'rron.
The wolf changes his coat but not his custom.

Tradita është më e fortë se gyrbeti.
Tradition is stronger than migration.

Research in southern Europe has shown that migrants returning from life abroad, while introducing to the sending community some material innovations in terms of housing and patterns of consumption, seldom introduce new ideas or perceptions to the local world view. On the contrary, their adherence to attitudes and customs drawn from the past tends to deepen.

This section explores this conservatism on the part of returning migrants. We see how traditionalism evolves as a manifestation of various factors: as a part of continuing allegiance to the sending community, as a way of protecting the moral reputation of families back home, due to an ideological distance from foreign ways of thinking, as a defensive stance against social and economic marginalization abroad, and as a strategy in maintaining a clear sense of personal and ethnic identity.

A major factor in the tendency toward ideological conservatism among Albanian migrants is "the idea of return," the migrant's abiding conviction that he will one day go back home to live in his own community. Whether he moves back home in five, ten or twenty years, the intention to return penetrates all aspects of his life abroad, helping him cope with the insecurity of living as an outsider (see Brettell 1979:12). Guided by this intention, the migrant feels that no matter how many years he lives abroad, he never really leaves his home community.

The Albanian migrant's motivation in leaving home is economic. His labor and profits are dedicated to improving the material standard back home. These migrants "emigrate for economic reasons only and not to have a new life—only a better one" (Cronin 1970:142). This is part of the reason most Albanian migrants in Europe do not identify with the host society and are constantly engaged in what Kenny calls "institutionalized nostalgia" (1976). As Abadan-Unat has observed among Turks in Germany, the migrant's life abroad is really about life back home. They are "migrants who never left home," displaced physically, but not emotionally (Abadan-Unat, lecture at University of California, Berkeley 1985). The aim of Albanian migrants is not to introduce new ideas or customs back home, but to embellish the life-style they left behind.

Another reason migrants remain oriented toward the home community is that the village continues to be the locus of his personal and family honor. Whether this honor is expressed through behavior which conforms to the traditional moral code or through financial success, it continues to be the foremost consideration in the migrant's life. The importance of honor ties him to his home community as the place where honor is created, displayed and maintained. In the Sicilian context Leman notes: "One emigrates for reasons of respect, but in practice this respect is to be manifested primarily in Sicily" (1987:120). Following Goffman's paradigm, the home community becomes the "front region," the arena in which the important performances which display social roles and status are staged. The place to which one migrates is the corollary "back region," the place where the work is done that will permit the mainte-

Another factor in the migrant's tendency toward conservatism is a negative attitude toward the foreign culture fostered by a need to reinforce his self-esteem as second-class citizens abroad. Most migrants are impressed with some aspects of the host society, notably the work ethic, and some have positive things to say about the generosity of certain neighbors, bosses and co-workers. But as an economically and socially marginalized foreigner, the migrant feels a need to reinforce his own self-worth and this inspires a generally negative reaction to life-styles in the host country. In order to reinforce his self-confidence, the migrant defends the superiority of his own world view and behavior, taking pride in this difference. Whether or not he himself remains true to the ideals of honor, respect and loyalty, he finds comfort in identifying with these ideals. To elevate his sense of personhood he denounces the customs of the host society and takes refuge in traditional Albanian conservatism.

They didn't bring back any ideas because they looked down on the people there. I remember as a child visiting my father in Beograd. The men would sit around and say of the Serbs, "These aren't any kind of people. They are nothing compared to us" (Xhemali).

They saw the wealth there—the houses, the high standard—and then looked at themselves sleeping on straw and felt devalued. Their pride did not allow them to internalize any positive qualities of the foreign place (Mensur).

Maybe the German looks down on me, sees me as a foreigner, as a fool, but maybe I don't respect him either. I am not educated as they are, but my personal qualifications are higher (Esat).

This defensive stance is common among southern European migrants abroad. Cronin (1970) reports the same phenomenon among Sicilian migrants in Australia who see the behavior and values of the Australians as the antithesis of their own ideals. Like Albanians, they see the foreigners as self-centered, disrespectful of others, oriented toward immediate gratification, and lacking in self-control. This is in contrast to their own people whom they see as warm, selfless, respectful and disciplined.

I play their Australian game. I smile and when I am corrected...but inside I know how superior I am to them, and how I could put them to flight with a few words if I chose to. But they never know. I play the fool with a mask and so they are happy (Cronin 1970:167).

This negative view of the host society deepens the migrant's conviction that traditional values are superior to foreign ones and inspires him to support the ideological status quo among his peers and his community back home. A conservative orientation reinforces the migrant's sense of personal and ethnic and religious identity.

nance of the image presented in the "front region" (Goffman 1959:269). "They tend to maintain conservative ideas because what's important is acceptance among the local, conservative population" (Gmelch 1980:151).

No matter how settled, migrants keep in their minds the possibility that one day they will return... The myth of return functions as a defense mechanism or perhaps as a kind of moral justification for their unwillingness or their inability to adapt more to the culture of the host society... [The myth of return] is used to legitimize continued adherence to the values of the homeland to condemn the assimilation of [foreign] cultural values as irrelevant and destructive (King 1986:13).

Where migrants tend to form the bulk of their social relationships with other migrants from the same communities, the basis is provided for the networks of social control which aid in producing conformity to the obligations to the home community (Philpott 1970:12).

When a man is abroad for a long time he can't hold on to those old ideas completely. But the conservatism that does last in his mind appears when he goes home. He wants to show that he belongs to that social circle by demonstrating his compliance with the norms, even though he himself has changed (Rami).

The "idea of return" also inspires many migrants to become even more conservative than their compatriots back in the village. Upon return to his village the part of him which has remained dedicated to ideals of the past come to the fore. Schreiber observes that the social marginality of Italian Albanians abroad causes them "to become more Albanesi...than they had been in the home region" (1973:270).

In some cases the reason why the migrant maintains traditional behavior and does not internalize foreign values and behavior is simply because what he sees is too different from his own experience. The strangeness of the new environment causes the migrant to retreat into the consciousness most familiar to him, to take refuge in traditions of the past. "When the men from my father's generation, completely bound by tradition, confronted the bewildering life outside, they had no choice but to close themselves into a deeper conservatism." Whether migrants went to Beograd, Ljubljana or Munich, their world views, especially among earlier generations, were so distant from those of the host community that the men remained separate from foreign ideological influence. Today a lack of fluency in the host language and customs impedes the migrant's ability to assimilate new ideas. In many cases the deep social chasm creates a state of passivity with regard to assimilation, what Leman calls "temporary deconstruction" (1987:100).

One gets the impression that they need customs in order to maintain balance on the insecure road between two fixed points—the west European world in which they have temporarily found a source of prosperity and the culture of their native land in which they find their identity (Rajković 1976:35).

Another aspect of continuing or exaggerated conservatism among migrants is the concern about families back home. It is assumed that village families who live according to traditional rules of behavior will be less vulnerable to scandal. Most migrants claim that they do not worry about the personal safety or moral insulation of their wives back home as long as the traditional lifestyle is observed. The migrant is confident that when his wife and daughter are living under the protection of his brothers and father, confined within the garden walls or under the vigilant surveillance of other family members, they will be protected from physical or moral insult. He is secure in the knowledge that the family's women are controlled by the strict moral code which defines village life. It is logical, then, that he defends this code comprised of traditional attitudes and behavioral patterns as a way of insuring that the social mechanism which protects his family back home will remain intact. A local historian contends that Opojans took the custom of *havale* [veiling and seclusion] from the Ottoman Turks and that they have left their women "unemancipated" because they could not be at home to protect them (Bahtiju, personal communication). Migrant men, concerned about the physical and moral safety of wives and daughters left behind, remain (or become) more conservative than local husbands and fathers men who can personally oversee their family's behavior.

The Perceived "Moral Decline" in the Behavior of Migrants Abroad

It is important to bear in mind that the migrant's actual behavior abroad does not necessarily correspond to his ideological conservatism.

While at home community members concentrate on establishing status through outward displays of propriety and honor. When abroad, the emphasis on correct outward behavior is relaxed as the migrants concentrate on the business at hand (Goffman 1959:269).

The emic view holds that the decade of the eighties has seen a profound decline in the migrants' behavior abroad. Opojans contend that in former decades Albanians in foreign lands attempted to uphold the tenants of trustworthiness, hospitality, loyalty and sharing which they consider the hallmark of their ethnic identity. Prior to the late 1970s work abroad was fairly plentiful and labor migrants were not competitive with each other. Information about jobs and lodging was shared.

Many agree that the migrants of the 1980s began to compromise Albanian values. Values associated with the sending community have lost force as economic desperation coupled with job scarcity put a premium on individual survival above mutual support in the foreign community. Research among Albanian migrants in Norway supports this observation. "They say that the migrants have been ruined, that customs are not kept as they should be, that even between themselves Albanians don't behave properly any longer. They are not the polite, honorable, hospitable, serious and helpful Albanians they used to be" (Backer 1986:14).

The generation of the 1980s is more *shfrenume* [unrestrained] morally. They're not as sure about the rules governing their behavior and are losing solid contact within their families. Many cannot find work, and do dishonorable things—stealing, lying, cheating—to maintain themselves. People are not interested in helping others. Many are secretive about where they work, where they live, so afraid are they of competition. In Vienna when I saw a boy from my own village he just lowered his head so I wouldn't see him. Some people would say he did this because *i ka rrit mendin* [his ego is inflated]. I think it has to do with competition, and the decline of our traditional values of mutual help under the influence of the self-centered western models. They have begun *me lëshu pejë*n [to slacken the string] when it comes to morals (Xhemali).

Far from the scrutiny of the village community, the migrants are susceptible to the fierce sense of scarcity they experience abroad. But the changes taking place in their behavior abroad do not contradict the conservative attitudes they continue to maintain with regard to life back home. The values the migrant defends while abroad, his behavior back in the village and his expectations about the behavior of the family and social circle he has left behind uphold an ideology the migrant himself may have abandoned.

Differential Degrees of Conservatism Among Individual Migrants

It is unfair to say that all Albanian migrants deepen their conservatism while abroad. The world view of some migrants does indeed become more elastic, more open to suggestion as a result of time spent away from home. The difference between these migrants and those whose conservatism becomes more entrenched depends on several factors, some based on the migrant's personal profile, others on his situation abroad. In terms of his personal profile, key factors are the migrant's age and educational background prior to migration. The size and composition of his family are important as determinants of the relative conservatism of his social circle, the vulnerability of wives and children left at home. Important also is the viability of life back home, the chances of establishing a better life there upon return and thus the extent to which the dream of return guides the migrant's daily life.

The migrant's experience abroad helps determine the extent to which his ideas grow more liberal or conservative. Important considerations are the degree of contact with the host population, the migrant's fluency in the local language and culture, whether or not the migrant is accompanied by his wife and children, and his social and financial success abroad. Another crucial factor is the continuity between the foreign and home communities determined by the frequency and length of visits home and the presence of family and kin in the foreign city (see Philpott 1970).

Whether new ideas are appropriated by the home community depends on a number of factors, including the number of local people migrating and returning, the prestige of the migrant in his local community and the extent to which foreign knowledge and values are transferable (see Gmelch 1980).

Conclusion

Migration has had an important effect upon the economy, social structure and world view of each ethnographic region of Kosova. Areas involved in rural-urban migration have deeper ties to education and social mobility afforded by the neighboring town and tend to have "liberal" ideas. Regions dependent on out-migration tend to maintain more conservative value systems. Within each region there are sub-groups which tend to be more insistent upon upholding traditional values than others based their proximity to home and relation to the sending community.

Applying this principle in Opoja we can see correlations between migration and conservatism among five groups of men:

- farmers who work in the village;
- locally employed men who return to the village every evening;
- men who work in other Kosova towns and return home on the weekends;
- men who work in other Yugoslav cities and return several times a year;
- and men who work abroad and visit home once or twice a year.

The foregoing discussion has suggested that conservatism is reinforced among migrants by a defensive stance as outsiders vis-à-vis the foreign society, a need to reinforce personal identity and a desire to maintain the status quo in the village in order to insure the moral integrity of families back home. Given these parameters, the group most open to change tends to be the men who work outside of Opoja but live close enough to home to maintain a presence in the village through frequent visits. Unlike the farmer or locally employed man whose horizons tend to be limited to Opoja's traditional cultural repertoire, the men living in Prizren or Gjakova or Prishtina come into greater contact with ideas imported from outside Kosova and

outside Yugoslavia. The migrant living in other parts of Yugoslavia or in Western Europe experiences a wider range of foreign ideas to a more profound degree than his counterpart in the Kosova towns, but several things undermine his desire to internalize new ideas or bring them home.

First, as the disparaged "stranger in a strange land," he seeks to reinforce his sense of self-worth, his personhood, by identifying with "unique" Albanian values, by tapping into the ideological continuity provided by Albanian tradition. In contrast, the man living in Prizren is among "his own," and does not face the ethnic and economic marginalization which would otherwise inspire him to uphold a more rigid interpretation of his customs.

Secondly, the migrant in Western Europe upholds his conservatism as a reaction to his experience of western society. Highly sensitive to negative aspects of the receiving community—the disintegration of nuclear families, the lack of control over self and over women and children, the self-interest which characterize for him his German, Swiss or Austrian community—the migrant wants to bar this aspect of "modern life" from his community.

Lastly, the migrant living outside of Kosova advocates conformance to the conventional Albanian wisdom in order to "protect" his family in Opoja. Far from home and unable to exert direct control over his family's behavior and reputation in the village, the migrant personally subscribes to and mandates among his family members a stricter adherence to Albanian tradition in order to make certain that communal discipline, family harmony and moral reputations will be intact when he returns. The man exposed to non-Opojan ideas, but close enough to monitor his family's behavior, is more elastic in his interpretation of local cultural mandates. He can send his daughters on to high school because he is nearby to observe their conduct. His wife can visit her relatives in Prizren because he is close by, and his community knows it. For these reasons, while more aware of alternative life-styles and attitudes, the migrant in Yugoslavia or in Western Europe tends to maintain conservatism to a greater extent than his counterpart close to home.

"Remember This, Migrant Men"

O se n'bylyk kur na hin djali,
E pret shpija, fusha e mali,
E pret puna, natë e ditë,
Për me pamun pakë dritë.
Pak e hiq dritë n'jetë t'vetë,
O e merr udhen për gyrbet.

When a boy enters this world,
The house, fields and forests await him,
Work awaits him, day and night,
To see but a little light.
There is but a little or no light in his life,
And so he takes the migration road.

Ej n'kohna t'moqme t'paret ton,
 Udhë t'largta kan pas marrë.
 Do n'Grki, e n'Bullgari,
 Do n'Turki, e n'Itali,
 Besa, do o n'Amerikë.
 Për nevoja pas kan ikë,
 Na kan lan ni amanet:
 "Fukara, po veç n'vend t'vet."

Ej shumë e shumë sot n'Evropë janë,
 Mik mas miki, shok e jaran,
 Nuk e dishin se shka i pret,
 Punë me lyp, e ku me gjet,
 Ku me hângër, ku me fjet,
 Nepër soba gjashtë, shtatë vet.
 S'ka oxhak, as muhabet,
 Se çdo njoni me gajle t'vet,
 Ditë mas dite o dhimta e malli,
 Bahen shtrat o i çdo djali.

Djem e burra o gyrbetli,
 Janë t'dalun o si n'çarshi,
 Sa me letra, sa me t'zi,
 Punën punë, e punojnë,
 Purën pare, fitojnë.
 Shumë e shpijat i kanë marue,
 Shumë traktora tuj livrue,
 Shumë makina po i bojnë,
 Pamjen vendit po ja nrrojnë.
 Po bojnë nom e po bojnë bujë,
 O veç po plaken v'vend t'huej.

Digjen burrat e gyrbetit,
 Nuk i shunë as ujtë e detit,
 N'luftë me jetën fyt për fyt,
 Andërr janë pa i mshel syt.
 Malli i kall e i përvlon,
 Për vendlindje, për vaton,
 Për nanë-loke, për babë-plak,
 Për atë motër, për atë vlla,
 Për bijë t'vet, o për djalë t'ri,
 Për atë grue që e ka mshel n'shpi.

Udhë t'largta ju po boni,
 N'dekë e darsma, duhet t'shkoni,
 Veç kur merreni gryka n'grykë,
 A me t'ngat a me ni mik,
 Zemra zemrës i bje thikë,
 Djalë i vogël, syt plot lot,
 "Rri bre babë se shkon se n'mot,"
 Haj, kuku, çelu moj tokë,
 Falma zot t'lumën dekë,

In the days of our forefathers,
 They went on long journeys,
 Some to Greece, and to Bulgaria,
 Some to Turkey, and to Italy,
 Word of honor, even some to America.
 They fled out of want,
 And left us with a last word of caution:
 "You may be poor, but in your own land."

Many today are in Europe,
 Friend after friend, comrade and loved one,
 Knowing not what awaits them,
 They seek work, but where to find it,
 Where to eat, where to sleep,
 Six, seven men to a room,
 There is no hearth, no conversation,
 Each one absorbed in his own troubles,
 Day after day of pain and longing,
 Make the bed of each boy.

Boys and men, migrants all,
 Are scattered about as in the marketplace,
 Some with papers, some with none,
 Their work, they work,
 Their money, they earn,
 Many houses have they built,
 Many tractors are plowing the fields,
 Many cars are on the road,
 Changing the appearance of our landscape,
 They make an impression on us all,
 As they grow old in foreign lands.

The migrant men are aflame with sorrow,
 Not even the ocean's water will cool them,
 In a neck-and-neck battle with life,
 They have nightmares without closing their eyes.
 Longing burns and scalds them,
 For their birthplace, for their home,
 For grandmother, for grandfather,
 For that sister, that brother,
 For the daughter, and for the young son,
 For the wife locked up in the house.

You make the long journey home,
 For deaths and weddings, you must return,
 When you greet each other with hugs all 'round,
 With family and with kin,
 It cuts the heart like a knife,
 Your little son, his eyes filled with tears,
 Says, "Stay, father, and go next year,"
 Oh God, open the earth,
 Give me blessed death,

Baba, mik n'shpi t'vetë,
O kofsh mallkue i zi gyrbet!
Sa na lindin fmi e fmi,
Nuk kanë babë o me thirr n'shpi.

The father is a stranger in his own house,
Damn the black migration!
Child after child is born,
And the father is not there to call.

Nalni burra, e kujtoni,
Parëen shumë, most e lakmoni,
Se tri ditë i kemi n'jetë,
Len, martesën, kena me dekë.

Stop men, and think,
Do not covet great sums of money,
Because we only have three days in this life,
Birth, marriage, and then we will die.

O mane n'mend, burra t'gyrбетit,
Shkoni pak simas adetit,
Ti kujtojmë stërgjyshët tanë,
Besën, n'erën, na e kanë lanë,
I ka njoft o krejt Evropa,
Asi burra, s'ka pas bota,
Kudo kamen si ta veni,
Fytyrë të bardh ju duhet t'keni,
Rune menden n'dhe të huej,
O se gjaku nuk asht ujë.

Remember, migrant men,
Follow the customs,
Remember our great-grandfathers,
Oath and honor, they bequeathed to us,
So that all of Europe would know,
That men like these, the world has never seen,
Wherever you lay your footstep,
You must keep your honor,
Keep your wits about you in the strange land,
Because blood is not water.

Xhemali Berisha
Geneva, Switzerland 1988

Notes

1. In one village an Opoja woman took a lover in her village while her husband was away. The villagers found out, and cabled her husband. He returned immediately, found evidence of the affair, and banished his wife, keeping the four children and his wife's gold jewelry. His wife returned to her own family but remains unmarried as no other family wishes to risk compromising their honor on "such a woman."
2. In Becedas migration has leveled inequalities between landowners and the landless by creating a land surplus and labor scarcity. Because of this new sense of economic equality, villagers no longer fear revealing their wealth and there is increased devotion to traditions which are about display. In a society lacking strong kinship organization, migration has functioned to strengthen family ties as migrants are sensitized to the potential economic utility of their kin back home, and migrants are valued as resources for getting jobs. "Because every villager is nowadays perceived as a potential migrant capable of being thrust overnight into the role of patron, he is treated with the utmost caution by all his relatives, who fear alienating their possible *enchufe* ("contact") to economic and social mobility" (Brandes 1975:128).

Chapter VII

Choices, Change, and the Issue of Women's Education

Introduction

In the previous chapter we considered the effect of migration on the continuity of conservatism in the sending community. In this chapter we look at an important manifestation of this conservatism: a declining faith in education as the promise for the future and a subsequent denial of secondary education to many village girls. During my attempts to elicit the reasoning behind this behavior, I have learned much about Albanian values, specifically about the way individuals explain to others and to themselves their own resistance to the trends toward liberalization taking place in other parts of Kosova and throughout Yugoslavia. The subject of education is presented here as an indicator of current social values and as one of the clearest manifestations of increasing conservatism in Kosova. The issue serves as a bridge linking our analysis of Albanian behavior and values discussed in previous chapters, and our concluding discussion of change and continuity in Kosova.

A Historical Perspective: Education in Kosova Prior to the 1960s

Everything was good in the old days, except for one thing: there was no school. People weren't even talking about it, because they didn't know what it really meant (Ismet).

Prior to post-war liberation in Yugoslavia, Albanians had no schools in their own language. In the late 1920s, four-year primary schools conducted in Serbo-Croatian were opened in rural Kosova and were attended by some Albanian boys. Finally, during World War II, four-year primary schools were opened in many villages with instruction in Albanian. Attendance at these schools was mandatory for boys, but many families refused to send their sons. "There was a primary school in our village but only one boy from my whole group of relatives attended. Fathers said to their sons, 'Get out there and look after the livestock. What do you need school for?'" (Imridin).

A large number of families resisted sending their sons to school believing that formal education would undermine the boys' religious faith: "They believed that the boys would be ruined. They wouldn't fast or pray and would be left without a belief. It was also feared that if a man's sons went to school they would get jobs and leave the family" (Behar). Many people

felt that a formal education would compromise Albanian identity in another way: "The older people did not want anybody from the younger generation to go to school because they were afraid that they would adopt Serbian customs" (Backer 1979:50).

The majority of boys who did manage to attend school made tremendous sacrifices to do so. Their experiences are typified in the recollection of a forty year-old school teacher who began his education during this period:

I was the only boy in my family who went to school. I went against my father's wishes. After I finished the fourth grade I had to stay home to take care of the sheep. While the sheep were grazing, I would sneak off and go to school. I couldn't go home after school; I had to go to the sheep, and didn't dare go home lest my ruse be detected. I stayed one night at a friend's, another night at another friend's, until finally my father got wise to me. After deceiving him like this, how could I ask him to buy me pants, shoes, a book, a pencil? I went to school just as I gone with the sheep, looking like a shepherd. When I went to high school in town I slept in cold basement rooms, living on cornbread and beans. I took a satchel of cornbread from home to last me the week. If it got moldy, I cut off the mold and ate the rest. It was like that for most of my generation (Hyri).

Eight-year elementary schools were opened in the mid-fifties and sixties and were widely attended by city and village boys. Thus Albanian boys born after the Second World War were the first to pursue an education in Albanian beyond the four primary grades. Many boys from this generation finished high-school, became teachers and state employees, and were the first to give the Albanian masses an insight into what education could mean for them.

During the Second World War literacy courses were offered to village women in the evenings. Attendance was mandatory, but as it was considered shameful for women to be seen outside the home, few of them actually attended courses and their families paid a fine for truancy. In 1950s only a few girls who lived near the eight-year primary schools were allowed to attend.

The Education Movement of the 1960s and 1970s

During the 1960s there was a dramatic change in the popular attitude toward education. Albanians began to cultivate a belief that an education would guarantee employment in the public sector and a high reputation in the community. The establishment of a university in Kosova's capital city of Prishtina in 1968 coincided with a period of relative economic security and political stability in Yugoslavia under the leadership of Tito. Many Albanian boys and a fewer number of girls enrolled in high school and college, and the completion of primary school became common for Albanian girls. The illiteracy rates dropped from 94% before 1950 to 30% in the 1970s (Ekonomiska Politika 1973:637). The boys who attended high school began

to lose interest in farm life, hoping for a job in the public sector which would guarantee an easier, more secure livelihood and eliminate the need for migration. The belief that *Veç me shkollë ka ardhmëri* [Only in education is there a future] was an idea that captured the Albanian imagination and became a major social force. We sense the spirit of this era in this excerpt from a 1972 article in Kosova's women's magazine:

The united and tireless efforts of all of the progressive forces of the country have meant that the villages following the backward notion that a woman is only good for baking bread and working in the fields are now racing to register girls in school (Kosovarja May 1972:7).

The tremendous popularity of higher education in Kosova during the 1970s is evidenced by the following statistics: while 36% of Kosova Albanians were illiterate, Kosova had the highest college student concentration in Yugoslavia (with thirty students per thousand inhabitants), one of the highest concentrations in the world (the USA has forty per thousand).

Throughout the sixties and seventies, men who had migrated as physical laborers endeavored to secure an education and local employment for their sons in order to spare them the hardships they themselves had endured. Having suffered the emotional dislocation, social marginality and physical hardship of a life away from home, the migrants were the most insistent of all villagers that their sons finish college and break the migration cycle in the family. "When we visited our father, working in his factory in Beograd, he would always point out the ditch-diggers on the street and say, 'That's where you will end up if you don't go to school!' (Xhemali). The dream of every father was for his son to finish college and get a respectable job in the public sector. *Eshhtë prit shpejtim prej shkollës* [It was expected that school would rescue them]. Thus began a simultaneous momentum towards migration to Europe for unskilled, under-educated boys, and towards higher education and local employment for those who completed school.

During the 1970s Albanians had witnessed the prosperity which external migration could bring and had been mesmerized by the promise of a higher living standard. But they had also become aware of the hardships of migration. So while a steady stream of external migration was in motion, there was a counter-movement toward education as salvation from the fate of migration.

The 1980s: Migration Takes Precedence Over Education

During the 1960s and 1970s, even as migration was on the rise, there was a strong faith in education as the promise for the future. The economic crisis in Yugoslavia in the 1980s and

accompanying unemployment and under-employment changed this by making it difficult even for college-educated Albanians to find work. As the Albanians' faith in the promise of education diminished, migration re-emerged as the universal "solution" to poverty, undermining the trend toward universal education for Albanian boys and girls which had gained so much momentum during the previous decade. While the number of Serbians and Montenegrins attending high school in the 1980s was on the rise, 30% (11,000) of Albanian students graduating from primary school failed to register for secondary school (based on statistics from the Provincial Education Administration [BVI Krahinore të Arsimit dhe të Edukimit], Rilindja, 15 November 1989).

Despairing of any alternatives, Albanians in the 1980s saw labor migration as their only hope. The experience of a young man from Opoja illustrates this phenomenon. Born into an extended Opoja village family in 1960, and having begun secondary school in 1974, Ridvan was among the last generation of Opoja youths who believed in the promise of higher education. Like many other boys in his age cohort, he pursued a law degree at the University of Prishtina. But the abysmal employment prospects of the 1980s convinced Ridvan, and many young men like him, that there was little point in finishing his degree. Now a husband and father, still living at home in the village with his extended family and with no income or economic future, Ridvan's only option is to seek undocumented work abroad through relatives or friends.

My father worked for twenty-five years in a Beograd factory. He always said that we had better get an education so that we could get local jobs and stay at home. But today this is not enough. There is no future for young people. There is no work. A boy finishes high school and signs up at the employment bureau, but there are no results. And there is nothing to do at home—a little wood to gather, a bit of wheat to harvest. They don't know where to turn. If they finish college they will end up doing physical labor as migrants anyway. They know that even if they get work in Kosovo, it won't be enough to adequately support a family (Ridvan).

This disillusionment with formal education is exacerbated by the fact that many men who finished school in the sixties and seventies and realized their dreams now face a painful irony. While those who had pursued an education subsist on meager government wages, their age-mates who had been unsuccessful at school and had had no higher ambitions than to stay on the farm, finding what work they could, are now the migrants who have built impressive houses, bought new cars and covered their wives in gold.

When young men see the economic promise of migration, school loses its luster. Everyone is used to being dependent on others, and the chance of having your own money is irresistible. They see that the migrants are so much better off than those who finished school. Those who have made lots of money say that in these hard times school has no importance because those who finish college find no work (Nexhmi).

How can we get the boys to continue school when they earn ten times as much if they become migrant workers? As a village school teacher, my monthly wages are enough to buy two pairs of shoes, nothing more. How can the boys think of high school when real money awaits them outside? (Enver).

A friend of mine who didn't go to school at all is now a gentleman, with a new house and car and his wife covered in gold. And people like me who finished high school have been left with nothing! And you don't think that this is a psychosis for me, that I was such a fool to go to school when I could have become a migrant?! All that is left to me is this psychosis, to me and to all of us who labored through school and suffer for it now (Bajram).

A migrant now says to himself, "I have made a lot of money abroad, have achieved my goals for myself and my children, now what do I need to send my children to school for, just to land some miserly job in the public sector?" (Rami).

The Resistance to Women's Education

Women's brains are put there only to feed their braids.

Flok gatë e mend pak
[Long hair and small minds]

The general trend away from formal education in the 1980s was particularly acute among village girls. While their urban counterparts continued to attend high school and college¹ the number of rural girls attending high school has dropped off considerably since the early 1980s.² Many village girls who begin their educations complete only seven or eight years before their parents take them out of school. It is estimated that of the girls who began primary school in 1975, 29% did not reach secondary school (Konferenca 1986:4), while in 1987, 50% of the 16,000 girls who finished eighth grade did not enter high school in 1988 (Rilindja 18 May 1988). During each year of the 1980s out of 45,000 female students who began primary school less than 8,000 entered the eighth grade (Ibid.). There is widespread illiteracy among Albanian females in Kosova. 70% of the estimated 200,000 persons above the age of ten who are illiterate are female (Ibid.).

While the decline in secondary education for girls has been felt throughout Kosova, it is most extreme in the most impoverished counties: Dragash, Rahovec, Kaçanik and Klina, where there are now only a few girls in high school. In Opoja, during the late 1970s, 40% of the high school were females. Ten years later, in 1988, this percentage had plummeted to 4.5% (23 Albanian girls out of a total 511 Albanian students) (Dragash High School records).³ This is in spite of the fact that 40% of the children who finish primary school are girls.⁴

The Emic Discourse on Women's Education

Albanians are consistent in their explanations of the current trend of keeping girls out of high school in a consistent way. A set of discrete reasons are offered, usually in the following order of descending importance:

the absence of future employment prospects;
 the high cost of education (clothes, bus transport, lunch money);
 the threat to a girl's moral reputation;
 the difficulty of finding husbands for educated women;
 the threat to family harmony posed by overly-educated brides; and
 the negative pressure from the *rreth*, the local community.⁵

Most discussions on the subject bring one or more of these reasons into play. When family members are prompted to consider why the girls in their families have not gone on to secondary school, a typical discussion will go something like this:⁶

"It's because we don't have the money."

"We do have the money, but it's tradition. People are afraid the girls go to school just to fool around with boys."

"It's just fanaticism."

"It's unnecessary. Girls learned all they need to know in primary school."

"There's no work afterwards."

A similar exchange:

"It's because of the conditions, and because of the tradition we have that girls just don't go to school."

"The girl gets engaged and that's that. We don't have the economic means."

"Tell it the way it is! The girls weren't interested in school."

"My daughters didn't go because they weren't interested, and because we didn't have the means. You have to buy them clothes. And besides, we needed her at home to help her mother."

"And there is no work afterwards."

The principal reason for declining high school attendance, given by villagers, townspeople and officials alike, is Kosova's high unemployment rate, especially among women. It has been estimated that in 1988 90.3% of the Albanian women in Kosova were "economically dependent" (Rilindja, 24 March 1988). Only 22% of the people employed in Kosova's are

women (compared to 36% in Yugoslavia) (ibid). It is generally understood that an education is valuable if the girl is employed after high school. But if she remains unemployed, the threat to her reputation posed by school attendance is unwarranted.

Before, when a boy or girl went to school, you knew they would get a good job. Now we don't want girls to go, because they lose their moral standing when there's no reason for it. After high school they are left neither here nor there—without a job or a husband (Sabri).

Another common excuse for keeping girls out of high school is the expense. "It is true that the emancipation of the people lies in the emancipation of women. But when Albanians don't have enough to eat, how can we send our daughters to school?" (Bajram). It is reasoned that if a girl is unable to find work after graduation, the investment made in her education will have been in vain. An investment in her trousseau is considered more sound. "You send her and she doesn't study well, or doesn't finish, and it will have been for nothing."

This argument is indeed substantiated in regions lacking their own secondary school, where students must board in a local town. But the rationale is thin in Opoja where a local high school is accessible by bus. The defense is especially weak when made by fathers from the village of Shajna which is only a few kilometers from the Dragash high school. The argument is even less convincing in families receiving substantial remittances from migrant fathers and brothers.

When my father told me I couldn't continue school he said we didn't have the means. But it wasn't that. The people here think that a girl becomes ruined when she goes to school, and in the end doesn't get a job, so what's the point? No one talks about these things, they just say, "*S'kemi kushtet*" [We don't have the means] (Lumnije).

While dismal job prospects dominate the surface rationalization for keeping girls out of high school, moral considerations are the underlying cause. If concerns about moral reputations and marriage prospects were not foremost in people's minds, it might be assumed that people would let their daughters go on to school to enrich themselves even without the promise of future employment.

It is a widely held belief in Opoja, as in many Kosova villages, that girls who attend high school (who ride the bus to and from school, who mix freely with boys outside their kin group, and who move about town unchaperoned) inevitably compromise their moral purity. "There are very few girls who have gone to school who are still good girls." Whether a girl actually "misbehaves" or not is not the point: once she sheds *havale*, the veil of enclosure, of protection within the family compound, her reputation is henceforth considered suspect. When a girls'

parents arrange their daughter's marriage it is understood that the responsibility for her moral reputation is transferred directly from their hands to those of her husband. Any indiscretion on her part reflects directly upon the honor of her entire family. If she ruins her reputation by going to high school she blackens their name [*e merrë fytyrën*—takes away the face]. In a larger sense it is thought that educated girls "destroy the social fabric" by compromising their reputations and setting bad examples for other girls to follow. "There were a few of these girls, who, after going to school, were morally unclean, and they have closed the door for others."

Not sending the girls to school...it's really all about jealousy. Every man still wants to marry a girl no one else has ever touched. For us the most important thing is that a girl is not been seen too much in public [*mos me u shfaq*]. Problems develop later between a wife and husband if it is discovered she had been with someone else. It creates conflicts for the couple and between the families (Ridvan).

Boys here want girls who have had nothing to do with buses, with cars, with boys: girls who have stayed closed-in. Things happen to girls on buses. Even if nothing happens, people think something has happened, and that's just as bad. That's why we keep our women inside. My daughter was one of the smartest in her school, but when it was time for high school, I paid a fine for two years because I didn't want her to continue school and risk having something bad happen to her, to be blemished for life, to have people talk about her. I'm sorry for her, but there would have been no work anyway (Ramadan).

The people say terrible things about girls who have gone to school, that they are ruined, that they go with boys. They don't understand school as a place where you learn something. They think you just go there to see boys (Drita).

Much fear has penetrated the society about girls going to school. The few girls who do go have illicit adventures, one after another. Then they remain unmarried (Hyri).

A girl who has attended high school and remains unemployed in the village may have difficulty finding a worthy husband due to the threat to her moral reputation posed by her attendance at school. Her education does not, as documented in other Moslem societies, become an asset in the marriage bargain (see Pastner 1980). Instead, it is assumed that a girl who has been to school risks the untenable possibility of remained unmarried. In Opoja everyone knows of six girls from one village who recently finished high school and remain at home, unmarried.

No one wants to marry them—healthy and intelligent girls, all of them. To see these girls being left as old maids makes you sick. That's why people don't send their daughters. How could I convince other villagers to educate their girls when they see something like that? (Bajram)

Girls are often sorry they went to school because people think badly of them. There's a girl in my village who finished technical school, is twenty-seven and no one wants to marry her. It's because we are still very fanatical (Ridvan).

In point of fact, few Opoja girls have failed to marry because they attended high school. Marriageable females are considered a "limited good"; there are never enough of them to satisfy the demand. Nonetheless, the small number of girls who seem destined for spinsterhood is enough to affect the Opojans' attitude toward education.

Everyone pities the girl who has attended high school, cannot get a job, and must return to the perceptual and physical confinement of her garden walls. With her own reputation compromised she returns to a community of morally "pure" women. Rather than looking up to the educated girl in their midst for her knowledge and experience, many of the girls who have stayed at home look down upon her "adventures." Indeed they find a deep sense of pride in not having gone to school, in having remained "behind the veil." A girl who has been to school but has no job and lives back at home has less authority than the girl who never left home, who spent her high school years close to the hearth working on her trousseau.

People also say that once the girls who have been to school return jobless to the old life and are confined at home, they re-enter the mind-set associated with that world. It is as if they had never left. A teacher at the local high school comments:

The girls who were my students used to greet me on the street. Once they are closed back behind four walls, they act as if they don't know me. They are afraid to talk to me; the *rreth* doesn't permit it. They become just like the others.

The use of the issue of morality as a rationalization for keeping girls at home raises an interesting question: if parents prevent their daughters from attending high school because they fear the girls' reputations will be blemished, how is it that many families appear to be so eager for the girls to get jobs and face what promises to be an even more compromising public display? A girl working the night shift at the local factory leaves the house as everyone else is going to bed, embarks on an hour's journey by foot and by bus in the dead of night, and is not seen again until the next day. How is it that this situation is, at least in theory, condoned?

The answer is that a working woman is understood to be in a different social category from her unemployed counterpart; she enters the jurisdiction of a different system of moral values. The key to this reasoning is that people assume she will marry an educated boy of her own choosing and her parents will not have to negotiate a marriage for her—*E hekin q'atë gajle* [They get rid of that problem]. When people choose their own spouses their family extricates itself from the matter. Parents do not guarantee the purity of their son or daughter, and are not

held responsible in the matter. The logic is as follows: if a girl has no hope of working after she finishes school, she will become a village housewife. She will remain within the behavioral parameters of traditional extended family life. She will have an arranged marriage, and to make sure she gets a proper mate, her reputation must remain spotless. She must be prevented from tarnishing her reputation by going to high school. If she were to be employed after finishing her studies she would find her own husband and her reputation would be under much less scrutiny. Her future husband would want an honorable girl indeed, but the random suspicion associated with going to high school or college would not necessarily damage her image for him.

The fundamental principle in attitudes about education is the perceived need to conform rigidly to the local behavioral code. Many people who would otherwise champion the education of women feel thwarted by the pressure of public opinion.

I want my children to get an education, to have a life beyond what we had, but most men around here are fanatics, and so the region cannot get ahead (Hasan).

The decisive thing is neighborhood pressure. For every father it's the same (Enver).

How can a man let his daughters go to school if his friends don't? (Aferdita)

Many men say that they want to send their daughters to school, but they cannot be the first one to do so.

Me një lulë nuk qel pranvera [One blossom does not bring the spring]. What good would it do for one of us to send our daughters to school? When all the girls go to school, it will be wonderful for all the people. But I alone send my daughter, she will just become an old-maid (Hyri).

Often it is not the girl's father but other men in her patriline who prevent her from going to school. One often hears from young women, "Our father wanted us to go to school, but he knew his friends would 'talk,' and all his friends are fanatics."

There are no positive role models to follow in this regard. Community leaders, political officials and even the high school teachers themselves fall prey to the pressure of public opinion, and perpetuate the problem. "If the president of the county doesn't send his daughter, why should other fathers send theirs?" There are no female teachers at the high school. Few of the teachers are strong advocates of women's education. Most of those who do think girls should be in their classes have small children and are not in a position to "practice what they

preach" by sending their own daughters. The school's principal sends all of his daughters. Unfortunately, a few girls from his village who went to high school have remained unmarried, thus negating the effect of his boldness.

An important reason Opoja men give for not wanting to marry educated girls is their desire to uphold the status quo in the extended family. Among rural Albanians it is generally understood that the presence of an educated, working woman changes the social order, indeed the very concept of the traditional extended family. Thus, while parents may want their son to have an education in order to get a local job, they do not want him to marry an educated girl because it is assumed that she will disrupt family harmony, the most prized component of Albanian life.

Many parents think that an educated bride will have *mendjen e madhe*: a swelled head, lofty notions, too much self-interest. She will lack the characteristic most essential to extended family life: selflessness and devotion to the collective good. Having been exposed to alternative ways of thinking, she will have her own ideas and want to do things her own way, an attitude considered inconsistent with life in the traditional family. "As head of the household, when I say something, my wife just says, "Amen." If you get an educated wife, she won't do this" (Bajram). "A girl without schooling behaves better, is more temperate, doesn't contradict her husband" (Ridvan).

Many believe that an educated bride, since she is cognizant of potential alternatives, will only be interested in an easier life, a better life, and will necessarily be oriented toward the well-being and future status of her husband and children above that of the collective.

If I had taken an educated woman, in three days I would have had to break from my family. She would have let the other women make coffee and clean the house. I would say, "We need twenty loaves of bread," and she would say to me, "I'll make one for you, one for me. Let the others fend for themselves." She would want to live alone, apart from the larger family. The neighbors would say my wife does nothing for my family. It is the Albanian way to watch out for the extended family. Our family would be given no respect (Pelivan).

This problem is magnified if the bride is employed, in which case it is anticipated that she will not tend to domestic chores as other women in the house, will disrupt the division of labor and create enmity between brides. (Here again the assertion that "we would send girls to school if she could get a job afterwards" is contradicted.)

If I take for my bride a working woman, she won't get home until three, and won't be able to do the work that brides do. *E djegin bukën tuj lexu gazetën* [They burn the bread while they're reading the newspaper]. If I take a typical girl with primary schooling when I come home in the evening everything will be under control (Nexhmi).

It's difficult having an educated bride in the house, showing off her knowledge. She will end up getting a job, will get up and leave in the morning without looking after the housework. She ruins the *rendi i maxhës* [the order of the flour bin—the work rotation among women]. It causes problems for the other brides in the house. And if she really achieves something, becomes a doctor or something, then it's a problem of jealousy between the women. If she's too good they get jealous. If she has weaknesses they are more tolerant (Ridvan).

It is believed that an educated bride will lack devotion to the service of the family, in particular to her mother- and father-in-law. The majority of young men in Opoja still marry to fulfill an obligation, to bring in someone to serve their parents and contribute to the family work-force. To take an educated bride is to shirk filial responsibility by depriving the household of a necessary "arm for work." Thus the boys consent to arranged marriages with unschooled girls "for the sake of the family."

Albanians can choose between two variants of life. I chose the primitive way of life and took a woman with no education, for the sake of my family. If I had taken an educated woman, taken her just for myself, I would have been turning my back against my mother and father. We would have had a modern wedding, she would not have kept *havale* [symbolic veiling - raincoat and scarf]. Life at home would have to change (Bajram).

A man has to decide from the beginning. If he wants to help his family, he has to take a woman who will suit their lifestyle. A good son would rather give up his life than have a wife who couldn't serve his parents (Pelivan).

In contrast to this point of view, some Opojans maintain that an educated wife would be an asset to family life and would ease his burden. For the men who think in this way, it is the pressure of community norms which prevents them from acting on their conviction.

An educated woman will better educate her children. My wife had only two years of schooling. She teaches her children what she was taught, for the house and field. In school it's different. You learn new things. Then you can choose between traditional and modern things. My wife cannot serve a dinner like an educated woman, cannot make conversation, cannot buy herself a bus ticket. Having an educated wife would make my life much easier (Bajram).

An analysis of the discourse surrounding the issue of women's education reveals that people believe that they are willing to sacrifice the traditional family structure, to face the potential threat to a girl's reputation and marriageability, and to make the financial investment if, in the end, the girl finds employment. If not, the investment and moral risk outweigh the

more intangible benefits of an education. If the women are not employed, it is preferable to abide by the social order of the past in which women remain close to the hearth from birth to death. It is in this light that we must understand the Opojans' view on the subject.

We are all aware that without the education of girls the culture can't go anywhere. But in the context of economic and political life now it's not worth it to people to risk their daughters' morals. If the state offered jobs, we would let the girls go. When the masses are depressed about the future, they cannot think beyond getting jobs. They can't think in terms of the pure value of education (Ridvan, born 1960).

Migrants' Attitudes Towards Women's Education

Albanians working abroad tend to be among the most conservative with respect to their daughters' educations. Their perspective is based on moral grounds. Many migrants are repelled by what they see as the immoral behavior of girls in the west and associate this behavior with the fact that the girls have been allowed to go to high school. Many keep their daughters out of school, believing that in doing so they may insure that they uphold traditional Albanian mores. From an economic point of view, the migrant father who has established a secure livelihood for his family says there will be no need for his daughters to work, and therefore no need for them to risk their moral reputation by attending school.

Girls' Attitudes Towards Education

The tears in the girl's eyes were tears of hunger—for knowledge,
for school—tears which denounced our backward traditions,
tears with which she protested the slavery of our women
(Kosovarja December 1971:21).

While the "official" position projected in Kosova's media reflects outrage against the neglect of women's education in the 1980s, the "victims" of this neglect, the girls themselves, are ambivalent about it, expressing both apathy and pain in reaction to their predicament.

As in other aspects of women's lives, apathy becomes a strategy of defense against the belief that they are the pawns of fate, the objects of their families' wishes. This apathy often leads to poor performance in primary school and a corresponding lack of interest in going on to high school. One often hears the expression: "*S'i ka shku shkolla*" [School didn't go well for her.] The girls' failure in school is part of a self-fulfilling prophecy: their indifference toward education comes from the knowledge that they will not be allowed to continue beyond primary school. Once they have internalized this notion their desire to learn dissipates. A lack of ambition in primary grades becomes a rationale for fathers who want to take their daughters out of school.

With few educated women to look to for role models in their immediate community, most girls remain unaware of the potential benefits of an education and this feeds their apathy. Many are unimpressed by the educated females they do see (e.g. the nurses in the local clinics) who are often believed to have tarnished moral reputations. While primary school teachers encourage the girls to remain in school, their influence is offset by the dominant collective ideology which continually reminds them of the futility of education. "Mothers say to their daughters: what do you need school for? You will marry, go to your husband, and he will take care of you" (Sevdije).

In contrast to the many girls who acquiesce to the denial of their education, other girls dream of finishing high school and college. Many girls believe it will make them more "cultured," more "emancipated," "freer." Foremost in their minds is future employment and "economic independence." (Interestingly, this independence is not sought because it would give women the financial ability to have more command over their own futures. Rather, women consistently express the desire to be able to buy things for themselves without having to ask their in-laws or husbands). Some women have been inspired to pursue a rewarding career, typically as a nurse or doctor. "I got the idea of going on to high school as a child in the village, when the nurses in their white coats set out the table in the meadow to give vaccinations. It was those white coats against the beautiful green grass..." (Fidone). The girls who do well in school are those who have maintained some hope that when the time came they would be allowed to go to secondary school. "I always thought I would go on in school, maybe become a doctor. I didn't think I would fall victim to the fanaticism of the past" (Melije).

When, at twelve or thirteen years of age, their families take these girls out of school, they can only suffer quiet devastation and disillusionment. They abide by their parents' wishes, attempting to focus their energies on trousseau preparation and on projecting the proper behavior which will attract a worthy husband. To contradict their father's wishes is to bring shame to the family, something few girls are willing to do. This acquiescence is a central element in the continuity from one generation of Albanian women to the next. The following statements are typical of women's reactions to being kept out of high school:

I was an excellent student in primary school, one of the best. But father made me stay home after that. I told my mother I wanted to continue school, but it was not her place to meddle in my father's decision. When my girlfriends and I were about to graduate from primary school one of the teachers wrote a letter to us: "I am very sorry for you girls, who will be shut behind four walls, once and forever." And he was right. After that we just worked at the loom and with the needle. How we cried over that letter. We left school and began another life, closed in. I accepted it. What else could I do? (Shpresa, born 1959)

My best childhood memories were of going to school. My worst memory was of leaving school. I was an excellent student all through primary school. When it came time to decide whether I could go to high school there was no big discussion: I said I wanted to, my father said no, and that was that. But my heart was burning for school (Lumnije, born 1970).

Kosova's policy makers, administrators and intellectuals maintain that the success of their socialist vision depends on the "emancipation" of women which they define in terms of education and employment. But very little was done in the 1980s to enforce this ideology. Since the 1950s fines have been imposed on families who refused to allow their children to attend primary school, but the leniency of the fine and the lack of enforcement have made it a weak deterrent. Newspaper and magazine articles regularly denounce the decline in high school attendance, but the critical economic, ethnic and political problems of the 1980s have eclipsed such social concerns, especially those concerning the emancipation of women and of social life in rural families.

The issue of women's education is one of the most visible manifestations of ideological conservatism among Albanians. It is one part of a system of practices which combine to produce the anachronisms in village life. It raises provocative questions about the Albanians' desire to uphold traditions of the past, questions we will explore in the concluding chapter.

Notes

1. Females comprise 36% of the university population in Prishtina (Colleges and High Schools [Technical Schools] in Kosova. Provincial Statistical Bureau, Prishtina, 1988.)
2. Compare this to the percentage of high school girls in the city of Prishtina and to the percentage in Dragash, the county seat of Opoja:

	Prishtina	Dragash
1982-1983	37%	6%
1987-1988	41%	3.8%

(Arsimi fillor dhe i mesëm [Primary and secondary education]. Provincial Statistical Bureau, Prishtina, 1988.)

3. The fluctuation in the percentage of girls in Dragash High School from 1982 to 1987 is as follows:

	Total number of Albanian students	Number of female students	Percentage of female students
1982-1983	616	37	6.0%
1983-1984	609	23	3.7%
1984-1985	555	14	2.5%
1985-1986	516	10	1.9%
1986-1987	527	16	3.0%
1987-1988	580	22	3.7%

(Primary and Secondary Education in Kosova. Prishtina: Provincial Statistical Bureau, 1988.)

4. The recent drop in female education beyond primary school is not unique to Albanians. The phenomenon is in evidence in other Mediterranean communities. Abadan-Unat reports that in Turkey only one-third of the girls in urban primary schools enter high school. The decline in attendance "does not come from legal restrictions, but rather from structural inequalities. Their access to education depends greatly upon urbanization and the realization that schooling has functional value" (1981:26). Here, as in Kosova, the trend is accompanied by an increasing interest in conspicuous consumption.
5. It is also argued by some that poor high school attendance is a political issue: uninterested in the emancipation of the Albanian population of Yugoslavia, many Albanians contend that the federal government has failed to provide enough subsidies for education, or to exert enough pressure on parents to send their children.
6. The following is an excerpt from an informal discussion with an Opoja friend about sending girls to high school. The speaker is Bajram, a thirty-five year old male nurse whose own liberal leanings on the issue are circumscribed by the conservatism of the extended family and the village community in which he lives. (My comments are in parentheses.)

If we just had educations... We have passed through a time when for a slight illness people died because they were afraid to go to the doctor. Now that Albanians girls have gone to school there are female doctors and nurses and people go to the hospital without fear... And the education of females would advance the whole people, because their education of their children has great importance.

(Here is the irony: you tell me how important education is for the advancement of the people, but on the other hand you say girls shouldn't go to school if there's no work afterward!)

All the people would send their girls to school if they knew that there was work waiting for them. The girls all go to school for eight years now, but then they stay home and work on their trousseaus as they did one hundred years ago. It's all because of poverty. If they were working in a factory, they would buy a few dresses, and that would be that, like it is in Slovenia, like it is everywhere. It's all a question of the standard. We have a factory, and several girls are employed there. When they seek workers, one hundred apply, five are taken. Ninety-five people go home without work. You send ten girls to school and out of them one gets a job.

And the worst thing is, a girl who went to school and didn't get a job, also didn't get engaged. If she had been working she would have found a husband at her job. Why would you send a girl to school if you weren't sure she would have work afterwards? Just to keep her at home? Just to spend money needlessly? Don't you realize how much it cost the head of the house to send a girl to school? People don't have the money for that investment—to pay for a place to stay in Prizren, for food, books, paper, clothes—if there is no promise of work afterwards. What good is an education if again she ends up closed behind four walls? She is left half finished—this is ruination.

(Then it's better to have never gone to school than to have gone and become a housewife?)

I didn't say it's better... But for some of the women here, it suits them to just be at home.

(You have many times complained in the hospital about the ignorance of the women who bring their sick infants, who don't have the education to properly care for the hygiene at home...)

The woman with the cleanest home is the one who is always home. Do you need school to know how to clean a room?

(Even with no employment, in the end isn't it better to send the girl to school?)

No one will send their daughter if there is no work. It seems to them just like sending them to have an adventure [an affair], and to end up at home anyway. And no one comes to ask for your daughter [in marriage]. There are many examples of girls who have finished high school and wind up behind four walls, just like the girl who has only finished the eighth grade, and the one in high school doesn't know any more.

(One more time: even if there is no employment afterward, is it better for a girl to spend those four years in high school or at the loom?)

It is better to have knowledge than to have things. It is useless if a girl has gold jewels and thirteen pair of *dimia* if she cannot support herself. But if you send her to school and not to work it's the same thing as if she had just been sitting there doing embroidery.

It's different when you send a girl to school than when you send a boy. We still have that *egër* [wild, primitive] world view.

If everybody was working, if there were lots of girls working, the moral question of sending girls to school or to the factory wouldn't be a problem. Then everyone would be sending their daughters to school, and going to school would have completely different moral connotations. If everyone were going to work, they would find husbands there, and would take responsibility for their own lives, independent from their parents. It's totally different if everyone is sending their daughters to school, no one at all leaving their daughters at home, everyone knowing their daughters will have work tomorrow. It's something else if just one or two men send their daughters, as if to "break the ice." Tomorrow that girl returns home, without a job. The others say: have you seen the daughter of Filan Fisteki [John Doe]? He spent all that money sending her to school and now she's back at home.

If there was employment for all, there would be a law that all girls and boys have to go to school because the workplace needs them. Then they would have to go to school, then it would be different. If there were just work for the people, we would send them all to school, and life would change. It's too late for me to change. I now have it the traditional way, and have to carry that burden. I'm responsible for educating my wife and my children.

(What will you do if there is still no hope of employment when it's time for your daughter to go to high school?)

I would try to find her a direction in school which would lead to work.

(But if there were no work?)

Then let the devil take us both.

Chapter VIII

Finding Refuge in the Past

Manifestations of Continuity

This study has explored the lifestyle of a group of rural Albanians, examining how they assess their way of life and how they represent it to themselves and to an outsider. It has outlined social configurations inherited from the past which order their lives: kinship and the corporate extended family, alliance and marriage, patrilocality and gender roles, and migration. And it has looked at specific spheres of social interaction in which continuity and change are being negotiated.

Among the Albanians of Opoja continuity with the past stands out against a horizon of change which looms large in the distance. This concluding section reviews behavioral and ideological manifestations of continuity and explores some of the reasons these Albanians "take refuge in the past." We first reconsider some of the prominent examples of traditionalism found in Opoja: arranged marriages, rituals of alliance and exchange associated marriage, convictions about the village and land ownership, attitudes about migration, and the denial of women's education.

Behavioral Continuity

From matchmaking and bridewealth negotiations to the myriad of rituals tied to the engagement and wedding, the institution of marriage is a primary index of continuity and conservatism in Opoja. Nearly every family is wrestling with issues related to marriage, but the windfall is on the side of tradition. The majority of Opojans still view marriage first and foremost as an alliance between two families. As such, the desires of the boy and girl are secondary to the social and economic consequences of alliance. Most marriages are arranged by parents or relatives. Many couples meet before marriage but only during brief, clandestine encounters. Matchmaking and the negotiation between families still take place under a strict protocol (see Appendix).

The ritual associated with engagement and marriage is a stronghold of continuity among Kosova Albanians, a powerful link to the past, a fixed point in a changing world. It serves Albanians "as an antiworld into which they can project their wishes...easing alienation in the modern world of shifting values" (Rihtman 1976:14;13). It is a marker of ethnic, regional and personal identity. As part of a disparaged ethnic minority in Yugoslavia, as an underem-

ployed public servant, or as a physical laborer abroad, an Albanian man's participation in elaborate, traditional marriage negotiations and wedding rituals lets him experience the personal status afforded to him by his local community. In producing a wedding spectacle to the letter of customary law a father claims his dignity as a member of the community. The wedding is also a microcosm of culture. Participation in it actualizes, demonstrates, and reinforces the individual's link to culture at large. Through participation in the ritual a person learns "what his culture's ethos and his private sensibility...look like when spelled out externally in a collective text; that the two are near enough alike to be articulated in the symbolic language of a single such text" (Geertz 1973:449).

The economic investment made in these rituals is an important part of cultural continuity. Even under severe economic hardship the huge expense is considered necessary in order to procure a reputable bride, secure a son's future, seal the alliance between two families and project strength in the eyes of the community. Though the money spent on gold and satin, wedding music and a village feast is considered obscene, people agree that no one can afford to be the one to break the tradition.

The time has come for us to say 'Stop!' to this custom. It's gone too far. Everyone is starting to think about it. But no one wants to be the first. Each man says, 'Look at the wedding that guy put on! Why not me? I can outdo him!' (Ferat).

Even in times of severe economic depression Opojans have made huge investments in weddings, but the high incidence of labor migration in recent decades has inflated the price-tag and intensified the financial burdens they create.

Another aspect of continuity in Opoja is in the attitude toward land. In other societies increasingly dependent upon wage labor and migration, land tends to lose its symbolic and monetary value. Stirling notes that in Turkey in the early 1950s people thought of land as the "moral and physical center of their lives," but by the 1970s, home and land had become "merely assets to be sold for cash" (1974:217). In Opoja this is not the case. Even though the status associated with farming is low and the importance of agriculture has diminished, land is still at a premium as a symbol of personal worth and as a link to one's family.

The high value of land in the village has to do with the unusual desirability of living in Opoja, another key factor in the continuity of values among the local people. (STATS: desire to stay in village) Given the option, young people in most rural areas of Kosova would choose to leave their village and move to town. This is not true in Opoja, where a superior infrastructure (an asphalted main road, electricity, running water in most villages) and the presence of public services (a post office and telephone, regular bus service, a local hospital and high school, etc.)

help to make village life desirable for young people (see Appendix). Many young men, especially those who have not gone on to college, would settle in Opoja if they could find a local job. Given the difficulty of this, many plan to work as migrants until they can build a house and a future back in their village. Many dream of starting a private business in the local town of Prizren, building one house in town and one in the village, and living between the two. The few college-educated Opoja boys tend to look toward settling in the city where they have found a more dynamic, freer life. Thus it happens that those who have not attended college remain in the village and contribute toward the perpetuation of the status quo. "The really successful, dynamic people who would bring about change in the village don't stay" (Artan).

The desire to remain in the village is divided along gender lines. It is understandable that men want to stay because of the sense of belonging in the house of their forefathers ameliorated by their freedom of movement beyond the limits of the domestic sphere. Opoja women, in contrast, are ambivalent about village life. Many are willing to sacrifice proximity to natal kin in favor of the easier, more dynamic and less confined lives they expect to find in the city. But many who do move to town with their husbands find city life to be more restrictive than village life, if their husbands or in-laws are bent on bringing rural values to the city.

Given the difficulty of finding local employment and settling in Opoja, an enduring commitment to migration as the region's only hope is a major conduit of continuity in Opoja. Given its high population density, insufficient productive acreage and the existence of only one substantial productive enterprise, without labor-migration Opoja would be one of the poorest regions in Kosovo. Because of this migration has been very intense here, and most families have or hope to soon have a family member working abroad. In the 1980s the focus in Opoja was on economic security from migration.

The people believe they need the wealth that only migration can give them. They feel that every other road is closed to them. We know that a high living standard is not everything, that there are other ways to exist, but still we engage our daughters to migrant men, looking first and foremost to the immediate economic needs of the family. The first consideration in marriage is economics. A man sells his daughter thinking of his family's economic status, a concern with becoming equal to those who are working abroad (Pelivan).

Tied to the migration phenomenon and accompanying traditional values, the conservative response to the issue of women's education in Opoja represents not only a link to the past, but a retreat to a behavioral pattern prevalent before the 1970s. The inability of many Albanian girls with secondary educations to find employment after graduation and their subsequent failure to marry and fulfill the associated cultural mandates within a "reasonable" amount of time has spelled doom for the girls who follow. A girl's elders reason that with no hope of

future employment there is nothing to be gained by risking her moral reputation and marriageability, or by investing money in her education. Thus the emancipation and enlightenment hoped for by Opojans during the education movement of the 1970s has fallen away, leaving in its stead the conservatism of decades past.

Ideological Continuity

We find deep currents of the "past in the present" in certain attitudes prevalent among rural Albanians: hierarchies of dominance based on age and gender, the symbolic veiling of women, the power of shame as social control, and acquiescence and fatalism in the face of potential conflict.

A major conduit of continuity in Albanian society is the acceptance of traditional hierarchies of age and gender. When life revolved around a subsistence economy, old-style migration and religion, the community elders "knew best." Today, "modern discovery and invention rivals eternal revelation as the source of truth" (Stirling 1974:222). But while the absolute authority of the family patriarch has been chipped away in many Opoja families, age hierarchies still guide social interaction.

Although in the past twenty years women in urban centers have gained a greater voice in the home and a wider range of movement, a huge dichotomy between men's and women's roles in domestic and public life is maintained in rural and urban Kosova. The female villager is secluded behind high walls, shrouded in public in a raincoat and scarf; the female urban professional presides at meetings, travels abroad, wears the latest fashions. But neither one questions the "true role" of women and men. The majority of Albanian women are looking for a higher standard of living, not a change in their identity as keeper of the hearth.

In Opoja the key symbol which sets apart the roles of women and men is *havale*—women's seclusion. This seclusion is symbolized in the garden wall which confines her domestic life, in the scarf and overcoat she wears when she is outside the house, and in the invisible veil of self-control which circumscribes her behavior. *Havale* implies impenetrability and chastity. It speaks to the past, bringing the past into the present more than any other social force among Albanians. As noted in the Greek context, "The ideal of chastity is important enough to warrant an inbuilt appeal to the absolute legitimacy of the past" (Herzfeld 1983:163).

Closely associated with *havale*, another important aspect of continuity among Albanians is the power of *marre*, shame, as social control. The avoidance of shame still guides the behavior of Kosova Albanians. For a village woman, it is *marre* not to be up at five and have the fire

stoked and the courtyard garden swept before her father-and-law rises. It is *marre* for a man to contradict his father, to balk at the marriage arranged for him, to shirk his filial obligations. The avoidance of shame continues to be the principle guide to behavior.

Pajtim, acquiescence, is another critical feature of Albanian consciousness which guides experience and perception. Older generations of Albanians lived by the principle that they were destined to suffer and endure. This sentiment has not been lost on post-war generations. The prevailing attitude among Albanians is that one accepts one's lot in life as gracefully as possible. *Duhet m'u pajtu*, "You must accept it," is an expression often heard from women and men, young and old. It is a part of being Albanian.

Closely tied to the notion of *pajtim*, fatalism is another attitude which characterizes Albanians and which links them to their past. Like their mothers before them, young girls are fatalistic about the course of their lives in terms of a denied education, an arranged marriage, and a life under the direction of one's mother-in-law. Like their fathers, boys are fatalistic about the dismal job prospects at home and the migration imperative. Whether they will be able to find a job in Kosova or somewhere else in Yugoslavia, whether they will be lucky enough to secure a work permit in Europe, is in the hands of fate: *është kismet*.

Emic Explanations for Conservatism

Opojans are acutely aware of the conservatism reflected in their attitudes and behavior. *Fanatik* is a word often used by local people to characterize their region. Everyone has his or her own way of explaining the conservatism for which Opoja considers itself infamous.

Some Opojans say that physical isolation is the reason for Opoja's traditionalism. "We are outside of Kosova. Transformations which have taken place there haven't reached us. Twenty years ago the rest of Kosova was more conservative than we were. Now the opposite is true" (Blaq). In fact, some even less accessible areas of Kosova, those without asphalted roads into the region such as Rugova and Gollak, are more "liberal-minded" than Opoja. It would appear that areas which depended on rural-urban migration were quicker to adopt urban values, while Opoja retreated into a protective conservatism inspired by migration outside of Kosova.

Other Opojans argue that their resistance to change derives from a devotion to Islam, and that their observance of customary behavior is a religious mandate. "You cannot be a Moslem and a believer without following the Koran. You are either a believer, and dress like a believer, or you are not a Moslem. There is nothing in between" (Backer 1986). In fact, except

on special holidays the mosques which dot the Opoja landscape are frequented only by old men. An interesting mixture of Marxism (learned at school), capitalism (learned as migrants) and secularism (learned as Yugoslavs) has replaced Islam as the social directive for Opojans educated in post-war Yugoslavia. But, as Stirling observed in Turkey, in spite of a decline in the formal observance of Islam there is still a sense in which "religious dogma and practice are absolute and eternal" (1974:229).

Religion is indeed an important element in the formation of consciousness among Albanians. But I would argue that in Opoja religion is also used to justify conservatism, to rationalize behavior inspired by other motives. It is also used as a symbol of ethnicity. Surrounded by Slavic Orthodox Christians, the Moslem majority among Albanians appropriate Islam as a part of their ethnic identity. There is not a very clear distinction between being Albanian and being Moslem. "We cannot say which customs are more important, Albanian or Moslem. It is one thing, and we must maintain both" (Ibadet).

Some Opojans contend that their conservatism has evolved from a recurring need to ward off the physical and ideological threat posed by neighboring ethnic groups. A history of regional antagonism has instilled in Opojans a desire to "protect" their women from hostile neighbors and from "dangerous" outside influences. This sentiment grew stronger in the late 1980s as ethnic conflict escalated. In 1989 several Opojans informed me that this threat was the real reason they confined their women and kept girls away from high school, and insisted that I was foolish to look further for the source of conservatism in their region.

The most fundamental emic rationale for conservative behavior is the force of public opinion as social control. This is expressed in one powerful word, *rreth*. Literally translated as "circle," the word is taken to mean the social circle, the immediate moral community. Most Albanians see themselves as living under the constant surveillance of the *rreth*. Conformity and the fulfillment of traditional behavioral norms in the eyes of the community still override individual accomplishments or wealth in creating and maintaining personal authority and family honor. "We have always been oppressed by the weight of public opinion, afraid of the consequence of unconventional action. Now in the pseudo-freedom of recent years, we are still bound to this rigid way of thinking. We can't imagine anything else" (Bajram).

The Extended Family as a Link to the Past

Perhaps the major determinant of behavioral continuity among Albanians is the patrilocal extended family structure.¹ Participation in the traditional patriarchal group mandates a vivid spectrum of attitudes and behaviors congruent with ideals of the past, and is a key to the reverence for continuity among villagers.

Some Opojans live in the extended family out of choice, praising the virtues of communal living with fifteen to thirty family members. Among my respondents, two-thirds of the Opoja group desire to live in extended families, compared to just slightly more than half for all of Kosova (see Appendix 1). The *familja e bashkuar* or "united family" is a key symbol, an embodiment of "tradition," a part of being Albanian. "Our tradition has always been to live for one's family. The idea of living in a nuclear family comes with wage labor and with women's education, which causes people to want to be alone. To leave one's parents alone is a borrowed idea, not ours" (Nazim). Membership ennobles individuals, linking them to a greater whole, to a lineage which transcends the individual. A thirty-year-old male college student reflects, "For me the happiest, most interesting life one can have is in the extended family, where everyone is respected and honored" (Ridvan).

But not all Albanians are enthusiastic about collective life. Many young men who would choose to begin a nuclear family in town are driven by financial need to remain with their brothers and uncles. Facing an uncertain economic future, they depend on the collective economy to put up bridewealth, finance their weddings, and help support a wife and children. Others remain in the collective out of an obligation to care for aging parents.

Many Albanian women say they would prefer to live alone with their husbands and children. While some appreciate the economic and emotional support offered by communal life, others, facing conflicts with in-laws and other in-married women, would prefer to live apart and manage their own households. But women who want a neolocal arrangement are bound by their husband's financial means. Young girls wait anxiously to find out what fate holds in store for them. Where and how they will live will depend upon whom they are "destined" to marry.

Life in the extended family mandates a system of traditional behavioral patterns and values among family members. Customs of the past are adopted in an attempt to promote harmony in the collective. In order to keep peace in the family a boy acquiesces to the higher authority of his elders and perpetuates the tradition of symbolic dominance over the women in his household. He may opt for an arranged marriage and seek a bride who has attended only

primary school. "You have to fulfill the obligation to your family. You can't do that if you take an educated woman" (Bajram). Many Opoja boys dream of finishing school, settling in town, taking an educated wife and living a "modern" life. But with dismal employment prospects in town many return to the village and assume the attitudes appropriate in the local *rreth*. Those who do so tend to become staunch defenders of the "tradition" which circumstances have forced them to accept.

Knowing that she will become part of her husband's extended family, a young woman concentrates her efforts on excelling in the performance of her customary role before and after marriage, acquiescing to the "authority" of males and senior females, projecting modesty, self-control and industriousness, and bearing a respectable number of children. Her plans for a "modern" life alone with her husband are thwarted by the role she must play in her in-law's home.

Nothing can change as long as you and your husband are living with his parents. If it weren't for my father-in-law, my husband would let me dress differently and go out of the house. His parents may be wrong, but you obey them without question. That's the way it is when you're living in a stranger's home, and know you will have to be there for a long time (Shpresa).

Whether men or women choose to live in extended families or are forced to do so by economic constraints, their living situation will dictate the choices made in other aspects of their lives. Thus while some Albanians come to uphold tradition by virtue of their desire to live in the extended family, others do so by default.

Today the majority of Opojans live in the extended family as long as harmony prevails. When conflict erupts, often after the death of the patriarch, brothers do their best to begin independent lives. But those who do break off into nuclear families continue to define their "personhood" in terms of a larger group and not as individuals. They tend to transfer membership in the extended family to participation in their local community, and consider themselves bound by the traditionalism of the *rreth*. While the perpetuation of tradition lies ultimately with decisions made by individuals, these decisions are made with respect to life in the family or community collective.

In the 1980s Opojans were concerned, first and foremost, with the well-being and economic security of their families and with the political future of their ethnic community. But beyond this they were concerned about reputation and status in their community. Though

material success was praised, respected and envied, it could not elevate one's reputation in the absence of moral rightness. "Tradition" thrives in Opoja because it is through success in the performance of traditional behavior that one gains favor in the community.

Migration and Conservatism

The other major factor in Opoja's conservatism is economic hardship. "We've always been too busy struggling against political oppression and poverty to worry about the emancipation of women and other issues of change" (Bedri).

We may be thinking in an abstract sense about modern things like choosing your own wife and taking an educated bride, but the economic decline and accompanying unemployment, accelerated migration, and life in extended families dictates a different reality. It dictates that we live in the traditional way. We would like change to occur, but the economic conditions control our lives (Nexhmi).

Without enough industry in Opoja there is a dearth of local employment. Without job prospects women are kept out of high school and men get jobs abroad.

Migration is blamed for "backwardness" on several counts. One clear reason is the long absence of household heads and their subsequent failure to integrate new customs modeled by urban Albanians into village life. Another major factor is the migrants' insistence on moral conservatism back home to "protect" wives and children. The men believe that aging parents and other family members will be secure as long as strict, traditional behavior is upheld in their absence. And they find comfort abroad knowing that each time they return home they will find the same lifestyle they left months, years and decades ago. The only changes they hope to find are in the family's material conditions.

Another impediment to change is the fact that the migrants invest in redundant retail businesses such as cafes and fruit stands instead of productive enterprises. They spend their earnings on houses, furnishings, and weddings along traditional lines, boosting an already inflated pattern of conspicuous consumption.

Those uneducated people who became migrants and prospered and spread their way of life in Opoja are responsible for our backward situation. Their idea of progress is to have big weddings, to dress the brides in expensive things, to build big new houses and buy new cars. They are the most conservative people, and they are the ones with influence. As long as I have nothing in my pocket, I cannot have the influence they do (Bajram).

Opojans argue that the accumulation of fancy clothes, televisions, and cars made possible by migrant money helps to perpetuate the status quo by appeasing those who remain behind, by making them passive about the way they live. This complaint, made by men and women, is directed particularly to women.

There have been many technological improvements in Opoja—washing machines, electric stoves—but life doesn't change, it just goes around in circles. Things don't change because the women are so placated. A woman has such an easy life, why should she bother herself with an education or employment? She is convinced that life is the way it should be. She's proud of the way she lives (Bajram).

It is interesting in this context to examine the relationship between migration and fatalism in Opoja. Lopreato (1967) has argued that in southern Italy migration has caused the community to lose its fatalism about its economic predicament and social status. This is only partly true in Opoja. The new wealth brought by external migration gives families a chance to pursue their material dreams: to build the house, buy the gold, host the elaborate wedding. There is a sense that the migrant was able to improve his family's life through his own efforts, by the sweat of his brow. But it also contributes to a feeling of passivity among boys accustomed to depending on the security offered by their fathers' salaries. Men complain that the younger generation has become lazy from their reliance on migrant remittances.

The son knows the limits of his father's wealth, but as long as he is sure he will be provided for, what does he care about his own future? Why should he break his back? Why should he finish college and work for \$100 a month when his father is making \$2,000 a month in Switzerland? (Pelivan).

The cycle of dependency on fathers is exacerbated by widespread joblessness in Kosova and the increasingly unpromising labor market abroad, which have made employment plans impossible for most boys. Sensing the futility of planning their futures, the boys pass their eighteenth, twentieth, and twenty-fifth birthdays in the vague hope that an invitation to work from a relative abroad will rescue them from an uncertain future.

Finding Refuge in the Past

We have now reviewed some of the manifestations of behavioral and ideological continuity in an Albanian community. And we have looked at how this community explains its conservatism in terms of specific social configurations: physical isolation, religion, the force of public opinion, the survival of the extended family structure, and the effect of migration on the sending community. We now extend the discussion to include some of the less tangible dimensions of "traditionalism" in this community.

In his 1981 work, *Tradition*, Edward Shils proposed three fundamental reasons why people cling to the past: because it reinforces and expresses their personal and collective identity, because they assign an "absolute validity" to values of the past, and because they cannot access feasible alternatives to the status quo. All of these reasons apply to the Albanians of Kosova.

Tradition and Identity

Dhe me dhe e fe me fe - Land to land and faith to faith.
(Each land, each people has their own way of doing things.)

Kosova Albanians appropriate the customs and world view of the past in the demonstration and elevation of ethnic, regional and personal identity. They take refuge in traditions of the past in order to create a sense of identity in the face of political, economic and ethnic stigmatization and liminality. Albanians perceive themselves as a marginalized people on different levels. As Yugoslavs, they are members of a developing country which finds itself just beyond the borders of the economic prosperity and the cultural and political hegemony of the west. As an ethnic "minority" in Yugoslavia², they are subordinate to the economic, political and cultural dominance of the ethnic "majorities" around them. As a disparaged ethnic group, Albanians are scorned for their peculiar, non-Slavic language, appearance, religion and customs. Albanian villagers experience further marginalization in terms of an economic and cultural distance from urban Albanians. As migrants Albanians are stigmatized as outsiders in foreign lands.

DeVos and Romanucci-Ross tell us that minority groups choose among three strategies to combat political oppression and social marginalization: they define their unity in terms of political opposition, they accept an inferior status as part of a collective self-definition, or they redefine themselves symbolically in terms of their heredity, establishing a sense of collective dignity on the basis of a cultural legacy (1982:10). Albanians have mastered all three strategies, making particular use of the third possibility which we examine here. In the face of political marginalization based upon ethnicity, Albanians cultivate a sense of self-esteem and collective worth by internalizing a forceful sense of group identity. This identity is based on their language and religion, on a collective consciousness of persecution and suffering, and on a set of behavioral ideals which call forth an allegiance to values and behavioral norms inherited from the past.

Albanians cope with marginality by cultivating their identity as oppressed and suffering "outsiders." *Vuajtje*, suffering, is considered a fact of life. As a key element in the "discourse of identity," persecution may be interpreted, Herzfeld tells us, ideologically as well as literally (1985:21). Thus we may argue that Albanians accentuate an ideology of persecution in order to transform the inferiority associated with marginality into a sense of superiority associated with uniqueness. They identify themselves as a backward, forgotten, plundered people, characteristics which they feel make them special. They counter this debased status by defending their collective worth on the basis of racial purity, moral uprightness, and as the keepers of a tradition uncorrupted by the breakdown of gender barriers and the individualism found among their neighbors³.

The world of Albanian women may be seen as a microcosm of this. If Albanians as a people characterize themselves as an oppressed and persecuted ethnic group, the lives of Albanian women represent subjugation within the Albanian community itself. But in the same way that Albanian society as a whole creates dignity in its uniqueness, women derive a special, revered status as the underclass of Albanian society. Women create a sense of pride by investing in the behavior which circumscribes and burdens their lives: obedience, acquiescence and "shame."

For Opojans, the persecution principle is magnified in terms of regional identity. By appropriating the images of "isolation" and "obscurity" with which they characterize their region, Opojans designate themselves as a special group within the Albanian community. This "uniqueness" is enhanced by their extreme commitment to tradition. Their collective worth is augmented in their "unique" preservation of Albanian ideals. Observing the same phenomenon in Greece, Herzfeld calls this the "discourse of local identity." Like Opojans, the Cretans "claim to have preserved the essence of Cretan identity in their inaccessible mountain fastness" (1985:7). An Albanian friend has captured this sentiment in a recent letter:

Our Opoja: it is backward, exhausted, and held down by suffering, fanaticism, hatred, poverty and a myriad of problems which eat away at us. For Albanians suffering and problems are daily companions. The only salvation from suffering is in our tradition of honor, the oath, morality and hospitality—the part of our culture which distinguishes us from other people (Bajram, January 1989).

Honor [*ndera*], the oath [*besa*], hospitality [*mikpritja*], right conduct [*sjellja*] and loyalty to one's clan [*fis*]: these are qualities which Albanians consider to be the pillars of their ethnic identity. These "traditions" are, of course, claimed by other societies which similarly glorify lineage and collective well-being above self-interest. But they are the qualities which Albanians consider to be uniquely theirs, which distinguish them from other ethnic groups.

Albanians also base their identity on behavioral principles grounded in the recognition of hierarchies based on age, gender, and the individual vis-à-vis the collective. Juniors defer to seniors, females to males, individuals to the group, and family to the ethnic nation, creating a social system which reinforces ethnic identity while entrenching the status quo.

The Past as an Authoritarian Discourse

Albanians appropriate tradition in the service of personal and ethnic identity by ascribing an absolute legitimacy to the past, by constructing a "rhetoric of traditionalism" (Herzfeld 1985:20). They engage in what Royce has called "an anesthetizing process of retreat into an all-absorbing, all forgiving identity" (1982:229). They view "their terrain as a holy geography, their past as a religious history" (Scheper-Hughes 1979:20). Customs are considered valid and indisputable simply by virtue of being of the past. "Not givenness, and not convenience, but its sheer pastness...commend the performance of an action or the acceptance of a belief (Shils 1981:206).

The traditions which enhance Albanian identity and organize the Albanians' way of life derive from *la longue durée*, from an expansive "time-before" in which no appreciable change occurred (see Braudel 1972, Davis 1981, Behar 1986:40). Observing Albanian people in the early 1900s, travel writers shared this vision of *la longue durée*.

Up in those mountains...the people are living as they lived twenty centuries ago, before the Greek or the Roman or the Slav was ever known... It was as though we had dropped through a hole in time (Lane 1923:15). For folk in such lands time has almost stood still. The wanderer from the west stands awe-struck amongst them, filled with vague memories of the cradle of his race" (Durham 1985[1909]:1).

The "perceived past" of the Kosova Albanians is based upon a "time-before" which stretches out as a vivid landscape in the collective memory. It is a vast canvas painted with martyrdom, heroism, dignity and sacrifice, a past which serves to ennoble the race, constructed according to an agenda of the present. It is not history per se; it is ideology. "Time is abolished in the name of a reified history" (Herzfeld 1983:163). "It is ideology that determines which patterns are remembered as those of 'the' past, and which are dismissed as exceptions that only prove the general moral rule."

Albanians characterize the "time-before" as a period of extreme hardship and poverty. But they think of it also as a time when discipline, order and mutual respect reigned supreme. They invest themselves in what Herzfeld calls "structural nostalgia," an abiding conviction that the past was better, more noble, because behavior was confined within a more rigid structure.

Twenty years ago we had nothing up here in the mountains. It was a completely primitive life. Many people were living in wooden hovels, sleeping on hay. We didn't send our sons to school because it would undermine their religious faith. There was no wage-work. We stayed at home and watched the animals; we gathered wood to sell. We worked twelve hours in the fields and lived on cornbread and beans. Life was difficult. But there was more feeling between us, more dignity. We knew everybody. We listened to each other. We had more respect for one another. When we gathered in the evenings, only the old men would speak; the younger ones would sit by the door without a word (Rami).

Before, there was no hot water. There was little to eat. But there was discipline. People listened to each other. When the master of the house spoke, everyone listened. We lived on cornbread and some cheese, but there was real pleasure in that. In the old days we wore leather moccasins which let the mud in. Today before the young people wear out a new pair of shoes they buy another. But where is the discipline, the satisfaction in that? (Ramadan).

Albanians are a people who experience "the past in the present." The ennobled, reconstructed past informs the present, providing a sense of deep continuity, an identity, a Tradition. In Mead's terms, the culture is a "post-figurative" one, "in which the individual's answers to 'Who am I? What is the nature of my life?'...are experienced as predetermined" (1970:17). Identification with the past "permits life to move along lines set and anticipated from past experience and thus subtly converts the anticipated into the inevitable and the inevitable into the acceptable" (Shils 1981:198).

The Problem of Appropriate Alternatives

Shils also explains the commitment to customs of the past as the result of an absence of accessible alternatives. "Human societies retain much of what they have inherited not because they love it but because they grasp that they could not survive without it. They have not imagined plausible replacements for it (1981:213). Opojans are clearly aware of different lifestyles—in the west, in Kosova's urban centers, and in other parts of Yugoslavia—but however plausible these alternatives may be for many other Albanians, new ideas are slow to take root in Opoja.

For reasons discussed in Chapter V, Opojans who live and work outside of Kosova seldom appropriate the customs they see and partake of abroad. They rebuff foreign ideas in order to preserve their uniqueness and dignity on "moral" grounds, and out of a fear that they will "lose control" of their social world if their families adopt "western" behavior. Family members who remain at home learn about western lifestyles from the reports of friends who have traveled and through American television. Throughout the 1980s "Dynasty" and "Dallas" have appeared weekly in Kosova homes subtitled in Albanian. The shows are addictive to

many Kosova Albanians, especially to urban women. They are equally as scintillating in Opoja, but in many homes they may be viewed only when elders are not present. The shows project a fascinating alternative to those who watch, but one which is much too far removed from their own reality to inform people's lives.

The alternative ideas gleaned from direct or indirect contact with lifestyles found in other parts of Yugoslavia or in Kosova towns are more accessible to Opojans than customs observed abroad or in foreign media. But even these are slow to affect life in the mountains due to the absence of individuals "who help to interpret tradition in the light of modernity" (Makhlouf 1979:87). As of 1988 there have been few Opojans in a position to inspire change. The younger generation of migrants and the college educated young men who have themselves accepted new ideas tend to defer to the wisdom of family elders and to the control exerted by the local community when they are back in the village. Girls with high school diplomas who are locally employed as nurses or factory workers also have new views about life and should be in a position to influence women who have remained at home. But their "excessive" contact with strangers has made their moral reputations suspect, weakening their efficacy as role models and rendering invalid their testimony to the merits of alternative lifestyles. While all but the most isolated villagers are aware of more "modern forms of thought and action, there are many psychological and social barriers to the appropriation of alternative behavior.

Having looked at some of the roots and the emic explanations of cultural inertia in Opoja, we now turn our attention to the nature of change.

Tradition and Modernity, Inertia and Change

In the west, discussions about change are inevitably prefaced on Comte's theory of a natural progression from simple to complex, low to high, traditional to modern. We tend to assume that "modernity" is the goal of all human societies. "Modernity versus tradition" comes to mean "reason versus tradition," "enlightenment versus ignorance."

But value-laden assumptions about the linear progression of change are troublesome. Tradition is not opposed to modernity; each is contained in the other. They are not "independent systems of mechanically related variables, but two aspects of one historical process" (Makhlouf 1979:19). Society does "progress" from "traditional" to "modern." Tradition is an ongoing negotiation between the past and the present, "a sequence of variations on received and transmitted themes...a set of compromises balanced among themselves but not necessarily and at all times harmonious with each other" (Shils 1981:13;217).

Opojans consistently characterize themselves as "fanatical" and "backward," awaiting the day when life will change, when the "future" will be upon them, when, all at once, as a group, their community will shed the "ignorance" of bygone days and join the ranks of "modern" society. But as Foucault tells us, modernity is not an "event," a wholesale transformation of life. It is an ethos, a particular way of taking up reality. Change does not come about in one sweeping motion. "Culture moves like an octopus—not all at once in a smoothly coordinated synergy of parts, a massive coaction of the whole, but by disjointed movements of this part, then that" (Geertz 1973:408). Change occurs in discrete parts of social life: in technology, in political and economic configurations, in behavior and in consciousness—in specific aspects of the way people live, act and think.

Whether or not change takes place depends ultimately upon conscious choices made by individuals.

Tradition is not the mechanical repetition of old customs...not a product of passive conservatism but the outcome of an active and creative reaction by the peasant to the changed situation in his life (Obrebski 1986:29; see Denitch 1976b).

...it is also an essential feature of native peoples' own creative efforts within the contexts, contradictions and conflicts of their own cultures and societies (Medick and Sabeian 1984:4).

Change...occurs slowly, partially, at different rates for different groups and individuals, and in different forms. Particular groups and individuals attempt to incorporate, interpret, and go beyond new situations which are imposed on them or which they themselves have created (Rabinow 1975:2).

Among Opojans the critical "creative reactions" involve decisions about certain aspects of their lives: about whether to observe strict age and gender hierarchies, whether to have arranged marriages, send girls to school, adopt urban dress and customs, whether to send families abroad with migrant fathers. The choice between continuity and change lies with individuals.

Changes which have taken place in neighboring regions and for the Albanians' relatives living in towns or abroad are now at issue for the villagers themselves. Many young Opojans, especially those who have ventured beyond the borders of their region, are aware of a deepening schism between their lifestyles in Opoja and the way people are living in other parts of Kosova. Customs associated with the past appear increasingly inadequate and the traditional universe no longer seems inevitable. But few men want to contradict the norm, to send their daughters to high school, to subvert the patriarchal power structure. Few Opoja women

believe they are in a position to step out of character, to follow the example of urban women. The persistence of the extended family structure, the nature of the migration experience and the force of public opinion bear down upon the inclination to change one's behavior.

In addition to these structural reasons for continuity there are ideological ones. I have argued in this thesis that Albanians seek "refuge in the past" as a defense against an increasingly oppressive political and economic situation. In this context, "tradition" is called upon to elevate and reinforce collective identity. "This is our tradition," said as a strategic evocation of the past, is used both to reiterate a sense of belonging and to justify a way of life. The Opojans are, as Herzfeld has put it, "invoking the pre-established system," the overlapping influences of Islam, customary law, and a legacy of persecution, in order to validate what they are doing.

It would be better for us to change our ways, to spend less on weddings, on gold for the bride, to send the girls to school, but, in short, *na ka met, na ka met* - it has stayed with us, that's what has been passed down to us. Everyone thinks about emancipation, but the tradition was left to us long ago. Our bones are infected with it (Artan).

We are thirsty for enlightenment, but what are we to do, filled as we are with the past? We guard the tradition because it is the law of our lives. That is all we have. It is our only refuge (Bajram).

Notes

1. The following figures give some indication of the extent of extended family structures in Kosova: (Islami 1985:194)

Household Size:	Avg	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+
City	5.5	4.9	7.3	9.7	17.0	16.0	13.3	9.9	20.5
Village	7.9	2.7	4.8	5.1	8.0	10.2	11.6	11.5	45.3

2. Beginning with the decentralist policies of the Yugoslav constitution of 1963, there was a renewed stress on the association of nationality and locality. By the end of the 1960s the idea was widespread that Yugoslavia was not the "Land of the South Slavs," but a country composed of separate states based on ethnic composition.

Since the beginning of the 1980s there has been a renewed emphasis on Yugoslavia as the "Land of the South Slavs." Since the homeland of the Albanians is Albania, they are officially classified as a "minority" in Yugoslavia, and as such do not enjoy the right to regional self-determination.

3. For a similar phenomenon in the context of Spain see Behar 1986.

Postscript

Prishtina, Yugoslavia, January 26, 1990. Ethnic Albanian protesters opened fire with handguns at police officers today on the third day of unrest in the Kosovo region of southern Yugoslavia where 28 people died in riots last year. Parts of Prishtina were sealed off by security forces, and armored personnel carriers and riot-control vehicles were parked in front of the city's police headquarters. The latest unrest started on Wednesday when the police used tear gas, batons and water cannon against 40,000 protesters in Prishtina who were calling for democracy and the lifting of emergency measures in force since last year (New York Times).

Belgrade, Yugoslavia, July 5, 1990. The Parliament of the Yugoslav republic of Serbia today suspended the Assembly and the Executive Council of the Kosovo region... The Parliament also dismissed the editors of Kosovo's main Albanian-language newspapers and the managers of its radio and television stations... Policemen seized the radio and television stations in Prishtina at 3 a.m... Serbia's Parliament and Executive Council have assumed all legislative and administrative powers in Kosovo (New York Times).

In February of 1989 martial law was declared in Kosova, ending fifteen years of autonomy and ushering in a period of political upheaval, blatant civil rights abuses and ethnic violence. Since that time thousands of Albanians have been fired from their jobs, catapulting many families into poverty and wreaking havoc on civil life. Professional people—engineers, actors, professors and medical doctors alike—are trying to make ends meet by selling fruits and vegetables in the marketplace. Albanian obstetricians have been dismissed from Prishtina's hospital or have left their jobs in protest, forcing women to deliver their babies in distant towns. The purging of many Albanian faculty members at Prishtina's university has forced the medical school to close its doors. Thousands of college students—their classes cancelled, their hope of future employment all but extinguished—pass the days in a state of limbo as they await the turn of political events. Albanian and Serbian neighbors, co-workers and schoolmates—friends and confidants before 1989—no longer look each other in the eye or speak to each other on the street.

In northern Yugoslavia the death toll mounts as fighting continues between the Serbs, who cling to communism and the political status quo, and the newly democratic republics of Slovenia and Croatia struggling for independence from Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, Albanians live week to week and month to month in a state of suspended animation, perched on the brink of civil war, anticipating the possible breakup of their country. Few people venture to guess what a dissolution of the present state of Yugoslavia would mean for the Albanians living

there. The country of Albania, just months ago looked to by the Yugoslav Albanians as their only bastion of military support and their future ally, is now in the throes of its own economic collapse and political chaos.

Everyday life in Kosova goes on. Women care for home and family, attend to guests, plot engagements and plan weddings. Men strategize how to get wood for the winter stove, how to pay for groceries, how to get work abroad for themselves or for their sons. Young people fall in love or have marriages arranged for them. Life goes on, but two and a half years of hostility, confusion and fear about an uncertain future have created a veil of desperation which weighs upon the consciousness of every Albanian.

This study has explored some of the social patterns and attitudes characteristic of Kosova in the 1980s. A large part has been devoted to explaining the profound allegiance to tradition held by many Albanians prior to the events of 1989. During my fieldwork in Kosova I was convinced, like the Albanians themselves, that the extreme emphasis on upholding the customs and ideology of the past would prevail, undaunted, well into the 1990s. Indeed, most aspects of the traditional ideology have remained entrenched in the Albanian spirit during the recent conflicts. But some ideas that only months before had seemed so much a part of the Albanian psyche have begun to lose their hold on the collective imagination. Some of the customs presented in this study as inviolable have been rendered illegitimate by the turn of events.

The current struggle for civil rights in Kosova and the fledgling pro-democracy movement have fostered an unprecedented sense of community throughout the province. The familism of the past has given way to an expression of social unity in the struggle for economic and political survival. One example of this nascent feeling of unity has been the "rationalization" of financial excesses associated with ceremonial life. In the interest of reducing the exorbitant cost of the rituals of engagement and marriage, in many villages ceremonies have been pared down considerably. The shawm and drum players are no longer hired, and what were three-day extravaganzas have been condensed into a one day affair. The changes have been instigated by the village leaders who, in some communities, have taken it upon themselves to respond to the economic crisis. These decisions have come as a relief to many families whose desires to depart from traditions of the past were thwarted by a perceived need to conform to the status quo.

The move toward unity has not been lost on Albanians living outside of Kosova. Each day the migrants suffer vicariously the plight of their compatriots back home. For the past two years they have been attempting to reconcile their own factionalism in an effort to consolidate their aid to Kosova. The thrust of their efforts has been in three directions: collecting money for relief to needy families, staging demonstrations to draw international attention to the situation in Kosova, and raising the political consciousness of the masses of unskilled laborers.

The changing political environment has also inspired a new sense of activism in Kosova. For the first time in recent history people are able to speak out against social ills. Ideas that were formerly censured in the media, topics of conversation once taboo, are now openly expressed. People are able to consider their own vision of the future. For most Albanians this means the creation of a new political order, the birth of democracy in their land. *Demokracia*, the new key symbol and driving idea in Eastern Europe, is the magic word for Albanians. Most believe that once they are liberated from Serbian hegemony, democracy will take root as a matter of course. But while the masses await "liberation," others have seized the moment, concentrating on what they can do during the interim. Convinced that democracy must start at home, they have initiated grass-roots movements to right the social wrongs embedded in the Albanian social system.

One of these projects has been the resolution of clan rivalries which still plague Albanian society. Blood revenge has accounted for as many as one hundred deaths annually in recent years. Anton Çetta, a retired Kosova folklorist, has spearheaded a movement to reconcile feuds throughout the province. It is said that about 150 feuds have been settled since February of 1990 by Çetta and his followers. The group is confident that it can settle many of the 450 to 550 remaining cases.

Another example of activism is a new literacy movement. It is estimated that in 1990 there were between two and three hundred thousand illiterate people in Kosova between the ages of fifteen and forty-five (Kosovarja, July 1990). Among these, 74% were women. Some 70,000 people did not finish the eight primary grades because they did not have access to a local school or were prevented from attending by their families (ibid.) In 1990 a small group of urban women, formerly rather indifferent to social problems in the countryside, initiated a grass-roots organization to tackle the problem of illiteracy among women. Named after three sisters who founded the first school for girls in Albania, the "*Motrat Qiriazhi*" have adopted the slogan, *Me laps në Evropë* [With the pen, on to Europe]. Their first effort has been to establish six-month literacy courses in the homes of village women. Inspired by their initial successes, the work has expanded to address basic questions of equality in the family.

It is difficult to say whether the changes in attitudes and the new activism in Kosova will endure beyond this period of upheaval in Yugoslavia. But conclusions about the inertia of Albanian society drawn in this study have clearly been challenged by recent events. While some aspects of thought and action will surely be re-entrenched in the collective imagination, it is possible that others will have been transformed. We are now witnessing the agony of an uncertain future and the hope for a new social order as the Albanians stand at the threshold of change.

Santa Barbara, California

August 18, 1991

When women took off the veil it was difficult, but now they sit among us. Now it is difficult to make the gift of blood [make a truce], but later it will be normal... We hope to enter the European Community, and we should go in without these old burdens from the ancient past. There are many things we have to become more civilized about. We will be more civilized when a grandmother says to her grandson, "Bring me the newspaper." We will be civilized when grandmothers know how to read and care about what is happening in the world (New York Times, April 6, 1990).

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Appendix I

Summary Statistics

Responses to selected questions

	All Areas		Opoja	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Women who would rather be a man	218	235	21	20
Men who would want to be a migrant	189	192	34	93
Women who would stay and not go abroad	47	245	8	24
Men who want an educated wife	92	75	7	14
Men who want an employed wife	206	140	56	45
Informants who would want to live in a nuclear family	415	425	77	88

All emigrants by destination country and year of move

	Before 1950	1950- 1959	1960- 1964	1965- 1969	1970- 1974	1975- 1979	1980- 1984	1985- 1988	Total
Australia					2	1		1	4
Austria		1		22	22	19	2	4	70
Belgium			1	1	2		3	1	8
Canada		1							1
France				8	3		3		14
Germany		1	2	36	50	38	18	17	162
Italy					1		3	2	6
Libya								1	1
Norway							1	4	5
Sweden					1	1		2	4
Switz.	1			7	23	28	49	45	153
Turkey			1						1
USA			1	1	8	3	19	16	48
Yugo.	5	14	10	10	6	4	3	4	56
Total	6	17	15	85	118	94	101	97	533

Opojan emigrants by destination country and year of move

	Before 1950	1950- 1959	1960- 1964	1965- 1969	1970- 1974	1975- 1979	1980- 1984	1985- 1988	Total
Austria				19	21	17		3	60
Canada		1							1
France				5					5
Germany				13	19	10	2	3	47
Switz.				1	7	8	8	6	30
USA			1						1
Yugo.	4	11	6	6		1	1		29
Total	4	12	7	44	47	36	11	12	173

Appendix II

A Guide to Albanian Pronunciation

ALBANIAN		ENGLISH	
c	caktoj	ts	hats
ç	çikë	ch	chin
dh	dhendër	th	they
ë	është	u	put
gj	gjyshi	j	jeep
j	Opoja	y	yard
l	havale	l	leap
ll	mahalla	l	hill
q	Shqiptar	ch	chill
rr	rreth	r	[trilled]
th	thatë	th	think
x	xixa	ds	heads
xh	axha	j	job
y	gyrbet	u	[French "tu"]
zh	zhvillim	z	azure

Appendix III
Glossary of Key Albanian Words and Concepts
Used in this Study

Besa	The oath; one's solemn word
Farefis	Relative in the patriline (maximal lineage) (literally "seed of the clan")
Fis	Patriclan
Gheg	The northern dialect group of Albanians
Gjak	Blood (relatedness)
Gjini	Relative in the matriline (literally "breast")
Gyrbet	Temporary labor migration (colloquial form)
Havale	Garden wall; veil; restraints on a woman's life
Kanuni	The Canon of Lekë Dukagjin
Kurbet	Temporary labor migration (literary form)
Kusheri	Relative in the patriline (major lineage)
Mahallë	Neighborhood
Marre	Shame
Nderë	Honor
Nuse	Bride; a woman married into one's family
Oda	The receiving room; the center of hospitality, conversation and discourse in the home
Pajtim	Acquiescence, agreement
Robët	The women and children of the house (literally "slaves")
Rreth	Social circle
Shqipëri	Albania
Shqiptarë	(An) Albanian
Shtëpi	House, family
Tosk	The southern dialect group of Albanians
Votra	The hearth; the center of family life