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THE ALBANIAN VILLAGE AND MODERNITY: AN OUTLINE OF A RELATION

Abstract

With the foundation of the modern Albanian state in 1912, the Albanian village underwent profound modernization processes that significantly changed peasants' way of life. The “great transformations” motivated by the idea of progress and evolution articulate a specific relation between modernity as a state-led project and peasant life. The latter, however, had already become subject to the modernist scientific discourse mostly as a linguistic and ethnographic curiosity through the writings of romantic Western travellers, diplomats, curious philologists, and adventurous ethnographers of the 19th century. Both historical moments demand attention and dedicated analysis to understand the ways that modernity transformed rural Albania over time. For this dedicated volume, we offer an outline of the nature of such encounters that rural Albanian had with modernity by specifically observing a) how rural life was subject to ethnological/anthropological discourses, and b) in what ways the modern state and its modernization processes impacted the Albanian village during state socialism and afterwards.

Keywords: village, peasant life, culture, ethnological/anthropological discourses, modernization processes, the modern state.

Abstrakt

Pas themelimit të shtetit modern në 1912, fshati shqiptar do të kalonte në procese modernizuese që ndryshuan thellësisht mënyrën e jetesës të fshatarësisë. Këto ‘shndërrime të mëdha’ që motivoheshin nga idetë e progresit dhe evolucionit artikulojnë një raport specifik mes modernitetit si projekt shtetëror dhe fshatarësisë. Kjo e fundit, ndër të tjera, qe bërë subjekt i diskursit modernist shkencor më herët. Fshatari shqiptar ishte përshkruar si kuriozitet gjuhësor dhe etnografik në shkrimet e udhëtarëve romantikë, diplomatëve, filologëve kureshtarë dhe etnografëve kurajozë perëndimorë të shekullit XIX. Këto momente takimi kërkojnë vëmendjen tonë analitike veçanërisht për të kuptuar mënyrat se si moderniteti shndërroi ruralen shqiptare. Në këtë artikull për këtë vëllim, ne japim një skicë të ‘takimit’ mes rurales dhe modernitetit në Shqipëri, duke u ndalur për të kuptuar: a) se si jeta e fshatit u bë subjekt i ligjërimit etnografik dhe antropologjik dhe b) në ç’mënyrë shteti modern ndryshoi fshatin shqiptar gjatë socializmit shtetëror dhe pas rënies së tij.

Fjalët kyçe: fshati, jeta fshatare, kultura, ligjërimit ethnologjik/antropologjik, proceset modernizuese, shteti modern.

Introduction

The following approach is conceived as an outline of arguments extensively explored elsewhere, aiming to reflect on the relation between the village, rural life, and modernity in Albania. (Bardhoshi 2010; 2011; 2016; Lelaj 2015; Bardhoshi & Lelaj 2018) The proposition implies a two-fold perspective. It provides, on the one hand, an analysis of the village and rural life as subject to modernist projections with the hope, in turn, that our reflection will enable us to offer a more reflective understanding of modernity itself. The endeavour we undertake is to read these layers, and in so doing to provide a sensible answer to a significant question: how and in what ways did the village become subject to - and how was it transformed by - the social, cultural, economic, political, and intellectual processes

through which the very idea and materialization of modernity shaped Albania?

Each of the concepts used in the following analysis - such as the village, modernity, transformation, and ideologies - have a long intellectual history within anthropology and in the wider field of the social sciences and humanities. We are aware of the critical assessments and reflections provided by such scholarship on each of these concepts. However, the present authors are using them as landmarks to frame and summarize more than a decade's worth of research and scholarship that has and continues to explore the relation between the village and modernity in contemporary Albanian anthropology. The guidelines provided by such scholarship that are summarised below, regarding the Albanian village and rural life, firstly, as part of the modernist intellectual thought of 19th century onwards, and secondly, as a project for change by the modern state and its ideologies. The following section offers insight about both perspectives on the Albanian village and its encounters with modernity.

Ethnography, hidden village, emerging nation

The village and rural life were transformed into a scholarly modernist project with the discovery of Albania by foreign and national intellectuals with a primary interest in philology, ethnography, history, or archaeology during the 19th century and onwards. The rural was introduced, as part of scientific explorations, by other intellectualist movements as well, which articulated the modern idea of people's self-determination. The latter, a pillar of modern political thought, instigates the sanctity of rights and freedoms for the individual and/or for a people to choose their own destiny. In the case of a people, it implied a political destiny to be then materialized in the form of the modern nation-state. The quest to find the possible future of a people, and eventually of a nation, and the right to a state, were the underlying motives that welcomed the Albanian village and rural life into the framework of modern politically engaged intellectual circles. The articulation of modern intellectual viewpoints about the nation and the state gave rural culture and traditions a central position in the maps

of dissolving empires and kingdoms in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. In such a context, the village and rural life were absorbed by two main theoretical perspectives that pervaded the imagination of many scholars who were seeking to understand and isolate cultural specificities of particular peoples, to separate them from the Ottoman *millet*, and to acknowledge them as a distinct cultural entity. The two dominant theoretical perspectives referred are *evolutionism* and *romanticism*. It must be stated that other theoretical approaches influenced by characterology, racial studies, or Indo-European theories also permeated the scientific modernist discourse inquiring about the *spirit*, *body* and *political ethos* of Albanian rural communities and village life. However, evolutionist and romantic approaches are underlined here as the two dominant theoretical approaches to influence the ethnological and anthropological research on Albanians' rural communities. Even more, both lines of thoughts would strongly impact and structure the anthropological imagination of many researchers who contributed to giving form to the anthropological studies of Albanians during the 20th century. (Bardhoshi 2016; 2017; Bardhoshi & Lelaj 2018; Bardhoshi & Canolli 2020).

The evolutionist approach appears in two forms within the study of rural communities. It oscillates between historic-progressivist and dialectical materialist interpretations of rural culture and society. The former is implicit in the works of scholars from the middle of the 19th century to the beginning of World War II, and it has no distinguished adherence to anthropological theory. Whereas the latter is explicit in the ethnological research done after WWII that develops especially within Albanian national scientific institutions, as it directly refers to the Marxist anthropological conception of socio-cultural change.

The logic of historic-progressist evolution is particularly attached to the intellectual moment when Albanian language and cultural tradition were included in the Indo-European kingdom of cultures and a whole new field of research fathered by the work of George Von Hann (1854) was born under the name *Albanian Studies*. The idea of primitivism nested in rural and highland Albania, addressed in these works, not only provided an intellectual opportunity for philologists to understand the origins and evolution of a language, but it also captured the anthropological

imagination of adventurous ethnographers such as Edith Durham. Her work is framed by a sense of rediscovery of an old world for a Western audience; a world that modernity had made people forget. In the first chapter of the book *High Albania* (1909), published 3 years before Albania's independence, Durham draws the attention of the English reader to rediscover once again this old world and the origin of man, the roots that Westerners had forgotten while chasing after modern life. High Albania is described by the modern English woman to her audience as "*the land of living past*" where *For folk in such lands time has almost stood still. The wanderer from the West stands awestruck amongst them, filled with vague memories of the cradle of his race, saying, "This did I do some thousands of years ago; thus, did I lie in wait for mine enemy; so thought I and so acted I in the beginning of Time."* Kinship relations, blood feuds, elementary forms of economic life, mythological thinking and superstitions were among the themes and issues through which Albanian society was described to Durham's readers.

Here we must highlight two features of this approach. Firstly, the village is not articulated as a social unit on its own right but rather as a mere settlement within tribal areas. The tribe is a central concept that frames people's way of life and their relation to territory. The perspective set by Durham is also reflected in the work of many other scholars of the time, who equally fail to observe the village unit of ethnographic investigation. The village becomes a true subject of ethnographic research with the work of Valentini on traditional law. (Valentini 2007 [1956], 160-200) The latter is built upon the ethnographic insights provided by the Franciscan priest Father Gjeçovi who viewed the village as a legal unit with an autonomous nature within the customary laws of highlands communities. Neither Gjeçovi's, nor Valentini's works offer insights on the effects of modernity on the village and rural life. However, their works along with others provide a great deal of information and data on the relation between the modern imagination and rural life. The codification of customary rules is one of the products of such a relation, the effects of which have been analysed in earlier works. (Bardhoshi 2016)

Besides the cultural, social, economic, political and legal dimensions of rural life, the bodies of villagers in highland Albania were also taken as an example to illustrate the evolution of races in Europe. Here the work of

Charlton Coon (1950) probably best exemplifies the scientific discourse built on the issue (Lelaj 2018). The modernist discourse of evolutionism captured the imagination of the renowned anthropologists such as Marcel Mauss (1920) or Robert Lowie, who interpreted the Albanian villages as an example of backwardness, and its people as unable to form political solidarities outside blood relations (Bardhoshi 2016; 2021).

Romanticism as a modernist discourse developed almost at the same time as the historical evolutionist perspective from which it drew certain elements in its interpretation of rural Albania. Even though it continued to emphasize the primitivism of village life, researchers found in the characteristics of this life the originality and distinctiveness of a cultural reality best exemplified by the language. Very much rooted in the Herderian, or more generally in the Germanic ethnological tradition, the romanticist gaze was quickly absorbed by the Albanian National Awakening movement and the literary tradition that developed around it. (Clayer 2012) The exploration of highland rural life became synonymous with the discovery of the roots of national identity. Documenting and describing peasants' way of life implied for many national scholars a duty to the nation that eventually required its own state. The political movement for an independent country needed the support of powerful nations. The latter had to acknowledge the existence of a people with a distinct culture reflected in political and legal traditions such as the *kanun*, among others. These people lived in the same territory as their forefathers had since the time of ancient Greece, if not before. The ancient customs harboured in highland villages served as proof of such continuity. Native intellectuals' documentation, before and after independence, of customary laws, legends, and ways of life would provide the base upon which national ethnology would develop after WWII in Albania, as a product of socialist modernity.

We end this section with two remarks. It must be stressed, first of all, that both perspectives discussed above emphasise the logic of change by describing highland and rural communities' transition from simple to complex existence, from primitivism to modernity. However, the meaning of the primitive changes in both approaches. For the evolutionist, primitivism is a cultural stage that must change through development policies. Whereas for the romanticist, primitivism must be preserved or

cultivated in cultural traditions, as it is a sign of the originality of the nation as underlined by Indo-European thought. In addition, the village, secondly, was never a separate topic of research or regarded as a proper social unit within either theoretical framework. As an autonomous topic of ethnological inquiry, it emerged in the works of Gjeçovi and later Valentini on the codification of customary laws in highland communities. Despite such contributions, it would take time for the village to gain a distinct research identity within the anthropology on Albania. The archaic way of life, ancient customs, and the ability to form a cohesive political national identity would continue to preoccupy national and international scholarship even after WWII.

Ethnography, the nation, and the state

Post-WWII Albanian ethnography adopts elementary principles of Marxist historical materialism and fuses its implicit evolutionism with historicism and diffusionism. The scientific paradigm of interpreting ethnographic data was state-oriented. The latter had declared Marxism as the only true science. At the political level, the country adopted the dictatorship of the proletariat as its form of government. The political situation was classified by the state as a permanent revolution, whereas the beneficiary classes of this new system were declared to be the proletariat, together with the peasantry as a class ally of the former. The transitory period to communism was socialism with its dictatorship of proletariat. Part of the transition was the proletarianization of the peasantry itself. Proletarianism itself was part and parcel of the "state mode of production" that defined the transition phase. [see Lelaj, 2016].

During state socialism ethnographers carried out fieldwork all over the country. Their research consisted mostly in the exploration of the material and non-material traditional culture of rural communities. There were also scattered explorations of urban culture and focused expeditions to document the success of socialist policies in rural areas, especially the effects of collective farm creation in the life of peasantry. The ethnographic materials generated from fieldwork expeditions are safeguarded in the

archives of the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies. However, the targeted social and cultural milieu for the ethnographers were the remote villages or rural areas, which were believed to harbour the “original cultural traits” of the Albanian people. The most researched subjects included material culture, the social organization of traditional society, and customary legal systems. The researchers’ focus on material culture included: folk cloths and crafts; traditional housing and the built environment; means of production and work activities; and folk arts. Whereas the themes explored in non-material cultural included issues such as traditional social organization and institutions, customary law, rituals, and folk systems of belief in rural communities. Besides the focus on traditional folk culture, several ethnographers carried out field research targeting the socialist development of the countryside to investigate the successes of state economic, social, and cultural policies. The results were either archived or published in the journal *Etnografi Shqiptare*. The questionnaires used by the ethnographers focused on issues related to different aspects of folk culture. However, a specific set of questions were posed precisely to uncover the success of state socialism and of its leadership. Within this framework, ethnographers often would provide answers and solutions that would produce a more efficient application of socialist principles and policies in the lives of the peasants—for example in the administration of family budgets or specific emancipation policies to eradicate patriarchal behaviours in the household.

Albanian ethnographic thought and practice during state socialism is another example of how modern ideologies engaged with rural life and with the peasantry. The latter became the battle ground for the experimentation of socialist modernity and its dictatorship. Inspired by the theoretical perspective on *modernity and liminality* proposed by Thomassen (2014) and expanding it further into *liminalisation* (Bardhoshi 2016) that define an endless processes of transformation structuring and supporting the dictatorial situation that is enforced on society by a gardener state (Bauman 2013), a multilayer analysis of data and conclusions was provided through examining the functions that ethnographic knowledge had in sustaining state policies on rural life by giving them legitimacy during state socialism. (Bardhoshi & Lelaj 2018)

To summarise briefly for the purpose of this outline, one of the conclusions deriving from our work that focused (among other things) on the observation of the temporalities nested within the ethnographic depiction of Albanian folk culture in published works is that ethnographic writing was part of a modernist optic looking at rural life. The political economy of time [i.e., backwardness v.s modernisation], and the binary logic explicit and implicit in most ethnographic accounts on rural life, was integral to the ideological viewpoint that demanded and enforced change in many rural communities by the state. Ethnologists embedded such temporalities in their discourse on traditional culture and society. Articulated in the logic of “ethnographic and historic calendars”, a macro timeline of stages in reading the empirical data, the narrative portrayed the evolution and development of Albanian nation within a Marxist historical materialist perspective. The metric of time was used to classify given socio-cultural practices and worldviews, positioning rural life within the grasp of state politics in order to change and transform it. Within the logic of our analysis, we use the term “ethnographic calendars” to refer to the temporalities used by the Albanian ethnographers or/and historians to position a social fact or cultural practice in time. The temporal understanding of culture depicted in the ethnographic discourse fused a historically tuned ethnography aiming to stabilise the origin of the *nation* which develops through the linear evolution of modes of production in historical materialism; the latter being imposed by the state as the only official theoretical lens through which to interpret scientific data at the time. Moreover, the discourse on culture framed by this temporal optic did not only speak about the past but also about the present and future. A key concept, for example, used by ethnographers to frame the temporality of a cultural practice and to classify it within a value ladder was “mbeturinë”. This probably can be considered as the most political concept of Albanian ethnography, a concept that outlines a specific relation between socialist modernity and rural communities in the country. The term has a dual meaning and depending on the context it can mean *remains* or *garbage*. It is, in either case, a morally loaded word, especially in daily jargon, which demands that interlocutors adopt a ‘hygienist’ position or action. However, when used as *remains*, especially in some ethnographic texts, it basically

followed Taylor's concept of *cultural survivals* and it nurtures the ethnographers' language with an understanding of cultural practices to support certain positions about past trajectories of cultural development stages, i.e. matriarchy (Taylor, 1920). In other cases, ethnographers used the word to frame a cultural practice as *garbage*, when they were speaking about the present. The discourse in the ethnographic sphere underlined the ethnographers' engagement as *cultural activists* or as *agents of the new modern socialist order* and of the ideological vision that the dictatorial state projected for rural communities and Albanian society in general. Certain cultural realities—for example, private property, religious practices, the wearing of traditional clothing, or marriage practices—would fall into this category and were thus subject to *emancipation policies*. These policies varied, ranging from public denunciation to the implementation of education policies and imprisonment. The latter policy was enforced especially for those who resisted state-led practices related to private property and religion. Through these classifications the ethnographic discourse provided data and legitimacy for the state's effort to “cleanse” society of the cultural practices that did not fit into *the vision of socialist modernity*.

In a wider framework, the temporal valences of cultural phenomena and the modernist hierarchy of cultural values were embedded within the political system and centralised economy that advocated and practiced the reduction of freedoms in the name of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. The above was essential in order to sustain the very idea of socialism as a transitory or liminal phase in which the state had to do whatever it took to achieve the future it promised to society. Under the label of emancipation, several ‘civilising’ practices took place and became part of the state's political economy in which its institutions—especially those working in the field of culture—participated in making a *new society* with *new people*. All state-led practices embedded within one single ideology, in which ethnographers participated, produced a *holocaustic culture* which sustained the idea and practice of a Gardener state to which time mattered very much. The transformation of the peasantry through ideological projects was pivotal to the logic of the Albanian state. The best example of this phenomenon (based on intensive research (Lelaj 2015)) is described below:

the creation of collective farms and the proletarianization of the peasantry during state socialism.

Proletarianization of the peasantry: An instructive case

It can be argued that one of the main sites of proletarianization (Tilly 1979) were the collective agricultural cooperatives and state farms during Albania's socialist modernisation. While the agricultural cooperatives formed, in principle, by the "unification"- supposedly based on "free consent"- of peasants' land and animal property together with other means of production, the state farms were exclusively state property. In state farms, individuals were employed from the very beginning as wage labourers and subject to the discipline of "time and norm" that placed established the rhythm pace of the daily routine of the workers. The history of the collective agricultural farms and the progressive change in legal status from the "unification of peasants' property" to "state property" during state socialism reveals how the Albanian peasant was transformed, progressively over time, initially into a peasant-worker and subsequently into a full wage-dependent worker. The section that follows shows briefly how such process happened over time. The reader needs to be reminded that the eradication of private property as a concept and practice was fundamental for the Communist-oriented governments that came to power especially in Eastern Europe and elsewhere after WWII. The creation of collective farms, together with the nationalisation of industry, seemed to be the first steps towards achieving the *dictatorship of the proletariat* as formulated in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Marx & Engels 1848). In the context of Albania field data suggest that the process of collectivization and cooperative formation started to be implement immediately after the WWII. The first collective farm was established in 1946 in the village of Krutje, in the Lushnja district, a lowland area of the country. It must be said that the process was not an easy one and it took 20 years to complete it. Peasants' way of life and the very essence of the village regarding architecture, and modes of socio-cultural, economic, and political organisation would change radically from the implementation of such

policies, which mirrored one of the fundamental ideas about state socialist modernisation.¹ We can say, in summary, that the outcome of such policies was first of all to increase the state capacity to control and orient the production and distribution of agricultural goods. Secondly, with the creation of collective farms and their subsequent control by the state, the latter had the necessary physical space to integrate local economies within the broader framework of a national economy that would be run under the umbrella of central planning. Consequently, besides aspiring toward modernisation and mechanization of the agricultural, the state was able to orient the agricultural sector and land usage toward mono-crop cultures and the intensive farming necessary for the emerging industrial sector, such as tobacco, sugar-beet or hemp growing, as well as the export of goods that enabled the state to participate, despite its lack of currency, in the wider international barter system - guided by the principle “ raw materials and agricultural goods for technology” - in order to meet the internal demand of consumption. Thus, with the increase of the state’s control over collective farms, the peasantry did not produce either for itself or for the market, but instead to fulfil the needs projected by the state. Thirdly, the creation of the collective farms enabled the state to eradicate any form of private ownership bluntly conflicting with the dominant state ideology. The peasantry not only lost ownership over the means of production, but also their control over production and work itself. They were subject to and socialised into the logic of wages, time discipline and work norms, features that enabled the peasantry to be easily absorbed into the developing industrial sector. The constitution of wages fourthly as the sole medium of payment—together with the shrinking ability to control land and animal products—were accompanied by the introduction of collective farm shops where, paradoxically, the peasants had to buy not only industrial products but also the basic foodstuffs that they produced. It needs to be stressed

¹ For a comparative perspective see: Humphry, Caroline.1983. *Karl Marx Collective: Economy, Society and Religion in a Siberian Collective Farm*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Kligman, Gail and Katherine Verdery. 2011. *Peasants under siege: The collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

that before the creation of Agricultural State Cooperatives, the individual peasant family could be considered to a certain extent as a self-sufficient economic unit that would compensate for the goods or money it lacked in three ways: by bartering things; by selling the surplus agricultural product on markets; and/or by the individual members of the family working outside the family property and providing the family with the necessary money or goods. The creation of cooperatives and the nationalization of arable land and livestock together with the *monetarisisation* of all economic transactions jointly with the centralization of goods distribution in the hands of the state disintegrated the peasant family as a self-sufficient economic unit. Therefore, within the new contexts created by the state, the able members of the peasant family eventually increased their engagement as wage labourers within collective farms and also participated in the broader controlled state socialist labour market as a means to fulfil their family and personal needs by working against a *salary* either in the newly emerging socialist state industry or agriculture, and to buy the needed goods in shops. While the aforementioned example looked at the changes induced by state-socialism in rural life through the concept of proletarianization, it is the post-socialist context that provides in depth analyses of the Albanian village as a topic of research, especially in the field of legal anthropology.

Post-socialism and the Albanian Village

Chris Hann regraded the process of collectivisation under socialism as the most significant state-led policy to drastically impact the life of peasants in Eastern Europe (Hann 1993). The data derived from examining the Albanian peasantry only supports such an interpretation. However, post-socialist transformations were equally dramatic. During the dictatorial regime foreign anthropologists were not permitted to conduct research in the country. The fall of communism opened the door to foreigners to carry out research investigations and anthropological inquiries. The *de-collectivisation* process that followed the collapse of state control of the agricultural economy was complex and full of challenges. Among the first

accounts to observe the disintegration of collective farms in the country is the documentary by the Norwegian anthropologist Berit Backer, *The Albanians of Ragam* (1991). The camera and the anthropologist documented for us the hopes and uncertainties of a historical moment: that of regime change as it happened in the highland village of Ragam in North Albania. Other anthropologists would continue to provide data on the transformation of villages, rural life, and identity. (De Waal 1995; Saltmarshe 2001) However, land division and property issues would be meagrely addressed in their research works. The same kind of situation was also reflected in the works of Albanian ethnologists who were struggling to make sense of their position within the new context of post-socialism. The systematic crises arising from economic, political, social and cultural turmoil strongly affected the lives of all citizens, including researchers. The limitations imposed by this presentation do not allow us to deepen our arguments here. However, one of the present authors, Nebi Bardhoshi offered the first research to directly focus on post-socialist property relation and land division where the village was analysed as a political, legal, social and cultural entity as well as the battleground between modern legal ideologies and customary rules (Bardhoshi 2011). This research provided an anatomy of the process of land de-collectivisation - focusing on agricultural land, pastures and forests - in the villages of Northeast Albania. The study focused ethnographic scrutiny on the application of the *Ligji "Për token" 7501* (Land Law) of 1991 which initiated the dismantling of collective farms and the return of property in all villages throughout the country. Following the legal principles stipulated in this law, the peasant family was recognised as an economic unit. The amount of land that a family received from collective farm property depended on the number of family unit members. The system of distribution was known as division of land per capita. The law explicitly did not recognise any prior ownership structure to the creation of collective farms. Data showed the problematics of this process and the way people reacted to the law in practice. The question of legality and justice was among the issues raised by the ethnographic data deriving from many villages of the area. We are informed that in most cases the villagers instrumentalised the law to take back ancestral land and regulated the process through customary legal

principles which they deemed to be fair. According to the people's perception, land was more than just economy. It represented a link with past generations, a place of social ties and worldview where the seeds of memory united the living with the dead. Framing the data through the analytical lenses of legal pluralism, the question of land distribution in post-socialist Albania underlines the tension between modernity and peasants' communities. Such tensions were reflected in the historical encounter between the modern Albanian state and the village. Modern legal ideologies enshrining the power of the state produced arbitrary realities which were contested and delegitimized by the peasantry. These are among the syntheses provided by an anthropological analysis of the de-collectivisation process in post-socialist Albania.

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To conclude, the relation between modernity and the village continues to be an important issue of investigation within the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies. Besides being integrated within the Institute's scientific research strategy since 2018, the impact of modernity on rural Albania is currently being explored through two major research projects implemented within the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies. The first project, supported by European Union funds under the framework of Horizon 2020, is titled *Materializing Modernity: Socialist and Post Socialist Rural Legacy in Contemporary Albania, 2020-2022*, and it focuses and explores how modernity is materialized in rural Albania. The second project is titled *Atlasi Etnographic i Fshatit Shqiptar Sot, 2019-2022* (The Ethnographic Atlas of the Albanian Village Today), supported by the National Research and Innovation Agency of Albania. This latter project has gathered eight researchers - anthropologists and ethnomusicologists - to ethnographically document the transformations of rural life and the village from the installation of communist dictatorship to the present days Albania. The results of the latter project are yet to come. Nonetheless, both research projects expand upon several issues and questions already summarised here, and together with the research on post-

socialist transformation, urban life or national minorities - they constitute a significant body of research carried out by the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies.

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