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TEZĂ DE DOCTORAT

AROMANIAN WOMEN POLYPHONY AND ALBANIAN WOMEN POLYPHONY IN SOUTHEAST ALBANIA: THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO ETHNIC GROUPS INSIDE THE SAME REGION

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April 2015   Inis Shkreli

To my parents and Jozita.

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Abstract:

The research focus on the framework of the Aromanian minority and Albanians in the District of Korça. I gives an overview of the identity of the place and people which under the influence of two systems, communist and democratic, was developed as a place at the margins of the Center's attention (Tirana). The thesis delves with collective and individual identity of people, mainly Aromanian-Vlachs in the District of Korça.

The research is also a presentation and analysis of identity negotiations, reconstruction of identity of Albanians and Vlachs which at time of economic crisis becomes flexible and changeable.

It engages in the transmigrational processes of Albanians and Vlachs which is an important phenomenon in the place. Carrying out interviews in the field, the research resulted into the occurrences of the emigration and the locals' expression about border, how they perceive crossing the border, either legally or illegally, their personal experience and adaptation with the new life in the host country, Greece. The research analyses the borders as rather fluid, more like an imaginary phenomenon, a fictive curtain separating the people who live in these areas.

I discuss identity politics which re-vitalized the Myth of former Moscopole or Moschopolis. I argue how nationalist mechanisms produce the space as a myth, and how it is used both by nationalist agendas and local people.

The thesis deals simultanioulsy with ethnicity and interactions among Albanian and Aromanian women through women polyphony during wedding ceremonies. I also discuss how post-modernity and immigration have strongly affected traditional music singing in the area, which day by day is vanishing.

Key words: Korca space (albania),aromanian-vlach minority, multiculturalism, transnationalism, immigration, identity politics, nationalist policy, voskopoja-moscopole, music and gender, tosk women poliphony

Summary

The purpose of this thesis is to give an overview of the ethnic-interconnection pattern between Vlachs and Albanians, and Vlach community life in the District of Korça. The overview of the life of the people focuses the post-communist period with some comparisons in time, the life during the dictatorship period. The settings of anthropological fieldwork include both rural and urban space, making the Vlach community a priority for the research.

The research investigates the place as a border area and the multicultural milieu of Korça. In this context the thesis delves with social develops of both Albanian and Vlach community under the influence of post-communist transitional processes that involved Albania. The main research topics are correlated with transmigration, collective and individual identity of people, nationalism, social and economical life under identity politics, as well with changes that happened with women polyphony pattern and the myth of Voskopoja (once named Moscopole either Moschopolis) during post-modern times.

The thesis follows several questions raised during the study, as with the political changes of post-communism there was also a change in the economical, social and demographical life of the place? The questions were shaped under an anthropological view of scholarly literature, and also compared with ethnographical data I collected during my fieldwork.

Did the identity of the place changed during post-communism transition? How the changes reflected in the life of the multicultural society? And the Vlach community itself? What did develop the identity policies in Albanian and Vlach communities? Did solidity (modern) and liquidity (postmodern) develop in the ethnic interactions of the women polyphony? How did post-modernism (liquidity) influence in the polyphony pattern of women? The thesis also shed light on the spatial perception of the creation of the Myth of Voskopoja under the nationalist agendas. The aspect is quite correlated with mechanisms during solidity and liquidity in Albania.

The research is divided in two main parts. Part one is organized into six chapters each corresponding to specific topics which are conceptualized from an anthropological, historical, urban and rural and statistical view.

Part two which involves chapter seven and eight observes deeply the subject of interethnic interactions discussing the topic in correlation with ethnomusicology view.

Chapter one and two
Chapter one gives an overview of the history of the space, Korça and several villages where I conducted the fieldwork. While chapter two provides the background information and fieldwork material and methods, describing the positionality of the researcher in the field and in her own country. I basically followed the traditional paradigm in which context as a participant observer I spent long term isolation from my own metropolitan ordinary life and clocked round immersion in the ordinary lives of Vlachs and Albanians of Korca, in order to observe agents and agencies (mostly in rural area) as a means to understand the social life in the round.

Significant is the fact that I focused my study in my own country because I saw it worth to utilize the repertoire of being familiar with my own people's culture, including also the acquaintances of language, Albanian, and with people of the area. Willing to bring a whole social perspective of the Vlach-Albanian interactions, life structure and events in a post-communist Albania I developed my research in a small corner of my country.

The research begun on April of 2011 and ended in October 2013, most of its part was conducted in rural villages with high presence of Vlach minority, in order to analyze inter-ethnic relations. The social research map targeted the village of Voskopoja, former Moscopole or Moscopolis as it is also a multiculturalist landmark affected by transnationalist and transmigration processes.

Employing a total experience, demanding all of my anthropological resources, intellectual, political, intuitive and native forms of knowledge had to measure the controlled information of the locals they delivered to me or to other researchers in the scholarly literature I had pre-suggested before the my ethnographical work, whose empirical research included several social facts that were found in the area of my study; organizations, norms, values, events.

Structured and semi-structured interviews were involved as well as focus group discussions, case studies, and participant observation. The research also included interviews and discussions with state policy-makers, planners, as well as national development agencies.

Positionality, insiderness and outsiderniess

In this chapter I argue my positionality in the field that 'doing research at home' brings different dynamics, in terms of concerns of insider-outsider and politics of representation, across other axes of social differentiation beyond commonality in nationality or ethnicity. People placed me as exerted authority/subservience, 'othered' me and negotiated the relationship on a continual basis. Nonetheless, many commonalities – such as my nationality, gender, ethnicity, attire, ability to engage in regular conversation in the local dialect and live in the rural areas – enabled me to bridge gaps and become more accepted over time (Ferhana, 2007:378).

Several dilemmas fall on my positionality from the respondents, as locals placed me in different categories, at first a 'scholar', than a 'journalist', at times a 'friend' and ultimately I was perceived as a 'spy'.

What perhaps concerned me the most about my positionality was the clear class difference and being a woman. Without the company of a man, from a different life background, differences immediately put me in a different location, and often in one of hierarchy, where people in a province and rural areas have come to respect and be deferential to urban. The fact that I was a woman from the capital, carrying a notebook, a camera and a tape recorder, all placed me in an irreconcilable position of difference and suspicion. Interested to know things about the place and the peoples' life, gave locals the suspicion I was a potential spy, working for foreign networks. My positionality in the field was complex, thus, I was simultaneously an insider, outsider, both and neither.

Chapter three

Chapter three delves mainly with identity of the place and people. In Korça, space and society are mutually related entities. In Lefebvre definitions about space, being inevitably social and

cultural process, Korça's territories and people were given various cultural meanings (1991:422). Northern Epirus (Greek: Βόρειος Ήπειρος, Vorios Ipiros, Albanian:Epiri i Veriut) a term associated by Greece, with political claims on the territory indentifies Korçë as the capital of North Epirus. Along with Korçë (Romanian: Curceaua or Corceao, Greek:Κορυτσά, Koritsá, Italian: Coriza,) and Voskopojë (Romanian: Moscopole, Greek:Moschopolis) 'Nym-s' bring evidences of the plural identity of space, and on how it has been identified from other societies. Korçars, have a multifold, complex identity, and a difficult historical process. Voskopoja in historical records and collective data is always attached to the identity and fate of the city. The modern geographical position in border with Greece and FYROM, and with a society composed by into those who identify or postulate themselves as Albanians, Aromanians, Greeks, Slavs, Roma, makes the space multicultural and multilingual. Therefore, with many divisions and criss-cross intensities (Endresen, 2013:45), the relationship between space and social identities becomes dialectical, which merge them into a continuous, contingent and irreversible process. This includes both collective identities among ethnic groups themselves, as well as group characterizations by outsiders, and the dynamic relationship among them.

Language and dialect are strongly connected with collective identity. At one side the southeastern sub-dialect part of the southern Tosk dialect, is bordered on northeast by Slavic language and, on southeast by Modern Greek. These factors develop a local identity between other Albanian dialects. At the same time the sub-dialect of Southeast Albania forms the basics of standard Albanian. Based with the coming in power of Hoxha's regime the standard Albanian is spoken mainly in Tirana, and in cities near the capital, Durrës and Elbasan. And with the post-communist massive urbanization in Albania, the standard also finds support by the young generation throughout Albania.

Albanian being the official language is spoken over a wide area in Korçë which from this view homogenizes the multicultural society. At the other hand in the every-day life ethnic and linguistic communities speak their own mother tongue languages. Ranking the languages according the domination in demographic numbers that concerns the minorities, Aromanian comes with a majority of speakers, followed by Greek, Slav and Roma. Multi-dialect/linguistic reality is so typical for the space which identifies it with the rest of Albania.

Differences and sameness in religion and ethnic identity

Korçars, are by no means a heterogeneous group, and with alternative constructed identities. The imagination of sameness, similarities, differences, and contrasts have mainly conceived along religious, political, linguistic and class lines.

Cultural diversity in Korça has in some levels reinforced religious, ethnic or linguistic boundaries, whereas having a shared religion softens ethnic or linguistic boundaries. Albanian Korçars do consider religious, ethnic or linguistic groups being different. In this case Albanian Muslims are highly marginalized than other religion communities. Echoed in part by my informants' discourses in centre Korçë, "being unbaptized, means to be dirty", this represented Muslims to be impure. A second respondent tells that "is better being Christian Orthodox Gipsy/Roma than Muslim". Having a shared religion decreases the feeling of 'difference' and increases a sense of 'sameness' with various ethnic minorities (Endresen,2014:18). This explains why in many cases Muslim Albanians who co-live in suburbs with Muslim Roma, do not them as Others. Meanwhile, Albanian Christians and Roma who co-live in the same neighborhoods or areas, exclude themselves from Muslim Albanians. But, this fact does not mean that the elite Christian Albanians sympathize with Christian Vlachs or Slavs. In reality, these communities are neither excluded from the prejudices on their ethnic origin, nor have been able with the time to create a bridge of inclusion and sameness.

Local identity between "We" and "Others"

Korça has not only produced social stratification within the community, but at the same time has created a ground for a distinctive elite identity over the entire country. The cultural, historical and political background positioned Korçë to a high status in Albanian social hierarchy.

But, with the establishment of Soviet economic, political and ideological model and the foundation of Enver Hoxha's regime in Albania, the city and the community are not part of the cultural center in Albania but are positioned as a provincial town. During the Socialist Period the community had to reformulate who "We' are. A new identity was constructed on the memories of who "We" were (See Dejan, 2007:277-302, In Lampe& Mazower, 2006).

The new socialist state de-constructed the cultural identity of "We". It had stripped off the rich class from their status, wealth and power and had melted down the class structure of the community. With the principles such as egalitarianism, during collectivization process and

'social de-stratification' or 'class fighting' the bourgeoisie was in target and lost their identity, no matter they had for decades highly invested in the National Question and the 'Liberation of the country' during the WWII. The wealth class, intellectual elite along with the multicultural background had been the core of the identity construction of "We" which was not only active in the political and cultural life of the area, but it also influenced over wide country. No matter this community, had created the ground for Hoxha's future career pushing forward his involvement in the underground Communist movement in the Korçë, and latter in Tirana, after Hoxha came in power, there was no reward from the Communist state leader.

The past, multiple and positive identity, "We" became a reminiscence of what "We" were, substituted by a new and negatived identity, of what "We" we became. Constructed under socialism, with the parole of 'the new communist man', the community had to re-conceive the new "We" under the normative dimension of identity-building of individual and egalitarianism, stripping away the collective form of the past. It was already created a frontier between who "We" were (a vision driven by different politics, multiculturalism, networking) and who "We" are (which is a vision driven by the communist political systems).

In addition, the new identity was strengthened when in Albania was settled the Decree on the Atheist State (1967), which banned all religions, demolished the temples or transformed them into storehouses, sporting arenas, or for some other lay usage. Lacking all the ideological vision of the past, which came in association with the postulate of the 'new man', linguistic and ethnic minorities faced identity crisis and soon led to their assimilation. The growth of Hoxha's repression extended far beyond religion, the regime developed a politically repressive internal security system, which was a secret police, named *Sigurimi*. This action introduced within the society (over all Albanian society), fear of persecution on account of observance and from which successfully achieved a shattering attack to the collective cohesion in the area. As a result of a more centralizing system, a new identity of provincialism was widely distributed in the place, by re-constructing the identity of one of the main cultural, social and economical centers of who "We" were into a new identity of provincialism of who "We" became.

Chapter four

The chapter gives an overview of the Vlach identity in the area and within the pattern of self-designation. They are known by the locals as "Vlachs" or as "Aromanians", but with a self-designation *Aromân* or *Rromâne* (or *Armân* or *Rraman*) which indicates their Romance mother tongue and which gives the Romanians reasons to regard them as part of their own culture(Schwandner-Sievers,1999:3). In Albanian they are named either *Vlleh* or Arumun, or *Çoban* (meaning: pastoralist) which indicates their original socio-professional specialization. *Çoban,* also indicates a pejorative term which categorizes the semi-transhumant group with significant 'others'.

During communist period Vlachs were not recognized as a separate minority group. The group constructed a new identity and slowly reshaped the memory of origin with the Albanian identity.

The community in historical records of Korça is quite known for their engagement in national questions and political commitments. During my surveys in the places densely populated with Aromanians, the Vlachs proudly claimed that soon the community became fertile recruiting ground for communist underground movements, fighting as partisans for the WWII. The fertile ground associates also with ethnic ties.

Though the community benefitted from the party membership and activism, there have been also segments from the group which suffered persecution, were imprisoned or some tens murdered under the classification as 'nation's enemies' [armik i popullit].

In fact, in some parts of the country where dictatorship was extremely severe with the community members, the sense of ethnic identity for the Vlach members remained powerful. Anyway, Vlachs were well integrated in the political sphere also were involved in the Sigurimi system. The espionage activity and fear from each other, weakened the relation between Vlach members, and influenced in the reduction of ethnic identity. A contested identity, a forbidden religion, a reconstructed identity under a new lifestyle, and a collapsed inter-confidence between the group members established a precarious position as an ethnic group, increasing the rapid assimilation of the Vlach identity.

Vlachs at present days

According to self affiliation and the informants' claims, I divided the community in two sub-groups, into Vlachs and Aromanians. The subdivision was a particular experience in my first visit in the area that shaped my perception what it means Vlach and Aromanian in the present days in Korça. The characteristic of self-ascription and ascription from others had put some boundaries within the social group. The conversations with informants put me framing their consciousness and loyalty toward Greece and Romania. The division inside the community reminds that how Vlachs are known for the ease with which they assimilate (Balamaci,1995).

The former nomad population are self affiliated to the name of Vlachs and base their origin with Greece, relating on their progenitor's birth documentations or memory origin. The majority of Aromanians, who make part of the urban society and he elite of the city, associate their roots to the memory origin that relates immediately with Voskopoje, the former Moscopole. As a matter of fact most of informants assertions associated to the memory origin of the myth of Moscopole. In reality a best part of these respondents come from other Vlach villages likewise Plasa, Shipskë, or Grabovë. At the other hand nationalist Romanian policies during the end of 19th century and early 20th century put the ties and penetrated into the conscience of urban Aromanians activating a new identity, the "Aromanian". With the fall of communism these ties were reconnected.

The division of the community turns out to be a crucial subject that auto-distinct these two sub-communities. Aromanians auto-distinct as urban, 'aristocratic', well educated, while Vlachs, themselves admit to belong to a rural and former transhumant with low education. Aromanians tend to the homogenization of community without division, taking references on the Christian orthodoxy and lingual facts which belong to the Eastern Romance Language, they claim no existence of Aromanian-Vlach dichotomy, stressing to the uniqueness of an Aromanian group. Aromanians willingly have the tendency to incorporate Vlachs within the group, whereas Vlachs are inclined to separate from Aromanians, self defined as a separate minority group with authentic unwritten language and that exclusively have the origin roots from Greece.

Profits and result of immigration have consolidated the division of Aromanians and Vlachs, which is vital to the pro-Greek faction. At the other side the nationalist agenda of Romanian state has also produced a good base of migration in education pattern. In circumstances of profit due

to the migration, pro-Romanian and pro-Greek parts utterly support the division of the community, putting more or less the same arguments.

Chapter five

Making research in and on borders and border areas, on their solidity (modern) and liquidity (postmodern) seem very relevant for the so called marginalized provinces of nation states, but it gets even more interesting in such a multi-faceted area such as Korça, which represents a region in border not solely to Greece as state, but to EU as well. In the region migration across borders and transnational activity occurs on a daily basis, this to some extent thanks to Europeanization and globalization and to some extent because of economic crisis in Albania. Once arrived in the place, a student is pushed in migration patterns as it is notable the post-communist effects on depopulation of the place, the need to escape constraining political and socioeconomic conditions at home and, not least, the urge to experience 'the West' had unleashed migrations of epic proportion.

Chapter five engages in the immigration processes of Albanians and Vlach population as a social mobility with a single flow from Korça to Greek side. Carrying out interviews in the field, the research resulted into the occurrences of the emigration and the locals' expression about border, how they understand the border crossing process, either legally or illegally, as well their personal experience and adaptation with the new life in the host country, Greece. The chapter analyses the borders as rather fluid, more like an imaginary phenomenon, a fictive curtain separating the people who live in these areas.

The interviews focus on stories about the border, border crossings, how the locals perceive the concept of being an alien the host country Greece, and their self identification with this concept. The interviews were taken with Vlach and Albanian communities of Korça District, and in villages of Voskopoja, Shipska, Drenova, Boboshtica, Bellovode, Kamenica and with Vlachs originated from Plasa. Interviews with Albanian community of Korça District depict the

experience of Albanians dividing their experience in two sub-communities, Muslims and Christian Orthodox.

The chapter also argues illegal migration over the border on communist times. The sealed closure transformed the mental reception of the locals in opposition to the border and the foreigners on the other side (Wilson& Donnan, 2000:1-30). During these times people in general constructed a new relation and a new identity with the changed border region. An informants asserted that "during the regime period, the state viewed the border as religion. We couldn't point with a finger nor could we direct our sight towards the border, this because the authorities would suspect that we were thinking of escaping across the frontier." Indeed during communist dictatorship the border was considered to be sacred, it was superior religion. These borders operated as a part of a relation between people and space, but where the space was finite and state could control continuously the boundary, then the border became a state weapon. But the sealed borders, once used by the semi-transhumant Vlachs for grazing became also trajectories of illegal border crossing. When nomadic Vlachs were pressured to become sedentary and when collectivization took them away everything what they had, this period marked small exoduses counting some Vlach clans of southeast Albania.

Ethnic differences and migration over Greece

"Greek descent" had to be evidenced either self-declared, it could be applied to individuals who are not officially members of the Greek minority or who consider themselves to be Albanian but, for the sake of crossing the border, they had to claim a Greek descent or a Greek national consciousness. In local terms, this category was translated as "Northern Epirote."(Raper, 2007). This process could be observed not only in the representations, but also in the practices of the border; both revealed lines of division inside local society. There were raised a number of boundaries, between Albanians and Vlachs, which we can call ethnic boundaries, and which delimit local groups recognized on the basis of shared customs. Greek state offered better opportunities – in terms of migration – to the members of the Greek minority in Albania. As Vlachs are part of Greek nationalist agenda and considered Greek citizens, *omogeneis* "of same origin", the Albanian Vlach's migration was accomplished easily, while for Muslim Albanians which fall into the category of *allogeneis* "of other origin", had to undergo through more difficult processes of visa applications. But in times of economical crisis and of a globalised era, trans-

national movement is seldom stoppable and for Muslim Albanian if it could not be done legally, they found ways to do it illegally.

There are many questions pending about the assimilation of the people and the space in general, which relates to immigration processes in Greece. Post-communist identity politics of Greece, Romania and Albania have largely influenced on the identity of the people and mainly the Aromanian-Vlach community. But due to the financial crisis in Greece, and with the returning of immigrants in Korça and their villages, social and political situation looks to return in favor to the Albanian nationalism.

Chapter six

The chapter discusses identity politics which re-vitalized the Myth of former Moscopole or Moschopolis. I argue how nationalist mechanisms produce the space as myth, and how it is used both by nationalist agendas and the local people.

Creating the myth, living the myth, narrating the myth"

The creation of a calculable system of prerogatives and favouritisms on academic level with influences from national policies has produced a new space about Moschopolis, Moschopole or what is itemed on modern times, Voskopoja. The village of present days within the patrimonial space, is presented to the reader as an idealized picture in the front-stage of nationalist performances with a great spectre of academic pamphlets and which take references from visitors who were involved in the construction of the Balkan's image (See Todorova, 1997). By the end of 18th century when Moschopolis glory faded, politicians and journalists, academics and conservative intellectuals presented the space as an isolated place in which during its brightness individuals lived perfectly with other individuals and environment. Economical and cultural development introduced Moschopolis as a label of civilization in separation with Ottoman Empire. Despite the description repertoire of civilization and island of Christianity there is a classification that develops categories which groups the Moschopolis around the western countries or civilization. Suggesting the literature of Moschopolis, emphasis make it clear that the city is described as 'other' in the Ottoman Empire context. Distinguishing the space between the barbarian role of Ottomanism and the great influence of orthodox Christianity stresses how

the methodological solutions to treat Moschopolis as de-orientalized or de-Balkanized evolves the city in bipolar axes, Balkan traditional culture/Ottoman-the West (1997:181).

Overgeneralizations in a strictly historically specific context have lead to shape the mentality of the present days Voskopojars, along with the attitudinal structures. They blame 'Turks' that refer to Muslims for the destroy of the city, whether the present day inhabitants have no connections with the former Moschopolis.

There are different theories that mythicise the space, starting from the history of first settlements, the city's names, the number of inhabitants and adding which makes it imperative to construct the myth, the ethnic component. Explanations to increase the sympathy and the separation have been based on the destroy theory (related to the theory of destroy see Lambru, 2001).

The production of space

The 'spatial practice' of Moschopolis in the sense of Henri Lefebvre (1991) which involves the use of space, its construction and re-construction from the elites and their ideologies achieved three products which are found in Voskopoja. *The first*, people that live in, are made means of strategies, moving people in new places, likewise mobility in Greece for work either in Romania for education scopes. *The second*, Moschopolis of Middle Age has settled an ethnic and religious division by the Aromanian-Vlach community (they claim to be 'old Voskopojars') versus Albanian Muslims (considered as newcomers), positioning themselves as a dominant category (See also Winnifrith, 1987:35). *The third,* people have become increasingly reflexive about the place, having made the explicit of national strategies implicit and the implicit space understanding of relatedness individually explicit; tourism industries with guesthouses and "family tourism" has played a crucial role in the socioeconomic life of Voskopoja. With the academic pamphlet and political strategies the space accentuates a trans-nationalist ground which attires the attention of foreign visitors and tourists.

The survive of churches in Voskopoja and Albanian nationalism

During the ruthless and atheistic movement in communist Albania, the case of Voskopoja was of importance for Hoxha's regime. The village represented an Albanian Middle Age metropolis, 'an island apart' of the Albanian developed culture during the 'Rule of Ottoman Empire'. The four

remaining churches and the monastery were the only material inheritance for "the illuminist Albanian Middle Age center". Hence the conservation of the churches was of great interest for the new national-communist state. As a result, the churches entered to the list of research in human sciences, were proclaimed monuments, a patrimony of the state and became a strong reference for the communist national building.

As churches in Voskopoja were painted by distinguished painters in the Ottoman Empire, David Selenica and Konstandin and Athanas Zografi, the murals were a strong testimony for the Albanian Art of Middle Age. Therefore the churches with frescoes and icons had to be preserved, researched and claimed publicly as a national value. Academy of Science and its members who were involved directly with the duty of the construction of the new communist state, and in with the invention of the tradition had a high influence in conserving or protecting the churches from the atheist movement of Hoxha's regime (See Popa, 1969; Adhami,1989).

Chapter seven and eight

Chapter seven and eight deal with interethnic interactions focusing the wedding ritual, shared practices during the ritual and through women polyphony. Women polyphony is observed in this case as gender music as the ritual of wedding takes place in private space separated from men. In addition the chapters depict the how post-modernity and immigration have strongly affected music singing in the area, which day by day is vanishing.

Technology, polyphony, cultural changes

Since the end of World War II there is an ambivalence about the tensions that individuals in the area are feeling toward the folk music (the rural) and the contemporary music, it is about two different social environments that separate the generations. During communism the industrialisation of the country with the fabrication of domestic products, inhabitants of Voskopoja were influenced on the new technology development. They started to entertain themselves through the radio and some, who had the possibilities to have one at home, from the television. The influence of the technology, also the bureaucracy of music making, through folk festivals and cultural centers "Vatra kulture", created a new concept of music singing in the rural

space. With the fall of communism new mode of societal organization and forms of culture in everyday practice has been produced, with radio and television, and later with tape and CD player and computers, internet as an advanced technology played a role in the process of the production to the role of natural human singing power. The post-communism system has already become a configuration of capitalism society using the terms of Kellner, techno-capitalism (Kellner& Douglas,1989b:178).

As a matter of fact, techno-culture of [post]communism represents a configuration of mass culture and the consumer society concerning the period it develops, communist either capitalist, in which cultural consumer goods, film, television, mass images and later computerized information become a dominant form of culture throughout the developed world [and] which increasingly penetrate developing the perception of culture. In this techno-culture, image, spectacle, and aestheticized commodification, or "commodity aesthetics", come to constitute new forms of culture which colonize everyday life and transformed social relations, folklore, and the polyphony singing in Voskopoja. In all these domains, *technology* plays an increasingly fundamental role" (1989b:22) in vanishing the polyphony. As a result I faced many difficulties in collecting songs during the ritual or singing practice, on the every day life. Immigration culture and techno-culture conditioned fundamentally my research on polyphonic songs.

Theorizing women singing as gender music

Gender music as part of social organization which is emphasized by patriarchal system at first begins to be produced within the environment it is sung. This musical practice is a form of verbalized social behave associated to the social system it is created. In regard to the patriarchal society in Albania, where gendered societal tension forms the society, music making in this context formalizes social order, moreover it constructs a cohesive image of women social relations serving as a major form of socializing within women group. The sound of Albanian singing is merely the aural component of a more general pattern of behavior that Albanian women adopt when they sing, encompassing both their demeanor and the emotional atmosphere that they encourage at their gatherings.

An outline of women singing in Albania

Singing in Albania is a particular type of behavior associated exclusively with relevant social occasions. In this way singing for Albanian society becomes more a social obligation, this fact is particular emphasized on weddings. As a full-fledged member of society, each participant is expected to sing, in the sense of performing the first solo line of a song, at least once, during the feast gathering as a gesture of respect and good will toward the society. Albanian women view singing as a form of interaction that is meant to contrast with everyday behavior and-in that contrast-to bring to the fore communal concerns and values that are underplayed in everyday situations.Through singing, Albanian women set aside the topical and individualistic concerns associated with speech in order to focus on themes of enduring importance to the group (Sugarman, 1998:4).

Gender, Music and singing

Two of the most important attributes that women in the village acquire in the course of becoming proficient singers are, first, confidence and composure in social situations, and second, a social demeanour that is appropriately feminine. Singing thus prepares them to behave in public as proper young women, and the performances of adults offers them stylized images of how they should conduct themselves as they move through subsequent age-grades.

Even today, when fewer young people learn to sing, those who do often learn the stereotypic performance stance and vocal timbre for a member of their sex before, at first they have to master the musical details of the style. With every performance, they are called upon to define both themselves as social beings and their place within the larger social order. The activity of singing is thus one of the principal means through Albanians come to know, and continually reassess, their social system; in fact, their very sense of it as a system is acquired through such performances(Schieffelin,1985: 707-724).

Of all the aspects of social identity that Albania come to know through singing, gender is fundamental. Whenever, wherever, and however they sing, they do so as females or males. They do so because they are constrained by shared beliefs regarding the sexes. But through their singing they both experience those beliefs in tangible form and publicly affirm them, specifying through the act of singing what their concerns should be, what sorts of emotions they should

experience, and what sorts of behaviour they should adopt in response to their innate natures and their resultant place within the social order.

At present days, the image that Albania set forth through their singing is overwhelmingly that of the Albanian system as today's adults were socialized into it several decades ago. It is an image that vies in many ways with their current lives, which they encounter at work and through the media. Each life occasion, however, contains countless moments when participants might choose to structure their song performances in ways more consistent with present-day concepts of gender.

Such innovations are generally introduced during smaller and more informal gatherings not connected with important ritual moments, when those assembled feel most comfortable with each other.

In short, the relationship between gender conceptualization and musical practice-and more broadly between systems of meaning and expressive forms-is best regarded as an ongoing and reciprocal one. Through their singing in Albanian or in their minority language, do not maintain an unchanging view of the sexes and simply "reproduce" it in subsequent generations. To the contrary, each individual possesses the potential to contribute through her singing to the incremental revision of the community's system. If tomorrow's adults continue to sing, it is likely that they will experiment increasingly with ways of conveying through song new views of themselves as women and men, and that some of the more convincing experiments will eventually displace older norms of musical practice. When one considers the clash of values that today's families are facing, however, it is more likely that the next generation may revise their system in ways far more radical than any changes experienced in recent decades. In that process, polyphonic singing-or any singing at all-may well cease to be regarded as a central component of an individual's social demeanour.

Wedding songs

Weddings address many sorts of understandings, the interethnic and interfamiliar relations, kinship ties and embed notions of gender within a far broader construction of social order. Korça

weddings, mainly in rural area accomplish more than mere depiction of society, with active participation in the event of members of host families and their guests, who are directed by the attitudes common to the community, sharing a common societal structure but each ethnic and religious community receives unique biographical articulation (Ritzer&Goodman,2003:348).

During a wedding in Korça district, individuals participate in singing according to their place within the social order, as determined by sex, age-grade, and kinship. The demeanour and singing style resembles to an ideal performance of a person of their social group. Each ritual therefore projects a unique visual and aural image of the community's system through the way in which the singing of members of different social categories is ordered and performed.

Because weddings in the region of Korça consecrate and reinscribe basic sets of relationship(Sugarman,1997:1-2), likewise interaction between ethnic and religious communities and put together the dichotomy of gathering and division of gender in public space, with emphasis that weddings are processed through singing, I saw it crucial to accomplish my research studying considering weddings singing as "a schemata of interpretation" that could enable me to 'perceive', 'identify' and 'label' occurrences within the peoples' life space and the place at large.

Polyphony, wedding ritual and reciprocity

An important example of food sharing, social and ethnic interaction in Voskopoja is the institution of wedding when the two parts participating in the event, the family people and attending guests share food, which is not of same, as the family of the spouse, bride or groom, serves an abundant quantity of food and drinks. While some members of wedding guests share sweet food with the family spouse.

What emphasis the social interaction within the wedding in Voskopoja is the daily social level of celebration of "bërjes së qiqrës" [the making of chickpeas] where women of the village gather together at the grooms or brides home in the "dhomën e ndenjes" [living room] to participate in the ritualistic event. All the ceremony stressed gender division in labour and social behaviour and structure, in which men and women stayed in separate rooms and had no interaction for all the ceremony, in relevance to the customs festa e qiqrës is a women ritual as women in the villages do not sing in public during the wedding.

The ritual emphasis a collective behaviour characterized by a strict hierarchical order among the host family and the guests, positioning of the seats and the participation in the ritual stresses that each of the members knows the hierarchical queue. In the case of the Voskopoja society, I have been observed that singing in company is a social behaviour, which is always associated with food and drinks and is practiced in mostly formal events.

For Voskopojar weddings are the most joyful of all celebrations and they consider it natural that relatives and friends of the families involved would wish to share that joy with the community's members. They interact happily because of a variety of feelings that are triggered through interaction with others (Sugarman, 1997:58-61).

The structure of Voskopoja polyphony

The polyphony of Korça District is one of the subdivisions of Albanian iso-polyphony. Tosk polyphony is part of the ethnographic setting of Tosk sub-region of southeast Albania. The area in which Tosk Iso-polyphony is sang stretches from the right bank of the River Vjosa to the River Shkumbin. Iso-polyphony is found mostly in agro-pastoral communities and in mountain regions. The style is practiced among Albanians, Aromanians, Greeks and Slavs in the region. It is shared with Greeks of Northwestern Epirus and Macedonians in the lower villages of the Prespa district. The style in Albania is named Iso-Polyphony, as it gets the name from the term *iso,* which related to the *ison* of Byzantine church music and refers to the drone. The drone accompanies the polyphonic singing and among the Tosks is performed always continuous and sung on the syllable 'e', using staggered breathing. The outstanding scholar Thede Kahl points out that during communism the style has provided a medium for the promotional of national ideologies and identities (2008:268).

It requires three individuals to perform the polyphony or according to the ritual it requires four or several others to achieve an optimally balanced sound, in which two soloists sing melody lines that interweave over a choral drone (see also Sugarman, 1997). The structure of the songs in Voskopoja is mixed ethnic, sang "a capella" and more pronounced when the singers have long experience of singing together.

First voice

The main or leading singer who starts singing and plays this role during the song, is called "lja canticle", [starts the song], or "tradzi boatsea" [pulls the voice], or as a noun "atselu tsi u lja" [the one who takes the song](see also Kahl 2008).

Second voice

The second voice the singer who enters by the end of the first line of the first singer, giving an answer is named in Aromanian "talji boatsea" [cuts the song], or "atselu tsi u tagli" [the one who cuts the song].

Drone

The drone which is a continues base note creating the modal base of the song, is sung by several singers regardless of the number of parts. The drone in Voskopoja is known "bëjnë e" [they do e] and means "they sing the drone". The drone in Aromanian is named "isu" deriving from the Greek Byzantine musical terminology.

Voice I pitcher, taker		Voice I ia merr-marrësi
Voice II fielder, intercepter		Voice II ia kthen-kthyesi
Voice III drone, in a group		Voice III ia mbush- mbushësat, iso, në grup

The songs are performed during the rituals or in events, seated and performed as conversing singing. The songs are sang in the chest register, some women sing "me zë të hollë" in a [thin voice]. Although women have a different vocal placement, they pitch their songs in a relatively high tessitura.

The melodic line and tempo almost remains the same while the texts changes. The repertoire varies in relation with the meter from 2/4 to 3/4 and it has a basic skeletal tonal structure. The rhythm is usually, "me të shtruar" [performing slowly], some vividly and others due to their dual performance in the rituals have a free rhythm that make the songs with an elastic meter. There are different textual formats, from a few verses to more than 20 verses. The texts are full of ornaments, oh, oj, mori, aman, involving the three voices and which the importance of the use of

the formulas falls mainly on the second voice, and goes to an end with intoning syllables eee and rhymes. The text itself is part of the dialectical music and language, many times there are dialectical words used, and there are no excludes of Aromanian and Ottoman words articulated. As a dialectical music the melody falls in pentatonic scale with a pitch that functions for both melodic and harmonic content of the music. The drone mainly starts in minor tonality, with four or five notes lower than the first voice. The music is characterized by imitative elements utilized in both melodies and rhythms of the songs, providing a sense of thematic unity.

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