

6. Between social opprobrium and repeat trafficking: chances and choices of Albanian women deported from the UK¹

Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers

Many people may have little idea about Albania, a small country in South-Eastern Europe with a population of 3.6 million, bordering the Ionian and Adriatic Seas. It emerged in the early 1990s from one of the most totalitarian Communist regimes as one of the poorest countries in Europe. During the nearly two decades following the dramatic regime changes in Eastern Europe, when Europe remained divided between 'Western' European Union (EU) and 'Eastern' non-EU member states (the latter including Albania²), the prosperous West became the recipient of a mass influx of informal Albanian labour migrants.³ Strong Albanophobic stereotypes have developed in response.⁴ Media and popular perceptions, particularly in the major European host countries – Greece, Italy and, further away, the United Kingdom (UK) – continue to associate Albanians in general with crime, violence and prostitution, regardless of the fact that most jobs in which Albanians have engaged abroad, typically low-skilled and below their qualifications, were not per se criminal, and that most Albanians are believed to have integrated successfully into their host communities (Vullnetari 2007). These Albanophobic stereotypes are usually gendered, in that 'Albanian women have been presented as a particularly vulnerable nationality among trafficked women in Europe ... [while] Albanian men are presented as dominating the new and violent mafias that have arrived in the EC from the Balkans' (J. Davies 2009: 22). Unsurprisingly, given their criminal and hidden nature, there exist no reliable statistics on either of these two stereotypes that would allow the separation of myth from fact.

Available figures and estimates regarding the Albanian trafficking issue sometimes appear to be stretched in opposite directions, according to conflicting political or other interests and sometimes to moralising attitudes that often bear little relation to the actual situation of transnational Albanian trafficking victims and sex workers. However, stereotypical attitudes, image anxieties and politically driven estimates can have a profound effect on the situation of those

attempting to extricate themselves from their predicament and hoping to be given protection by the authorities back home after trafficking episodes. They can also be symptomatic of deeper problems, such as weak governance, that may affect the likelihood of protection. In particular, in Albania – as with many other countries – there still exists a problem of social ‘shame’ that causes discomfort within families, in wider society, and even on the national level, resulting in a preference for silence over open discussion of the serious issues being examined here. Fatos Lubonja, known in Albania and beyond as one of its most candid observers of society,⁵ explained (in an interview in early October 2008):

We don’t want to touch the issue of prostitution here: it’s embarrassing, it’s large profit for many, it’s against the image. The traffickers keep a low profile. We pretend it is not our problem, it’s against the image of ourselves. It’s like a monster: it’s not like us, but in fact the monster is inside us. If the prostitutes come back they will be three or four times prosecuted: it’s the moral code that’s in place here. They have no chance of being reintegrated into this society. They have a dark mark; they are like dead persons in Albania. They cannot undo their past. They will be forced to continue their trade. Trafficking of women by Albanians is a very controversial issue. People here, when they speak of *kanun*⁶ and honour, that people should kill their daughter [for such shame] and so on, this is their rhetoric, their myths; but on the other hand they treat her like a commodity, sell and buy her, she is an object, so you can kill her ... They behave like a merchant. The extreme cases are in the north, but this is true even for our urban society today.⁷

Given this background, many of the current official anti-trafficking efforts in Albania appear remarkable. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, they are compromised by severe problems of governance, such as high degrees of corruption and systemic neopatrimonialism, and endorsed by highly conservative concepts and patriarchal attitudes that are still prevalent in wider Albanian society. They are also international donor-dependent and donor-driven. This chapter aims to describe the ways in which specific neopatrimonial forms of governance, corruption and sociocultural factors in Albania, such as prevailing familism and severe stigma for women outside male protection (or control), have on the one hand empowered the criminal traffickers and, on the other hand, restricted choices and options of protection and alternative life paths for their (former) victims.

The focus of this chapter is on the character and effects of the situation that Albanian women face on returning home from trafficking and sexual exploitation abroad, and the re-trafficking risks this situation incurs. However, this country focus should not distract us from the wider geopolitical context and its effects. Albanian migration to other European countries is, for many Albanians, still only possible by illegal means. As John Davies has explained in detail, such a structural context has exposed Albanian women – particularly

those without family support (whom he classifies in terms of their 'weak social networks') – to exploitation by informal cross-border entrepreneurs. Davies has further argued that countries deporting asylum-seeking women who were trafficked and sexually exploited are complicit with the traffickers and engaged in 'reverse trafficking' (Davies and Davies 2008; J. Davies 2009). Equally, the geopolitical context – beyond culturalist explanations of shame – must be considered when discussing heightened national image anxieties in Albania that have led to the downplaying of the problem. The country has for many years been exposed to regular EU assessments, such as the annual EU 'progress reports' regarding its human rights and democratisation development, which have determined the chances for and speed of the EU accession process.

The present chapter relies on predominantly qualitative analysis based on open sources, plus research interviews conducted in autumn 2008 with stakeholders of Albania's pronounced anti-trafficking fight.⁸ These interviews were conducted in preparation for a cross-examination by the UK immigration tribunal, and for an expert witness report in a 'country-guidance case'⁹ on the return situation of adult female Albanian victims of trafficking. My research was guided by and sought to address three contested observations among national and international stakeholders (Lesko and Puka 2008: 6–8; Republic of Albania 2008a; US Department of State 2008a). The first was that failed and returned Albanian asylum seekers who have been trafficked are highly likely to follow repeat trafficking patterns. Second, internal trafficking has been increasing significantly in recent years and thus poses an additional risk to this category of returnees. And finally, many of them would re-engage in prostitution 'both willingly and voluntarily', particularly if they are beyond the traffickers' priority target groups of very young women and children.¹⁰ Given these observations, the question of free choice of Albanian sex workers versus the nature of socioculturally restrictive circumstances in Albania, which would frame such 'choice', has become paramount in the ongoing country guidance case (in early 2009).

Aware of wider policy and scholarly debates that suggest a risk of discursive reproduction of victimisation and the implicit denial of agency for sex workers through the categorical use of the term 'victim' for trafficked persons in general (Doezema 2002; Ditmore and Wijers 2003; Surtees 2008b: 41), the term 'victim' is used in this chapter only when explicitly intending to imply the objectification of specific sex workers, either by their traffickers (not smugglers) or pimps. In short, the term is used only when processes of commodification, deceit and abuse are claimed or documented, or as a result of decision-making processes within the wider structures of policy and power. The latter might include the asylum process itself, or formal and informal (including corrupt) domestic governmental practices that categorise and assign

statuses such as 'victim' or 'criminal' to the women concerned (see Shore and Wright 1997: 4). Increasingly in recent years, many Albanian women have consciously chosen migration for sex work as a route to aspired life improvement. But such a strategy does not always work out, and many 'end up deceived or coerced and exploited, rendering their situation one of trafficking' (Surtees 2008b: 43; see also J. Davies 2009). It is also understood that Albanian traffickers have increasingly resorted to less violence-dependent strategies of recruitment and ensuring compliance (CARPO 2007; Leman and Janssens 2008: 444; Surtees 2008b: 55). The variety of possible experiences among Albanian women transnationally involved in sex work has been well documented (J. Davies 2009), and there exists an undisputed 'continuum from lesser to greater use of deception, coercion and force ... in a range of different contexts' (Surtees 2008b: 43).

The UN's so-called Palermo Protocol of 2000 has been seen as pivotal in (implicitly) recognising 'the existence of both coerced and non-coerced participation in sex work' (Ditmore and Wijers 2003: 87). The present study is particularly concerned with a specific group of women (child trafficking is excluded for the purposes of this chapter) situated at the most disadvantaged end of such a continuum. Its aim is to explore Albanian women's security, protection and exit options, as well as the re-trafficking risks they face within Albania. It is based largely on the reports by women who have testified in UK asylum procedures, recounting stories of sometimes extreme violence, deceit and coercion. Some of these women have been diagnosed by clinical psychologists with 'complex post-traumatic stress disorder' (Herman 2001). All have requested protection through the UK asylum process, and this is where I encountered their stories, through both detailed interviews and their so-called case 'bundle' (approximately 20 cases in all). In the ongoing country guidance case, two such women face the imminent possibility of being deported to Albania, based on Home Office suggestions that there is a general sufficiency of protection in Albania for those women who base their asylum or human rights claims 'on the fear of being trafficked or their fear of those who trafficked them if they return to Albania' (OGN 2008: para. 3.9.16).

This chapter illustrates that Albanian women deported to Albania after being trafficked to the UK face social opprobrium that exposes them to a high chance of re-trafficking. Clear-cut categorical distinctions between 'coercive' and 'voluntary' engagement in sex work appear not to match ambiguous realities, in which circumstantial coercion, resulting from societal stigma, widespread familism and entrenched corruption leave many women little choice other than, at best, aiming to assert agency within the re-trafficking process.¹¹ For women who have already chosen a foreign asylum system as an exit strategy from prostitution, 'the return to their places of origin, facing the impossibility to adapt and reintegrate, forces them to exploit themselves in daily

prostitution until they find a way in which to leave Albania again' (Lesko and Puka 2008: 9–10). Applying rigid categories to the situation after deportation – such as coercive versus voluntary, or victim versus criminal – only further objectifies and victimises these women and disenfranchises them from making free choices, possibly in contradiction with EU human rights legislation.¹² And yet these simple binary categories inform the wider debate, Albanian governmental strategies and perceptions, and even UK asylum procedures.

IMAGE POLITICS, FIGURES AND TRANSFORMATIONS

In its Evaluation Report (Republic of Albania 2008b: 4, 12) on the implementation of the first National Anti-Trafficking Strategy (2005–07), the Albanian government claimed that 'the number of trafficked persons in Albania has decreased considerably' in Albania, and that there had been 'a continual reduction. This is a fact shown also by national and regional statistical data ... Albania is no longer considered as a transit or destination country, but only as an origin country for the trafficking of human beings'.

The same report suggested that local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) may inflate figures because victims of trafficking (VoTs) 'are transferred from one centre to another, thus artificially increasing the real number of victims of trafficking' (Republic of Albania 2008b: 43). At first sight, such an argument seems to correlate with those international commentators who have pointed to a widespread 'moral panic' regarding the trafficking phenomenon in general, with sensationalising and inflating effects regarding the problem of Albanian sex work in Europe (J. Davies 2009: 38–42). Yet the true numbers of women and men involved or at risk are not known to anyone, neither the Albanian government nor local or international NGOs, nor other observers, not least because returned sex workers might try their utmost to avoid identification by any means so as not to fall prey to corrupt police officers and/or NGO policies of family reunion and security detention, and thus to further impositions on their free will (J. Davies 2009; the reasons for this are considered below).

The 2008 US Trafficking in Persons (TiP) Report found that, for Albania, 'the overall decline in victims identified [was] due to inappropriate application of the national referral mechanism for several months [in 2007] by anti-trafficking police' (US Department of State 2008a: 54). This suggests a quite different reason for the lower figures than a real reduction of numbers in trafficked persons. This interpretation is corroborated by Amnesty International's 2008 Annual Report, which states that: 'According to police sources, the trafficking of women and children decreased sharply in 2007, with 13 reported cases in which the victims were women and seven cases involving children.

However, NGOs apparently suspected that considerably more cases went unreported' (Amnesty International 2008).

USAID suggests in its 2008 report that proper recording, based on the numbers of referrals by border police, has taken place in Albania only at moments of immediate international oversight (USAID 2008: 16). Jennifer Hollinger, who in her capacity as fellow of Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking Across Europe (CHASTE) conducted four months of research into Albania's anti-trafficking situation in late 2007, observed:

This obsession with comparison and surface appearances has dire consequences in the case of trafficking. For example, the police in Albania have cut down on their referrals of trafficked women through the proper channels because they want to keep the number of victims, particularly those returned from abroad, low. In their aspirations of entering the European Union, it is in their interests that the phenomenon appears to be decreasing. In a recent visit to the United Kingdom, some officials from the Albanian government declared that trafficking abroad was no longer a problem for Albania. Not only is this untrue, it is dangerous. When donors hear this news, they shift their funds elsewhere and efforts to prosecute the traffickers, as well as others responsible, are hampered. This preoccupation with outward appearance, with reputation and the view of one's family in the eyes of others, also contributes to shame and stigma against the girls who do return home from trafficking for sex work. (Hollinger 2007)

Internationally influential sources such as the 2008 TiP Report (US Department of State 2008a: 53–4) severely challenged the Albanian government assessment. Not only did it criticise the Albanian government for its failure to identify, refer and protect VoTs effectively and consistently – because it relied on proactive self-identification only – but it also pointed to a significant rise in internal trafficking in Albania. In early 2008, Albania was demoted in the TiP Report from a Tier 2 (out of three possible tiers) to a Tier 2WL country (placed on the 'watch list').¹³ A recent EU progress report (November 2008) similarly states in regard to Albania's pronounced anti-trafficking fight that 'the lack of reliable statistics and of a proper capacity for identifying victims is hampering progress'; it also pointed out that 'the national referral mechanisms are not yet operational' and that there is a 'rise in internal sex trafficking of women and children' in Albania (CEC 2008: 49). Meanwhile, Albanian women in the UK are among the majority national groups¹⁴ of women assisted by the Poppy Project; this is the major UK government shelter offering support to trafficked women forced into prostitution, subject to certain conditions, including the willingness to cooperate with the police and being above 18 years of age (US Department of State 2008a: 255). These women are mostly referred to Poppy after police raids on saunas and massage parlours, but also by customers identifying a coercive background, as well as through self-referral (Hibbert 2007).¹⁵

Albanian NGOs and shelters, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM)-sponsored Different & Equal in the capital city of Tirana, or the internationally best-known shelter Vatra in the southern Albanian port city of Vlora, provide statistics based on their support work that further contradict the government assessments cited above. According to its annual assessment for 2007 (Different & Equal 2008), this NGO assisted 77 trafficking victims as well as their 24 children. Of these, the assessment states, 52 per cent of beneficiaries had been externally and 48 per cent internally (domestically) trafficked (Different & Equal 2008: 17). The latter represents an increase from 2006, when it reported supporting 42.2 per cent victims of internal trafficking, 8.9 per cent of both external and internal, and 48.9 per cent of external trafficking (Different & Equal 2006: 25). In 2006, '79.5% of the beneficiaries had been trafficked only one time before coming to the shelter, while 11.4% of them have been trafficked two times ... and 9.1% have been trafficked three times before participating in the shelter programme' (Different and Equal 2006: 25).

Vatra reports for 2007 that it assisted 126 women and children. Of these, 45 were first-time VoTs and eight had been accommodated more than once in the shelter, 23 were regarded as 'at risk', 29 as 'clandestine', eleven as 'abused', nine were children, and there was 'one male child regarded at risk of being trafficked' (Lesko and Puka 2008: 13–14). Vatra further highlights that 'neither the NGOs nor the state have come up with a study on the number of women and girls included in this phenomenon [of increased internal trafficking]' (Lesko and Puka 2008: 6). The report identifies as categories at highest risk: '1) Women and girls, married and divorced, with many children and extremely poor, who come from rural areas; 2) Minor girls between the ages of 14 and 18 years old; 3) Students, living on campus, descending [*sic*] from other cities or rural areas; 4) *Trafficked women and girls repatriated by EC countries*' (Lesko and Puka 2008: 8; emphasis added). Even the 'students', Vatra suggests, who aspire to work independently and for their own profit, are at risk of 'traffickers or agents monitoring their daily activity and making threats and use blackmail to oblige the victim to "work" for them' (Lesko and Puka 2008: 9).

Different & Equal also highlights the risks of internal trafficking when stating that 'Tirana – the capital of Albania – continues to flourish as a centre of internal trafficking of Albanian girls and women. They are attracted towards Tirana by different means of recruitment, and are later exploited in selected settings such as hotels, motels, street corners, etc.' (Different & Equal 2008: 13). According to my interviews, whether returned formerly trafficked Albanian women will end up being re-trafficked abroad or internally may simply depend on the connections of their new traffickers and their 'business' strategies.¹⁶ The boundaries between one and the other are fluid: internal exploitation can serve as preparation for external trafficking and vice versa.

In reaction to these strong, contradicting international and local voices, the new Albanian National Strategy On Combating Trafficking in Persons 2008–2010 acknowledges a ‘disconcerting increase in internal trafficking of women and children ... mainly for prostitution or labour exploitation, and especially in the new informal areas of the urban centres’ (Republic of Albania 2008a: 4). The new Strategy provides self-critique, identifies challenges, and offers visions and target priorities, such as the improvement of the national referral and identification mechanisms, and of prevention, protection and statistical mapping programmes. It also promises to secure sustainable funding, aware of the phasing-out of funds from external donors. Visions, however, are not yet results, and the implementation of what are on paper often impressive reforms, including one of the best legal frameworks in Europe, has been widely regarded as a major problem in Albania. Part of the problem is that Albania has one of the highest corruption rates in the world. This not only directly affects the ways in which trafficked persons experience support and the chances of protection from the government, whatever the formal laws proclaim, but also exposes them to the risk of double, if not triple victimisation (see below). In general, a corrupt system advantages traffickers because their purchasing power is normally much higher than that of their victims. Corruption, in general, ‘erodes victims’ confidence in law enforcement’ (Surtees 2008b: 49) and forfeits fair access to justice and protection by the authorities.

THE EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION AND NEO-PATRIMONIALISM

According to Holmes (2009b: 85), trafficked persons, ‘[a]ll too often ... are victims not only of criminal gangs, but also of officials who cannot be trusted to help them counter the first form of victimization. And if states turn a blind eye to their own officers’ corrupt involvement in trafficking and/or treat trafficked persons as criminals rather than victims, there is a third form of victimisation’.¹⁷ Trafficking-related phenomena of corruption in South-Eastern Europe have been summarised to include: ‘document falsification, illegal border crossings, overlooking prostitution venues in identifying victims, compromising criminal investigations, lack of investigation and judges dismissing cases or imposing minimal sanctions’ (Surtees 2008b: 49). In general, positions of authority and insider knowledge and experience are abused to support criminal ventures with impunity (Surtees 2008b; see also Holmes 2009b).

According to the 2007 Global Corruption Barometer (Transparency International 2007: 21, Appendix 4, Table 4.1), Albania was topped only by

Cameroon (79 per cent) and Cambodia (72 per cent) as the most corrupt country assessed in 2007, with 71 per cent of respondents having paid bribes during the previous year in order to obtain public services. Even though overtaken in the 2007 world ranking – Albania held first place in 2006, with 66 per cent of respondents stating that they had to pay bribes during that year – the Albanian figure represents an increase in incidents of bribery since the previous assessment. Typical of many international sources, the *Wall Street Journal's* 'Index of Economic Freedom' (2008) suggests that:

Albania's judicial system enforces the law weakly and is one of the country's most tainted institutions. Judges are often appointed strictly for political reasons and are sometimes corrupt. Organized crime is a significant obstacle to effective administration of justice. Judges are subject to intimidation, pressure, and bribery, and the pace of judicial reform remains very slow.

Local expert respondents interviewed during the fact-finding mission in autumn 2008 reported that corrupt practices had become more sophisticated and less visible in the judiciary since Albania began systematically combating trafficking and organised crime following the last change of government in 2005 and under the scrutiny of the EU. According to some of my local interlocutors, bribery in Albanian courts dealing with trafficking cases includes – as with other cases – situations in which a prosecutor may accept a bribe in order not to advance a case to court at all. Theoretically, bribes can also be offered to reduce the charges, for example for illegal border crossing. By the same token, anti-trafficking NGOs offering legal assistance to victims found that the evidence for their beneficiaries, even though compelling, was frequently rejected as insufficient. If a case advances to court, local respondents suspected that bribes may be paid to judges either to include or to ignore certain evidence, or to identify procedural mistakes to invalidate evidence – whichever is in the interest of the person seeking to buy justice. According to the staff of the Centre for Legal and Civic Initiatives,¹⁸ a local NGO offering legal advice to trafficked women, in 2008 judges usually separated the criminal from the civil procedure in trafficking-related trials, which – although such separation is allowed according to Article 62(3) of the Albanian Criminal Code – was interpreted as another strategy aimed at disadvantaging formerly trafficked women seeking justice. This separation was originally intended to speed up criminal proceedings if the civil aspects of a case are complicated and would cause a delay in the criminal proceedings. But other NGO respondents also suggested that this has led to the civil procedures becoming such long and risky processes that the supported women typically withdrew their charges against their former traffickers, for fear of exposure to harm. Even though recent legal reforms support victims' claims to compensation from monies confiscated from their former traffickers' assets, such rights have yet

to be granted in practice. According to the Albanian solicitor working as the legal advisor for the Vatra shelter, speaking of its formerly trafficked beneficiaries who had denounced their traffickers:

their life is extremely in danger because they are witnesses against their traffickers. Their risk is related to purposefully prolonged trials (so the judges have a chance to better fill their pockets). This is because of the corruption in the judiciary. Hearings last two, three, four years and then to infinity ... the VoTs have to apply to the Prosecutor's Office for witness protection. In order to do so, they have to prove that they are in danger. The prosecutors simply refuse to accept the evidence.¹⁹

Low procedural standards and the frequent, unacceptable prolongation of criminal trials have long been noted as a persistent and typical problem with the Albanian judiciary (for example OSCE 2006). An analysis of Albanian newspaper and web reporting over more than two years on just one, albeit high-profile and prominent trial against an infamous, previously internationally operating Albanian traffickers' gang – the so-called Durrës Gang²⁰ – suggests that prolongation may even be used as a systematic strategy. The weekly scheduled hearings in this trial, which started in summer 2007 and was ongoing at the time of writing in early 2009, involved 19 defendants, and for months on end has been adjourned from one week to the next for reasons such as the repeated absence of defendants' counsels and overfilled court rooms. Regardless of the ongoing trial, killings associated with the gang's internal rivalries and revenge interests occurred outside the courtroom, with the most recent being in September 2008. The evidence of the prosecution's key witness, a repentant former gang leader whose family has been granted witness protection, has yet to be heard in full. Moreover, none of the many other witnesses lined up by the prosecution had been heard at the time of writing, while the available number of these witnesses appeared to be dwindling.

Often, the impressively high number of anti-trafficking trials in Albania is noted as an indication of success in the anti-trafficking fight. For example, in 'Albania in 2004 there were 257 trafficking-related criminal proceedings against 262 defendants, with 121 traffickers convicted' (Surtees 2008b: 41). In 2005, Albanian police referred 362 cases related in one way or another to the trafficking problem to the Prosecution; the numbers in 2006 and 2007 were, respectively, 356 and 398 cases (Republic of Albania 2008b: 91–3). However, 'concluded cases' (sometimes incurring severe sentences of up to 25 years' imprisonment) for 'trafficking in women for prostitution' amounted to only 23 in 2005, 17 in 2006 and a mere six in the first nine months of 2007 (Republic of Albania 2008b: 97–102). By way of contrast, verdicts for 'illicit border crossing' were much more frequent: 130 in 2005, 149 in 2006 and 65 during the first nine months of 2007 (Republic of Albania 2008b; for the ways in which such sentencing patterns reflect the criminalisation of the trafficking

victims, see the next section). Here the successful prosecution figures are of interest, not least because the Albanian government prides itself on having 'referred to the prosecutor's office 175 criminal complaints against 244 police officers of relatively high rank in 2007 for trafficking-related offences, and 71 of them were arrested' (Republic of Albania 2008b: 29). Arguably, such figures are themselves indicative of the deep entrenchment of crime and corruption within the Albanian authorities. However, in October 2008, the representative of the Organised Crime Directorate of the Albanian State Police – perhaps guided by national image anxieties (see above) – refuted the possibility that any Albanian police officer would ever have been involved in the crime of trafficking.²¹

Indeed, in Albania as in many other weak, often post-socialist states, there exists an apparent parallelism of both formal and informal structures, that is, both 'rational bureaucratic' and 'patrimonial' (that is, personalistic, clientelist and patronage-based) forms of governance coexist, with the latter penetrating the former (Erdmann and Engel 2006). Such neopatrimonial systems of governance result in a political and judicial culture characterised by unreliability, uncertainty and unpredictability. They also result in competing systems of moral reference and legitimacy that are called upon, respectively, according to both political actors' particularistic interests and their respective purchasing power at a given time. Stephan Hensell, who conducted research into the Albanian state police administration and the Ministry of Public Order/Interior between 1997 and 2005, found this logic applying in politically motivated rotations in the state administration and police. During this period, the office of the Minister of the Interior was changed eight times, each time prompting the change of the Chief of State Police (or General Director of Police) and all the District Police Directors. The changes even trickled down to lower levels, resulting in transfers and sackings among junior officers according to party affiliations (there are two major opposing parties in Albania, the Democratic Party or DP, and the Socialist Party or SP). He concluded that 'the fact that [soon after the elections in December 2005] the ruling DP [was] recruiting police officers again, who had last served eight years previously, precisely when this DP was last in government, indicates above all a continuation of clientelism' (Hensell 2005: 42–3; transl. from German).

Such neopatrimonial logic underpins the direction of police investigations and prosecutions, both of themselves and others, to the present day. Without having space here to explore current allegations of entrenched corruption in the DP government (for examples, see Likmeta 2008), the previously introduced example of the Durrës Gang trial illustrates systemically politicised prosecutions. According to the above-mentioned Albanian news reports,²² the Durrës Gang's main leaders were connected by both kinship and friendship to high government leaders of the SP. Indrit Dokle, leader of one of two rival

factions within the Durrës Gang, is known to be the nephew (or grandson – both *nipi* in Albanian) of Namik Dokle, Socialist Party MP for Durrës, a high-ranking SP party leader, and Deputy Prime Minister 2004–05. Namik Dokle also attended the funeral of the previous gang leader, who had been executed by rival factions within the same gang in 2005. In Albania, such participation is a strong symbolic message of friendship and support, and indicates a relationship of patronage.

One of DP leader Sali Berisha's first actions on assuming power on an anti-corruption and anti-organised crime platform following his election victory in July 2005 was to order Operation 'Top Secret', which led to the first arrests of gang members in October 2005, and further arrests in March and April 2006. Formal criminal investigations were declared completed in early summer 2007, when the above-mentioned trial at the Serious Crimes Court began. The trial has since been cited in political pronouncements of success in the fight against Albanian organised crime, regardless of the successful obstructions in the interests of the SP-related defendants noted above. Observers suggested that there was a political interest in this prosecution that helped if not to eradicate, then to weaken the SP rivalry over assets and influence in the criminal economy of Albania.

Where justice must be purchased and the authorities' support requires personal connections (even if only in the opposition now), criminal entrepreneurs or gangs such as the Durrës Gang are strongly advantaged, while their formerly commodified victims are at a severe disadvantage. However, the problem goes beyond restricted chances of obtaining protection through the authorities. Neopatrimonialism compromises professionalism within the state support structures, including that offered in the name of the national anti-trafficking effort. As one expert interviewee stated in regard to the existing anti-trafficking shelters and NGOs:

The non-governmental centres employ better qualified staff than the state centre. For example, a psychologist there would have graduated as a psychologist, but in the state centre he could be anything – a teacher, technical engineer ... this is because in the state institutions they are employed for political reasons. It is always like this. For example, in order to be employed by the Ministry of Labour, you have to be a member of the same party as the minister.²³

The above-mentioned state centre, however, is the only centre that has benefited from financial support from the government (Republic of Albania 2008b: 52). Privileged employment, micro-credit and vocational training programmes, part of the national anti-trafficking strategy (Republic of Albania 2008a, 2008b: 53), are similarly compromised. As Vullnetari (2007: 42) affirms, in Albania political changes at either the local or parliamentary level result not just in rotations of staff – based on party loyalty – in high adminis-

trative and bureaucratic positions, such as in the police and customs, but they also affect medical and educational positions from the highest to the lowest specialisation, right down 'to the school cleaner in a village'. This informs migration patterns, in that those who are sacked or politically harassed migrate, while those previously disadvantaged might return from abroad (Vullnetari 2007).

Anti-trafficking NGOs such as Vatra found that their regional employment office, entrusted by the government to support disadvantaged groups – including previously trafficked women – in finding jobs, 'would rather employ a cousin or sister [of staff] than a victim of trafficking. Reality is contrary to the programmes on paper. The beneficiaries of these programs are the local government employees who employ their own relatives.'²⁴ Despite this tendency to employ relatives, a total of 20 beneficiaries of Vatra assistance were employed in 2007 (Lesko and Puka 2008: 19). Yet these employees still faced stigmatization, discrimination, social isolation and ostracism at their working place. The anti-trafficking NGO Different & Equal found that even 'the staff employed in governmental structures [of anti-trafficking support] ... is biased towards the victims of trafficking' (Different & Equal 2008: 41). This NGO also battled with high turnover rates after successful job placements (Different & Equal 2006: 28), presumably due to similar problems of prejudice. Both NGOs resorted to finding jobs for their beneficiaries amongst their own personal acquaintances and, for a limited number, in their own facilities (Different and Equal 2006: 27; Lesko and Puka 2008: 20). However, by resorting to familism as a strategy of inclusion, they inadvertently reproduce a cultural norm that explains exclusion and stigma for women placed outside of traditional means of family support in Albania to the present day. This culture informs attitudes towards women as either 'wives' or 'whores' that still underpin values and practices within both wider society and its state institutions.

VICTIMS OR CRIMINALS, 'WIVES' OR 'WHORES'

Albanian law considers prostitution a 'criminal act against morality and dignity' and it is punishable by a fine or up to three years' imprisonment, according to the country's Criminal Code (Republic of Albania 2001: section VIII, Article 113). Illegal border crossing is similarly punishable by a fine or up to two years' imprisonment (Article 297). Exploitation of prostitution and related violence, coercion into sex work, or trafficking for such purposes (Articles 114 and 114/a, 114/b) incur much higher sentences of up to 7, 10, 15 or even more years, as does assistance in illegal border crossing (Article 298).²⁵ Transnational Albanian sex workers who cannot prove that they were coerced into prostitution (for example by denouncing their traffickers) are thus

at risk of criminal prosecution. According to a juridical expert respondent in Tirana, there is still a widespread lack of familiarity with the relatively new trafficking article,²⁶ as well as a prevalence of more conservative attitudes among members of the judiciary. This is particularly so at District Court level, where most such cases are tried, so that large numbers of cases are treated as 'illegal border crossing' and the involved women thus criminalised. In order to qualify as 'victims of trafficking', who are formally eligible to protection as well as privileged reintegration and employment programmes, trafficked women must therefore self-identify in interviews at the border crossing points.

All deported asylum seekers from EU member states are interviewed by specially trained border police and must explain themselves, particularly if they are not in possession of regular Albanian identity documents.²⁷ They are fingerprinted (except for minors) and there are checks with local police from the returnee's home region regarding possible criminal records; the home address and family background are also verified. As we learnt from border police, 'the Albanian identity system is thorough and cannot be faulted'; there is 'no way that they can lie to us', because they would otherwise be taken to the wrong home location – which, the respondent indicated, would be both impossible and an unsustainable situation in Albania. Often the family is informed and arrives to pick up the deportee. However, if the deportee identifies herself as a victim of trafficking, she will be transferred to special units of the anti-trafficking police (presumably for questioning) and can then request shelter protection.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Albanian women involved in sex work abroad were found to fear exposure upon identification to corrupt or abusive border police upon deportation, and violent revenge on the part of their former traffickers. But they also feared community stigma and the wrath of a family concerned about social 'shame', even though the family is precisely the support mechanism that should be helping them in Albania (all from J. Davies 2009: 53, 100, 120–23, 146–7). The shelters indeed aim to 'sensitise' the women to 'voluntarily cooperate with the police and punish [that is, denounce] their traffickers' (Lesko 2005). Among Davies's respondents – 58 Albanian sex workers in Lyon, France, interviewed between 1999 and 2001 – only those considered 'socially inept' were regarded as 'unable to avoid detection' upon deportation to Albania. Such avoidance was seen as imperative, because they regarded remigration as the only promising long-term strategy and best exit option to escape their predicament. Through remigration, they hoped eventually to acquire a foreign husband. Such remarriage would allow them to recuperate lost social status and thus, one day, an honorable reapproach to their parental families.

Without exception, the anti-trafficking agents interviewed in Albania, including those from the government, NGOs, associations and shelters, advo-

cated family mediation and reunion. They engaged in family reintegration programmes, as this was regarded as the only chance for trafficked women of acquiring long-term security and protection within Albania, even though 'conflict based relationships within the family account for double the risk of individuals being trafficked in the first place' (Different & Equal 2006: 36). According to Different & Equal, 'in more than half of the cases, the families of the beneficiaries don't accept them back home' (Different & Equal 2006: 35). Previously, shamed women returned to their families via NGO initiatives or police action were found to be 'locked away by their families because of shame', or else the families contacted the shelter to take the victim back. Others (40 per cent) simply disappeared, presumably having been re trafficked (since their reputation and their value as a 'marriageable' woman had been lost) after such a family reunion (Surtees 2005: 106). One of Vatra's beneficiaries was successfully reunited with her family, soon married and had a child; but when her husband discovered that she had lived in the shelter – that is, once worked as a prostitute – he divorced her for the unbearable shame involved.²⁸ An ex-trafficked Albanian asylum seeker testified in a UK court that she feared being married off by her father to someone against her will upon return. She suggested with a shudder that this could be a man of bad repute in the village (involving an immediate re trafficking risk), or an aged widower or a disabled or disfigured man – someone who would otherwise not easily acquire a wife in Albania. Yet regardless of such risks, 80 per cent of anti-trafficking NGO beneficiaries were reintegrated into their families between 2007 and 2008 (USAID 2008: 21).

Local and international respondents often refer to historical Albanian customary law, usually subsumed under the term *kanun*, when explaining the Albanian cultural concept of shame. The historical *kanun* concept of *kurvnija* (from *kurva*, Albanian for 'the whore') is similarly enlightening. The English translations of this concept encapsulate three differentiated concepts: 'adultery', 'rape' and 'prostitution'.²⁹ In the historical cultural context in the northern Albanian mountain villages, just one term might have sufficed because it was not the notion of female consent that mattered culturally. Rather, significance was given to the fact that sexual intercourse occurs outside the protection or control of the family men: their father and brother(s) before marriage, and their husband after marriage. In other words, culturally, a 'whore' was a woman categorically falling outside the Albanian norms of the family and the gendered social roles assigned to its members. According to the historical source, *kurvnija* requires either the killing of both partners involved in the act outside of marriage, or else the expulsion of the woman, since only death or exile can avert 'her' shame from the family in most traditional conceptions. Although sociocultural changes and modernisation processes do not permit the generalised use of *kanun* as an explanation for Albanian culture today, Amnesty

International published a survey in 2006 that suggested that the same cultural concept of shame still prevails in large parts of Albanian society. Accordingly, the concept still informs notions such as that violence against women is entirely an internal family affair and that 'disobedient' or 'unfaithful' women can legitimately be beaten or expelled (Amnesty International 2006b).

Among all my research respondents, cultural attitudes of shame, 'mentality' or 'fanaticism', were held responsible for the severe problems of family reintegration and the typical family rejection faced by NGOs seeking to reintegrate their beneficiaries with their families. Yet it was also because of the culturally rooted social stigma and resulting harassment faced by women who fend for themselves without visible male family protection in contemporary Albanian society – and who are thus, by cultural definition, regarded as (potential) 'whores' – that family was seen as the only viable option for the long-term security and sustenance of these women.

Many scholars (for example Anthias 2000: 17–18) have argued that migration, in general, has offered women from a culturally patriarchal background an exit option to a life outside male domination and control. Yet part of Albanian women's predicament is that if they do not command any family male support while making such a choice, they are particularly exposed to the likelihood of ending up in another coercive situation, that is, being sexually exploited after consenting to being smuggled. As John Davies (2009; see also Mai 2001) has argued, Albanian women thus remain controlled within transnationally extended gendered patterns of violent domination, because the Albanian traffickers and pimps export these across borders and simply adapt traditional means of controlling women to the trafficking situation. Davies has empirically demonstrated the ways in which contemporary Albanian women in search of a better life, and as a long-term strategy of family reintegration (particularly after previous trafficking episodes and if facing the social opprobrium of lacking male family support), feel induced consciously to enter 'contracts' with traffickers. He has also shown how the associated men enforce compliance – in ways other than violence – through culturally informed types of control, such as promoting co-dependency, self-surveillance and the use of threats (for example disclosing these women's engagement in sex work to their families and communities at home).

Davies's study further reveals that, both consciously and involuntarily, (re)trafficked Albanian women themselves are not free from these cultural attitudes. This is evident in the ways in which they relate to the associated Albanian men who control their income, but also to each other. He identified an internal distinction among his female respondents between 'wives' of their traffickers or pimps, and 'whores'. This difference was determined by whether the individual woman was aware of the exploitative character of her relationship to the associated man.

'Wives' were not, or did not want to be, aware of their exploitation; this was because of psychological reasons of 'co-dependency',³⁰ also known as a 'relationship addiction', comparable to the Stockholm Syndrome (that is, where victims of kidnapping become loyal and sympathetic towards their kidnapers). Through this phenomenon, the associated men can maintain control over the women through their 'voluntary' submission, regardless of normally severe initial incidents of violence related to coercing them into sex work. Many of these 'wives' had fallen prey to Albanian traffickers' main form of recruitment, which to the present day continues to be 'marriage under false pretenses or other false romantic relationships to lure victims abroad for sexual exploitation' (US Department of State 2008b). In earlier years, numerous cases of criminal kidnapping were reported (Renton 2001). Yet Albania has also long been regarded as unusual in that: 'a particularly high percentage of recruiters were men with whom the victim was in an intimate relationship – husbands, lovers, fiancés and boyfriends' (Surtees 2008b: 52). Davies (J. Davies 2009: 139) found that the Albanian term for 'kidnapping', *rrëmbej*, has two meanings: it 'can be used to describe the violent kidnapping of someone against their will ... but its equally common usage is to describe the elopement of a daughter against the will of her father'. This practice is reminiscent of historical descriptions of consensual practices of 'bride robbery', which thus can equally qualify as recruitment through false relationship promises and abuse of trust. Although these women's 'husbands' went to great lengths to uphold the illusion of an existing 'marriage'³¹ and deliberately nurtured emotional dependency, Davies's male interviewees clearly showed both cunning and conscious deceit. For example, he found that these pimps would consider only 'untainted' Albanian virgins, who they could introduce to their parental family as regular future wives and mothers for their children.

In contrast, the 'whores' – this is the name they were given by the 'wives' among the Albanian prostitutes in France – had no illusions about the relationship with the involved Albanian men. They had in common that they had usually been induced by a situation of rejection and social exclusion at home, and thus sought out their traffickers on their own initiative. The 'whores' all considered themselves as either 'divorced' (if a previous relationship with a man – real husband or pimp, recognised as such in the social home environment – had fallen apart) or 'abandoned' by their family (J. Davies 2009: 171–8).³² As explained above, 'divorce' (that is, a woman without a husband) or 'abandonment' (that is, a woman without a father or brother to protect her), in any case amounts, in the traditional cultural context, to societal assumptions of being a whore (*kurva*).

According to Davies's sample, these 'whores' were women who deliberately approached traffickers in order to find avenues of eventually rehabilitating themselves socially by marrying a foreigner abroad (J. Davies 2009: 133,

134, 148, 149, 165, 251). 'Consenting' to, and 'voluntarily' entering sex work was thus understood to be a necessary but only temporary means to an end. Such women normally entered 50–50 'contracts' with their prospective pimps, involving agreements of time limits, smuggling (that is, consensual cross-border movements) and protection (J. Davies 2009: 135). However, Davies's respondents usually found themselves eventually unable to control their own labour once abroad, 'because of the abusive and arbitrary nature of the 50 per cent contract and the demands of the *çuna*'.³³ Typically, the pimps/traffickers invented minimum standards of what the originally agreed 50 per cent should amount to and, in consequence, absorbed the entire income of these women. Alternatively, they invented various debt obligations resulting from their services or transport and protection (J. Davies 2009: 174, 187, 195). While the 'whores' thus had (re-)entered prostitution 'willingly', 'voluntarily', and consciously after being faced with the social opprobrium at home, they ended up in a coercive situation of trafficking regardless. They were re trafficked after all. In e-mail correspondence, Davies clarified:

Knowing about trafficking does not reduce risk/migration motivation, it only allows more nuanced negotiation to access the trafficking network ... because the 'risk' is not trafficking, but the total social opprobrium of being 'divorced' or 'abandoned' in Albania ... using trafficking to escape such social oppression is often judged the price to be paid for a chance to rehabilitate through foreign marriage.³⁴

EPILOGUE

The findings presented in this chapter are but a few of the available indications of the effects of deeply culturally embedded familism and corresponding stigma for Albanian women outside family protection and control, which effectively trap them in a 'social opprobrium' that renders the question of 'willing' or 'voluntary' re trafficking redundant. The notion of victimhood in relation to trafficked women appears as the result of modernisation processes in Albania. Attitudes informed by cultural 'shame' that both criminalise and direct the blame onto the 'whores' themselves, regardless of a history of coercion or consensus, are still ubiquitous in wider social attitudes.

Yet because of the prevalence of engrained corruption in conjunction with cultural familism there appear, so far, to be no alternative forms of societal or state protection and security options available to trafficked persons after their return to Albania – other than family reintegration. This is seen by all Albanian stakeholders in the anti-trafficking fight, as well as by the women themselves, as the only long-term option apart from remarriage or success in the asylum system. However, a (new) marriage relationship based on free choice and honesty appears impossible for most former sex workers in Albania. As

Davies's (J. Davies 2009) study suggests, the only effective means of achieving family reunion and taking control and agency over one's fate are currently through the women's own long-term strategies that involve a conscious choice of re-engaging in prostitution after previous trafficking experiences, in order to find either a foreign husband or asylum abroad. The categorical distinctions into either victims or criminals, voluntary or coerced forms of re-trafficking, do not stand up to the ambiguities of circumstantial coercion in which trafficked Albanian women are most likely to find themselves after deportation, given that seeking asylum in that case emerges as a failed strategy of exiting the social opprobrium awaiting them at home.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank John Davies, who came up with the poignant term of 'social opprobrium' in personal e-mail discussion, for inspiring the title of this chapter. I am also grateful for discussion, support and inspiration to Neritan and Egin Ceka, Frank Dalton, Rigels Halili, Jennifer Hollinger, Leslie Holmes, Fatos Lubonja, Garry Marvin, Nicola Mai, Artan Puto, Julie Vullnetari and the immigration and human rights lawyers associated with the UK's Anti-trafficking Legal Project (ATLeP). Special thanks go to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) for facilitating and hosting a fact-finding mission regarding the anti-trafficking efforts in Albania in late September and early October 2008, in which ATLeP, a representative of the UK's Poppy Project, and myself as an independent scholar, participated. The patience and cooperation of our local interlocutors has been invaluable and cannot be acknowledged sufficiently. These included the national anti-trafficking coordinator, Iva Zajmi, and the head of office of the government's anti-trafficking unit, Irena Targa; Vera Lesko and her team of the Vatra shelter and NGO in Vlora; Aurela Anastasi and her team at the Centre for Legal and Civic Initiatives; Xheladin Qahi and his team at the National Reception Centre for the Victims of Trafficking; Bajana Cevoli of the Durrës Association for Women with Social Problems; Rezarta Abdiu of the Centre of Integrated Legal Service and Practices; Leonard Guni of Children of the World –Albania; representatives of the local NGOs and shelters Tjetër Vizion ('Another Vision'), Elbasan; Different & Equal, Tirana; and Life & Hope, Gjirokastër; Anila Trimi of the Organised Crime Directorate of the Albanian State Police; and Mr Boshniaku, director of the readmission centre and border police at Rinas International Airport. Opinions expressed and possible errors of interpretation in this chapter are entirely my own.
2. Negotiations regarding the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between Albania and the EU, a precondition for initiating the longer-term accession process, were initiated in September 2003. This Agreement was ratified by the last remaining EU state, Greece, in January 2009. Full accession is not expected for several years.
3. Initially pushed by poverty, almost every Albanian family (a population of just above 3 million in 1992) sent at least one member into labour migration as an economic family survival strategy. By 2005 the estimated numbers of Albanian migrants amounted to 600 000 in adjacent Greece; 250 000 in Italy (easily in reach by speedboat across the narrow – only 70 miles wide – Strait of Otranto); 150 000 in the USA (from 12 000 in 1999); between 50 000 and 100 000 in the UK (from 5000 in 1999) and between 1000 (Netherlands) and 15 000 (Germany) in many other, mainly European, countries. Apart from predominantly economic motives (migrant remittances are regarded as the major pillar of the economy), push and pull factors have also included: political harassment and other forms of social and political exclusion; aspirations for personal liberation, self-expression and educational advancement; flight

- from blood feuds and other conflicts; and formal and informal trade, including the sexual exploitation of women (Vullnetari 2007: 36–43).
4. There exists a considerable array of Albanian migration studies and host-country attitudes, many of which have been synthesised in Vullnetari (2007).
 5. Lubonja is the editor of *Perpjekja* ('Endeavours'), Albania's leading social and political journal, a writer and former political prisoner. Among other honours, he has been awarded the Herder prize for literature in Germany (2004) and the Alberto Moravia prize for international literature in Italy (2002).
 6. The Ottoman term for an historical Albanian customary term associated with classic codes of honour and shame; the concept is elaborated below.
 7. Interview with Fatos Lubonja, Tirana, 2 October 2008.
 8. For details see note 1.
 9. In a way similar in fact, but not identical to precedents in other areas of law, 'country guidance' decisions are supposed to provide authoritative guidance for UK immigration adjudication in respect to specific categories of asylum claims from selected countries. Country guidance decisions usually remain valid for several years, until the country situation is deemed to have changed. This particular case was still ongoing at the time of writing in early 2009; for an update on the outcome see Chapter 10, this volume.
 10. Interview with Vera Lesko, Vlova 30 September 2008; see also Lesko (2005) and Lesko and Puka (2008: 6–8). Vera Lesko was the winner of the prestigious Anti-Slavery International award in 2003. She is the director of the internationally most prominent Albanian anti-trafficking NGO and shelter, Vatra, in the southern Albanian port city of Vlova, and is known for her tireless lobbying of the government for improvements in its anti-trafficking efforts.
 11. These theoretical considerations do not fundamentally differ from Davies (J. Davies 2009), except that his research did not focus on the specificities of the situation in Albania upon return, but rather on Albanian sex workers during their trafficking episode abroad.
 12. The European Convention on Human Rights grants a person the right to liberty and security (Article 5), prohibition of discrimination (including on the basis of a person's sex, Article 14), right to freedom of movement (Protocol 4), and so on.
 13. 'Countries on [the Watch List of] Tier 2 require special scrutiny because of a high or significantly increasing number of victims; failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat trafficking in persons'; a Tier 2 assignment is 'based on commitments to take action over the next year' (OMCTP 2005).
 14. Other source countries for trafficked persons in the UK include Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, Malaysia, Thailand, the People's Republic of China, Nigeria and Ghana (US Department of State 2008a: 255).
 15. Also information presented by Poppy's representative during a fact-finding mission to Albania in 2008 (see note 1).
 16. For a variety of characteristics of Albanian traffickers, ranging from small-scale 'private' entrepreneurs to large transnational and, increasingly, interethnic organised criminal groups, see Leman and Janssens (2008) and Surtees (2008b).
 17. Holmes has now added a fourth type of victimisation to his taxonomy – see Chapter 10.
 18. Interview/meeting with the Centre for Legal and Civic Initiatives (CLCI), Tirana, 29 September 2008.
 19. Legal advisor of Vatra, present among staff at the interview/conversation with Vera Lesko in the Vatra drop-in centre, Vlova, 30 September 2008.
 20. *Balkanblog* 19 June 2007; *Balkanweb* of 17 August 2007, 17 December 2007, 24 January 2008, 31 January 2008, 2 May 2008, 25 May 2008, 30 May 2008, 12 June 2008, 26 June 2008, 4 September 2008, 24 September 2008, 2 October 2008, 30 October 2008, 20 November 2008, 27 November 2008, 4 December 2008, 11 December 2008, 18 December 2008, 29 December 2008; *Forum Shqiptare* between 22 March 2006 and 21 June 2006; *Gazeta Metropol* of 7 April 2006, 13 June 2008; *Gazeta Shqip* of 12 October 2007, 13 June 2008, 16 December 2008; *Gazeta Shqiptare* of 18 April 2008, 13 June 2008; *Koha Jonë* of 26 August 2008, 5 December 2008, 16 December 2008; *Shekulli* of 20 March 2006, 19 June 2007, 16 December 2007, 30 August 2008, 2 September 2008, 24 November 2008, 15 December 2008; *Tirana Observer* of 7 April 2006.

21. Joint meeting, including Anila Trimi of the OC Directorate of the Albanian State Police, at the OSCE Tirana headquarters, 1 October 2008.
22. See note 20.
23. Anonymous, in interview, Tirana, 1 October 2008.
24. Interview/conversation with Vera Lesko in the Vatra drop-in centre, Vlora, 30 September 2008.
25. Despite certain changes made in 2004, the Albanian Code currently states that if, *inter alia*, the victim is abused, then 15 years is a minimum. There is also a provision that exploitation of a state function increases the penalty by 25 per cent. Seven years' imprisonment is prescribed for assisting in illegal crossing of borders for the purpose of profiteering. If this involves collaboration with others, it could result in ten years' imprisonment. If such activity results in death, it could even be punished by life imprisonment. I wish to thank Frank Dalton, head of the OSCE's Rule of Law and Human Rights Department in Tirana, for pointing out these legal details to me.
26. The Albanian Criminal Code was first ratified in 1995. Article 114/b on 'trafficking of women for prostitution' was added by Law No. 8733, dated 24 January 2001, Article 30.
27. All deportees from the UK arrive at Albania's only international airport, Rinas, in a charter flight every Thursday.
28. Interview with Vera Lesko and staff, Vlora, 30 September 2008.
29. This is a text-critical analysis of Gjeçov (1989 [1933]); see particularly pp. 39–40, 179.
30. For a summary of some of the available literature on this concept and application to the Albanian case, see J. Davies (2009): 174–8.
31. Culturally and socially, living with a man amounts to 'marriage', irrespective of existing civic registration.
32. The Albanian term for 'orphan', *jetim*, applies to persons whose parents abandoned them or are dead, as well as those, in particular, who lost their father, traditionally seen as the sole breadwinner of a family. On the trafficking risk disproportionately affecting female 'adult orphans', see Amnesty International (2007).
33. 'Boys', the term used by the female sex workers for the men 'protecting' and controlling them; more formally, the term *tutor* is used in Albanian for 'pimp'.
34. Private e-mail correspondence of 30 November 2008.