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Chapter 1

Migrant Routes and Local Roots: Negotiating Property in Dhërmi/Drimades of Southern Albania

Nataša Gregorić Bon

In his recent plea for a 'return of the local' in a world that believes it is 'globalizing' (2009: 1) Peter Geschiere explores the meaning of the 'local' or the '*autochthon*'. The term means 'to be born from the soil', a concept that has acquired vital meaning in the present world of increasing migrations and greater mobility. Geschiere explores the meaning of this term in two different contexts of Africa and Europe. In Africa the local struggles for autochthony are centred on the nation-state, while in Europe they invoke fierce debates over the integration of immigrants. But despite its different modes and historical specificities, the concept of the '*autochthon*' 'celebrates the primacy of being rooted as something self-evident' and enables 'participation in a world shaped by migration' (Geschiere 2009: 38). The link to the land is central to autochthony as it gives a strong territorial capacity in the globalising world where more people than ever have begun to assert their identities in ways which are deeply rooted in the local.

This chapter will explore the meaning of 'the local' and 'locality' in the southern Albanian coastal village of Dhërmi (the official Albanian name) or Drimades (the local Greek name) of the Himarë/Himara municipality, and will explore its relation to materiality, migrations and belonging. With the acceptance of the Law on Land¹ in 1991 post-communist Albania, many tensions and conflicts emerged in the village space and influenced the re-organisation of social relations, processes of local identifications and the meaning of land and property. This chapter illustrates how villagers who are 'on the move' negotiate, manage and contest their locality, through which they seek to ensure their ownership and property. Based on 14 months of fieldwork in the village of Dhërmi/Drimades between 2004 and 2008, I focus on the returnees who own tourist facilities on the village's coastal plain and the emigrants who continue to return regularly to their natal village. I argue that when expressing their feelings of locality and belonging people continuously reconstruct their past in order to affirm their present, reconstitute and corroborate their ties to land, control their own labour and income, and negotiate

¹ After the fall of communism in 1991 the land which used to be part of the collective property and managed by cooperatives became decollectivised.

their sense of mastery. I focus on locality constructions that involve new meanings through which local people and returnees seek to guarantee their property and reinforce their attachment to land. I argue that, in today's shifting economic and political relations, the meaning of locality relates to a group's sense of rootedness in a particular locale as well as to continuous movements and migrations, which I explain with Clifford's concept of 'dwelling-in-travel' (1997: 2).

Dhërmi/Drimades

The collapse of communism and the ensuing liberalisation of Albania were accompanied by economic, social and political instability, causing massive migrations throughout the country. These migrations were especially apparent in Dhërmi/Drimades and other villages of the Himarë/Himara municipality where a great number of people emigrated to Greece after 1991. Many people had also moved out of the village for educational reasons during communism. After 2000, due to decollectivisation of the land, emigrants from Greece began to return to the village. They started re-constructing old houses and building new ones, as well as tourist facilities on the village's coast. From May to September the village is crowded with emigrants who live and work as manual labourers in Greece during the rest of the year, moving to Dhërmi/Drimades in the summer to run these tourist ventures. Return migration and re-possession and re-management of the coastal plain have brought about social differentiations and arguments over the land upon which the returnees and emigrants re-construct their locality and belonging.

The returnees and other villagers, who all believe they 'originate' from the village, often declare themselves to be locals (*horiani/vëndasit*)² or 'of the place'.³ This indicates several specific claims about being 'rooted' to the place of their natal origin – either Dhërmi/Drimades or another village of the Himarë/Himara municipality, their language – the local Greek dialect, and their Christian Orthodox religion. Their self-declarations are formed in contrast to newcomers who moved to the village during the period of communism or, more commonly, those who came after its fall for economic reasons. Newcomers often introduce themselves according to the name of the place from which they have moved. The newcomers who came during the communist period generally live in houses purchased from the villagers or built on land given to them according to the Law on Land. Newcomers who moved to the village after the breakdown of communism generally rent old houses owned by the villagers and do not own land.

In contrast to the people living in areas of acknowledged national Greek minority (Gjirokastra, Saranda and Delvina), the bilingual residents (who speak Greek and Albanian) of Himarë/Himara are not considered to be part of this

minority. Rather, according to Greek politics and mainstream public opinion, they are considered '*omogeneis*' (co-ethnic) Greeks living in Albania. The status of 'co-ethnicity' gives them the right to apply for Special Identity Cards for Aliens of Greek Descent designating them as 'co-ethnics' and allows them unrestricted passage across the Albanian-Greek and other European Union Schengen borders which, due to massive emigration and long visa procedures, are now almost impassable for other Albanian citizens. This status also entitles them to Greek pensions and Greek health and social insurance.

'Dwelling-in-travel'

In his well known book *Routes* (1997), James Clifford writes that in the present world of mobility and migration, dwelling is no longer bound to the 'local ground of the collective life' where travel is a supplement (Clifford 1997: 3). In the twentieth century travelling became normative and thus one can often speak about 'dwelling-in-travel' (1997: 2). Due to considerable erosion of the terrain, lack of land suitable for cultivation, and various economic, social and political changes, people living in Dhërmi/Drimades and the Himarë/Himara area have been moving to and from the area of today's southern Albania and Epirus, Greece for many centuries (Winnifith 2002). While these movements brought about a multiplicity of connections between people and places, the administrative (Ottoman period) and political (formation of nation-states) divisions caused differentiations and inequalities. During the communist period, when the totalitarian regime of Enver Hoxha forbade any passing of the state borders and, in addition to other restrictions and reforms (such as land reform and nationalisation of property), limited in-country movement (see Gregorić Bon 2008a: 51–2), the movement between southern Albania and Greece also stopped.

After the breakdown of communism and the ensuing massive migrations (King and Vullnetari 2003, Vullnetari 2007), a significant part of the population migrated to Italy and Greece (Mai and Schwandner-Sievers 2003, Vullnetari 2007: 14), and in later years to the United States and elsewhere in Europe. To paraphrase Clifford (1997), movements and migrations became the norm in post-communist Albania. This is especially the case for Dhërmi/Drimades, where recent returnees who came back to their natal village after retiring maintain relations with their children in Greece. This means that almost every year, especially when they go to the doctor or collect the pensions provided by the Agricultural Insurance Organisation in Greece, they visit their children's families and spend several weeks with them. Continuous connections with Athens, where most of the returnees' children and grandchildren live, are maintained by different bus companies in Himarë/Himara, transporting passengers three days a week during the winter and every day during the summer. Besides the bus connection, in the summer there is also a connection by sea on speedboats travelling between Corfu and Himarë/Himara. In addition to physical contact (such as visits), the locals keep their ties with their children

2 Throughout this chapter the words in Albanian language are written in *italics*, the words in local Greek are written in *italics and underlined*.

3 '*Apo ton topos/nga vëndi*'.

through the Greek mobile phone system which, due to the proximity of Greece (the island of Corfu and Albanian-Greek state border), is available along with the Albanian mobile phone system.

Because of continuous movements through the Albanian-Greek border, maintained before and after the communist period, a number of villagers refer to the state border as the 'road' which connects their village to Greece and Europe. In spite of the fact that in practice few of the villagers travel beyond Greece, they often emphasise their ability to travel 'freely' to the countries of 'western' Europe. They often use this privilege to differentiate themselves from other citizens of Albania, whose travels are restricted by visas that must be acquired through long bureaucratic procedures. Their actual movements, together with their ability to cross the Schengen borders, serve as means by which the people of Himarë/Himara re-construct social and spatial boundaries.

Many elderly returnees often recount stories recalling their ancestors' movements to places over the sea and mountains, dating back to the period before communism (Gregorić Bon 2008a: 7–27). While stories about such mobility relate the village, its area and its people to Greece and Italy, 'civilisation', economic development and general wellbeing, stories of movements over the mountains relate the village and its people to Albania, poverty and a lack of 'civilization' (Gregorić Bon 2008a: 15–20). It seems that the locals' continuous movements and travels to and from Greece constitute their sense of 'dwelling', which is conceptually similar to Clifford's notion of 'dwelling-in-travel'. Through the villagers' self-ascriptions as locals 'of the place' or particular 'locale', and through their recounting of past movements and trading relations (Gregorić Bon 2008a: 15–22) and their access to 'free' passage over the Albanian-Greek and EU Schengen borders (Gregorić Bon 2008b: 83–105), 'place' does not appear as a bounded site but rather as an itinerary, or in Clifford's words, 'a series of encounters and translations' (1997: 11).

In contrast to Appadurai (1996), who sees locality as 'primarily relational and contextual' rather than spatial, I argue that spatiality is constitutive and constituting of the locality in Dhërmi/Drimades and vice versa. While locality may be based on the villagers' sense of being 'rooted' to the place, land and property, it is also based on the villagers' continuous movements and migrations. The latter, along with the endless negotiations of locality and property, means that for villagers place and locale are an 'instantaneous configuration of positions' constituted by a system of signs (de Certeau 1988: 117). Because people's claims of belonging relate to a plurality of places more than to one particular place, I define locality as a process of becoming. As this ethnographic account will show, the sense of a particular locale or land, and consequently locality, is continuously shifting as it is negotiated and managed by people pursuing their practical, personal or social goals. These goals are often related to claims for property and land ownership, which have now become the subject of many heated debates.

Property

The complexity of the processes of denationalisation, privatisation and restitution in Albania brought ambiguous understandings of land and property,⁴ which differ from the property relations established in the pre-communist period. Before I describe the complexity of decollectivisation and the problems caused by its application, however, let me pause to define some key concepts in this chapter's continuing debate.

Several anthropologists working in eastern Europe (Kideckel 1992, 1995a, 1995b, Hann 1993a, 1993b, 1998, Verdery 1994, 2003, Abrahams 1996, de Waal 1996, 2005, Creed 1998, 1999, Kaneff 1998, 2000, 2009, Meurs 2001, Lampland 2002, Pine 2004 and so on) discuss various responses to decollectivisation and view property and ownership from different perspectives. In this chapter, Hann's (1998) and Verdery's (1998: 161) conceptualisations of property as a bundle of powers rather than rights provides a useful point of entry to the meanings of land and property. I concentrate on the meaning of property as the 'set of social relations, and organisation of power' that come together through social processes (Verdery 2003: 19).

The process of decollectivisation introduced new differences and inequalities among the people of Dhërmi/Drimades and the Himarë/Himara area. These are being shaped through the reconstruction of individual belonging to locality, which is closely intertwined with individual and collective ownership, as well as people's attachments to land. This chapter shows how the process of decollectivisation and restitution of property changed relationships in the village and influenced people's self-representations, their relation to labour and their belonging to 'their' place. I do not seek to define 'property' and 'locality' but to illustrate and explain how porous and flexible their meanings are, and to question what ramifications this has in the local as well as the national and supranational European contexts.

Land/*krima*/*toka*

After the fifteenth century most of the area that is now Albania submitted to the Ottoman administration. Yet people living in the isolated mountainous areas of northern Albania (Miridia) and some places in the south (such as Himarë/Himara, Dhërmi/Drimades, Saranda, Delvina, Gjirokastra and parts of Korca) managed to keep their autonomy through local administration, 'customary law' and religion in exchange for paying taxes (Rusha 2001). The people of Dhërmi/Drimades kept their own property, which, besides a house and adjoining small garden, also comprised of agricultural land, pasture and small woodlands. While the house and agricultural land were inherited by partible inheritance (each male heir received

4 Whereas the people of Dhërmi/Drimades generally use the terms 'property' (*pronë/idioktisja* or *perionsia*), 'proprietor' (*pronar/idioktitis*), 'land' (*toka*) or 'estate' (*krima*) in their daily discourse, I use the term 'property' throughout this chapter.

a lot or a house), the pastureland and small woodlands were inherited by the impartible principle – all the men of one patrigrup⁵ (*soi/fts*) inherited a portion of the land together. In theory, there was a strong agnatic preference for dividing the land and property exclusively among the sons. The settlement pattern tended to be patrilocal and marriages, endogamous within the village, were based on pre-marriage agreements between two patrigrups. These decisions were based on the perceived need to keep ownership of the land within the village and to preserve the Christianity of the area.

With the beginning of communism in 1945 came land collectivisation and the foundation of cooperatives. In 1957 Dhërmi/Drimades became part of the agricultural cooperative. Land previously owned by individual proprietors and patrigrups became part of the state cooperatives. After 1980 private houses became part of the cooperatives too. Some of them were used for the purposes of the cooperative while others remained inhabited by their previous owners. The communist party relocated several people to the village from other places in the Albanian state. They lived in the village as public workers, such as teachers, doctors, policemen, etc. Many local youth requested relocation to the capital, Tirana, or the coastal city of Vlora for educational purposes. After completing their studies many found jobs in the cities, where they married and settled with their families. The marriage pattern gradually changed from village endogamy to include exogamous marriage outside of the village.

A year after the fall of communism in 1990 the government passed the Law on Land (Law No. 7501 on Land, 19 July 1991). The law declared that land, which used to be state property and managed by the cooperatives, should be divided equally between the members of the cooperative. Thus, every member who once worked for the cooperative should own a proportionate piece of land, its size based on the size of the entire area of the cooperative's operation. This law resulted in many disputes between the local people of Dhërmi/Drimades, as well as those in other areas that had managed to keep their autonomy during the Ottoman conquest. Internal population movements from rural to urban areas and vice versa between the 1960s and 1970s, instigated by the communist government, had changed the population of the village. After the fall of communism several locals, both those who during communism had worked in the village cooperative and those who had moved to the cities, migrated to Greece. While most of those migrants who had worked in the village cooperative never returned to Dhërmi/Drimades, those who had lived elsewhere in Albania during communism have now begun to return to their natal village. Therefore there are more returnees living in the village than there are people who remained there during communism. As most of the returnees were not members of the village cooperative they were not given the right to use the land. Because of this the Himara Community, the Himarë/Himara municipality and the local people decided together to abrogate the Law on Land and implement a

5 Patrilinear descendants of an apical ancestor as well as other blood and fictive kin assimilated into the line of descent.

consensus arrived at by the population of Himarë/Himara, involving the restitution of the land to its previous proprietors.

In 2004 the government passed another Law on Restitution and Compensation of Property for a few expropriated feudal Albanian families who had owned land in Tirana before communism. As their land now serves the public interest, the government decided to compensate them. Because of financial shortages in the state budget, they compensated these owners with coastal land in the Himarë/Himara municipality, which, according to the political elite, is state property. While the law on restitution and compensation has 'silenced' the conflicts and discordances within particular kin groups and within the village, it has also led to conflicts and discordances between the local community and the leading political elite.

Negotiating the 'Local'

Tourism on the Dhërmi/Drimadean coast dates back to the 1960s, when the communist Labour Party transformed some of the old buildings, formerly used as warehouses for storing oranges, olive oil and olives, into a hotel, a government villa and a Workers' Camp. In the first few years after the collapse of communism and the beginning of privatisation, the state buildings and the land that had been owned by the Communist Labour Union were leased to people who had come from other parts of Albania. In the years after 1997 and especially after 2000 when the Himarë/Himara area was acknowledged as a municipality and the national road from Dukati to Palasa was reconstructed, tourist facilities on the coastal plains of Dhërmi/Drimades grew in number. The owners, originating from other parts of Albania, built nine new buildings that are now used as guest houses, room rentals, a bungalow site, hotels and a disco bar. Except for one (the smallest hotel), all are situated on the northern side of the Potami (literally 'stream'), a small stream flowing into the sea. In 2000, local people also began to build tourist facilities, which are primarily located on the southern side of the Potami. They built nine facilities, including guest houses, small hotels, a bungalow site, a restaurant and a night club. The majority of locals who run tourist facilities worked as emigrants in Greece for at least a few years. Three of them still live in Greece for most of the year, returning to the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades only in the summer season. Another three local owners of tourist facilities live in larger towns such as Vlora and Tirana in Albania and are present here only during the summer months. The last three owners live in the village permanently, but often go to Greece where they visit their children, see the doctor and renew the Special Identity Cards for Aliens of Greek Descent, if needed.

Kosta, who moved out of the village when he was 15 years old, returned in 2003 with a plan to build a restaurant on the so-called 'local side' of the coastal plain. He had applied for relocation to Tirana for educational purposes. There he married Ariadne, from Saranda where the Greek minority lives. A year after the fall of communism they and their three children migrated to Greece. When I asked

why they had returned to the village, Kosta replied: 'Because I own land here and I mean something. All my life I have been working for other people and now I finally work for myself and for the future of my children.' The majority of returnees in the village described their reasons for returning in similar terms, often concluding that land is 'like their bank'. When Kosta returned to the village, he claimed half of the 2,000 square metres of coastal land on which his cousin Andrea (the son of a brother of Kosta's father) had built a bar in 2001. Like Kosta, Andrea too had moved out of the village for educational purposes when he was a teenager. After finishing school in Vlorë, Andrea married a woman from the city. In 1991 he, his wife and children (two sons and a daughter) migrated to Greece. In 2000 Andrea and his wife settled in the village and a year later, with their sons who live in Greece but return regularly to the village in summer months, they built a bar on the coastal plain.

Kosta's claim to a portion of the coastal land led to a dispute between him and Andrea. At first, Andrea resisted giving Kosta any of the land, saying that he had returned to the village first, thus the land should belong to him. As neither of them had worked in the village cooperative, they knew that legally neither had any right to the land. Kosta noted that everybody in the village knew this land belonged to their patriline and since he and Andrea are the only heirs currently living in the village, they should split the land in two equal parts. As Andrea's bar was situated in the middle of the parcel he was forced to pull it down after several months of arguing with Kosta. That same year, Andrea built another bar on his part of the land which he and his sons now run. On the other half of the land Kosta and his son Archile, who returned from Greece and settled in the village in 2004, built a restaurant. The difficulties between Andrea and Kosta continued. Kosta's wife Ariadne often complained about the conflict, which she believed exposed Andrea's carelessness and irresponsibility towards the land. She often recounted the story of the garden behind their restaurant where Andrea had disposed of empty bottles and other rubbish in the years he had had his bar there. She complained that she and Kosta had to put a lot of effort into removing the bottles, disposing of them outside of the village, in order to put in the garden where they now grow most of the vegetables used in their restaurant. She often criticised Andrea's wife as being lazy and lacking good work habits. Gardening is a mode used by Ariadne to establish her physical relationship to the land which, together with her care and responsibility for the restaurant, forms her identity and defines her belonging to the land and the village. Not having been born in the village, she has no ancestral ties to it. When gossiping about Andrea's irresponsibility, she stressed their own conscientiousness regarding the 'proper' management of their restaurant and land. In a slightly reserved manner, Kosta similarly criticised Andrea's irresponsibility and lack of loyalty towards his kin. He often noted that he and Andrea are of the same patriline and therefore they should cooperate and help each other. Like Kosta and Ariadne, Andrea and his wife connected their sense of being 'of the place' to locality. They often emphasised their work and effort in building the bar a year after their return from Greece. They also expressed their responsibility and the successful management by their sons, who gained experience managing

bars in Greece. Moreover, they pointed out that their bar was busier than Kosta's restaurant.

Besides economic value, land ownership brings cultural capital to returnees and locals, who once worked for the communist government and later, through emigration, for landlords. Verdery (2003: 178) defines this notion as the sense of mastery, which is not only an individual but also a communal matter. In Dhërmi/Drinades the sense of mastery is often related to the meaning of property and locality. For example, when Ariadne declares her labour, care and responsibility for the land, she exposes Andrea's carelessness, irresponsibility, and insufficient management. The sense of mastery is used also by Andrea who boasts about his responsibility and successful management of his bar which is making higher profits than Kosta's restaurant. The sense of mastery is thus continuously shifting and is contextual, relational and sometimes oppositional.

Some months after the local authorities of the Himarë/Himara municipality decided to abrogate the Law on Restitution and Compensation of Property and to implement the Law on Land 'in their own manner', the procedure of land registration began. This procedure was based on verification of the old testaments and other land documentation which date back to the Ottoman administration period and have been preserved either in people's personal archives or in the national archives in the capital, Tirana. Upon submission of these documents the municipality would issue land ownership documents and building permits for tourist facilities on the coast. In 2005, based on one of his grandfather's letters, Kosta registered the 2000 square metres of coastal land upon which he and Andrea had acquired the building permit for the restaurant and bar. The relationship between Kosta and Andrea gradually improved. For example, when Kosta had no electricity because of a delay in his payment, Andrea offered him access to his power line. Since then, Kosta and Andrea have helped each other run their businesses on the coast. 'I prefer to cooperate with troublesome kin rather than let the state to take the land away from me', Kosta said, explaining the sudden change in their relationship. The registration process and enforced returning of ancestral lands strengthened the differences between the local owners, largely returnees, and the owners from other parts of Albania. Thus notions of who owns the land and who does not are flexible and negotiable.

Many owners of tourist facilities who are from other parts of Albania saw their labour as a central component of their propertied identity and considered their purchase of the land from the state authorities to be something that makes them 'real' owners. In contrast, the returnees and local owners of tourist facilities view their land as a source of reconnection with their ancestors. 'This is the land of our grandfathers' is a common explanation of local owners' claims to the land. They often recounted stories about the trading relations that their grandfathers maintained before the communist period with the island and mainland of today's Greece and Italy. Kosta, for example, often recalled a story about the village port, Jaliskari, situated on the north-western side of Potami or on the '*ksemeria*' – the local part – as many of the local owners and other villagers refer to that section

of the village's coast. Before the communist collectivisation of private property, the port was owned by a few prosperous patrigroups in the village who anchored their boats there. Some years ago a man from Tirana built a bar there. Kosta and many other local owners often complained that most of the 'foreigner' owners stole land which had belonged to the village patrigroups. The local owners do not consider the 'foreigner' owners to be the 'real' proprietors because, according to their statements, they are not 'of the place' and do not belong to the village space. In contrast, they constitute themselves as being 'of the place'. When claiming this they often express the autonomy of the area, and the trading relations that their ancestors had managed to sustain with what is now Greece and Italy until communism. Moreover, many returnees often speak of their ability to freely cross the Albanian-Greek and other Schengen borders which are hardly passable for the majority of Albanian citizens. The local owners and returnees construct their sense of being cosmopolitan, which they see as a vital part of 'their' local connectedness, on the past movements of their ancestors as well as their own present movements.

Resisting the Law on Land

Following Gupta and Ferguson, who define resistance as a way of shaping the identity of the 'subjects despite its conjectural character' (2001: 19), I argue that resistance in Dhërmi/Drimades is constituted by and constituting of locality. In order to object to the Laws on Land and Restitution and Compensation of Property, the intellectuals of Himarë/Himara (many of whom are living in Greece or the United States), along with the association of the Himara Community and the Himarë/Himara municipality, organised Pan-Himarian conferences in 2005 and 2008. At both conferences, local intellectuals, emigrants originating from Himarë/Himara and some returnees discussed the present and future development of the municipality with particular emphasis on tourism and land ownership. The organisers invited the media and in 2008 even invited the Albanian president, Bamir Topi.

But in spite of these events, conflicts between the local people and the political elite continued. In February and August 2008, protests were organised in Himarë/Himara with the local people demanding 'land ownership and autonomy for the area' (as was reported in their own newspaper, *Himarë/Himara*, published in Greek). In 2006, local intellectuals along with the Himara Community set up a website⁶ to provide general information about the villages of Himarë/Himara and their history, and also offering a tourist guide and blog discussions on the current property issues.⁷ The website is posted in three languages: Albanian, Greek and English. The tourist guide presents the history and tourist attractions of the

area, emphasising its autonomy, trading relations, movements to today's Greece before the period of communism, and the Christian religion, using these features to construct the distinctiveness of Himarë/Himara 'region'.

Local efforts to establish an autonomous region transcend the area's geographic borders, yet generate and redefine the meaning of locality. The local intellectuals, municipal authorities and the villagers themselves are striving to find their place in the 'Europe of regions'.⁸ Therefore many intellectuals attempt to virtually connect their region to the European Union. This supranational governing body, they believe, could provide them with opportunities to strengthen their regional autonomy and solutions to their land tenure issues.

Conclusion

The process of decollectivisation has influenced changes in the perception of land, which no longer has a collectivised but a market value. As Kosta and many other villagers articulated, ownership of coastal land mainly used for tourism purposes brings economic benefits and represents a long-term investment for many villagers. Like Verdey's (2003: 173–5) example from a Bulgarian village, in Dhërmi/Drimades property also brings responsibility and autonomy to people who once lacked these benefits. Under communism land and labour were held in collective ownership. Now they have become independent and autonomous categories that individual people are able to control.

This ethnographic material illustrates how returnees, through the reconstruction of locality and belonging, reassert their property rights, constitute their identity and reinforce their attachment to place, which they seek to emplace in the 'Europe of regions'. It also exemplifies how returnees, through their sense of rootedness and their mobility, construct their place as a set of encounters and translations. When managing and negotiating their feelings of belonging they expose their past and present movements, and in the process constitute their locality as a form of 'dwelling-in-travel' (Clifford 1997).

This chapter demonstrates how social boundaries between the 'locals' (those 'of the place') and 'foreigners' (those 'out of place') are spatialised and emplaced. In people's daily discourses the coastal plains are divided into a 'local' and 'foreign' side. Social boundaries serve as the means through which returnees constitute their locality and rootedness to place, which is reaffirmed through their present and past

⁶ <http://www.himara.eu>.

⁷ <http://himarablog.blogspot.com/search/label/Prona>.

⁸ The 'Europe of regions' is a specific term used in the European Union which demarcates administrative and transborder Euro-regions. While on the one hand the regions (as they are constituted in the political agendas of the regional policy-makers and economists) are administrative and political, the social or symbolic regions – as Roth (2007: 33) names them – are on the other hand constructed through social differences and nostalgic discourses. These serve peoples' recreation of their regional belonging, which they exclude from the national past, (re)turning to a European present and future.

movements to places in Greece, Italy and elsewhere. The meanings of locality and property are influenced not only by the returnees' and villagers' roots in their natal village, but also by their routes to and from their village. When returnees express belonging through property rights they reconstruct their rootedness to place and expose their ability to move. The meaning of locality is thus ambiguous as it results from the continuous interplay between mobility and rootedness. Returning to Geschiere (2009), in his conceptualisation of the *'autochthon'* or the *'local'* he does not point out this interplay between mobility and rootedness, but rather focuses on the peoples' link to the land as the flip side of globalisation. By contrast, the ideas of *'autochthon'* in Dhërmi/Drimades merge mobility and rootedness without contradiction.

I have described some of the ways in which identity and relations among the people were reorganised as the land in southern Albania became decollectivised. The local people's implementation of the Law on Land in their own manner has brought about social conflicts both among kin and among the village inhabitants. It has reasserted the predominance of particular relations over space, privileging the people *'originating'* from Dhërmi/Drimades and other villages of Himarë/Himara over those who originate elsewhere, creating social and spatial differences. In such contests, property became a vital subject in the process of constructing and reconstructing relationships, locality and space. Locality implies reference to a place, signifying a sense of rootedness and origins, yet entailing dwelling-in-travel. Property and locality do not have singular references but are context-bounded and contingent. In Dhërmi/Drimades ideals of locality and property celebrate *'rootedness'* and gives the returnees a feeling of emplacement in the village space, a space that is shaped by movements and migrations.

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Chapter 2

Against the Gated Community: Contesting the ‘Ugly American Dream’ through Rural New Zealand Dreams

Catherine Trundle

Between 2002 and 2004, in the picturesque Tasman region of New Zealand's South Island, a wealthy American migrant attempted to gain permission for a large beachside property development. Residents of the rural community soon organised a vocal campaign of opposition. Spokespersons claimed that the development would increase house prices beyond the reach of ‘local people’, and lead to an ostentatious ‘gated community’ in the midst of a population living on modest incomes. In this chapter I analyse the public outcry surrounding this controversy, placing it within the context of nationwide political debates regarding foreign land ownership and influence. Centrally, I explore how ideas of belonging, ownership and ‘local’ identity were deployed and made visible in ways that excluded a stereotyped version of the American migrant from the moral landscape. Moreover, I show how other American migrants attempted to align themselves with the opposition movement and distance themselves from ‘rich Americans’ and ‘foreign’ cultural values. Such stereotypes, I argue, acted as a foil through which ‘average’ American migrants could both personally and publicly confirm their rights to land custodianship, regional identity and virtuous migrant subjectivity. Such migrant claims relied upon discourses, also expressed by ‘locals’, of heritage, conservation, economic vulnerability and rural industry.

Based on fieldwork, conducted in 2004 for 10 months in the Tasman and Nelson regions,¹ this case study illustrates that contemporary mobile migrants may not embrace the transnational identity markers ascribed to them by social scientists. Their identities as migrants, furthermore, do not stem solely from their previous cultural worlds or their own personal aspirations and ideals. Migrants must also in various ways respond to the identity resources made available to them in their

¹ During this time I kept field notes detailing informal conversations with residents and public discussion on the topic of ‘rich Americans’, collected all relevant local and national newspaper articles and letters to the editor on the issue, and conducted 15 in-depth interviews with American immigrants who had arrived in New Zealand in the last 10 years. All interviewees were of European descent. Nearly all had migrated while aged between 35 and 45 years old and just under half were in their 40s when interviewed.