Domesticating the transition: appropriating interiors in postsocialist Gjirokastër

Gen Fujii
University College London, ucsagfu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
In Gjirokastër of southern Albania, the current socio-economic situation is often described by the local inhabitants as a transition to western-style capitalism. This contrasts with the discourse refuting transitology in regards to postsocialist[1] societies argued by many scholars (Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Hann 2002; Humphrey 2002; Pelkmans 2003, 2006; Verdery 1991, 1999). Based on ethnographic material collected between 2005 and 2006, this article investigates whether such a claim by scholars should dismiss the heuristic statement voiced by local people about the ways in which domestic objects shift in values and meanings inside people's homes. Inspired by Arjun Appadurai's (1986) notion of a 'regime of value' and Alfred Gell's (1996; 1998) theory of the 'social agency of things', the focus is placed upon the appropriation of a sense of temporality in material cultures inside postsocialist homes in Gjirokastër.

KEYWORDS: transition, interior, continuity, value-shift, (re)appropriation.

Introduction
Within the spectrum of domestic space, two consistencies are particularly noticeable in Gjirokastër's households. One is the dominance of socialist furniture within each domestic sphere; the other is the continual rearrangement of interiors. While newly purchased domestic objects are becoming more common, the dominance of socialist objects such as furniture can be seen in almost all households. I used the word 'dominance' partly because of the prevalence of these items in many households. Even in other households, where they are present to a lesser extent, the uniformity in generic style and design (quite literally the same pieces in every household) seems to contrast with other consumer items. To argue the notion of appropriation I look at shifts in the values and meanings of such objects. While the 'shift' of the power of commodities is at stake, Arjun Appadurai (1986)

[1] The period of one party politics, especially Enver Hoxha's regime, is generally referred as *koha e komunizmit*, the time of communism. While this is due to the ideological input imposed by the regime, following the idea of evolution as one of characteristics of socialism (Heywood 2007: 114–118, 134), I consider this period to be socialism rather than communism. Accordingly, the period after socialism is referred to as postsocialism.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL NOTEBOOKS 14 (2): 65–86.
ISSN 1408-032X
© Slovene Anthropological Society 2008

argues that the existing regime tends to loosen and expand its capacity to give away a certain space so that a seemingly closed, rigid framework invites a newer regime of value to move in. Therefore, while the quantity and visual impact of the regime of socialist values represent dominance in the domestic sphere, the value-shifts appropriate to them adopt a new context which I see as domesticating transition.

In many households I visited during my stay in Gjirokastër I noticed frequent interior rearrangements. Distinguishing interior arrangements from home decorations, Pauline Garvey (2001) employs the term 'routine' to explain the general attitude towards interior rearrangement, particularly the moving of furniture, amongst her informants in Norwegian households. Despite use of the term 'routine', she emphasises spontaneity over the disciplinary continuity in her informant's motives:

> Routine reminds the individual of stability and permanence which reorganization provides an escape from. However, the rupture effected by change is nevertheless ephemeral, and framed within a domestic setting which by nature assuages the efficacy of transient challenge (Garvey 2001: 54).

She thus posits that interior rearrangement is indeed a routine, but as opposed to a discipline, it should be seen as habitual spontaneity where, by moving furniture around, an individual can impose a psychological restriction as a response to 'emotive stimulus' such as changing mood and a symbolic gesture of a new start.

Perhaps it is so in the context of Norwegian households where the material expression of a consumer-oriented society was a less significant aspiration, but in postsocialist Gjirokastër the motivation for interior rearrangement appears to be different. Nevertheless, such routine acts as moving furniture can also be found there. The difference is that it is not spontaneous but continual because interior rearrangement is considered by my informants to be a process for achieving a desired future. When discussing house decorations and interior rearrangements in a North London council estate, Alison Clarke (2001) suggests that the motives by which residents carry out makeovers at each household is related to the individual's aspiration towards the ideal domestic realm that each person longs for. She argues that a great deal of attention is paid to the visual representation of private space despite rare exposure to outsiders (2001: 41). Thus, the individual's act of makeover is attributed to the aspiration for his/her own ideal home.

The aspiration toward ideals seems the right term to discuss the cases in Gjirokastër because interior arrangements shift as more consumer items come into the house. However, it appears to be not just an individual but a collective aspiration towards a 'particular future' projected by the generic image of a consumer-oriented society. In such circumstances, the objects carried forth from socialism were contested by a different regime of value (Appadurai 1986) in the postsocialist context. As different regimes of value co-exist in each household, domestic interiors appeared to be cluttered and messy to my eyes. However, for my informants, it was their reality and the continual interior rearrangements attempted to realise an ideal home. By closely following the sequence of interior arrangements, what appeared to be messy is revealed to be not disorder but a messily connected shift of values and meanings in the given context. While Alfred Gell explains such a shift

by employing the term 'distributed object' (1998), my informants regard it as 'transition' (or *tranzicion* in Albanian). In short, finding the 'right' places for objects represents a fair account of the 'present'. The belief in this rightness is the motivation to regard their current situation as a 'transition' toward the socially aspired ideal living environment projected in the consumer oriented living standard of the West[2]. For this reason, despite numerous critiques (Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Hann 2002; Humphrey 2002; Pelkmans 2003, 2006; Verdery 1991, 1999) of the term 'transition' to describe the current situation of postsocialist society, I take a sympathetic view towards use of the term.

This paper is based on sixteen months of fieldwork in Gjirokastër between June 2005 and September 2006 as part of my MPhil thesis. Supplemental photographs, house plans, and inventories of household items were made with permission. The majority of informants appearing in this paper had vocational training in various fields and their ages range from thirty-five to sixty-five.[3] For the purpose of protecting confidentiality, all the informants' names appearing in this article have been changed.

Gjirokastër: the neighbourhoods and inhabitants

Situated on the slope of Gjerë Mountain, the city of Gjirokastër consists of fourteen neighbourhoods populated by approximately 30,000 inhabitants. Amongst the fourteen, I collectively describe six of them, situated on the hillside, as the old town. The current state of the built environment of the old town came into being approximately two hundred years ago, though many believe earlier. The physical manifestation of its built environment and the late Ottoman vernacular houses are so characteristic[4] that the old town came under state protection in 1964 and was listed in UNESCO World Heritage in 2005. After the collapse of socialism, the new town developed at the foot of the mountain. Having attracted numerous economic migrants from nearby villages, the new town has recently taken over centrality in socio-economic activities from the old town, becoming the new economic centre.[5]

[2] When the 'West' is mentioned, I don't mean it in terms of geography but in socio-political and economic terms.

[3] The age range of interviewees resulted from the fact that most households consist of two to three generations. Therefore, to obtain genealogical information, I chose to interview older members of the family, while about practical matters such as the design of the layout and motives behind particular trends in decorations I tended to interview younger members as they were the initial imposers of aesthetic values.

[4] Emin Riza, an Albanian architectural historian, describes the built environment of the old town: 'the dominant buildings are the houses; masterly tight with the land, with monumental characters and the distinguished unity of buildings expressed to their full extent, the ensemble appears to be a unique realization of long-term inspiration' (Riza 2003: 37, author's translations from the Albanian).

[5] The reason I reduced the city's geography into two towns by categorically leaving other neighbourhoods and inhabitants of the city behind is that the main theme of this paper is based upon the *puro*'s everyday life, dialectically influenced by the change that has been occurring in the new town more than anywhere else, despite the kaleidoscopic ethnic mixture elsewhere in the city.

The residents of the old town distinguish themselves from other inhabitants of the city by claiming themselves as 'autochthonous' *puro*. The etymology of the term *puro* is unconfirmed, but may be derived from the adjective *puro* meaning 'pure'. Embedded within the built environment of the old town, one of my informants told me that for an 'ID pass' to be regarded as a *puro*, one should have a physical or imaginary tie with his/her ancestral house or *stëpia me oxhaku* (lit. house with the chimney) so that his or her surname represents the genealogy of a particular *fis* (patrilineal clan). Thus, the definition of *puro* is expressed through the house as a symbolic representation of genealogical lineage, resembling Lévi-Strauss' theory of *house societies* (1983, 1987) in which the inalienable wealth attached to the house should be recognised as a taxonomical category of kinship. Considering the large amount of criticism given to the theory (see Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Joyce and Gillespie 2000), I would limit my words to state, at most, that *puro*-ness is only loosely defined by the residents' self-claim, as in some societies where one's identity is embedded in the house to such an extent that self-identity and house-identity become inseparable (Pine 1996, 2003).

Marginalised by postsocialist economic migrants who settled in the new town, *puro* show strong reserve towards other residents. One of my informants – a *puro* – cynically described his current living situation as being forced to live in the 'museum' while economic development happens down below. Considering such a situation, *puro* have perhaps a stronger aspiration towards economic development than other inhabitants, yet are trapped in inalienable wealth anchored by genealogy and houses as its material manifestations. The three case studies (all describing *puro*) presented below entail different scenarios but express the notion of transition in terms of a shift in values and meanings attached to domestic objects. Before moving on to the case studies, it is important to clarify the term 'transition'.

Transition as discourse

In the study of postsocialist societies, the 'transition' towards the market-oriented economy of the West is often treated as a myth (e.g. Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Hann 2002; Humphrey 2002; Pelkmans 2003, 2006; Verdery 1991, 1999). For example, Burawoy and Verdery (1999: 4) refute the transitology discourse of postsocialism as a mere prediction based on the economic model in which prosperity is reduced to 'some pregiven future' where 'they [economists in particular] think of only one future: textbook capitalism'. Along the same lines, Katherine Verdery (1996: 15–16) argues that there is no such thing as transition to 'the promised world of capitalism'; rather, the situation of postsocialism is 'transformation' as these societies are heading towards something peculiarly their own, distinct from the established capitalist economy. On the contrary, using exactly the same argument, my informants look towards the 'West' as their 'pregiven future'.

Both use exactly the same argument but arrive at opposite conclusions. The problem with the term 'transition' appears to be related to different interpretations of the term 'capitalism'. While economists discuss it as a generic term for an economic model, my informants tend to consider it as something of a 'better' future. Perhaps what they mean by *tranzicion* is not the transition to a market economy that economists see through

models of 'probabilities', but to modernity as institutionalised order, similar to what Anthony Giddens (1991: 20, 33) terms 'post-traditional order' where the relationship between formations of self-identity and institutionalised structure is reflexively conditioned.

Giddens (1991: 35) argues that self-identity is constructed through knowledge of one's behaviour obtained during day-to-day reflexive activities. We all monitor the circumstances of our activities as part of reflexive awareness. And this awareness has a discursive character. If asked, one can explain and interpret the nature of and the reasons for the specific activity one is engaging in. But our engagement in everyday activities is carried out 'at the level of practical consciousness' (1991: 36) without making a conscious effort to interpret what we are doing at a particular moment. This notion of reflexive behaviours is integral to the circumstances the person is engaged in and reproduces the institutionalised order according to the norm set up by a particular social context. Amongst households I have visited, there seems to be a shift occurring from one 'practical consciousness' to another through the willingness to redefine self-identity by relating it to modernity as 'institutionalised order'.

Necessities of household items: regimes of value

Household items are often equated with the notion of personal values ascribed to 'memories' (Carsten 2004: 31), 'sentiments' and 'intimacies' (Bachelard 1969; Burikova 2006; Cieraad 1999; Miller 2001), or even the establishment of kinship relations (Makovicky 2007), particularly when a biographical quality is attached to them (Kopytoff 1986). But Fatmiri's relationship to socialist furniture such as the tables and chairs he uses everyday in his studio seems different, although it does show a clear indication of biographical quality. While the furniture may serve a functional role, Fatmiri, a painter in his early 40s, told me that he does not value them, either monetarily or sentimentally:

> For me, this thing [pointing at a table of socialist origin] doesn't have a value. Well, no, it doesn't seem to have a value to me ... I keep it because this is a studio. A studio is a studio where you should have tables and chairs.

When asked for the reason, he responded:

> It [the table] is from a period that already passed so it may have a historical value in a museum, but ... because I am too used to these things I cannot understand the value someone else may ascribe to them. ... No, it doesn't have a value [to me].

Contrary to his comment, the table showed clear signs of 'being taken care of' including evidence of constant repair. During the interview, Fatmiri pointed at a loosened joint on a table leg and told me that he was thinking of having it repaired again. As a series of repairs performed on the table can be seen as a biographical quality, it is clear that he appreciates the functional necessity of the table. While the functional necessity of everyday objects can be a meaningful component of personal or collective value, Fatmiri challenges such a notion by claiming over-familiarity: he was 'too used to them'. As shown below, Fatmiri's refusal to ascribe value to the table appears to be related to the notion of

value during socialism. Rather than considering his perception of such an object as value-less, I argue his denial is a sign of value shift, following Arjun Appadurai's discussion on regimes of value (Appadurai 1986). In order to understand this 'shift', I first lay out the notion of socialist value.

Socialist furniture and ideology

The pieces of socialist furniture in Fatmiri's studio were of the modernism-inspired design and style of the 1980s, still found in almost every household in Gjirokastër. Given that one of my informants purchased a set of the same type of furniture in the 1970s, the design and production seem to have remained the same over a long period. Such furniture was utilitarian, made with minimal use of materials. Each piece often had multiple functions and was transformable. For instance, a sofa that could extend to become a bed served other functions by having a small shelf to hold books and small objects. Likewise, the table that Fatmiri mentioned could accommodate chairs underneath so that the objects occupied minimal space. The simplification of the dwelling environment with such objects maintained functionality with less material, hence representing both progress and utility.

Figure 1: Sofa bed produced during socialism in Albania

In Soviet Russia, particularly under Khrushchev, 'de-artefactualisation' (Buchli 1999: 143) in the domestic sphere represented an ideological statement against 'petit-bourgeois consciousness, commodity fetishism and irrational consumer behaviour' (Buchli 1997: 164, 1999: 146). Furthermore, specifically adderessing the modernisation project in Poland, David Crowley argues:

> Domesticity defined as private life and possessions became irrelevant. The promotion of modern design with its emphasis on utility and technology ... might be seen, therefore, not only as a refutation of attitudes to domesticity ... but as a step closer to the communist paradise (2002: 195).

In socialist states in general, the meanings and values ascribed to domestic space and the objects it contained were detached from the idea of personal expression and claimed by the State on behalf of the people (Crowley and Reid 2002: 2-3). Therefore, the sense of materiality conveyed in pieces of furniture produced during socialism was subject to political interests, aimed at perpetuating socialist ideology in domesticity (Buchli 1997, 1999; Crowley 2002; Crowley and Reid 2002; Reid 1997). In light of 'de-artefactualisation' as a specific 'value', crafted objects featuring curves and decoration were subject to eradication.

Remembering his youth, Fatmiri told me that his family used to own beautifully crafted pieces of furniture such as his mother's old dowry box (*sunduk*), a pendulum clock, and an old wardrobe. However, such ornamented objects were considered a sign of material fetishism, given no value, and thus had had been discarded. Instead, his house, like any other household at that time, was furnished with generic socialist furniture such as the sofas and table described earlier. Due to the socialist modernisation project, the material expression of personal taste and aesthetic was significantly lacking in his household. Looking back at the socialist formalisation of aesthetic values, he exclaimed with regret:

> For us, during the dictatorship we threw things away too early. Such things [as old furniture] had no value and we didn't know that these things had a lot of value because the main aim [of the dominant ideology] was to modernise life.

The value ascribed to furniture during socialism was therefore one of functional necessity, used as vehicle to perpetuate socialist ideology. Fatmiri must have valued it at the time, as he discarded objects which were not assessed such a value. In a postsocialist context, the fact that he does not ascribe any value to such ideologically specific objects should not be seen as neglect of the functional necessity of the object, but rather as a rejection of the objects as vehicles for perpetuating the ideology of socialism. Thus, his comment on not ascribing value should be seen as a shift and appropriation of values because the given context has changed. The valuelessness of socialist furniture after socialism is therefore not a synonym for meaninglessness. It is meaningful insofar as the postsocialist context is considered a shift in regimes of value.

Postsocialist value and transition

When Arjun Appadurai (1986) discusses value, he uses the term ‘politics’. What is political about value is not just the fact that things are assessed by a specific regime of value demanding privilege and social control, but that there is a ‘constant tension between the existing frameworks (of price, bargain, and so forth) and the tendency of commodities to break these frameworks’ (Appadurai 1986: 57). In other words, value shifts when given a new context. Appadurai’s framework is the capitalist economic relations between commodities and value; the circumstance of socialism may have been different. Nevertheless, Fatmiri’s value judgment of socialist furniture seems to follow a similar line. In Fatmiri’s case, value and meaning have necessarily shifted from a vehicle to convey socialist ideology to a context where he is so familiar with everyday objects that he cannot even recognise their value. Appadurai argues that the value of mundane objects is so conventionalised that the value shift is often not visible. It was necessary back then and is necessary even now. Fatmiri regards them as necessary alongside newly introduced consumer items. In response to my question ‘what is more necessary’, he answered:

> I don’t know what to say. They are all necessary. For example, I have an electric manometer to check blood pressure; it can be more necessary than others because it checks up on my health. Television is of course necessary because you see the world through television–you watch EuroNews, CNN, films, art programmes, and something interesting. You ask me which one is more indispensable, but all of them are indispensable ... So I am saying that there isn’t a single object which is absolutely superior to others.

The objects he compared with socialist furniture are indeed necessary but they became necessary because the previously dominant regime of (socialist) value was contested by the collapse of socialism ‘to invite a loosening of these rules [of privilege and social control] and an expansion of the pool of commodities’ (Appadurai 1986: 57). To this extent, necessity as a framework of value was equally applied to every object he considered indispensable. The intriguing point in Fatmiri’s case is not his use of the term ‘necessity’ for objects belonging different regimes of value, but that objects shift according to the discordance of different regimes of value, influencing Fatmiri to regard them all equally necessary. Such capacity of an object to influence an individual conception of value is, in Alfred Gell’s (1998) term, the social ‘agency’ of objects.

The politics of value in Fatmiri’s case was embodied by the shift in the meaning of necessity in each given context. It is not that he no longer ascribed a value to the socialist furniture. But as he made use of and appreciated it, the tension between specific regimes of value attached to the furniture made him consider them valueless. Alfred Gell suggests that objects can be ‘objective embodiments of the *power or capacity to will their use*’ (Gell 1998: 21, emphasis in the original). The process of recognising an object’s agency is a transcendental one, and Gell calls it a ‘distributed object’. It is ‘distributed’ because regarding the ‘present’ state as a result of a ‘particular past’ and the future as a likely outcome towards which the present will progress, an object’s agency persists through time and space (Gell 1996: 223–228, 1998: 232–242). He argues that ‘“remembering” some-

thing which happened in the past is *very like* “copying” a picture that was painted in the past, or that “making preliminary sketch for a picture” is *very like* mentally anticipating some future happening or course of action’ (Gell 1998: 236, emphasis in the original). Gell sees the process in which the agency of objects changes as similar to looking over an artist’s *oeuvre*. While artists sometimes make inexplicable shifts in style (such as Picasso’s radical shift to Cubism), a viewer can recognise the changes and modifications over time in a systematic manner when following the artist’s entire career (Gell 1998: 232–251).

At first, the two different regimes of value equally ascribed as ‘necessity’ in Fatmiri’s case may seem confusing; but by following the narrative behind the value ascription and the changing context, the continual shifting of values and meanings becomes more articulated. The term ‘transition’ may be criticised as an imaginary model, but through the continuous shift of meanings in a given context, it is a process in which Fatmiri projected an anticipated future.

Domesticating transition: a continual shift of incompleteness

The idea of shifting towards their imaginary West is often translated by most of my informants as ‘transition’ to the ‘pregiven future’ through ‘imitating’ the West (de Rapper 2002) or ‘caring’ for the family prospects (Fujii 2005). I suggest that the transition in the domestic sphere represents the ‘messy’ reality of the current state. Though the messiness may be considered chaotic, in the domestic sphere where the meanings of material cultures continuously shift in the given context, it is a process in which objects are continuously appropriated. The continuous appropriation is a flow of value shift and can be seen as a sequence of ephemeral changes. Thus, to the eyes of strangers, the state of the present may be seen as chaotic, but by following the steps of the process the value shift has engaged with, agency is distributed to the objects and becomes embedded. To this extent, the messy ‘reality’ is a sign of an incomplete process (Buchli 2006; Pelkmans 2003, 2006; Ssorlin-Chaikov 2003) which my informants call ‘transition’, however messily connected they may be. To illustrate this point, the following sections look at two case studies: Kujitmi and Jona’s interior rearrangements and Anila’s family’s home-making.

For Kujtimi and Jona, a series of ephemeral yet continuous interior arrangements is a search for the harmony of objects by shifting them around physically so that the aspiration and practicality of the space can be appropriated. Anila’s family undertook the physical movement of their home, forcing them to make a new house into a home. They engaged in material expression such as incorporating the features of the old house into the new house and adopting the names of certain objects whose forms and shapes remind them of objects they had used in the old house. While the actual material cultures may be gradually replaced, the identity of these objects was transmitted in order to authenticate the new house as a familiar environment. Anchored by and transmitting the meanings and values of objects, the individuals in both cases attempt to authenticate their living environments, which I argue is domesticating the transition.

The annex at Kujtimi and Jona's house

Kujtimi and Jona, a retired couple, lived in the house Kujtimi and one of his elder brothers inherited from their parents. The house was initially renovated by his grandfather in the 1930s. Since then, Kujtimi's father made several changes to the house as the family grew. The current appearance of the house owed much to the major renovation work during the 1970s initiated by the brothers through a state loan granted by the socialist government. They renovated the house to provide the two families more privacy. Thus the house looked like a semi-detached house. By the completion of the renovation little trace of the original house remained visible, but the object's agency had been inscribed in the lineage and genealogical memory that transmitted the authenticity of the original house. The annex that he built recently was thus part of this continuity. Such a shift is not just about the appearance of the house; internal shifting has also been happening behind the closed door. When Kujtimi finally completed the construction of the annex, the entire house saw a shuffling of interior arrangement. In this case study, three rooms are considered in particular amongst other facilities and rooms in the house. For the following description of object movements inside the house, the house plan (figure 2) indicates Room A as the annex; Room B as the original living room; and Room C as the original bedroom.

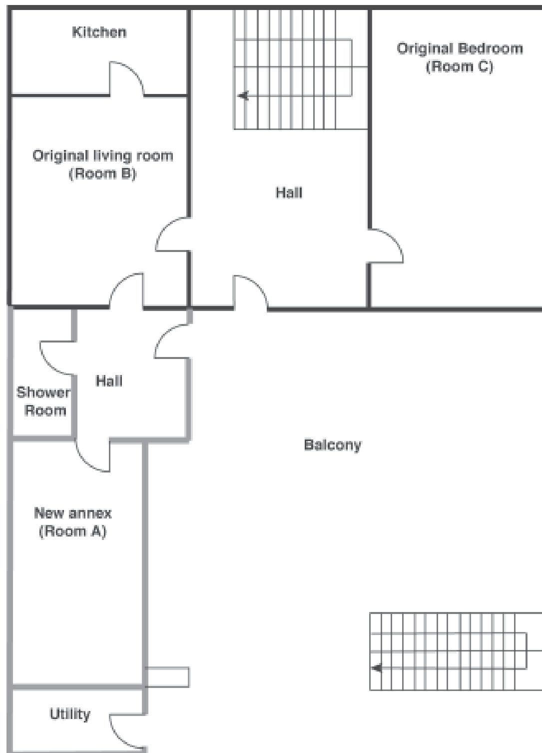

Figure 2: The plan of Kujtim and Jona's house

Arrangement I: aspiration to ideal rooms

When the annex (Room A) was completed, household appliances and furniture purchased recently, such as TV, video, and sofas, were moved there from Room B. They were accompanied by some finishing touches, such as cushions, sofa covers, and laces on the table, so the annex could be used as the living room. The objects contained there were what they thought a modern living room should contain, hence they manifested their ideals. Subsequently, the original living room (Room B), situated next to the kitchen, was turned into the bedroom. Sofas were moved from Room B to the annex and beds came into Room B from the original bedroom (Room C). Due to the fact that it was adjoined with the kitchen, Room B, now the bedroom, together with the kitchen clearly indicated the sign of privacy. As a result the shift, Room C, furthest from the annex, was left unused but contained various things such as old clothing, their children's clothes, and tablecloths hand-laced by Kujtimi's mother. These artefacts were systematically placed into the drawer and Jona's dowry box, the *sunduk*. Furthermore, photographs of Kujtimi's mother and of Jona at about the age of her marriage were hung on the wall. Each item makes little contribution to the sense of genealogy, but collected in one place, they constructed the sequence of family history (see Makovicky 2007: 300–301). As in Daniel Miller's (1998: 133) argument that a house is a place where 'the very concept of lineage is encapsulated' with material cultures of 'transcendent identity', the room was arranged with the objects in such way that it looked like a museum of the family's old memories. In short, the objects contained indeed defined the role of each room, but they were all arranged in such a meticulous manner – with much of aspiration either towards modernity or privacy – that, as Alison Clarke (2001: 41) argues, each room looked 'as if it is firmly within the public domain.'

Arrangement II: making it lively

The construction of the annex was completed in early summer and came into use almost immediately. However, the walls were so inexpensively constructed that the heat would penetrate directly through thin, uninsulated walls making the room unbearably hot during the daytime. Thus, the room could only be used while the temperature was low in early mornings and late evenings when they usually spent time elsewhere, cleaning the house, cooking in the kitchen, and socialising with friends on the balcony. In short, the room did not come into use as much as they had imagined. In Albania, a living room is traditionally called a *dhoma e miqve* – the guestroom to host visitors. The generous hospitality of Albanians is noted as one of the essential parts of connecting social relationships both inside and outside the kinship relations[6] and the living room plays an important part. Therefore, the social inconveniences created by the lack of an appropriate living room left Kujtimi and Jona no choice but to rearrange the furniture to convert the Room B back into the living room. This led to the second major rearrangement.

[6] For general understanding of hosting guests see the customary law of Lekë Dukagjini (Gjeçov 1989: 132–135) and the customary law of Labërisë (Elezi 2002). Despite the socio-cultural diversities in Albania which are evident in the existence of different types of customary laws, my field experience concluded that there are some fundamental commonalities amongst them.

They moved both beds back to Room C. In turn, Kujtimi and Jona brought into Room B one of the sofas from Room A along with a multipurpose sofa bed (same type as pictured in figure 1) from Room C. To this extent, Room C as the 'museum' was modified into another use – Kujtimi's bedroom. For this, not only did the room project the genealogy of the family, but it also represented continuity as the room came into to active use. While Jona continued to use Room B as her bedroom, the room was arranged with the multipurpose sofa bed and the sofa (B)[7] so as to be used as socialising space when guests came by. Room B was thus used as the living room, but not exclusively.

The arrangement of the annex was also changed. It had been previously decorated as living room with aspiration to the ideal environment. But when the couch which had been located on the balcony for a long time was brought back in and placed in the annex, it made a sudden impact on the atmosphere of the room. Like humans, every object has its own life. During its social life, each object represents a different degree of significance (Kopytoff 1986: 67). As the couch had been left outside for a long time, the sun had deteriorated the fabric and the bear wood dried out as the varnish wore away. As such, it was quite literally 'aging', having passed the time of its active role. But as happens from time to time, bringing old things back into a contemporary context is an 'occasional awakening' in which 'the past breaks through the surface of the present to reveal meaningful continuities' (Makovicky 2007: 302). Thus, the 'awakening' of the couch added a sense of 'livelihood' to the annex which was otherwise used for only a conceptual representation of the ideal living room. If the notion of presentational value was surface aesthetics, the addition of the couch somewhat appropriated the annex as a meaningful space through the material expression of continuity from the past. In short, with various objects conveying distinctively different 'values', the annex was a 'single entity', harmonised with 'the projection of collective agency' (Gell 1998: 252). In other words, the meaning of the annex was transformed from a 'show room' to an everyday living room.

Arrangement III: the TV and video as distributed objects

The third occasion came when Kujtimi and Jona acquired a new sofa from their eldest son who lived in Tirana. The furniture had to be moved around yet again. As summer was ending and the temperature moderating rapidly, the annex finally came in use. When rearranging, it turned out that the new sofa was so generously sized that it did not leave enough space for either the existing sofa (A) or the couch, but there was a bit of space for the armchair. The new sofa was placed in the annex with domestic appliances such as the TV and video, while some old items such as the armchair and hand-made lace were still present.

Subsequent to the introduction of the new sofa, a domino effect occurred. Sofa (A) was moved back into Room B. This meant the multipurpose sofa bed in Room B made its way out to the balcony together with the couch. Thus, Room B came to accommodate exactly the same pieces of furniture it did originally, except for the TV and video (Table 1.1 and 1.4). In the analysis of household items, TV sets are often valued as 'habit of viewing'

[7] Despite the appearance of the couch, the seats were deep and wide enough to be used as a bed.

(Ang 1992; Csíkszentmihályi and Rochberg-Halton 1981: 74–76), but the physical presence of the TV and video as objects can constitute the sense of a living room.

As in Jo Tacchi's study (1998) on sound transmitted through radio, which creates a certain 'texture' of placeness, the visionary presence of broadcast beaming from the TV created the socialising environment of a living room[8] by replacing the symbolic representation of the hearth (Leal in Silverstone *et. al*. 1992: 23; Madigan and Munro 1996: 44; Mai 2001). This is particularly evident on occasions of hosting guests: activating the TV would be amongst the first acts that Kujtimi would do while Jona made coffee for the guests. For Kujtimi and Jona, as well as many other households I visited, the TV, together with its broadcasting, was an active agent in creating a social atmosphere[9] rather than a passive patient 'being viewed'.

If the presence of the TV provided an aspect of social sphere in the mind when hosting guests (though they enjoyed watching TV as private entertainment, too), the video player was considered an expression of privacy and intimacy because Kujtimi and Jona had only one specific purpose for the video player–to watch the recording of their eldest son's wedding. The video was rarely used when socialising except for family gatherings. Privately, however, Jona watched it frequently especially when she was minding her granddaughter who comes to stay every school holiday. The wedding video would remind Jona of the youngest son who remained unmarried, while through the recording of her own parents, the granddaughter developed a sense of marriage as the most intimate and important social contract. Thus, the video player facilitated the creation of a private sphere for the (imaginary) genealogy to be reproduced.

To this extent, despite the furniture being arranged as it was originally, Room B became a private bedroom for Jona, due to the absence of the TV and video. Thus, the TV and video player 'abducted' the 'personhood' (Gell 1998; Leach 2007) of the living room in such a manner that even though the household items accommodated in Room B were almost the same as in the original arrangement, the meanings and the function (as living room) entailed became transient.

The shift of the meaning through arrangements

The first arrangement was characterised by the creation of the 'ideal' living-room in the annex and the museum of family history in the original bedroom. The meticulous arrangements of the interior in these rooms were, in Alison Clarke's (2001) term, instigated by the aspiration attributed to treat them as public domains. However, such arrangement lacked practicality and a sense of livelihood.

[8] In fact this seems to be almost universal in Gjirokastër houses. Every time I was invited to someone's house, I was hosted in their living room accompanied by a glass of *raki* and some assorted sweets. While the women of the house were preparing, the man of the house would immediately switch on the TV.

[9] For a similar account about watching TV as part of habitual practice in the village of Dhërmi/ Drimades, southern Albania see Gregorič Bon (2008 in press).

In order to incorporate practicality into the second arrangement, Kujtimi and Jona breached the ideal and brought in livelihood instead. When Kujtimi started to use Room C as his bedroom, the room no longer belonged to past memory but gained a sense of continuity. Similarly, the return of the old couch gave the annex a sense of meaningful continuity. On the contrary, difficulty also cropped up with this arrangement. If the addition of objects to the annex and Room C appropriated the aspiring spaces to practical and lively ones, the lack of an appropriate living room significantly disturbed the sense of continuity in Room B because the notion of living room is a defining aspect of the household both privately and publicly in Albanian tradition. To this extent, the introduction of a new object, the new sofa, became a key point in proceeding with the third arrangement.

The third arrangement was essentially to define the living room both symbolically and practically while keeping the meaningful continuity of other rooms. The introduction of the new sofa instigated the moving of some furniture and resulted in placing the same set of objects in Room B as when it had been the living room, except for the TV and video player. The material expression of TV as public domain and of the video player as private domain contributed to 'abducting' the personhood of the living room to be distributed to Room A. As has been emphasised in this section, meaningful continuity was created through harmony between old and new objects in the same room. The harmony effectively gave a sense of continuity to the rooms. Every time things were added into the room, the personhood of the room was abducted, hence modified into something else. As a result, a new harmony was created so as to appropriate the sense of a transient present. The harmony therefore produces the sense of present by combining the material expression of past and future.

Room A	Room B	Room C	Balcony etc.
	Sofa A&B TV & Video Refrigerator Armchair A & B	Bed A&B Multi-functional sofa-bed A	Couch Multi-functional sofa-bed B

Table 1.1: Objects originally placed (objects in question only)

Room A	Room B	Room C	Balcony etc.
Sofa A& B Armchair A & B TV & Video Refrigerator	Bed A&B	Multi-functional sofa-bed A	Multi-functional sofa-bed B Couch

Table 1.2: Objects present after arrangement I

Room A	Room B	Room C	Balcony etc.
Sofa A Couch Armchair A & B	Sofa B Multi-functional sofa-bed A	Bed A&B	Multi-functional sofa-bed B

Table 1.3: Objects present after arrangement II

Room A	Room B	Room C	Balcony etc.
New sofas Armchair A TV & Video	Sofa A&B Refrigerator	Bed A&B	Multi-functional sofa-bed A&B Couch Armchair B

Table 1.4: Objects present after arrangement III

Anila's house

Anila's family actually moved their household: they left the house in the old town neighbourhood where the family had lived for generations, also leaving the other clan members still living in it, and constructed a new house in the new town. The move was against their will but they were forced to do so due to the severe deterioration of the old house. At the new location, they felt neither secure nor well-accommodated because their emotional and genealogical attachment was still strongly embedded in their old neighbourhood and the house. Although the new house was just the other end of the city from the old house, it meant as much to them as if they had migrated to an unknown land. Anila tried to adapt to the move by focusing on the positive aspects of living in the new town, such as the convenience of the transportation to their workplaces and ease of access to various public and commercial facilities in the new town:

> People moved ... from the historic part of the town to the areas [in the new town] that ... have more access to institutions and facilities.... After graduating from Tirana University, [I was] teaching at the high school, ... then got a position at the university [of Gjirokastër in the new town]. My sister got a job near the border [with Greece] at a beverage company, and my mum was still working at the bank. So all of us being employed outside [the old town] seemed to be the main reason for us [to move].

When they initially moved, the new area was uninhabited except for themselves. Away from the environment that their identities and genealogical memories belonged to, Anila described the new house as 'a practical location for people to be served'. In other

words, the house was a place of staying rather than dwelling. According to Martin Heidegger (1997), the relationship between a 'building' and a 'dwelling' is like that between the means and end. They are related in a separable but complementary way. We build something so we can dwell in it. To this extent, a built structure is a container and the activity of dwelling is to occupy that container. Anila's sense of 'staying' is similar to this notion of mere 'occupation'. But Heidegger's discussion extends to the notion of dwelling beyond just the fact of occupation (Ingold 2000: 185). In the search for the meaningfulness of 'dwelling', Heidegger looks into the etymology of the German word *bauen* (meaning 'to build'), which derives from the Old English and High German *buan* (meaning 'to dwell'). He asserts that the meaning conveyed in *buan* was 'not limited to one sphere of activity' such as occupying or temporally staying, but 'encompassed the whole manner in which one lives one's life on the earth' (cf. Ingold 2000: 185). In other words, the meaning of dwelling is identical to existence. A building or a house, then, is not just a container to be occupied, but is a platform where, whether imaginary or actual, the human capacity to envision the ideas and plans of the 'real-world environment' is to be practiced: 'Only because they already dwell therein can they think the thoughts they do' (Ingold 2000: 186). As such, despite Anila's comment about the house as a space for occupation, that current circumstance itself is already a way of dwelling as it is the 'specific relational contexts of their practical engagement with their surrounding' (ibid.). The surrounding that they engaged with may have been hostile to them, but it was also a fact that the family kept making attempts to turn the dwelling into an environment familiar to them:

> The idea of people who used to live in an old house like ours is that they had already shaped the idea [as to] what the new place was going to be like. In this regard, my parents always wanted to have enough space, like they'd had in the old house. It's difficult to construct the same kind of design but most of the stuff is similar. So for example, in our hall we have this arch which resembles the entrance to our [old] place, and the height of the ceilings.... My parents were always referring to the walls that we'd had in the other place. So from the technical point of view, though they did not have a similar kind of design, they at least tried to have the same height as in the old house.... So I think the similarity of the construction has been also applicable to the new place (Anila).

Even though it was more than five years since they had moved, Anila said that the transition from the old house to the new one was an ongoing story. Household items and furniture were still taken down from the old house and stored in an empty space until needed. 'They go in a circulation within the new place', she explained. The old things were still considered valuable because of the emotional attachments:

> Everything that is related to the situation of the old place is very precious – copper things, woollen and wooden things. There are still some of those things at our place: carpets, blankets, rugs, plates, small chairs, ashtrays, all the other decorations. They are still at the current place. These are the favourites (Anila).

As the items that used to belong to the old house transmitted the memories, they were appropriated to the new, unfamiliar house and became inalienable. Sophie Chevalier (1999) discusses the notion of inalienable possessions amongst urbanites of Paris suburbia who have genealogical ties elsewhere in rural France. They possess objects that remind them of their origins despite such artefacts often being mass-produced. While mass-produced objects are often considered not to have distinct characteristics, Chevalier argues that the emotional attachment to these objects makes the mass-produced goods appropriated.[10] To this extent, the feeling of familiarity encouraged home-making in such a way that Anila's family's new house was authenticated by gradually acquiring the feeling of homeliness. As the house gradually acquired a sense of familiarity, the old things were being replaced. But the identity of older objects was transmitted to the new ones, for example, *tepsia*. *Tepsia* is a round baking tray used for serving pies on the dining table. Though *tepsia* did not exist anymore, everything that was shaped and functioned as a serving tray was given that name in Anila's house:

> New things [that replace the old ones] are still called by the former, old names, like *tepsia*. There are no *tepsia* anymore. But everything that is similar to *tepsia* is now called *tepsi*; *tepisa e madhe* [the large *tepsia*], *tepsia e vogel* [the small *tepsia*] which means defining new things that are similar in shape and function though not exactly alike.

In other words, the newly purchased objects that were similar in shape and function to the older ones can be seen as transmitting the authenticity of familiarity. It was thus an ongoing transition to making the place familiar while objects were gradually replaced. Chevalier argues 'The houses and the objects in them circulate slowly outside of the sphere of market-related commodities eventually to become inalienable' (1999: 92-93). Chevalier refers to Annette Weiner's (1985; 1992) notion of inalienable possessions. These objects are inalienable because their presence authenticates the origin and genealogical settings (Weiner 1992: 9). To borrow Chevalier's (1999: 93) words, inalienability makes movable objects immovable. Because of the specific meanings ascribed to objects, inalienability is transmitted through a process of appropriation. Weiner argues:

> 'An individual's role in social life is fragmentary unless attached to something of permanence. The history of the past, equally fragmentary, is concentrated in an object that, in its material substance, defies destruction. Thus, keeping an object defined as inalienable adds to the value of one's past, making the past powerful a resource for the present and the future' (Weiner 1985: 224; also quoted in Chevalier 1999: 94).

The house and certain objects which reminded Anila's family of the past were gradually gaining inalienability. When asked if she and her family would eventually develop an emotional attachment to the new house similar to the one they had for the old, Anila told me clearly:

---

[10] For the narrativity of souvenirs see Stewart (1993).

> Yes! Because time itself produces a feeling and makes, relates, or connects the human beings to the location wherever that is and it's also an issue that people are living in it. And I think the new location conveys the memories of something before. So it's a kind of connection that transforms and reflects [the old place] in the shape of the new location.

In the case Anila's family's home-making, while older objects may have been replaced, authenticity was transmitted. One by one, they were sorting out in order to make the house a home. The act of putting things into an order could be interpreted in Jean-Sébastien Marcoux's (2001: 83) terms as a 'sorting out of relations and memories'. While the order may be ephemeral and often considered 'messy' as new acquisitions kept coming in, each time a change happened, Anila's family would make an attempt to appropriate the place in such a way as to shift the conformity. Though the house may still be incomplete, the messiness was connected to the notion of inalienability that anchors the continuity between the past and future. As such the incompleteness leaves space for them to believe that they are in transition to a 'pregiven' future.

Anila's family made attempts to authenticate the new living environment with familiarity by transmitting the object's agency to the consumer items brought in after they moved to the house. While the forms were transformed or even replaced, the meanings given to object's identity were transmitted in an unproblematic manner (Dovey 1985). The process by which the transmission of object's identity takes place shows a commonality with Gell's aforementioned notion of distributed objects. In Gell's conception, the actual outcome of progressions 'changes, is evaluated in different ways, and set up different patterns of protentions according to the way in which the present evolves' (Gell 1996: 226). A protention is a result of sequential changes referring back to a particular past. Therefore, we may not be able to grasp the relationship between the 'default' and the current state by comparing them, but when tracing back the progression, the transmission of authenticity can be revealed. Both Kujtimi and Jona's interior arrangements and Anila's family's home-making are concerned with shifting meanings. The shift occurred so as to make progress towards a socially aspired future. With continuity and authentication at stake, these activities domesticate the transition.

Conclusion

Daniel Miller argues that property provides 'the most powerful objectification of transcendence as the material culture of descent' and thus reiterates the importance of 'process' in domesticity (1994: 164, 199). As has been seen, my informants still believe in this notion of transcendence in 'transition'. In Fatmiri's case, it was the shifting value of necessity ascribed to socialist furniture where the functional necessity which projected the progressiveness of socialist ideology was reappropriated in a postsocialist context. Through moving objects around, Kujtimi and Jona made attempts to harmonise the sense of past and present. In Anila's family's house, the gradual integration of the domestic material objects helped appropriate the 'feeling' of authentic homeliness in the new house. Each case has shown a different motivation to materialise the existing reality; neverthe-

less, their conception of the present was attributed to constructing the notion of 'transition' through material expressions of the past and the future in the domestic sphere.

In accord with Miller, I see their dealings with houses as a continual process of incompleteness. The more attempts they make, the more messiness they create. But the notion of messiness, in other words the incompleteness, is also a confirmation in the belief that they are still in transition. Anila's mother said it all:

> We'll extend here and make some changes there, break here, do this in this way and do that in that way. And not even once do we feel that we have finished the construction. Always you have something to build.

Only the current state of incompleteness reminds them of where they are. The continual reproductions of ephemeral harmonies and orders to temporally overcome the difficulties are, thus, acts of domesticating transitions. That is to say, the dynamics of shifting values and meanings convey the notion of the present to my informants whose lives remain subject to socio-cultural changes.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Anna Crosby, Giulia Bonali, Nataša Gregorič Bon, and Nicolette Makovicky for commenting on the earlier draft. I would also like to thank three anonymous reviewers whose comments improved the final version of this article. Both Aleks Catina and Christian Geosits's help with various aspects of this article should also be mentioned here.

References

Ang, Ien. 1992. Living-room wars: new technologies, audience measurement and the tactics of television consumption. In: Roger Silverstone and Eric Hirsch (eds.), *Consuming technologies: media and information in domestic spaces*. London: Routledge, pp. 131–145.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1986. Introduction: commodities and the politics of value. In: Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *Social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bachelard, Gaston. 1969. *The poetics of space: the classic look at how we experience intimate places*. Boston: Beacon Press Books.

Buchli, Victor. 1997. Khrushchev, modernism and the fight against petit-bourgeois consciousness in the Soviet home. *Journal of Design History* 10: 187–202.

Buchli, Victor. 1999. *An archaeology of socialism*. Oxford: Berg.

Buchli, Victor. 2006. Astana: materiality and the city. In: Catherine Alexander, Victor Buchli, and Caroline Humphrey (eds.), *Urban life in post-soviet Asia*. London: UCL Press, pp. 40–69.

Burawoy, Michael and Katherine Verdery. 1999. Introduction. In: Michael Burawoy and Katherine Verdery (eds.), *Uncertain transition: ethnographies of change in the postsocialist world*. Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield, pp. 1–17.

Burikova, Zuzana. 2006. The embarrassment of co-presence: au pairs and their rooms. *Home Cultures* 3 (2): 99–122.

Carsten, Janet. 2004. *After kinship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carsten, Janet and Stephan Hugh-Jones (eds.). 1995. *About the house: Lévi-Strauss and beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chevalier, Sophie. 1999. The French two-home project: materialization of family identity. In: Irene Cieraad (ed.), *At home: an anthropology of domestic space*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, pp. 83–94.

Cieraad, Irene. 1999. *At home: an anthropology of domestic space*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Clarke, Alison. 2001. The aesthetics of social aspiration. In: Daniel Miller (ed.), *Home possessions*. Oxford: Berg, pp 33–49.

Crowley, David. 2002. Warsaw interiors: the public life of private spaces, 1949-65. In: David Crowley and Susan Reid (eds.), *Socialist spaces: sites for everyday life in the eastern bloc*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 181–206.

Crowley, David and Susan Reid (eds.). 2002. *Socialist spaces: sites for everyday life in the eastern bloc*. Oxford: Berg

Csíkszentmihályi, Mihály and Eugen Rochberg-Halton. 1981. *The meaning of things: domestic symbols and the self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dovey, Kimberly. 1985. The quest for authenticity and replication of environmental meaning. In: David Seaman and Robert Mugerauer (eds.), *Dwelling, place and environment*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 33–49.

Elezi, Ismet 2002: *E drejta zakonore e Labërisë*. Tiranë: Botimet Toena.

Fujii, Gen. 2005. Ruins, decays and new constructions: materialising family in postsocialist housing in Gjirokastër, southern Albania. *Ethnologia Balkanica* 9: 185–200.

Garvey, Pauline. 2001. Organised disorder: moving furniture in Norwegian homes. In: Daniel Miller (ed.), *Home Possessions*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 47–68.

Gell, Alfred. 1996. *Anthropology of time: cultural constructions of temporal maps and images*. Oxford: Berg.

Gell, Alfred. 1998. *Art and agency: an anthropological theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Giddens, Anthony. 1991. *Modernity and self-identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gjeçov, Stjefën. 1989. *The code of Lekë Dukagjini*. New York: Gjonlekaj Publishing Company.

Gregorič Bon, Nataša. 2008 (in press). *Prostori neskladij: etnografija prostora in kraja v vasi Dhërmi/ Drimades, južna Albanija / Spaces of discordance: ethnography of space and place in the village of Dhërmi/Drimades, southern Albania*. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC.

Hann, Chris. 2002. *Postsocialism: ideas, ideologies and practices in Eurasia*. London: Routledge.

Heidegger, Martin. 1997. Building, dwelling, thinking. In: Neil Leach (ed.), *Rethinking architecture: a reader in cultural theory*. London: Routledge, pp. 100–109.

Heywood, Andrew. 2007. *Political ideologies: an introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Humphrey, Caroline. 2002. *The unmaking of Soviet life: everyday economies after socialism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Ingold, Tim. 2000. *The perception of the environment. Essays in livelihood, dwelling and skill*. London: Routledge.
Joyce, Rosemary and Susan Gillespie. 2000. *Beyond kinship: social and material reproduction in house societies*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.
Kopytoff, Igor. 1986. Cultural biography of things: commoditisation as process. In: Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The social life of things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 64–91.
Leach, James. 2007. Differentiation and encompassment: a critique of Alfred Gell's theory of the abduction of creativity. In: Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad, and Sari Wastell (eds.), *Thinking through things: theorising artefacts ethnographically*. London: Routledge, pp. 167–188.
Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1983. *The way of masks*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1987. *Anthropology and myth: lectures 1951-1982*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Inc.
Madigan, Ruth and Moira Munro. 1996. 'House beautiful': style and consumption in the home. *Sociology* 30 (1): 41–57.
Mai, Nicola. 2001. 'Italy is beautiful': the role of Italian television in Albanian migration to Italy. In: Russell King and Nancy Wood (eds.), *Media and migration: constitution of mobility and difference*. London: Routledge, pp. 95-109.
Makovicky, Nicolette. 2007. Closet and cabinet: clutter as cosmology. *Home Culture* 4: 287–310.
Marcoux, Jean-Sébastien. 2001. The refurbishment of memory. In: Daniel Miller (ed.), *Home possessions*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 69–86.
Miller, Daniel. 1994. *Modernity: an ethnographic approach*. Oxford: Berg.
Miller, Daniel. 1998. *A theory of shopping*. Oxford: Polity Press.
Miller, Daniel (ed.). 2001. *Home possessions*. Oxford: Berg.
Pelkmans, Mathijs. 2003. The social life of empty buildings: imaging the transition in post-Soviet Ajaria. *Focaal* 41: 121-135.
Pelkmans, Mathijs. 2006. *Defending the border: identity, religion, and modernity in the Republic of Georgia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Pine, Francis. 1996. Naming the house and naming the land: kinship and social groups in highland Poland. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2 (3): 443–459.
Pine, Francis. 2003. Reproducing the house: kinship, inheritance, and property relations in Highland Poland. In: Hannes Gradits and Patrick Heady (eds.), *Distinct inheritances: property, family and community in a changing Europe*. Münster: Lit Verlag, pp. 279–295.
de Rapper, Giles. 2002. Culture and the reinvention of myths in a border area. In: Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd Fischer (eds.), *Albanian identities: myth and history*. London: Hurst & Co Ltd, pp. 190–202.
Reid, Susan 1997. Destalinization and taste, 1953-1963. *Journal of Design History* 10: 177–201.
Riza, Emin. 2003. Gjirokastër a dëshmi madhore historiko-kulturore. In: Moikom Zeqo (ed.), *Forumi i intelektulëve për mbrojtjen e vlerave kulturore të Gjirokastrës*. Tiranë: Makabe Zaharia, pp. 27–34.
Silverstone, Roger, Eric Hirsch and David Morley. 1992. Information and communication technologies and the moral economy of the household. In: Roger Silverstone and Eric Hirsch (eds.), *Consuming technologies: media and information in domestic spaces*. London: Routeldge, pp.15–31.
Ssorlin-Chaikov, Nikolai. 2003. *The social life of the state in subarctic Siberia*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
Stewart, Susan. 1993. *On longing: narratives of miniature, the gigantic, the souvenir, the collection*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Tacchi, Jo. 1998. Radio texture: between self and others. In: Daniel Miller (ed.), *Material cultures: why things matter*. London: UCL Press, pp. 25–47.
Verdery, Katherine. 1991. Theorizing socialism: a prologue to the 'transition'. *American Ethnologist* 18 (3): 419–439.
Verdery, Katherine. 1996. *What was socialism and what comes next?* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
Verdery, Katherine. 1999. Fuzzy property: rights, power, and identity in Transylvania's

decollectivization. In: Michael Burawoy and Katherine Verdery (eds.), *Uncertain transition: ethnographies of change in the postsocialist world*. Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield, pp. 53–81.
Weiner, Annette. 1985. Inalienable wealth. *American Ethnologist* 12 (2): 210–227.
Weiner, Annette. 1992. *Inalienable possessions: the paradox of keeping-while-giving*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

POVZETEK

Prebivalci kraja Gjirokastër v južni Albaniji pogosto opisujejo svoje današnje družbeno-ekonomsko stanje kot tranzicijo v zahodnjaško obliko kapitalizma. Njihovi opisi nasprotujejo trditvam številnih sodobnih raziskovalcev (Burawoy in Verdery 1999; Hann 2002; Humphrey 2002; Pelkmans 2003, 2006; Verdery 1991, 1999), ki se ne strinjajo z diskurzom tranzitologije v postsocialističnih družbah. Avtor se na osnovi etnografskih podatkov, zbranih v času dvanajstmesečnega terenskega dela v letih 2005 in 2006, sprašuje, ali bi morali v korist anti-tranzitološkim trditvam zanemariti določene hevristične izjave domačinov, ki enačijo tranzicijo z nenehnim spreminjanjem vrednosti in pomena domačih objektov (npr. pohištva) v njihovih domovih. Izhajajoč iz koncepta 'režima vrednosti' (Arjun Appadurai, 1986) in teorije Alfreda Gella o 'družbeni tvornosti (*agensu*) stvari' in 'distribuciji objektov' (1996; 1998), se članek osredotoča na opredeljevanje občutka temporalnosti v materialnih kulturah v okviru postocialističnih hiš v kraju Gjirokastër.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: tranzicija, notranjost, kontinuiteta, spreminjanje vrednot, ponovno opredeljevanje.

CORRESPONDENCE: GEN FUJII, Department of Anthropology, University College London, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT. E-mail: ucsagfu@gmail.com.