

# NEGOTIATING RUBBISH IN DHËRMI/DRIMADES OF SOUTHERN ALBANIA<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The article addresses the problem of rubbish in the coastal village of Dhërmi/Drimades in Southern Albania. On the one hand, people's dealings with rubbish are very much a reflection of historically determined political, economical and social relationships in the village, region and country at large; on the other hand, rubbish negotiation became one of the vital subjects in the process of construction and reconstruction of these relationships and the social space generally. The article explores the ways in which rubbish produces ordering and classifies what and who is "out of place" and what and who is "of the place". The presented accounts illustrate people's never ending negotiations of who is responsible for dumping of rubbish and who for it not being removed. When talking about these issues people delineate multiplicity of contradictions and shift the responsibility from "state" to "locality" and from "locality" to "state", from communal to individual and from individual to communal, from foreigners to locals and from locals to foreigners. All these conceptualizations are quite complex and depend on the social and cultural background of the speaker. With expansion of tourism and pertaining growth of the owners of tourist facilities, seasonal workers, emigrants and tourists in the recent years, the questions about who or what is "of the place" and who or what is "out the place" became even more relevant. While the coastal place serves as the source for this kind of negotiations, the negotiations themselves construct this same coastal place, on which local people who claim to originate from Dhërmi/Drimades situate their belonging.

Key words: Southern Albania, postcommunism, rubbish, locality and belonging.

What defines the meaning of rubbish and dirt and how is this meaning constituted and generated on the tourist coast of the postcommunist Albania? In one of her well-known works *Purity and Danger* (2002 [1966]) Mary Douglas has already shown how the meaning of dirt and filth is socio-culturally conditioned. The meaning of dirt cannot be understood as a unique and isolated phenomenon, but as a deviation from the ordering. Dirt is the “matter out of place” (Douglas 2002, p. 44). It is “the by-product of a systemic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements” (ibid.).

On the coast of Dhërmi (official, Albanian name) or Drimades (local, Greek name) of Himarë/Himara municipality dirt and rubbish could also be seen as by-products of social and spatial ordering. They continuously constitute differences between what and who is considered to be “out of place” and what and who is “of the place”. Dirt and rubbish are not passive but productive categories which often evoke contradictions between the state and the local community, communal and individual responsibility and between “foreigners” and “locals” of Dhërmi/Drimades. The article illustrates the contingent nature of these contradictions and explores the ways in which the notion of who and what is “out of place” varies according to the particular narrator’s life experiences. The emphasis is placed on how the owners of tourist facilities, seasonal workers, emigrants and tourists debate and negotiate who is responsible for rubbish and who should clean the coast. Through their debates and negotiations about the rubbish as well as through other practices, people express their views about tourism and continuously construct the tourist coast. In this article I will argue that while the tourist coast serves as the source for these negotiations, the negotiations themselves construct the tourist coast on which the people who claim to originate from Dhërmi/Drimades place their locality and belonging.

Arjun Appadurai (2000 [1996], pp. 186-189) defines locality as a set of relations, or better, as a relational achievement. Locality is a process and production which is to some

extent context-generative. Locality is contextual rather than spatial. It is a “phenomenological property of social life, a structure of feeling that is produced by particular forms of intentional activity” that yield particular sorts of material effects (Appadurai, 2000, p. 182).

The narratives presented are told in people’s own words. They were collected during twelve months of doctoral field research in the coastal village of Dhërmi/Drimades in Southern Albania, which took place between 2004 and 2005.

### **Dhërmi/Drimades**

Dhërmi/Drimades is one of the seven villages of Himarë/Himara municipality. It is located 42 kilometres away from the northern city of Vlora and about 60 kilometres away from the Albanian-Greek border on the south. The local people of Dhërmi/Drimades, its neighbouring village Palasa and the municipal town Himarë/Himara mainly use the local Greek dialect and partly the southern Albanian (Tosk) dialect<sup>2</sup> in their day-to-day conversations. The people inhabiting other five villages of Himarë/Himara area (Ilias, Vuno, Qeparo, Pilur and Kudhes) mainly speak the southern Albanian dialect.

The village lies in the hills that extend on the level of about 150 and 200 metres above the sea. The area opens up on its south-western side into the Ionian Sea with gravel beaches that represent the main tourist attraction in the summer months together with the beaches of Himarë/Himara and Vuno. These days tourism provides the main income for the village beside remittances, Greek pensions<sup>3</sup> and olive oil. To the north-eastern side the area is surrounded with the Acroceraunian mountain range or *Malet e Vetëtimës*<sup>4</sup> (the Thunderbolt Mountains).

The ambiguity of a dual name Dhërmi/Drimades already hints to the contradictions that exist in this area. The official, Albanian name Dhërmi is mainly used by those inhabitants and seasonal workers who moved to the village from other parts of Albania either during the

period of communism or after it. In contrast to Dhërmi, the local, Greek name Drimades is mainly used by the inhabitants who are believed to “originate” from the village and thus declare themselves as *horiani* (the locals or *Drimadiotes*). When asked about the meaning of the term *horianos* (the local), many people of Dhërmi/Drimades explained that *horianos* means *apo ton topo*, “of the place”. The indicative “of the place” is related to the referent’s origin which has to be either from Dhërmi/Drimades or Himarë/Himara area<sup>5</sup>. Their declarations as *horianos* are formed in contrast to that of *ksenos* meaning newcomers, foreigners and outsiders. Sometimes they also use pejorative names for them, such as *Turkos* or *Alvanos*<sup>6</sup>. Newcomers, who moved to Dhërmi/Drimades, often declare themselves according to the name of the place from where they have moved to Dhërmi/Drimades. During my stay in the village I have never heard anyone declare themselves as either locals or *vëndore* or as villagers or *fshatarët*. In contrast to *horianos*, who are predominantly of Orthodox Christians, the majority of the newcomers are Muslims<sup>7</sup>.

According to the official population registration from 2005, the village of Dhërmi/Drimades conjoins approximately 1.800 residents, one half of which live in emigration in Greece or elsewhere (mainly United States and Italy). The collapse of the communism in 1990 and the ensuing liberalization in Albania were accompanied by economic, social and political instability that led into massive migrations throughout the country. A great number of people emigrated to Greece, Italy and other countries in Europe and the world (King & Vullnetari, 2003, p. 8). Emigration was especially evident in the places such as Gjirokastra, Saranda, Delvina and Himarë/Himara, where the Greek-speaking population lives.

Based on the official population census carried out by the Albanian government (1989 Population and Housing Census of the Statistic Department<sup>8</sup>), the people of Himarë/Himara municipality are not considered to be a part of the Greek minority, in contrast with people

living in the areas of Gjirokastra, Saranda and Delvina. Contrary to this, the Greek official policy and different Greek organisations (OMONIA, The Union of Human Rights Party<sup>9</sup> and other smaller organisations) acknowledge the people of Himarë/Himara area as being of Greek descent, or Northern Epirots (*Vorioepirotas*), as they are known in Greek public and its everyday discourse<sup>10</sup>. According to the Greek Ministerial Decision all the members of “Greek descent”, are allowed to apply for the Special Identity Cards of *Homoghenis – Eidiko Deltio Tautotitas Omoghenous* (Tsitselikis, 2003, p. 7; Kondis & Manda, 1994, pp. 20-21). This special card gives them a right to reside in Greece, permits them to work there, grants them with special benefits in social security, health care and education and allows them a “free” crossing of the Albanian Greek border, which is nowadays hardly passable for the rest of the Albanian citizens<sup>11</sup> due to the massive emigration in the recent past and the present.

Because of the massive emigration of youth, mainly the elderly population (born before 1950) and a couple of young families live in the village of Dhërmi/Drimades. While most of the year the village is rather desolated, in summer months it is crowded with tourists: emigrants originating from Dhërmi/Drimades and other places throughout Albania, tourists coming from Vlora and the capital Tirana, from Kosovo and sometimes from other parts of Europe.

### **Brief History**

Throughout the past the area of present Himarë/Himara, of which Dhërmi/Drimades is a part, was subjected to various administrations and regimes (Hammond, 1967; Jacques, 1995; Winnifrith, 2002; Rusha, 2001; Bixhili, 2004; Nasi et.al., 2004; Koçi, 2006). Along with the changes in regimes, people living in these areas have been continuously moving due to the needs and demands of labour migration, trading and other issues.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, based on a tax collecting system Ottoman administration divided all non-Muslim people in special administrative units, millets<sup>12</sup>, which divided people according to their religion, regardless of where they lived and what language(s) they spoke (Glenny, 1999, pp. 71, 91-93; Mazower, 2000, pp. 59-60; Duijzings 2002, pp. 60; Green, 2005, p. 147). After the foundation of the independent Republic of Albania in 1913, the Ottoman way of organizing people and places was replaced with the nationalistic way, which categorised people and places according to the language and territory. The lack of accordance between the Ottoman and nationalistic way of organisation led in many tensions and territorial disputes, continuously appearing, disappearing, reappearing and blurring since then (de Rapper and Sintès, 2006).

Such tensions appeared after the foundation of the Albanian state border in 1913. A year later the autonomous republic of Epirus was declared by the irredentist pro-Greek party. The Republic, which conjoined a part of the Southern Albania and Epirus of Greece, soon collapsed during the ensuing break of the First World War (1914-1918) (Winniffrith, 2002, p. 130). After the war the tendencies to re-establish the autonomy of the territory named as Northern Epirus (or Southern Albania) continued. In February 1922 the Albanian Parliament ratified the Declaration of minority rights to the Greek speaking villages of Palasa, Dhërmi/Drimades and town Himarë/Himara and the districts of Gjirokastër and Delvinë (Kondis & Manda, 1994, p. 16; de Rapper & Sintès, 2006, p. 22). During the communist dictatorship (1945-1990), these minority rights were taken away from the people living in Palasa, Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara, whereas the districts of Gjirokastër, Delvinë and Sarandë were declared as “minority zones” (Kondis & Manda, 1994, p. 21; de Rapper & Sintès, 2006, p. 12). In the period of Enver Hoxha’s autarky, the state-borders were closed and any attempts to cross the border were strictly forbidden<sup>13</sup>. In this period the minority issues and irredentist claims disappeared, but reappeared again in 1990 following the

declaration of democracy, opening of the border and subsequent massive migrations. Nowadays, because of economic (capitalism), political (democracy, the rise of new nation-states and European Union), social and cultural (individuality) changes, these claims and issues are reflected in a somehow different way as they were before. This way puts forth distinctions which the people who claim to be of Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara area describe with the term locals (*horiani*) or “of the place” (*apo ton topo*).

### **Tourism on the Coast of Dhërmi/Drimades**

The beginnings of tourism on the Dhërmian/Drimadean coast date back in the 1960s, when the communist party or so called the Albanian Party of Labour transformed some of the old buildings that used to serve as warehouses for storing *kitro*, *valanidhia*<sup>14</sup> (pl.), olive oil and olives, and built *Hotel Dhërmiu*, the government villa or *vila tou Enveri*, and the Camp of Workers or *Kampi i Punëtoreve*. While the hotel served for the members of the Communist Labour Union<sup>15</sup> to whom were given special tickets (*Fletë Kampi*) to spend their summer holidays there, the villa used to be a holiday resort for the political elite. In 1997, after the fall of Albanian pyramid investment schemes and the great economic crisis which ended with the loss of state control, *Hotel Dhërmiu* was robbed by rioters who broke in and destroyed the communist property. The only building that remained preserved is the government villa, which is still owned by the state together with the old and decaying *Hotel Dhërmiu*. Following the fall of communism, *Kampi i Punëtoreve* was gradually abandoned. Its location, which served for the members of Communist Labour Union and school children who spent some weeks of holidays there every year, is now occupied by another *Hotel Dhërmiu*. Although the camp no longer exists, its name is still present in people’s discourse. They refer to the coast as *Kampi*.

In the first few years after the collapse of communism (1990) and the beginning of privatisation (Law 7501, 19 July 1991) the state buildings and the land that used to be owned by the Communist Labour Union were contracted to the people who came from other places of Albania. Later on, in the years after 1997 and more evidently after 2000, when the Himarë/Himara area was acknowledged as a municipality and when the national road from Dukati to Palasa was renewed, the tourist facilities on the coastal plains of Dhërmi/Drimades enlarged in number. The owners originating from other places of Albania built nine buildings which are nowadays used as guest houses, room rentals, a bungalow site, a disco bar and a small hotel. Except for one (the small hotel), all of them are situated on the northwestern side of the small stream *Potami* (literally “stream”) that flows into the sea. After 2000 the local people also began to build their tourist facilities, which are mainly located on the southeastern side of *Potami*. They built nine facilities, such as guest houses, small hotels, a bungalow site, a fast-food restaurant and a night club. The majority of locals who run tourist facilities used to work in emigration 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 the tourist facilities live in bigger towns such as Vlora and Tirana in Albania and are present here only during summer months. The last three owners live in the village permanently.

During the summer months the life in the village turns upside down. This usually happens at the beginning of August. The main road from the border pass Kakavia to the village of Dhërmi/Drimades is suddenly jammed with cars. A number of people return from Greece to spend August on Dhërmian/Drimadean coast, to rest and enjoy their vacation and celebrate the Assumption Festivity (*Panayia* or *Mikri Pashka* on August 15), while the restaurant and bar owners try to earn as much money as possible. Their earnings (estimated at 15.000 – 20.000 Euro per summer season individually) during the summer season enable the

owners of tourist facilities on the coast to live throughout the year and continuously improve their facilities.

Those emigrants-tourists, whose one or both parents originate from Dhërmi/Drimades, mainly populate the southeastern side of the small stream *Potami*, where the gravel beach is wide and open. Among them one can find a few other tourists coming from different parts of Albania, while the majority of them nevertheless occupy small bays on the northwestern side of *Potami*. With the growing number of tourists and the absence of communal service, the number of dumpsites along the roads and clearings<sup>16</sup> rises and the rubbish becomes an important issue.

### **Negotiating Rubbish**

In the period of communism, the practices of cleaning the surroundings were often organised with the aim to build up unity and equality between urban and rural inhabitants and to evoke responsibility in people. The aim of such actions was therefore to stimulate the people to cooperate and contribute to the “communal good” of “their place” and the “state”. In 1990 these actions were abandoned. Because of the economic crisis which took place throughout Albania (Sjoberg, 1992), care about the disposal of rubbish and the organisation of dumpsites in the outskirts of towns and cities was neglected. In the past few years, due to the opening of state borders, many of the low-degradable materials such as plastic, cans, batteries, etc. flooded the Albanian market. Several of American organisations such as USAID and the World Bank, as well as other NGOs addressed the issue of the organised landfills and rubbish disposal in Albania. In 2005, with the implementation of the World Bank project for cleaning up the coastal zones in Vlora, Saranda and Himarë/Himara (including Dhërmi/Drimades with four other coastal villages) (see Albanian coastal zone development and cleanup program), the meaning of rubbish in Dhërmi/Drimades became a subject of various contestations.

In May 2005, just before the national elections were held in June, the municipality of Himarë/Himara used World Bank funds to provide villages with small trash containers (measuring 1 x 0.5 m) which were in Dhërmi/Drimades put mainly in the centre near the coastal road and four of them also in the interior near a smaller village street. Additional funds were used to organise the collection of garbage during the peak summer months (June to August) by seasonal workers using a newly bought truck, all employed especially for this purpose. During August, they collected garbage every day and transported it to the rubbish dump near the neighbouring village Vuno. Despite their effort, the problems with garbage were still not sufficiently solved and remained a cause of discontent among tourists and tourist workers on the coast.

What should be done with the rubbish? Who is responsible for it? Who should be held responsible? Who is the major polluter? These are some of the questions that occupy the thoughts of the majority of the locals as well as some of the tourists. Some owners of tourist facilities are of the opinion that the municipality should be held responsible for this pollution, because garbage removal is not organized in a proper way. On one summer afternoon I spoke to Athina<sup>17</sup>, who was born in 1948 in Tirana and is married to a local man originating from Dhërmi/Drimades. Athina and her husband Andrea met in Tirana where they studied Pedagogic. Until January 1991 they lived in Tirana and worked as primary school teachers. Later they migrated to Athens together with their children – two sons and a daughter. The first three years they lived together with Andrea's elder brother and his family. The men worked as builders and women as domestic cleaners. When Athina and Andrea earned some money they bought a small apartment in the suburbs of Athens. They moved there together with their sons while their daughter got married and moved in with her husband whose parents originate from Dhërmi/Drimades. In 2000 Athina and Andrea returned to Albania while their sons stayed in Greece. Athina and Andrea moved in the old house of Andrea's father in Dhërmi/Drimades.

A year later, with the help of their savings from Greece and remittances sent by their sons, they build a small hotel on the coastal plains of the village. Athina told me the following about the rubbish on the coast:

In the previous years the municipality received money from the state so that they would take care of this problem, but they didn't do anything. Following numerous arguments and appeals for something to be done about the garbage removal, they finally set up a service that collected the garbage from the hotels and restaurants on a daily basis. As there was no service in the previous years, my husband drove the garbage away in our car. Every morning he collected all the trash, put it in black bags, drove off and threw them away somewhere on the outskirts of the village. Where else could he leave it? The road to our small hotel was built with our money. Can you imagine how this place used to look like? The road was not asphalted, holes and rocks everywhere. You couldn't drive down the road with a car. So we had to hire workers to level the road with their machines. Their work was expensive, but what were we to do? We were among the first to offer tourist services on the coast, so the expense was practically all ours. Now we share the costs with our neighbours. If possible, of course. Who will help us, if we, the locals (*i horiani*), do not help ourselves? We can not expect any support from the state. Regarding the municipality of Himarë/Himara, they would have to deal with their envy first, then we could maybe expect some help. As regards tourism, Drimades became their competition during the last two years, so they obviously decided to give us a hard time. Last year they cut us off from electricity in the peak of the season, stating that there was a system overload. They refused to collect the garbage saying that this kind of municipal service is too expensive for Drimades. Now that a number of locals revolted against this, they have taken a step back and became more helpful.

Archilea, whose parents originate from Dhërmi/Drimades, also owns tourist facility on the coast. His understanding of the responsibility for the rubbish disposal was rather different from Athina's. Archilea was born in 1970 in Korçe. In December 1990 he migrated to Greece together with his parents and two sisters. The first couple of years they lived in Trikala where they all worked as gardeners. In 1994 Archilea moved to Athens where he studied tourism and management. After completing his studies he worked as a tourist agent in the tourist agency in Patras. In 2000 he moved to Dhërmi/Drimades.

Because Himara is a politically problematic municipality (*zona e problemeve*), the state policy is not to invest into its infrastructure. This is the reason why the roads are full of holes and rocks. It is a similar case when it comes to electricity and garbage disposal. We also lack a proper medical service in this area, thus we can not guarantee safety to our tourists. Another problem is the unreliability of the public transport system. Traffic safety is also an issue. These are all important reasons why we cannot offer our place and services to foreign tourists. Basically, the municipality of Himara never gets sufficient funds from the state budget, thus we can not afford to develop proper tourist facilities and services. The money we get is not sufficient to deal with all of the problems at the same time. The development initiative is left down to us, *i horiani*, it depends on our work and cooperation. I prefer to cooperate with my troublesome neighbour than let the state take my land away from me. I hope that better times will come soon, as we are promised help from certain international institutions. For example, in 2007 the World Bank plans to implement a pilot project of renovating the old houses in Drimades. We cannot expect this kind of help from the state, as they don't like us because we are Greeks. This is something they cannot tolerate.

Fjoralba met her husband in Elbasan where they both studied agronomy. In 1997 they tried to migrate to Italy and join Fjoralba's brother in-law and his family who lived there since

1991<sup>18</sup>. Because they had problems by acquiring visa they had to stay in Albania. In 1995 they moved to Berat where they rented a restaurant. Because of a low income they had to close it down. Later they decided to try their luck on the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades.

I feel very strange here! I am in Albania, but I feel like a fugitive. I do not know what is wrong with these people, but they speak Greek all of the time. Besides, they only listen to Greek music and they want to serve foreign tourists only the Greek food – such as Greek salad and *tzatziki*. It is terrible and shameful that they cannot offer the tourists some typical Albanian dishes. For example, when foreign tourists wanted to try something typical for this area, I couldn't offer them anything, as the owner of this restaurant does not want me to cook traditional Albanian food. I was embarrassed, when tourists asked me if Greek and Albanian cuisines are the same. Of course they are not. But here people love everything that is said to be of Greek origin.

People here are really strange, for they behave as if they were very important. Especially men, who do not work at all, like our barman for example. He is asleep all the time and whenever guests arrive, I have to serve them with drinks. But now I decided that I will no longer support his laziness. These men (the men from Dhërmi/Drimades) are only capable of sitting, smoking and drinking, while their women have to work. I really cannot understand this! If they do not feel like working, why do they run such businesses? I do not understand their strange and not even slightly civilised character. *Fshatarët* (peasants)! Besides, they are very dirty. Did you see where they throw their garbage!? Into the bushes on the other side of the road. Just like pigs! If I was a tourist, I would never eat in this restaurant. It is disgusting to eat near somebody who is throwing garbage behind your back. I really regret coming here. I do not feel well here and I can't wait to leave this place at the end of the summer season.

During my stay in Dhërmi/Drimades I also met some tourists from other parts of Europe. Apart from a group of tourists from Israel, who spent two days in Dhërmi/Drimades, I also met one tourist from Germany, two from Hungary, and six from England. In the village I met a couple from France who was looking for the church of Saint Mary which was mentioned in a tourist guide they bought in one of the book shops in Vlora<sup>19</sup>. They enjoyed travelling around Europe which they considered to be a kind of a hobby. They were told about Albania by their friends who work in one of the NGO's based in Tirana. The husband said:

I like the Southern Albanian coast, especially the villages in Himara area. My wife and I stayed in Saranda for a few days, but we did not like it as much as we like it here. It is greener here and it is not as crowded with big hotels and restaurants like in Saranda. You can stay on the beach and enjoy swimming or take long walks along the coast and see some of the churches. If you want, you can go up to the village and see the magnificent old houses and churches with wonderful frescoes. The only bad thing here is the rubbish. I have noticed that the locals are careless regarding this issue; they throw it just about everywhere. Amazing! (*smiling*)

A group of young people, two women and three men with whom I spoke while they were on the beach had a different view on the rubbish and pollution. All of them were 20 to 23 years old and born in Greece to emigrant parents originating from the village. None of them can speak Albanian. They are all students of economy (two men and a woman), construction engineering (a man) and pharmacy (a woman). One of the girls explained her views with the following words:

We really enjoy our visits to the village in which our parents were born and our grandparents live. As we love our village it is unfortunate that we cannot come here for longer than twenty five days. We have spent our summer holidays here since ever, although we live in Greece. Drimades has a gorgeous beach and fabulous sea. But

there are more and more *Alvani* here every year. We are not used to this, because it was not so long ago that only *horiani* spent their holidays on the coast. Now there are more and more of Albanians. Look at them (pointing towards a group of young men sitting next to us)! *Mavri san gifti* (black as Gypsies). They throw their rubbish everywhere and they pollute our beautiful sea. They are not ashamed about that at all.

### **Rubbish as “the matter out of place”**

During their debates and negotiations over who is responsible for the rubbish and who should clean the coast, the narrators continuously constitute and reorder the social space of Dhërmi/Drimades. Following Douglas, dirt and rubbish on the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades are part of the social and spatial ordering and classification that are based on rejecting the “inappropriate elements”, which are considered to be “out of place”. Along with the definitions of what is “inappropriate”, the “appropriate” or “of the place” is being formed. Debates about dirt and rubbish that went on in summer 2005 illustrate how the meanings of “out” and “of” the place continuously shift according to the social and cultural context of the speaker<sup>20</sup>.

Based on her past experiences of living in Greece, Athina, who originates from Tirana and is married to a “local” man from Dhërmi/Drimades, emphasises contradictions between the local people and the “state” and the local municipality. Similar contradictions describes Archilea, the official of the Himarë/Himara municipality, who returned to his parents’ natal village after living for some years in Greece. Archilea considers the “state” or the Albanian government as being responsible for inappropriate cleaning of the coast. Archilea finds one of the reasons for the government’s irresponsibility in ethnic tensions of the local people and the government’s disapproval of their pro-Greek feelings. The seasonal worker Fjorialba of Berat discusses the rubbish issue from a somehow different viewpoint. In contrast to her

expectations to earn some money on the Albanian coast, she is faced with the Greek-speaking people among whom she is not welcome. Following her negative experiences with the local owner of the hotel where she works she criticises the local peoples' use of Greek language and their "inappropriate" treatment of foreign tourists to whom they serve Greek food and play Greek music. When complaining about the "locals" whom she calls "peasants", Fjorialba defines the locals as the people "out of place" in contrast to her and other Albanians who are perceived as the people "of the place". The tourists from France come from a different social and cultural environment than the rest of my co-speakers do not refer to this kind of differences. The coast of Dhërmi/Drimades is only one of the stops they make when travelling through the southern part of Albania. In prizing the beauty of the Dhërmian/Drimadean coast they see the rubbish and the coastal people's carelessness as inappropriate and as a matter "out of place". Last but not least the group of local emigrants who live in Greece and spend their holiday in the village where their grandparents live, blames "black" and "dirty" "Albanians" who are throwing rubbish on "their" coast. Following their life experiences from Greece where they are bombarded with stereotyped and stigmatised behaviour<sup>21</sup> of the Albanian emigrants, which are promulgated by the media and in the public life generally, the local emigrants constitute differences between them as the "locals" and the others as "Albanians".

Debates and negotiations over dirt and rubbish on the coastal plains of Dhërmi/Drimades illustrate that categories such as "locals" and "tourists" and the split between them, which have been discussed since the beginnings of the anthropology of tourism (Cohen, 1974; Wahab, 1975; Smith, 1977; Crandall 1980), are complex and contingent. Namely, the narratives show that being a local or being a tourist is a rhetorical claim about one's position within a network of social relations. Thus for example the group of emigrant-tourists can claim to be locals in contrast to the Albanian tourists who are

considered to be dirty. A different categorisation of the term local is expressed by tourists from France who see not only emigrant-tourists and other tourists from Albania and Kosovo but also tourist workers and owners as careless locals who are dumping rubbish everywhere. In terms of Appadurai, being local is a relational achievement, a part of the process and production of community. Following Smith's argument we could say that the notions of locals and tourists or hosts and guests are not fixed oppositions. Their meanings continuously shift according to the social situation. As Selwyn<sup>22</sup> (1996, p. 8) pointed out, the boundaries between who is a local and who is a tourist are porous and vague in today's complex world of globalisation (see also Kenna, 1993).

Dirt and rubbish have history. As illustrated in the introductory part (Brief History) of this article, Dhërmi/Drimades and Himarë/Himara area were subjected to various divisions of people and places throughout the centuries. These divisions were by different political administrations, which variously categorised people and places, gradually generated and mediated through the peoples' daily life. A lack of fit between different ways of categorisations (especially Ottoman and national) resulted in ongoing discords that are nowadays by the local people of Dhërmi/Drimades presented in their claims to local distinctivity. The debates presented above show how the concept of locality is relational, contextual and constituted in opposition to the concept of a "foreigner" who is considered to be "out of place". Namely, the local emigrants define themselves as locals who belong to the coastal places to which they return almost every summer. In opposition to the "locals" whom they perceive as being "of the coastal place" they put the "foreigners", the "Albanians" who do not belong to the coastal place.

Besides the "local" and the "foreigner" the meanings of dirt and rubbish on the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades involve contradictions – in terms of responsibilities – between the local community and the individual and between the state and the local community.

The contradictions between the communal and individual responsibility can be explained by the process of transition from the collective cleaning actions promoted in the communism and the individual responsibility for these “actions” after its fall. The collective cleaning activities (such as cleaning of streets, paths, city-centres, villages, etc.) that were initiated by the Labour Party were based on promoting the unity and homogeneity amongst the individuals as well as on creating their feeling of engagement with and responsibility for “their” neighbourhood and country. Cleaning activities were one of the means of the “state apparatus”<sup>23</sup>, which was promulgating the idea of the “national homogeneity”. While on the one hand this idea was based on the unity of people and places, on the other it presupposed the differences between them<sup>24</sup>. After the fall of communism and introduction of democracy this ideological hegemony of national unity and equality, for many continued to be generated and mediated through representations and practices of people’s daily life while for others it came under the question. Thus, for example when Athina and Archilea complain over the careless “state”, which does not take care for the rubbish disposal, they put forth their own, individual responsibility for the cleaning of the coast. Neither Athina nor Archilea do not expect and hope for a financial help from the “state” and rather see a solution to their problems in their individual responsibility as well as in international funding sources such as The World Bank.

The co-speakers also emphasise the contradictions between the “state” and the “local community”. Their debates which are grounded in different social and cultural origins from where they are coming show how the unity and homogeneity that were promoted in the period of communism are generated through their understandings of the “state” and the “local community”. Both are debated as if they were entities defined upon the common language, territory, customs and habits of the people living within these entities. For example, when agitated Fjoralba complains about the local peoples’ use of Greek language and their delivery

of Greek food and music to the tourists from abroad, she constructs the meaning of “Albanianess” as a homogeneous entity *per se*. When expressing her feelings of disgrace over the local owners who throw the rubbish in the bushes, she sees the local owners as the people “out of place”. Archilea and the group of young emigrants represent their “locality” in a similar way to Fjorialba’s understanding of “Albanianess”. They equate with “Greekness” of the people of Dhërmi/Drimades and define it as a homogeneous entity too. Overall, both narratives illustrate that in their views and representations of the rubbish on the coast Fjorialba and Archilea generate and mediate the ideas of equality and homogeneity of members, grouped either under the concept of the nation-state or under the concepts of “locality” and the locals (*horiani*).

The article illustrates how debates and negotiations about the rubbish disposal are based on the interactions between the people who construct the differences that sometimes evoke the contradictions between the local people, emigrants, seasonal workers, Albanian and foreign tourists. These social differentiations are constructed along with the spatial boundaries. Together they define the meaning of the tourist coast of Dhërmi/Drimades. The coast is divided between its northwestern and southeastern part. The former leads to the north of Albania and mainly conjoins the owners of tourist facilities and other tourists from Albania and abroad. The latter leads towards Greece and conjoins the local owners and emigrants. The same spatial boundaries are also constructed through ongoing debates of who is “out” and who is “of” the place or better who is foreign and does not belong to the coast and who is local and belongs to the coast of Dhërmi/Drimades.

Spatial and local reconfigurations on the coastal plains of Dhërmi/Drimades indicate that “tourist place”, “tourism”, “tourists” and “locals” are not immutable categories. Rather they are relational configurations as the people in the given historical, political, economic, social and cultural contingency continuously negotiate and shift their meanings. The

encounters between locals, tourists, visiting emigrants, and others – along with their fierce debates over dumping – point towards the raising claims and negotiations over who is “of” the place and who “out” of it. As I have argued the tourist coast of Dhërmi/Drimades is the place where these very same claims and negotiations construct the tourism and tourists’ landscape which has to the people who claim to originate from Dherrmi/Drimades simultaneously become the source of their spatial belonging and locality.

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<sup>2</sup> Knowledge and use of the local dialect usually correspond to the age of the speaker. Generations born between 1920 and 1940 mainly use the local Greek dialect. Some of the inhabitants who were born in 1920 or a couple of

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years later attended Greek school and can therefore also read and write in Greek. But the generation born between 1945 and 1960, the majority of whom moved out of the village in their early youth, cannot read or write Greek. After the demise of the communism some of them migrated to Greece. They lived there for some years and later returned to the village, where they usually use Greek language in their daily conversations. They are also good in reading and writing in Greek. Other local people, who stayed in Albania, are relatively bad in their command of local Greek or cannot speak it at all. A great majority of the last generation, born from 1960 onwards still live in Greece at the present and only return to visit their parents in summer months. They all speak Greek on a day-to-day basis. Because they use Albanian language quite rarely, their knowledge of it is moderate. In contrast to them their children know very little of Albanian as they were born and socialized in Greece.

<sup>3</sup> Upon the Ministerial decision of the Greek Republic, the members of the Greek minority were given a right to hold a Special card for aliens of Greek origin and according to the Law of naturalisation they were able to attain a dual citizenship (Tsitselikis, 2003, p. 7). This allowed them to retain their ties with the place of their birth or natal country. According to the Greek Law of naturalisation and Greek nationality, the members of Greek minorities (in Albania, Turkey and Egypt) who lived and worked in Greece at least for some years, are eligible to receive Greek pensions after they retire. This system allows the elderly people who originate from Dhërmi/Drimades to return to their natal country after their retirement. Most of them live on their Greek pensions (around 218 Euro) and partly from Albanian pensions (from 50 to 100 Euro).

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this text the words in Albanian language are written in *italic* while the words in local Greek language are written in *italic and underlined*.

<sup>5</sup> In the colloquial language numerous villagers differentiate between those *horiani*, who originate and have lived in the village for most of their lifetime, those who originate from the village but have lived for most of their life in other places of Albania and/or Greece and only recently returned to their natal village, those who originate from the village but live in other places in Albania or in emigration in Greece or United States, those who originate and live in one of the other villages of Himarë/Himara area, and finally those who originate from one of the other villages of Himarë/Himara area and live either elsewhere in Albania or in emigration in Greece or US.

<sup>6</sup> According to *horianos* these pejorative term of address point to the differences in place of origin, language skill, religion, financial position, social status and the possibility of unrestricted crossing of the Albanian – Greek border.

<sup>7</sup> After 45 years of atheism in communist Albania, contemporary religious proclamations play a more important role in questions about ethnicity than in questions regarding ideological beliefs. Thus, many scholars of Albanian Studies when identifying religious ratios prefer to refer to the survey done in 1939 (before communism) when about 70% of the population were perceived as Muslim (among which 20% were the followers of Bektashi order), 20% belonging to the Albanian Orthodox Church and 10% to the Catholic Church.

<sup>8</sup> The Albanian constitution defines the minority rights upon the latest official data on the numbers of the national minorities in Albania conducted in 1989 by the Population and Housing Census of the Statistic Department (in 1993 renamed the Institute of Statistics INSTAT). As the census was conducted in the period of communism (four years after the death of the communist dictator Enver Hoxha and during the presidency of Ramiz Alia (1985-1992), it included only the number of the only acknowledged Greek minority in the period of communism which included people living in “minority zones” in Gjirokastër, Sarandë and Delvinë. In 2001 the population census was repeated but it did not include the categories of the nationality and religion (see First report submitted by the Republic of Albania, under article 25, paragraph 1, of the Council of Europe, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> In 1992, on the Albanian parliamentary elections, OMONIA was not represented because the Law on Political Parties (passed in July 1991) disqualified parties with a religious, ethnic or regional basis. For this reason in 1992 the Union of Human Rights Party was founded which protects the rights of the Greek minority besides the rights of other national minorities and ethnic groups in Albania (Bos & UNPO Mission, 1994, p. 2).

<sup>10</sup> Several reports and discussions about the Greek minority in Albania note the discrepancies regarding minority population numbers estimated by Albanian and Greek government (Kondis & Manda, 1994, pp. 16-18; Bos & UNPO Mission, 1994, 1994, pp. 1-2; Pettifier, 2001, pp. 5-6; partly also Green, 2005, p. 170; de Rapper & Sintès, 2006, p. 37). The reason for such differences is that the Albanian statistics takes into account only the inhabitants of Greek “nationality” living in the 99 villages that were part of the “minority zones” while the Greek statistics figures include all people who declared their religious affiliation as Christian Orthodox (Pettifier, 2001, pp. 5-6, de Rapper & Sintès, 2006, p. 37).

<sup>11</sup> Since the massive migrations which took place in 1990, most of the receiving countries strengthened their migration policies. This made the emigrations from Albania to most of the countries (except to Macedonia and Kosovo) much more difficult.

<sup>12</sup> Muslims and those who converted to Islamic religion were excused from taxes and therefore many people living under Ottomans adopted Islam, although they kept their Christian habits in their daily life (Mazower 2000: 64-80).

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<sup>13</sup> For more details see de Rapper (2006, pp. 13-14).

<sup>14</sup> *Velanidhi* or *velanidhia* (pl.) cones of the oak tree (*Quercus aegilops*). *Kitro* nowadays already extinct citrus.

<sup>15</sup> These were mainly workers, doctors, teachers and bureaucrats who worked in public service. Farmers who worked in the agricultural cooperatives or state farms were not members of Labour Unions.

<sup>16</sup> In Dhërmi/Drimades dumpsites are situated mostly near the inhabited areas, on the sides of the roads, in empty building plots, near streams or in the bush clearings. People burn the garbage approximately two to four times per year. At those times plastics and other low-degradable materials cover the village with foul smelling smoke. Dumpsites on the coast are located similarly to those described for the village.

<sup>17</sup> To keep anonymity of my co-speakers I changed their names as well as some of the information of their life-stories that are not important in the following discussion.

<sup>18</sup> Fjoralba's brother-in-law migrated to Italy during the first mass migrations of Albanian citizens to southern Italy in March 1991. The Italian authorities accepted 25.000 Albanian migrants as refugees and settled them in various parts of the country. A few months later, after the first democratic elections in Albania, followed the second mass movement of Albanian citizens. This time most of them, around 20.000, were sent back to Albania as the Italian authorities no longer considered them as refugees (Vullnetari 2007, p. 32).

<sup>19</sup> The original title of the tourist guide in English is "Vlora. Itinerary, Services, Beaches, Mountains, Caves, Mysteries and Unknown Stories, the People and the Food". The guide was edited by Renato Novelli and published by Italian Cooperation UNOPS-PASARP.

<sup>20</sup> Similarly, in some non-European societies space is, in everyday discourse, hierarchically classified according to the level of cleanliness and dirt which is defined by the speaker. For an example from West Africa see Debevec (2005).

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Georgia Kretsi (2002), Gilles de Rapper (2002), Mai and Schwandner-Sievers (2003).

<sup>22</sup> Besides this Selwyn in the introduction to his edited collection gives an example how debates over rubbish in the tourist town Valetta of Malta are central to the process of identity formation. Different from my case of Dhërmi/Drimades, Selwyn's example shows how the Valetta's Foundation of International Studies identified dumping as "authentic Maltese culture" (Selwyn, 1996, p. 31).

<sup>23</sup> See Althusser (1980 [1977]).

<sup>24</sup> Thus, for example, based on the Enver Hoxha's idea to elide the difference between "developed" south and "undeveloped" north of Albania, the autocratic leader enhanced the population movement between the north and south of Albania. Though the in-country movements were strictly controlled and directed (while the movements outside the state-borders were strictly forbidden and any kind of violations were punished) numerous people of Dhërmi/Drimades moved to a bigger cities (Julie Vullnetari, Sussex Centre of Migration Issues, personal communication). Movements were easier allowed to young and preferable single Greek-speaking population for the purposed of the education or youth that took part of the volunteering working projects (building Railways, bridges, hydro-electric power plants, etc).