

## The perception of crime from Albanian families that come from rural areas (Case study in the city of Durres)

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### Abstract

Crime in the family constitutes one of the major concerns of recent years in Albania. Violence in Albanian families remains unnoticed and is not declared by the majority of those affected. The worst is that there are deep rural areas where violence is accepted as normal within a family. Many studies have come to the conclusion that women who have higher education tend to be better prepared to cope with domestic disputes and solve the problems with communication, so are less likely to be victims of physical violence. The economic, cultural, emotional and social factors are sources that generate violence or crime within the family. The transition from a totalitarian to a democratic society brought not only functional changes, but also differences in their implementation. This was accompanied by misunderstandings of the individual crisis and human rights. This misunderstanding is often associated with deviant behavior or by criminal acts. Poverty, unemployment, jealousy, alcohol and drugs are some of the main reasons that cause domestic violence. Albania has long been considered a patriarchal society where men have more rights than women. This difference has led to a situation where husbands continue to see themselves as more superior, and tend to violate their women or children. In recent years poverty has even increased bringing domestic violence to alarming levels. But besides the major problem of growing violence within the family, the biggest problem is the failure of declaration, because of the mentality, shame, lack of trust in government bodies etc. This problem is even greater in rural areas, where there is a lack of police structures, while NGOs cannot cover the whole country. This study was concentrated in the city of Durres, where 600 surveys were undertaken to people of different ages. This paper is focused in the way of how domestic violence is seen by citizens of the city of Durres and those coming from rural areas.

**Keywords:** Domestic violence, rural areas, emancipation, totalitarian society, Durres.

### Introduction

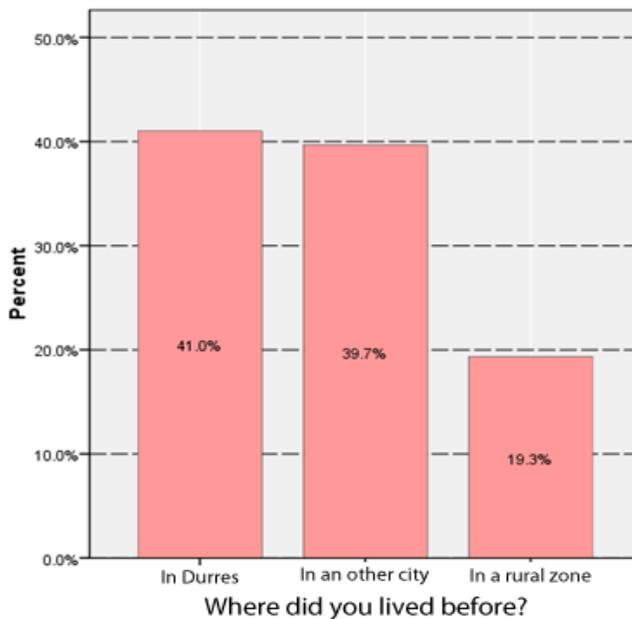
Rural areas in Albania have major problems in terms of poverty, access to police, or other state institutions. While the culture for reporting to police or other institutions or organizations that deal with these problems is their mentality, biggest problem is that a large part of domestic violence is currently tolerated, even accepted (Giddens, 2007). In fact, according to Giddens, the statistics show that men of any age tend to be subject of physical violence more at home than on the road at night. Many studies show that many couples are convinced that in some circumstances it is entirely justified for a husband to hit his wife.

Most rural families in Albania tend to respect traditional roles where the husband works, while the woman stays at home to raise children and do the homework. Thus in cases of domestic violence, the husband isolates the wife from outdoor activities and exercises systematic violence on her and his children. Because of the mountainous areas, it is difficult to have any support due to distance and the abused women can be victims of violence for very long periods of time. They rarely dare to travel to "the big city" according to them, where everything seems different. The appropriate way to express male control

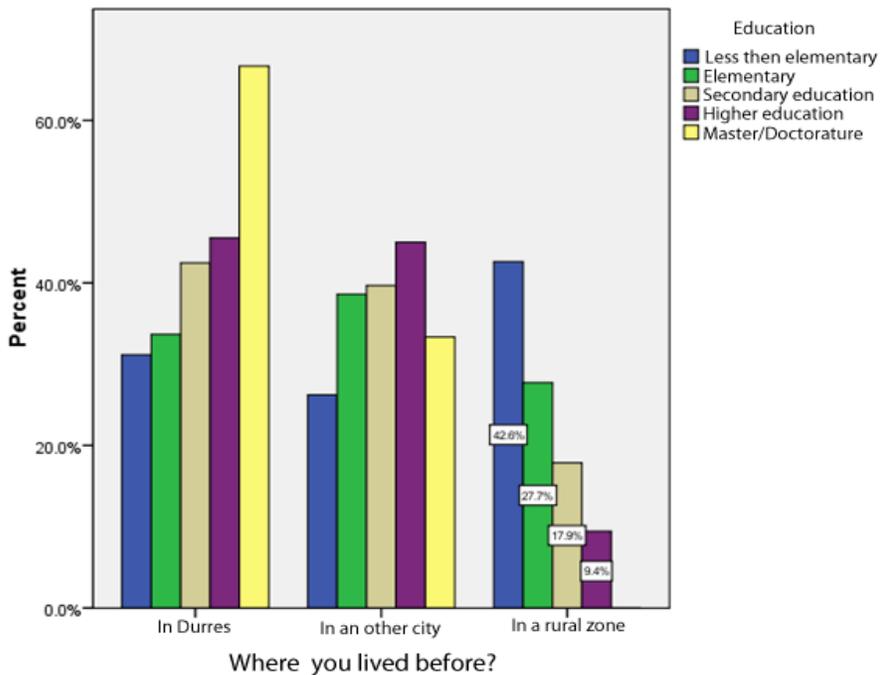
over women is patriarchal dominance, consisting of shelter, food and security. In Albania there are several studies related to domestic violence. Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) has undertaken a nationwide survey on domestic violence, supported by UNDP and UNICEF in 2007. More than 2,590 women were interviewed and 56% stated that they had experienced at least one form of domestic violence during marriage or in intimate relationships. 50.6% said they had experienced emotional abuse in marriage or in their intimate relations. 39.1% had experienced psychological abuse and physical violence. 31.2% had experienced sexual violence (INSTAT, 2009, 25). While other studies made by UNICEF highlighted the violence in Albanian families on children. This survey found that 1 in 2 children had been victims of domestic violence (UNICEF, 2006, 7).

### Case study in the municipality of Durres

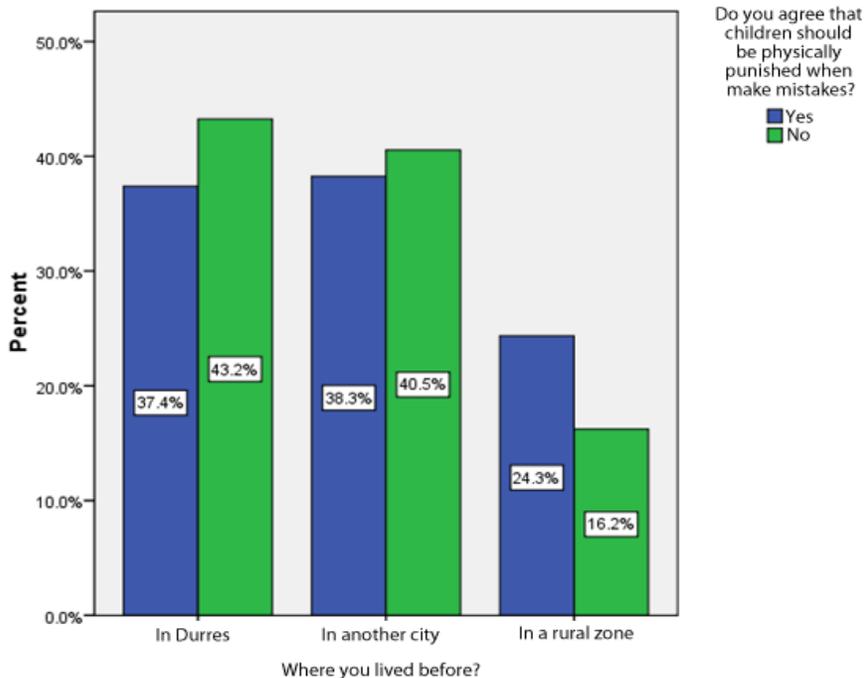
Since the municipality of Durres is often curved as one of the most problematic regarding domestic violence and crime in Albania, an extensive study with 600 respondents was undertaken. Main purpose of this study is to learn if the newcomers in Durres from rural areas still believe that violence “does well and educates children”. In this survey, it was understood that living in the city negatively affects health and therefore motivates domestic violence. 600 individuals with different social and demographic characteristics were interviewed, ranging from 15-65 years, in order to get different opinions from different age groups. In the chart below most of the respondents came from another town and just 19.3% (approximately 115 respondents) came from a rural area.



Regarding the education of the participants coming from rural areas, 42.6% had less than primary education. From the analysis it became clear, that education was closely linked to violence. Less educated women tend to be victims of violence more than those with higher education. This is also a reason why violence is more spread in rural areas.

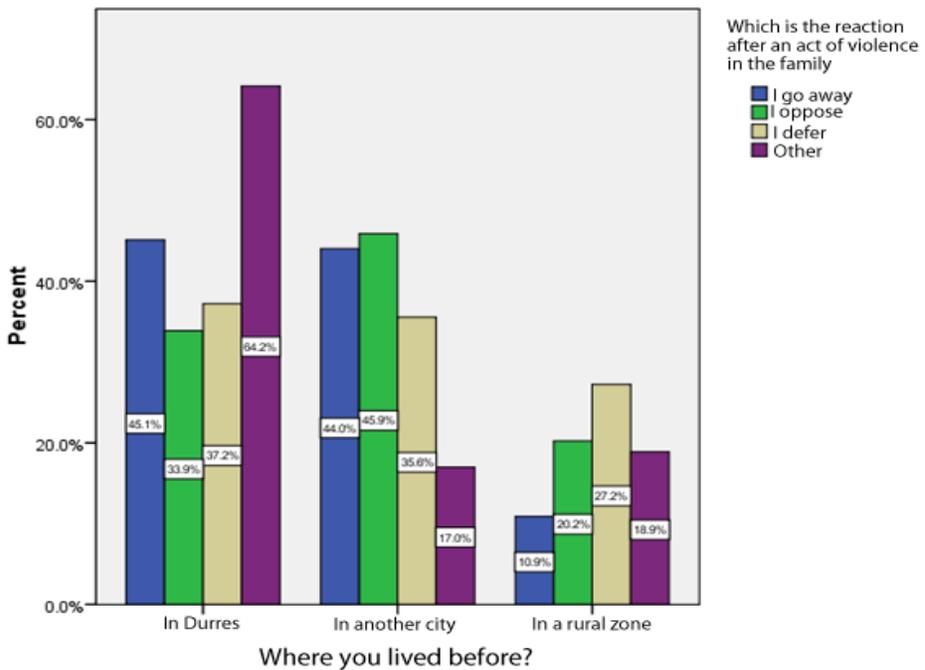
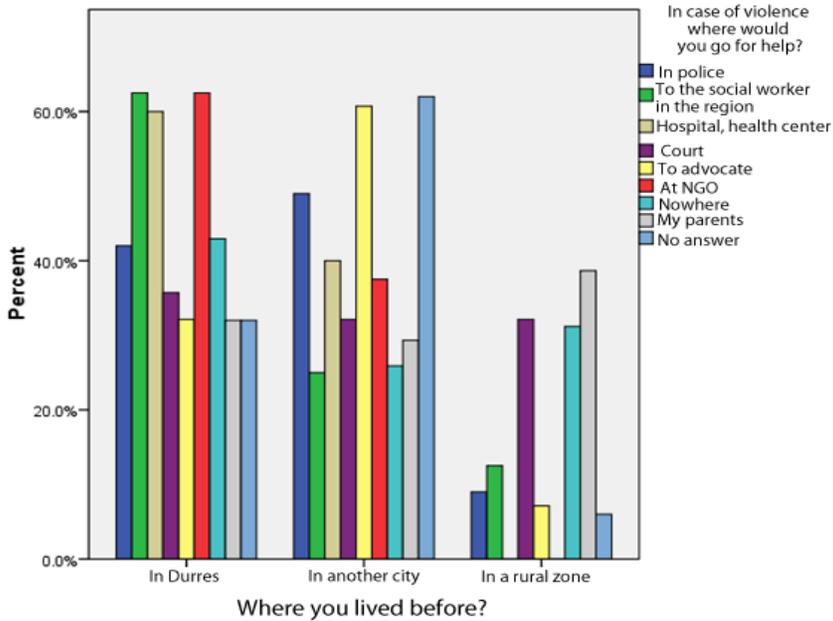


Another trend that we observed is that people who come from rural areas agree with the fact that children should be physically punished. 24.3% of respondents coming from rural areas were of the opinion that children should be physically punished, while people living in the city were not of this opinion.

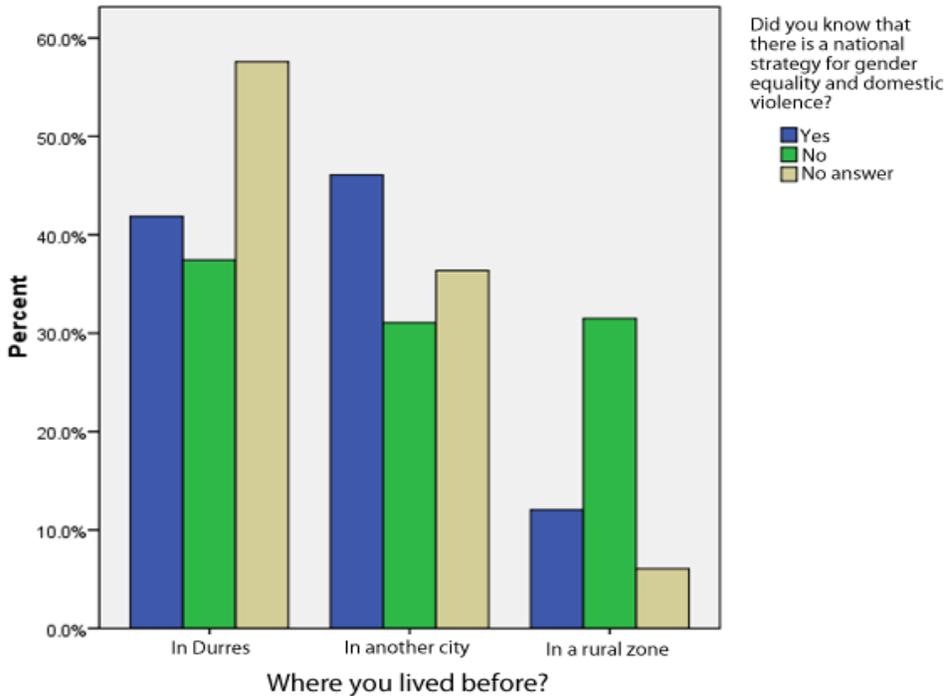


Most of the people coming from rural areas were of the opinion that they would go to their parent's homes, in the cases when they were victims of violence

Results of the survey provide interesting data regarding sex abuse. More than 27.2% of women recently coming from rural areas agree to sexual abuse, while 20.2% would contest.



Regarding the question: Do you know that there is a national strategy for gender equality and domestic violence? Most of the newcomers from rural areas said “No”. This shows that they have no information about the ways of protection from domestic violence.



### Conclusions and recommendations

This paper showed one thing, that violence in rural areas is likely to be higher than in urban areas. This is driven by many factors, such as lack of education in rural areas, poverty, mentality, and above all the patriarchal mentality that still prevails in Albanian families. Most women coming from rural areas consider as normal the violence against children and they tend not to report violence that occurs behind closed doors. The newcomers did not even have the right information to protect themselves in case of violence. The problems arising are that many women from rural areas consider domestic violence as a normal part of marital life. Another group finds salvation in the family of origin. It is known that domestic violence causes many psychological problems, which often are reflected in children or other family members. In order to raise awareness of rural women reporting violence it would be good to organize some meetings in the center of villages with the aim of describing the ways of how to protect abused women or children. Albanian police and courts should ensure these women about the highest protection in the cases they denounce perpetrators.

Schools can also play a key role to distinguish violence against children in rural and urban areas. So schools can hold discussions with students on the topic of violence and identify potential problems in the family. School students should be aware that domestic violence is not normal and should be denounced. In this way we also recommend the Ministry

of Education to train teachers in rural areas or suburbs of cities in order to promote communication with students on topics of domestic violence.

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