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Strengthening Women's Decision-Making Power

Examining Local Participation in Forest and Pasture Users' Associations in Albania

Author: Victoria Johansson

Supervisor: Sara Gabrielsson

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Abstract

Efforts to empower Albanian women and strengthen their participation in decision-making in local Forest and Pasture Users' Associations (FPUAs) have been undertaken by the Environmental Services Project, including implementing the Gender Action Plan. The phenomenon of women's agency and participation in decision-making in this local setting is examined in this study by answering the following: (I) Who currently holds the majority of decision-making power in FPUAs and why? (II) What factors determine women's participation and decision-making power in FPUAs? (III) How can women's participation in and influence on decision-making in FPUAs be enhanced? The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with project implementers and an online survey with FPUA members. Findings demonstrate that main determinants connected to economic dependence, double-burden, time poverty, lack of self-consciousness constrain women's participation and decision-making power. These stem from traditional gender roles that dictate women's role and responsibilities. Examples of policy enforcement, capacity building, and awareness show positive results in women's representation and confidence to raise their voice. However, to transform voice into influence on decision-making, collective action, and men's involvement in women's empowerment is necessary to address inequities.

Key words: Women's Empowerment, Community Based Forestry, Participation, Decision-Making, Agency, Albania

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Acknowledgment

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Acronyms

ASC	Advanced Study Centre
AWEN	Albanian Women's Empowerment Network
CNVP	Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ESP	Environmental Service Project
FPE	Feminist Political Ecology
FPUA	Forest and Pasture Users' Association
GAP	Gender Action Plan
LGU	Local Government Unit
MoTE	Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Albania
NCG	Nordic Consulting Group - Sweden
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
WB	World Bank

1. Introduction

The globally shared agenda for sustainable development recognises gender equality and women's empowerment as a core development goal in itself and as a catalyst for reaching all other goals (UN, 2014). When being empowered to take the space and opportunity, women in poor or marginalised communities are powerful agents of change. However, due to gender inequalities, women are seldom involved in decision-making processes, and their knowledge and skills are not harnessed (Sunderland *et al*., 2014). There is compelling evidence of the essential role of women in rural development and agriculture, particularly their substantial contribution to ensuring food security and nutrition at household and community levels (FAO, 2016a). Nonetheless, there is an apparent disparity in roles, rights, responsibilities, and possibilities and constraints between men and women, often to the detriment of women that prevents their access to natural and productive resources and their participation in decision-making processes. This is especially true for women in forestry-dependent communities who, as a result of persisting gender inequalities, cannot exercise power and agency (Colfer, Bassnett, & Elias, 2016). The success of sustainable development and the achievement of gender equality is contingent on taking into account actors excluded in the past and ensuring their participation in decision-making, in alignment with the pledge to "leave no one behind", which is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (FAO, 2016a).

Feminist political ecologists who study how decision-making processes and the social, political, and economic context shapes environmental policies and practices have argued for the importance of considering gender in the context of natural resource management. They demonstrate that political-ecological stories are implicated in power relations. The risk of reproducing gender inequalities is exacerbated if women are left out as agents of environmental change (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, & Wangari, 1996). Empowering women of forest-dependent communities to participate in local forest management has become essential in the commitment of development projects, programmes, and policy consultation (Cornwall, 2003).

Since 2015 the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Albania (MoTE) has implemented the Environmental Services Project (ESP) with support from the World Bank (WB) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The project's development objective is to support sustainable land management practices and increase communities' monetary and non-monetary benefits in targeted project areas, mainly in erosion-prone rural upland areas (AWEN, 2020). The Gender Action Plan (GAP) is implemented as part of the ESP to increase the involvement of women and young people in decision-making at the local level, especially in Forest and Pasture Users' Associations (FPUAs) and Federations and Local Government Units (LGUs). Through various measures, the GAP attempts to increase the involvement of women in planning, implementation, and evaluation processes to contribute to their economic empowerment. These measures include, among other things, carrying out capacity building activities, raising awareness, and involving women in different processes to make them feel capable and empowered to raise their voice about their needs (AWEN, 2020). In light of this, the exciting and highly relevant case led me to focus this study on Albanian women's agency and participation in decision-making, specifically in FPUAs targeted in the project. Centring on Naila Kabeer's (1999) three dimensions of empowerment - resources, agency, achievements – this thesis explores the empowerment process and highlights how the project contributes to it.

1.1   Background to the Project

In the Republic of Albania, forest ownership has changed drastically in the last decades due to decentralisation (Forest Europe, 2021). Eighty-one per cent of the total forest area that used to be state-owned is now communal forestry. Decision-making and management of forests and pastures are decided by local actors, i.e., LGUs in collaboration with FPUAs, for the benefits of community members (Forest Europe, 2021). Since 1991, forest and pasture management practices have created a vicious cycle of severe degradation. Significant issues remain at the national and local levels regarding natural resources and sustainable development. This relates to the discrepancy that exists between legislation and strategies and their actual

implementation (Christoplos *et al*., 2013). Therefore, enhancing capacities to withstand such challenges has been one of the main priorities for programmes, such as the World Bank and the Netherlands development organisation Connecting Natural Values and People Foundation (CNVP) forestry work. Their support has focused on developing the capacity of local FPUAs, sustainable resource use, local management systems, and facilitating dialogue between civil society, the private sector and local government. As a result, community forestry is reported to have yielded results in terms of improved management of forest and pastures and the organisational capacities (Christoplos *et al*., 2013). However, special efforts to include women and other marginalised groups are being implemented as they are still not well represented in the users' associations. The situation in the Albanian forestry sector, in general, reflects the wider society whereby gender inequalities are prevalent. Even though more than 60 per cent of women are involved in concrete forestry activities and work in the forest, they are often excluded from planning, monitoring and decision making in local forestry-related institutions because this is traditionally men's role (CNVP, 2018).

The GAP replicates and builds further on earlier development programmes that emphasise gender equality as critical in Albania's forestry and natural resources sector. Its implementation took place in two consecutive phases (2015-2017 and 2019-2020). The objectives of GAP were carried out by the Advanced Studies Centre (ASC), which comprised capacity building activities in terms of gender awareness training to increase social inclusion in the FPUAs, support to female board members, and individual female and young farmers (ASC, 2017). Since 2019, the Albanian Women Empowerment Network (AWEN) has been engaged in the implementation of GAP II. The network consists of 10 member organisations focusing on protecting and promoting women rights and the advancement of gender equality issues across the country. The objectives of AWEN's consultancy included increasing access for women to decision-making in FPUAs in South and Central of Albania; improving women and young people's possibilities to access grants in the ESP; and increasing the awareness of the positive results of gender equality at relevant decision-making

bodies. Moreover, to provide follow-up support to the FPUAs and women in the North of Albania, GAP activities were carried out in the first term (AWEN, 2020).

1.2   Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to examine women's agency and participation in decision-making in local FPUAs in Albania. Drawing on Kabeer's (1999) conceptualisation of women's empowerment, through a focus on resources, agency, and achievements - this study is guided by the following questions:

- Who currently holds the majority of decision-making power in FPUAs and why?
- What factors determine women's participation and decision-making power in FPUAs?
- How can women's participation in and influence decision-making in FPUAs be enhanced?

1.3   Disposition

The thesis is structured into five chapters where the following presents previous literature pertaining to the topic. The theoretical and analytical framework used in the study is presented in chapter 3, followed by a description of the methodology and methods applied in chapter 4. Findings and discussion that aim to answer the research questions of this study are presented in chapter 5, and chapter 6 ends with the thesis' conclusions.

2. Previous Research

The following chapter reviews previous research and theoretical debates surrounding empowerment, gender, and participation in forest communities, highlighting the central tenets outlined in the literature. The chapter further describes where this study is situated in relation to previous research and how it aims to contribute to current debates.

2.1   Conceptualisation of Empowerment

Empowerment can be understood as the "expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them" (Kabeer, 2001:19). Despite the considerable diversity in the literature of empowerment, most theorists conceptualise empowerment as not an end goal but as a process (Kabeer, 1999a; Rowlands, 1995; Mosedale, 2005). Such scholars focus on power as an essential component of empowerment, which should be exercised to challenge unequal power relations embedded at multiple levels of society that maintain inequalities. Another distinguishing feature in the concept of empowerment is agency, which highlights women as significant actors in the process of change. A good reference point for conceptualising and measuring empowerment is provided by Kabeer (2001) who argues that power is the ability to make choices which entail both the process and agency elements. To be disempowered implies to be denied choice. According to this understanding, people who are exercising plenty of choices are powerful, but they were never disempowered to begin with. Kabeer provides a broad and process-oriented perspective of empowerment which this study applies throughout the analysis, which is further elaborated in Section 3.2. Thus, stages of empowerment are not seen as linear but as interconnecting.

2.2   Connecting Women and Empowerment

The debate regarding the connection between women, often under the category of gender, and environment is influenced by feminist scholars. The sub-field of feminist political ecologist (FPE) draws on ecofeminism, feminist environmentalism, feminist poststructuralism and socialist feminist. FPE examines how gender and other power dynamics between women and men intersect to shape their resource access and control as they operate at different scales (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, & Wangari, 1996). It further highlights the gender differentiation of natural resource use and management through their distinctive roles, responsibilities, and knowledge (Elmhirst & Resurreccion, 2008). Gender is thus understood as a critical variable in shaping processes of ecological change, the struggle of women and men to sustain an ecologically viable livelihood, and the prospects for sustainable development (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, & Wangari, 1996).

Moreover, scholars in this field emphasise how gender is not fixed, but rather a process through which social identities are constituted in and through relations with nature, discourse, and everyday practices (Nightingale, 2006; Butler, 2011). Throughout this study, a FPE perspective and framework borrowed by Kabeer is utilized, which generally focus on women. Nevertheless, because the study incorporates men respondents, it is not a 'women only' analysis.

2.3   Participation in Decision-Making in Community-Based Forestry

Attention to improving participation of women in decision-making in forest governance has gained prominence in development research as organisations, researchers, and policymakers seek to integrate gender priorities into research, planning and policy (Manfre & Rubin, 2012). The concept of participation embodies several ideas, including inclusiveness, empowerment, democracy, and efficiency. A point often made in this literature is that equitable participation is necessary for the institutional efficiency of community-based forestry groups. Studies of Agarwal

(2009, 2010) have indicated that enhancing women's participation in decision-making in committees in community forest institutions leads to improved forest governance and resource sustainability. Acharaua and Gentle (2006) also found that the participation of women in forest user groups in Nepal improved their overall functioning to address poverty and social equity. Cornwall (2008) suggests that equitable participation is also an important indicator of citizenship, voice, and agency.

Enhancing women's participation at the local level has proven to be a complicated matter. Studies on the topics have focused on the exclusion of women from community-based forestry in terms of their access, control, utilisation and claim to resources (Agarwal, 2001; Coleman & Mwangi, 2012; Rocheleau & Edmunds, 1997; Shroeder, 1999). For instance, Agarwal (2001) examines the exclusion of women in participatory spaces in community forest user groups in Nepal and India. From this work, she identified that the ability to participate and the terms of participation are shaped by several factors, such as rules of entry, social norms, assets, perceptions, and attributes of those involved (Agarwal, 2001). While this tells us a great deal about determinants of participation, it cannot be generalised as they are context specific. Rather than simply adding women for analysis, these authors highlight the importance of examining social, cultural, and political-economic explanations for differences between the experiences and roles of women and men in forest-related institutions (Manfre & Rubin, 2012).

2.4   Contribution

The previous literature is relevant in the case of Albania as the introduction of community forestry seeks to promote a decentralised and democratic approach to forest and pasture management through the direct involvement of individuals in decision-making (Christoplos *et al.*, 2013). Comprehensive analyses of community forest outcomes in understanding the process of exercising power remain a critical gap. Empirical studies are needed on this topic to better understand participation and decision-making as critical issues related to gender relations in forest management in rural areas (Manfre & Rubin, 2012). As the goal of the ESP is to empower

beneficiaries which includes implementing the GAP and increasing the involvement of women in decision-making within the FPUAs, this case seems compatible to examine through the framework of empowerment. Moreover, there is a great need to examine women's agency and participation in decision making in forest groups as a gendered process.

3. Theoretical Framework

To investigate the phenomenon of women's agency and participation in decision-making processes in the environmental field, this study applies two theoretical perspectives; Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) as a broader theoretical framework and Kabeer's conceptualisation of empowerment to organise and analyse the empirical data. While FPE addresses power relations, it does not provide an analytical tool for analysing these. However, the empowerment framework provides a tool for examining power and decision-making in the context of this gendered regime.

3.1   Feminist Political Ecology

In line with feminist epistemology, the broader theoretical framework of this study is based on feminist political ecology (FPE), a theory examining the complex context in which gender interacts with ecological, economic, and political power structures (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, & Wangari, 1996). FPE takes a holistic approach to understand local gendered experiences in global economic and environmental change processes through the lens of three themes: *gendered knowledge, gendered rights and responsibilities, and gendered environmental politics and grassroots activism* (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, & Wangari, 1996).

G*endered knowledge* can be understood in terms of what science is and who has the power to construct it (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, & Wangari, 1996). Central to this theme is that women and men have differential knowledge of natural resources, often resulting from the gendered division of labour and activities. For instance, men often have more access to agroforestry extension services[1], training opportunities, and other

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[1] Forestry extension is used to cover "any situation in which local people are directly and willingly involved in forestry activities from which they will derive some recognisable benefit within a reasonable period of time" (Sim & Hilmi, 1987).

knowledge associated with 'science'. In contrast, women's knowledge is linked more directly to their role as subsistence providers in households (Nightingale, 2006). Ideologies, particularly those formulated within a patriarchal mode, generate gendered access to information, knowledge, resources, and technologies for improving livelihoods (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, & Wangari, 1996). This theme is only addressed briefly since the aim of this study is not to analyse gendered knowledge. However, it demonstrates the importance of including women more centrally in development projects and extension work as they often have crucial knowledge of natural resources that allow for household survival.

The second theme, *gendered rights and responsibilities*, explores the differential access by women and men to various legal and de facto claims to land and resources (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, & Wangari, 1996). The notion of land and resources is never fixed but changes over time within and between groups and places with human capacities, knowledge and skills, and power relations based on gender, ethnicity, class, locality, and nationality (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, & Wangari, 1996). This study focuses primarily on this theme in terms of how increased decision-making power affects women's ability to claim rights and resources.

The final theme is *gendered environmental policies and grassroots activism,* which examines women's involvement in community struggles over natural resources and environmental issues. While this project is the result of a top-bottom approach, the participation of individuals in these local users' associations is a way to exercise grassroots politics. It highlights the process of redefining environmental issues to include women's knowledge, experience, and interests.

3.2   Kabeer's Empowerment Framework

Kabeer (1999a) conceptualises women's empowerment from a three-dimensional framework: resources as part of the preconditions to empowerment, agency as an aspect of the process, and achievement as a measure of outcomes. While empowerment can occur at several different levels, covering a range of different dimensions, central to the idea is the notion of power - the ability to make strategic life

choices. Essentially, empowerment entails a process of change whereby those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire the ability.

3.2.1 Resources

Resources form the conditions under which choices are made. According to Kabeer (1999b), these include material or physical resources and various human and social resources that enhance the ability to exercise choice. They are distributed through the various institutions and relationships in society, including the domains of family, market, state, and community. Resources acquired within social relationships take the form of increased knowledge, future claims, and expectations. Such resources can be gained through group meetings, training, and education to increase awareness and facilitate individuals to consider alternative opportunities (Kabeer, 1999b). The principle of distribution and exchange is determined by rules and norms which give certain people authority over others by virtue of their positioning within the context. Resources tend to be unequally distributed, and thus the ability to exercise strategic choices regarding resources entails challenging existing power relations and structures (Kabeer, 2005).

3.2.2 Agency

Agency represents the processes by which choices are defined and put into effect (Kabeer, 2005). It is central to the concept of empowerment and encompasses more than observable action, such as the meaning, motivation, and purpose behind an individual's action, that is, their sense of agency. Agency can be operationalised as decision-making over resources. However, it can also take different forms in terms of bargaining and negotiation and more intangible processes of reflection and analysis (Kabeer, 1999b). There are both positive and negative meanings to agency, the former being 'power to', which refers to the capacity to define and pursue strategic choices (Kabeer, 2001). As noted earlier, rules and norms may deny certain access and constrain the ability to make choices. Agency, therefore, implies not only actively

exercising choice but doing this in ways that challenge structures of constraint in the face of oppression and resistance from others (Kabeer, 2005). In a negative sense, the agency is exercised as 'power over', meaning the capacity of actors to override the agency of others through violence and threat (Kabeer, 2001). Because of the significance of norms and values that legitimise inequality, empowerment from within is integral. This refers to the third dimension of agency: 'power within' and is expressed through a sense of self-worth and confidence (Rowlands, 1997, Kabeer, 2001). While an individual sense of agency is essential, Kabeer (2001) distinguishes it from a collective agency, which is essential for institutional change to occur. Collective forms of agency set out to address structures of gender inequality whereby new forms of power can arise, the 'power with' (Rowlands, 1995).

3.2.3 Achievements

Resources and agency together constitute people's capabilities, the potential for living the lives they desire (Kabeer, 2005). Achievements seek to capture the extent to which this potential is realised or failed. In relation to empowerment, an achievement is considered in terms of the exercised agency and its outcomes. However, measuring achievements is not particularly straightforward. This is mainly due to the challenge of knowing what people wanted to achieve and the attributing variables that led to what they have, in fact, achieved (Kabeer, 1999b).

Moreover, reaching the stage of achievements does not mean that empowerment is fulfilled. It is understood as an ongoing process rather than a quantifiable outcome. All three dimensions of resources, agency and achievements can be seen as the pathway through which empowerment processes can occur. This means changes in any one dimension can result in another outcome in others. (Kabeer, 1999b).

3.3   Analytical Framework

The process of empowerment in the FPUAs for women is defined as the "expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was

previously denied to them" (Kabeer, 2001:19). The purpose of the analysis is to capture a form of change, from a marginalised position to one of relatively greater agency through the enhancement of resources, agency, and achievements, drawing on the figure below.

Outcome of empowerment	**Achievement** Women's realisation of choices
Process of empowerment	Individual action · Collective action **Agency** Women's ability to define choices and to use resources to enact them
Pre-conditions of empowerment	**Resources** Women's actual access and future claims to - Ideas, beliefs, attitudes - Material assets - Social assets
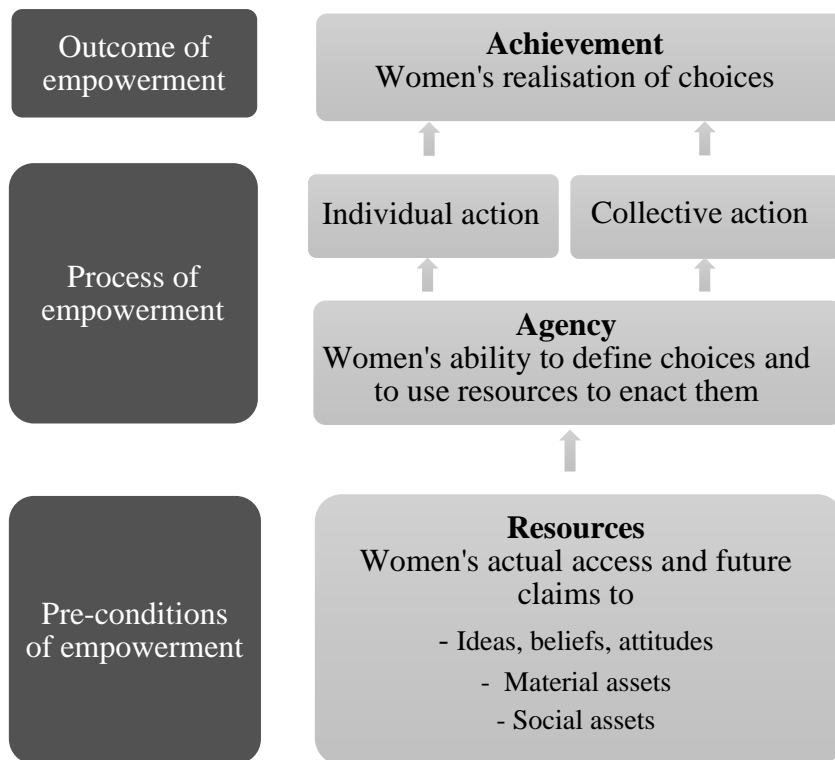
Figure 1: Empowerment process drawing from Kabeer (1999) and modified by author

20

4. Methodology

4.1   Research Design

The research design adopted in this research is that of *mixed-methods case study design.* That means qualitative and quantitative data collection and results are integrated to provide in-depth analysis for a case (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A mixed-methods case study design allows the researcher to address the complexity of a single case in-depth rather than making generalisations (Bryman, 2012). Mixed methods research has become a frequently used and accepted approach to exploring social phenomenon (Bryman, 2012). A mixed-methods approach enables triangulation both in research design, analysis, and interpretation of data, strengthening the validation process as it seeks to gain a nuanced understanding of research findings and clarify data sets by placing them in dialogue with one another (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012). This position is commensurate with Fielding & Fielding (1989, as cited in Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012). They argue that mixing qualitative and quantitative data can illustrate a more comprehensive account of the phenomenon being studied. However, there is a potential disadvantage of mixing methods for validity convergence, to merely examine whether the findings from different methods agree or disagree. The data should instead be put into a more comprehensive explanatory framework, possibly through group discussions of both sets of data allowing improved interpretations and better community ownership (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012). The role of researchers can further explain the rationale for using triangulation amid the pandemic, who must increasingly rely on numerous sources of empirical support as a basis for researching the field remotely, such as rural areas where access to certain groups is difficult (Bryman, 2012). Thus, the integration of such data has informed the design and decision-making process of the study.

The data-collection consists of primary data from key informant interviews, a survey, and secondary data from reports about the project. The anticipated outcome of the individual interviews with project implementers has been to understand gendered

knowledge, rights and responsibilities, and policies that influence how women and men participate in community based FPUAs. The survey collected from FPUA members focuses in particular on women following a feminist approach to mixed methods praxis which seeks to include the voices of those who have been marginalised into conversation with other data (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012). In doing so, neither qualitative nor quantitative data are privileged. Both are accorded legitimacy to make different perspectives visible (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012). Detailed steps of the selected methods are described in the following sections.

4.2   Ontology and Epistemology

This study is interpretivist in nature as it seeks to understand the context-specific and experiences of a broad range of stakeholders. The key principle of the interpretivist paradigm is that reality is socially constructed. It further aligns with methods that gathers and analyses qualitative data, which is the primary source of the study (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017).

In assuming a relativist ontology, the study upholds the understanding of multiple realities and that those realities become subject to multiple interpretations through interactions between the researcher and research participants (Chalmers, Manley & Wasserman, 2005). A subjective epistemology guides this position. This allows for the interpretation of the participants' viewpoint and perceptions of the world around them. From this standpoint, the researcher makes inferences and interpretations of the data gathered, which in themselves are influenced by the researcher's cognitive process and construction of meaning. Therefore, it is imperative that the researcher is self-reflective about methods, their role in the knowledge gathering and interpretation process, and is transparent about potential bias (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017).

Whilst this study embraces a diversity of approaches, it has a shared commitment to feminist epistemology, methods, and values whereby the androcentric conceptions and practices of knowledge and authority are recognised and challenged (Elmhirst, 2015). In this regard, the study also accounts for a feminist ontology of social relations in

which individuals are embedded in and constituted by unequal political and socio-economical structures (Tickner, 2005).

4.3 Data-Collection in Times of Covid-19

While the adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have brought many challenges to fieldwork endeavours, it has also been recognised that the idea and practice of repurposing one's work to address such barriers are possible (Lobe, Morgan & Hoffman, 2020). The research topic was identified during the researcher's internship placement at Nordic Consulting Groups - NCG Sweden AB (NCG), located in Stockholm, Sweden, in connection to one of their missions. NCG is an established consulting firm engaged in international development cooperation for over 30 years and offers in normal circumstances an overseas trip for their interns to meaningfully participate in a project and thereby experience real live consultancy work in practice. In this case, the trip to Albania was not possible due to the closing of the client's offices in the country and the pandemic travel restrictions. Considering that on-site fieldwork was not an option, the role of the gatekeepers has been crucial for the realisation of this study.

Creswell & Poth (2018) highlight that access to "the field" typically begins with a gatekeeper, an individual who provides access to key resources needed to research, be those resources human, logistical, institutional, or informational. Firstly, the host organisation created many opportunities in terms of initial access to the potential research site and interviewees. One of the consultants has been the initial gatekeeper in facilitating contacts and information regarding the project. The major challenge to carry out this study has been the process of acquiring access to project participants in rural areas who are difficult to reach by virtual means. While conducting online interviews with project implementers has been a viable solution to overcome the physical distance, other barriers such as trust, culture and language prevented direct interaction between the researcher and project participants. Examining both project implementers and participants' perspectives was valuable to the study, which required

readjustments in terms of the selected methods, such as relying on a gatekeeper to collect the data to address such barriers.

Nevertheless, the gatekeeper experienced physical restrictions due to the pandemic's restrictions, leading to the choice of survey and collecting responses over the telephone. Although researchers accept the necessity and advantages of working through gatekeepers, one needs to consider the complexity of that relationship and the potential implications it may have for the research (Campbell *et al.* 2010). Such implications are further treated in the section of limitations and chosen boundaries.

4.4   Sampling

Drawing on Teddlie and Yu's (2007) distinction of sampling approach, this study utilised a fixed purposive sampling strategy, meaning that the sample is established at the outset of the research, and there is little adding to the sample as the research proceeds. This is an appropriate method as there are limited available primary data sources that can contribute to the study due to the nature of research design, aims and objectives.

The Key Informants (KIs) included different levels of stakeholders working with FPUAs and gender issues in Albania and is part of my primary data collection (Table 1). A total of six individual KI interviews were conducted, whereas two were the respective team leaders of the first and second phase of the GAP. As local stakeholders and responsible for carrying out project activities, they have extensive knowledge of the social context and individuals. One KI is the senior gender expert whose role is to provide gender mainstreaming monitoring support to the ESP, the overarching programme under which the gender intervention is implemented. Apart from being the main gateway to obtain all interviews, this informant was selected in accordance with her expertise and holistic perspective to acquire reliable data. Two KIs were representatives from CNVP operating in Albania with extensive field experience working with FPUAs and women groups in rural areas to address gender issues. The final KI represented MoTE as the ESP project coordinator and was

selected to gain a perspective from further up the chain in terms of policies and project implementation.

The survey was sampled from FPUAs located in municipalities of Northern Albania after consulting with the respective team leaders of the GAP. The Northern region, which was targeted in both phases, is characterised as traditional in terms of gender roles, culture and mindsets, but has a strong presence of NGOs and WROs, which the GAP implementers acknowledged as a factor that conditions for an effective intervention (AWEN, 2020). A purposive and non-probability form of sampling was utilised to sample specific participants relevant to the research aim and questions being posed (Bryman, 2012). Based on certain requirements, such as the region of targeted forest associations and gender, the choice of respondents was left to the KI who administered the survey and then made a random selection from a list entailing project participants' contact information. It was made clear at the outset to reduce bias from the sample selection that the data was to be used for academic purposes and not for the benefit of the project (Bryman, 2012). The first round of interviews consisted of five men and five women. After an initial overview of the data, however, it was concluded that the data needed more input from women. While it is helpful to capture men's perception as they are important influencers of women's empowerment, the aim of the research pertains to women, which should be better reflected, especially considering the small sample size. Consequently, the KI continued the data collection, and seven more women responded to the survey, resulting in a total survey size of 17, where 12 respondents were women and five men.

4.5   Methods

Table 1: Remote fieldwork data-collection

How	Who	When	What
Semi-structured interview with KI	GAP I Team Leader from Advanced Study Centre (ASC)	9 February 2021	Identifying gendered knowledge, rights and responsibilities pertaining to participation in decision-making in FPUAs
Semi-structured interview with KI	GAP II Team Leader from Albanian Women's Empowerment Network (AWEN)	11 February 2021	Identifying gendered knowledge, rights and responsibilities pertaining to participation in decision-making in FPUAs
Semi-structured interview with KI	ESP's gender mainstreaming expert from Nordic Consulting Group (NCG).	18 February 2021	Key challenges and opportunities pertaining to gender mainstreaming in the project
(Follow-up) meeting with KI	GAP I Team Leader from Advanced Study Centre (ASC)	29 February	Obtaining field observations and gaining qualitative meaning to the quantitative data
Semi-structured interview with KI	Country director from CNVP	31 March 2021	Identifying gendered knowledge, rights and responsibilities pertaining to participation in decision-making in FPUAs
Semi-structured interview with KI	Regional coordinator and gender advisor from CNVP	1 April 2021	Identifying gendered knowledge, rights and responsibilities pertaining to participation in decision-making in FPUAs
Semi-structured interview with KI	ESP's project coordinator from the MoTE	2 April 2021	Identifying policies, challenges and opportunities pertaining to gender mainstreaming that influence project implementation
Structured survey, administered by ASC via telephone targeting Pukë region, Albania.	5 men and 5 women FPUA members 7 women FPUA members	1 - 21 March 2021 29 March - 14 April 2021	Identifying resources, agency and achievements pertaining to participation in decision-making in FPUAs

For the integration of methods to be successful, i.e., that you can gather, measure, and establish meaning to answer the research question, Bryman (2006) draws attention to

the dimensions of which the typologies are instructive. These critical considerations include, among others, whether the quantitative and qualitative data is collected simultaneously or sequentially and which data has priority (Bryman, 2006). This study concluded that collecting the data sequentially (figure 2), starting with most of the semi-structured interviews first, was most appropriate. In doing so, the preliminary findings of the qualitative data could better inform the survey collected from FPUA members, strengthening the notion of completeness and triangulation.
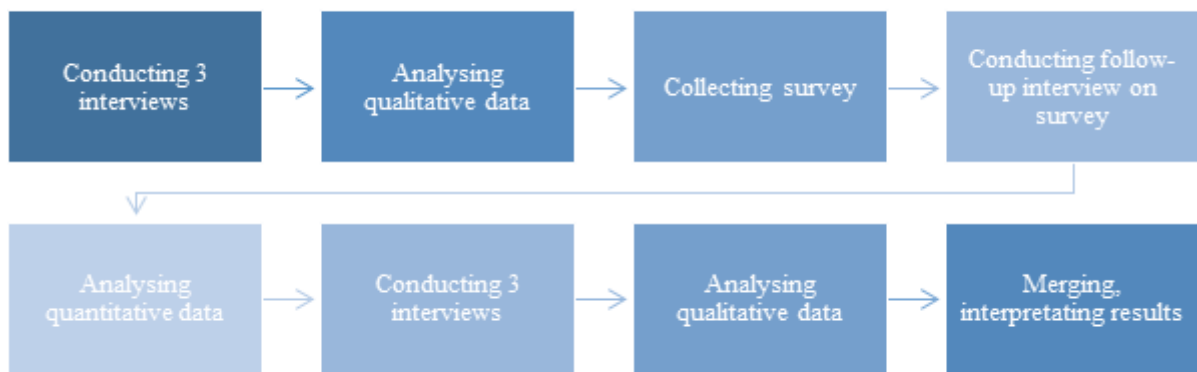
Figure 2: A visual model of the exploratory sequential design used in this mixed-method case study

4.5.1 Key Informant Interviews

KIs involve qualitative in-depth interviews with people who have particularly informed perspectives and information about the social setting and individuals being studied (Bryman, 2012). The purpose of key informant interviews is to collect information from actors who have first-hand knowledge on different aspects of the intervention.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured method, using virtual tools to overcome geographical and platform-specific obstacles between researcher and participants (Archibald *et al*. 2019). Semi-structured interviews were selected as the most suitable instrument since they are built around themes and allow respondents to

express their views in a free manner. It furthermore ensures the flexibility of the researcher to follow up questions in line with the pre-decided themes related to the research questions (Bryman, 2012). Zoom as the chosen platform for online qualitative data-collection offered the ability to communicate in real time with respondents who were geographically dispersed via computer or phone.

Four different interview guides were created and sent together with a consent form before each session (appendix A, D, and F). The guide particularly probed questions connected to women's role at different levels of the forestry sector, gender issues, project activities and participants' experience and behaviour, and policy issues. All interviews were audio recorded and respondents reaffirmed consent verbally prior to the interviews. They were conducted in English and lasted for approximately one hour each.

4.5.2 Survey

The data was collected using an online survey, which has the ability to collect answers automatically and offers several options for asking questions, from multiple choice to a linear scale (appendix E). The survey was administered via telephone in the local language by the GAP I team leader's organisation. The gatekeeper's assistance was especially pertinent due to the respondents being geographically dispersed in contexts with limited resources which prevented direct interaction between the participants and the researcher of this study. Moreover, the established contact and trust with project participants, shared culture and language constituted the decision of them being best positioned to collect the surveys. The familiarity with the context further aided the process of identifying and selecting what research site to study which is otherwise challenging to determine from a theoretical standpoint (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Inputs on used language and terminology of the survey was included to ensure context responsiveness and the quality of the data.

The survey entailed a section explaining the purpose of the data-collection and the consent terms of the respondents for transparency. The questions were informed by

Kabeer's empowerment framework to gauge the sentiment surrounding women's participation in decision-making in the FPUAs and to evaluate if changes in behaviour post project activities had taken place. The method was structured to enhance the compatibility of answers and to process the data easily. Although open questions are useful to explore the salience of issues and allow respondents to answer in their own terms, they are more time-consuming and require greater effort for both the interviewers and interviewees than the case for comparable closed questions (Bryman, 2012). Additionally, the possibility of variability in the recording of answers and hence of invalidity is reduced with closed questions, though there is still the potential problem that the interviewer makes self-interpretations. For instance, if respondents do not understand a question and have to ask for clarification. One solution to account for this was to ensure an availability of several answers in the survey which may clarify the meaning of a question and situation for respondents (Bryman, 2012). However, interpretivist research that deals with human behaviour is by its nature subject to multiple interpretations of reality. Steps can be taken to minimize biases which entail making sure that the findings of the research can be confirmed by others in the field (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017).

4.6   Description of Analysis

After transcribing the interviews, the primary data was processed through thematic data analysis to extract recurring themes and ideas that emerged from the interviews (Bryman, 2016). Thematic data analysis provides the opportunity to identify similarities and differences between different participants' perspectives from transcript and field notes. After the first initial identification that took an inductive approach, the next step taken by the study was generating categories, using the analytical framework of Kabeer, which enabled data managing and interpretation. As this research consisted of qualitative and quantitative data, it was necessary to ensure they supplemented one another. Once the analysis was undertaken, it was possible to merge and interpret the quantitative data to ensure triangulation. A follow-up interview was conducted with the KI who administered the survey to derive a qualitative understanding of the survey and general observations. This data has been given priority in understanding the

findings of the surveys from FPUA members. Since the KI is an expert in this field, her perspective is a valuable and essential channel in understanding the collected quantitative data. In accordance with the analytical framework of Kabeer, the purpose of the analysis is to capture a form of change, from a marginalised position to one of relatively greater agency through the enhancement of resources, agency, and achievements. The process of empowerment in the FPUAs for women follows the definition "expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them" (Kabeer, 2001:19).

4.7   Reflexivity and Positionality

A key feature in conducting fieldwork is to recognise power relations between researcher and participants. Therefore, it is essential to emphasise issues of reflexivity and positionality to ensure an ethical approach in the research process. Reflecting on self, process, and representation may allow for a more nuanced understanding of obstacles and ensure research quality (Sultana, 2007). Firstly, this study acknowledges the researcher's positionality as a female student from Sweden doing remote research on people's perspectives and experiences of gender equality issues in Albania. This involves being attentive to the local context and not imposing Western notions of feminism derived from a place of privilege (Sultana, 2007).

A significant part of the qualitative data has been the experiences of project implementers to understand the impact on beneficiaries. Therefore, it has been necessary to critically reflect on how their position influences methods, interpretations, and knowledge production (Sultana, 2007). Though the study incorporates local knowledge, including Albanian KIs, it needs to be noted that undue reliance on the KIs may be developed. Rather than seeing social reality through members of the local setting being studied, the researcher is, to some extent understanding the context through the eyes of the KIs (Bryman, 2012). As such, both researcher and the interviewees are inevitably tied to an interpretive form of analysis based on their subjective understanding, which is inherently political, personal, and linked to knowledge production (Campbell *et al*., 2006). In terms of values and bias,

Turnbull (1973, as cited in Bryman, 2012) acknowledges that research cannot be value-free. However, to ensure no untrammelled incursion of values, the researcher must exhibit self-reflective and reflexivity about the subsequent findings influenced by such factors. Since a mixed-methods, yet primarily qualitative approach, was employed in this study, the interviewees represent bearers of knowledge. However, measures such as theoretical framework, triangulation, and transparency have been utilised to increase the validity and quality of data.

4.8   Ethical Considerations

One of the problems faced by social researchers using online tools for data collection is to ensure safe data storage, so exchanges remain private. Online it is more challenging to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity of individuals because the data may be accessible to others (Bryman, 2012). During the individual interviews, which took place on Zoom, different security mechanisms were employed to indicate privacy and provide a safe virtual environment for the respondents. One of these steps included the waiting room feature to secure the interviews and keep unauthorised participants out (Zoom Video Communications Inc., 2016). Because Zoom has come under scrutiny over its security and privacy practices, the interviews were recorded with a password-protected phone instead of using the option to record and store sessions to the Zoom cloud or local drives (Aiken, 2019). A further ethical issue that was paramount relates to the consent form, especially given the active roles of the respondents in different aspects of the project which the study aims to examine. By getting an electronically signed consent form (appendix F) from all respondents, they were fully informed of the nature of the research at the outset to avoid possible implications of their participation (Bryman, 2012). Since they all agreed to disclose their name, the opportunity to confirm direct quotes used in the study was guaranteed for transparency. The principle of informed consent was also advocated in the survey collection of FPUA members who had their conditions of participation read to them over the phone. Another ethical issue to consider in collecting the survey remotely and through a gatekeeper is the ownership of the raw data (Lobe *et al*., 2020). The participants' identities have been anonymised, and the data maintained as confidential

to mitigate the ethical concerns and protect them from harm (Bryman, 2012). This involved specifying in the consent form with the gatekeeper collecting the survey that ownership of the raw data belongs to the researcher and that the raw data was to be used solely for academic purposes.

4.9   Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study is to look at the ESP's gender component and contribution towards the GAP. More specifically, it covers the efforts made to increase the participation of women in decision-making processes in local FPUAs. The activities and efforts in other forest-related institutions, e.g., Local Government Units, Federations and boards, were excluded from the scope. The sample size of the survey was limited to municipalities in Northern Albania. The focus of this study is *on* women and *women to make* certain women's lives more visible. While the category 'women' is used as a common factor of discrimination, it does not mean that all women share the same experiences as there are other factors and axes of social differences that contribute to its complexity. The category 'women' is based on the specific social context, in this case, rural forest and pasture users in Albania, and cannot be generalised.

In terms of the survey data, the decision for whom to sample for the survey was likely to be influenced by prospective respondents' availability and accessibility or other implicit criteria for inclusion which may have impacted the range of respondents. In the language of survey sampling, such limitations are considered to be biased (Bryman, 2012). Being mindful of the gatekeeper's time invested into facilitating the data-collection, principles behind sampling and the sample size are aspects that this study could not wholly control and recognise as a limitation in data. Strictly speaking, this means that the sample cannot be generalised beyond the groups from which it was selected (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, the use of closed survey questions restrained the scope and prevented the chance for respondent's expression through strict adherence to a specific range of answers. The limitation of the data range was accepted as the

most important thing was to reduce self-interpretation and bias, given the researcher's absence in the collection process.

Regarding the qualitative data-collection, the study was unable to conduct a large number of interviews due to a limited data collection time frame. However, since the interviews conducted were with key project actors and experts from different levels, the collected data is valuable. In addition to the policy documents and the follow-up interview with the gatekeeper that derived qualitative meaning of the survey data and observations, this established enough data for analysis to understand the case in-depth better. As Bryman notes (2012), this study has some weaknesses given that case studies are unable to generalise findings formally. Instead, it provides context-specific knowledge that does not apply to other contexts. Still, the findings may contribute to the field of community-based forest and pasture management and yield important insights about women's agency and participation in decision-making in similar cultural and ecological contexts.

5. Findings and Discussions

5.1   Decision-Making Power

This section aims to examine who holds the decision-making power in FPUAs and why by understanding the gender differentiation and power dynamics in Albania on a societal level that impacts other practices and discourses across scales in line with an FPE perspective.

5.1.1 Decision-Making Seen as "Men's Terrain"

Albanian women in rural agrarian communities find themselves embedded in a strong patriarchal system reinforced both within the household and in the work context (Çaro, Bailey, & van Wissen, 2012). The interviewees explain that these patriarchal values are more prevalent in the North than in other regions in the country where men are seen as the head of the household and have authority over all family members. They further emphasise that women are generally considered to be primarily responsible for the care of children, the elderly and sick members of the family, and unpaid domestic labour. The distinct gender inequalities in this region are perceived to be stemming from complex cultural and traditional settings such as the traditional customary laws known as 'Kanun', which have been practised for centuries (Çaro, Bailey, & van Wissen, 2012). The Kanun established rules, measures and norms amounting to law and regulated all aspects of life, including gender relationships and the role of women in the family and society (Tarifa, 2008). The values inscribed in the Kanun prescribe patriarchy, a clear division of rights and responsibilities between women and men at the household, and the exclusion of women from family inheritance (Çaro, Bailey, & van Wissen, 2012). The remnants of that system have contributed to the subordination of women and continue to manifest themselves in habitual social practices, roles, and behaviours (Zhllima *et al*., 2016). Currently, the patriarchal system co-exists with more open attitudes, although women still face significant discrimination and

exclusion from social, political, and economic spheres (Çaro, Bailey, & van Wissen, 2012).

The system of governance of communal forest consists of several stakeholders in different levels of influence and decision-making, including local forest users organised in FPUAs. Women's low representation has generally not been considered a problem within the municipalities, administrative units, boards, and associations before implementing various development projects. CNVP's gender advisor informs that this was evident during dialogues with FPUAs regarding the importance of including women in FPUA boards:

> Of course, in the beginning, there was resistance. They would say women are busy, we tell them everything when we go home, we share everything in the meeting. But we [CNVP] were trying to convince them that women need to be present.

The quote exemplifies the reluctance of men to leave positions and their lack of understanding of the uneven responsibilities in terms of women taking care of children while the men participate in decision-making processes, ultimately making it challenging for women residing in rural areas (CNVP, 2018). Due to the gendered division of roles and responsibilities, women's and men's participation in forest activities differ, including how they benefit from these. Women are typically more involved in forestry activities, including manual pre- and post-harvest work, collection of medicinal plants and fodder. At the same time, men's roles are associated with tasks that entail mobility, control over assets, and decision-making. Thus, women and men's responsibilities and participation are divided along reproductive and productive lines. For instance, the GAP II team leader explains that women possess extensive knowledge mainly in terms of using the forest and preserving it for their family. However, the forestry engineers who are a critical part of forest planning and harvesting operations are mainly men, which may relate to patriarchal values and gender norms.

Meanwhile, women are considered as cleaners of the forest and pastures. The interviewees unanimously express that men acknowledge the role of women,

especially in terms of the daily activities and contributions in forestry for ensuring the economy for their families and communities. The GAP II team leader highlights:

> Women were the ones that were, for example, collecting the main products that the forest is serving, so although their inclusion and their important role, they were not considered as the main actors in this type of activities.

As illustrated here, women are considered more as a great *support to activities* than *leading activities*. Furthermore, this division becomes even more poignant when it comes to women's role and participation in decision and management issues, as one KI expresses: "They [men] see this as men's terrains". The perception of women as providers of labour and tenders of the household, rather than as farmers and managers of the land or other significant actors for livelihood, has practical implications for women who effectively are denied resources. Not only do such values and norms shape the identities and behaviour of individuals, but they influence customary practices and political culture that continue to devalue women (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter and Wangari, 1996).

5.2 Determinants of Women's Participation and Decision-Making Power in FPUAs

This section illustrates a wide range of determinants that define women's participation and decision-making power in FPUAs Albania. Some are quantifiable, such as individual economic resources, other resources are less tangible resources, such as time, social norms and perceptions on contributions and needs (Kabeer, 1999b).

5.2.1 Economic Dependence

From most of the interviews, it was raised that the husband plays a dominant role in the women's lives as the primary breadwinner. This is an acute problem in Albania, especially in the rural areas, and one of the main obstacles to equality between men and women. For instance, the gender expert consultant from NCG recalls a local forest

user in her 50s from the Northern region who was asked about her priorities if she would gain access to forest and pasture grants:

> Her answer was that she would give the money to her husband, because she didn't know and she had never had any money on her own.

The above quote illustrates that failing to contribute to one's family financially and the resulting spousal dependency arguably directly impact the confidence of rural women. Although women contribute significantly to forest activities, it is perceived that men generate incomes since they deal with the commercialisation of forest produce (Zhllima *et al.*, 2016). The survey indicates that most women respondents do not own any forestry and pastureland compared to the men, as illustrated in figure 3. This finding is of interest because it says something about independent financial decisions within and beyond the household. For instance, land-owning women may have a stronger fall-back position and, therefore, greater bargaining power than landless women (Agarwal, 1997). The gender advisor from CNVP highlights: "If women were economically independent, they would be free to choose their own destiny and take ownership".
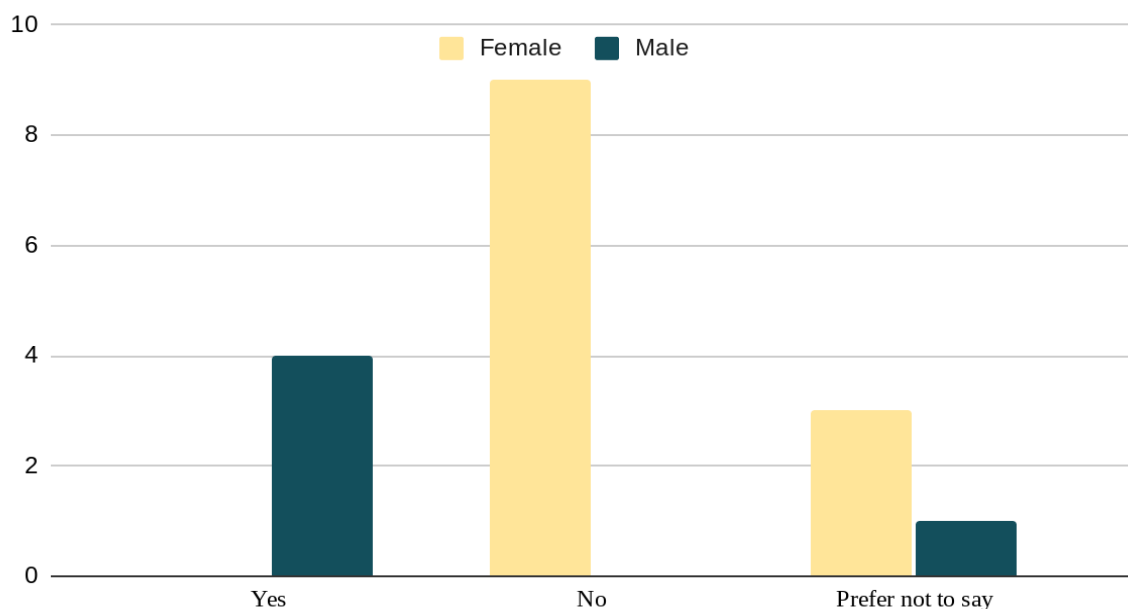

Figure 3: Forestry and pastureland ownership disaggregated by gender

One of the main issues about enforced economic dependence is unequal resource distribution. Although legislation allows Albanian women's equal rights to ownership and disposal of land and property, land titles tend to be registered in the name of men who have the de facto enjoyment of rights and management control over land (FAO, 2016b). According to project reports, many women are not aware of their rights as members in the associations or their rights over land, ultimately affecting their participation (CNVP, 2018). The fact that women's property rights are scarcely observed in practise stems again from the role of men being the primary economic providers while women are responsible for children upbringing and administration of daily activities (Zhllima *et al.*, 2016).

5.2.2 The Issue of Double-Burden and Time Poverty

The interviews made it evident that poverty is a significant driver of women's lack of social and economic power in the family and management (Soto & Sato, 2019). As Kabeer (2005) explains, poverty and empowerment are closely linked whereby the inability to meet one's basic needs, and dependence on powerful others to do so, influence the capacity for meaningful choice. This tends to disproportionately affect women as the effects of poverty are intensified by gender-related inequalities (Kabeer, 2005). Noted by Soto & Sato (2019), the inequitable gender-based allocation of unpaid domestic work, representing double-burden for women, often intensifies women's time poverty as they have little or no discretionary time. As women and men play different social and economic roles in the family and forest management, the obstacles and economic opportunities are also different, as is their participation and access to community development activities (Soto & Sato, 2019). One of the primary reasons can be summarised by the quote below by the GAP I team leader:

> In the remote rural areas that we were present, you find women who work all day, they have to work the land, they have to prepare lunch, they have to do everything related to the children. So, to find two hours of training, or even more was not so easy. Men were more relaxed, or they could spend the day discussing and so on, but for women, it was not so easy to come.

This exemplifies that time is an intangible resource that often demarcates the boundaries of choice for women (Kabeer, 1999b). In addition to household and forestry work, women are compelled to be active in the FPUAs. However, the absence of male sensitisation of what these unequal burdens mean for women, women's time poverty, along the lack of material resources determines women's ability to participate and decision-making power (Soto & Sato, 2019). In addition, women's lack of assets constrains their access to formal finance limits, for instance, the possibility of hiring extra help to cover the labour typically contributed by women (Soto & Sato, 2019). According to the survey, most associations organise meetings between 3-6 times a year. When asked how many of these meetings the FPUA members usually attend, eight out of the 12 women state that they attend few meetings. Meanwhile, all five men respondents report that they attend almost all of them, as seen in figure 4. When it comes to the gender balance in their respective FPUA, all 17 respondents report that they are composed mainly of men. As suggested by the study of Bolanos and Schmink (2005) on Bolivia, women's participation in meetings is constrained more by an overall lack of time compared to the time of day that meetings take place (Bolanos and Schmink, 2005). Cornwall (2008) notes that women may have less inclination to spend time on community affairs due to limited economic opportunities. For some, the required time of taking part in meetings does not outweigh the benefits and hence the active choice to not always participate may not be recognised (Cornwall, 2008).
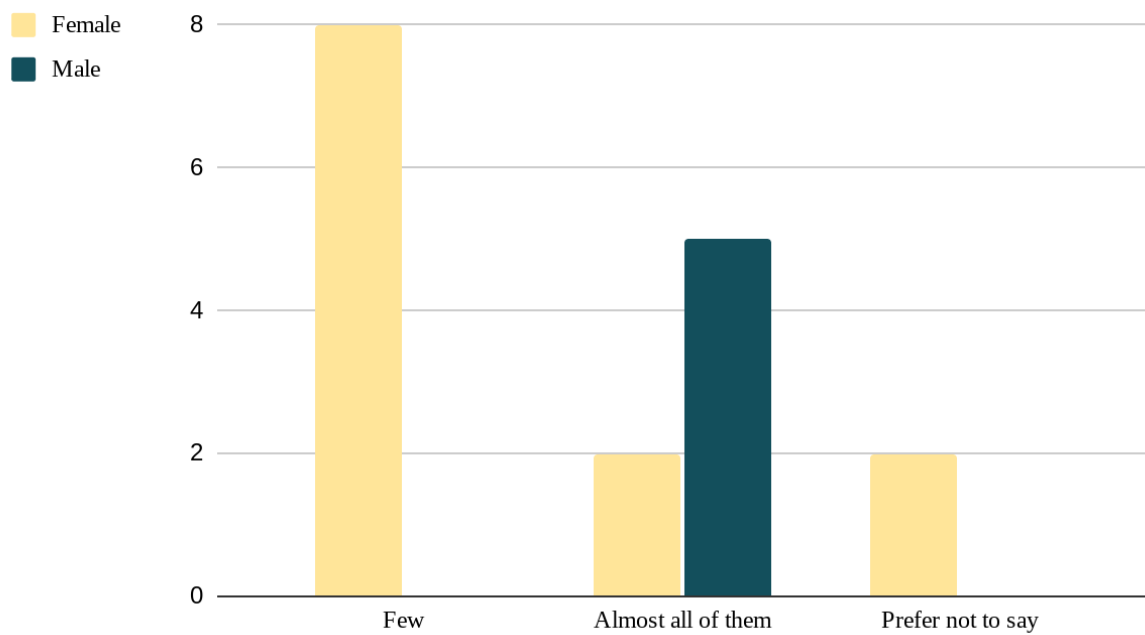
Figure 4: Participation frequency in FPUAs meeting disaggregated by gender

5.2.3 Perceptions and Self-Consciousness

According to the GAP II team leader, women often accept the stereotypical association between "women's activities" and domestic activities. She observed how many women did not see themselves in management roles during awareness-raising activities. Even though women take care of forest and land activities: "They [women] were saying that men are more important in this while their role is more important in the family". They lack a critical consciousness which Batliwala (cited in Mosedale, 2005: 248) talks about as crucial to reflect on the gender regime that legitimises male domination and understand how it is limiting their rights and dictating their responsibilities. When it comes to how women perceive their self-efficacy in forest management, it was highlighted by the same KI:

> They [female project participants] had this tendency to refer to the director or the engineers about a certain issue, not being present and not representing themselves as not only as women, but as persons who have been greatly involved in this type of activities.

On the one hand, this may suggest that education or hierarchical work titles take precedence in those situations. Nevertheless, the gender regime may negatively impact women's self-efficacy, which is a crucial asset that can facilitate a person making their own decisions and acting upon them. Improving women's capacities to cope with situations in which they experience injustice is of the essence. However, it is also crucial to enable women to question what they previously have considered normal and act to change that reality (Cornwall, 2008). As noted by Kabeer (2005), power relations are effective when they are not perceived as such. Women who internalise their given roles and responsibilities and lesser claim to resources do so because to behave otherwise is outside of the norm. Inequality is legitimated through the significance of values and beliefs. Therefore, a process of empowerment must begin from within (Kabeer, 2005).

5.3   Enhancing Women's Participation in, and Influence on Decision-Making in FPUAs

This section seeks to capture the process of expanding women's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them (Kabeer, 2001).

5.3.1 Translating Policy into Practice

The Albanian government has created an enabling framework to promote and enforce gender equality and empowerment of women. It has taken numerous measures for increasing women's participation in decision-making positions. The most recent is the third national Strategy on Gender Equality and its Action Plan 2016-2020, whereby one of the four strategic goals are "effective and equal (de facto) participation of women in public and political decision-making processes". This includes increasing participation and contribution of women in local decision-making by 30 per cent, pursuant to the Law on Gender Equality that has been in place since 2008 (Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, 2016).

The same gender quota has served as a core element and requirement by the World Bank for FPUAs to receive grants within the project. This means that the associations must comply with a minimum of 30 per cent female members and a minimum of 30 per cent women on the boards. Most quotas aim to address the underrepresentation of women - this is particularly relevant since a substantial part of forest and forest-related activities in Albania is carried out by women. Dahlerup (2001) argues that the crucial threshold for women to be able to change the political scene often occurs at 30 per cent. However, the impact of entrenched attitudes and positional power must be considered. While international organisations' pressure to use gender quotas could contribute to the advancement of women in decision-making, it is important that quotas are also imposed by domestic grass root mobilisation and women organisations for it to be perceived as a legitimate tool to increase women's representation (Clayton, 2015). The KI from MoTE acknowledges the importance of civil society actors in terms of ensuring the implementation of the gender quota:

> Being well aware of the law requirements, I think the inclusion of civil
> society will make it more feasible and more convincing, the representation
> and the raise of women's voice in FPUAs for ESP activities.

Gender disparities cannot be addressed by legal changes alone, but the extent to which legal changes are enforced depends on how such changes are received by the people in rural areas (Dauti, & Zhllima, 2016). Several KIs attest that there is often a discrepancy between policy and practice in rural areas regarding gender equality, empowerment, attitudes, and behaviour, which sometimes falls short of such intentions. As the GAP I Team Leader highlights:

> Whatever laws and strategies are decided at national level, these people do
> not feel attached to any of this, whether it is gender or another legislation at
> the national level.

This discrepancy can be linked to FPUAs' lack of organisational and financial capacities according to several KIs, which is a determinant factor to ensure that progress relating to gender equality is enhanced and maintained, both on an individual and a collective basis. Though all FPUAs have policies and procedures in their statutes, many still lack the financial and human capacities to revise their existing documents to ensure a gender perspective and its implementation. The country

director from CNVP explains that gender issues are closely linked to financial capacities:

> Gender issues are normally very much linked with a strong association. If the associations are weak, we cannot talk about gender issues because they are very weak, and they cannot represent themselves to others. So this is very important. If we build a good association, gender will be more present in that association.

The KI from the MoTE also refers to financial capacities as a prominent obstacle that prevents some FPUAs from making progress in this direction. However, he states that most FPUAs are more willing to include women as members, especially as board representatives. This is supported by the final social and beneficiary survey data showing that within the five years corresponding to the ESP implementation, women representatives in FPUA boards account for over 30 per cent of board members. In several cases, the number of female board members increased to 50 per cent. The same applies to the percentage of women representation within FPUAs, meeting the 30 per cent minimum application requirement for grants (IDRA, 2021).

5.3.2 Awareness Raising and Capacity Building

Cornwall (2003) argues that women's opportunities to influence decision-making are not simply dependent on getting women into committees but whether their voices are raised and heard. Central to this is to build the 'power within' (Gammage, Kabeer, & Rodgers, 2016). This includes raising the awareness of members about the value of women, building women's confidence and self-worth, capabilities, and raising their awareness of their rights as women, as members and as citizens. The majority of the KIs emphasise that the government approach tends to focus on numbers. In contrast, civil society plays the role of agents of change, seeking meaning to give a transformative change to those numbers. The gender advisor from CNVP explains:

> For the sake of having numbers, you can stress that we need more women, but it's not for the sake of numbers. We need to have the skills, if they don't have the skills, then it's useless if they are part of the board.

The GAP II team leader emphasises that the idea is not to push women to something that they may not want to be part of, but rather to provide equal opportunities to ensure that women can at least choose. The ability to make choices, however, requires that women are aware of their rights. Thus, both capacity building training and gender awareness are critical, which has served as the primary means of project activities to improve women's ability to claim and enjoy their rights.

Conducting training workshops with women and men together is regarded important by all four KIs from CSOs. It offers a prominent opportunity to redefine their preconceptions and see each other as colleagues and bearers of knowledge and contribute to the strengthening of cooperation between women and men for collective ideas and initiatives. At the same time, it is necessary to facilitate activities for women only because: "We could have more in-depth discussion of their [women] own feelings and realities, and the women were freer to express themselves with no men present", creating space for women to speak. Several KIs report how different training workshops have served as valuable participatory forums where women and men have come together to share ideas and initiatives. Women acquire these human and social resources from exposure, which allows them to raise their voice more (Kabeer, 2001). The gender advisor from CNVP explains that women who have increased their capacities because of training are now able to express their own needs to development organisations:

> Women are now approaching us. I think this is the best response and change when you see women asking for what you have in the beginning tried to instil and encourage. Women are now very willing to be part of the meetings to voice their concerns. They are not shy, they are asking to be more educated.

People's voice is a crucial aspect of agency to articulate needs and interests, individually and collectively (Cornwall, 2008). However, for change to happen, 'voice' must move beyond the capacity to speak. It must be listened to and acted on. The survey indicates that a significant number of female participants feel that they can voice their ideas and needs to a fairly high degree in the FPUA they belong to post-project activities. However, notably, none of the respondents state that they can voice their ideas and needs to a high degree, according to figure 5. Figure 6 demonstrates

that 6 of 10 responded that they believe their needs and ideas are incorporated in decision-making processes at some point.
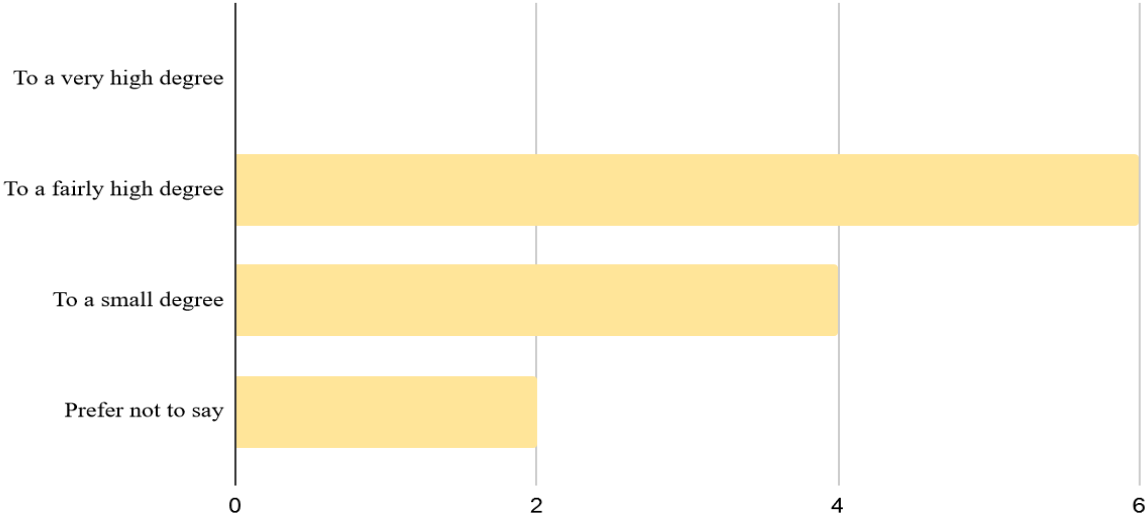
Figure 5: Ability to voice ideas and needs in FPUAs by female respondents
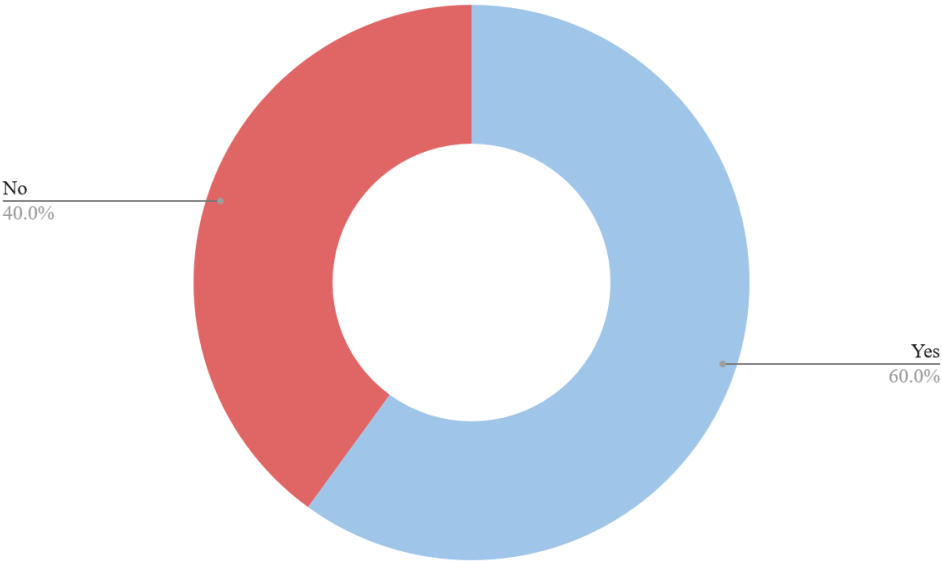
Figure 6: Ideas and needs are incorporated in decision-making in FPUAs by female respondents (only those who expressed their views)

Even if most of the women perceive that they can voice their ideas and needs, only two respondents report that their participation in decision-making has increased, as illustrated in figure 7. However, it is not possible to conclude from the quantitative data why this is the case. Nevertheless, considering the sample size, it is reasonable to

assume that the statistical perspectives on decision-making cannot provide more than a brief glimpse of complex realities which should be pursued in future research.[2] Nevertheless, improving women's human and social resources is shown to lead to a sense of agency (e.g., raising their voice), which is an achievement. This is further supported by findings from the final social and beneficiary survey of the project that shows positive results regarding a substantial increase in women's voice within FPUAs (IDRA, 2021). Women's overall knowledge and awareness of their potential are recognised as an achievement by the GAP II team leader. However, the decision-making power between male and female members in the associations appears not to have shifted extensively. As Kabeer's (2005) framework brings forward, norms and cultures still govern, which may hinder the transformation of their choices into desired outcomes. The survey further shows that all women wish to be more involved in decision-making in the future, indicating an increase in awareness and motivation. These findings may be interpreted that traditional gender roles are still limiting women's ability in realising the choice that they have gained awareness of (Alsop, Bertelsen, & Holland, 2006).
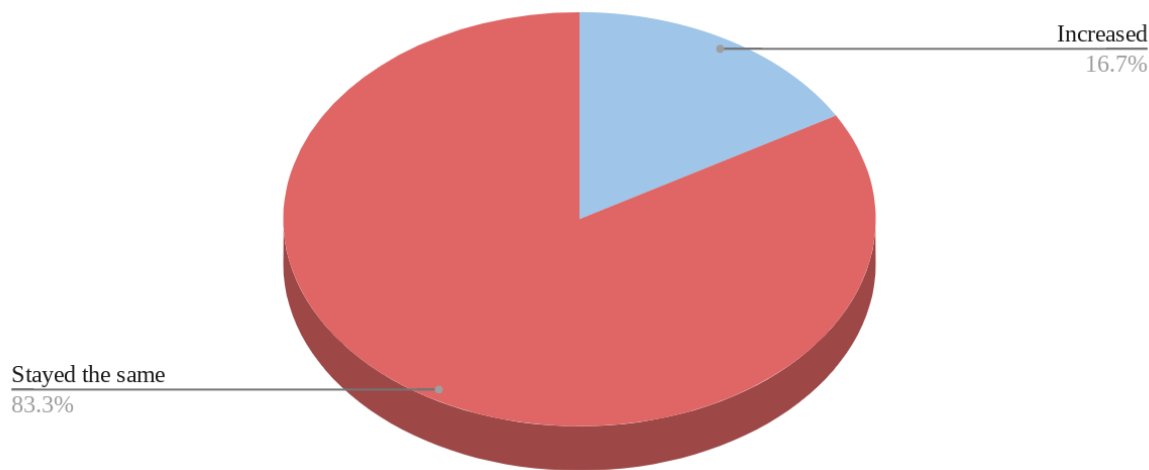

Figure 7: Change in participation in decision-making in FPUAs by female respondents

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[2] A possible venture to this is to examine the different typology of participation that Agarwal draws from her work in forestry (2001), in which women are usually categorised as passive and consultative, such as informally influencing decision-making.

5.3.3 Men's Involvement in Gender Issues

To raise more awareness, not only for women and the associations but also for the men, the GAP II team leader highlights exchanging activities as imperative. These aimed at exchanging experience and ideas between FPUA members on issues related to gender equality challenges the associations face and how to enhance organisational development and sustainability of their associations. In the workshops, women and men were encouraged to participate in discussions of gender equality issues anchored in local realities, sharing their perspectives on how to address these in their communities, associations, and local governments (AWEN, 2020). This provided the FPUA members with an environment conducive to increasing knowledge and skills necessary for the continuation of their work, particularly in recognising the potential of women within associations and communities and families. At the same time, facilitation of the participation of men from the Northern region is identified as a challenge by the same KI who explains that many still perceive gender equality as an issue that regards only women and girls:

> We tried to convince men that it's the same importance for you as well to know about these issues. But because of their conception, they, let's say, stated that I will skip this, let the women come and listen about gender equality.

The practical equivalence between "women's issues" and gender illustrated by the above quote obscures the importance of gender as a constituent element of social relationships and as signifying relationship of power. This is noted by Cornwall and Rivas (2015), who talk about changing power relations as fundamental to empowerment. While the change in economic or human resources can positively impact women's lives, it is ultimately the social relationships that govern access to the resource in question that determines the extent to which choices and achievements are realised (Kabeer, 2005). Women themselves do not have sufficient transformative power to change structures regarding gender norms that are embedded in culture (Alsop *et al*., 2006). Therefore, it is difficult to see how women's increased capacity can result in greater control over their lives unless men take on a more active role in gender issues as members of associations and the community. Their empowerment is

dependent on collective action in the public arena and individual assertiveness in the private sphere (Kabeer, 2001). The renegotiation of the division of labour in domestic chores and childcare between the sexes is crucial to expand women's freedom of choices and actions to shape their own lives. Neglecting unpaid work may lead to incorrect inference about changes in women's wellbeing and the value of time, which in time will limit policy effectiveness across socioeconomic areas, specifically in empowerment interventions (Ferrant, Pesando, & Nowacka, 2014). The involvement of men in any capacity development activities focusing on gender equality is necessary for which tackling entrenched gender stereotypes can 'de-feminise' caregiving and shape gender norms that prevent men from shouldering equal caring responsibilities (Ferrant, Pesando, & Nowacka, 2014).

5.3.4 The Entrepreneurial Capacity of Rural Women

The GAP implementers bring up training and coaching on business development and management as a crucial aspect of enhancing women's participation in and influencing decision-making in FPUAs. They explain that women have different perspectives, needs, and ideas regarding what they want to do within forestry compared to men but lack the skills related to project proposal writing and resource mobilisation. The survey shows that female respondents have not been members as long as the men, as illustrated in figure 8. The men further state that they acquired their forest and pasture management skills from their long experience working in the forest. In contrast, most women indicate that the commune provided them with some guideline. Stemming from the fact that women have previously been excluded and are lower positioned in the value chain explains why development projects and business management skills differ. The country director from CNVP explains:

> Women have less knowledge about the natural resource management process because they have not been very much included due to mentalities. In preparing management plans, you need the participation of women in the different stages. Women giving more knowledge about this process is very important because after you have a proven management plan, you have to implement that in a time of 10 years.

Increasing the entrepreneurial capacity of women is therefore not only an essential step to advance within the value chain. It is furthermore allowing different sets of priorities to be expressed in the FPUAs, but such skills can also prepare them for a more equal place in the economy and society:

> Raising capacities, and making them [women] understand that economic empowerment and investing in their knowledge is something that they need for the future, not only for the existence of the association, but their own welfare.

> It's very important for economic independence in the rural areas, women need to be financed as entrepreneurs, with the local resources they have, they should be stimulated. There is a need and money is needed.

The value of this approach is the particular attention to knowledge and skill relating to business start-up and business management, which may have an empowering effect on their sense of self-worth by reducing women's economic dependence and increasing their income, as illustrated by the quotes above. However, depending on how such changes are received will determine the extent this would be successful (Kabeer, 2005). Businesswomen may, for instance, be less likely to thrive due to widespread societal belief that women have a subordinate role. Thus, ensuring equal access to markets and property, and resources is essential to impact women's economic status (Sida, 2015).
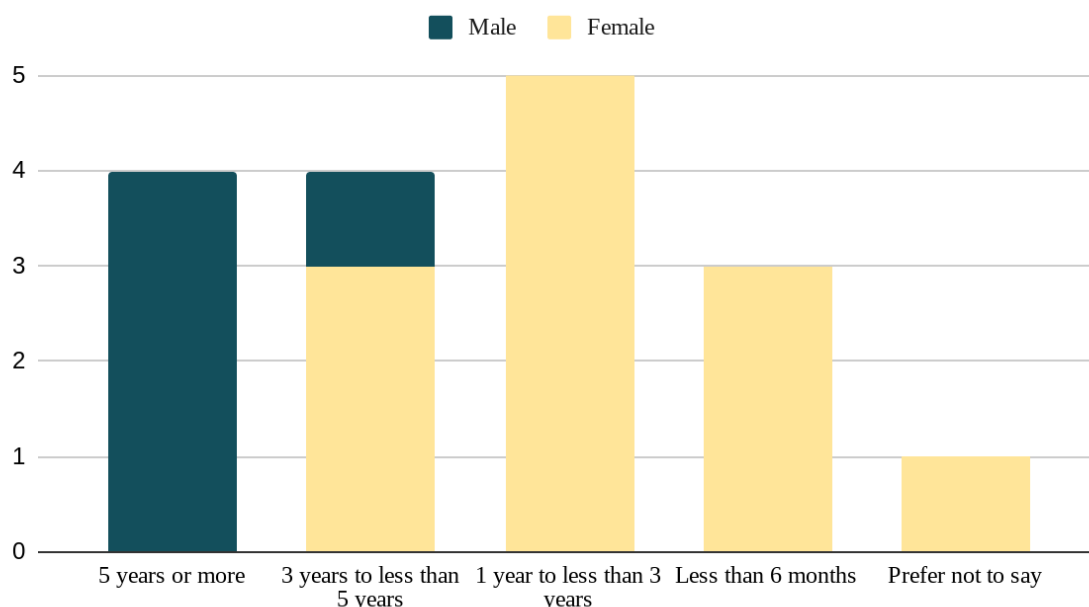

Figure 8: Membership in FPUAs disaggregated by gender

5.3.5 Collective Action

Capabilities and awareness of their rights are the driving force underpinning women's self-worth and agency to promote change and challenge gender-based stereotypes. As such, the notion of collective action is an essential aspect of empowerment since it is difficult for individuals to act against cultural norms (Kabeer, 2001). The GAP II team leader identifies the prevalence of gender stereotypes and patriarchal mentalities as a challenge, more so in the Northern region where collective action is needed in rural areas to increase women's ability to move freely in public and private places, as illustrated in the quote below:

> It's not good for a woman to go and work with a bunch of men, let's say in an association, and especially going into the forest with them for activities. If other women are involved, especially women that are respected from the communities from the smaller rural areas. Women of a certain age, 55-60, could be there to accompany the younger ones, then maybe it will be okay for them to participate if they are with these respected women from the community. This is a kind of strategy that we have used, especially in gathering women and meeting women from communities in order for them to be present, along with door to door activities and going to their homes and trying to bring together women from different homes in one place in order to speak.

As suggested by Kabeer (2001), the project of women's empowerment depends on collective solidarity to create conditions for change. Regarding creating collective action, the GAP I team leader mentions how political parties use strategies to identify local women leaders during electoral campaigns using the terminology "strong woman" to describe one who can face oppression. Similarly, strong women can serve as role models and organisers for other women in villages who may want to form groups for skill-building and addressing forest-related issues. For instance, the gender consultant from NCG met with a woman with traits of being solid and business-oriented who tried to convey this to other women to form their collective. The same informant highlights that an empowered woman who takes space becomes especially important in a setting where women may not be welcome to speak up. In a study by Acharaua and Gentle (2006), building the capacity of individual women leaders and an enabling environment to support women's initiative proved to be essential to yielding results within forest groups. They demonstrate how the women's empowerment

process in the forest user groups led to improved functions once women began participating and holding key decision-making positions. Due to the strong presence of women's organisations and other NGOs in the Northern region, the GAP II team leader explains that women are becoming more armed: "Women there [the Northern region] are active in participating in activities that are related to forestry and environment issues".

Women's involvement in collective struggles over forest resource and environmental issues suggest an essential step in redefining the meaning of gender through human expressions of individual agency and collective action (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter and Wangari, 1996). Thus, building the collective and individual capacity of women to participate is an essential basis for policymakers to keep the promises that they made on achieving gender equality and women's meaningful participation in local decision-making processes (Kabeer, 2005).

6. Conclusion

Ultimately, the vision behind increased involvement of women in decision-making is that it will lead to a sense of agency and empowerment. As a result, women can claim and exercise their rights and challenge gendered roles and responsibilities (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter and Wangari, 1996). While the patriarchal mentality and mindset are changing in Albania, it remains present in many rural areas where men continue to hold the majority of decision-making power. These mentalities take time, investment, and persistence to transform, so does the ethic of participatory development and empowerment (Cornwall, 2008). The findings from the study exemplify the issue of women's double-burden work and time poverty as determinants factor to women's participation and decision-making power in the FPUAs.

Furthermore, it was evident from the interviews that unequal resource distribution and the resulting spousal dependency as another determinant directly impact women's confidence, which is a crucial asset that facilitates a person´s ability to make decisions and act upon them. Gendered perceptions regarding women's perceived abilities impinge on their participation, who lacked a critical consciousness of how the gender regime limits their rights and dictates responsibilities. One of the significant findings is that the project has contributed towards the capacity building and awareness-raising of women and men members to provide an enabling environment for women to raise their voice. Providing training on gender awareness, business planning, and awareness of their rights is particularly important to enhance women's effective participation in FPUAs and strengthen their decision-making power. Such strategies create a feeling of 'we can' and being more assertive to joining decision-making processes (Cornwall & Ritas, 2005). The findings showed that providing an opportunity to represent women in FPUAs using gender quota is a prerequisite but not necessarily sufficient to ensure that women realise their desired goals. This stems from traditional gender norms internalised in structures that govern the behaviour and practices that are difficult to challenge and alter, which would require collective agency (Alsop, Bertelsen, & Holland, 2006). Equally critical is the role of men in the processes of women's

empowerment. This means increased attention to males' sensitisation to gender inequalities, especially in understanding the uneven burden.

For women's presence to be more than a 'token' and a legitimate form of representation, efforts are still needed to ensure effective and meaningful participation in decision-making. As suggested by Cornwall (2008), translating voice to influence requires supportive processes that help build capacity, nurture voice, and empower people. For women to be more empowered, continuous exposure to education and knowledge is crucial to sustaining change in behaviour, norms and practices. Narayan (2005) argues that women's empowerment is contingent on both top-down and bottom-up approaches strategies. Thus, the Government, external donors, and NGOs as the providers of knowledge and information are important key actors, as are women themselves as empowerment must start from within, individually and collectively.

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8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview 1 – GAP Implementers

Introduction	Follow-up questions
1. Can you tell me about your role in the implementation of the GAP?	
Women's role	
2. How would you describe women's role and responsibilities in the Albanian forest and pasture management; at the household and community level?	
3. In your opinion, do women's experiences and perspectives on forest and pasture management differ from that of men?	• If yes, how?
Challenges and opportunities	
4. What factors can you identify that hinder or enable women's equal participation in decision-making in FPUAs?	• Culture, norms and beliefs • National or subnational laws, regulations or policies • Governmental support
Gender Action Plan	
5. What *resources* does the GAP provide the participants with? How does this influence gender issues and women's participation in decision making?	• Capacity training • Awareness of rights • Involvement of men
6. How and to what extent would you say that women are involved in decision making, developing and implementing policies, and monitoring the forest management?	• Agency • If yes, how?
7. Did you observe changes in the empowerment of individual women?	
Improvements	
8. What aspects do you think are the most important to address to increase women participation in decision-making in FPUAs? 9. What factors do you think should be addressed to increase awareness of gender issues in the Albanian forest and pasture management?	

8.2   Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview 2 – Gender Expert Consultant

Interview with Anja Taarup Nordlund, NCG's senior gender expert who provides gender mainstreaming monitoring support to the Environmental Service Project in Albania throughout the process.

1–2 introduction questions   • How would you define gender mainstreaming?   • What are some of your previous experiences of providing gender mainstreaming monitoring support in different projects?
2–3 main questions   • Can you tell me about…   -your role in this project?   -your contact with the actors involved?   -your level in relation to how it reaches the beneficiaries, at local level?   • How do you view the challenges and opportunities to integrate a gender focus in this project, which consists of many different components? What has been successful and what has been less successful?
1 future question   • How can we continue to develop monitoring/gender equality work so that women become more than statistics/numbers to become voices that are included in decisions, planning, participation in forestry, and in these groups?
Lastly, discuss other actors of interest to potentially interview

8.3 Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview 3 – CNVP Representatives

Introduction	Potential follow-up
1. Can you tell me about CNVP and your role at the organisation?	
2. What is your organisation's experience with FPUAs regarding gender issues?	

Gendered roles in community-based forestry	
3. Do you see a difference in…	
- knowledge between women and men working with forest and pasture management in Albania?	
- rights and responsibilities between women and men working with forest and pasture management in Albania?	● If yes, how?
4. Do you consider that the forest associations' workers and members are equally represented in terms of age, ethnicity, and gender?	● Mirroring the community?

Resources, Agency, Achievements	
5. To what extent would you say that women are involved in decision-making processes in FPUAs?	
6. How does CNVP work to increase women's participation in decision-making processes?	● How do you cooperate? Their interest regarding the issue? Their view on your work?
7. Do the authority or other institutions work with support for gender mainstreaming?	
8. Have you used any national strategies in your work with gender?	● If so, can you give an example of these?
9. Have you observed any concrete changes in women's empowerment within your project interventions?	● Do you think these changes will remain after the end of the project?

The way forward	
10. What factors can you identify that hinder or enable women's equal participation in decision-making processes in FPUAs?	● Culture, norms and beliefs? ● Leadership?
11. What aspects do you think are the most important to address to	● Funding?

increase *women participation in decision-making* in FPUAs?

12. What factors do you think should be addressed to increase *awareness of gender issues* in forest and pasture management?

8.4 Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview 4 – MoTE Representative

Introduction	*Potential follow-up*
1. First, can you tell me about your work at MoTE and your role in the ESP?	

Gender mainstreaming	
2. What do you consider are the benefits of mainstreaming gender in the ESP?	
3. Do you see synergies between sustainable agricultural development and gender equality?	● *If so, how? Are the work divided or considered equally important, prioritised, financed for?*
4. Have you used any national strategies including gender strategies in the ESP?	
5. Since the beginning of the project up to today, have you seen concrete results on women's participation in decision-making processes in FPUAs?	● *If so, can you give an example of these? Do you think these changes will remain after the end of the project?*
6. Can you reflect on if there was something that should have been included that wasn't in addressing gender issues?	
7. Can you see any linkages between the overall achieved results of the ESP's objectives and gender mainstreaming?	● *Would there be different results without gender mainstreaming?*
8. Have you published anything about the project where you have followed up on the results, on behalf of the ministry or as a report to WB, Sida?	

The way forward	
9. What factors can you identify that hinder or enable women's equal participation in decision-making processes in FPUAs?	
10. How can we continue to develop monitoring/gender equality work so that women become more than	● *Probing - how do we give*

statistics/numbers to become voices that are included in
decisions, planning, participation in FPUAs?

meaning to the numbers?

8.5   Appendix E: Structured survey - FPUA members

Section 1: General Information		
Q1	Location (City/Village/Municipality)	
Section 2: Demographic Information		
Q2	Age	18-29 30-44 45-65 Over 65
Q3	Gender	Female Male No answer
Q4	Level of Education	University Not finished University 3=High School Not finished High School 5=Middle School Not finished Middle School 7=Elementary Not finished Elementary School Never went to school Other (Specify) Prefer not to say
Q5	Current job position	Self-employed Unemployed Prefer not to say
Q6	If employed, type of employment	Full Time Employer Part Time Employer Seasonal Employer Volunteer/Internship Prefer not to say Other:
Section 3: Representation in FPUA		
Q7	Have you ever worked in FPUAs?	Yes, I am currently working Yes, but I am not anymore 3=Never No answer / I don't know

Q8	How long have you been a member in your FPUA?	Less than 6 months 1 year to less than 3 years 3 years to less than 5 years 5 years or more
Q9	How often do they organize meetings?	More than 1 per month 1 per month 3-6 times/year 1-2 times/year Other specify: _____ Prefer not to say
Q10	How many of the meetings do you participate in?	Almost all of them Half of them Few Prefer not to say
Q11	Do you know if women are on the boards of the FPUA you belong to?	Yes they are No they aren't No answer / I don't know
Q12	Do you think women should be on the boards in the FPUAs?	Yes they are No they aren't Prefer not to say
Q13	Do you think the representation in your FPUA mirrors your community in terms of age and ethnicity?	Yes No Prefer not to say
Q14	How is the gender representation in your FPUA?	Only or almost only women Mostly women Approximately equal Mostly men Only or almost only men Prefer not to say
Section 4: Questions on "resources"		
Q15	Do you own any forestry and pastureland?	Yes No Prefer not to say
Q16	For what purpose do you use the forestry and pasture land? Please select all the types you used it for.	Fuel wood Timber Fodder Leaf litter Nuts Medicinal plants, wild fruits, leaves Prefer not to say Other:
Q17	How did you acquire general forest and land management or working skills?	The Commune has given me some guidelines We are trained by some international donors

		My long experience working on forest Prefer not to say Other:
Q18	Would you consider opportunities in FPUAs equal for males and females?	Yes, they are No, they aren't I don't have any information Prefer not to say

Section 5: Questions on "agency"

Q19	To what degree do you feel that you are able to voice your ideas and needs in the FPUA you belong to?	To a very high degree To a fairly high degree To a small degree Not at all Prefer not to say
Q20	Do you believe that your ideas and needs were incorporated at some point in the decision-making in your FPUA?	Yes No Prefer not to say
Q21	According to you, which actors are able to impose their opinions in the decision-making in your FPUA?	Only men Both men and women Prefer not to say Other (specify)
Q22	Would you like to be more/or less involved in decisions in the future?	More Less Same
Q23	Since the past 2-3 years, has your participation in decision-making increased, decreased or stayed the same?	Increased Decreased Stayed the same

Section 6: Questions on "achievements

Q24	When I say empowerment/empowered women, what do you think of? How would you describe it with your own words?	
Q25	Do you feel as an individual more/or less empowered in the past years?	More Less Same
Q26	Do you think the project activities led to these changes?	Yes No No answer / I don't know

8.6   Appendix F: Interview Consent Form

Research Project: Master's Thesis - Examining Women's Agency and Participation in Decision-Making in Forest and Pasture User's Associations in Albania.

Research investigator: Victoria Johansson

This is a letter of consent of your participation in a study of *women's agency and participation in decision-making in Forest and Pasture User's Associations* (FPUAs) in Albania. Your participation in this study is important because you have been involved in the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and possess important information on the challenges and opportunities that influence women's empowerment in the context of this project intervention. The research is being conducted as part of completing the Master's of Science degree in International Development and Management and it will be submitted as the final thesis at Lund University, Sweden.

This interview will be recorded, transcribed and used during the data analysis process. You may choose whether you would like your name disclosed or not. Should you consent to being quoted, you will be sent the exact statements for verifications from your side. Should you choose to remain anonymous, then any interview extracts or direct quotes will be treated confidentially and be anonymised. This is done by changing your name and disguising details which may reveal your identity. Moreover, you have the right to request the transcribed interview text for verification before the thesis is submitted in May 2021.

By signing this form I, the research participant, agree that:

1. I am participating voluntarily in this research project. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without any consequences.

2. I understand that I will not receive any reimbursement for my participation.

3. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.

4. The transcribed interview or extracts from the interview may be used as described above.

5. The original recordings will be retained on a password-protected phone and only accessed by Victoria Johansson, and destroyed after one year after the thesis is submitted to the university.

6. I have read the informed consent form.

7. I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview for verification.

8. In case data is collected through the research participant and not directly by the researcher of this study (i.e. structured questionnaire conducted with FPUAs members in Albania, administered by the research participant and/or their organisation), then it is the responsibility of researcher Victoria Johansson to not compromise the anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided by participants. For this reason I understand that the raw data is only to be used for the purpose of review by Victoria Johansson and that my organisation will be allowed to access a compilation of the findings and use it for secondary purposes after the completion and submission of the Master's thesis.

9. I understand that I am free to contact Victoria Johansson to seek further clarification and information.

I consent to having my identity disclosed in the research.   ☐ *Yes*   ☐ *No*

I consent to being quoted in the research. ☐ *Yes* ☐ *No*

Participant Name _____ Participant Signature_____

Signature of researcher

I, Victoria Johansson, promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Researcher's signature _____ Date _____