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DISSERTATION

**Albanian Labour Migrants in Greece during the “economic
crisis”: Labour Migrants in Ammouliani and Veroia**

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Contents

- 1. Introduction. p. 3**
- 2. Methodology of the case study research and basic characteristics of my interlocutors. p. 4**
- 3. The places of the research: Ammouliani and Veroia. p.5**
- 4. Migration theories. p. 9**
- 5. Securitization of migration. p.14**
- 6. Greek immigration policies. p.17**
- 7. Albania after1991: a migration explosion. p.18**
- 8. Place of origin. p.21**
- 9. Reasons for migration to Greece. p.22**
- 10. Passing the borders illegally. p.23**
- 11. Difficulties during the first years. p.24**
- 12. Economical status and the economic crisis. p. 28**
- 13. Transnational activities p. 40**
- 14. Being an Albanian migrant in Ammouliani and Veroia. p.44**
- 15. Plans for the future. 47**
- 16. Conclusions. p.48**
- 17. Bibliography-references p. 50**

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to examine Albanian migration in Greece during the economic crisis in two districts of Greece, Ammouliani (Chalkidiki) and Veroia (Imathia). Greece is witnessing the worst economic recession in its recent history. Following the global economic recession in 2008, a period of intense economic decline and insecurity began in Greece. The high public debt, the implementation of austerity measures and structural reforms in exchange for loans from the International Monetary Fund and the European Union, changed the social, economic and political reality in Greece. Unemployment rate has risen steadily from 2009 onwards, while income has steadily decreased. This economic recession has negative implications for all inhabitants of Greece, natives and migrants, especially the ones with low or middle size incomes. At the same time this situation has led to political and social instability. Under this context, I will examine the experiences and the life stories of Albanian migrants in Ammouliani and Veroia. Additionally, I will analyze the transnational activities of my interlocutors and the linkages they retain with Albania. The main thrust of my analysis is centred around the following questions: If and how the 'economic crisis' in Greece has affected the Albanian migrants in Ammouliani and Veroia; if and in what ways do the Albanian migrants retain linkages with their country of origin.

The structure of the thesis

The first part of this thesis refers to the methodology of my research and the basic characteristics of my interlocutors. In the following section I refer to Ammouliani and Veroia the places in which my interlocutors migrated. The third part deals with migration theories, focusing on the theory of the New Economics Labor of Migration (NELM) and on Transnational Theory. According to NELM, migration is seen as a family decision which has to do with income maximisation, income diversification and risk aversion. The theory of transnationalism is based on the lives and experiences of migrants whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation state. The next part of this thesis deals with the Securitization of Migration, analyzing the fact that the abolition of borders within EU space was accompanied with stricter controls and more prerequisites for the entrance and residence in the EU member- states of third country nationals. Subsequently, the evolution of the Greek migration laws is analyzed. After 1998 and until today, the Greek migration laws evolved gradually and made easier the entrance and staying of the Albanian migrants in Greece in comparison with the previous years. But according to the information of my interlocutors there are problems in putting these laws into practise. Greek migration laws evolved very slowly because of slow bureaucracy and lack of necessary infrastructure. In the next sections, I refer to the place of origin of my interlocutors and the reasons that they decided to migrate in Veroia and Ammouliani. Subsequently, the difficulties that my interlocutors faced during the first years of their settlement in Greece are discussed. Then, I examine the working conditions and the economic status of my interlocutors before

and after the economic crisis. In the following section, the transnational activities of the Albanian migrants in Ammouliani and Veroia are analyzed. Subsequently, I refer to the interaction of the Albanian migrants with the Greek people in Ammouliani and Veroia and to their plans for the future. At the last part conclusions are drawn.

Methodology of the case study research and basic characteristics of my interlocutors

This multiple case study research was based on the experiences and the life stories of eight interlocutors in Ammouliani and twelve interlocutors in Veroia. Semi-structured interviews were conducted during July 2013 –October 2013. The sample was chosen first of all according to informal social networks in Veroia and Ammouliani and it was expanded with the snow ball sampling tactic. The snow ball sampling tactic led me to Albanian migrants who are living in Veroia and Ammouliani for a long time. Beginning with the Albanian migrants that I or my friends and relatives knew, they introduced me to their friends and relatives. Unfortunately, I couldn't have access to Albanian migrants who migrated in Greece recently (the one who migrated most recently in Greece was in 2007). The use of the snow ball tactic helped me, because the interlocutors that I found through this tactic were more open to me since their friends or relatives introduced me to them. Also cold calls were made in the workplaces of Albanian migrants in Ammouliani. My questionnaire was planned in order to give light in two particular themes: the transnational activities of the Albanian migrants and the ways the new sociopolitical and economic environment in Greece after the outbreak of the economic crisis affected their lives. Additionally, the reasons that they decided to migrate in Greece were discussed, as well as their choice of Veroia or Ammouliani. Finally we talked about their plans for the future. In order to have an insight view to the experiences of my interlocutors and create trust between us I used open questions. On the other hand limited closed questions were used too, in order to compare the different information and to escape the danger of going beyond the subject.

The conversations with the interlocutors took place in their workplace, in their houses, in my house and in cafes in Veroia and in Ammouliani. Although their workplace wasn't my preferable place for the conversations, since I knew that the presence of their employers might affect their answers, I chose this place (for four cases in Veroia and four in Ammouliani), because of the lack of time of these interlocutors, who especially in Ammouliani didn't have spare time since they work a lot of hours during the summer. At the same time I had the opportunity to see the working conditions of my interlocutors and to observe the relationship they had with their employers.

Additionally, two conversations took place in the house where I was living in Ammouliani and three in my house in Veroia. I was invited in the houses of three interlocutors in Veroia where we had the opportunity to talk without the time pressure in a trusty environment. These interlocutors were more open to me, especially the ones that invited me to their homes. At the same time I had the chance to see their living conditions .The rest of the

conversations took place in the cafes in Ammouliani (three cases) and in Veroia (one case).

In Ammouliani three of my interlocutors were women and five of them men. In Veroia four of my interlocutors were women and eight of them men.

In Veroia ten of my interlocutors are between 39-53 years old and the rest of them between 24-39 years old. In Ammouliani three of them are between 40-44 years old and five of them are between 20 and twenty eight years old. According to the research of Liberaki and Labrianidis 64, 6 % (2001)¹ of the Albanians migrants were at a working age 18-55. The research of Maroukis in Athens² (2005) also leads to the same conclusion.

One of my interlocutors in Ammouliani has finished the basic education in Albania. Three of them have finished the secondary education, one of them has a degree as a teacher and two of them are studying at the university, one in Crete and one in Tirana. It is important to note that my younger interlocutors have gone to school in Albania for some years and then migrated to Greece and finished the secondary education in the Greek school. Seven of my interlocutors in Veroia have finished the basic education in Albania. Five of them have finished the secondary education in Albania and one among them after coming to Greece has finished a private school in Thessaloniki, where he learned how to be a butcher. It is very interesting to note that none of them is illiterate. At the following section I will refer to the places of my research.

The places of the research: Ammouliani and Veroia

Ammouliani, the only inhabited island of central Macedonia, with a permanent population of 600 inhabitants, located in the Gulf of mountain Athos, is a very interesting place to examine how the Albanians interacted with the local population in this small island and what are the linkages they retain with their country of origin. Until 1925 the island was a metohi of Holy Monastery of Vatopedi inhabited mainly by 2-3 monks, who were managing the land property, having assistants from the surrounding area. At the early of 1925, the island was vested to the refugees who came from Minor Asia, and more concrete from the islands of Propontis. Coming from these areas the refugees brought with them their culture, customs and their tradition, brought life to the island and built a local society. I chose this place because it is very interesting to examine how this local society was affected by the Albanian migrants who started coming to the island during the 1990s and how the old refugees interacted with the newcomers Albanian migrants.

Salamone in his outstanding work "In the Shadow of the Holy Mountain" studies in great depth a small group of Greeks, who were resettled

¹ Λαμπριανίδης Λ., Λυμπεράκη Α., (2005) Αλβανοί μετανάστες στη Θεσσαλονίκη: Διαδρομές.

Ενημερίες και Παράδρομικές Δημόσιες Εγκυρίες, Αθήνα, Πατάκης σ.197. The research was conducted in

2000 in Thessalonica (500 households of Albanian migrants). Hereafter: Αλβανοί μετανάστες στη

Θεσσαλονίκη.

² Μαρούκης, Θ. , (2010) Οικονομική Μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα: Αγόρα Εργασίας και Κοινωνική

Ένταξη, Αθήνα, Εκδόσεις Παπαζήση, σ. 126. The research was conducted in Athens in 2003 (560 households of Albanian migrants). Hereafter: Οικονομική μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα
δα

form the Marmaras islands in Ammouliani. The story that he tells is first of all a story of survival of a group of people who managed to deal with extraordinary circumstances and to build a community in Ammouliani maintaining their identity and preserving their traditions. Although they faced great difficulties gradually they established an economy which was not only viable but eventually very successful. Salamone through the experiences of these Greek people examines first of all the Ottoman Greek legacy of Asia Minor. According to the sayings of the old refugees in Ammouliani two important things about village life in the Marmaras community were: first of all the inner village loyalties which superseded the distinctions between the rich and the poor residents and secondly the fact that each village managed their own affairs without outside interference, even from the Turkish police. As Salamone points out this strong inner village loyalty and political and administrative independence led the refugees to choose Ammouliani, as a remote and not until then an inhabited island, as their place of residence in Greece in order to re-establish some semblance of their former community's social structure and traditional way of life³.

Community life in the Marmaras islands was collective. The collective life was thoroughly based on two communal enterprises through which the group activities of the entire year were chronologically carried out: the sequence of local religious festivals, based on the liturgical cycle of the Orthodox Church and the seasonal tasks requiring the majority of the communities' manpower set by the fishing industry. In the Marmaras community fishing villages a wealthy man was traditionally designated a *nikokiris*, and the local profession which held the first rank in terms of social status was that of the fishing captain or *karavokiris*. In the villages such men constituted the local elite and provided work for many families. The term *nikokiris* had a broad meaning. The *nikokiris* was a *paterfamilias*, a man with patriarchal responsibilities to discharge above all. His prestige laid not simply in his wealth, but in his *proneia* and his personal power as a producer for the families of many workers. The emphasis was on his efficacy to produce both work (*ergasia*) and works (*erga*). *Nikokireoi* were respected by the villagers and their social status was recognised. Salamone divides the social structure of the villages of Marmaras in three groups. At the top was the first *nikokireoi* who had estates consisting of a fishing company, vineyards, farmland, small workshops etc. Then there was the second *nikokireoi* who were self employed and not in anyone's debt and finally there was those more or less dependent families who did not have enough money to be self-employed. As Salamone argues the ethical bond holding the various social classes of the islands together was the common and universal aspiration on the part of all its residents to become a *nikokiris*.⁴

After the events of the First World War and the failure of the Greek assault in Central Turkey, the Greeks of the Marmaras islands decided to leave in late September 1922, because they knew that the Turks would

³ Salamone S.D, *In the Shadow of the Holy Mountain: The Genesis of a Rural Greek Community and its Refugee Heritage*, East European Monographs Boulder. pp.39-45

⁴ *ibid* pp.53-83

revenge on them. It is important to note that the people of Gallimi were transported to Greece altogether as a community on a steamship and the inhabitants of Passalimani did the same. They all first went to Salonica. Their living conditions in Greece were horrible during the first years of their settlement. It was very difficult for them to find food and accommodation and diseases spread amongst them. They also faced unemployment and in many cases the hostility of the Greek people. One appellation which the refugees found particularly disturbing was that of Turkseed or Turksperm. The Passalimaniotes were the first to trace the island of Ammouliani and they thought that it was the ideal place to resettle as a community. The Pasalimaniotes tried to convince their Galimite compatriots to come and join them in their resettlement in Ammouliani. It is important to note that the refugee leadership, the uprooted nikokireoi of the Galimites took the role of persuading their compatriots to resettle in Ammouliani. They chose Ammouliani in order to re-establish the autonomy they enjoyed in the Marmaras islands and to be together as a community. The Pasalimaniotes were unwilling to be mixed with native Greeks or with other refugees' communities. Salamone concludes that they decided to invite Galimites as they failed to draw together enough Pasalimaniotes. That is why they then turned to the task of persuading Galimites their preferably kin-related community to join them.⁵

Unfortunately the refugees had to face many difficulties in Ammouliani. As already mentioned the island until 1925 was a metohi of Holy Monastery of Vatopedi inhabited mainly by 2-3 monks, who were managing the land property, having approximately 20 assistants. Thus, there were only a few houses for them to use and it was very difficult for them to find food. Men depended on whatever day-labour they could find and upon subsistence farming, which produced, even in good times only enough bread for half of the year. In order to survive many of the men went to neighbouring monasteries of Mount Athos to work, but they were paid very little money. The fishing industry was underdeveloped and unproductive. The refugees' hardships and misfortune characteristically changed from year to year through a cycle of disease, famine and war. From 1925 until 1960, their economic circumstances and general standard of living remained stable, except from a period of prosperity between the years of 1941-1945 when the island served as a crucial link in a chain of black market operations in northern Greece. Ammouliani was in constant trend of economic depression and underdevelopment. The harsh economic conditions under which the refugees had to live, was reason enough for despair. But, true to their Asia Minor tradition, what they lacked through contact with the outside world, they were often able to provide themselves from within, drawing on their resources of their heritage of social independence. The new settlers set about reconstructing their shuttered lives in the context of their new community, evolving for themselves a new social order, a new way of life, and new reasons for their seemingly inexhaustible will to survive as a community.⁶

⁵ ibidpp.87-109

⁶ ibidpp.113-165

During the sixties the village was given official permission to install two large oil tanks on the island, an advantage aiding in the mechanization of the island's fishing fleet. Two telephones with the mainland were also installed. The most significant progress on the island was the organisation of the fishing industry. Modernizing fishing techniques were introduced in Ammouliani by Kavala. One of the islanders had been working in Kavala for many years and after returning to Ammouliani, he brought with him new technology for the fishing company. With the advances in technique and the resulting re-organisations of the island's fishing companies, there was a flurry of reinvestment in the local fishing industry and new alignment of fishing partnerships. ⁷Under these developments, as time passed Ammouliani's economy became relatively prosperous in comparison with the shortcomings it had in the past and in comparison with other rural Greek communities. One important development was that electricity was brought to the island in 1974. Most importantly, tourists, mainly from Thessaloniki, but also from abroad (mainly Germany), started coming to the island in the 1980s. The tourist domain developed to a large extent as time passed and it is now one of the main economic resources of the island. While in the past there were few hotels and hostels on the island now it is full of them. Also many restaurants, café-bars and tourist shops operate in the island during the summer time.

On the other hand it is very interesting to compare the experiences of the Albanian migrants in Ammouliani with the experiences of the Albanian migrants in Veroia, my hometown. Veroia, located in the eastern foot of the Vermio Mountain, is a very old city first mentioned in the writings of Thucydides and has a population of 66.630 according to the 2011 census.⁸ Veroia was an important commercial and religious center during the Byzantine period. Its former religious character is evident in the city today by the 52 Christian churches of the town. After the beginning of the 20th century Veroia became the place of residence for refugees from Pontus, Minor Asia, Russia and Thrace. In 1915 Veroia had 815 refugees and in 1926 17.649.⁹ After the fall of communism many migrants from the Former Soviet Union and the South East European states came into the town. The modern town has cotton and woollen mills and trades in wheat, fruit, and vegetables. Lignite mines operate in the area. Up until the end of the 20th Century, Veroia's economy was mainly based on the export of local agricultural products to the South Eastern and Central Europe. These exports declined steadily after 2000. Veroia's economy is traditionally characterised by a weak productive base and a predominance of small and medium size enterprises. Similar to other Greek cities, the tertiary sector is expanding while the secondary and primary sectors are in decline. Unemployment rates in the prefecture of Imathia have been high for some time, with about 15.34% of the active population unemployed (2004-2006). The main outcomes of the economic crisis in Veroia

⁷ ibid pp.169-202

⁸ www.statistics.gr

⁹ Ζερδαλής Σ., Εγκατάσταση των Προσφύγων στη Βέροια (1914-1930), Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, Παιδαγωγική Σχολή Φλώρινας, Τμήμα Δημοτικής Εκπαίδευσης, θέμα πτυχιακής εργασίας 1998.

are the unemployment rate which has risen to 30% (2012) and delocalisation of productive units in neighbouring countries or prefectures with a lower cost base.¹⁰ Before analysing the context of my research I will refer to migration theories, focusing on Transnational Theory.

MIGRATION THEORIES

In order to discuss the experiences and the life stories of Albanian migrants in Ammouliani and Veroia I will first examine the main theories on migration.

Migration is a phenomenon which has a fundamental historical role as part of human experience from the remote past to the present and on into the future. The roving instinct, it is said, is intrinsic to human nature: the need to search for food, pasture and resources; the desire to travel and explore; but also to conquer and possess. Population movements have been the carriers of innovation from one region to another.¹¹

According to scholars there are many types of migration: internal vs. international, temporary vs. permanent, and regular vs. irregular migration, voluntary and forced migration, for instance 'economic' migrants vs. refugees. But as Russell King argues all these categorisations are useful up to a point, but can break down in practice. Intra-EU migration can be classified as both internal mobility within the free-movement space of the EU, and as international between the different EU states. Temporary migration can lead into permanent settlement, as migrants who intended to stay for a limited period of time continually postpone their return until it never happens. Irregular migrants can become legalised through special schemes for regularisation and regular migrants can become irregular after their permits expire or because of the bureaucratic obstacles and delays they face in renewing them.¹² Finally the forced/voluntary divide is seen often to be too simplistic in practice. Sales critically notes that the theoretical distinction between refugee migration and 'voluntary' economic migration neglects the fact that conflicts can produce economic devastation which forces people to leave, who do not satisfy the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees which stipulates a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion or political beliefs. The same author goes on to point out that 'conflicts are increasingly related to the breakdown of state structures which makes economic and political reasons for emigration strongly intertwined'. A case in point would be post-1990 emigration from Albania, where the collapse of both the political

¹⁰ http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/general_library/Crise_urbact__16-11_web.pdf

¹¹ McNeill, W. and Adams, R.S. (eds.) (1978). Human Migration: Patterns and Policies. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. in King Russell, (2012), Theories and Typologies of Migration: an Overview and a Primer, Willy Brandt Series of Working Papers in International Migration and Ethnic Relations, 3/12, p. 4

¹² King Russell, (2012), Theories and Typologies of Migration: an Overview and a Primer, Willy Brandt Series of Working Papers in International Migration and Ethnic Relations, 3/12 p. 9

and the economic system created what Barjaba and King called 'economic refugees'.¹³ The concept 'economic refugees' illustrates that many people are forced to leave their country because of economic insecurity. They flee in order to escape oppressive poverty and ensure their survival and the well-being of their families. In that case migration is not a matter of choice, but a matter of survival and consequently a humanitarian matter.

Thus, migration is a complex phenomenon and is too diverse to be explained in a single theory. Additionally as Clifford Jansen¹⁴ wrote more than forty years ago, the subject matter of migration has been claimed by many social-science disciplines. Geographers, sociologists and economists (including economic historians) have been engaged in migration studies, but other disciplines have also been involved, such as social psychology, political science, anthropology, history, demography, law, media and cultural studies. In this paper I will focus on international labour migration.

A variety of theoretical models has been proposed to explain why international migration begins, and although each ultimately seeks to explain why some people choose to migrate to another country, they employ radically different concepts, assumptions, and frames of reference. Neoclassical economics focuses on differentials in wages and employment conditions between countries, and on migration costs; it generally conceives of movement as an individual decision for income maximization. The "new economics of migration," in contrast, considers conditions in a variety of markets, not just labour markets. It views migration as a household decision taken to minimize risks to family income or to overcome capital constraints on family production activities.¹⁵

Push-pull models dominated much migration thinking during the mid twentieth century and reflect the neoclassical economics paradigm. According to this theory and its extensions, international migration is caused by geographic differences in the supply of and demand for labour. Countries with a large endowment of labour relative to capital have a low equilibrium market wage, while countries with a limited endowment of labour relative to capital are characterized by a high market wage, as depicted graphically by the familiar interaction of labour supply and demand curves. The resulting differential in wages causes workers from the low- wage country to move to the high-wage country. Corresponding to the above macroeconomic model is a microeconomic model of individual choice. In this scheme, individual rational actors decide to migrate because a cost-benefit calculation leads them to expect a positive net return, usually monetary, from movement. International migration is conceptualized as a form of investment in human

¹³ Sales, R. (2007). Understanding Immigration and Refugee Policy. Contradictions and Continuities. Bristol: The Policy Press in *ibid* p.9

¹⁴ Jansen, C. (1969). Some Sociological Aspects of Migration, in Jackson, J.A. (ed.) *Migration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 60-73 in *ibid* p.10

¹⁵ Douglas S. Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, J. Edward Taylor, (1993), *Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal*, *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3, p.432

capital. People choose to move to where they can be most productive, given their skills¹⁶.

According to Arango, the neoclassical theory fails to explain, first, why so few people actually migrate, despite the apparent incentives to do so; and second, why some countries have high rates of out-migration whilst others, with the same structural economic conditions, have very low rates. Additionally one of its most important failures is to consider personal, family or socio-cultural factors; to acknowledge a political reality of multiple barriers to international movement; to pay attention to the varied histories of colonialism that linked certain countries together and not others; and to take on board the systemic structuring of the world economy in terms of dependency and underdevelopment¹⁷.

The so-called 'new economics' of migration has made a major impact on the theorisation of migration since the 1980s. Its leading supporter has been Oded Stark. There are two main innovative aspects of the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM). The first is to recognise that migration decisions are not individual decisions but joint decisions taken within the household, and for different members of the household. Sometimes the scale of the decision-making unit moves further into the meso-scale of extended families and wider communal groups. The second is that rational-choice decision-making is not only about wage and income maximisation but is also about income diversification and risk aversion. Taking these two perspectives together, it can be seen that families and households are in an appropriate position to control risks to their economic well-being by diversifying their income-earning and livelihood resources into a 'portfolio' of different activities, spreading their labour resources over space and time. One of the key benefits of international migration to a wage-labour destination is that some of the income earned can be sent back in the form of remittances. This monetary return can be used to hedge against other activities failing, to cover the basic costs of everyday life (food, clothing, children's education etc.), or to invest in some new project such as a house, land or small business. Additionally, neoclassically-framed migration does not predict return, which can only take place by people who have miscalculated the balance of costs and benefits in migration: hence returns are movements of 'failure'. In NELM theory on the other hand returnees are considered 'successes'. These are people who have achieved their 'target' in migrating and then return home with their accumulated savings, perhaps in order to use them for new investments.¹⁸ But as Cassarino argues the success-failure paradigm cannot be fully explanatory of the return migration phenomenon. It tends to isolate the decisions and strategies of the returnees from their social

¹⁶ *ibid* 433-434

¹⁷ Arango, J. (2004). Theories of International Migration. In D. Joly (ed.), *International Migration and the New Millennium*. Aldershot: Ashgate in King Russell, (2012), *Theories and Typologies of Migration: an Overview and a Primer*, *Willy Brandt Series of Working Papers in International Migration and Ethnic Relations*, 3/12 p 14.

¹⁸ Douglas S. Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, J. Edward Taylor, (1993), *Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal*, *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3

and political environment, without correlating them with contextual factors at home. Return cannot be analysed solely with reference to the individual experience of the migrant, but also with reference to social and institutional factors in home-countries.¹⁹ Additionally, in many cases, home-land policies tend to introduce incentives for repatriation of migrants and funds.

NELM is not without its critics. Arango points out that it is limited to the supply side of labour migration, and seems best when applied to poor, rural settings. It assumes, moreover, that intra-household relationships are harmonious, leading to unanimous collective decision-making. In other words, the family or household is treated as a black box without acknowledging the tensions or conflicts that are contained therein – such as patriarchal practices– which might lead to ‘distorted’ decision making. Finally, it does not apply to the common situation where the entire household migrates²⁰.

Migration and migration-related topics have a prominent place in the discipline of anthropology. Among an assortment of topics, anthropologists are involved in the study of areas such as migration and identities, citizenship, law and legal status, religion, family and kinship, children and ‘the second-generation’, language, education, health, media consumption, internet use, the construction of ‘home’, sexuality, remittances, hometown associations, development, local politics, workplaces and labour markets.

Considering all of these, if there is a particular anthropological approach, focus, or set of questions around migration that distinguishes it from other social sciences concerned with the topic; they are summarized well by Caroline Brettell who describes anthropology’s attention to:

the articulation between the place whence a migrant originates and the place or places to which he or she goes. This includes exploration of how people in local places respond to global processes. Equally, anthropology’s focus on cultures, which includes the study of the interaction between beliefs and behaviour, of corporate groups, and of social relationships, has resulted in an emphasis in migration studies on matters of adaptation and culture change, on forms of social organization that are characteristic of both the migration process and the immigrant community, and on questions of identity and ethnicity.²¹

During the 1970s and 1980s, the anthropology of migration was particularly characterized by studies of ethnic identity, its maintenance, construction or reproduction among migrants. Since the early 1990s, while ethnicity has remained of much interest to anthropologists, the anthropology of migration

¹⁹ Cassarino, J. P., Theorising Return migration: a revisited conceptual approach to return migrants, EUI Working Papers RSCAS, No. 2004/02.p.4-5

²⁰ Arango, J. (2004). Theories of International Migration. In D. Joly (ed.), *International Migration and the New Millennium*. Aldershot: Ashgate in King Russell, (2012), Theories and Typologies of Migration: an Overview and a Primer, *Willy Brandt Series of Working Papers in International Migration and Ethnic Relations*, 3/12 p 23

²¹ Brettell, C.B.(2000) ‘Theorizing migration in anthropology: The social construction of networks, identities, communities and globalscapes,’ in C.B. Brettell and J.F. Hollifield (eds), *Migration Theory*, New York: Routledge, pp. 97-135 in Vertovec S., (2007), Introduction: New directions in the anthropology of migration and multiculturalism, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol. 30 No. 6 p. 963

has witnessed the steady growth of transnationalism as perhaps its foremost topic of interest.²²

Glick Schiller was the first scholar to use the term 'transmigrants'. According to Schiller transmigrants are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation state. A growing number of persons live dual lives: speaking two languages, having home in two countries and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders²³.

Theorists have formulated typologies in order to distinguish the different types of transnationalism. According to Portes and Guarnizo and Landolt an initial working typology grounded on this concept would distinguish between the economic initiatives of transnational entrepreneurs who mobilize their contacts across borders in search of suppliers, capital and markets versus the political activities of party officials, government functionaries, or community leaders whose main goals are the achievement of political power and influence in the sending or receiving countries. A second useful distinction is between transnational activities initiated and conducted by powerful institutional actors, such as multinational corporations and those that are the result of grass-roots initiatives by immigrants and their home country counterparts. Grass-roots transnational activities were not initiated by actions or policies of governments, national or local. Nor were they the brainchild of large corporate managers. Instead, these activities commonly developed in reaction to governmental policies and to the condition of dependent capitalism fostered on weaker countries, as immigrants and their families sought to circumvent the permanent subordination to which these conditions condemned them.²⁴

A third and more diverse category comprises the manifold socio-cultural enterprises oriented towards the reinforcement of a national identity abroad or the collective enjoyment of cultural events and goods. This type of transnationalism includes the travels of musical folk groups to perform before immigrant audiences, the organization of games in the national sport between immigrant teams and those from the home country and the celebration of holidays abroad with participation of prominent political or artistic figures who travel to immigrant centres for that purpose²⁵.

The most important value of the transnational theory in reformulating migration theory is that it questions the linear, push-pull, no-return model. Additionally, it builds on theories of migration networks and it also places a big question-mark over the extensive body of literature devoted to the integration/assimilation of migrants in host countries²⁶. The implication is that

²² *ibid*

²³ SCHILLER, NINA GLICK, From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration, *Anthropological Quarterly*, 68:1 (1995:Jan.) p.48

²⁴ Portes, A., Guarnizo, L.E. and Landolt, P. (1999). The Study of Transnationalism: Pitfalls and Promises of an Emergent Research Field, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(2) p. 221

²⁵ *ibid*

²⁶ Portes, A. (2003). Theoretical Convergences and Empirical Evidence in the Study of Immigrant Transnationalism, *International Migration Review*, 37(3) in King Russell, (2012), *Theories and*

clear-cut dichotomies of 'origin' or 'destination' and categories such as 'permanent', 'temporary', and 'return' migration are increasingly difficult to sustain in a world in which the lives of migrants are increasingly characterised by circulation and simultaneous commitment to two or more societies.²⁷ This has fundamental implication for the study of migration and development, because this implies that integration in receiving societies and commitment to origin societies are not necessarily substitutes, but can be complements. It has long been assumed that migrants' integration would necessarily coincide with a gradual loosening of ties with societies of origin. This explains much of the prior pessimism on the sustainability of remittances as well as the fact that migrants' contribution to development in origin countries was typically linked to return migration. However, it has become increasingly clear that this is not necessarily the case, and that many migrant groups maintain strong transnational ties over sustained periods. Migrants' engagement with origin country development is not conditional on their return, but can be sustained through telecommunication, holiday visits and pendular or circular migration patterns²⁸

The transnational activities of Albanian migrants in Ammouliani and Veroia, is a focal point in this paper and will be analyzed below. Before that analysis of the case study research I would like to commend on the way migration is articulated within the borders of the European Union.

Securitization of migration

In order to have an inner view of the experiences of the Albanian migrants in Ammouliani and Veroia, I think that it is important to examine first how migration is seen within the borders of the European Union and secondly the Greek migration policies.

As Huysmans argues, although in the 1950s and the 1960s immigrants were seen in the Western European states (although it is difficult to generalize between the different states) with a permissive view, primarily as an extra workforce this policy changed in the late 60s and early 70s. There was a shift from a permissive immigration policy to a control-oriented restrictive policy. One of the most significant decisions of this period was Council Regulation 1612/68 which distinguished between the right of free movement of nationals of member states and the right of free movement of nationals from third countries. Ugur argues that this decision laid the foundation for "fortress Europe" in the area of immigration. The idea that citizens of member states can benefit from special rights was confirmed at the

Typologies of Migration: an Overview and a Primer, Willy Brandt Series of Working Papers in International Migration and Ethnic Relations p. 25

²⁷ De Haas H. 2005. International migration, remittances and development: Myths and facts Third World Quarterly 26:1269-84 in De Haas, (2008), Migration and development a theoretical perspective, International Migration Institute, James Martin 21st Century School, University of Oxford, Working Papers, p. 40-41

²⁸ De Haas, (2008), Migration and development a theoretical perspective, International Migration Institute, James Martin 21st Century School, University of Oxford, Working Papers, p. 40-41

Paris summit of 1973. There it was also decided that the community should formulate common legislation for foreigners.²⁹

The issue of migration has increasingly given rise to intense political debates after the official ban on labour migration decided by the majority of European countries in the 1970s. It has been linked to a wide array of socio-economic or political problems such as criminality, breaches of law and order, unemployment, abuse of social benefits, epidemics, cultural and religious threats, social unrest, and political instability. Some political leaders and media outlets have even described it as a security threat. One of the best examples is the 1990 Convention applying the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985 which connects immigration and asylum with terrorism, transnational crime and border control. In order to prevent or dissuade people from migrating, states have taken a wide array of legislative measures to reduce access to their territory, such as visa policies and carrier sanctions. They have also reduced the entitlements of the migrants and asylum-seekers that stay on their territories, with regards to conditions for family reunification, access to the labour market, and access to social benefits for example.³⁰

The Dublin Convention in 1990 (replaced by Dublin Regulation in 2003) limits the ability of states to pass the buck in the case for application for asylum. One of the principal aims of the Dublin Regulation is to prevent an applicant from submitting applications in multiple Member States. Another aim is to reduce the number of "orbiting" asylum seekers, who are shuttled from member state to member state. However, since the country that a person first arrived in is responsible for dealing with the application, this puts excessive pressure on border areas, where states are often least able to offer asylum seekers support and protection. Currently, those being transferred under Dublin are not always able to access an asylum procedure. It sets out criteria (place of application family links etc.) determining the state that must process the asylum application. As Huysmans states the Dublin Convention is heavily over determined by a policy aimed at reducing the numbers of applications. Making it impossible to admit application for asylum in different member states it reduces the chances of being accepted which obviously deter some refugees from seeking asylum in Western Europe.³¹

Moreover, such legislative changes have been accompanied by an increase in the budgets devoted to migration controls in several Member States. They have invested vast amounts of money into sophisticated technologies in order to increase their control of migration. It is in this context that EU Member States have gradually increased their co-operation on asylum and migration. The Treaty of Maastricht (1993) gave the EU some limited

²⁹ Huysmans, J, (2000), The European Union and the Securitisation of Migration, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol38, no5.

³⁰ *ibid* and Leonard, S, 'Securitization and the Other: Theorising Immigration and Asylum Policies', Paper presented at the SGIR Sixth Pan-European International Relations Conference, 12-15 September 2007, Turin (Italy) p. 3-5

³¹ Huysmans, J, (2000), The European Union and the Securitisation of Migration, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol38, no5.

competence on 'justice and home affairs'. This new policy area included asylum, migration and external borders matters, alongside traditional international security problems like drugs, civil and criminal judicial cooperation, customs cooperation and police cooperation. With the Treaty of Amsterdam, which entered into force in 1999, Member States identified justice and home affairs as one of the Union's priority policies. They adopted an ambitious five-year action plan (1999-2004) – the so-called 'Tampere Programme' – which included the development of a common policy on asylum and migration. A wide range of measures were subsequently adopted, notably several directives setting minimum standards with respect to various aspects of asylum systems. Another area marked by substantial progress was that of operational cooperation between Member States to strengthen border controls and combat illegal immigration.³²

Since then, asylum and migration issues have remained at the top of the political agenda of the EU, as a new five-year work programme (the 'Hague programme') has laid out an ambitious series of measures to be adopted during the period 2005-2010.³³

I agree with Huysmans, who argues that the key development in the Europeanization of migration is a spillover of the economic project of the internal market into an internal security project. Immigration and asylum have been integrated into a policy framework that defines and regulates issues arising from the abolition of internal border control.³⁴ In other words the free movement of people within the borders of the European Union has been accompanied by stricter controls and difficulties for the movement of people of third countries into the European's Union's borders. As King puts it, it is easy to be a migrant if you come from an EU member state, North America or from a state of the "developed world" but if you are from a poor country in Africa, Latin America or parts of Asia forget it. But even within the borders of the European Union, although the free movement of EU citizens is a fundamental value, central and Northern EU states created borders control against Bulgarians and Romanians to keep them out of potential misuse of public funds. Bulgarians and Romanians gained the right to visa-free travel to the UK in 2007, when their countries joined the EU. But there were temporary restrictions on the kind of jobs they could take. Employers had to apply for work permits and migrants for an "accession worker card". Low-skilled workers were restricted to existing quota schemes in the agricultural and food processing sectors. Apart from Britain eight countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxemburg, Malta, Spain, the Netherlands) imposed restrictions of some kind on Romanians and Bulgarians. These restrictions were dropped on 1 January 2014, having been extended to the maximum period of seven years. Bulgarians and Romanians will be entitled to claim the

³² Leonard, S, 'Securitization and the Other: Theorising Immigration and Asylum Policies', Paper presented at the SGIR Sixth Pan-European International Relations Conference, 12-15 September 2007, Turin (Italy) p. 3-5

³³ *ibid*

³⁴ Huysmans, J, (2000), 'The European Union and the Securitisation of Migration', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol38, no5

same benefits as other EU citizens. However, the UK government has rushed through legislation to toughen the rules around migrants claiming benefits. Romanians and Bulgarians will not have unrestricted access to UK social security benefits and tax credits, in common with all people coming to the UK from the European Economic Area - the EU member states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Under new tighter rules that came into force on 1 January, all EU migrants will have to wait three months before they can claim jobseeker's allowance and other out-of-work benefits. The government says they will then face a more robust residence test before any claim is approved. This will include questions about their efforts to find work and English language skills. If they pass the test, they can claim housing benefit, council tax benefit, access to local authority housing, income support, jobseeker's allowance and employment and support allowance. Under these tightened rules, EU migrants also face having out-of-work benefits cut after six months unless they can confirm they are genuinely seeking work.³⁵ But what are the latest Greek laws on migration which were developed within that context?

Greek immigration policies

Until 1991 the Greek migration law in use was law 4310, enacted in 1929. After the collapse of communism in East European states and the massive inflow of migrants in Greece a new law was implemented in 1991. It introduced numerous strict stipulations aimed at controlling the entrance, stay and employment of immigrants. The measures included the penalisation of undocumented entry; immediate deportation of illegal immigrants without the application of formal procedures; creation of special police squad for patrolling Greece's land and sea borders; and prohibiting the illegal employment of immigrants. Under this climate the Greek state moved to mass forced deportation of migrants (called skupa in Greece) in order to prohibit migrants entering the country. Despite the severity of the Greek migration law – which, among other things, prohibited any contact between undocumented people and public services – the influx continued. Konidaris believes that Greek-Albanian relations did influence Greece's policy response to the large scale immigration from Albania in the period 1990-1996. He argues that the immigration issue was used as a bargaining tool by Greece for achieving other purposes most of all the protection of the rights of the Greek minority in Albania.³⁶

The large number of undocumented migrants residing and working in the country led to the first legalisation program, voted on in 1997 and implemented in 1998. More than 370,000 people participated in the first phase of the regularisation programme of 1998. The first comprehensive migration law was voted on in 2001 (2910/2001), and had two main aims: mid-term management of the phenomenon (including border control, the issuance and renewal of stay and work permits, and matters related to the

³⁵ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-21523319>

³⁶ Konidaris, G, Examining policy responses to immigration in the light of interstate relations and foreign policy objectives in King R, Mai N, Scwandner-Sievers S., The new Albanian Migration, 2005, Great Britain: Sussex Academic Press p.12.

naturalisation of foreign residents) and implementing a new regularisation programme. Another 360,000 people applied to legalise their status during this programme. In 2005, a new law (3386/2005) was passed in Parliament which simplified the renewal of stay permits (work permits were abolished) and introduced a third, albeit significantly smaller, regularisation programme (with approximately 200,000 applicants). The new law provided for the incorporation of European directives on family reunification and the status of long-term residents into national legislation.³⁷

Since the previous law had important short comings related to the overall processing of applications for new entries and for the renewal of expiring permits an amendment to this law was passed in February 2007. Law 3536/2007 introduced some positive changes: It abolished the regularization fee for children between the age of 14 and 18, it gave immigrants the opportunity to pay for up to 20 per cent of the 200 days of social insurance contributions required (two-thirds of which is paid by the employer and one-third by the employee) in order to be eligible for regularization and permit renewal, and it gave an extension for the submission of the required documents.³⁸

In 2010, Act 3838/2010 granted immigrants who either held long-term residence permits or were of Greek origin voting rights in local elections. Additionally, the 2010 law reformed citizenship rules by providing birthright citizenship to eligible children born in Greece to immigrant parents. This law constitutes a great step towards the recognition of the legal rights of the migrants of the first and second generation and it opened the way for obtaining Greek citizenship.³⁹ Thus, there have been some large improvements on migration laws in Greece. Beginning with the period of 1991-1997, when migration in Greece for nationals of non-EU members states, and mostly for the migrants (of non Greek origins) entering Greece from South Eastern Europe after the fall of communism, focused on borders controls and restriction of entry to the law of 2010 which opened the way for obtaining Greek citizenship. In order to discuss how these laws affected the lives of my Albanian interlocutors I will first refer to the large number of Albanians residing in Greece after 1991.

Albania after 1991: a migration explosion.

Albanian migration in Greece can be seen in two faces. First from 1991, after the collapse of communism, until 1997. Secondly from 1997, after the collapse of pyramid schemes, which led many Albanians in poverty and consequently to leave their country. Additionally, migration can be seen in a different context in Greece after the economic crisis.

³⁷ Migration and Migration Policy in Greece. Critical Review and Policy Recommendations April 2009, IDEA, no 3 pp.8-9.

³⁸ Kasimis Ch, Illegal Immigration in the Midst of the Economic Crisis, 2012, available at www.migrationinformation.org

³⁹ ibid

The starvation and the bad economic and political situation of the country led many Albanians to leave the country. The overall numbers of Albanians living abroad at the end of the 1990s were estimated by the Albanian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs at 800.000. These figures referred to the post-1990 exodus. Thus, after 1990 there was a migration explosion from Albania if one considers that by 2000 an estimated 800.000 Albanians were abroad, compared to 2.5 million living within Albania.⁴⁰

It is difficult to evaluate the numbers of Albanians in pre-regulation Greece if one considers that many migrants were taken to the borders by the police and then re-crossed into Greece soon after, so that the "skoupa" figures include multiple counting of the same individuals. Also, the types of migration ranged between seasonal migration, short term migration and long term residents. According to the first Greek regularisation of migrants in 1998, out of a total of 371.641 applications for regularisation 241.561, 65% were Albanians (excluding the ethnic Greek Albanians). Additionally, Fakiolas estimated that around 300.000 irregular immigrants did not apply. According to the 2001 Greek census 443,550 Albanians were living in Greece, approximately 65% of the non EU, non ethnic Greek population. In pre-regularisation Greece only 10.000 out of an estimated 400.000 Albanians were "legal", a ratio of 40:1. By the 2001 the illegal –legal ratio was about 1:1.⁴¹

According to the Ministry of Interior Affairs in 2010 there were 368.269 Albanian migrants in Greece with resident permit, 71% of all legal migrants. Overall in Greece migrants constituted 10% of the population in 2010 and above half of them were Albanians. During 1988-2004 the number of migrants in Greece was five times more than previously and during 2005-2010 migration in Greece continued to be very large.⁴² According to the Hellenic Statistical Authority and the 2011 census 480.824 Albanians are living in Greece, 52,7% of all migrants in Greece. 77, 1 % of them are living in urban areas and 22,9 % are living in rural areas.⁴³ Apparently the illegal Albanian migrants in Greece are not included in this number.

According to Maroukis the number of illegal migrants in Greece at the end of 2010 was estimated around 350.000-440.000. There was an increase of 160.000 people during the period 2007-2010⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ Barjaba K and King R., *Introducing and theorizing Albanian migration* in King R, Mai N, Scwandner- Sievers S., The new Albanian Migration, 2005, Great Britain: Sussex Academic Press p.12.

⁴¹ *ibid* pp.12,13

⁴² Κασίμης Χ., Παπαδόπουλος Α, *Μετανάστες στην Ελλάδα: Απασχόληση και ένταξη στις τοπικές κοινωνίες*, 2012, Αθήνα: εκδόσεις Αλεξάνδρεια, σελ. 27,30.

⁴³ Hellenic Statistical Authority:

http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/General/nws_SAM01_GR.PDF

⁴⁴ Μαρούκης, Θάνος: *Μη νόμιμη μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα: ρεαλισμός, σεβασμός και «έξυπνες απελάσεις»*, στο Συρρή Δέσποινα,(2011), *Συμβιώνοντας με τη μετανάστευση*, Θεσσαλονίκη: Ιανός σ.

	Total number of migrants	valid resident permits	evaluation of illegal migrants	Newcomers
at the end of 2007	900.000-1.000.000	190.000-280.000	190.000-280.000	2005-2007: 90.000-180.000
at the end of 2010	1.050.000-1.140.000	700.000	350.000-440.000	2008-2010: 120.000-210.000

Source: Maroukis Thanos⁴⁵

While the land border between Greece and Albania used to be one of the main entry points of irregular migrants, the detections of illegal border-crossing reported at this border section dropped considerably over 85% (5,269) in 2011 comparing to 40,250 in 2009. This decrease follows the introduction of a visa free regime for Albanians as of 21 December 2010. However, reports suggest that Albanians are still irregular circular migrants in Greece but their irregularity, this time, is mainly related to their employment in the informal economy.⁴⁶

According to Maroukis the Albanian migrants in Greece can be divided first of all in two categories: the ones with Albanian origin and the ones with Greek origin from North Epirus (Vorioepirwtes). As Veikou Mariaggela argues this appellation "North Epirus" has a political meaning which designates that the north part of Epirus and the Greeks leaving in that area belongs to the Greek nation.⁴⁷ Maroukis is making this division because Vorioepiotes are enjoying special legal treatment in Greece and they have the right to issue a three year or ten year resident permit. Two of my interlocutors are Greeks from North Epirus, they are husband and wife and they both had a three years resident permit until 2002 and afterwards a ten years resident permit (the woman) and a five years resident permit (man). As Maroukis argues few of them have got the Greek citizenship (according to the Ministry of Interior 5.634 Albanian migrants of ethnic Greek decent had the Greek citizenship until 2007).⁴⁸ One of the above two interlocutors succeeded in getting the Greek citizenship in 2013, while her husband doesn't have it yet since as he told me they have lost the needed paper in the registry of Koritsa, which would confirm that his grandmother was of Greek origin. A second distinction can be made amongst those who stay legally in Greece (those who have insurance through their work and those who have the rights to stay legally in Greece based on the law of family unification) and amongst those who have an illegal status. The second group according to Maroukis is further devided:

⁴⁵ ibid

⁴⁶ Gemi, Eda (2013), Albanian Irregular Migration to Greece: A New Typology of Crisis in http://ec.europa.eu/ews/en/resources/detail.cfm?ID_ITEMS=36745

⁴⁷ Βέκου, Μ. , Παραλλαγές πάνω στο θέμα «Πατρίδα»: Η περιγραφή της εθνοτικής ταυτότητας στις αφηγήσεις μεταναστών, στο Μουσίδης Α., Παπαδοπούλου Δ. (2011), Η Κοινωνική Ενσωμάτωση των Μεταναστών στην Ελλάδα, Αθήνα: Κριτική, σ. 189.

⁴⁸ Μαρούκης Θ., Αλβανική Μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα: Ζητήματα Κοινωνικής, Οικονομικής και Πολιτικής Ένταξης στο Μαρούκης Θ., Τριανταφυλλίδου, Α., (2010), Η μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα το 21^ο αιώνα, Αθήνα: Κριτική, σ.175.

1. Former legal migrants who lose their legal status because they can no longer get insurance. As Maroukis notes, according to recent researches (Μέτοικος; [http: http://metoikos.eui.eu/](http://metoikos.eui.eu/) and Human Smuggling to Greece <http://www.eliamep.gr>) the migrants who have a resident permit will be reduced in the following years. Almost 60.000 migrants, who stay in Greece from 2004 or sooner couldn't renew their resident permits after law 3386/2005 was put into force and lost their legal status.
2. Migrants who stay illegally in the country without former legal status. Those are mainly migrants who are temporary or seasonal workers. They work without insurance. Maroukis points out that the migrants, who were caught by the police during 2005-2007, are 180.000. It is estimated that 90.000 of them still stay illegally in the country and half of them are Albanians.⁴⁹

All of my twenty interlocutors told me that they stay legally in Greece. One of them stays for a three month period in Ammouliani (summer time) and works without insurance. Hereafter, I will refer to the context of my research starting with the place of origin of my interlocutors and the reasons they decided to migrate in Ammouliani and Veroia.

Place of origin

As shown in the table below, most of my interlocutors come from Southern Albania, some of them from central Albania and one from Northern Albania. As Lambrianidis argues in his research about Albanian migrants in Thessalonica, the fact that most migrants in Thessalonica come from South Albania can be explained by the proximity of South Albania with Thessalonica, by the existence of Greek-speaking people in South-Albania and by the existence of consulates in the area (Gjirokastra, Koritsa) which made it easier for the Albanian migrants to get a visa.⁵⁰ The same reasons for migrating in Veroia or Ammouliani apply to my interlocutors too. My interlocutors informed me that one of the main reasons that they decided to migrate in Veroia and Ammouliani was because of the proximity of these places with their hometowns. Some of them also told me that they knew a few Greek words, because they watched secretly Greek TV before the end of communism. Additionally, after the end of communism in Albania, people from South Albania and Tirana were the first to develop economic relationships with Greek people.

⁴⁹ Μαρούκης, Θάνος: Μη νόμιμη μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα: ρεαλισμός, σεβασμός και «έξυπνες απελάσεις», στο Συρρή Δέσποινα, (2011), Συμβιώνοντας με τη μετανάστευση, Θεσσαλονίκη: Ιανός σ. 42-43

⁵⁰ Αλβανοί μετανάστες στη Θεσσαλονίκη, σ. 206-207

		Ammouliani	Veroia
South Albania	Koritsa	2	6
	Arza	1	
	Pogradec		1
	Bilisht	2	
	Erseke	1	
	Lusnja		1
Central Albania	Tirana	1	2
	Elbasan		2
North Albania	Peshkopi	1	

Reasons for migration to Greece

All of my interlocutors decided to migrate because of the bad economic and socio-political situation of their country and all of them faced great difficulties in doing so. I must note that the difficulties were much larger for the ones that came to Greece during 1990-1997.

The main reasons that all of my men interlocutors migrated to Greece were the proximity of their country to Greece and a second important reason was their ease illegal entrance to the country. It is important to note that all of my women interlocutors (with the exception of one) came to Greece following their husbands (three of them) or fathers (the rest three). One of them told me:

“I didn’t want to leave my hometown. All of my beloved persons were there. But it was too hard for me not seeing my father, I didn’t have a choice”

The main reason that my interlocutors chose Ammouliani or Veroia was again the proximity of these places with their hometowns, since as already discussed most of them come from South Albania. Additionally, for most of the men who migrated to Greece during 1990-1997 Ammouliani or Veroia was not their first place of residence in Greece. Most of them have lived in one of the big centers in Greece, Athens or Thessaloniki, because it was easier for them to find a job there. Many of them have also lived in Crete, Volos, Kavala and in other towns. One of them told me:

“The main reason that I decided to go to Ammouliani was that I wanted to be in north Greece so that if the police caught me I could be sent to Kristalopigi and not Kakavia. Once I was caught in Chios and I was sent to Albania through Kakavia. I stayed without food for three days while I was trying to get to the other part of Albania in Arza, my village”

Another important reason was that all of them have friends or relatives in these places, who informed them, that they could find a job in Ammouliani or Veroia and that they would help them.

Apart from these specific reasons, which apply to all of my interlocutors some of them who live in Ammouliani told me that they chose

the place, because it was a quite place and they could have a peaceful life and also because they were informed that the police didn't check often the illegal migrants in Ammouliani.

Passing the borders illegally

Fourteen of my interlocutors came to Greece during 1991-1997(ten in Veroia and 3 in Ammouliani). One of them came in 1999 and the rest of them from 2002-2007 (four in Ammouliani and one in Veroia). Three women and five men in Veroia and three men in Ammouliani came to Greece illegally from 1990-1996. They told me about the great difficulties that they faced during their passage from Albania to Greece. They had to walk for a lot of hours and they were very afraid that they would be caught by the soldiers. Many of them told me that during the first years of the Albanian migration to Greece the soldiers committed violence against the migrants, when they caught them. One forty years old man, told me

"I didn't bring my wife with me in Greece, because I was told that some soldiers raped the women that they caught passing the borders illegally. Many Albanian men didn't bring their wives to Greece for the same reason".

Another one told me:

"While walking through the mountains, we saw a light and we thought that it was candles from a church but then we realized that it was soldiers, who started shooting at us".

Another one who was caught by the police told me:

"I was caught by the soldiers while passing the borders illegally and I was beaten by them continually for thirteen hours, before I was sent back to Albania".

For their illegal entrance to Greece my interlocutors passed the borders on foot through the mountains and some of them were transferred with a taxi or a van. One 55 years old woman, who passed the borders in 1993, told me:

"After passing the borders on foot by the mountains a Greek taxi driver was waiting for us and brought us to Veroia. My husband who was already there has bought a visa for 400 lek in order to enter into Greece".

Another woman, who came to Veroia in 1993, told me:

"I paid 60.000 drachmas to a taxi driver in order to pass the borders"

Another interlocutor who came to Greece told in 1990 told me:

"After passing the borders illegally a Greek guy was waiting for us and brought us with a track to Veroia. He told us that we were going to Veroia, because he has arranged jobs for us. When I heard that I was going to Veroia I did not know what Veroia was. Only when we arrived there I realized that it

was a city. I worked on the fields for five days and they offered me food and accommodation. Then, I found a job as a painter”.

Difficulties during the first years

It is very important to note that the difficulties that my interlocutors faced during the first years of their settlement were much greater for the ones that came to Greece during 1990-1997. One important reason is their illegal entrance and settlement to Greece. The main problem they faced was the problem of illegality which in many cases was accompanied with a negative behavior towards them. As Lambrianidis argues, the entrance of Albanian migrants to Greece after 1991, was accompanied by the negative stereotype that Albanians are criminals, which was adopted by a significant part of the Greek society. This perception was strengthened by the media, because in each criminal event, they presupposed that the criminal was an Albanian.⁵¹ This negative stereotype can be related to the illegal status of many Albanian migrants who entered and stayed in Greece illegally especially during the years 1991-1997. Most importantly they were under the concept of fear because of their illegal status. Most of my interlocutors who entered and stayed in Greece illegally were caught by the police and they were forced back to Albania and then came back to Greece. One of them was caught 22 times and he told me:

“During the first years of my settlement in Greece I was caught by the police, because I was very unrest. I couldn’t stay at home and hide and I always went out. That’s why I was caught so many times. The police could realize that I was an Albanian from my outlook. My children who were raised in Greece are undistinguishable now from the Greek children”.

One woman that lives in Veroia was caught by the police in 1993 and was led back to Albania and said to me:

“One policeman felt sorry for me because I had two children one that was two years old and another that was seven years old. He asked the older daughter “Do you want to be with your father in Greece or with your mother in Albania?” and she answered that she wanted both of them. I left for Albania with the smaller daughter. One other policeman treated us very badly and I was afraid of him. I stayed in Albania for two months where I and my child didn’t have anything to eat. I then came back. I entered the borders illegally again on foot and then a lorry brought me to Veroia. I paid the driver a lot of money. I arrived to Veroia at 5 o’clock in the morning and my shoes were ruined because I had to walk for so many hours”.

⁵¹ Λαμπριανίδης Λ., Λυμπεράκη Α., (2005) Αλβανοί μετανάστες στη Θεσσαλονίκη: Διαδρομές
Ενημέρωσης και Παράδοξης Δημόσιας Εικόνας, Αθήνα, Πατάκη

All of my interlocutors, and especially the ones who stayed in Greece illegally until the first regularization program in 1997, feel disappointment and anger about Greece's policies and migration laws which were very slow in regularizing the migrants. All of them spent a lot of time and money trying to get the needed papers in order to stay in Greece legally. According to their sayings:

"I came to Greece when I was 19 years old (1991). At first it was very difficult, I was very poor and I didn't know the language. Also, I didn't have the opportunity to be in Greece legally until 1998, so during 1991-1998 I was always feeling insecure and was under the concept of fear. I believe that the Greek state was very slow in regularizing the migrants. I now have a two years permit of residence in Greece, which I renew during all these years and my children haven't succeeded in getting the Greek citizenship yet". This interlocutor makes a negative comment on the way Greek migration laws evolved. He also points out the fear that he felt while staying illegally in Greece.

Another interlocutor told me:

"After the 2005 law I learned that I should buy insurance from the Social Insurance Organization (IKA) in Greece in order to stay legally in the country. I learned that every Albanian in Ammouliani left because they were informed that they would be caught by the police. I was helped by a Greek who had a house in Ammouliani. I went to Thessalonica in his house in order not to be caught by the police. I was hired by this man as a gardener in order to stay legally in Ammouliani and he allowed me to stay at his home. Now (2013) I succeeded in getting a ten years resident permit after coming in Greece for the first time in 1992 and staying and working in Ammouliani (circular migrant) from 2005 onwards ." This interlocutor points out the help that he was given by a Greek in Ammouliani and he feels satisfied that after so many years he succeeded in getting the a ten years resident permit.

"After 1997 Greek migration laws were getting better for the migrants but they involved very slow. The entrance of Albanians in Greece is easier after 1997. I, my sister and my brother tried to come earlier in 2001 but although we have prepared all the needed papers our entrance in Greece was not allowed. Now I have the green card. She told me that one of the main problems that her father faced was the bureaucracy and the reluctance of the Greek state for his regularization".

Another interlocutor told me:

"I faced great difficulties in moving from Albania to Greece during the first years from 1991 until 2001. I didn't have the opportunity to go and visit my wife in Albania. By July 31, 2001 I am legalized. I entered surreptitiously the borders and passed in a village where I found someone to hire me as a farmer and to give me insurance (OGA) and got permission to stay. I had 250 stamps and I didn't have to lubricate. From 2002 onwards I stay in Ammouliani. In 2003 I applied for family reunification. I had to give money at the Greek Embassy in Tirana in order for my wife to pass the borders. The process was very slow and it was organised according to the first letter of the surname. I had to go on the first of the month and at 16. There was confusion at the border. I am 16 years total in Greece and every two years I

am getting a residence permit. I feel anxiety to glean the necessary documents and on February 2011, I made application for a ten-year residence permit in Greece but has not gotten it yet. I feel a great injustice by the State and laws and feel dependent on them. "They have the knife and the watermelon». One of the times that I went to an employee of the municipality for my residence permit, he told me that I have to work in order to stay in Greece because otherwise I am not needed here. I feel that I was mistreated and I believe that the law is fascist. Whoever is in the unemployment fund is prohibited to go to his country because after he/ she will not be able to return to Greece. I wanted to go to my wife in Albania to get some money from the bank but I couldn't. I always have the anxiety to find work in order to stay in Greece. I believe that this is wrong. I have sold my house in Albania and I have bought a house here. I have been working for sixteen years in Greece, I had been paying my rents until I bought my house and the law overlooks all that. They now ask from me two things in order to remain legally in Greece: health card and I must declare to the tax office 8,000 euros incomes and 250 insurance stamps for a two years residence permit. I don't like the officials of the State and I believe that half of them are lazy and the other half fascists. I feel that there is injustice. I believe that I have wasted my years here". This interlocutor feels great anger for the ways the Greek migration laws evolved. He makes negative comments about the state officials and feels mistreated. He feels that there is injustice in the way the Greek migration laws operate and that he has wasted a lot of time and money without result.

According to the statement of another interlocutor:

"I stayed illegally in Greece from 1990 -1998. From 1998 until 2008-9 I was renewing the permit for two years residence and after 2008 I got the permission for five years of residence in Greece. Before 2008 it wasn't easy for me to go to Albania. My ant died and I couldn't attend the funeral. After 2010 the movement from Albania to Greece and from Greece to Albania is easier. My children have taken now the Greek citizenship". This interlocutor points out the difficulties that he faced in his movement from Greece to Albania (and the opposite) until 2010. Additionally, although he could claim the Greek citizenship through his children, he didn't seem to have that intention yet.

Another one told me:

"I came to Greece in 1991 and in 1998 I got the green card. At first I had the right to stay in Greece for 6 months, then for 2 years and now I have the right to stay indefinitely (2009). I was one of the few that got it because the Albanians had the right to do an application only for one month and many of them didn't know it. I paid 150 euro". This interlocutor thinks that she is very lucky that she succeeded in getting the right to stay indefinitely in Veroia. She thinks that she is one of the few that have that right because she was informed about the right for application which lasted only for one month.

According to the statement of another interlocutor:

"I believe that the Greek government was very slow in regularizing the migrants. I believe that after 1997 the Greek government started passing

laws which made the movement from Albania to Greece easier. I now can move easily from Albania to Greece and the opposite. I have insurance (ΟΓΑ)". This interlocutor makes a negative comment on the slow bureaucracy of the Greek state in regularizing the migrants and points out that the movement of migrants between the two states is easier now.

Another one told me:

"I was regularized in 1998 and had a two year stay and working permit, which I renewed every two years until 2008-9. Then I succeeded in getting the permit for staying indefinitely in Greece. . I think that I should have the Greek citizenship by now because I have been staying and working in Greece for so many years. I blame the Greek state and I don't understand why my children can not get the Greek citizenship too. On the other hand I believe that the Greek state is very slow in regularizing the migrants because many migrants do an application without having a job in Greece and the ones that have a job and stay in Greece for many years cannot be regularized because the employees have a lot of applications to check". This interlocutor also feels injustice and anger. He thinks that by now he and his children should have the Greek citizenship.

Communicating in the Greek language

Additionally one other problem that the migrants faced during the first years of their settlement in Greece was that they didn't know the language and they have problems communicating with the Greek people. It is important to note that all of them learned the language very quickly and they were very proud of it. As Labrianidis argues Albanian migrants in Thessaloniki evolved a great capacity in learning the Greek language, although they didn't attend Greek language courses, mostly because they needed to communicate in Greek in their workplaces⁵². The same case applies also to my interlocutors.

One of them said to me:

"I learned the Greek language with great difficulty in a six month period" and another, said, " It took me two months to learn the Greek language"

A woman that works at a house in Veroia, where she takes care of an old woman told me: "The woman I work for was mad at me during the first years when I didn't remember the Greek words. As time passed through communicating with her I have learned the Greek language".

Wandering around Greece

Many of my interlocutors who came to Greece during that period have changed many places of residence, before choosing Ammouliani or Veroia. Especially the ones that live in Ammouliani have wandered around Greece until choosing the island as their place of residence, whether they stay there for the whole year or for the spring and the summer. One of my interlocutors said to me:

⁵² Αλβανοί μετανάστες στη Θεσσαλονίκη

"I first went to Aigina and then to Athens, Chio, Kiato and Kria Vrisi. In Aigina I injured my foot and some of my Greek friends in Aigina helped me and sent me to Athens to heal it. In Athens I met one guy in the hospital who took me to work in the construction domain in Chio. I stayed in Chio for two years and I mainly worked in the construction domain. Although I didn't know the job, I learned it gradually".

Another one told me:

"From 1991 until 1994 I was in Athens Spata with my brother. I worked in the construction domain. I then went back to Albania during "the skupa" and came back to Greece in 1995. I decided to go to Ammouliani this time because it was closer to my home"

The rest of my interlocutors that entered Greece during 2000-2007 didn't face the same problems with the ones that came earlier, because as already indicated, in the cases of the women they followed their husbands or fathers to Greece and in the cases of the men they followed relatives and friends, who had already found a place to leave and a job in order to earn adequate money to satisfy their primary needs.

Economical status and the economic crisis.

In this section I will examine the working conditions and the economic status of my interlocutors before and after the economic crisis. My questionnaire was organized in order to give light to the following questions: if and what kind of difficulties did the migrants face during the first years of their settlement in Greece, if and in what ways were their working conditions evolved as time passed, if and in what ways did the economic crisis affected their lives and finally if they are satisfied with their working conditions. The occupational domain of my interlocutors is presented in the following table:

	Ammouliani	Veroia
men		
construction domain (builder, painter)	3	4
tourist domain	1	1
butcher's shop	1	1
bakery		1
agriculture		1(Kria Vrisi)
women		
tourist domain	3	
domestic services		4

Two of my male interlocutors in Veroia, whom I wrote down as workers in the construction domain, do other jobs too. The one is also working as a

cattleman in Koumaria (a village near Veroia) and as a waiter in the tavern of the village. The other is also working as a shepherd and he carries wood. The one that works in the agriculture domain stays in Kria Vrisi (municipality of Pella) only for the spring and the summer time.

It is important to note that one of the men that work in the construction domain in Ammouliani stays there only for the spring and summer time while the rest of the year, he goes back to Albania. Two of the three women in Ammouliani work in the tourist domain in the summer time and they study in the University the rest of the year, one in Albania and the other in Crete.

As shown in the table above there is a difference in the occupational domain of the Albanian migrants in Ammouliani and Veroia. As expected many of them work in the tourist domain in Ammouliani during the summer (3 out of 8) and one is working at a café bar for the whole year, while only one of them is working in the tourist domain in Veroia since it is a city with very little tourism. 5 out of eight of my interlocutors don't stay the whole year in Ammouliani, except from the ones working in the tourist domain the other two work there only during the spring and the summer (one in the construction domain and one in a butcher's shop). In Veroia Albanian migrants are mostly occupied in the construction domain (men) and in the tourist domain (women). Two of them are staying in Veroia and in Kria Vrisi respectively during the spring and the summer (one in the construction domain and one in the agriculture domain) while the other ten stay in Veroia the whole year. Of course, there are many Albanian in Veroia, who work as seasonal workers in the agriculture domain. Unfortunately I had the chance to talk with only one of them, in Kria Vrisi because they work a lot of hours during their staying in the region. One similarity (which will be discussed) is that in both regions many men are working in the construction domain (7 out of 13).

According to King and his South-European model of migration most migrants in the region are doing jobs that the native people wouldn't prefer. He points out the Albanian's role as a "replacement" labor force in Greece, picking up jobs which Greeks no longer want to do themselves, which has a self-perpetuating mechanism built into it, whereby jobs done by Albanians have become stigmatized for Greeks and are therefore even more decisively rejected by them. A dual labor market is thereby created, marked by different wage levels and working conditions and reinforced by the irregular status of Albanians, at least in the first stage of their presence in the Greek labor market.⁵³ The model of King applies to the working experiences of my interlocutors during their first years of their settlement in Greece 1990-1997. All of them told me that during the first years of their settlement in Greece they had to work for a lot of hours, most employees in their jobs were also migrants and they were paid less in comparison with the few Greeks employees in their work, also at the start they didn't have insurance.

⁵³ King R, Mai N, Scwandner- Sievers S., (2005), *The new Albanian Migration*, Great Britain: Sussex Academic Press, p.16

According to the statement of a 39 year old woman that came to Greece in 1993:

"I worked in the cotton fields in Aleksandreia (a town near Veroia) but the work was very hard and I was paid very little money"

According to the statement of a 42 year old man that came to Greece in 1993:

"I found a job very easily in a fruit factory when I came to Veroia in 1991. During those years there was exploitation of the Albanian migrants. My employer hired illegal Albanians for a month and when the time came to pay them he brought the police so that Albanians would be caught and he would not pay their salary".

According to Maroukis and his research of Albanian migrants in Athens ten years ago, at first it looked like Albanians were doing jobs that the natives wouldn't prefer. According to his research 39% of the men interlocutors were working in the construction domain and 35% of his women interlocutors in domestic services⁵⁴. The research of Lambrianidis and Limberaki in Thessaloniki leads to the same conclusions⁵⁵. Most of my interlocutors in Veroia also work in the construction domain (men) and in domestic services (women), while many men work in the construction domain in Ammouliani also. But as Maroukis and Labrianidis and Limberaki point out, there had been some changes in the South European model of King as time passed. The working conditions of Albanians migrants seemed improved at the period the above researches were conducted. Some of them though few according to their findings, had started their own jobs and were self-employed. According to Maroukis, 7, 4 % of the men and 3, 9% of the women in his sample were self-employed, while according to the research of lambrianidis and Limberaki 8, 1 % of the men were self employed and only 1, 3% of the women.⁵⁶ Additionally, some of them were doing jobs that until some years ago had been dominated by Greeks. Two of my interlocutors in Veroia have started their own businesses, one of them has a tourist office, and another is self-employed as a painter. Additionally, one of them in Ammouliani is self employed in the construction domain and one of them is working in a big butcher's shop (getting a large wage), where all the other employees are Greeks.

Also, according to the research of Lambrianidis and Liberakis the proportion of the Albanian migrants in his sample that had insurance was 6/10, and according to Maroukis 88, 7%.⁵⁷ On the other hand they point out that this was not a complete safe conclusion, because most of the men and women interlocutors were amongst the ones that were staying in Greece for a long time, which applies to my research too. Maroukis argues that getting insurance depends upon what kind of work the Albanian migrants have, apart

⁵⁴ Οικο νομική μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα, σ. 127

⁵⁵ Αλβανοί μετανάστες στη Θεσσαλονίκη, σ.253

⁵⁶ Αλβανοί μετανάστες στη Θεσσαλονίκη, σ.253-254 Οικο νομική μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα σ.

128,260

⁵⁷ ibid

from the years of their residence in Greece.⁵⁸ For example the women, who work as housecleaners, take insurance through the jobs of their husbands because this a job for which the employers in Greece don't give insurance. In the cases of my interlocutors, all of my men interlocutors with the exception of one have insurance, but most of them are worried that they will lose it because of the economic crisis. Also, all of them, with the exception of two, told me that they are getting the same wages with the Greek people now, while they didn't during the past. Additionally all of my women interlocutors that work in domestic services take insurance through their husbands. It is important to note that my interlocutor that doesn't have insurance stay in Ammouliani only for the summer months with a tourist visa.

Additionally, another improvement in the working conditions of the Albanian migrants, according to the findings of the above researches, was the following one. Although the Albanian migrants in their first years of their settlement in Greece changed jobs regularly, when Lambrianidis and Limperakis conducted their research 53, 2% of their women interlocutors described their jobs as permanent.⁵⁹ According to the research of Maroukis in 2003 only one in ten amongst his interlocutors changed jobs during the last twelve months before the interview took place.⁶⁰ My findings also lead to the same conclusions. Many of my interlocutors have changed several jobs in Greece, mostly the ones that came to Greece during 1990-1997. Additionally, most of the ones that first came in Greece in 1990-1997 now describe their job as permanent, since they work in the same job for above a year. But as will be shown below, although there have been some positive changes in the working conditions of my interlocutors this situation is changing because of the economic crisis.

According to the statements of my interlocutors in Ammouliani:

A forty year old man told me:

"When I first came to Ammouliani, I worked in the camping and I didn't like the job too much. I was paid 8.000 drachmas per day and gradually my salary was raised to 10.000, 12.000 thousand, 14.000 thousand. After the euro, I earned 50 euro per day. I believe that my gains are worse after the euro. I then started working in the construction domain. At first I didn't know the job but I have learned it gradually. *I feel happy that I found a job because otherwise I should stay in Albania for the whole year, where there are no jobs.* My main goal by working in Greece for so many years was to buy a house in Albania and I succeeded it. I believe that there is an economic crisis in Ammouliani and it is mostly felt after 2011. I find it more difficult to get a job after the crisis. Now I don't have the opportunity to ask

⁵⁸ Μαρούκης Θ., Αλβανική Μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα: Ζητήματα Κοινωνικής, Οικονομικής και Πολιτικής Ένταξης στο Μαρούκης Θ., Τριανταφυλλίδου, Α., (2010), Η μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα

το υ 21^ο αιώνα, Αθήνα: Κριτική, σ.181

⁵⁹ Αλβανοί μετανάστες στη Θεσσαλονίκη σ. 267

⁶⁰ Οικονομική μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα σ.138-139

for a raise in my salary and I am paid less". According to his statements his working conditions got much better after working in Ammouliani for many years, though he is a circular migrant and doesn't stay in Ammouliani the whole year. Additionally, he says that he learned the job in Greece, he feels that he had succeeded his main goal (buying a house in Albania), but he feels that after the crisis he is paid less and he is worried that he may be unemployed in the future.

A twenty year old man, who came in Ammouliani in 1999, told me the following:

"I believe that there is an economic crisis and its outcomes are felt in Ammouliani from 2012 onwards. I think that the main outcome is that fewer tourists are coming to the island. I work in a café-bar in Ammouliani and I have a very good relationship with my boss. Until now they gave me insurance and paid me my salary, but nowadays they do not have the money to pay me my wage although I sign that I have taken it. I don't complain about that, because I believe that my boss supported me for many years. Family businesses operate in the island and migrants work in these businesses, when they are needed". It is very interesting that this man feels obliged to his boss and he isn't paid for his job. He even acts illegally and signs that he had taken his wage because he feels that he was treated well by his boss during the previous years. Since I had a conversation with this man in his workplace, first of all I was astonished that he wasn't paid for his job because the café was full of tourists (of course it was full-season). On the other hand it was obvious that he and his boss had a close relationship from the way they talked to each other and he told me that one of the main reasons that he feels he has a good life in Ammouliani is that he has good friends. I believe that it is very important for him to stay in Ammouliani because he told me that his parents were very conservative and he couldn't act freely while living in Preshkopia, but most importantly he believes that he couldn't find a job there and he is willing to give up his wage and work only for insurance in order to stay. I think that his behavior gives light to one of the main outcomes of the economic crisis. Migrants remaining employed after the economic crisis are often affected by reductions in pay, working time and worsening working conditions. Despite that many migrant workers are not returning home. Simply put, conditions at home are even worse. While there may be opportunities for some kind of work in host countries, there are simply less opportunities at home. Migrant workers are thus compelled to take whatever work they can find. They may accept even more substandard pay and abusive conditions than before.

A 27 year old man, who came in Ammouliani for the first time in 2005 and works in a butcher's shop during the summer months and during the rest of the years as a builder in Koritsa told me:

"I believe that there is an economic crisis in Ammouliani and its outcomes are obvious from 2012 onwards. They do not give insurance to workers and they pay them less. I believe that things will get worse economically. There are no jobs in Albania too. I feel very lucky that I can work in Albania and Greece too. I feel like I am part of the society in both countries through my jobs".

This interlocutor points out two main outcomes of the economic crisis, lower

wages and lack of insurance. He is willing to work without insurance because he believes he is lucky that he even has a job in Greece and in Albania too because of the high rate of unemployment and he also points out that according to his opinion there are very little job opportunities in Albania.

Another man- interlocutor who came to Athens in 1991 and then resettled in Ammouliani in 1995 told me:

"I work in the construction domain in Ammouliani and stay here for the whole year. I believe that there is an economic crisis in Ammouliani, because there are no jobs in comparison with the previous years. It is mostly felt from 2011 onwards. Before that year I, my brothers and relatives (3 brothers, 3 cousins) have started a business in the construction domain and we all could earn enough money to feed our families and have a good life, but now there is no job, not even for one person. I feel insecure about the future. I feel that there is no end in the economic crisis. My son is 18 years old. He can no longer stay legally in Greece unless he finds a job and has insurance. He cannot go to the hospital and have health care". This interlocutor also learned the skills for his job in Greece and he succeeded in being self-employed after working many years in Greece and after facing many difficulties during the first years. He was very satisfied with his job in Ammouliani and he had also bought a house in the island, but now, because of the economic crisis his job isn't going well and he is worried about his son who can no longer stay legally in the country, because he doesn't have a job and he cannot have healthcare. His words points out one of the main outcomes of the economic crisis. Migrant workers have less access to healthcare and if unemployed they don't have the chance to stay in the country. Also, their working conditions were improved after staying in the same place in Greece for many years, but this development is changing now because of the economic crisis.

A forty year old man related to my previous interlocutor and working in the same business told me:

"I believe that there is an economic crisis in Ammouliani and its outcomes are obvious from 2011 onwards. There are jobs but the employers pay less. The employer decides on the fee. An employer didn't pay me for my job (construction domain) because he said that he didn't have money because of the economic crisis. Fortunately the employers give me insurance". This man points out to main outcomes of the economic crisis, the lowering of the wages and the unpaid work. In Albania he was a teacher in the elementary school, but he decided to migrate in Ammouliani because his salary was very low. He was satisfied with his work although it wasn't in the domain of his studies and I believe that one of the key reasons for that except from the higher wage he got in comparison with the one that he would get if he stayed in Albania, was that he worked together with his relatives in the construction domain.

Maroukis believes that one of the reasons that Albanian migrants stay in the same kind of occupation (construction domain for the men) after so many years of their staying in Greece, although the education of many of them could lead them to search for a better job, has to do with the following. The construction domain is a social space familiar to the Albanian migrants, since most of their compatriots are working in this domain. There are used to creating social supportive networks through their work and they feel safe

because they work in a familiar environment. Also, Maroukis argues that their first priority is to work and earn money and have insurance, regardless of what kind of job they do, because they need it in order to stay legally in Greece.⁶¹ I believe that his findings also apply to the experiences of the above interlocutors.

Additionally, since three of my men interlocutors in Ammouliani work in the construction domain, I would like to point out that this is a domain mostly hit by the economic crisis (as already shown from the statements above). As Robolis argues, from 2010 and onwards the construction domain is facing decreasing trends, after seventeen years of economic boom. This development mostly has to do with the reduction in the mortgages loans after 2010. The economic recession in this domain has a great impact on the economic situation of the Albanian migrants, since as discussed above, many Albanian men work in this domain. The main outcomes are reduction in wages, unemployment and lack of insurance. Despite these developments, as Robolis states, only a small number of the migrants working in construction decide to return to their places of origin.⁶² According to the views of my interlocutor this happens because job opportunities are even less back home.

Moving to the women and to the tourist domain a 24 year old woman who came to Greece 10 years ago following her father, works in a bakery-café during the summer time in Ammouliani, while the rest of the time she stays and studies in Iraklio, Crete. She told me:

"In my work the most employees are Albanians and other migrants. The last year some local people decided to work in this domain but I think that they are lazy and they are always complaining. I believe that there is an economic crisis in Ammouliani from 2011 onwards. My employer decides for my salary. He pays me 5 euros per hour. Albanians could ask for a bigger salary before the economic crisis. I think that there are jobs during the summer despite the crisis, but the main outcome of the economic crisis in Ammouliani is lower wages".

On the other hand another 21 year old woman shared with me the following opinion:

"I believe that there isn't an economic crisis in Ammouliani. I see people in Ammouliani that have hotels and many houses complaining and I don't understand why. All the members of my family are working. I have been working from when I was 12 years old. We have bought a house in Dirahio. I am very proud about the house that has two floors. We rent a house in Ammouliani. We have bought a car and two motorcycles. I feel that Greeks are ungrateful. I work in the tourist domain. In my work most employees are migrants. I work in a café-bar in Ammouliani. The other employees are members of the family that own the bar. I feel that the Greeks are jealous

⁶¹ Μαρούκης Θ., Αλβανική Μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα: Ζητήματα Κοινωνικής, Οικονομικής και Πολιτικής Ένταξης στο Μαρούκης Θ., Τριανταφυλλίδου, Α., (2010), Η μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα το 21^ο αιώνα, Αθήνα: Κριτική σσ. 188-189

⁶² Ρόμπολης, Σ., Οικονομική Κρίση, Αγορά Εργασίας, Μετανάστευση, στο Μουσιδής Α., Παπαδοπούλου Δ., (2011), Η Κοινωνική Ένσωμάνση των Μεταναστών στην Ελλάδα: Εργασία, Εκπαίδευση, Ταυτότητα, Αθήνα: Κριτική. σ. 67

when an Albanian is doing well. In Ammouliani there are jobs in the tourist domain during the summer and fishing during the winter. My brother also works in the tourist domain". I found very interesting the perception of this woman about the Greek employees. She believes that contrary to the migrants employees they are lazy and always complaining. Additionally, according to her sayings, after the outbreak of the economic crisis some Greek people started working in domains that they didn't prefer previously, contrary to the South European model of King discussed above.

According to the words of these two interlocutors, Albanian migrants are good workers who succeeded in difficult situations while Greeks are "lazy" and don't appreciate their well being. Maroukis argues that Albanian migrants want to be perceived as good workers, who first and foremost came to Greece in order to work in order to defend themselves against the negative stereotypes against them.⁶³ In relevance with this perception there is a saying in Greece when someone wants to define a good and hard worker "he works like an Albanian". On the other hand the above interlocutor cultivates a negative stereotype about Greeks by saying that "Greeks are lazy", maybe as a reaction to the negative stereotypes cultivated by some Greeks and to a large extent by the Greek media against the Albanians. Additionally, I believe that the above woman has the opinion that there isn't an economic crisis in Ammouliani, because she has experienced worse economic situation in Albania. She has experienced poverty in Koritsa where she was living until she was twelve years old. Her family got through the difficult years by the remittances sent by his father, who was in Ammouliani. After coming in Ammouliani she has been continuously working, although she was very young and her family succeeded their main economic goals. Thus, she cannot understand the Greeks in Ammouliani, who have fortune but still complain. I believe that the economic crisis is defined by everyone as a worsening of the previous economic situation. She feels that her economic situation got better in comparison with the previous years and many Greeks in Ammouliani think that they have lost some of their economic privileges in comparison with their prior economic situation, so they are complaining. Also, she works in the tourist domain, which still flourishes during the summer time in Ammouliani, despite the economic crisis.

According to the statements of my interlocutors in Veroia.

A 53 year old man in Veroia told me:

"I work as a painter in Veroia. I have learned the job here. I am very satisfied with my work and I earn a lot of money. I believe that there is an

⁶³ Μαρούκης Θ., Αλβανική Μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα: Ζητήματα Κοινωνικής, Οικονομικής και Πολιτικής Ένταξης στο Μαρούκης Θ., Τριανταφυλλίδου, Α., (2010), Η μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα, το υ 2 1^ο αιώ ν α, Αθήνα: Κριτική

economic crisis but I don't have a problem. I am self-employed and I still earn a lot of money as a painter and work in Thessaloniki too". The above interlocutor is very proud about his job. Through our conversation he continued saying to me "There is an economic crisis but despite that I am very good economically" or "The other Albanians have faced many difficulties but I didn't, it was very easy for me". I think that he considered himself as a success story; he said to me that he is a hard worker and that he knows many people in Veroia through his job.

I became particularly interested in the story of my following interlocutor who changed a lot of jobs after coming into Greece and he succeeded in all of them. Now he has a tourist office (for the route Thessaloniki-Tirana and the opposite). It is also very interesting that after earning some money in Greece he decided to go back to Albania, he opened a business and he was doing very well but his children didn't want to stay in Tirana because they were used to living in Veroia, and they perceived Veroia as their hometown. Thus he decided to come back in Veroia.

"I first worked at the agriculture domain cultivating peaches, then as a parking boy. Afterwards, I went to Thessaloniki in a school in order to learn how to be a butcher and found a job in Veroia in a butcher's shop. After working for a few years in this shop, I decided to go back to Albania (ten years ago) in order to open my own butcher's shop in Tirana. Although my business was doing well, I stayed there only for six months because my children didn't want to live in Tirana. They were used to living in Veroia, Greece. They didn't know the Albanian language and they had difficulties in communicating. I came back to Veroia and decided to open a travel office for the route Tirana -Thessaloniki. I got the idea from one of my friends, who already had a travel office in Veroia. In Veroia there are four such travel offices. I own the office for eight years now. My business is doing very well, especially during the summer months, when Albanians come to Veroia in order to work as seasonal workers at the agriculture domain. Almost fifty Albanians came to Veroia and Thessaloniki per day during the summer time. They came with a tourist visa for three months and many of them weren't paid for their work. They worked illegally and I believe that the Greek state should have arranged for them to work legally by asking migrants for workers in the agriculture domain. The state would have also earned by this way some money from the taxes".

I tried to understand how my interlocutor felt when after working hard, he succeeded to go back to his hometown and open a shop there, but his children forced him to come back in Veroia. His children had problems communicating in the Albanian language, as he had problems communicating in the Greek language, when he first came to Veroia. They considered Veroia as their home and they felt they were away from home, while there were in Albania, as he felt away from home when he was in Veroia. I believe that his story is well fitted in the New Economy Theory of migration, which considers migration as a family decision. Additionally, according to the information of this man there are many Albanian migrants that come during the summer time in Veroia and work in the agriculture domain without insurance.

A 42 year old man who works as a painter told me:

"I believe that there is an economic crisis in Veroia and its outcomes are felt in the city during the last two years. I work in the construction domain and I am paid less than Greeks. It is difficult for me to find insurance in order to renew my residence permit. I learned to work in the construction domain here in Greece. Greece gave us many skills. Also, when I first came to Greece I was happy living in a coop with bad conditions. Then when I started working I wanted more and more. I wanted what the Greek people had. I have bought a house in Albania and two cars". I became particularly interested in this story. Although my interlocutor feels satisfied that he had earned money bought a house and cars, he thinks that in the past he was happy with fewer things, though now he never gets satisfied and he always wants more. I think that his view is critical to the free market economy, and he puts a question on the values that we lost while trying to get rich.

In accordance to this comment another interlocutor in Ammouliani told me:

"I miss that when I was in Albania before 1991 there was solidarity between the people. Everyone was poor and helpful to each other. When I came to Greece things were different. Everyone wanted to get rich. I believe that when people are poor they are pure and there is solidarity when they get rich they become cruel. I believe that people in Albania are changing too after the end of communism. I think that I have become crueler than previously after living in Greece for so many years". This interlocutor also makes a negative comment about the impact of free market economy on his character. He thinks that he has become crueler than previously and that people under the free market economy are more interested in getting rich than helping each other. I believe that the above comments have to do with the experiences of my interlocutors in Albania and the sharp transition from communism to capitalism.

I also had a conversation with a 29 year old man working in a tavern in Koumaria (and also in the construction domain and as cattleman). I had the conversation with him at his working place. I got the impression that this man was not completely open to me and he tried to end the conversation very quickly. His employer was there when I talked to him and he told to one friend of mine "I do not like people that ask questions, why is she talking to Albanians? Are we giving them now a stand to talk?" I felt that his behavior was controversial because although he told that he didn't want Albanian migrants to have a stand to talk, at the same time he is the main employer of Albanians in the village and he gives them insurance in order to stay legally in the country. My interlocutor told to my friend that introduced us to come with me at the tavern at a time when his employer would be absent. But unfortunately we did not accomplish that because the employer came back at the tavern earlier than we expected. I think that he was afraid to talk more freely, because he knew that his boss didn't like it that I had a conversation with him. Additionally, he is depended on his boss for giving him insurance and his wage and he didn't want to displease him.

Hereafter I will discuss the working conditions of my women interlocutors in Veroia, who all work at domestic services.

A 39 year old woman told me:

"When I first came (1993) I worked in a fruit factory where I was paid very little money and then I started cleaning houses. Although from 2000 until 2011 I was doing very well, now because of the economic crisis I am paid less and I work for fewer hours than before. The employers decide for my payment." This interlocutor points out the exploitation that she faced during the first years that she came to Veroia, the improvement of her working conditions during 2000-2011 and the reduce on her wage and her working hours after the economic crisis.

A 55 year old woman who works in domestic services told me:

"I believe that the outcomes of the economic crisis are evident in the city of Veroia during the last year. Now I am the only one, who works in the family. If I don't have a job the following years, I would be obliged to go back although I don't want to do so. I believe than in Albania things are worse than in Greece because there are no jobs at all. My best woman helped me find jobs as a housecleaner. I am very satisfied with the behavior of the Greeks in Veroia and I have made many friends through my job. I believe that if you treat people well they give it back to you regardless of your country of origin". This woman refers to the main outcome of the economic crisis, unemployment. The other members of her family lost their jobs and now she is the only one who works in the family. She also refers to the help that she was given in order to find job by her informal social networks and to the new relationships that she created through her job.

.A 49 year old woman, who came to Veroia in 1991 told me:

"I am cleaning houses and I am very satisfied with my work. One Greek woman helped me find my first work as a housecleaner. My first employer introduced me to the second one, the second to a third and that is how it happened. I am very satisfied with people in Veroia. They gave me work and I also have many Greek friends. I am not affected by the economic crisis. I still earn enough money. My husband is affected by the economic crisis. He works in a bakery shop and now he is paid less than before and worries about losing his job". This woman is satisfied with her working conditions and, as my previous interlocutor, points out that the economic crisis had a great effect in the economic status of her husband. He is paid less and he worries about losing his job. She also points out that she found and expanded her work through her informal social networks and she made new contacts.

According to the above statements of my interlocutors Albanian women create social networks in Veroia through their jobs. Maroukis also argues that the Albanian women in Athens create social networks through their jobs as housecleaners. They feel secure and appreciate the human intensive contact, one of the main characteristics of their jobs.⁶⁴ According to the research of Psimmenos Albanian women, who work in domestic services, become more familiarized with the social and political reality in Greece through their everyday contact with the family for which they work. In many cases they

⁶⁴ ibid

create good relationships with their Greek employers and feel obliged not to leave them.⁶⁵ The above 49 years old woman has gone to Sweden for a few months visiting her sister, and told me:

"I was in a hurry to get back to Veroia, because many women were waiting for me to clean their houses. I was worried that they would think that I have betrayed them and decided to find a job in Sweden".

Additionally, a 45 years old woman told me:

"When I first came to Veroia I worked in a fruit factory. Then I found my current job in a house where I take care of an old woman. The old woman insisted on helping me to learn the language. At first she was angry when I didn't remember the Greek words. Now I have a very good relationship with her".

On the other hand Maroukis argues that Albanian men think that it is more appropriate for the women to work in the houses. They don't want them to go out so much and they feel that housecleaning is an appropriate job for women. This attitude corresponds to the patriarchal structure of the family. Although Maroukis argues that housecleaning wasn't considered a good job and sometimes the economic contribution of the women in the household wasn't appreciated, according to my interlocutors, after the outbreak of the economic crisis this situation has changed, according to my interlocutors. In many cases women working as housecleaners bring more money to their families than men, because the construction domain, in which, as already indicated most of them work, are one of the domains mostly hit by the economic crisis.

Additionally, while trying to find interlocutors in order to conduct the research, I have noticed that men were considered as more appropriate for giving me information. I had a conversation with a woman at her brother's house. When I went there, I found except from the above interlocutor two more women, her sister and her sister in law. My interlocutor who was the older one of the women in the house started a conversation with me. When after a while her brother entered the house they stopped talking and they told me that from now on he will give me further information. I got the impression that they believed that he was the most appropriate person to give me information. The same incident happened when I asked many of the men in Ammouliani to have a conversation with their wives. They told me that they can give me more information than their wives or that they will tell me exactly the same so there is not a point in meeting them.

Thus, as time passed, the working conditions of the Albanian migrants in Ammouliani and Veroia, improved in accordance with the difficulties they have faced during the first years. They are in the same job for many years, most of them get the same wages with the Greek people, some of them are self-employed and almost all of them have insurance. Also, they told me that their economical status got much better after working in Greece for many years. It is also important to note that none of them is unemployed. Some of

⁶⁵ ibid

them also pointed out to me that they have learned many skills after working in Greece. Many of them (and in the case of my younger interlocutors, their parents) bought houses mostly in Albania and two of them in Greece (one in Veroia and one in Ammouliani). Although the working conditions of my interlocutors improved, currently many of them are worried that they are losing these privileges because of the economic crisis. Almost all of them feel that there is an economic crisis in Veroia and in Ammouliani respectively and its main outcomes are the lowering of the salaries and unemployment. Most of them think that the outcomes of the economic crisis are evident in Veroia and Ammouliani during the last two years. The main problem that they face because of the economic crisis is that they are worried that they will not have a job and thus they will not get the necessary insurance in order to have access to healthcare and stay legally in Greece. Evidence refers to the regular migrants losing the legal status and lapsing back into irregularity due to the high unemployment rates, which has been estimated to reach 36% for the third quarter of 2012 (Labour Force Survey, 2012c). Journalist sources, citing data provided by the Ministry of Interior, refer to about 130,000 to 140,000 Albanian migrant workers losing their stay permits because they were unable to secure the required number of social insurance stamps (IKA) in order to renew their documents in Greece.⁶⁶ Despite these developments most of my interlocutors don't plan to go back to Albania because they believe that the jobs in Albania are even fewer than the ones in Greece and some of them are willing to accept more substandard pay in order to keep their jobs. Furthermore, as one of my interlocutors informed me, there are many Albanians that are coming during the last years in Veroia in order to work in the fields with a tourist visa during the summer time. He told me that the employers prefer them because they pay them less than other migrants who stay for many years in Veroia and because they don't give them insurance. He also told me that many of them were not paid for their work. Thus, the working conditions may have improved gradually for the Albanian migrants who stay in Veroia and Ammouliani for years but this isn't always the case for the newcomers, especially the ones who come and work in the above places during the last years.

Transnational activities

Three out of eight of my interlocutors in Ammouliani live only for some months in Ammouliani, while the rest of the year they live in Albania. One forty year old man is working in the construction domain in Ammouliani and stays there during the spring and the summer, while the rest of the year he stays in Baban (Albania) with his family (first came in Ammouliani in 2000). One 20 year old woman studies Economics in a Private University in Tirana and visits her parents who live in Kastoria during the holidays, while during the summer months she stays in Ammouliani with her ant and works in a

⁶⁶ Gemi, Eda (2013), Albanian Irregular Migration to Greece: A New Typology of Crisis in http://ec.europa.eu/ews/en/resources/detail.cfm?ID_ITEMS=36745

seaside cantina. One 27 year old man lives and works in Ammouliani in a butcher's shop, during the summer (tourist visa) and during the rest of the year he stays in Koritsa (first came in Ammouliani in 2005). Additionally I had a conversation with a man that works in the agriculture domain in Kria Vrisi and stays there during the spring and the summer, while the rest of the year he stays in Poporantes.

According to their statements:

"I feel that I am important when I am in Baban not in Ammouliani. At first I thought that it was a mistake that my wife didn't follow me to Greece with our children. I feel satisfied now because I see the attitude of the children of other Albanians who live in Greece. The children feel like Greeks and when they go to Albania they say to their parents when will we go home? The other Albanians say to them you are Greeks now and they call them all with the name "George", because it is a very common name in Greece. So in Albania they are called Greeks and in Greece Albanians. I think that they feel caught between two countries and that they do not belong to none of them. The other Albanians in my village do not have the same attitude towards me because I live in Greece only for some months during the year and retain linkages with my country. I go to Ammouliani in order to earn money, because in Albania I could not find a job. During these years I was sending remittances to my family and I have built a house in Baban. I think that it is very important to have your own house and your own grave". This man feels that he is away from home, while staying in Ammouliani and he stays there only in order to work. He said to me that he wouldn't wish even to his worst enemy to be away from home. He also told me that in his hometown he knows everybody, they are friendly to him and he feels safe. That's why he feels important only when he is in Baban. Thus, he feels his is part of the society of Ammouliani only through his job, while he feels a sense of belonging when he is in his hometown.

Additionally, he thinks that Albanians who live in Greece for many years and don't visit their hometowns suffer from lack of identity. Most importantly they are teased from their compatriots as "Georgedes" in order to note that they have become Greeks after living in the Greek state for so many years. First of all I think that it is important that the compatriots of the Albanian migrants differentiate them from themselves. According to the words of another interlocutor in Ammouliani who stay there during the whole year and visits Albania rarely: " When a relative of mine came to visit me in Ammouliani we had a fight because he told me that I was working a lot of hours and I didn't spent much time with him. He said to me: You have changed here in Greece. Now you only know how to work and you have forgotten what it means to spent time with your relatives" This is a negative comment by one relative of my interlocutor about the impact of the Greek way of life on his character. I believe that Albanian migrants who stay for many years in Greece have been affected by the Greek way of life, by the Greek values and ways of thinking, but to different extends, according to their characters. On the other hand they are also carrying the ideas and the beliefs of their place of origin. It depends on the place they live, their living conditions and their character in what extent their host or their sending

country will have an impact on the perception of their selves and in their way of thinking. According to their statements I don't believe that they suffer from a lack of identity. All of my interlocutors with the exception of two told me that they are proud to be Albanians. The other too after living for many years in Greece told me that they feel like Greek people.

Additionally according to the statement of my interlocutor he feels relief that he is not staying with his family in Ammouliani because he believes that if he had brought up his children in Ammouliani they wouldn't want to go back to Albania. Two of my interlocutors told me that their children don't want to return in Albania. One of them, as already discussed, went back to Albania and his children forced him to return in Veroia, because they were used in living in Veroia-Greece. Another woman in Veroia told me that when they go to Koritsa with their children, their children complain and say to them that they want to return home. I believe that although the above cases are not uncommon that doesn't mean that in all cases the second generation migrants will loose linkages with their home country. I agree with Peggy Levitt who argues that while some admit that it is unlikely that the children of immigrants will be involved in their ancestral homes in the same ways and with the same intensity as their parents, since many of these children have been raised in households saturated by homeland influences, even those who express little interest in their roots, have the knowledge and skills to activate these values and identities if and when they decide to do so.⁶⁷ My next interlocutor confirms that comment.

A 20 year old woman that came to Greece in 1998, now returned to Albania in order to study in a Turkish Private university in Tirana. She told me:

"When I first went to Tirana I couldn't get used to living there. I was afraid getting out of my apartment and I was used in the Greek way of thinking, since all the friends I have were Greeks. But as time passed I was used to living there. It was very helpful that one of my close relatives lives there too. Now I am very satisfied living in Tirana and I believe that the University in Tirana is very well organised. I believe that I am well educated there" I believe that this woman quickly got used to living in Tirana because she was raised up with the values and the way of thinking of Albanian parents. I think that this was the reason that she chose to study in Albania and she also told me that in another University in Tirana 70 % of the students are Albanians migrants from Greece. She also told me that she believes that the University in Tirana is much better organised than the Universities in Greece, according to the information that she gets from her Greek friends in Greece. According to another interlocutor in Ammouliani: "I felt that school in Koritsa was much better organized than the one in Arnea. In the Greek school students were disrespectful towards the teachers and they didn't show the will to learn. That was not the case in Koritsa, where the students were very

⁶⁷ Levitt P, Transnational Migrants: When "Home" Means More Than One Country, Migration fundamentals, October 2004 in:
<http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=261>

quite during the courses and paid attention to the teachers. For that reason I feel that I have learned more from the school in Koritsa”.

The other two interlocutors told me that they come to Greece in order to work. I had a conversation with one of them in his working place and I didn't have the chance to create trust between us, because his employer was present and also because he works illegally and he stays in Ammouliani with a tourist visa.

The other 24 years old man who works in the agriculture domain told me:

“I am here in order to work and I don't miss Albania so much because I stay in Greece only for six months. I don't want to stay here. In Poporantes no one can make enough money in order to make a living by cultivating the land, that's why I come here. I first came in 2007 and until 2010 I was working here illegally. I was regularized in 2010. In comparison with my life in Poporantes I can act more freely here, because I don't have to take the permission of my father in order to go out. The above interlocutor points out one difference according to his perception between the way of living in Poporantes and in Kria Vrisi and that is that he can act more independently while away from home. Thus he feels more freely while in Kria Vrisi and he feels like he is home when in Poporantes.

Apart from the above transnational activities of my interlocutors I would like to point out that transnational activities are also articulated by political leaders as discussed above. Before the elections of 2008 in Albania, Edi Rama came to Veroia and 2000 thousand Albanians (from Macedonia and Thessalia) were gathered to hear him. The mayor of Veroia together with other important political figures in the city, were also present.⁶⁸ Furthermore, it was arranged for Rama to come and visit Veroia in order to give a speech and earn votes before the elections of 2013. According to the sayings of one of my interlocutors thousands of Albanians were gathered in the place where he would give his speech, but he cancelled it at the last moment because of other priorities (as my interlocutor informed me). The gathering of so many Albanians for the speech of Rama shows that after migrating they still want to take part at the political evolutions of their country of origin.

All my other interlocutors told me that they go to Albania once a year or once every two or three years. Most of them told me that their close relatives live in Veroia and Ammouliani respectively. They mostly go there in order to attend weddings and funerals and when it is necessary in order to obtain the needed papers for their legalization in Greece. On the other hand as already indicated many of them have bought a house in their hometowns in Albania hoping of returning in the future. Additionally, the ones that still have members of their families in Albania send remittances or they were sending during the past. Although these interlocutors don't visit often their hometowns in Albania I felt like I was in Albania while talking to them, from the Albanian coffee that they offered me, the showing of an Albanian wedding

⁶⁸ http://www.maknews.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=316:2009-05-25-15-44-35&catid=1:imathia&Itemid=59

in a video (they proudly said to me that weddings in Albania are better than the ones in Greece), to their belief that we Albanians are good workers and to their strong faith in the value of the family.

Although most of my interlocutors are not involved in constant transnational activities, that doesn't mean that they don't articulate the transnational space. I agree with Livett who argues that most migrants are occasional transnational activists. At some stages in their lives they are more focused on their countries of origin while at others they are more involved in their countries of reception. Similarly, they climb two different social ladders, moving up, remaining steady, or experiencing downward mobility, in various combinations, with respect to both sites. Persons change and swing one way or the other depending on the context. Rather than expecting full assimilation or full transnational connection as the ultimate goal, we expect some combination of the two. In fact, it is more likely that migrants will engage in selective transnational practices on a periodic basis.⁶⁹

Being an Albanian migrant in Ammouliani and Veroia

According to the statement of one 40 year old man who stays and works in Ammouliani during the spring and the summer from 2000 onwards: "I don't feel incorporated in Ammouliani. I feel that Greeks in Ammouliani are racists. I believe that people in Greece have different attitudes towards the migrants. I was treated well by the Greeks in Thessaloniki, Chios, Aigina and Athens while in Kiato and Ammouliani I faced racist behaviors. My current boss treats me well but I don't feel that he is my friend. I feel that his behavior towards me is hypocritical. I believe that I am the one towards whom my boss will look if he wants to look at someone. The salary is bigger for the locals. I also worked for some people for a few days that did not pay me and I believe that this happened because I am an Albanian. If I come closer to a Greek like the one who helped me by hiring me as a gardener, the other Albanians will get jealous. Also, some Greeks in the island don't like it that I have a Greek friend. I believe that Greeks in Ammouliani become jealous when an Albanian is earning money and has a good social and economical status. I miss my country and I would not wish even to my worst enemy to be away from home. I feel as an Albanian. I am a Muslim but I believe that religion does not play an important role. I respond with anger when I face a racist behavior. I once responded to a Greek in Ammouliani "You are refugees too. The land was given to you and you did not earn it". This man doesn't feel a sense of belonging in the society of Ammouliani. He feels that he doesn't have true friendships with Greeks in Albania apart from one who comes from Thessalonica and has a summer house in Ammouliani. He also thinks that his friendship with this Greek man from Thessalonica is accepted neither by Albanians nor by Greeks in Ammouliani. Additionally, he

⁶⁹ Levitt P, Transnational Migrants: When "Home" Means More Than One Country, Migration fundamentals, October 2004 in:
<http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=261>

points out that Greeks in Ammouliani gets jealous when an Albanian is well economically. He feels that he is away from his homeland during his staying in Ammouliani and feels nostalgia. According to his words he has faced racist behaviors in Ammouliani and felt very angry. He responded to the Greeks in Ammouliani by referring to their origins from Minor Asia and their prior refugee status discussed above.

Another interlocutor, a 47 year old man, who first came in Ammouliani in 1995 told me:

"I feel that people in Ammouliani are close to each other but that there is racism. Greeks in Athens had a better attitude towards the migrants in comparison with Greeks in Ammouliani. In Athens, I felt that I was trusted by the Greek people. I feel that people in Ammouliani are conservative. I was never invited in the house of a local and sometimes I feel that Greeks in Ammouliani has a negative attitude towards me and that they are suspicious. Many Greek people think that Greece is the center of the world and that the Modern Greek people have the same characteristics with the ancient Greeks. I really don't like it. Although my children were born here the neighbors teased them and said to them: You are Albanians. I believe that the Albanians in Ammouliani are not friends with each other but no enemies either". This interlocutor points out the negative attitude that some people in Ammouliani have towards him and his children and, as my previous interlocutor, refers to the lack of friendship between Albanians and Greeks in Ammouliani. He also points out that Albanians in Ammouliani are not friends with each other but no enemies either. According to the information that he gave me, he spends his free time mostly with his relatives, who also live in the island, so he has not close contacts neither with the other Albanians in Ammouliani nor with the locals.

Additionally, both of them pointed out that they felt that they were treated better while living in other places of Greece. Both of them felt that they were trusted by the Greeks in Athens.

Another 42 year old interlocutor who came to Veroia in 1993 told me:

"Although I have some Greek friends I believe that there is racism in Greece. I think "Do Greeks believe that because they are Greeks they are more worthy than Albanians?" Also I believe that some Greeks think that all Albanians are the same. When my brother died in 2000 I had to pay more than Greeks for the funeral and for his treatment in the hospital. I think that I was mistreated. This interlocutor believes that there is racism against the migrants in Veroia and he thinks that he has faced mistreatment because of his Albanian origin. On the other hand he doesn't believe that all the Greek residents of Veroia are racist. He has Greek friends and he hangs out with them and with his relatives in Veroia during his spare time.

A 41 year old man that came to Veroia in 1991 told me:

I believe that there is racism against the migrants in Veroia. A few months ago some people painted a big cross outside an Albanian tourist office. I believe that during the last few years the negative stereotypes towards the migrants in Veroia have grown. I think that Greeks get jealous when an

Albanian is doing well economically. Although I believe that there are negative stereotypes against the Albanians in Veroia, a migrant in Veroia can have a good life if he/she has a good behavior and if he/she has the right contacts". According to the statement of this interlocutor racist behaviors have grown during the last years in Veroia. It wasn't accidental that a cross was painted in the tourist office of an Albanian migrant. The cross represented the orthodox religious faith of Greeks, one of the main elements of their national identity and the particular tourist office was picked, because the owner was an Albanian, who is successful economically and his office represents in a way the movement from Albania to Greece. I believe that this development has to do with the economic crisis. According to Patrick Taran one of the main impacts of the economic crisis is scapegoating of migrants and xenophobic violence against foreigners. It is expressed in dramatically increased murders of migrants in some countries, in generalized expressions of anti-foreigner sentiment, in hostile political discourse, and in calls for exclusion of migrants from access to labour markets and emergency social protection benefits.⁷⁰ I often hear in Veroia the following view "Albanian migrants take our jobs". Additionally I heard in Ammouliani the following words "Look at the Albanians. They come to Ammouliani as tourists now (the woman that had this view was referring to the relatives of the Albanian migrants in Ammouliani that came during the summer time in the island to visit them). They came to Greece earned money and now they spent it. They become rich and we become poor". According to the above opinions there are some Greeks in Veroia and Ammouliani that believe that migrants take the jobs of the Greeks.

On the positive side my women interlocutors in Veroia that works in domestic services, told me as already discussed, that have Greek friends and they don't feel that they face racist behaviors from the Greeks in Veroia, although some of them did during the first years of their settlement in Veroia. According to the statement of a 45 year old woman:

"I am very satisfied with the behavior of the Greeks in Veroia. I know feel like I was born here. I feel that Veroia is my home and Greece my country. I believe that if you treat people well they give it back to you regardless of your country of origin".

Additionally, my younger interlocutors in Ammouliani told me that they feel incorporated in the society of Ammouliani and all of them have Greek friends. That doesn't mean that some of them didn't face negative behaviours because of their Albanian origins, but they seem to have overcome them. According to the statement of a 21 year old woman that came to Ammouliani in 2005:

"Another problem that I faced when I first went to the Greek school was a negative attitude of my classmates towards me because I was an Albanian. I believe that the main reason for that attitude was that I didn't know the

⁷⁰ Taran P, (2009), The impact of the financial crisis on migrant workers: To the 17TH OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM "Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region", TIRANA, 16-17 March 2009 p.2

Greek language and there was a lack of communication. It took me two months to learn the Greek language and after that I have succeeded in turning the negative behavior of my classmates towards me to a positive one. The children ended up supporting me, when I had problems. But that was not the case for some other Albanian students. Some of them tried to hide their Albanian origin because of the negative stereotypes that existed in the Greek school. I would never do that. I am proud that I am an Albanian”.

Another observation that I made is that none of my interlocutors neither in Veroia nor in Ammouliani participates in a collective organisation based on their Albanian origin. Additionally most of them spent their free time with their family (as already discussed almost all of my women interlocutors followed their husbands or their father after the law on family unification) and relatives. All of them have relatives in Ammouliani and Veroia respectively since as already discussed one of the reasons that they chose these places was that they were informed by their relatives or friends, who were already there that they could find a job. Zhelyazkova, Kajsiu, Bumci and Rakipi argue that Albanian migrants create social networks through their families and relatives and don't participate in collective action based on their common ethnicity. They argue that this happens because their family provides them a safety and trusty environment in contrast with the unstable political environment that they have experienced in their country of origin.⁷¹

Plans for the future

Most of my interlocutors don't intend to return to Albania yet, because as already indicated, they think that the economic situation in Albania is worst than the one in Greece. On the other hand, according to data it is suggested that over 180,000 Albanians have returned to Albania in search of better employment prospects there.⁷² At the same time all of my women interlocutors in Veroia don't want to return to Albania because they feel satisfied with their lives in Veroia, but they think that they will be obliged to leave because of worsening economic conditions. According to the words of one of them “I am willing to go wherever there is a job in order to bring up properly my child”. Additionally, three of my interlocutors in Veroia don't plan to return because their children want to stay in Greece. My two interlocutors in Ammouliani that study in the University (one in Crete and one in the private University of Tirana) after getting their degree, plan to go to Germany

⁷¹ Zhelyazkova, A. (2000), *Albania and the Albanian Identities*, Sofia: International center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations and Kajsiu B., Bumci A., Rakipi A. (2002), *Albania –A Weak Democracy a Weak state*, Tirana: Albanian Institute for International Studies in Μαρούκης Θ., *Αλβανική Μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα: Ζητήματα Κοινωνικής, Οικονομικής και Πολιτικής Ένταξης* στο Μαρούκης Θ., Τριανταφυλλίδου, Α., (2010), *Η μετανάστευση στην Ελλάδα το 21^ο αιώ* *ν α*, Αθήνα: Κριτική σ 197.

⁷² Gemi, Eda (2013), *Albanian Irregular Migration to Greece: A New Typology of Crisis* in http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/resources/detail.cfm?ID_ITEMS=36745

or England or in another West European state in order to continue their studies or to find a job. Finally, my interlocutors that work as circular workers plan to continue coming in Greece as long as there is a job.

Conclusions

Albanian migrants faced many difficulties during the first years of their settlement in Veroia and Ammouliani, especially the ones that came to Greece during 1991-1997. At first they had problems in satisfying their primary needs, some of them were victims of exploitation, they had problems in communicating in the Greek language and they had to face negative stereotypes by some of the Greek people. Additionally, many of them were staying in Ammouliani and Veroia illegally and were caught by the police. As time passed their working conditions got better, they found permanent jobs, they got insurance, some of them are self-employed and most of my interlocutors take the same wages with the Greek people. Their economic status got much better and many of them bought houses in Greece or in Albania. Additionally, they all became legalised. Despite these positive changes my interlocutors currently have to face many problems because of the economic crisis. They are worried that they will lose their jobs, they are paid less and their employers decide for their payment. Also, some of them are not paid for their work and become again victims of exploitation. Additionally, many of them fear that they will not have insurance and thus they will not have access to healthcare in the following years and will not be able to stay in Greece. Most of them don't have the intention of returning to Albania, because they believe that they will not be able to find a job there. Another important impact of the economic crisis according to my interlocutors is that the negative stereotypes and the racist behaviours against the Albanians in Veroia and Ammouliani have grown. They believe that some Greeks become jealous when an Albanian is doing well economically and that the Albanian migrants have taken the jobs of the Greek people. In Ammouliani despite the economic crisis, the tourist domain continues to flourish. In Veroia the construction domain is hit by the economic crisis and many of my interlocutors fear that they will lose their jobs. My women interlocutors in Veroia, who work in domestic services, still earn money by their jobs, but they work for fewer hours.

Five out of twenty of my interlocutors in Ammouliani live only for some months in Ammouliani, while the rest of the year they live in Albania. They become part of two different societies; they speak two languages and are the carriers of ideas, beliefs and customs of both societies. I believe that all of my interlocutors at some stages in their lives they are more focused on their countries of origin while at others they are more involved in their countries of reception and periodically all of them are involved in transnational activities. Most of them are proud for the Albanian identity while two amongst them told me that they feel like Greeks.

The older of my interlocutors in Ammouliani don't have friendships with the locals to a large extent and they mostly hang out with their relatives. My younger interlocutors have become accustomed with the Greek way of life and have many Greek friends, but they too face racist behaviours in some cases. My women interlocutors in Veroia that work in domestic services are satisfied with their lives in Veroia and have Greek friends, but they also spent their free time with their relatives. Some of my men interlocutors in Veroia told me that they have faced negative behaviours because of their Albanian origins and that they have few Greek friends, while others are very satisfied with their working and living conditions in Veroia.

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