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# From scapegoats to ‘good’ immigrants?

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*Albanians’ supposedly ‘successful’ integration to Greece*

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## **Introduction**

The massive concentration of the Albanian migration over a short period of time, as Albania moved almost overnight from total closure to large-scale out-migration, has marked this particular flow as a significant and unique case (Vullnetari, 2007: 39). Greece has been the destination par excellence of Albanian out-migration. More importantly, 60 percent of the foreign immigrants of Greece come from solely one neighbouring country that is indeed Albania.

In less than 20 years’ time, the Albanians’ out-migration in Greece presents all the ‘classic’ stages of a migratory movement (Cf. Castles & Miller, 1998 : 26-28): labour migration of young males (pioneers), regularization of the migrant’s status, extension of the intended stay, stabilization of the flux with the arrival of women and children (and in a lesser extend of grand-parents), children’s schooling and questions of incorporation, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation issues such as the Greek-born Albanian children’s nationality...

The study of the age pyramids of the Albanian migrants settled in Greece reveals this shift from a very young male migration to a family migration – what Abdelmalek Sayad (1999) would call a migration of populating (‘migration de peuplement’) or Castles & Miller (*op.cit.*) a long-term settlement. Figures talk for themselves: in 1995, 75 percent of the Albanian migrants were male, and 34 percent were under 30 years-old (Labrianidis & Lyberaki, 2001: 158). Six years later, according to the Greek census in 2001, over 41 percent of all Albanian migrants are women and we register a non-negligible rate of dependent young persons (children aged 0-14 years account for over 21 percent of the Albanian population in Greece).

Greek public opinion, Greek media and the state have viewed immigrants and Albanians in particular with suspicion and resentment, harshly stigmatising them. For more than a decade (early 1990s

to early 2000s), antipathy towards Albanians led to a rather generalized albanophobia, while an entire nation – the Albanians – has been convened under the stigma of the ‘criminal’<sup>1</sup>.

In the mid-2000s, the entrance of Eastern Europeans in Greece, including Albanians, has been slowed down, and even if the Albanians remain the most numerous ‘stock’ of foreign immigrants, the fluxes from Africa and Asia became increasingly significant with time. Refugees and immigrants from the so-called ‘less industrialised countries’ of the planet, such as Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Kurds, Afghans, Somalis and Nigerians, arrive massively to Greece –legally or illegally – mainly via Turkey.

The shift in the ethno-national structure of the foreign population of Greece seems to have had an impact on the way the Albanians are viewed by the dominant society. From scapegoats they were until the early 2000s, at the end of the decade, they become the ‘good’ and integrated immigrants of the Greek society.

Yet, the term ‘integration’ needs some reflection. According to French sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad, the problem of immigration is – explicitly or implicitly – ‘*always that of the adaptation to the host society*’. This adaptation receives, according to the context, several names and essentially the one of integration (1999: 57-98)<sup>2</sup>. The discourse on ‘integration’, whatever the name we give it, is perceptible only by those who are already ‘integrated’, and do not make, therefore, the object of integration (Sayad, 1999: 314). The discourse on integration is a discourse of the ‘dominant’ that is to say the societies of migrants’ installation<sup>3</sup>. Didier Lapeyronnie (2003) has a similar thesis. For him, integration is the point of view of the dominant to the dominated. Besides, the former generally considers the latter as not integrated.

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<sup>1</sup> For the campaign of criminalization and stigmatization to which have been submitted the Albanian immigrants in Greece, since 1991, see Tsoukala (1999), Pavlou (2001: 135-137), and Kourtovik (2001).

<sup>2</sup> ‘*The notion of integration is highly polysemous and has the particularity that the meanings given to it by totally new contexts do not erase its older meanings. [...] The word integration, as it is understood today, inherited the meanings of other concomitant notions as, for example, adaptation and assimilation. Each term is meant to be unprecedented, but, in reality, they all form the different expressions, at different times, in different contexts and for different social purposes, of the same social reality and of the same sociological process. [...] It is as if, having to name the same process in different social and mental contexts, every era had needed to give itself its own taxonomy*’ (Sayad, 1999 : 309).

<sup>3</sup> Sayad emphasizes the relations of power and domination in the migratory process, which should not be confused with the logic of the capitalist exploitation put forth by the Marxist and functionalist theories. Rather it is about relations of domination between the country of departure and the country of settlement, and thereby between migrants and host societies. This subordination, argues Sayad, is also reflected in the discourse on migrants in the sending countries themselves. Indeed, in the emigration countries, the discourses on emigrants particularly lack of autonomy, since they borrow from the immigration countries the themes, the categories of thought and the ways of analyzing migration. Yet, the stakes of migration in the emigration and the immigration country are not the same (Sayad, 1981).

Even if integration is supposed to be a binary process, in which – at least in theory – both the dominant society and the immigrant population adapt to the new datum (that is the arrival of immigrants and thus the ethno-cultural, socio-economic and demographic changes brought to society), in practice, integration requires and implies the abandonment of every feature calling upon a culture other than the ‘dominant’ culture, as if the migrant never existed before the migratory episode (Sayad, *op.cit.*).

This extremely short discussion on integration does not pretend to be exhaustive. Yet, it is a useful introduction to the case of the Albanian immigrants in Greece and their supposedly successful and ‘exemplary’ integration.

In this article, I try to demonstrate that this ‘integration’ is only integration by name. For this purpose, I draw on an empirical study on the Albanian immigrants’ living conditions, conducted in 2005-2006 in Greece<sup>4</sup>, as well as on the relevant literature. My argument starts from a brief overview of the Greek immigration policy, which – to my mind – have opened ‘Pandora’s Box’ for the hostile perception of the Albanians, during the whole decade of the 1990s. Then, I try to discuss the reasons that brought a shift to this perception and why the Albanians are currently thought to be the most integrated foreign population of Greece.

## **Greek immigration policy and construction of the Albanian ‘*lathrometanastis*’<sup>5</sup>**

Despite the growing numbers of foreign workers residing in the country already from the 1980s, the prevailing stance of the state during this decade was characterized by a remarkable disregard and denial of the phenomenon. The only existing legislation regarding migration was Law 4310/1929, which was adopted in order to meet the legislative needs created by the mass arrival of nearly one million Greek refugees from Asia Minor (Turkey) after the defeat of the Greek army by the forces of Mustafa Kemal in 1922. The bill remained in force until 1991 without, however, being strictly applied, given that the low numbers of migrants – until the late 80s – did not alarm neither the state nor the society about the (il)legality of the presence of non-Greek nationals on the country’s soil.

The bill 1975/1991 laid the premises for a migration policy and aimed to meet the new reality. Highly repressive, it focused exclusively on migration control and deportation, putting emphasis on the

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<sup>4</sup> Research project ‘*Supporting the Design of Migration Policies: an Analysis of Migration Flows between Albania and Greece*’ commissioned by the World Bank and conducted by the Laboratory of Demographic and Social analyses, University of Thessaly. 128 semi-structured interviews with the Albanian immigrants in Greece were conducted. The sample was selected from the database of the LSMS survey carried out by the World Bank and the INSTAT (Albanian Institute for Statistics) in Albania, in 2005. For more on the identity of the research and the sampling method, see the final report, Kotzamanis (2006).

<sup>5</sup> This section draws abundantly on Kokkali (2010: 64-85).

expansion of border and internal controls. It conferred discretionary power to the administrative authorities and the police in particular, on the entry, sojourn and forced exit from the country of non-EU nationals. Repatriation procedures and deportations increased either on the grounds of a so-called public policy or for reasons of internal security. The aim has clearly been to prevent and discourage foreign nationals to settle in Greece or make them leave. As a result, the public debate (including media discourses) at the time has been submerged by the term *lathrometanastis* (clandestine immigrant), which increasingly ended up in characterizing almost any immigrant – regular or irregular – without distinction.

The law required that the employment of non-nationals was allowed only when a job vacancy could not be filled by Greek citizens or EU nationals. The Ministry of Labour would grant work permits for specific employment, only before the arrival of the foreign employees in Greece, making thus the dependence of the worker on his/her employer excessive. In addition, the work permit could not exceed the period of one year, and it was only renewable four times. After the end of this period, the renewal could only be granted by the Ministry of Public Order. However, there was no legal measure foreseen to fight against the informal economy, yet one of the main sources of attraction of clandestine immigrants. Besides, except for a regularisation programme that would be brought into force seven years later<sup>6</sup>, the legislation did not provide any realistic plan for social, economic and cultural integration and adaptation of the newcomers into the surrounding society.

It is worth noting, moreover, that the legislation was less demanding with respect to individuals of foreign nationality but Greek origin/descent<sup>7</sup>, who would enjoy a favorable legal status, as for instance in employment in which they were preferred to other foreign nationals.

In 2001, the government voted bill No.2910/2001. The new law even though it was based on a philosophy much more liberal than the previous one, still consisted of numerous restrictive measures. Yet, the transfer of authority on the residence permits for aliens from the Ministry of Public Order (art. 12–19 of Law 1975/1991) to the Ministry of Interior and to the local administration constituted one of the major reforms introduced by the law 2910/2001. It symbolizes a decisive step since immigration issues were hitherto seen not primarily as questions of public order, but rather as questions of integration. However, the most important novelty of Law 2910/2001 is that for the first time, rights were granted to third-country nationals. Besides, the xenophobic and racist acts were, for the first time, subject to penalty.

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<sup>6</sup> The first programme for the regularization of the undocumented migrants came into force only in 1998. The main objective of this program was, first, to measure the size – then – to regularize the undocumented migrants living in Greece estimated, at this same year, at approximately 600,000 individuals. Hence, 371,641 persons applied, but only 40% were finally legalized; all the others fell back into their illegal status. This first regularization programme came across sizeable organizational and practical difficulties. Besides, as Psimmenos and Kassimati (2003) have shown, OAED, which was the service responsible for managing the programme, suffered from severe ideological bias, not to say corruption, which conditioned the decisions on the eligibility of applicants according to the administrators' personal criteria (e.g. the ethnic origin of the applicant).

<sup>7</sup> Co-ethnics mainly coming from the Greek minority in Southern Albania (falsely known as “Vorioepiroti”) and Pontic Greeks from ex-Soviet Republics.

On January, 2006 a new bill (3386/2005) came into force, incorporating the EU Directives 2003/86 (on the right to family reunification) and 2003/109 (on the status of long-term residents) to the national legal order. Two new regularization programmes would enable specific categories of immigrants who had lived in Greece for several years but who had not been able to regularise their residence and employment in the country, for various reasons. However, the law excluded de facto long-term residents in Greece who have no valid documents (passport, identity card) or whose country of origin does not dispose of a Greek consulate or embassy (mainly Asian and African countries). In this respect, the law regulates those who are already regularisable. Besides, once again, it left the possibility to the administration to choose those who are to be included or excluded from the process, by country or region of origin. Even if, in theory, the law foresees some provisions for the social integration of immigrants, it actually does no more than repeat the right of '*participation of foreign nationals in the economic, social and cultural development of the country*' (Law 3386/2005, Chapter IB '), without defining any means for financing the announced 'Comprehensive Program of Action'. Not surprisingly thus, all the proclaimed provisions remained on paper, apart from some actions that were funded by the European Community programme EQUAL.

Overall, the absence of legal and political protection of immigrants and the orientation of the Greek immigration policy towards solely the adoption of very severe laws against the entry to Greece encouraged the development of authoritarian attitudes and practices at collective as well as individual level. The choice of this kind of policy, with the involvement of the police as the exclusive mechanism of the state in its public communication with the immigrants, all along the decade of the '90s, shaped the conditions in which immigration was directly related to criminal behaviour and criminality (Petraou, 2001: 34, 40-44).

Indeed, until the advent of the 2001 immigration law, all migratory policies and legislation were characterized by the police logic and, as aforementioned, dealt mainly with the control of immigration and deportation. The restrictive measures and the police controls during the 1990s were numerous and were foreseen by the law. The police were in charge of managing the so-called 'broom-operations'<sup>8</sup>, during which clandestine immigrants were 'swept out' of the country – an image that symbolically worsened the perception of immigration that was already sufficiently loaded.

The media come to exaggerate and generalise the existing hostile general climate. The increasing migration flows towards Greece and the massive arrival of undocumented immigrants, during the 1990s, found a particular echo in the media that started systematically incriminating foreigners, associating them with crime, even when there was no evidence. As the Albanians were by far the more numerous

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<sup>8</sup> A. Tsoukala (1997) estimates that in 1991 84,259 Albanians were led to the border. In 1992, the number of foreign individuals led back to the frontiers reached 281,643, of which 276,656 Albanians that is more than 98%. In 1993, the number was approximately of 229,000 individuals of which 220,655 Albanians (a bit more than 96%). In 1994, the police drove back to the border 224,905 individuals, of which 216,449 of Albanian nationality (a bit more than 96%). The number of people that were driven back to the frontier in 1995-1996 reached 534,589 persons, of which 512,517 were Albanians that is close to 96% (Petrinioti, 1993: 41).

immigrants in Greece, many of which were at the time undocumented, the quasi-automatic association of the clandestine immigrant (*lathrometanastis*) to criminal behaviour acquired quickly a third part: Albanian- *lathrometanastis*- malefactor. Since 1991 and until, at least, the early 2000s, Albanian immigrants in Greece have been subject to a remarkable campaign of criminalization and stigmatization. They were presented as ‘criminals’, ‘backwards’, ‘uncivilized’ – often in stark opposition to the ‘good’, ‘honest’, ‘hardworking’ ethnic Greek-Albanians.

Some examples taken from the press of the time are telling. We can thus read titles such as: ‘The Albanians are a plague all over Western Macedonia and Epirus’, *Apogevmatini*, 05/10/96; ‘An open wound the lathrometanastes’, *Eleutheros Typos*, 06/10/96; ‘Who is going to save us and our property from the plague of the Albanian lathrometanastes?’, *Apogevmatini*, 27/11/96; ‘Albanian terror’, *Adesmeutos Typos*, 11/12/96; ‘Worries for the new wave of Albanian lathrometanastes’, *Eleutheros Typos*, 24/01/97.

It is not surprising therefore that the image constructed for the immigrants coming from Albania by the Greek (and the Italian<sup>9</sup>) media has gradually led to phenomena of resentment for Albanians. ‘Albanophobia’ should be considered as the most mainstream obsession at the time. However, as we saw, the criminalization of immigration, and in turn of the Albanian immigration, was not an initiative of the media. As Teun Van Dijk (1991) stresses, the media discourses are nourished by the social reality that – in its turn – is nourished by the media discourse. The role of the state with its xenophobic and anti-immigrant policies cultivated the social climate that the media reflected and reproduced. The authoritarian attitudes and practices towards immigrants that all immigration laws until 2001 legitimized and encouraged (with a total absence of rights for immigrants and absolutely no punishment foreseen for Greeks involved in the employment of *lathrometanastes*), literally opened Pandora’s Box, since they permitted various discriminations to the detriment of immigrants.

## **Inclusions-Exclusions: Albanians in Greece viewed through empirical evidence**

Research material drawn from the project ‘*Supporting the Design of Migration Policies: an Analysis of Migration Flows between Albania and Greece*’ reveals some very interesting facts about the multiple discriminations experienced by Albanian immigrants in Greece. The main fields of this discrimination include housing, employment and school.

It is to note that approximately six over ten respondents experienced discrimination of any kind due to their Albanian origin. It is then not surprising that more than one out of four respondents concealed his/her Albanian origin, while more than one over three has used a Greek name instead of his/her own. Among those latter, more than three individuals out of five did so when they went to look for a job for the first time. They considered – not falsely – that they would have had better chances to get a job if they

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<sup>9</sup> See Mai (2003).

presented themselves as Albanian citizens of Greek origin that is members of the Greek minority in southern Albania or at least as Christian Albanians<sup>10</sup>.

This makes sense, if we consider the preferential treatment of aliens of Greek origin in the 1991 immigration law, the first recent law and the one that laid the premises for an immigration policy. The preferential treatment of Greek-Albanians reflected the general social climate in Greece and the unspoken hierarchies of the society, meaning who is more or less Greek, who 'deserves' to be Greek and so on. In this context, manipulating an identity of Greek-Albanian seems to have presented the advantage of gaining sympathy from the local communities.

Generally speaking, the Albanians' incorporation into the labour market presents a rather complex image of inclusion – exclusion. While we cannot speak of exclusion from the labour market – or even from the formal labour market, since the majority of our respondent's jobs were officially registered and they themselves were socially insured –, we can neither maintain a sufficient inclusion. Their inadequate social security did not give them access to unemployment benefits as the rest of workers in Greece<sup>11</sup>. Indeed, from those who have been unemployed at least once, less than one out of ten received unemployment benefits. Regarding payments compared to the average payments (for the same labour done by a Greek worker), less than one out of three respondents declared to have been equally paid, while six over ten persons believed that they were unequally paid.

Housing has been another field for discrimination of the Albanian immigrants. According to the research's findings, almost six out of ten persons interviewed had difficulties in purchasing or renting a house because they weren't Greeks. More importantly, for one person out of two, this was the case because they were Albanians.

These findings come to reinforce my argument on the ambiguous and partial inclusion of the Albanians. This is even more so, if we consider intermarriage between them and Greeks. None of our interviewees had a Greek partner or wife/husband. Overall, percentages of intermarriage with Greeks are very low, according to the Greek National Agency for Statistics. In 2007, for instance, in a total of 61,377 marriages all over Greece, 53,943 marriages either religious or civic were held among Greek nationals that is 88 percent. Intermarriage between Albanians and Greeks in particular, in the same year, counted for 1,16 percent of all marriages, which is a low percentage compared to the volume of the Albanian population living actually in Greece (estimated at 5 percent of the total resident population), (Triandafyllidou & Kokkali, 2010: 14).

For the Albanian children at Greek schools, the main problem encountered in our empirical research was isolation from their fellow pupils, and this concerned more than half of the respondents with

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<sup>10</sup> For more on the phenomena of 'identity dissimulation' of Albanian immigrants, mainly name-changing and christening of children, see Kokkali (2010).

<sup>11</sup> One third of the insured respondents got the law's minimum number of social security stamps requested annually at the time in order to obtain a residence permit. This means that even if our interviewees were insured, employers paid the minimum insurance for them. Still, 20 percent of the sample was not insured, while 18 percent had fewer stamps than the minimum demanded (at the time) for the renewal of the residence permit.



children. In-depth interviews with some respondents have also shown that teasing and even bullying (in the primary school) were all too often practices.

The issues addressed in this section do not examine exhaustively the patterns of inclusion-exclusion of the Albanian immigrants in Greece. They simply provide some indication on the existing asymmetries. It is very difficult to talk of inclusion when considering Albanians, because even if they managed more or less successfully their economic integration, from many other aspects, their social inclusion to the enviroing society remains an open question.

### **Albanians in Greece: a successful paradigm of immigrant integration?**

As discussed in the previous sections, the Greek society has gradually viewed immigrants and Albanians in particular, at first, with suspicion and resentment not to say racism. More recently, immigrants and more importantly the Albanians have been viewed with a paternalistic and utilitarian spirit. According to the post- 2000 campaign in politics and the media, immigrants are beneficial to the Greek economy, while Albanians in particular have largely contributed in the construction works needed for the organization of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens (Pavlou 2009).

As such, for the collective Greek imaginary, from the dangerous ‘criminals’ they were in the ‘90s and the early 2000s, the Albanians have gradually become the ‘good’ and ‘integrated’ migrants, a paradigm to cite. Yet, as above shown, the Albanians are far from being fully included into the Greek society. Their ‘integration’ is more fictive than real.

There are three basic preconditions for this supposed integration. The first one is the actual predominant familial character of the Albanian migration. As aforementioned, this latter shifted from a young men’s migration to a long-term settlement of the Albanian family. Generally speaking, families and couples enjoyed much more acceptance from the local communities than isolated male immigrants, who – in many cases – enclosed themselves in exclusively male Albanian-speaking milieus with poor linguistic abilities in Greek. The arrival of women contributed to a considerable shift in the way the Albanian immigrant was perceived by the dominant society that is to say with suspicion, classified as dangerous, dirty and uncivilized. The family reunions, which in Greece were mainly requested by Albanians rather than other immigrant groups, succeeded – together with other reasons – in changing this image<sup>12</sup> (Kokkali, 2010).

This is not new in the study of migration. The actual familial character of the Albanian migration should be associated to what Sayad (1999: 112-113) very tellingly writes when he describes what the dominant societies often perceive as the ‘*good immigrants*’. The ‘good immigrants’ are those who can be trusted because they behave like *us*; those who *‘have given themselves the same social and family structures as ‘us’ as well as the same familial ethos, because those immigrants cannot stand being separated for long from their wives and their children, and they are constantly being joined by their*

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<sup>12</sup> For a similar evolution in Italy, see Kelly (2005: 35)

*families*'. Conversely, those who behave differently from *us*, who would give themselves social and family structures and a domestic moral in which we do not recognize ourselves – a moral which is shocking for the societal sensitivity ('*as if there was no culture than our culture*') –, are not good migrants, because they certainly form a bothersome factor to assimilation (Sayad, *op.cit.*).

In this respect, the Albanians, who are actually living in Greece mainly in family, do not challenge the moral values of the dominant society. This was not the case in the early 1990s when the pattern of the newcomers – essentially men – was completely different: four to five persons (sometimes even more) used to stay in small, ramshackle apartments altogether. Actually, this is the case of more recent migrants in Greece, Asians and Africans. It is these groups of migrants that are now considered to be dangerous, dirty and uncivilized. It is thus safe to maintain that these more recent migratory waves have become the new scapegoats of the dominant society, thus replacing the Albanians.

The practice of name-changing or – better – of identity dissimulation that took massively place in Greece should be considered as another token of the Albanians' volition not to challenge the moral values of the dominant society. Let me remind the way in which the identity dissimulation has been operated. The original Albanian name has been replaced by a Greek one that the person would use in his/her contact with the Greeks, yet without excluding its use in the domestic sphere. This practice concerned in particular those Albanian names that were Muslim or sounded as such, but not exclusively. As we saw, one third of our respondents had used a Greek name instead of the original Albanian name. The second component of this interesting 'identity game' concerned a pseudo- shift in religion. Many Albanian immigrants of Muslim faith would display themselves as Orthodox Christians. They wouldn't necessarily convert to Christianity. This has rather been a matter of discourse and a display effect<sup>13</sup>.

These practices offer an exemplary indication of how the Albanians' otherness has been silenced so as to fit in the Greek society. They have changed their names in order to pass for co-ethnics from the Greek minority in Albania and for the same reason they have also christened their children or even themselves, erasing thus every cultural difference that could hinder inclusion. This 'invisible' difference is the key to the Albanian immigrants' supposed integration and forms the second precondition.

The last precondition is of spatial order. The absence of any marked ethnic infrastructure (such as shops, Albanian cafés, etc.) and the Albanians' spatial diffusion in the urban space, without forming any ethnic enclaves or neighbourhoods, render this group spatially invisible (Kokkali, 2010). Hence, once again, the Albanians – via their 'invisibility' – do not challenge the existing orders, values, practices, etc. of the dominant society and thus let for discussions to go freely on the subject of their integration.

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<sup>13</sup> Regarding children, however, there are clear differences. In-depth interviews within the aforementioned empirical study showed that children born in Greece, whose parents are Muslim, were often christened. For parents, it seemed to be a sort of necessity: '*I have christened them [his children], that's it: I did my duty...*'. Of course not all parents did so. Let me remind that the Greek name, acquired via the customary christening of children, concerns almost every Greek child (the exceptions must be really scarce). It's useless to repeat, besides, that Orthodoxy is a constitutive element of the Greek national identity.

Yet, rather than integration, Albanian immigrants in Greece seem to counter ‘differential exclusion’, meaning that the migrants are accepted and incorporated in certain fields of the society (e.g. the labour market), but, on the other hand, the access to other fields (social security, equal payment, free practice of culture and religion, political participation, etc.) is refused to them (Castles & Miller, 1998: 244-249). Therefore, even if the Albanians are currently thought to be a successful paradigm of immigrant inclusion, there is sufficient evidence that, in reality, this is not exactly the case.

As a word of conclusion, let me remind that the process of immigrant integration in Southern European countries overall and in Greece in particular has taken place mainly through labour market insertion and at the personal or family level, via informal (meaning personalized) social networks. The slow process of social inclusion of immigrants into the dominant society has had less to do with formal policies and related state or sub-state structures, such as welfare and education services or other social agencies. Hence, in Greece, we witness a situation whereby immigrants find their local niches of life and work, initially even without papers. They have to adopt the local customs and through personal relations with natives manage (or not) to take part in the local networks of clientelistic relations, that generally structure and condition both the labour market (the process of finding employment or improving one’s work position) and the interaction with the state (Triandafyllidou, 2009:51).

In this sense, having quickly understood the rules of the game in the Greek reality, the Albanian immigrants, who form actually one of the oldest migratory groups, embraced indeed the local customs and used the personalized networks, in which they were initially introduced by their employers, in order to achieve different aims. Silencing every difference of the immigrant that could be silenced has been a frequent prerequisite for this ‘introduction’. Therefore, the gap of the protection of immigrants by the state has been filled by the personalized social networks. As such, the immigrant managed to include at some extent him/herself to the mainstream society, without challenging the status quo of this society.

In this context, the Albanians are probably indeed the most integrated migratory population actually living in Greece. Yet, at least according to theory, what the Albanians have achieved in Greece cannot be named integration or inclusion. As demonstrated in this paper, the Albanians are not included to the Greek society at equal grounds with Greeks, as unspoken hierarchies occur in various fields of everyday life.

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