Fragmented and Fluid Mobilities: The Role of Onward Migration in the New Map of Europe and the Balkans

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SUMMARY

This paper directs attention to examining migration beyond the conventional bipolar model of origin-destination. It does so at two levels: conceptual and empirical. Conceptually, it reviews recent trends to see migration as a more complex and diverse space-time process. Spatially, and especially within Europe, migration increasingly manifests itself in a variety of trajectories and pathways, which mix internal with international moves, transit migration, onward migration, and back-and-forth moves. Temporally, a range of mobility forms, including return visits and cross-border shuttling, may be enfolded within longer-term migrations. Moving more specifically to onward migration, a series of examples is then reviewed, based on case-studies in the literature. In the final part of the article the authors present results from their recent study of the onward migration of Albanians from Greece to the UK. Based on 10 in-depth interviews with onward-migrated Albanians in London and Brighton, their reasons for leaving Greece, where they had been more-or-less successfully settled, are interrogated. They left because of the negative impact of the Greek economic crisis on their livelihoods, and because their acquisition of Greek citizenship gave them the freedom to move. Given their reluctance to return to Albania, which offers them few opportunities to advance their lives, they saw the UK as the best option, although the spectre of Brexit disturbs this certainty. Interview data are also included on their memories of pre-migration life in Albania, and their impressions of their resettled lives in England.

KEY WORDS: onward migration, mobilities, Europe, the Greek crisis, Albanian migrants

INTRODUCTION

Europe's map of migration constantly evolves, but recent years have seen a series of geopolitical and economic events which have more radically changed pre-existing patterns. From the dissolution of the Iron Curtain to successive "Eastern" enlargements of the European Union in 2004, 2007 and 2013, the main geographic axis of migratory flows, which had been South-North during the early postwar decades of labour migration, shifted to East-West. As well as this geographic rotation, new migration temporalities also became evident. The demise of the Iron Curtain opened up new mobility types across the old East-West divide, including shuttle migration, irregular migration and other temporary and speculative moves that Okólski (2012) called "incomplete migration". One of the most dramatic migratory episodes of this post-communist era was the sudden mass exodus from Albania, a non-EU country, to Greece and Italy, the longer-term ramifications of which are considered in the latter half of this paper. But it was the post-2004 EU enlargements which did most to reorient the European migration map, creating a boom in new migration flows, the most numerically significant of which were from Poland to the United Kingdom, Ireland and Germany, and from Romania to Italy, Spain and the UK (Baláž and Karasová, 2017; King and Okólski, 2019).

Engbersen and Snel (2013) proposed the term "liquid migration" to describe this new era of East-West mobility, characterised by a diversity of types of movement, not all of which accorded with conventional definitions of migration. Such movements included temporary, seasonal, back-and-forth, onward and open-ended mobilities, mainly for work reasons but also for study and leisure purposes. The defining characteristic of liquid migration, according to Engbersen and Snel, is "international unpredictability" – moving abroad with an open-minded mentality and without a definitive plan, except, perhaps, to be mobile. Others, however, observed that in reality many of these initially short-term and open-ended migration intentions subsequently evolved into longer-term "grounded" settlement once the ties to the host country became stronger, for instance in terms of good incomes, career enhancement, romantic partnership formation and the birth of children (Bygnes and Erdal, 2017). Flipping round Engbersen and Snel's formulation, the model became, at the risk of creating an oxymoron, "unintentional predictability".

Following the main EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007, the succeeding years, 2008–17, could rightly be termed "the crisis decade", when a series of exter-

nal shocks disturbed the continent's economic, geopolitical and migratory landscape. First came the financial crisis which broke in late 2008 and which particularly affected several peripheral countries of the EU, none more so than Greece, but also Spain, Portugal, Ireland and the Baltic states. Then, in 2011, came the Arab Spring and its initially optimistic but ultimately catastrophic follow-ups; and the crisis decade ended with the Syrian refugee crisis of 2015–16. All of these major events, especially the first and the last, served to trigger new migrations into and within Europe, fragmenting and diversifying existing patterns (King and Okólski, 2019).

The 2000s ended with manifestations of a more xenophobic Europe. Whilst Germany claimed the moral high ground in accepting the bulk of the Syrian refugees, the trend elsewhere was to resist an expansion of immigration; in fact to reduce it. Solidarity towards refugees and appreciation the economic logic of migration have been replaced by right-wing populism and nationalism, most evident in Hungary, Italy and Brexit-era UK, but present in many other countries. Too often, nowadays, immigrants are scapegoated for problems not of their own making. Cynical politicians and media moguls demonise immigrants to boost, respectively, electoral impact and profits; yet the reality is that a buoyant circulation of migrants is connected both to economic growth and can be a rational response to economic recession (Zimmermann, 2014).

After this rapid-fire overview of recent developments in European migration, what are the implications for how we think about migration as an academic field of study? For sure, as many have argued, it is a research theme to be studied from many angles, ideally in an interdisciplinary or postdisciplinary way (Favell, 2008). But the very definition and conceptualisation of migration need to be broadened, in our view, beyond the conventional "bipolar" model of origin and destination, around which so much migration and integration theory has been built.

We see two main directions in which this broadening should take place. The first is to "complexify" the way in which migration is thought of and defined as a form of space-time movement (cf. Pratsinakis, Hatziprokopiou and King, 2017). Migration is much more than a process with a starting point and an end point. Return migration, onward migration (from the original destination to another one), and various other transnational and diasporic mobilities also enter the field. Secondly, migration needs to be embedded within the individual's or family's life-course. The notion of a "migration career" is relevant here (Martiniello and Rea, 2014), since people

migrate at different stages of their lives (as children, youth, adults, in old-age etc.) and with different degrees of agency. They may move multiple times, either as separate migration events separated by return migration, or in a sequence of linked onward moves involving different destinations. As migration scholars we need to embrace this space-time diversity and fluidity of migration, including its intergenerational effects, both now and into the future. Finally, we need to acknowledge a fundamental flaw in much research on migration, where migrants as an analytical category are compared to non-migrants; in a future-oriented life-course perspective, many non-migrants will become migrants and thereby cross the comparative divide between categories.

In the next section of the paper we examine in more detail the under-researched phenomenon of onward migration, followed by a review of some European case-studies. The latter half of the paper is a more detailed investigation of the Albanian onward migration from Greece to the UK in the wake of the severe "eurocrisis" in Greece.

WHAT, EXACTLY, IS ONWARD MIGRATION?

Following Nekby (2006) and Ramos (2018), we define onward migrants as those who, after living in one destination country, then move to another. Strictly speaking, onward migrants move directly from the destination country they are in to the next one, although a brief interim return visit to the home country might be "allowed" under this definition. A longer period of residence in the home country before the new departure would constitute return migration, and this would be then be followed by a new migration.

Ramos (2018) stresses that onward migration does not usually reflect a planned strategy *ab initio*, when the migrant left his or her country of origin, but arises due to changed circumstances which occur when the migrant is in the first destination country, such as discrimination, unemployment, or some change in personal circumstances. These could be considered push factors for onward migration. Pull factors from the targeted new country of destination are also likely to be relevant, if only because these are often the flip side of the push factors. Hence, pull factors include higher incomes, better career prospects, a more preceptive social environment towards immigrants, better education systems for children, or a desire to join a larger community of diasporic co-nationals. Several of these factors will be shown to be relevant to our Albanian case-study.

Onward migration is quite common amongst dispersed refugee populations in Europe. Many refugees from the same origin country end up scattered in different destination countries, due to the rule of claiming asylum in the first country of arrival in Europe, plus quota policies on refugee acceptance. Not unnaturally, some refugees wish to relocate to places where there are larger concentrations of their co-nationals or co-ethics (Ahrens, Kelly and van Liempt, 2016). Within the "free movement" provisions of the EU, refugees who acquire citizenship in one country are free to onward-migration to another.

Onward migration is "crowded in" by a number of other terms for rather similar migratory concepts: transit migration, stepwise migration, re-emigration, serial migration and twice migration are the main ones. All refer to migration trajectories that involve stays in at least two destination countries. Whilst some of these could function as synonyms for onward migration, there are also distinctions to be drawn. *Transit migrants* are different from onward migrants because they are essentially passing through intermediate destinations en route to their pre-determined destination (Collyer and de Haas, 2012). Both economic migrants and refugees can be transit migrants – for example Central Americans transiting Mexico on their way to the southern border of the United States, Sub-Saharan African migrants passing through (and maybe getting stuck in) Morocco or Libya aiming for Europe, or Syrian refugees transiting Turkey en route for EU countries. *Stepwise migration* refers more often to internal migrants moving from village to town to city, but may also combine internal and international migration trajectories (King, Skeldon and Vullnetari, 2008). An internal migration within the country of origin can be a first step towards international migration; and in the destination country the international migrant might engage in an onward internal move to seek out better livelihood opportunities in a different town or region. Clearly this is not the same as international onward migration. *Re-emigration* implies a second emigration following a period of return in the country of origin, whilst *serial migrants* see ongoing and repeat migration as a form of lifestyle choice (Ossman, 2011). The term *twice migrants* derives from Bhachu's (1985) classic study on Asian migrants who first migrated to British East Africa during the colonial era and then, two or three generations later, their descendants migrated to the UK as a result of the "Africanisation" policies of the now-independent states in the 1960s and 1970s. This term has been little used since, although it was recently reprised in Della Puppa and King's (2019) study of Bangladeshis onward migration from Italy to London.

The most complete theoretical typology of onward migration in Europe is provided by Ahrens, Kelly and van Liempt (2016), in which all such movers make use of their accumulated knowledge and experience (known as "migration capital") to explore their cognitive maps of where better opportunities are available. Firstly, *career movers* onward migrate to overcome barriers to employment. These migrants are often located in countries such as Spain and Greece which have been most negatively affected by the economic crisis. A second category are *student movers* who are highly mobile as a group anyway, and move onwards to access better university systems and build their academic qualifications over two or more countries. *Family movers* onward migrate to plan a better future for their children; this was a prime motivation for the recent trend of Italian-Bangladeshis to move to England (Della Puppa and King, 2019). Fourthly, *political movers* are onward migrating, self-evidently, for political reasons, to access more open, democratic and welcoming societies, and in order to escape political, racist and religious repression in their first destination countries. Fifth are *diaspora movers*, who regroup with relatives, friends and larger diasporic communities in the new destination country, thereby accessing a more "ethnic" way of life consistent with their desired lifestyle. Finally there are *cosmopolitan movers*, who are less wedded to their ethno-national heritage and want to explore the exciting, multicultural lifestyles of major European cities like London, Paris and Berlin. Many have high-level careers which may actually demand their onward migration, but certainly enable them to move onward in this way.

ONWARD MIGRATION: SOME EXISTING CASES

There is an expanding literature on onward migration in various geographical contexts; in this review we focus on European cases, leading up to our primary research on Albanian onward migrants. Before we do this, we briefly acknowledge cases elsewhere, notably in North America. This North American literature divides itself into two main types. The first is international onward migration, either those effecting onward moves between Canada and the US, or onward international moves elsewhere in the world before the migrants arrive in the US or Canada. For instance, Konadu-Agyemang (1999) found that two-thirds of Ghanaian migrants in Canada had migrated there after stays in one or more intermediate destinations; this onward migration was mainly led by males. Paul (2015) found analogous results for Filipinos entering Canada; this time, the typical profile was made

up of female domestic and health workers who had first worked in Singapore or the Gulf States, accumulating capital and experience in preparation for the onward migration to Canada. Another subgroup of North American studies is made up of more statistical analyses of the backgrounds of various immigrants moving from Canada to the US (King and Newbold, 2007; Mueller, 2004). Artuç and Özden (2016) found that approximately 9% of the immigrants arriving in the US between 2001 and 2012 were coming from a country which was not their country of origin.

The second type of North American study concerns the onward migration of immigrants *within* the country of arrival and settlement. Typically these are Mexican migrants in the US who subsequently move to another state or metropolitan area, commonly in a dispersal pattern away from the main "gateway" cities of arrival and initial settlement. These moves are usually driven by economic considerations, seeking out new work opportunities, but may also be related to other factors such as family and social networks, or looking for "safer" environments to bring up children. This is a much more extensive literature, mainly by population geographers and spatial demographers, that we do not review here.

Turning now in more detail to European case studies, there are also divisible into subtypes, including refugee onward movements, onwardly mobile students, and the onward moves of labour migrants seeking improved opportunities in other countries. As with Albanians leaving Greece, the role of the 2008 financial crisis is pertinent to some of these cases, as is the critical condition of acquiring a "European" citizenship in order to access the right to "free movement".

A first well-researched case concerns the onward migration of Somali refugees from their countries of first settlement and citizenship acquisition in Europe to a second country, which is often the UK. An early paper on Somalis onward-migrating from Denmark by Bang Nielsen (2004) was followed by a more detailed study by van Liempt (2011) on "Dutch Somalis" with the evocative title "And then one day they *all* moved to Leicester". According to van Liempt, Dutch Somalis move to the UK to join already-established Somali communities in Leicester and major cities like London and Birmingham because they anticipate better education and career opportunities for their children, better jobs for themselves, and a more receptive and supportive environment, both on the part of the established Somali communities and the wider British society. They describe how life in the Netherlands, initially characterised by a tolerant multiculturalism, had in recent years been

marked by increasing anti-Muslim sentiments, including acts of violence. Van Liempt also found that many of these UK-bound moves occurred right after the Somali refugees acquired Dutch citizenship, indicating an element of pre-planning in the moves. The Somali case is typical of other refugee groups present in Europe, which also show a proclivity to onward-migrate to the UK, especially London. Lindley and van Hear (2007) mention Afghans, Congolese, Sudanese, Iraqis and Sri Lankan Tamils in this context of the onward migration of ethnic groups with a refugee background.

A second group of studies focuses on the trajectories of West Africans, who are remarkably mobile across many countries of Western Europe. The key national-origin groups here are Nigerians (Ahrens, 2013), Senegalese (Toma and Castagnone, 2015) and Ghanaians (who, as far as we know, have not been researched as onward migrants but who are known to be present in significant numbers in many European countries and whose family, social and professional networks must presumably shape a certain degree of international mobility within Europe as well as onward to other destinations). Ahrens' research on Nigerians (2013; also Ahrens, Kelly and van Liempt, 2016) shows two main patterns: a northward migration from Spain and Italy to Germany to the UK; and another, partially linked to the first one, of onward migration from Germany to the UK. Amongst the first trajectory are many Nigerian women who have been trafficked into the sex industry. The latter trajectory is made up of students, skilled workers and labour migrants, but also includes some former refugees from the Biafran war and the later years of dictatorship. Complex and shifting transnational family networks often underpin these movements. The 2011 British census gives a glimpse of the scale of the phenomenon: significant, but not massive. There were almost 190,000 Nigerian-born residents living in England, of whom 5,400 were onward migrants, including 1,464 with German nationality. Rather different is Toma and Castagnone's (2015) more statistical analysis of Senegalese migration between Italy, Spain and France, which records migrants moving in all possible directions between the three countries; in this study, both onward migration and return migration are referred to by the confusing term "remigration".

A third cluster of cases focuses on the experiences of Latin American migrants in Spain (Mas Giralt, 2017; Ramos, 2018). Such migrants have been able to acquire Spanish citizenship after just two years of legal residency – a post-colonial favour offered to Latin American Hispanics, and very different from the 10-year residence requirement applied to other "third-

country" immigrants. This case provides a direct parallel to our own, presented shortly. Onward migration to the UK is seen as a "coping strategy" (Mas Giralt, 2017) against the economically devasting effects of the 2008 financial crisis in Spain on migrants' livelihoods. Unemployment amongst Latin American men in Spain reached 41% in 2012 (Ramos, 2018: 1844). In the more complete of the two papers, Ramos (2018) utilises the conceptual framework of "migratory careers" (Martiniello and Rea, 2014) to explore two interesting variations in her interview data (53 Colombians and Ecuadorians interviewed in London). The first is the finding that migrants' paths and motivations can swiftly change during the migration process. In particular, migration behaviour responds to the unexpected (e.g. the sudden onset of the economic crisis in Spain), so that new decisions (e.g. to onward migrate) are taken. Second, Ramos points to the importance of the stage in the life-course at which onward migration takes place, distinguishing three life-course junctures: mature migrants, who are on the whole reluctant to leave; mid-career movers, who onward-migrate in order to re-launch their careers in a more economically opportune setting; and youthful escapees seeking independence and adventure, many of whom came originally to Spain as children with their immigrating parents.

Our final case-study in this review are the Bangladeshis in Italy who onward-migrate to London, where they join the biggest Bangladeshi population in the diaspora. Once again, the two interlinked factors of the economic crisis and the acquisition of European citizenship are central to the analysis, but here in a more nuanced way (Della Puppa and King, 2019; Della Puppa and Sredanovic, 2017). Some 3000 Italian-Bangladeshi families are estimated to have moved to London in recent years; all have Italian citizenship, although in most cases this was not an instrumental act purely designed to facilitate emigration ("citizenship to go"), but it was also strategised as "citizenship to stay" – to enjoy more rights in Italy as an Italian citizen (Della Puppa and Sredanovic, 2017). And the crisis was not the direct trigger mechanism. Compared to Spain and Greece, the crisis and its aftermath were more muted in Italy, and most of the onward migrants had steady, if dead-end, jobs working in factories and restaurants. The main driving force was the future for the Italian-born children who, their parents' minds, would struggle to get good jobs in Italy and always be racialised as the "children of immigrants". The plan was that they would have much better chances in the UK of parlaying their educational qualifications from British schools and universities into the professional employment that they and their families aspired to.

ALBANIAN ONWARD MIGRATION FROM GREECE TO THE UK

The post-1990 Albanian emigration is arguably the most dramatic of the European post-communist migration flows: by 2010, according to the World Bank, a "stock" of 1.4 million Albanians had accumulated abroad, the vast majority of them in Greece (an estimated 600,000) and Italy (400,000), the two most adjacent "Western" countries to Albania (Barjaba and King, 2005; World Bank, 2011). The scale of this exodus is all the more remarkable when we note that the population resident in Albania is less than 3 million. And we also need to remember that, unlike other former Eastern bloc countries such as Poland and Romania, which have also experienced mass emigration since 1990 and particularly since they joined the European Union, Albania is not in the EU, so that much of its emigration has been, in one form or another, clandestine or irregular.

Several factors help to explain the large relative scale of emigration from Albania. First, the country had just released itself from four decades of repressive autarky under the dictatorial rule of the "people's leader", Enver Hoxha. During this long span of communist rule, emigration was banned: those attempting to escape could be shot whilst trying to cross the heavily militarised border, or condemned to long prison sentences as traitors and "enemies of the people". Internal mobility, too, was very tightly controlled. Small wonder, then, that when the borders were open (at least on the Albanian side), an emigration of epic, if chaotic and unregistered, proportions took place, especially across the mountainous land border with Greece. Internally too, Albania became "a country on the move"; with the pent-up frustration of forced immobility removed, people were free to relocate from remote highland areas with poor living conditions to Tirana, the capital, and to other major towns (Carletto et al., 2006; Vullnetari, 2012).

The largest-scale emigration was to Greece, although the precise numbers are impossible to know because of the irregular status of the migrants in the 1990s and the large amount of to-and-fro movement across the border, including mass repatriations (often followed by immediate re-entry) by the Greek authorities at moments of political tension with Albania. What is clear that Albanians quickly became the numerically dominant immigrant group in Greece, accounting for almost two-thirds of the estimated total of around 1 million immigrants in Greece (Barjaba and King, 2005: 13).

Over time, the back-and-forth and irregular nature of the Albanian migration to Greece evolved to a more settled presence, facilitated by successive

regularisation schemes which started in 1998. Most Albanians, however, continued to be employed in low-status jobs in the informal Greek labour market; these jobs were poorly paid and without proper contracts or social insurance. Typical jobs for men were in construction, casual farm labour, restaurant work and other manual labour; and for women in cleaning and care work. Migrants with high levels of education and professional experience from Albania – teachers, engineers, artists etc. – were also, for the most part, confined to these "immigrant" jobs. Moreover, Albanians in Greece became heavily stigmatised by certain political factions and right-wing media; they were portrayed as "rough, uncivilised, violent and prone to criminality" (Kapllani and Mai, 2005: 164), and as the embodiment of the undesirable "communist Other", Greece's historical neighbour-enemy during the Cold War. This stigmatisation did not exclude, at the individual level, instances of great kindness and charity, and over time the tendency to stereotype and racialise Albanians has significantly lessened. Many, indeed, were on the path towards becoming successfully integrated. Then, the Greek financial meltdown, which started in 2008, constituted a rupture in this integration and settlement process. Many were forced to leave due to unemployment – according to one estimate, 150,000 returned to Albanians in the wake of the economic crisis (Barjaba and Barjaba, 2015). Others decided that a better option was onward migration to another European country.

With this background in mind, we now zoom in on our case-study. A standard onward-migration trajectory consists of three geographically emplaced life phases and two migration decisions: for our participants, the periods of their lives spent in Albania, Greece and the UK; and the decision to migrate from Albania to Greece, and then from Greece to the UK. The key research questions that we wanted to find answers for were concerned with the reasons for onward migration, and how these reasons were related to different migration-linked life stages: early life in Albania, life as a migrant in Greece, and experiences so far in the UK. We structure our account along these biographical time-lines, preceded first by a note on methods.

Methods

For this research, 10 semi-structured interviews, averaging one hour in length, were carried out with a convenience sample of Albanians in London and Brighton who had onward migrated to the UK from Greece. Their length of stay in Greece varied from 4 to 24 years and they arrived in the UK between 2011 and 2017. The ages of the interviewees ranged from 26 to

57 at the time of interview in mid-2017. Seven interviewees were women, three were men. The older participants had migrated to Greece in the 1990s and had memories of growing up under the communist system in Albania; the younger ones had emigrated to Greece during the 2000s and had only sketchy memories, if at all, of the communist era. Indeed the youngest participant had been born in 1991, the year the Communist Party lost power in Albania. Most of the participants were married, with their spouses and children with them in the UK. They did a variety of jobs including cleaner, care-worker, shop assistant, waiter, mechanic and engineer.

The language of the interviews was Greek, which all participants were fluent in; indeed for some of them, who had spent a long time in Greece and/or had moved there during their school years, Greek had become their first language, displacing the Albanian of their childhood. Although some participants expressed an initial reluctance to be interviewed, mostly because of their busy working lives, all interviews took place in a relaxed manner, and were recorded subject to "informed consent". The recordings were subsequently transcribed and at the same time translated into English. The interview scripts were then subject to thematic analysis to see both the main themes emerging and the degree of consistency across the interviewees.

Participants were recruited through personal networks, plus some subsequent snowballing. They are given pseudonyms to protect their identity and any other potentially identifying details, such as precise places of work, are excluded or blurred to further ensure confidentiality. In order to relax the participants, as well as maximise the information flow, the "atmosphere" of the interviews was kept informal and conversational, whilst still adhering to a broadly semi-structured format. The interviewees were gently encouraged to tell their stories in a broadly chronological sequence, starting with basic biographical data and then recounting their lives in the three phases and two decision-making events mentioned earlier – life in Albania, the initial migration to Greece, life in Greece, onward migration to the UK, and life in the UK. They were also invited to comment on issues of ethnic and national identity, belonging and integration, social networks, work opportunities, and Brexit.

We cannot claim that this small sample is statistically representative; however, our combined knowledge and previous research on Albanian migration, and on Albanian migrants in Greece and the UK, enable us to be rather confident that the following account approximates the "reality" of onward migrants.

Life in Albania and the migration to Greece

As is extensively documented in the literature (Hall, 1994; Sjöberg, 1991; Vickers, 1999; Vickers and Pettifer, 1997), life in Albania under the communist regime was characterised by poverty, physical hardship, isolation, lack of freedom to be mobile, and an obsessive central control by "the regime" and its capillary networks of managers, enforcers and informants. The regime nationalised all land, factories, mines and other means of production. During this period, Albanians were denied fundamental human rights such as travel abroad and the freedom to practice their religion (Islam, Orthodox Christianity and Roman Catholicism were the prevalent religions). Above all, participants remembered the impoverished living conditions they endured, especially in rural areas (see King and Vullnetari, 2016). Their situation then was seen as all the more miserable in the light of their subsequent experiences in Greece and England.

Maria (aged 38, interviewed in Brighton) remembered growing up in Himara, a village on the southern coast of Albania:

From Himara you could see the island of Corfu and we used to look at all those lights at night. The sea was between us and lots of people wanted to leave. Some left at night using tractor inner tubes as floating boats… and some were caught and killed or put in prison to frighten the rest of us, so we wouldn't leave. They demolished our Christian churches… that is how the regime was.

[…]

During communism they used to give us 2 kilos of pasta a month to eat, and 1 kilo of meat… We were hungry… [My mother] *was very poor – she would steal olives and then press them through a sock to make olive oil… We were a very poor family, with six kids.*

Similar poignant memories were articulated by other older participants. Adriana (57) recalled:

We only knew Coca Cola because the waves washed up the cans and we put them out for decoration. Those cans and plastic bottles seemed so beautiful to us…

Later, on their first days in Greece, when Adriana took her young son and some other relatives to have a Coke at a café, she laughed when she remembered that no one in the group knew how to open the can. She continued:

My son [aged 8] *would look at the shops* [in Greece] *and constantly call me over to see this and that. And he saw a fruit market and he shouts – "Mom, look,*

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apples!" I told him they were not real, but made of wax, because apples that big do not exist. But he runs to the stall and sinks his finger-nails into the apple shouting "Mom, they're real!" I felt embarrassed and told him to stop. The man selling the apples saw all this scene and he filled a big bag with these apples and gave them to us [for free].

These two latter interview clips, about Coca Cola and apples, give both an indication of the isolation and privation of life in communist Albania, and also an example of one of the many kindly acts on the part of Greeks when the Albanian migrants first arrived in 1991.

Hence, the Albanian migration to Greece during the 1990s (and also to Italy; King and Mai, 2008) was largely economically driven: for many it was a "route out of poverty" (see De Soto et al., 2002). Barjaba and King (2005) described the migrants as "economic refugees". Whilst the economic rationale certainly explains the bulk of the exodus during this first decade of Albanian emigration – at this stage mostly young men seeking casual work in the informal economy in Greece – other mechanisms were revealed by the interviewees, especially those who migrated later, when migration motives were more diversified. Some of the female participants went as part of marriage or family migration to join their (future) husbands who were already living and working in Greece. Rea (31) migrated to Greece as recently as 2009 to live closer to her husband-to-be whom she had met when he was a guest at a family wedding in Albania. Other, younger participants had emigrated as part of a family migration when they were children – for instance, the case of Anna (30) who was moved with her family in 1997 when she was 10, and Mario (29) who was likewise taken to Greece by his parents in 1999, aged 11. Those emigrating at this time, in the late 1990s, also referred to the unsafe situation in Albania at that time, due to the country's own financial meltdown, caused by the collapse of corrupt pyramid savings scams and a period of civil unrest.

Life in Greece

What do the participants remember about their lives in Greece? In some cases this amounted to periods of 20 years and more, during which their experiences, material and psychological, changed markedly. Early experiences, conditioned by their irregular status, were mixed, but following the regularisation schemes, life improved, at least up until the economic crisis.

The Greek state initially had no policy to cope with the sudden influx of Albanians – an estimated 200,000–300,000 in the early 1990s – except periodic mass repatriations known as "sweeping" operations. Some help was offered on an *ad hoc* basis by the Orthodox Church and by others with charitable instincts. Adriana, quoted earlier, continued her account of her family's initial welcome:

> *…the bishop gave us a house to stay in, it belonged to the church. We cleaned it up and painted it. The bishop was knocking on doors telling people to give us anything they thought might help, and by the end of the evening we had a room full of clothes and other nice things.*

It should be pointed out that Adriana was a special case because, as part of the small ethnic-Greek "Northern Epirote" minority in southern Albania, she had grown up speaking Greek and her nominal religion (suppressed by Hoxha's atheist regime) was Orthodox Christianity. She had been able to lobby the Greek embassy in Tirana to get passports to go to Greece. For nationalistic reasons the Greek government granted special permission to enter the country to members of the Greek government granted special permission to enter the country to members of the Greek diaspora who were Greek-speaking and Orthodox – the two main markers of Greek national identity. Yet hers was not the only story of help by the church that we heard of from the interviews, since the church was also motivated to "Christianise" the predominantly Muslim-heritage Albanian migrant population.

Soon after the initial arrivals were "welcomed", a different reaction set in, and those older participants who were early arrivals in Greece also spoke of the challenges of coping with racism and rejection, encountered in a range of spheres of life, from the labour market to the school playground.

> *One day my daughter came home from school very upset, because another mother had told her daughter at the school "Don't you dare play with the Albanian girl again!" And my daughter came home crying… this caused her a lot of psychological problems.* (Elpida, 56)

> *In Albania, I was a kindergarten teacher and my husband studied economics at the university. When we came to Athens my husband had dreams at the beginning… For two years, he went all over the city… and every time he saw something in the newspapers related to his field, he would go and ask… but nothing… So then he started working as a mechanic in a garage.* (Miranda, 50)

This next longer extract from the interview with Artur (42) gives a more detailed insight into the typical experiences of a teenage boy who migrated speculatively in the early 1990s:

I came to Greece in August 1991 when I was 16 years old. We were three brothers in the family and the middle brother had arrived before us, so I travelled with my eldest brother. At Iannina [town in northern Greece] *we got on a bus and came to Athens; my brother was expecting us and slowly we got our first jobs. My first job was in construction… and then I started working at the central meat market… by then I was 17… So this is how life unfolded, from one job to the next… There was no opportunity to be legal and have any papers at that time… only if you were a Northern Epirote and had a Greek name, only those could find an open window… But in 1997 there was a new law and they gave the first work permits, and from then on I could have health coverage. But that didn't mean you were part of Greek society; it's just a paper that says you don't have to live under the pressure that you're going to be caught by the police. Because… there were those "sweeping" operations… hundreds of thousands of people were caught and beaten up in jail... and then put in buses* [to take them back to the border]*… This is how Greeks treated the Albanians back then.*

Artur's experience was typical of the hundreds of thousands of young Albanians who walked across the border in the early 1990s and who managed to survive in the Greek informal economy, doing all the tough jobs that Greek young men increasingly rejected (see for instance Hatziprokopiou, 2003; King, Iosifides and Myrivili, 1998; Lazaridis and Psimmenos, 2000).

Over time, things improved for the Albanians in Greece. Their stigmatisation lessened and they began to "integrate". Part of their integration strategy was to "become like the Greeks" – taking Greek names, getting themselves and their children baptised into the Orthodox Church, and learning to speak Greek fluently (Kokkali, 2015). A similar transition, from stigmatisation and criminalisation to tolerance, acceptance and integration, was underway in Italy, the other major destination for Albanian migrants in the 1990s and 2000s (King and Mai, 2008). Especially for the participants who arrived in Greece after the late 1990s, a more receptive social environment for immigrants was in place, which was also helped by Albanians' adaptability and "ethnic invisibility" (Kokkali, 2015). This strategy of mimesis was implemented not without a certain sense of irony and sarcasm. Artur again:

We learnt for our personal and family benefit to take Greek names, to tell one or two lies to satisfy the Greek. That's how things were… so if your name was Artur, you had to change it to Vasilis, because it was easier for your boss to call you that, as if it was really difficult to pronounce Artur.

Another well-rehearsed sticking-point, mentioned by several participants, was the issue of flag-carrying on school parades. There is the custom, on special national occasions, such as Independence Day, for the "best student" in the school or class to have the privilege of carrying the Greek flag. On several occasions up and down the country where the best student turned out to be an Albanian pupil, controversy arose. Many nationalistic Greeks were offended by the idea of "the Greek flag in the hands of an Albanian" (Kapllani and Mai, 2005); others, more liberal, saw this as a celebration of Greece's move towards a multicultural society; whilst on the other side of the debate there was the provocative suggestion that the Albanian student should carry the Albanian flag – literally a red rag to the bull!

The general picture gleaned from the interviews, however, was of increasingly stable settlement and successful integration. Occupational status improved as people passed across the somewhat blurred divide between the informal and formal labour market, moving into more skilled and well-paid employment, with some setting up their own small businesses. Increased incomes were accrued, even if in most cases it was necessary for both parents to be working to ensure a decent standard of living (true also for most Greek families), including a more spacious flat, a car, and holidays (usually back in Albania).

We close this subsection with two typical accounts from our participants of how their lives had developed in the years leading up to the crisis. Ariana (38) had migrated to Greece in 2002 when she was 22 and newly married, to join her husband who was already working there as a window maker. After having two children, she found a part-time job working in a delicatessen.

I was really happy with my job. In the beginning I was paid well, around 1000 euros a month, and my husband 1600, so we were really comfortable financially.

Secondly, Miranda (50), whose highly qualified husband could only find work initially as a garage-hand, described how their life developed during their increasingly prosperous years in Albania, up to 2008.

He worked in the garage for a number of years until he got to know the job well… Then my husband decided to open his own garage for about six or seven years…

It went really well, plus I was also working [as a part-time carer], *so we had a comfortable life. Before the crisis, my husband made really good money, on average 3000–3500 euros a month.*

The Greek crisis and onward migration to the UK

Many of the participant narratives introduced in the previous subsection link through to the next stage in their migratory trajectory: the decision to leave Greece and embark on a second emigration, this time to the UK. Indeed, all those interviewed framed their migration to the UK as a need to escape the consequences of the Greek recession, which affected them in multiple ways. These included straight unemployment, falling wages through short-time work, inability to pay mortgages, rents and bills, and lack of career opportunities for younger interviewees and for the second-generation children of older participants. Furthermore, for those with financial obligations back in Albania, such as sending remittances to support elderly parents, their ability to sustain these commitments also suffered.

At this point, we pick up some of the narratives of the interviewees already quoted, as well as introducing new ones. Artur (42), quoted above, had started his teenage working life in Greece doing manual-labour jobs; later he "graduated" to restaurant work and for many years was a waiter in Italian restaurants:

The financial crisis changed things dramatically in Greece. I worked in Italian restaurants and I was paid well, 65 euros a day plus tips, and I would get good tips as I worked in an up-market neighbourhood in Athens and the clients were politicians, journalists and the like, and I was happy. But the first year of the crisis I was getting only 43 euros a day, and then my work became irregular. And then the restaurant I worked in closed down.

Later in the interview, Artur said:

Although as Albanians we had some problems [in Greece]*, the thing that kept us there was the financial prosperity, the fact that we had good jobs and a good life. But when this breaks down, then you realise you have to do something.*

The participants gave plenty of evidence that the effects of the crisis on Albanian immigrants were highly gendered (Koehler et al., 2010). The Greek construction industry came to a virtual standstill, thus destroying the jobs of large numbers of Albanian men; whereas certain sectors of the care industry, which employed a lot of Albanian women, were less affected. This

meant that, within immigrant households, men usually lost their jobs whilst women retained theirs. Men tried initially to switch to other jobs, but this became almost impossible when the economic situation further worsened after 2011. Wives continued working but could not support their entire families' livelihoods on their wages alone. This situation also challenged Albanian norms of masculinity which resisted the "role reversal" within households, because of the "shame" attached to men who are unemployed and live off their wife's earnings. In the words of Maria (38):

> *Basically, I had a job but my husband did not. I worked in the port, as a cleaner. I was paid well and I was happy with the work, but my husband could not live off my money, he felt guilty… he is a man.*

For the younger and more highly educated migrants, including those like Eduard (26), quoted from below, who came to Greece as children and who progressed through secondary school and university in Greece, it was not just the immediate impact of the crisis, but the lack of career openings to match their professional profile and aspirations, as well as what Eduard described as the toxic social environment.

> *There are lots of reasons why I left Greece. Obviously the first one is the financial crisis and the fact that you can't see your future in Greece, which is really stressful because, otherwise, who wouldn't want to live in Greece? The second reason, there is no room for professional development in my field* [engineering]. *And another reason is the mindset that there is in Greece and generally in the Balkans, where everybody gossips about their neighbour and complains about everything… I couldn't live in such a toxic environment.*

Eduard's strongly-held view that his professional aspirations could not be satisfied in crisis-era Greece (he had the bad luck to graduate at the height of the crisis) reminds us of Carling's (2002) theoretical point that for migration to take place, a two-stage process has to occur: there has to be first the desire to move, and then the ability to do so. Carling's aspiration/ability model seems particularly apposite to help us frame Albanians' onward migration to the UK. For most of our participants, acquiring Greek Citizenship and hence the "European" passport was the key which opened the door to onward migration. In Eduard's case, he had not yet been successful in securing a Greek passport; however, his "ticket out" was the offer of a place and a scholarship on a specialised Master's programme in a UK university. For others, acquiring the Greek passport was the mechanism to turn aspiration into ability: they had the "citizenship to go" (Della Puppa and Sredanovic,

2017). Most of the interviewees, like Ariana and Artur below, moved to the UK as soon as they obtained the Greek citizenship and passport.

> *With the crisis, they started reducing our wages; it happened gradually at first. They started laying off staff. My husband had already lost his job. My salary was reduced from 1000 to 650 euros and so as soon as we got the* [Greek] *passports, I told my husband, "Let's go, because there is no future here".* (Ariana, 38)

> *We got it* [the Greek passport] *in 2013, and as soon as we got it, we left. We got it so we could leave… The UK was my first choice, because I know the language; it was a strategic choice… I thought that, if I moved to Sweden or Germany, I would need at least a year to learn the language…* (Artur, 42)

Most of the participants (7 out of 10) mentioned that they had friends and/or relatives who were already living in the UK, having migrated there in recent years. This indicates an important principle of onward migration noted in our literature review – the role of social networks and the phenomenon of joining an already-existing migrant/ethnic community. After Greece and Italy, the UK hosts the third largest Albanian community in Europe, proving to be especially attractive as a destination after the late 1990s, due to a combination of direct migration from Albania (often irregular, managed by smugglers via Belgium) and onward migration from Greece and Italy. Some Albanians also acquired rights to settle in the UK by posing as refugees from Kosovo. A mini-amnesty in 2003 helped Albanians living in the UK in a limbo status to acquire legitimate means to remain and became British citizens (Vathi and King, 2013). Like other onward migrants to the UK, one of the attractions of this country for Albanian families (7 out of 10 arrived with their children) was the availability of a good, English-language school system with ample possibilities for further and higher education and career prospects for the "next generation".

Summarising thus far, onward migration has been an important coping mechanism for Albanian migrants in response to the Greek financial crisis. Despite all the participants being comfortably settled in Greece with no initial intention to onward migrate, the economic crisis and their subsequent unemployment and drastically reduced incomes forced them to move. They strategically acquire Greek citizenship, which removes legal barriers to mobility, and move to the UK because they know the language and have friends and relatives there. In the UK they also expect to find better employment opportunities and a good education for their children. Younger

Albanians without children, such as Eduard (26) and Mario (29), move to the UK to further their higher education – in both cases to follow Master's courses – and enhance their longer-term careers.

Life in the UK and questions of belonging

Participants' relatives and friends were instrumental, in most cases, in helping them to settle in the UK, offering them valuable information and practical support. They usually provided the incoming migrants with a place to stay initially, and then helped them to find more permanent housing, and also to find work. For most onward-migrating families with young children, the father migrated first, found employment and accommodation, and the wives and children followed a few months later. The role of family and close social networks is particularly important for Albanian migrants, as "ethnic solidarity" amongst them appears very weak – a characteristic that has been noted in several studies on Albanian migration in different contexts (Hatziprokopiou, 2013; King and Mai, 2008, 2009; Melchionda, 2003). This weak development of a formal sense of ethnic belonging has been speculatively linked to Albanians' reaction to their communist past of forced collectivisation, or interpreted as a tactic to distance themselves from a community image which has been tarnished by negative stereotypes (King and Mai, 2009).

An interesting aspect of our findings – albeit based on a small sample – is the fact that half of the interviewees contacted and took advantage of the Greek community and friends in London and Brighton. One participant works for a Greek family, partly because she does not yet speak much English. Three participants mentioned that they contacted the Greek community through the Orthodox Church, and two found employment through that route. When Elpida was asked why she contacted the Greek community and not the Albanian one to get help she simply replied: "We Albanians are not very organised; the Greeks are". In terms of employment, all except two are working for an income. The exceptions are Mario, who is doing a Master's degree, and Rea, who looks after her small children and hopes soon to return to her nursing career. For the others, Artur continues his career as a waiter, Eduard works as a technical specialist in London, and the female respondents were mostly working in service-sector jobs in shops, offices or as cleaners. All found it relatively easy to access employment in the buoyant labour markets of London and Brighton.

An interesting question arises in the case of onward migration: where do such migrants feel they "belong"? Put differently, what kind of "identity"

do they express? In the case of the participants in this research, they have physical and emotional links to three countries: Albania, Greece and the UK. How does this multi-locality manifest itself in their sense of belonging and of "who they are"? And where, and what, for them, is "home"? These are complex questions and we collected and collated a variety of answers. One finding, however, stood out, which somewhat surprised us: their strong emotional attachment to Greece (albeit not unanimous), despite the fact that they were economically expelled by that country's employment crisis, and some had suffered social exclusion there. Maria (38) gave a fairly typical evocation of this sentiment:

> *I still feel my home is in Greece. My home that I built is in Albania, but I don't feel Albanian, I feel Greek, I was settled there for a long time…*

But others were more ambivalent; some of the nuances being due to differences in the length of time spent in Greece, the age at which they migrated there, where they did their schooling, and whether they kept frequent contact with Albania. The following two quotes illustrate some aspects of this ambiguity of identity:

> *Greek, I am not. Albanian – I don't feel. Every time I go to Albania, I no longer feel that connection. I don't think I have an identity.* (Miranda, 50)

> *I feel 50-50. I speak Albanian, I have relatives back there, I go there almost every summer. But I am not 100% Albanian, nor am I 100% Greek, so 50-50. But my home is Pireaus!* (Mario, 29)

Some participants stated that the reason they still identify as Albanian is because they never felt fully accepted and integrated in Greece, despite their best efforts. They were pushed back by the stigmatisation of Albanians by the wider Greek society and by the lack of any state support for their integration. Artur (42) was the most outspoken exponent of this view:

> *I don't feel Greek because Greece never accepted me. I feel Albanian only because I was born there. If I don't feel Albanian, then I am without identity… I feel Albanian because this is how the Greek policy made me feel. Greece doesn't accept you. There is no way that Greece can let you feel 100% Greek, even though I lived there for over 20 years, even though I have a Greek passport.*

Against the view of Artur was the narrative of Adriana (57) who has rejected her Albanian identity in favour of a combination of being not only Greek but also a "global citizen".

I am not Albanian and I don't want to be that. I feel Greek and my passport is Greek. But everywhere I go I like to adapt and learn new things. To tell the truth, I feel more like a global citizen, and I like it that way… A lot of people say – you must like Greece, the Greek sun, there is nowhere to compare. And I say – sun without money? I prefer rain with money!

What was also interesting was that, when they arrived in England, many participants presented themselves as Greek and either deliberately hid or simply omitted to mention their Albanian origin. This strategy is probably quite rational given their experience in Greece, and also realistic given the existence of some media-manufactured prejudice in the UK against Albanians fanned from some isolated acts of criminality and "illegal" entry.

I said to people [at the Greek church in London] *that I came from Greece and I am looking for a job. I didn't know how they would react. I just needed a job. I don't feel inferior that I'm Albanian… but I didn't mention it, so they don't close the door on me.* (Elpida, 56)

And Artur again:

If someone only has three minutes and asks me where I'm from, I am going to say I'm Greek since I have a Greek passport. I'm not going to explain my life's story.

On the whole, however, participants said that they felt more comfortable being Albanian in England than being Albanian in Greece. In England, they would say, "no one cares" where you are from, and this give a sense of release from the negativity that some had experienced in Greece, especially during the earlier years. They feel more at ease living in a multi-ethnic society and find that London and Brighton are tolerant and accepting of different national origins and ways of life. As Elpida related:

I feel happy and settled here: I have a job, my kids, my sister; I'm happier here. When I went back to Greece last summer, I felt that pressure again.

These somewhat ambivalent feelings of identification and belonging lead to equally divided senses of where "home" is. Most felt Greece to be their home, even if much of their earlier lives had been spent in Albania, where many of them had invested in property – a "concrete" home. Some expressed the wish to return to live in Greece one day; and they often placed their home within the city neighbourhood in Greece where they lived, which demonstrates the importance of localised identity. Anna (30) expressed this multi-local allegiance rather well:

I still feel Albanian. My friends in London are half Albanian and half of them are Greek, plus some English. But I definitely don't feel English. But Thessaloniki is my home!

Summarising, and returning to the title of this article, the identities of onward migration are not fixed and static but, like their geographic mobilities, are shaped by fragmented and fluid histories of movement. The dynamic nature of their identification is clearly demonstrated. Birth and upbringing in Albania does not mean that they still hold an Albanian identity. Greek citizenship does not necessarily mean that they identify as Greek. Even their notion of home does not always match their identity. Nowadays, in Brighton or London, they feel more comfortable living in a multicultural society. But they are not ready (yet) to see themselves as British or to regard England as their "home", not least because of the ongoing ramifications over "Brexit".

CONCLUSION, AND A CODA ON BREXIT

At the end of the interview, the participants were asked what they would do in the event of a "hard" Brexit – that is, a situation in which the outcome of the June 2016 referendum, which yielded a small majority (52%) to leave the EU, resulted in the UK having a distant relationship with the EU, making life more difficult for the EU-citizen residents. At the time of writing (November 2019), things are still very uncertain, with a general election pending (12 December 2019) and the "leave" date postponed (yet again) until 31 January 2020. Whatever one may think about the rationality of the Brexit vote and the chaotic stalemate surrounding its implementation, the referendum is interesting in that it represents yet another exogenous shock in migrants' lives. Having already onward-migrated to escape one "shock" – the Greek economic crisis – they are now faced with another unprecedented event which potentially upsets their plans for the future.

Almost with one voice, the answers of the participants to the "hard Brexit" question were clear: they would return to Greece. Despite the problems they had previously encountered there – unemployment and, for some, a sense of exclusion – there was a widespread feeling of nostalgia for their lives there, and most still had relatives living in Greece whom they would welcome reuniting with. The Greek economy was now seen as less crisis-ridden than in the past, so there was some hope that the job situation might have improved. None contemplated a return to Albania, even if, from migration statistics and some relevant literature, it is known that many migrants did return from Greece to Albania (Barjaba and Barjaba, 2015; Ker-

paci and Kuka, 2019; Xharo and Çaro, 2016). Other options considered by the participants to be a possibility were to onward-migrate again to another EU country or to the United States, but none had concrete plans to do so. For the time being, like most other EU migrants in Britain, the actual plan was to stay put, "wait and see", and perhaps take steps to secure their status by applying for the "settled residence" card (see Lulle et al., 2019; Lulle, Moroşanu and King, 2018).

The ongoing uncertainty of the UK's future relationship with the EU demonstrates a fundamental point made at the outset of this paper: that onward migration needs to be seen not just as a discrete migration event which must be added to the wide variety of space-time manifestations of mobility, but that it should be "doubly embedded" – firstly in broader conceptualisations and mappings of migration as a global and European phenomenon undergoing constant change, and secondly in thinking of this and other kinds of move as part of a migration career encased within the individual, family and intergenerational life course.

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Fragmentirane i fluidne mobilnosti: uloga daljnjih migracija na novoj karti Europe i Balkana

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SAŽETAK

U radu se istražuju migracije izvan uobičajenoga bipolarnog modela koji uključuje porijeklo i odredište. To se čini na dvije razine: konceptualnoj i empirijskoj. Konceptualno se nudi pregled nedavnih trendova razmatranja migracije kao složenijeg i raznolikijeg procesa u mjestu i vremenu. Prostorno, a posebice u Europi, migracije se pojačano manifestiraju kroz raznolikost trajektorija i putanja u kojima se isprepleću unutarnje i međunarodne migracije, tranzitne migracije, daljnje migracije i kretanja naprijed-natrag. Vremenski, širi raspon tipova mobilnosti, uključujući povratne posjete i prekogranična prevoženja, može biti obuhvaćen dugotrajnijim migracijama. U nastavku rada više se pozornosti posvećuje daljnjim migracijama (*onward migration*), pri čemu se raščlanjuju i analiziraju različiti primjeri studija slučaja iz literature. U zadnjem dijelu rada autori donose rezultate vlastitog istraživanja daljnjih migracija Albanaca iz Grčke u Ujedinjeno Kraljevstvo (UK). Na temelju deset (10) dubinskih intervjua s albanskim migrantima u Londonu i Brightonu analiziraju se njihovi razlozi napuštanja Grčke, gdje su se već, manje ili više uspješno, nastanili. Rezultati pokazuju da oni napuštaju Grčku zbog negativnog učinka ekonomske krize na njihove živote i zato što su dobivanjem grčkog državljanstva dobili slobodu kretanja. S obzirom na njihovu nevoljkost vezanu uz povratak u Albaniju, uz koji vežu lošije mogućnosti za poboljšanje života, odabiru UK kao najbolju opciju, iako Brexit remeti tu sigurnost. Prikupljeni podaci uključuju i njihova sjećanja iz života u Albaniji prije migracije kao i dojmove o ponovno uspostavljenom životu u Engleskoj.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: daljnje migracije (*onward migration*), mobilnosti, Europa, kriza u Grčkoj, albanski migranti