

**Return migration during the economic crisis:
Experiences of Albanian return migrants and their
children in the quest to belong**

Elida Cena

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at**

Edge Hill University

November 2017

Elida Cena

Return migration during the economic crisis: Experiences of Albanian return migrants and their children in the quest to belong

PhD in Psychology

Abstract

Following the social and political turmoil in many countries after the recent economic crisis, many Albanian migrants regarded a return to their ‘homeland’ as the best solution during a time of uncertainty. Adding to the literature on return migration, this research investigates a group of migrants, not previously studied extensively, whose return to their country of origin was triggered by the lingering economic crisis in Europe, particularly in Greece. The research explores the experiences of return migrants and their children in Albania by focusing on their (re)settlement issues, the ways they (re)construct a sense of belonging, and how their identity is impacted by these changes. Return migrants (aged 30-50 years) and their children (aged 7-18 years) participated in this research (n=51). Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with respondents aged 13 years and above, augmented by focus groups and family case studies. This research was conducted in two waves and several participants were followed up to document changes. Findings show that the economic and socio-structural constraints in the origin country and uncertainties about the future experienced by adults create barriers to their overall ability to adjust and construct a sense of belonging in Albania. The research documents further that children of return migrants experience exclusion and non-belonging, instigating feelings of being foreigners for a second time. While children showed improvement in their socio-spatial worlds overtime; in Wave 2 adults continued to grapple with employment instability and future uncertainties. Entangled in between these experiences and a simultaneous quest to belong, the research contributes to a better understanding of return migration in times of economic crisis.

Key Words: Return migration in Albania, economic crisis, children, adults, (re)settlement, belonging, identity.

Acknowledgments

I am deeply indebted to Professor Derek Heim for his great support during the past three years. He guided me with respect, patience, flexibility, genuine caring and concern in completion to this thesis. I appreciate the belief he had in me and the consistent encouragement throughout my time as his student, a support for which I am eternally grateful. I thank Dr. Ruxandra Trandafoiu who has given a great support too and constructive comments to my work.

I wish to express a sincere thank you to all my participants, who graciously shared with me their experiences and agreed to participate in my research. I had invaluable support from the head teachers in schools “At Zef Pllumi”, “Ismail Qemali”, “Mesonjetorja”, “Alen” “Mark Dashi”. I thank Bona, Suela and Andi for helping me with the fieldwork in Fier. I thank Ditjon, Jani, Mira who have been extremely helpful for the fieldwork in Tirana.

Special thanks go to my friends without whom this work would not have been possible. I thank Ajten, Caroline, Sahar, Gergana and Marianne who have cheered me up and I am fortunate to know them.

Huge thanks to my family, Elma and Armand, for the support, encouragement and patience with me. My little girl Elma, who is so special and without her this simply would not have been possible.

I am very grateful for the endless love and support my parents have given me during my whole life. Thank you for believing in me, raising me with love and never doubting my abilities. I dedicate this work to them.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgments	3
List of Figures	7
List of Tables	7
Chapter 1: Introduction	8
1.1 <i>Research Context</i>	8
1.2 <i>Return Migration in Albania</i>	10
1.2.1 <i>Background</i>	10
1.3 <i>The current study</i>	14
1.4 <i>Research questions:</i>	15
1.5 <i>Overview of the thesis</i>	16
Chapter 2: Experiences of (Re)settlement, Belonging and Return Migration: A Review of the Literature	20
2.0 <i>Introduction</i>	20
2.1 <i>Return migration, motivations to return and conditions upon return</i>	22
2.2 <i>Preparation and context of return migration</i>	27
2.3 <i>Return migration and belonging</i>	29
2.3.1 <i>Belonging, home and socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion</i>	29
2.4 <i>Children in migration research</i>	37
2.5 <i>'Returned' children, places and belonging</i>	40
2.6 <i>Conclusion</i>	45
Chapter 3: Migration and Return Migration in Albania	47
3.0 <i>Introduction</i>	47
3.1 <i>Albanian migration</i>	48
3.1.1 <i>Albanian migration trends</i>	48
3.1.2 <i>Reception of migrants in the destination countries</i>	50
3.1.3 <i>From exclusion towards social integration</i>	53
3.2 <i>Children of Albanian migrants</i>	55
3.3 <i>Intentions to return to origin country</i>	57
3.4 <i>Patterns of return migration during 1990s – 2008</i>	59
3.5 <i>Economic crisis in host and home countries and return migration</i>	63

3.6 <i>Effects of the global economic crisis on Albania</i>	64
3.7 <i>Field sites in Albania</i>	65
3.8 <i>Conclusion</i>	69
Chapter 4: Methodological Approaches and Methods	71
4.0 <i>Introduction</i>	71
4.1 <i>Theoretical and methodological framework</i>	71
4.2. <i>Research Design</i>	74
4.2.1 <i>Recruitment and Sampling</i>	74
4.3. <i>Research Methods</i>	79
4.3.1 <i>Interviews</i>	80
4.3.2 <i>Family case studies</i>	82
4.3.3 <i>Drawing activity</i>	84
4.3.4 <i>Focus Groups</i>	85
4.4 <i>Data Analysis</i>	88
4.5 <i>Ethics and positionality</i>	93
4.5.1. <i>Ethics</i>	93
4.5.2 <i>Positionality</i>	96
4.6 <i>Conclusion</i>	99
Chapter 5: Adults' Experiences of Return, (Dis)Identification with the Homeland and Future Trajectories	101
5.0 <i>Introduction</i>	101
5.1 <i>Facing a (re)new(ed) reality: Transition, Employment Opportunities and Structural Conditions</i>	103
5.2 <i>Challenges to women and support of family</i>	113
5.3 <i>Multi-layered uncertainties: 'my mind tells me there is no future here'</i>	116
5.4 <i>Homeland (dis)identifications and social relations</i>	123
5.4.1 <i>'Us' and those who have stayed behind</i>	126
5.5 <i>Discussion</i>	130
5.6 <i>Conclusion</i>	136
Chapter 6: Teenagers: School Experiences, Belonging and Future Prospects	138
6.0 <i>Introduction</i>	138
6.1 <i>School experiences</i>	140
6.2 <i>Belonging: marking insiders and outsiders</i>	144
6.2.1 <i>Labelling and stigmatisation</i>	144

6.2.2 Liminality and social ascriptions	147
6.3 <i>Social expectations and friendship relations</i>	152
6.4 <i>In-between families and individual autonomy</i>	156
6.5 <i>Cultivating belonging</i>	159
6.6 <i>Teenagers' Future Mobilities</i>	164
6.7 <i>Discussion</i>	169
6.8 <i>Conclusion</i>	174
Chapter 7: Children Changing Places: Belonging and Social Relations	175
7.0 <i>Introduction</i>	175
7.1 <i>Confined places of belonging</i>	177
7.2 <i>Patterns of identification in relation to space</i>	181
7.3 <i>Strained relations and daily activities</i>	186
7.4 <i>Discussion</i>	189
7.5 <i>Conclusion</i>	193
Chapter 8: General Discussion and Conclusions	194
8.1 <i>The rationale for the research</i>	194
8.2 <i>Transition, experiences of (re)settlement and uncertainties for the future</i>	195
8.3 <i>Non-belonging and difference</i>	200
8.4 <i>Constructing belonging, places and spaces</i>	204
8.5 <i>Contribution to knowledge</i>	206
8.5.1 <i>Theoretical and methodological contributions</i>	206
8.6 <i>Limitations of the research and future directions</i>	208
8.7 <i>Conclusion</i>	210
<i>Reference:</i>	211
<i>Appendices</i>	236
Appendix A. <i>Information Sheet for School Gatekeeper</i>	236
Appendix B. <i>Informed consent for participants (teenagers and adults)</i>	237
Appendix C. <i>Informed consent for children 7-12</i>	239
Appendix D. <i>Interview Guide (Teenagers and Adults)</i>	241
Appendix E. <i>Categorization of content for drawings</i>	245
Appendix F. <i>Participants</i>	246

List of Figures

Figure 1.0	Number of return migrants (in per cent) for the period 2009-2013	11
Figure 3.0	Map of Albania	67
Figure 5.1	Bakery shop in Tirana	107
Figure 6.1	Memories from Greece	160
Figure 6.2	Orthodox church in Tirana	161
Figure 6.3	Acropolis of Athens	163
Figure 7.1	Greece and Albania by Nina	178
Figure 7.2	Italy and Albania by Bled	179
Figure 7.3	Greece and Albania by Erti	180
Figure 7.4	Greece and Albania by Landi	182
Figure 7.5	Greece and Albania by Olti	184
Figure 7.6	Greece and Albania by Mario	185
Figure 7.7	Greece and Albania by Mario	187

List of Tables

Table 4.0	Individual interviews: Respondent characteristics	78
Table 4.1	Methods used for each study group	79
Table 4.2	Participants followed in the two waves of data collection	88

Introduction

Rationale

The current thesis examined the experiences of (re)settlement reported by return migrants and their children in Albania. This thesis is the first to explore a group of return migrants moving to their country of origin during the difficult circumstances of the outbreak of the recent economic crisis in Greece and Italy. It is also the first research which in return migration includes adults and their children in one single study. The thesis seeks to explore experiences of (re)settlement and individuals' sense of belonging located in two cities in Albania: Tirana and Fier. It identifies challenges return migrants and their descendants face upon their return and the forces that constrain their (re)settlement, by highlighting agency and strategies they use to construct and form belongings. The research is qualitative and employs various methods which include interviews and other participatory methods, such as drawing and photo-elicitation. This research is longitudinal in nature and the data collection took place during two phases in 2014 and 2015, following up participants within one year. The details of the thesis are described further in this chapter, which outlines the research context, the background to return migration in Albania, the aims of the current research, followed by research questions and the overview of the thesis.

1.1 Research Context

In a transnational world that characterises the 21st century people move across borders and migration is a major concern to policy makers across the globe. However, until recently there has been little information about return migration, and the phenomenon has therefore been referred to as 'the great unwritten chapter in the

history of migration' (King, 2000, p.7). In this way, until fairly recently migration was perceived as a one-way journey from which people never return. In recent years return migration has, however, begun to gain more prominent attention in the international migration literature which views the phenomenon as a more challenging process than a simple reinsertion into society (Markowitz & Stefansson, 2004), or as a blending into their 'home' country (Szkuklarek, 2010). Increased interest has been paid to the multifaceted intentions that can prompt migrants to return to their homeland (Djajic 2008; Dustmann, 2003; van Houte et al., 2015) with experiences post-return receiving less attention (van Meeteren et al., 2014). Existing research illustrates that return migration is a precarious journey that is fraught with difficulties and re-integration issues, associated with frequent disillusionment as well as complex challenges (Djajic, 2008; King, 1977; van Meeteren et al., 2014; Stefansson; 2004; van Houte & Davids, 2008), including the not insignificant task of (re)constructing a sense of belonging and identification (Carling et al., 2015). However, in order to understand experiences of return migration, it has been suggested that context and circumstances upon which the return takes place need to be taken into account (Cassarino, 2004). While experiences of various types of return migrants' groups have been researched, the experiences of (re)settlement and belonging of migrants who have been 'forced' to return to the origin country in the wake of troubled economic crisis has not been investigated to date.

The literature has established that family considerations are the primary reason behind considering a potential return (Dustmann, 2003; Konzett-Smoliner, 2016). Yet, until recently, there has been a tendency in migration studies for children to figure as 'baggage' or as a source of anxiety and burden to adults (Orellana, 2001; c.f., Dobson, 2009), without detailed consideration of their individual experiences, mobility or agency (Ní Laoire et al., 2011a). Noting that children's 'return' experiences are atypical because children relocate to a place which may have never been home to them (Knörr, 2005; Tsuda, 2009), more recent research has begun to address this through a more explicit focus on the experiences of family migration (Bushin, 2009). This work highlights the extent to which children may participate in the family migration decision-making process, and family narratives reveal that the decision to remain or to return often takes into consideration children's opportunities and needs (Ní Laoire, 2008). While not designed to systematically examine

children's experiences during return migration, this work challenges adultism in migration research (White et al., 2011). Recently, literature concerning migrant children has emerged, however there are several gaps that necessitate further research. Consistently in the literature, adult migrants and children are explored individually, even though patterns of migration are differently shaped throughout different stages of life (Gardner, 2007). This indicates that there is a need to investigate children and teenagers in addition to adults so as to capture the complex ways people experience return migration through multiple frames of reference based on age.

1.2 Return Migration in Albania

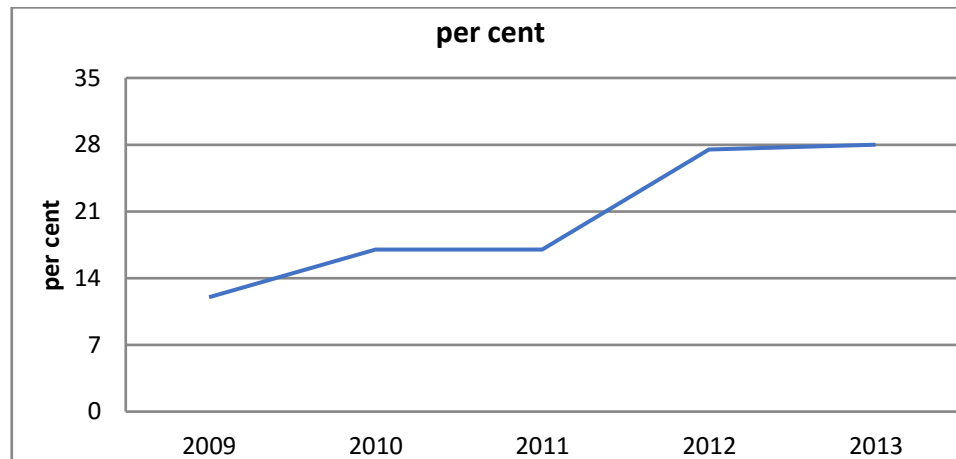
1.2.1 Background

Return migration to Albania is a recent phenomenon which primarily occurred between 2009-2013 (IOM, 2013), and largely coincided with the economic crisis that erupted particularly in Greece but also in Italy, and which had compelled many Albanians to reconsider their livelihoods in these countries (Gemi, 2014). Unable to continue their migration projects in these destination countries (Maroukis & Gemi, 2013), many people returned to Albania, and this re-migration comprised elements of both voluntary and involuntary return (INSTAT & IOM, 2014). Data on return migration has been sporadic, and there is some inconsistency in the estimated numbers of return migrants, though it is generally accepted that the flow of returnees has been on the rise since 2008 (INSTAT, 2011). The research in Albanian return migration thus far has been a snapshot since attention has been particularly given to the circular nature of migration (Maroukis & Gemi, 2015), i.e., while some people decide to stay permanently in Albania, for others it may be a temporary decision. This suggests that more attention needs to be paid to return migration in Albania and understanding the experiences of individuals involved in these migratory movements.

The Census data suggest that the number of return migrants has increased sharply during the period 2009-2013 by 133,544 of which, 73,7 per cent are males and 26,3 per cent are females (INSTAT & IOM, 2014). As displayed in the graph below, the

number of return migrants has been on the rise since 2011 and the main reasons for return were associated with the loss of jobs in the migrating country, longing for the country, followed by reasons such as acquiring better job opportunities in Albania or family obligations.

Figure. 1.0. Number of return migrants (in per cent) for the period 2009-2013



Source: INSTAT and IOM (2014)

The published data however, correspond to the returnees above 18 years old and data on children of return migrants are not provided. According to the census data, most of the migrants (94 per cent) returned voluntarily, whilst six per cent appear to have been forced to move to Albania. The majority of returnees came from Greece (70.8 per cent) followed by Italy (23.7 per cent), and other countries (5 per cent) with an average rate of duration of stay abroad over six years (INSTAT and IOM, 2014).

Most of the return migrants were single when they migrated, however the family composition frequently changed during migration, with most of the returnees being married with families upon their return (INSTAT & IOM, 2014). For children under 18 years of age, the data document that in 2012, 5,000 returned young people started school in Albania. During 2013-2014, a number of 2,060 was registered in the pre-tertiary system of education (GoA, 2015). However, there are still no data concerning the total number of children who relocated to Albania. Most returnees settled in their previous place of residence, however, return migration is associated even with the internal migration of the population, as migrants are mostly located in

the regions with higher socio-economic conditions such as Tirana, followed by Vlora, Elbasani, Fier and Korca (INSTAT & IOM, 2014).

With regards to policy developments aimed at facilitating migratory return, the Albanian Government established a policy measure entitled “National Strategy for the Re-Integration of the Returned migrants 2010-15” (GoA, 2010) to support the reintegration of return migrants. This strategy was developed with the aim of providing a sustainable return and supporting the readmission and reintegration process of people moving voluntarily and involuntarily. According to this strategy and its action plan, re-integration support for return migrants is provided mostly in the form of informational assistance in educational and vocational arenas. Measures related to education include the development of the curricula in supporting return migrants, providing psycho-social services in schools, training teachers in re-integration issues, etc. In terms of education, the government has taken measures with the intention to support the children with information and materials which have been distributed to the Regional Education Directorates for further managing (GoA, 2015). However, there is no indication or breakdown figures displaying the concrete type of support children have received.

Furthermore, the programme stipulates support for the economic reintegration of the return migrants through the employment support programmes, including public vocational training courses, information on health services, social support and agricultural incentives. The main reintegration mechanisms consisted of the allocation of Migratory Counters in each region of the country. These counters with trained staff, were developed with the aim to offer support to returnees and to refer them to existing public services (GoA, 2014). The assessment of these mechanisms by INSTAT and IOM (2014) has indicated that very few individuals have received support upon return to Albania. This suggests that uptake of government support offers has been low amongst Albanian return migrants. With regards to the financial situation, a large number of return migrants report their situation has not changed since returning to Albania, while a significant number have reported their situation had deteriorated since their arrival (INSTAT & IOM, 2014).

The vocational patterns for returned migrants are mostly focused in the construction sector and agriculture, meaning they are not considered as a qualified working force (ACIT, 2012). This may explain the fact that returnees rarely work in the public sector (Hausman & Nedekoska, 2017). Official data further indicates that returnees who had managed to start a business had used their own financial resources to do so (INSTAT & IOM, 2014). In general, return migrants have reported lack of information on institutional practices and advisory information for investment and job opportunities (ACIT, 2012).

However, more recent evidence indicates that, when migrants and non-migrants in Albania are compared, returnees acknowledge that they had benefited from migration and believed that their employment chances increased (Hausman & Nedekoska, 2017). Return migrants tend to be more active in self-employment and also employ others as they create jobs. This could be a result of being exposed to more advanced technology, better vocational skills or a second language, acquired during their migration. Indeed, it has been suggested that return migrants demonstrate better know-how skills in comparison to non-migrants (Hausman & Nedekoska, 2017). Research thus far has examined to some degree the employment progress of return migrants and has focused on the scope of the economic contribution to the origin country, rather than the experiences of return migrants and their families. Two recent studies (Vathi & Duci, 2015; Vathi et al., 2016) highlight that children of these return migrants tend to be unsure about ‘returning’ to Albania and grappled with the consequences of a decision that they had little part in making (Vathi & Duci, 2015). This work with teenagers who moved to Albania with their families, documents some of the challenges children experience because of their families’ return projects. In particular, the process of adjustment to life in their parents’ homeland appears to be associated with repeated experiences of racism and discrimination that may have also been apparent in their previous country (Vathi & Duci, 2015; Vathi et al., 2016). As literature has started to document some of the challenges of teenagers, it is the aim of this thesis to capture a broader context of experiences of both adults and their children upon return migration.

1.3 The current study

This thesis concentrates on a group of migrants and their children who have moved to their origin country during unsettled times of economic downturn experienced in Greece and Italy. This group of migrants represents a unique case in migratory flows and human mobility, as their return is propelled by the implications of the crisis in the host society. The context and circumstances of the two destination countries which have been in recession, has profoundly impacted migrants lives and challenged them to return before achieving their migration objectives. This contrasts with many other countries across Europe undergoing economic downturn where migrants have preferred to stay in the migrating country (Zaiceva & Zimmerman, 2012; Bygnes & Erdal, 2017). The aim then, is to understand the experiences of belonging of return migrants and their children who have decided to return to the origin countries due to the recession in the destination countries and the inability to continue living in migration. It focuses on challenges they face upon return by capturing views of adults, teenagers and pre-teens independently.

My approach is based on other research which views belonging as central to the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion (Antonsich, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Literature recognises that belonging is a fluid process and particularly children and young people actively engage in constructing a sense of belonging by not being trapped in between the two cultures (Ní Laoire et al., 2011a; Olwig, 2003). Along these lines, the aim of this research is to tease out the ways adults, young people and children's belonging may be (differently) influenced and shaped as the former return to their own home country, and children migrate to their parents' country. Furthermore, following an intersectionality approach (Anthias, 2008), which suggests that other factors influence and shape belonging in certain ways, the current research aims to explore the multiple factors and identifications that involve positioning and power relations including age, gender, class, migratory history and location upon return.

Further, literature with migrant children draws on belonging and identity as being constructed between two cultures of host and origin countries (Mannitz, 2005), however this essentialises identity and neglects children's agency. To overcome

these barriers, my research joins current debates to consider children's belonging and identity as developed within global and local scales where children's everyday life is constructed (Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; Ní Laoire et al., 2011; Olwig, 2003). In this way, the current research aims to view children's belonging as being and constructed in the interconnected places of the everyday lives and the transnational places of the past and the present.

Finally, research in migration suggests that negative experiences are evidenced particularly in the beginning of the migratory journey (Ansell & van Blerk, 2007). Nevertheless, existing literature in migration is predominantly conducted at one point of time, therefore capturing only a snapshot of their experiences. Methodological issues are evidenced as literature is mainly cross-sectional and does little to consider how these experiences, whether negative or positive, change over the time (Punch, 2013), which could elucidate the factors that have influenced the change in participants' lives. Temporal considerations are considered essential in exploring return experiences (Levitt & Rajaram, 2013) and understanding the way time affects individual migration trajectories, however little research considers these changes. Building on this, the current research aims to longitudinally identify changing experiences for children and adults.

1.4 Research questions:

Inspired by return migration which has happened during the lingering effects of the economic downturn and the impact returning in these conditions would have had in the lives of return migrants and their children, this research seeks to answer three main questions as well as a number of sub-questions:

1. What are the experiences of adult migrants after returning to their origin country?
 - a. What are their circumstances upon their return and possibilities for employment?
 - b. What are their plans for the future and which factors may impede these plans?

- c. What are the implications of the return on family relations and are there gender differences?
 - d. Do return migrants identify with the origin country and what are the factors that may influence dis-identification?
- 2. What are the experiences of teenagers (13-18 years) returning to their (parents') origin country?
 - a. What are the school experiences for teenagers and do certain teaching methods influence non-belonging?
 - b. Do teenagers feel included and welcomed in their parents' origin country and identify with the origin country and what are the factors that may influence their belonging?
 - c. Are teenagers' experiences and relations with their parents affected by this type of return and what are the influencing factors?
 - d. What are some of the ways teenagers construct belonging over the time (including friendship, strategies, religious performances)?
 - e. What are teenagers' plans for future mobility?
- 3. What are the experiences of children (7-12 years) and their identification with the local and transnational spaces?
 - a. What are children's experiences of changing places and do these experiences change over time?
 - b. How do children feel in relation to their peers and do they develop a sense of belonging over time?

1.5 Overview of the thesis

This thesis is organised into eight chapters and each of these chapters, addresses questions of return migration for adults and their children, as follows:

Chapter 1, which is the present one, locates the thesis within the broader context of return migration. The main findings of the research on return migration are presented and main gaps which have led to this research are identified. The chapter then

discusses Albanian return migration and the children of return migrants in Albania. Finally, the chapter discusses the current research and outlines the primary and secondary research questions.

Past research and theory on return migration, belonging and migrant children is reviewed in Chapter 2, which is divided into three central themes. The first section discusses the various reasons that have led to return migration and the main theoretical models which explain who returns and why. The second section focuses on belonging and aspects of inclusion and exclusion. Studies are discussed more broadly as it is relevant to capture issues of belonging for both return migrants and their children. The final section is based solely on migrant children focusing on teenagers and younger children discussing on theoretical ideas and empirical research. Throughout the chapter, I aim to highlight the gaps in current literature and underlie the way the research may advance current debates on return migration for adults and children.

In Chapter 3, I elucidate migration and return migration in Albania. Literature is reviewed on Albanian migration following the communism period post-1990s focusing on migratory patterns and experiences of migrants and children in Greece and Italy. The chapter then discusses the intentions of migrants to return to the origin countries or to remain and the wake of the economic crisis which forced many migrants and their families to return. The chapter further discusses the contextual background of Albanian migrants in the advent of the economic downturn in the destination country and the situation in Albania. The two fields of study are discussed in this chapter and the choice for the selection of these sites of study is presented.

Chapter 4 outlines information about the methodology employed in this research by providing details on the epistemology and the choice for the qualitative research methods utilised in this research. The chapter outlines the design of the research, recruitment strategy and the sampling of adults and children. Additionally, methods are discussed and the logic behind the selection of these methods is presented. The data collection which took place at two points in time is also discussed. The final

part discusses ethical considerations and the way the position of the researcher has impacted on the conduct of this research.

Chapter 5, which explores experiences of (re)settlement and belonging of adult return migrants. First, findings with adults rather than children are outlined to illustrate the circumstances upon which return migration took place. It is highlighted that this appears to be particularly linked with adults' loss of jobs. Drawing on the initial circumstances of the return foregrounds the transitional period from migration to post-return which serves as a context for the subsequent two finding chapters. Employment opportunities and plans for the future are a focus of this chapter and the final part focuses on the returnee's identification with the origin country and the social relations with members of the broader community.

Chapter 6 focuses on experiences of teenagers (13-18 years) 'returning' to parents' origin country. The chapter pays attention to the school experiences and performance of teenagers in relation to the challenges and the discrepancies in teaching programme and teaching methods which influence experiences of non-belonging. Further, it investigates the processes of inclusion and exclusion in relation to other peers and changes that take place over time. Ways of constructing belonging are discussed throughout the chapter, but one of the sections pays special attention specific ways of performing and cultivating belonging. Finally, the chapter discusses teenagers' future plans by identifying their intentions to migrate or stay in Albania.

Chapter 7 discusses the migratory experiences of pre-teens or younger children (7-12 years) and their sense of belonging with Albania. The chapter investigates children's belonging and identity as they settle into a new cultural context, and documents a process which necessitates continuous negotiation within the interconnected spaces of their everyday lives. Attention is paid to children's everyday places and the influences of social interaction in belonging. The chapter maps the changes that take place by exploring the ways in which children construct a sense of identification with local places and the effect of time in this process. The chapter also pays attention to socialization processes and the role of adults in situating children as insiders and outsiders.

The thesis is concluded in Chapter 8, which summarises and discusses the main findings of the three empirical chapters in relation to the broader literature. Main contributions with relevance to theory and methodology are discussed and finally, limitations and potential areas for future research are highlighted.

Experiences of (Re)settlement, Belonging and Return migration: A Review of the Literature

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will critically review literature relating to return migration, and aims to develop a conceptual approach for understanding return migrants' experiences and their ways of constructing a sense of belonging in the origin country. The chapter concerns two groups: adult return migrants and (return) migrant children. Existing literature on return migration is mainly focused on the individual return migrant rather than the family. In this way, by investigating both adult return migrants and children migrants, this project seeks to address the scarcity of literature encompassing both adults and children.

The chapter will discuss the main theoretical assumptions on return migration and the notion of belonging for return migrants and their children. The first section of the chapter provides an overview of the main theoretical assumptions underpinning the return migration literature and the proposed main reasons that have led to return migration, as identified in previous literature. By reviewing literature on factors that have led to return migration, this section highlights a new pattern of return migration which appears to be propelled by the lingering economic crisis that occurred across Europe. Further, this section provides evidence in considering aspects of the conditions in which the return takes place as essential in belonging.

The second part of the chapter reviews the literature in fields such as human geography, which focus on the concept of belonging in its two primary dimensions. First, literature concerned with belonging in relation to a person's home will be reviewed, analysing the hybrid and multiple notions of identification and the way these identifications are shaped when migrants return to their origin country. This problematizes prevailing assumptions of natural homecoming which have dominated existing literature. Second, literature concerning belonging will then be reviewed, by looking at the socio-spatial practices of inclusion and exclusion (Antonsich, 2010) which recognise that belonging is not only individually acquired, but can be ascribed, or influenced, by others in various ways. Categorizations of difference including language, class and gender will be discussed as main social markers employed to emphasize difference and exclusion.

The third part of this chapter focuses on migrant children. Existing literature in this field mostly considers adjustment experiences of children in a new cultural context, meaning in the host society, with little consideration for migrant children and youths moving to their parents' country of origin. Generally, literature portrays migrant children as a more or less homogeneous group, with minimal regard for possible age-dependant developmental differences shaping their identity and belonging. Therefore, there are conflicting arguments with respect to how identity formation and other transitional changes interact and influence belonging and experiences of young teenagers. Further, literature will highlight that teenagers are in between many phases of transition which necessitate attention by research.

The remainder of the chapter focuses on the literature on younger migrant children's feelings of belonging. It draws upon children's strong attachment to the everyday local places that influence their lives and identity. While grounded in migration, literature identifies the need to consider examining the local and the global environment as mutually influential and interwoven in researching migrant children. Following this, longitudinal research in return migration in general and child migration in particular, will be considered.

2.1 Return migration, motivations to return and conditions upon return

Return migration has been defined as a situation where a migrant goes back to her or his home country after living in another place for some time (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008). For a long period of time, return migration was considered as the least understood stage in the migration cycle. According to Gmelch (1980), the paucity of research on return moves is derived from the assumption that movements are mostly unilinear and because migration is regarded a more or less static process. This earlier notion of return migration was challenged as the theoretical approaches that were generally employed tended to be designed to understand primary migratory movements. The subsequent increase in the number of different categories of migrants (including economic migrants, refugees or asylum seekers) necessitated making distinctions between the types of return migrants and understanding the reasons why people return and under what conditions. As a result, today, return migration is widely analysed by initially understanding the determinants of return migration (Fokkema, 2011; Meteeren, 2014). In this view, considering who returns and why, is essential to understand the overall (re)settlement experiences and the dynamics upon return.

King's review on return migration comprehensively summarised the reasons for return migration (2000, p.14-15). Economic development in a country of origin, or better wages are categorized as the "pull" factors, whereas an economic downturn in the country to which migrants had emigrated are considered as "push" factors. Neo-classical approaches have focused on the logic of economic decisions such as the cost-benefit calculations, suggesting that returning to an economically weaker country suggests that an individual's migration objectives have failed (Constant & Massey, 2002). Based on this model, the return is seen to occur for one of two reasons. First, because the initial migration did not fulfil individuals' expectations and objectives or second, because return is a natural outcome of a successful migration experience which has met its goals. The neo-classical or the "push – pull" theories have contributed to an understanding of the reasons to return, but they put too much emphasis on the economic factors (Gilmartin, 2008) and take little consideration of other conditions beyond individual level upon which the return takes place.

Structuralist approaches, on the other hand, provide an explanatory theoretical understanding, and suggest that return migration does not only occur because of the individual experiences but also because of structural and situational factors in the destination countries which may also trigger the return. Structural factors and conditions include the socio-economic developments which have taken place in the country of origin and expectations of migrants (Cassarino, 2004). Conversely, this theoretical approach contends that the structural conditions of the host country lead to the potential for return migration, including changes that happen in the labour markets or economic crises that may lead to a decline in the labour market (Kritz & Zlotnik, 1992; Mabogunje, 1970). Nevertheless, even though this model has recognized the contextual factors and their potential effects, most of the research focuses more in the contributions that migrants make in the economic development of the origin and destination countries.

It was the transnationalism perspective which has overcome most of limitations of the classic economic theories in understanding the dynamic links between origin and host countries. Initially, it is essential to understand that transnationalism has been useful in challenging existing assumptions of methodological nationalism, which largely assumed that nation-states are the natural homogenous containers of social life (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2003). This framework provides an important paradigm in migration studies which foregrounds the multiple social, political and economic links that migrants sustain across borders (Cassarino, 2004). The core explanation of the transnational perspective concerns the sustained ties of people, networks and organizations across nation states (Faist et al., 2000). This model, therefore assumes that migrants integrate in the migrating country and simultaneously keep contact with the ties in their home country and the destination country.

Based on the transnational perspective, research indicates that transnationalism shapes return intentions (Carling & Petersen, 2014) which appear primarily to be initiated as migrants maintain relations and strengthen transnational activities via regular social contacts across national borders over time (Portes et al., 1999, p.219). The analysis further suggests that people who are most likely to return are those who

are strongly transnational and weakly integrated in the host society and vice versa. From this perspective, migrants prepare their return through visits to the origin country by assessing the situation in the country of origin for a possible return plan or the social ties maintained in the origin country (Duval, 2004; Zohry & Debnath, 2010). Moreover, it is within this context that return migration has received increased attention particularly amongst policy makers as transnational migrants constitute a significant source as agents of economic development (Faist, 2008). Based on this assumption, migrants bring social remittances, consisting of ideas, behaviours and other aspects of social life transferred within transnational spaces (Levitt, 1998). Social remittances refer to the human capital which involves the skills that returnees have accumulated during migration, which is then linked to migrants' economic mobility (Hagan et al., 2011). Nevertheless, literature suggests that transnational activities are not universal and can be limited to certain groups of migrants based on their socio-economic position in the destination countries (Itzigsohn & Saucedo, 2002), and may not be accessible by all groups of migrants, particularly unskilled migrants (Faist, 2008). This may, in turn, explain why some migrants are recognized as agents of change while others are not (Cassarino, 2004). As this research has been crucial to understanding the nature of the transnational linkages that are a feature of contemporary international migration, it is essential to emphasize that this perspective does little to explain whether these intentions contribute to a potential return migration and the transferability of skills and resources upon return.

There is an abundant body of literature which has indicated that return intentions happen for various reasons including nostalgia or homecoming desire, ancestral return to parents' homeland (Brah, 1996; Christou, 2006; Ní Laoire, 2007), retirement (Warnes & Williams 2006) or ethnic return (Tsuda, 2003). Furthermore, there is a whole body of literature which focuses on repatriation or migrants who are forced to move back to their countries, or are deported (Black & Koser, 1999; Ghanem, 2003; Mensah, 2016). While there has been growing interest to research these different return migratory contexts, there has not been sufficient attention given to return migration in the troubled times of recent global economic crisis of 2008.

Existing literature suggests that the global economic crisis has resulted in a new context which is likely to have impacted on international migration flows (Castles & Vezzoli, 2009). One of the most problematic aspects of the economic crisis is the increasing level of unemployment. Severe downturns, emerging from the financial crisis of 2008, have led to a decline in labour demand, job insecurity and cuts in the welfare budget. Some of the immediate effects have been felt in employment irregularity, reduced levels of migration, reduced remittances and an increased dependence on the welfare system, particularly in developing countries (Dagdeviren et al., 2014). Consequently, the effects of the economic crisis have been particularly felt by migrants, which has increased the likelihood of them considering a return to their country of origin (Castles & Vezzoli, 2009). Although the crisis impacts lives of migrants, it was not a foregone conclusion that they would return home.

Return migration during the economic crisis is considered to be exceptional as it does not fit within the conditions of returning which have traditionally been recognized to prompt return migration (Bastia, 2011). Literature concerning return migration during this period is very limited and is mostly conducted in the host country, with the intention to understand whether migrants will continue to stay or return to their country of origin (Bastia, 2011; Dagdeviren et al., 2014). Research suggests that the migrants mostly affected by the consequences of the economic crisis are labour migrants (Papademetriou et al., 2009). In face of crisis, for example, it appears that migrants prefer to remain in the country they migrate to, even if they run the risk of inferior working conditions and lower wages (Bastia, 2011). The group least likely to return appears to be family migrants. The factors which determine whether migrants will stay in the migrating country or return seem to be: the time of immigration, length of stay in the host country and the development of family ties (Papademetriou et al., 2009). This is supported by research in post-enlargement Europe following the economic crisis, suggesting that even though the economic situation may have accelerated the return, there is no evidence of mass-return migration (Bastia, 2011). The economic crisis has instead significantly decreased migratory flows in general as migrants adopt a “wait-and-see” strategy (Bygnes & Erdal, 2017; Zaiceva, 2012, p.4). Specifically, migrants adopt the assumption that origin countries are affected to a greater degree by the crisis. While the extent of research examining return migration in times of economic crisis is

limited to date, where there is evidence of return migration, such as in Poland (Parutis, 2013) or other Southern European countries (Lafleur, 2016), there is a tendency to re-migrate to the destination countries or to other countries in Europe.

Therefore, the above literature highlights that in case of unsuccessful return migration, migrants had benefited from the regime of the free movement within Europe to either re-migrate back to the destination country or to other countries. The movement trajectories that migrants have followed under these particular conditions of crisis are part of broader conceptualizations of return migration which challenge the inherent assumption that returning is the final step of the migration journey (Leo & Kobayashi, 2005). In effect, return migration is considered as one of the stages of migration, which gathers many forms of return moves, such as repeat migration, circular, temporary or definitive return migration (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008) in which social and economic relationships circulate (Cassarino, 2004). The occurrence of multiple and multidimensional migratory patterns, particularly within the EU and leading to circulatory migration, has attracted attention mostly with reference to migratory policies.

Circular migration allows migrants to gain experience and skills in the migrating country and apply and exchange skills, which may contribute to the socio-economies development of the countries involved. It shares similar features with transnationalism as it facilitates back-and-forth movements between two or more countries (Cassarino, 2004; Vertovec, 2007). Circulatory migration or repetitive movements between origin and destination countries are facilitated by migration policies and intervention programmes within Europe as a win-win scenario which provides benefits to both home and host countries, and to the migrants themselves (Pries, 2016). From this perspective, it can be argued that the free movements within destination and home countries provide flexibility during the economic crisis as circular migration leads to 'brain circulation' and facilitates allocation of the resources within the EU countries (Zaiceva & Zimmerman, 2012). This indicates that in the context of European countries, staying put in the migrating country or moving back and forth to origin and host countries are ways migrants have used to ameliorate the adverse effects of crisis. While the flexibility and the preferences for circularity migration have been growing, migrant mobility may not be comparable in

all contexts, considering that capacities for free movement are unequally shared due to the existence of a 'mobility gap' (Shamir, 2005, p.199) in movement regimes of countries not benefiting equal rights to mobility. These differentiations in access to mobility require researchers to be sensitive to contextual influences when seeking to better understand antecedents and consequences of (return) migration.

The argument of mobility takes prominence when considering that the literature suggests that the effects of the economic crisis may differ across geographical regions and countries (Beets & Willikens, 2010). The recession in Greece and Italy registered during 2008 and 2014 (particularly in the case of Greece) has mostly affected groups of the population with the lowest levels of human capital, among which is the immigrant population (Lafleur & Stanek, 2016). The serious economic problems faced by Greece and Italy have increased migratory flows of people leaving the country therefore leading to return migration. As literature above suggested that circular migration has mediated the adverse effects of the economic crisis to the migrant population across EU countries, it remains unclear whether (return) migrants of countries like Greece and Italy would engage in circulatory migration or re-migration.

2.2 Preparation and context of return migration

Theorists have conceptualised migration flows and movements in terms of services and capital, by focusing mainly on the impact on the economic development. While this is an important lacuna, the complex human outcomes of these systems have not been researched (Scott, 2006, p.1125). Gaining an understanding of individuals' experiences is important, as for return migration to have an impact on development, it primarily necessitates a positive experience for the individual returnee (van Houte & Davids, 2008). In order to understand experiences of return migrants, Cassarino (2004) has introduced the concept of preparedness, which entails the *willingness* and *readiness* of migrants to return. The first concerns the extent to which the act of return is a voluntary decision made in the absence of external pressure (Cassarino 2014, p.3) which may lead to an unplanned decision to return sooner. Readiness reflects the extent to which migrants are prepared to mobilize tangible resources

(financial means) and intangible resources (contacts, social networks, etc.). The will to return and readiness to return are the two main elements that determine preparedness of return migrants. The argument follows, that an abrupt interruption of the migration cycle may have a negative effect on return migrants' experience. From this perspective, if return migration is not desired and is not made as a free choice, then that will have an effect in the post-return experiences. This assumption problematizes the degree of choice when a decision is made under difficult circumstances of economic downturn. Therefore, migrants forced to return during economic crisis may negatively affect their experiences upon return and feelings of belonging.

This model is supported by recent research which suggests that different levels of return 'preparedness' among migrants and the return motivations shape different return outcomes. The research has found that migrants, who were better prepared, were significantly more satisfied with the return in their origin country than migrants who were less prepared (van Meteren, 2014). Elsewhere, it has been shown that return migrants frequently use the capital they have acquired in migration, such as access to markets and technology, and employ these resources in their countries of origin (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008; Vanhonacher & Chung, 2005). However, it has been suggested that migrant preparation and accumulation of resources may not be sufficient for a potential (re)settlement and this also increasingly depends on other factors including the economic, political, social and cultural circumstances in the origin country that need to be taken into account (van Houte & Davis, 2008). As these factors are essential in understanding the (re)settlement experiences of return migrants, most of the literature focuses on the individual migrant, although evidence shows that family is the most important behind the decisions to return (King, 2000). As familial experiences of returnees including children have been largely ignored (Konzett-Smoliner, 2016), it is important to examine the effects that returning under troubled circumstances of economic crisis has on the wellbeing of the return migrant family.

Overall, this section has suggested that migrants return to their origin country for various reasons, which in turn have implications on the outcomes or experiences of (re)settlement. Therefore, there is a need to examine a group of migrants moving

back to their origin country due to the economic downturn in Europe, who have rarely been researched. Literature on intentions of return migration during the difficult times of the economic downturn across Europe was discussed and migrants' tendencies to stay put as a safe way of dealing with the crisis. However, as not all countries have similar access to movement, this necessitates understanding the plans and pathways of migrants for the future. It was further suggested that to understand the experiences of return migrants, it is crucial to take into account the intersection of various factors which include preparation, as well as the conditions in the origin and host country upon which the return takes place. In this vein, it is essential to investigate whether return migration during economic crisis is a free choice, whether there has been sufficient preparation from the migrant(s) and if the conditions upon return enable the transfer of transnational capital.

2.3 Return migration and belonging

2.3.1 Belonging, home and socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion

The adaptation and settlement of immigrants in society is a significant topic in migration studies and political discussions. The adoption of the concept of integration has emerged as a central notion within these discussions and research, which have focused largely on European countries (Favell, 1998). Extensively used in research and policy, the concept has been contested and attacked as 'a highly ideological notion because it assumes integration into a given social fabric' (Anthias & Pajnik, 2014, p.15), encouraging inclusion of immigrants into the more 'singular' culture and belief systems of the dominant society (Grzymala-Kazłowska, 2017, p.9). While integration policies broadly stimulate processes of inclusion and the those through which migrants become accepted in society, it does little to capture broader social and psychological adaptation considerations such as identity and belonging (Grzymala-Kazłowska, 2016), as well as the larger social hierarchies and inequalities (Anthias & Pajnik, 2014).

To avoid the aforementioned pitfalls with the concept of integration, belonging is favoured in this research and will be adopted as a main explanatory theoretical concept, as this captures wider aspects of understanding migration experiences and

identification. To describe the comprehensiveness of the notion, Skrbiš and colleagues have argued that although “belonging” may well be one of the “softer” social science concepts, [it is] central to any discussion of some of the hardest issues facing human societies today: immigrant integration and cultural diversity’ (2007, p. 271). Despite the increase in the volume of research concerning belonging, it remains a vaguely defined concept and has generally been used as a self-explanatory term and left undefined by scholars (Antonsich, 2010). Inability to define the concept could be due to the heterogeneity of belonging as an important pattern of society which has an influence on identity, family, migration, economic factors and emotional attachments as they are articulated in aspects such as national, ethnic, cultural and religious affiliations (Brockmeyer & Harders, 2016). Belonging is also close to related concepts of identity or identification, categorization and commonality (Cooper & Brubaker, 2005, p.70-77).

Yuval-Davis (2006) and Antonsich (2010) have provided comprehensive explanations in order to study belonging in a more organized way. Yuval-Davis (2006) provides an analytical interpretation constructing belonging defined as a dimension which refers to a personal feeling of being at home which is mutually exclusive to the assumptions of ‘home is where we *feel* we belong’ (Hedetoft, 2002, p.5; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Therefore, a sense of psychological home consists of the affective, cognitive and behavioural components and it is a process which continues throughout a person’s life course and is not only bounded to a person’s country of origin (Sigmon et al., 2002). By defining the concept in this holistic manner, this situates usefully the concept of belonging at the intersection of psychology (agentic aspects) and sociology (structural aspects).

In research concerning migration, the concepts of home and belonging are often used interchangeably to describe identification with the home country. Diaspora research draws attention to the tension that migrants experience through being situated between the lived (migrating country) and the longed-for (origin country) (Ramji, 2006). This can be a permanent condition of the migrant living in a place and ‘longing’ for another, relating to the core meaning of belonging, which constitutes a yearning desire to be part of something that represents a stable state or position (Probyn, 1996). This feeling can often manifest as the desire to return home which is

constructed based on an ongoing 'homing desire' that is presumed to be inherent in the diasporic consciousness (Brah, 1986, p.186). This situation requires individuals to negotiate the sense of home and struggles of identification, as well as the interactions between their home and host countries (Christou, 2006; Duval, 2004; King, 2000). Research has suggested how the life of a migrant is characterised by the search for a stable self, whilst they are in flux (Christou, 2006; Ralph & Staelhi, 2011; Wessendorf, 2007). This literature unravels the tensions which exist during migration and can emerge as migrants construe dual meanings of home, entailing the real experience of home and of the idealized home which is absent (Moore, 2000). However, literature on transnational migration has contributed to refine the understandings of home that reflects the multiple attachments and feelings of belonging towards more than one place. Based on this assumption, being in several communities and places at the same time, home is not bounded, but it is "here and there", meaning an individual may simultaneously identify with the two countries (Vertovec, 1999, p.4-5). Such forms of identification can develop feelings of 'double' belonging (Vertovec, 2004, p.97) and 'transnational belonging' (Moska, 2015, p.24). The loosening concepts of identity and markers are therefore replaced by more fluid notions of identifications whereby migrants articulate 'hybridity' that is characterised by feelings of simultaneously belonging in many places and can contribute to portraying experiences of home and belonging as multi-layered (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Krzynanowski & Wodak, 2007). This research has contributed to the challenging of primordial assumptions that displacement is inherent to migrants' lives and that people can simultaneously belong in many places.

While the above literature refers to the migration context, scholarly research suggests that returning to the country of origin has been considered a natural process of migration, synonymous to homecoming (Hammond, 1999; King, 2000) or the final cycle of migration, portraying returning as an unproblematic reinsertion in the country of origin (Markowitz & Stefansson, 2004). Upon return, however, migrants are seen re-evaluating their sense of belonging and identification with home, (re)appraising whether the new reality meets their expectations. This re-evaluation happens as migration creates what Dubois (1994) has referred to as "double consciousness", alluding to a subject's sense of alienation and belonging. For the

migrant, this engenders a split subject, a fractured reality (Gilroy, 1993, p.126) which the migrant who moves home needs to manage from the position of the insider and outsider at the same time. Building on these assumptions and adopting these theoretical underpinnings, Werbner (2011) has found that Pakistani return migrants no longer shared the same cultural understandings as the ‘non-migrated’ population and that “everyday assumptions, relationships and modes of performing kinship differed radically” (p.57). Such challenges become clear when the migrant returns home. Moving home, from this perspective, forces the returnee to realize the ‘loss of home’ (Ralph, 2011; p.174) as they often view themselves as marginalised, while at other times they perceive themselves as more harmonized with the home, suggesting that a full identification with the home can never be captured due to this. These are the disappointments that return migrants may experience as they encounter a mismatch between the reality and the imagined, suggesting that returning home can be a rather complicated process.

It is within this context to consider that belonging is not only a personal perception of feeling at home, but it also incorporates a social element whereby people are conditioned to feel accepted as members of the broader society (Antonsich, 2010). This relational dimension indicates that identifying with a place should become reconciled with the discourses and practices of inclusion and exclusion which determine who belongs and who does not (Anthias, 2001, 2008; Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006). In other words, this view suggests that belonging is not only an individual choice but it is also defined by others. Questions surrounding belonging emerge when people perceive that there are certain spaces, places or identities to which they cannot have access or participate in (Anthias, 2008). From this perspective, individuals need to conform to the group membership arises from the fear of being socially excluded - which is also referred to as the politics of belonging, or power relations (c.f., Yuval-Davis, 2006). While the politics of belonging are seen to be expressed and produced in various forms (issues of safety and rights) which are beyond the scope of this research, the main focus is on the boundary discourses and practices which divide ‘us’ from ‘them’ (Bhabra, 2006, p.39; Yuval-Davis, 2006). In other words, contemporary belonging to a community is characterised by various forms of otherness as globalization has intensified estrangement, experiences of outsider-ness as people cross countries (Bauman, 1995;

Anthias, 2001). This then suggests that belonging to a community is not a self-determined process but it is also determined by members of the broader society.

Differences with regards to exclusionary practices are observed in the social expectations relating to different behaviours, appearance, language, dressing and other social markers which portray migrants as different from the dominant society (Favell, 1998). Citizenship is another component that is vital for belonging, which provides security and safety and imposes membership and participation in society or cultural 'otherness' defining who belongs and who does not (Yuval-Davis, 2006). This is related to ethnic identity which is determined by the individual's perception of the meaning it has to different audiences and the social contexts. Nagel (1994) suggests that ethnic identity formation is a result of the social ascriptions provided by self and others and it is related to how others define who belongs to the norms and expectations of the broader society. As explored by Valentine and colleagues (2009a) simply self-claiming membership and citizenship for migrants is not adequate as it requires recognition and the validation of the broader community. This is the meaning that self and others assign to ethnic identity in different social contexts which points to the ongoing internal and external influencing forces which set the boundaries of belonging. This then indicates that ethnic identity in the origin country may be challenged by others and that particularly for children of migrants, it is essential to explore these complexities when children return to parents' home country.

However, research has emphasized that experiences of exclusion and otherness are more pertinent to host countries, in which minority migrants enter a new environment, which is shown from the perceived differences with the mainstream society (Nash, 2012). The emerging literature in return migration has indicated the way categorisations of perceived 'differences' from others have an impact on people's belonging. People who return, bring with them new ideas and practices gained in the host country. They even behave differently, which makes them stand out (Stefansson, 2004). One of the most disillusioning aspects of return negatively impinging adjustment is the migrant's social distance from the local community, and the ways they perceive each other in relation to the dominant society. In this way, return migrants are often made to feel unwelcome (Christou, 2006; Markowitz &

Stefansson, 2004) and feel like a 'stranger' in their homeland as they come to encounter a sense of unfamiliarity. They also realise that they can never be completely part of what once was their social environment. A more recent body of literature in this area documents that return migration can even generate psychological distress, xenophobia, dislocation and feeling torn between two places (King & Christou, 2014; Markowitz & Stefansson, 2014; Potter, 2005; Potter & Philips, 2006; Yehuda-Sternfeld & Mirsky, 2014; Vathi & King, 2017). This then, suggests that even upon return, belonging appears to be shaped by others expectations and broader norms, which determine the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

It has been emphasized that one of the main aspects of belonging that influences the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion is rooted in the parameters of power relations. The intersectionality of gender and class that make visible multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it (Anthias, 2001; Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006, p.187). In this perspective, migrants are categorised into different high social and economic mobility groups, whereas others are excluded even from the labour market. In this way, class is a strong determinant in influencing belonging as research has indicated that experiences of belonging for refugees (Ghanem, 2003) or for returnees in post-conflictual countries (van Houte & Davids, 2008; Steffanson, 2004) show more severe signs than of high-skilled migrants or elite return migrants (Hatfield, 2010; Konzett-Smoliner, 2016). This, in turn, points to the different experiences in migration and background factors which differently shape patterns of integration in the origin country.

In addition to class, gender is one of the main factors which influences experiences and belonging of migrants. It has been argued that gender practices may have different meanings in different contexts (Afshar, 1994). Migration can therefore, affect women and men in different ways and may also reshape relations between them (Levitt et al., 2003). Migration has been shown to deeply impact the public and the private lives of women by influencing their participation in the work force. For some it increases independence and self-worth as they may acquire education and professional careers (Pedraza, 1991). In this way, it can have an emancipatory effect by providing women with autonomy as they leave behind the traditional gender

norms of the home society and have access to employment resources (Pärrenas, 2001; Pessar, 1995). This is observed among some Caribbean women who experienced more adjustment issues as they lost gendered autonomy upon return (Phillips & Potter, 2005). Similarly, Polish returned women moved back to UK because they felt less stereotyped and more autonomous than in their country (Parutis, 2013). It has therefore been documented that migration can have an emancipatory effect for women, and they are more reluctant to return to their home country than men are (Attias-Waite, 2012). Conversely, it has been suggested that migration may further add to the feminine role as women may take up more caring roles (Attias-Waite, 2012), indicating that it may differently impact women, by either disrupting or reinforcing traditional gender roles (Ho, 2006). By implication, it is necessary to consider the dynamics of social positioning based on gender relations and identities when migrants move back to a former and different socio-cultural context issues which can become more challenging for women and young girls.

Additionally, literature has suggested that another strong element influencing belonging is language, often used to mark people as different and not originating from this place (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Language, has been argued, represents one of the most important identity markers that sets and demarcates boundaries between different people (Colombo et al., 2009). Whilst literature mostly focuses on the boundaries between mainstream society in the migrating country and the migrants who may have little knowledge of the language (Valentine et al., 2009b) in return migration too, accent becomes an identity marker of exclusion particularly for the children of migrants (Joyce, 2010). For example, research indicates that upon return, Bajan Brits have been marginalized and stigmatized for their English accent. In turn, such processes reveal complex identity politics, as exclusion is performed only with the returnees from UK and not from the US. This differentiation uncovers that exclusion is rooted in the postcolonial historical background, thus revealing complex identity politics of the white colonizer and the black colonized (Potter & Phillips, 2006). This work has been important in highlighting that upon return, social exclusion can be shaped based on historical circumstances of migration which vary significantly. This is in line with Kibria (2000, p.79) who has argued that some (hybrid) ethnicities are better regarded than others, which therefore necessitates considering the way migration history may have different implications in the ways

migrants and their children are perceived by the broader community. Further, as this literature is more concerned with the boundaries set by others, factors such as the lack of economic embeddedness which may influence identification and overall experiences of belonging are less considered.

While the above literature has explicitly shown the influence of others in determining boundaries of belonging, and the main categories which shape these boundaries, it does little to show the processual nature of the formation of belonging. As Probyn suggests, belonging is not a stable status but a ‘desire for becoming’ (1996, p.5), it is rather a process than a status, which is socially constructed and negotiated (Kumsa, 2006). In other words, even though individuals are conditioned in their belonging, they are constantly seeking ways for (re)settlement by means of challenging and shifting from belonging and non-belonging. For example, research suggests that return migrants in Ireland, position themselves between both cultures, a state which is not simply self-dependent but highly influenced by how others include or exclude them, as observed in everyday life or work related places (Ralph, 2013). In this process, performing (Bell, 1999) belonging shows the ways in which belonging can be enacted and performed in various ways. In this respect, Fortier (2000) has discussed that it is through practicing various ethnic and cultural performances that Italians constructed a sense of belonging in England. A number of other studies have documented the way migrants engage in performing religious and family rituals during migration (Ugba, 2008; Gardner & Grillo; White, 2011a). As the idea of performativity in recognizing a sense of agency towards constructing belonging while in the host society, it is essential to unravel the ways belonging is negotiated and performed while in the origin country.

Overall, this section has highlighted that belonging and identification is not only a self-construct but it is largely shaped by others, which indicates that even upon return, migrants and their children may be prone to exclusion and othering. It was argued that the main elements that set boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are gender, class, accent and other social norms set by the broader community. It was also suggested that the constructions by which others set boundaries of non-belonging have a broader historical and political dimension in terms of the country from where migrants return, which may influence a hierarchical belonging. Further,

it was shown that belonging is not given, but it is a process which individuals may act and negotiate, and requires understanding the different ways employed to construct belonging.

2.4 Children in migration research

Children are part of an increasingly mobile world which characterizes contemporary life (Urry, 2000). Therefore, children are central to the migration phenomenon as they migrate with their families or become migrants themselves (Veale & Dona, 2014). Until recently, children have figured very little in migration research as migration has been considered to be important in the context of adults or because children often have been subsumed within the interests of the family as a whole (Ackers & Stalford, 2004). Predominantly in western discourse, children's place has been considered to be within their homes and the private spaces or in spatially confined lives (Holloway & Valentine, 2000 b). These widely accepted assumptions have frequently made children relatively invisible in migration research (Bushin, 2009; Moskal & Tyrrell, 2016). Lack of research with children is based on the inherent assumption that children are dependent and vulnerable, reinforcing notions that children are the 'becoming adults' rather than social beings in their own right (James & Prout, 1990). This, in turn, has led to understanding children's experiences through parents' accounts, therefore denying children's agency.

Emerging migration literature has challenged these assumptions and has broadened the scope by understanding children's lives and experiences in various migratory contexts. Research has, for example, explored children involved in family migration research (Bhabha, 2008; Bushin, 2009; Orellana et al., 2001) suggesting that children play an active role and shape families' journeys in general and participate in negotiating with their parents in family migration decision-making processes (Bushin, 2009; Haikkola, 2013; Orellana et al., 2001). Further, the emerging research has contributed to literature by focusing on the way children forge their identity and belonging in relation to places of the present and those of the past, they may feel attached to. Within the scope of diasporic assumptions mentioned earlier (section 2.2.1) of fluid notions of identification, multiple allegiances and cultural

positions, this research emphasizes the various ways children develop a sense of belonging across multiple spaces. This literature adopts a transnational perspective to analyse their identity and belonging and argues that migrant children utilize cultural practices strategically, by incorporating influences from both the past and the present as they negotiate identification and belonging (Mannitz 2005; Christopoulou & de Leew 2005). For example, Haikkola (2013) has argued that transnational social relations maintained through mobility increase connectivity across borders, indicating that relations act as a space to negotiate identities across borders. This is supported by research which has suggested that British-born children feel a sense of belonging with the kin and traditions in Bangladesh (Mand, 2010), meaning that transnational practices have been maintained through visits, technologies (phone calls or skype) and communication. However, at the same time, London was also a home to them as their lives are negotiated in more than one place. In this view, this research has contributed to challenging cultural assumptions of fixity and stability, highlighting the nature of belonging as being negotiable and performative in many ways and across borders.

However, while the above literature contributes towards a more insightful understanding in the construction of identities and belonging transnationally, children's lives are not confined only to the country of origin, but must be understood in relevance to various points of reference of their everyday life (Ní Laoire et al., 2011; Olwig, 2003). For example, literature has pointed to the role of peers, family and localities as essential in belonging (Ní Laoire et al., 2011). Schools for example are considered as essential sites which determine exclusion and inclusion as they define the parameters of social membership, which can reinforce society's inequalities (see for more Gonzales, 2016). However, it has been observed that in literature children usually figure as a group, and are referred to as 'migrant children', instead of understanding experiences as guided by developmental life stages. Considerations of time-related characteristics such as age and stage in the life-cycle are, however, crucial in understanding the individual's migratory experiences and process (Erdal & Ezzati, 2014) as children's developmental stages or age plays an important role in the ways children and youth exert agency in developing a sense of belonging and attachment (Ní Laoire et al., 2010).

The first who introduced age in the U.S. literature as an essential variable in the adjustment process was Rumbaut (1997), suggesting that children's developmental stages can have a significant bearing on migrant children's experiences (Hirschman, 1994). In this perspective, in the context of migration, it has been found that adjustment is entirely different for teenagers from adult migrants, as the process of developing as teenagers necessitates the incorporation of information from both cultures and multiple reference points in terms of peers, schools and the larger society (Rumbaut, 2005). For instance, literature suggests that teenagers are in a liminal stage, which according to Turner (1974, p.231) refers to a "betwixt and between" period as the individual attempts to move from one place to another, or from a stage of life characterised by ambiguity and uncertainty to another. Teenagers in this period live in between life-worlds and need to navigate many transitions from childhood to adolescence and the cultural changes of two countries. This notion has been used more widely for refugees or illegal immigrants in the US to describe their liminal time as they transit from adolescence to young adulthood and begin a transition to illegality (Gonzales, 2016). From a developmental perspective, teenagers have to manage their relationship with parents while simultaneously seeking autonomy and cultural adjustment. As these relations are mainly researched in the context of host country (see Kwak, 2003 for a detailed review), it further necessitates exploration in the context of return migration when children move to parents' origin country.

Exploring migratory experiences through the lens of development, directs attention to the changes of the nature of development through the life course, particularly for young people (Arnett, 2004). Therefore, Arnett has proposed a new conception of development suggesting that late teens belong in what has been recently termed as 'the emerging adulthood' (Arnett, 2004, p.469), which is a period characterised by instability as young people are in the process of transitioning from a teenager to a young adult. While the model refers that changes and instability happen as this period entails a self-exploration and is characterised by semi-autonomy. As changes and transitions happen during this period, literature suggests that young peoples' lives are also largely shaped by cultural and economic conditions (see Furlong, 2009 for more details). For example, research has indicated that the recession in Italy has had a negative impact on the mental health of young people in Italy, who show signs

of instability, isolation and disengagement (Di Blasi et al., 2016). In this regard, it is essential that experiences of children are explored more widely than within the context of cultural influences.

In sum, this section has explored that migrant children's lives and experiences are not only defined by disruption but also by fluid lives that take place transnationally. It was argued that literature should give attention to researching children by focusing on their experiences through life cycle stages. It was shown that while cultural identity formations are essential to consider, migrant children are in a life stage which may be shaped by various transitions related to changing places and cultures. This is essential when researching particularly late teens as they are in a transitional stage to adulthood which necessitates making decisions about future plans.

2.5 'Returned' children, places and belonging

Literature on migration has most frequently acknowledged experiences of the individual return migrant, rarely making reference to the return as a family project, although it has been recognized that settlement may be more complex when children are considered (Erdal & Ezzati, 2014). There is a lack of literature in this field, even though it is observed that children are frequently one of the main reasons for returning in the origin country (Ní Laoire, 2011a). Literature suggests further that immigrant children tend to adapt more easily to the host society in most areas of life, relative to their parents. Therefore, in contrast to their parents, children often have a strong desire to remain in the host society, which means, decisions regarding return may also manifest as a family divide (Djajic, 2008; Chavez, 1998). Tsuda (2009) suggests that there are two types of return, the first-generation migrants moving to their country of birth and the 'ethnic return migration' which refers to second and subsequent generations 'return' migrants moving to live to their ethnic country. Even though both groups may feel emotionally attached to the country, the experiences of parents and children in the origin country tend to differ as the first generation moves to a country where they were born and with which they are familiar, whereas the second generation moves to a place that is more foreign to them. This indicates that

particularly in a cultural context, children of return migrants are exposed to greater challenges than their parents.

Despite a growing recognition of children within migration research, literature investigating children's experiences related to return migration remains rare. The seminal work by King (1977) was the first to document that during return migration children can face difficulties such as school and language problems. Since then, existing literature concerned with children of migrants has mostly focused on second generation adult return migrants (Christou, 2006; Reynolds, 2008; King & Christou, 2014; King & Kilinc, 2014; Potter, 2005; Potter & Philips, 2006; Sardinha, 2011; Wessendorf, 2007). This body of work has examined the experiences of adult children of migrants whose return tends to have been motivated by families' narratives of returning to the homeland, or to their 'roots' (Reynolds, 2008; Wessendorf, 2007). Research of this sort, has been important in documenting the extent to which these adults can face difficulties adjusting to their new surroundings, while the question of to what extent children of return migrants experience similar difficulties has received relatively less attention.

Diminutive work in this area demonstrates that moving to the parents' origin country can be an unsettling experience for young people. Challenging hegemonic assumptions of unproblematic resettlement to their parents' homeland, this work suggests that, owing to cultural differences, children can experience feelings of isolation and exclusion (Knörr, 2005; Ní Laoire, 2011a). However, it is recognized that return migration experiences are context-dependent (Erdal & Oppet, 2017). In this way, there is literature which has been conducted with children of high-skilled migrants (Hatfield, 2010) and of Irish return migrants (Ní Laoire, 2011) who have moved for a better quality of life and indicate less challenges on their belonging and adjustment. Therefore, it is essential to explore experiences of children of return migrants in Albania who have moved to parents own country under difficult circumstances of economic crisis, which have not been much explored before. There is an exception in the research conducted with children moving to Albania which has observed difficulties in school and even psychological problems such as stress and sadness (Vathi & Duci, 2015; Vathi et al., 2016). This is significant in further

advancing the understanding of these experiences, by including adults and children in the research.

The majority of previous literature has a tendency to focus on mid- to late-teens, and less research has concerned younger children of return migrants (Allen & Aber, 2006). A notable exception to this, is a study by Ní Laoire (2011b) which examines the extent to which experiences of children of return migrants can be considered gendered. This research finds that girls and boys employ different strategies aimed at facilitating inclusion in society (e.g., football for boys and socialising for girls). Utilising a cross-sectional qualitative design, the study provides a valuable record of the ways children's integration processes are shaped by social influences, and highlights the need to consider the everyday places in which children negotiate identification with significant others and their new surroundings. However, methodological issues have also been raised in working with children. Yaqub (2007), for example, suggests that the experiences of migrant children can have long term implications. However, there is little research that employs longitudinal approaches to map the changes that take place over an extended period of time. Most of the research on migration concerns a single snapshot in time, meaning the method fails to capture change and circumstances of this change (Punch, 2013). Few exceptions in literature capture longitudinally child migrants' lives (Punch, 2013; Gonzales, 2016). By following families of migrants for ten years, Punch (2013), for instance, captured the way Bolivian child migrants coped with the economic crisis in Argentina. She found that many changes had happened over time; children had migrated continuously even during the crisis and they engaged flexible ways through which they took up opportunities. The author stresses the relevance of longitudinal research which facilitates exploring the changes that happened during transitional points of their life. The factor of time and change is also particularly important for places as research has shown that over time attachment with the places can change (Gonzales, 2016; Levitt & Rajaram, 2013). Research in return migration necessitates sensitivity to these issues in exploring the dynamics of change in terms of relationships, adjustment and ways of coping.

In addition to the need for researchers to study the ways in which children and young people experience 'return' migration over time, there has been a call for research to

consider that children use and encounter space differently to adults (Holloway & Valentine, 2000b) and should therefore be studied within their own spaces and places. With this in mind, recent research has begun to study children's everyday spaces, and this work recognises that public places, such as play environments, parks and streets are significant spaces for children to identify with and help create their everyday realities (Harker, 2005). It is crucial to recognise that children's lives are located in their everyday territories and local places (Moskal, 2015). Children engage in this process by actively developing a sense of who they are in relation to the localities they manoeuvre (Christensen & James, 2000; Rasmussen, 2004). In support with this, previous research on spatialities with children has focused on the ways they exercise agency in relation to the everyday localities they inhabit and the social contexts they grow up in (Christensen & James 2000; Matthews et al., 2000; Rasmussen, 2004; Wilderbegs, 2010; c.f. Seymour, 2015). These are the localities to which children are able to connect physically, and in which they are able to develop meaning for their life (Rasmussen, 2004). This type of attachment echoes the seminal work by Tuan (1977) with regards to how people experience places – a sensible feeling that comes with familiarity and ease and the experiences and memories gathered over time. Based on this perspective, children become attached to their surroundings at a deeper level than adults and interact with the local spaces more closely. When considering place in this sense, then lack of meaningful places can have psychological implications and lead to uprootedness or placelessness (Du, 2015). While this research highlights children's attachment with the everyday localities, this research does not capture children's belonging when they move to another country and leave behind their [old] everyday spaces.

From this perspective, the increasing research interest in recognizing children's connections to everyday places, particularly in Europe, has been problematized by Ansell (2009). She warns about the overemphasis on the local focus of the children's geographies or the children's everyday places as limiting and thus leaves unproblematized broader aspects that happen beyond the confined spaces of everyday life. The call for developing broader scales in a more global context (Holloway & Valentine, 2000b), resonates with Massey's (1994) conceptualization on space and place which allow us to understand that places are not static and singular but open and porous. According to Massey, the 'spatial' is constructed by

the multiplicity of the social relations across all spatial scales, integral to the production of the social world (1994, p.4). In the same way that identities are defined as fluid and multiple, so are the places which are also crucial in search for identity. To overcome this, research into children's geography has emphasized the need to include a broader spatial understanding of global/local in order to transcend the dichotomy and to produce cross-linkages in the field (Holloway & Valentine, 2000b). In these formulations, for children changing places, is it essential that identifications which happen at local and global spaces need to be accounted for.

Despite this emphasis, there is little research which has looked at the ways mobility has shaped children's place-making practices. Studies which have attempted to address spatial mobilities as influenced by both local and global processes have suggested that children engage in place-making by connecting to local everyday spaces (Olwig, 2003; den Besten, 2010) and via linkages and social attachments that encompass both the countries of origin and destination respectively (Moskal, 2015; White et al., 2010). The tendency on the notion of connectedness of places and spaces at various levels indicates that belonging is non-static and ever changing (Ilcan, 2002, p.8). It further illustrates the role of space on children's identities as being spatially constituted (Valentine et al., 2009a). In support of this, there is research with children of return migrants in Ireland, findings of which point to the role of spaces and places within narratives of identity (Ní Laoire, 2010). Such research suggests that belonging is substantially easier for children with strong family connections and who settle into the places and spacious localities where parents grew up. Extended family played a crucial role by providing means to become accepted by the wider kinship and therefore gain access to social and cultural capital. The meaningful sense of belonging in relation to familiar local places and the family ties then raises the question of the context of return presupposing that not all migrant families may decide to settle in their home town. This indicates that location in which families settle upon return may have an impact in children's belonging, however children's agency in negotiating within their surroundings need to be accounted for.

In summary, this section has argued that the migration literature is characterised by a relative dearth of studies which consider the ways in which children of return

migrants negotiate belonging by drawing on spatial and temporal encounters that shape their experiences of migration. It was argued that this consideration is important as it enhances our understanding of how belonging is negotiated by children, by drawing on their past and present experiences, and how they construct a sense of home by actively traversing different reference points.

2.6 Conclusion

The current chapter has discussed the literature and the theoretical underpinnings on return migration of adults and migrant children. The chapter demonstrated that contemporary lives are characterised by increased mobility which has produced various types of migratory movements, including return migration. The main motives of return migration were discussed and that the recent lingering economic crisis across Europe has led to new mobility patterns which will be analysed through this thesis. The importance of preparedness to return and its two components (willingness and readiness) are essential for positive experience upon return. However, it was argued that while transnational practices and preparedness to return are useful to understand the preparation from the individual, it needs to be explored whether that is sufficient for transferring skills and capital in the origin country.

The chapter has discussed many existing theoretical models regarding reasons to return. However, to better capture experiences of return migrants and their children, the rich notion of belonging will be employed (Yuval-Davies, 2006; Antonsich, 2010), which captures not only individual perceptions and experiences but even the all-encompassing social discourses. It was discussed that belonging and identification are not only self-defined, but others too, determine who set boundaries of who belongs and who does not. However, literature suggests that belonging is further complicated by intersectionality of various identity markers including language (accent), gender and class which will be considered in this research. It was observed that little consideration is given to other factors including historical and political relations between the countries of origin and destination and the effect they have in participants' experiences of belonging and identification.

The second section of this chapter (respectively, sections 2.3 and 2.4) highlighted research with migrant children, providing evidence on children's experiences in migration. Drawing from diaspora and post-culturalism theoretical influences, the chapter indicates the complexity of identity and belonging in transnational contexts. A distinction is made by considering life-cycle aspects in migration research, recognizing the consideration of transitional changes that take place in different developmental stages of life. Further, it considers the implications of these transitional changes on identity formations in conjunction with the mobility transitions, as in the case of changing places. Therefore, for teenagers, literature highlighted the tensions which prevail, as a result of other age-related influencing factors. For younger children, the chapter reviews existing literature on local and leisure places as meaningful in children's lives. As literature exploring children's experiences and belonging is fractured and either focuses on local or the transnational spaces, the need to capture belonging as constructed both within the local and global spaces was highlighted.

Migration and Return Migration in Albania

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the history of migration and return migration in Albania. The chapter focuses on the Albanian population movements by looking at the patterns of migration and the motivations that have given rise to them. Through an examination of the literature, the censuses and the reports used to develop the chapter, aim to contextualize the integration processes that have taken place through the act of migration. The chapter, particularly focuses on the two main destination countries of Greece and Italy, mainly because the majority of participants of my research have been emigrants in these two countries.

The chapter will discuss literature on the integration dynamics of Albanian migrants and their children; the challenges migrants have faced in relation to employment and social incorporation in the host society. Further, the chapter will discuss the changing policies and migrants' own strategies adopted to better integrate themselves in society. I consider that strategies employed by migrants and their children to better integrate themselves in society need to be investigated for their usefulness upon return, when similar challenges will be faced particularly by migrant children. The chapter then presents work on migrants' intentions to return to Albania and the ways that challenges in the host society have shaped these intentions which may differ in the two countries. The transnational nature of Albanian migration with the origin country maintained through investing, sending remittances and paying visits as 'preparations' to return will be discussed. I suggest that these practices need to be considered for the importance they have in facilitating return migrants' (re)settlement.

The chapter will consider return migration to Albania before the advent of the economic crisis and the policy measures taken to support the reintegration of return migrants. I will suggest that while attention has been given to some groups of migrants, there is a need to consider return migrants more generally and those influenced by other reasons to return.

Finally, the chapter discusses the global economic crisis in the host societies and in Albania and the challenges faced by migrants to make decisions about staying or returning to Albania. The changing nature of the transnational migration will be discussed, and that difficulties mostly faced by migrants in Greece will propel return or cyclic migration for the low skilled migrants. Finally, the chapter will provide a detailed overview of the two study sites, Tirana and Fier; an overview of the geographic location, population data and the economic conditions of each city.

3.1 Albanian migration

3.1.1 Albanian migration trends

Migration represents an important phenomenon in post-communist Albania. Since the collapse of the communist regime which had caused 45-years of isolation of the country from the world, a series of mass-migrations were unleashed in the 1990s. Albania has been considered as one of the countries with the highest migration flows in Europe, wherein up to one third of the population have migrated over the past 25 years (Barjaba & Barjaba, 2015). Albanian emigration represents a unique case in international migration due to the significant size of the population outflow and the type of migration that is almost exclusively directed towards two destination countries, Greece and Italy (Vullnetari, 2013). A model for the migration in the post-communist period sets out the main characteristics of Albanian migration (Barjaba, 2000). First, this type of migration is *recent*, as it emerged after the 1990s; second, it is *intense* and, third, it features *irregular* migrants (i.e., those with no documents). The main driving forces were *economic* factors, and this type of migration has been classified as rapidly *evolving* (King & Mai, 2008a). Studying this group is

particularly interesting with regards to highlighting contextual local influences on return migration.

Following the communist period in Albania, the occurrence of international migration can be divided into three main waves. The *first wave* of mass-migration, which occurred between 1990 and 1993, tended to be motivated by the political and economic crisis that characterized the country at that time. The change of systems from communism to democracy was associated with political chaos and the occurrence of the economic collapse (King & Vullnetari, 2004). As a response to the isolation and destabilized situation, an estimated 200,000 – 300,000 people left the country, seeking refuge abroad, mostly in Italy, Greece, Germany and France (Vullnetari, 2013). The second wave of migration occurred during the collapse of the pyramid investment schemes in 1997, which had been introduced by the government in power at that time. These were fraudulent investing schemes in which unsustainable rates of return were promised, based on an increasing number of investors. (King & Mai, 2008a). This period prompted dramatic consequences which were triggered by the economic distress and dissatisfaction with the political system, and culminated in a new migration and refugee crisis. During this period, an estimated number of 70,000 Albanians left the country to live abroad. The third wave was stimulated by The Kosovo crisis of 1990-2000, during which more than 400,000 Kosovar Albanian refugees crossed the border into Albania (King & Mai, 2008a). The arrival of Kosovar refugees in Albania aggravated further the economic difficulties of one of the poorest countries in Europe. The majority of Kosovar refugees left to seek asylum in western countries, and the unstable situation in the country also propelled many other Albanians to head towards European destinations. Due to the geographical proximity, the main destinations were again Greece and Italy, including the UK, France, Germany and Belgium. The World Bank (2011) has reported that by 2010, around 1.4 million Albanians, out of a population of approximately 2.9 million were living abroad.

It is further estimated, that around 50 per cent of all migrants who had left the country were lecturers, researchers and intellectuals, many of them having been trained in Western Europe or the US in the early 1990s (UNDP, 2006a). This rate of migration of intellectuals in Albania, the highest when compared to other countries

in Central and Eastern Europe, represented a major concern for one of the countries with the highest poverty levels in Europe at the time. The socio-political situation since the 1990s elevated the feeling among Albanian intellectuals that they were a generation which was lost and with little hope, as well as the belief that ‘Albanians are better off outside their country’ (Memaj et al., 2008, p.632). However, improvement in the economic and social situation in Albania, led to a decline in the migration of the intellectuals since 2000 (UNDP, 2006: a). In general, Albanian migration has therefore been characterised by both push and pull factors. The exodus of the early 1990’s and then the second surge in 1997 were caused by political and socio-economic crises which engulfed the country (Carletto, et al., 2006). Additional pull factors, such as the exposure to the Italian media during the communist period, acted as a ‘window’ to the image of Europe, playing a ‘seductive role’ by stirring migratory desires in the Albanian population (King & Mai, 2008a, p.51). The literature cites education abroad as another pull factor, attracting around 5,000 Albanians per year to study in different countries (Barjaba & Barjaba, 2015).

This then suggests that the need and desire to migrate has been instilled by the political and socio-economic conditions in Albania and the exposure to other media over prolonged periods of isolation. This is likely to have shaped the way people see their own country and other countries from which they have been isolated for a long period of time. In turn, this would make the consideration to return even harder as migrants had long built dreams and hopes and the return would be considered a ‘failed’ project of their migration dreams.

3.1.2 Reception of migrants in the destination countries

Evidence suggests that there were an estimated 670,000 Albanian migrants in Greece, making up around six percent of that country’s total population (Iosifides, 2007). Most of the migration to Greece and Italy has been described as “irregular migration”. The same wide-spread allocation features in Italy (Mai & Paladini, 2013). Geographical proximity with Greece, has shaped migration patterns and has initiated ‘back and forth’ home-host movements (Michail, 2009:540). For the most part, migration to Greece was temporary rather than long term (Carletto et al., 2006; Labrianidis & Kazazi, 2006), while for some it was viewed as a short-term project to

achieve financial capital. For others, it was a path to reach the western countries (Vullnetari, 2013). The migrants whose destination was Italy tended to be in a more superior socio-economic condition and able to partake in significantly better education system than those whose destination was Greece (Labrianidis & Hatziprokopiou, 2005). Nevertheless, in both countries and particularly in Greece migrants have experienced social exclusion which is linked with various factors. It has been indicated that Greece has shown resistance to accept the existence of minorities in its territories and this is featured in its policies that have reinforced temporary migration (Gogonas, 2009; Lyberaki & Maroukis, 2005). The main reasons for the Albanians are linked with the existing antagonistic relations between the two countries combined with the present role of Greece in Europe (Vullnetari, 2013). Secondly, the Greek national consciousness has conveyed the unification of the state by all the territories which belong to the Greek orthodox populations constructed based on religion, ethnicity, culture and language (Kohn, cf. Kapllani & Mai, 2005). For the above reasons, in comparison to all other groups of migrants in Greece who had enjoyed benefits and full citizenship, Albanians received a differential and exclusionary treatment. This inequality among groups of migrants has been described as ‘the hierarchy of Greekness’ (Triandafyllidou & Veikou, 2002). The complexity of these factors has shaped the experiences of migrants for a long time, by being stigmatized and viewing the Albanian as an ‘invader’ and the ‘traditional enemy’ of the ‘Greekness’ (p.165). However, there has been a tendency to apply this hierarchy and strong differentiation even among Albanian migrants themselves. According to Vullnetari (2013) there were two groups of migrants: the more privileged ethnic Greek-Albanians (Ethnic Greeks from Albania) who received beneficial treatment because of their more or less similar position within Greek society. The second one consisted of other, ‘ordinary’ Albanian migrants who received the most unfavourable reactions, being viewed as Muslims but also related to its past history of communism (Vullnetari, 2013). As literature suggests, the complexity of these reasons was reflected in the ambivalence of policy making towards certain groups of migrants by creating different levels of inclusion and exclusion for the migrant groups (Triandafyllidou & Veikou, 2002). This complex interplay of factors linked with political and national identities has in turn influenced the way migrants are perceived in Greece. Further, it is essential to understand the

implication that such antagonist relations between the two countries will influence the experiences of return migrants in relation to the broader community in Albania.

It has been evidenced that the ensuing stigmatisations and prejudices confined migrants to a state of illegality and vulnerability (King & Mai, 2008 a). Evidently, the marginalization was reinforced by the character of the migration policies in Greece, which has been that of border restrictions and control of illegal migrants with little attempts on drawing policies on integration (Lyberaki & Maroukis, 2005). In both countries, the media has portrayed many crimes being committed by Albanians, which had a wide impact on the general opinion and in constructing the image of Albanians as ‘dangerous’ and ‘criminals’ (Lazaridis, 2004; Barjaba & King, 2005; Triandafyllidou & Veikou, 2002). At the same time instrumentalizing this for exploitation in the labour market (Lazaridis & Wickens, 1999). To understand the experiences of migrants, it is essential to highlight the type of treatment and the working conditions of migrants. In this way, initially, employment in Greece was largely shaped by the socio-economic structures and informality, giving way to illegal employment activities. It has been indicated that the five main sectors of employment were: construction, agriculture, tourism and catering and cleaning for women. Even though the majority of Albanian migrants were skilled and possessed some qualifications, their options were limited to the informal economy with poor conditions and payment (Lazaridis, 2004; Barjaba & King, 2005). Relatively well-educated migrants tended to work in low-skilled or semi-skilled jobs, a working experience which resulted in a deskilling effect with regards to educational and professional abilities (Labrianidis & Hatziprokopiou, 2005). This indicates that downward mobility in the labour market, marginalization and stigmatisation have impacted lives of migrants which in turn has influenced in shaping their social positioning.

Taken together, these studies have highlighted the geographical location of majority of Albanian migrants during the post-communist period. It was suggested that in both Greece and Italy, migrants have experienced marginalization, stigmatisation and exploitation in the labour market. For the group of Albanian migrants, the interplay of factors which include political, historical and national identity in the host society have caused discrimination and low socio-economic positioning in

society. These are particularly essential to understand the ambivalences of lives of migrants, but also the impact that the tense relations between two countries may be reflected in experiences of return migrants and their descendants.

3.1.3 From exclusion towards social integration

The legalization procedures reformed by the Greek government in early 2000, changed the social environment for Albanian migrants in Greece and provided the opportunity for socio-economic mobility. Therefore, access to secure jobs was granted, along with better pay, less restrictive travel and permission for family reunification even though they were denied access to citizenship (Maroukis & Gemi, 2013; Gemi, 2014). The situation however, was better for well-paid immigrants who were able to acquire social welfare contributions than the low skilled migrants. It should be noted that regularization programmes which took place, improved the figures from irregular to regular migrants, consequently influencing the changing attitudes of locals in the two countries towards a positive view for Albanian migrants (Vullnetari, 2013; Barjaba & Barjaba, 2015). Over the years, a trend of economic stability was evidenced as migrants moved from agricultural work towards semi-skilled work and small business enterprises have been evidenced in both countries, including access to health care services and retirement benefits (Barjaba & King, 2005; Lyberaki & Maroukis, 2005). Regardless of this, the slow process of regularization procedures that have taken place in Greece (Labrianidis & Kazazi, 2006) has left many of the migrants in Greece economically and socially marginalized in contrast to Italy with more irregular migrants and unemployment. As the process of the socio-economic integration was lengthy, it can therefore be assumed that for most of the migrants, returning to the origin country may not be an option as they settle in and their children grow in the destination country.

It is crucial to emphasize that the progression in economic mobility and access to services was largely a process in which Albanian migrants have deployed their own strategies to counter the harsh stigmatisations. Vullnetari (2013) points out that it was by learning the language and interacting with co-workers and the local community that migrants developed social relations. In Greece, migrants baptized their children in Greek churches or changed their names, a strategy to become

‘invisible’ among Greeks and to avoid stigmatisation to some extent (Vullnetari, 2013, p.89). Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the differential treatment of the Albanian migrants, some of whom were privileged and some of whom were marginalized, led to the instrumentalisation of Greek ethnicity as an integration strategy. This literature for example suggests that family ties and relatives in Greece played an important role in helping immigrants integrate into Greek society and with assistance in tasks such as finding and securing employment (Iosifides et al., 2007; Lyberiki & Maroukis, 2005). Apart from the networks formed among other Albanian migrants, more formal and informal networks extended even with the Greek locals in relation to employers, neighbours, colleagues, in school settings and with godparents. Of significant importance in establishing these networks were reported to be godmothers who came closer to Albanian women and became a source of support. The relationship with the godparents was followed by baptism rituals within the family or children of migrants (Hatziprokopiou, 2003, Vullnetari, 2013). This highlights the ways migrants engaged in relations with the broader community and acquired skills which are likely to be useful when they return to Albania and frequently face similar challenges.

The above research indicates that with time, stigmatisation had decreased and migrants were better incorporated in society. More recent literature suggests that Albanians from a stigmatized group of migrants have persistently mobilized themselves to overcome barriers and advance from the state of exclusion to one of inclusion. This has afforded them to become more visible at a cultural level (King & Mai, 2008a). This is illustrated by research indicating that in Italy the recent images of Albanian migrants have changed as this group of migrants no longer feature as scapegoats but as a ‘virtuous example of integration’ (Mai & Paladini, 2013, p.54). This process of integration emerged mostly due to the fact that Albanian migrants have moved from a source of burden to a very significant resource of the labour supply for the host countries’ economy (Barjaba & Barjaba, 2015; Maroukis, 2005). As migrants have made great efforts for their integration in the host society, it is important to understand the impact that leaving the country during the economic downturn, will shape the experiences of migrants in Albania.

This section has indicated an overall improvement and upward socio-economic mobility for migrants in both countries but more so in Italy. Existing restrictions on residency permits, particularly in Greece, have still left groups of migrants who are marginalized. The process of integration and inclusion has been shaped by the changing policies in the host society, but most importantly, the continuous efforts and strategies of migrants to incorporate themselves in the host society. It is therefore essential to measure how these positive indicators of migrants' integration in the host society will impact overall identification with Albania upon return and whether there will be differences based on social class of low- and high-skilled migrants. The skills and strategies that migrants have acquired as a way to counter stigma, will be explored in relation to their usefulness in return migration experiences.

3.2 Children of Albanian migrants

Children of migrants are part of the current research, however little is known about their life experiences in Greece or Italy. Limited research suggests that children of migrants or the so-called 'second generation' migrants - regardless of whether they were born in the host country or had moved at a certain age - acquired a language competency of the country, performed well in school and have set high expectations for their future (Vathi, 2011). In comparison to their parents, children display a connection to the Greek culture and socialize with Greek students and other minorities (Michail, 2009). However, as in terms of culture, more recent literature suggests that young migrants tend to avoid strong ethnic identification with any country and are more oriented towards other values and interests more relevant to their age (Michail & Christou, 2016; Vathi, 2015). The lack of ethnic language maintenance is associated with Greek's resistance to acknowledging minority groups within its territory, and strategies have been established to keep minority language at a minimum (Gogonas, 2009). However, it has been argued that while the system of education has discouraged bilingualism in school, even parents' efforts to preserve the Albanian language have been low with the justification that they see their children's future prospects in Greece (Michail, 2009). Faced with racism in school, and stigmatisation as an ethnic group, this literature highlights the extent to which

children went so far as to hide the knowledge of the Albanian language, mostly speaking Greek or Italian and disassociating themselves from the language of a stigmatised group (Gogonas, 2009: Mai & Paladini, 2013). It is therefore essential to highlight that the lack of language acquisition will have an impact on school experiences and performance upon 'return' and will become one of the main social markers for exclusion and estrangement.

Research has suggested that children have been target of discrimination within the school and among the wider community based on the physical appearance and different cultural aspects (Vathi, 2015). It has been argued that children of migrants have internalized the stigmatized discourse which adversely affected their self-image and the inter-relations with Greek/Italian people or even to other Albanians (Mai & Paladini, 2013). Predominantly in Greece, this process was associated with weak ethnic identification and agency to counter stigmatisation (Vathi, 2015, p.68). This literature has documented the extent to which children of migrants in Greece did not always develop a coherent identity (either as a migrant in Greece or as an Albanian). By implication, this indicates that in Albania, children of migrants will indicate a lower identification with Albania which may intensify feelings of estrangement. Overall, the literature concerned with Albanian migrants in countries such as Greece and Italy indicates that second generation Albanian migrants are in a constant process of redefining themselves in many ways. Unlike their parents, for whom aspects of structural integration (such as employment and children's education) are the most important, for their children concerns appear to centre predominantly on factors related to social and cultural integration (including friendship and other socializations) (Vathi, 2015). The residence status remains a problem for migrants and their children. As they have been given similar 'level of stay' permits as their parents, they are made to feel 'neither Greeks nor Albanians' (Vullnetari, 2013, p.152). This indicates that experiences of children have influenced overall identification with Greece and Albania which indicated that these complexities may be reflected in their belonging experiences in Albania.

Research indicates that particularly children of migrants have not been fully investigated. The research presented on migration has indicated that a number of factors have influenced the construction of children's ethnic identification and

belonging. Experiences of marginalization and discrimination in the host society have weakened their ethnic categorizations with both societies. It is argued that these experiences may be reflected in the origin country by increasing alienation and lack of identification with Albania. The role of language as a determining factor in children's belonging and inclusion in Albania is essential to be explored. A broader understanding of other age-related factors including localities, social relations, future plans, will offer an opportunity to investigate the lives of children of migrants as shaped by age interests.

3.3 Intentions to return to origin country

As mentioned earlier, the status of migrants in Greece and Italy has undergone a positive change in general. Nevertheless, the problems constructed by social exclusion and stigmatisation, have kept migrants (not their children) uncertain of establishing plans to permanently stay in the host society, especially in Greece (Lazaridis, 2004). In general, return migration has remained an ambiguous topic for Albanian migrants during their migration. The majority of these people have migrated with the intention to work, accumulate some savings and move back to the home country. These intentions are evidenced mostly considering that migrants have invested most of their capital in Albania, with the aim to maintain ties with their homeland and as a financial resource in case of return (Michail, 2009). This investment encompassing a trans-national character has been a mechanism to counter feelings of insecurity, caused by migration policies that has constrained land investment in Greece and other barriers faced with the papers. Such financial practices of working in Greece and investing in Albania are facilitated by the geographical proximity of the two countries (Michail, 2009). This is also part of the nature of Albanian migration to Greece (and Italy) by multiple moves back and forth or cyclical migration (Kiliç et al., 2009; Labrianidis & Lyberaki, 2004). This is important as it indicates that some migrants are more prepared than others and that those who have invested will have a more positive experience than others, particularly when returning in times of economic downturn.

In this way, Albanian migration from both these countries has had an established history of sending remittances to the homeland since the early 1990s. This has been a technique used to support family and people left behind (Maroukis, 2005) and which has been accelerated by the social linkages in the home country, maintained even through the frequent visits to Albania (Labrianidis & Hatziprokopiou, 2005; Vathi, 2011). Besides its transnational nature, remittances have been a strong financial source to fuelling the economic growth in Albania in the post 1990s. Monetary in nature, remittances have contributed in boosting the overall GDP of the country by 20 per cent in 2004 (IOM, 2008a). Migrant remittances and emigration have facilitated in reducing unemployment, increasing productivity in construction and agriculture sectors as well as creating new job openings in Albania (Kule et al., 1996). Apart from sending capital, the practice of remittances, plays a crucial role in establishing and maintaining social networks with the homeland, as well as travel and the socio-cultural experiences (Maroukis, 2005). While this was a way migrants remained in contact with Albania, it also portrays that migrants might have built a certain image in the broader community, which is necessary to explore when migrants move to settle in Albania.

With regard to the tendency to return to Albania, although migrants in Greece were uncertain, if a migrant has his family in Greece, children usually are not willing to go back and sometimes also the adults (Triandafyllidou 2012, p.16). In Italy, there is a sense of permanency as migrants and their children were more certain to see their future there than in Albania (King & Mai, 2008 a). Recent research suggests that one of the main reasons for people wanting to leave Italy is to escape the stigmatisation which is mixed with feelings of nostalgia for the home country (Mai & Paladini, 2013). In contrast, a multitude of other reasons to hold their decision to return are associated with the yet undeveloped economy of the home country, the perceived lack of opportunities and employment situation, the low income and low wages, corruption, political venality and the lack of hope that the situation in Albania will change. For most of the migrants these are the main reasons for changing their initial plans (Kosic & Triandafyllidou, 2003: King & Mai, 2008b). Socio-cultural aspects are also found to obstruct their decisions, including the ambivalence about moving back to what many perceive to be a more conservative mentality in Albania, characterised by more defined gender roles than Italy (Mai & Paladini, 2013). Such a

view, the literature documents, appears particularly concerning for the younger generation in both Italy and Greece who express scepticism as they are perceived by them as inhibiting in many ways (Christou & Michail, 2016). The lack of fluency of Albanian language is another obstacle for children to contemplate the return. Time also appears to be a strong factor in changing plans. While migrants may migrate with certain plans, they may change those plans depending on circumstances. Research has reported that the longer the migration time and the integration in the migrating country, the lower the likelihood to return (Labrianidis & Hatziprokiou, 2005). This indicates the tendency of migrant families to go back to Albania has been low and particularly the strong identification with the shared cultural, socio-economic experiences with the Greek society makes it more difficult.

In sum, the intentions for return during the period of pre- economic downturn have not been well-defined. The fact that migrants (in Greece) had planned to return at some point in their lives may not indicate a smoother (re)settlement as migration has its objectives, and the disruption of these objectives may impact their experiences. The transnational nature of migrants indicates that social relations with the origin country have been well-maintained. The extent to which these social networks are useful upon return may depend whether migrants will settle down in their home towns and whether families are able to provide support. Finally, for various cultural, economic and political reasons, despite the challenges in the host society, migrants with families are willing to settle down in Greece and particularly Italy which indicates that returning is not a desirable act.

3.4 Patterns of return migration during 1990s – 2008

Return migration during post-communism period has emerged during the late 1990s, however there is little reliable data on this migratory pattern (INSTAT & IOM, 2014). The analysis of patterns of Albanian migration has tended to view this phenomenon along a continuum of positive and negative experiences. On the negative side, until lately, Albanian return migration has been considered as an ideology of failure (Barjaba, 2000, p.62) as migrants who have not been able to integrate in the host societies have been forced to return from the authorities in the

migration country (Barjaba, 2000) Due to the irregularity issues, the majority of the migrants sent back to Albania were from Greece (Gemi, 2015). To assist this group of migrants, Albania has developed a system to provide an overarching policy on migration management which sets out several provisions on the return and reintegration of Albanian nationals from EU member states (The National Strategy on Migration 2005-2010). This strategy was developed as part of the negotiations for stabilization-association process to combat irregular migration and readmitting forced return migrants (IOM, 2006). Majority of returnees that were assisted belonged to the category of asylum seekers, trafficking or irregular migrants (IOM, 2008: b). In general, those who had returned appear to conceive adapting and reintegrating as a difficult process. This seems to be particularly the case among forced returnees who typically are limited with regards to their level of integration and frequently encounter employment difficulties and are more inclined to reconsider re-migrating (Germenji & Milo, 2009). This research indicates that the type of support provided was located mainly in job-seeking efforts, professional training and facilitating social re-integration. As these studies are mostly quantitative and cross-sectional, little is known about the subjective experiences of migrants. Other data suggest that there are other reasons which have compelled migrants to decide to return to Albania, including racism in the host society, family reasons or retirement (Efstratios et al., 2014) however there is no data which suggests about experiences of these migrants and the overall dissatisfactory evaluation by migrants indicates that these measures needed considerable improvement.

While the emphasis on ‘returning’ and reintegration of illegal migrants has been given as part of the process in complying to EU policies in fulfilling standards of migration, there are many other groups of migrants who have not been explored. Another group of return migrants which has received attention are the high-skilled migrants. As mentioned earlier, the flows of migration have led to the phenomenon of ‘brain drain’ or emigration of the highly qualified and talented professionals from Albania. Within the agenda on strengthening capacity development and to combat *brain drain*, the Albanian government in cooperation with other partners introduced the ‘Brain Gain Programme’. Based on this agenda, during 2006-2013, the government set up the initiative aimed at benefitting the country’s economy as the returnees may bring with them financial, cultural capital, skills and other resources

(UNDP, 2006: a). The initiative encouraged the return of the highly skilled migrants of people who after completing their university or postgraduate studies, had chosen to remain in the host country (Zeneli et al., 2013). The platform of this measure focused on providing incentives and policy mechanisms by engaging the diaspora in three sectors in Albania; in the development of the academic, administrative and business areas. The programme was suspended in 2011 (BTI, 2014), however little is known about the outcomes and efficiency of this measure.

As only the two groups of return migrants have received attention (forced return migrants and the high-skilled) in policy making, it indicates that voluntary return migrants have not been viewed as resources, regardless that the remittances from migration for a long time were the main source for the improvement of the economy in Albania (IOM, 2008). The lack of attention by policy makers in this field and the wide distinctions made in the provision of reintegration upon return have been related to the fact that return migration is a new phenomenon in Albania and that it needs to be promoted to generate growth and economic benefits (Kiliç et al., 2009). The differentiation based on political implications can be related to wider discourses on transnational social inequalities across borders (Faist, 2013). As it has been argued, the labour migrants are “wanted but not welcome”, whereas the highly skilled migrants are ‘wanted and welcome’, (Zohlberg, cf. Faist, 2013, p.1642). This indicates the prioritization of policies in ways countries (policy makers) view migrants based on their skills and the underlying production of social inequalities.

The few emerging studies in this area have contributed to document the impact of migration in the Albanian economy and their family (Kiliç et al., 2009; Labrianidis & Hatziprokopiou, 2005; Labrianidis & Kazazi, 2006; Piracha & Vadean, 2010). Some of these data point to particular successful aspects of return, highlighting, for example, that return migrants frequently enjoy a better quality of life compared to their life before migration, especially in terms of employment, remuneration, housing and living conditions (Labrianidis & Lyberaki, 2004). As they move to Albania, literature indicates returnees often bring their savings with them which are used to cover household expenses and for setting up small business enterprises. It has been suggested that among return migrants, a transfer of financial and human capital has taken place to a satisfying degree. In this way, skills accumulated during

migration have been used to initiate small scale enterprises (Germenji & Milo, 2009). On some occasions, return migrants run service businesses, tourist related activities and trading companies (fast-food outlets, grocery shops, confectionaries, etc.) (Kiliç et al., 2009). This indicates that migrants have benefited from migration and the resources they have accumulated will be useful.

However, literature suggests that the propensity to set up a business appears to be highest among return migrants who have a longer migration period (Kule et al., 1999), and it is more likely among migrants returning from countries other than Greece (such as Italy or the UK) (Kiliç et al., 2009). It has been suggested, that the reason for this are the differences in skill acquisition, the better earning potentials acquired in countries like the UK, or Italy, human capital accumulation acquired in different host countries. Whereas it has been argued that Greece has attracted the less skilled migrants as compared to Italy (Labrianidis & Lyberaki, 2004). In this respect, this indicates that upon return, migrants are concentrated towards investing in a family business, therefore that makes their financial resources and skills essential for migrants' economic mobility. However, as literature suggests migrants moving from Greece are less able to invest than other groups of migrants, a situation which coupled with the effects of crisis can make the return more challenging.

This section has highlighted that return migration before the economic crisis in Greece and Italy has been present and it has been mostly considered as a failed return migration of irregular migrants sent back to the origin country. It was argued that irregular migration and high-skilled migration has received attention from the policy makers, however, less attention has been given to other groups of migrants resulting to social inequality among migrants. Furthermore, as migrants from other countries than Greece have been able to make investments and transfer their capital, it can be assumed that challenges for migrants returning from Greece will be higher. However, the nature of transnational engagement can facilitate return either as economic embeddedness or by support provided from maintained social networks in the origin country.

3.5 Economic crisis in host and home countries and return migration

The outbreak of the global financial crisis started during 2007-2008 and impacted Greece and Italy in several ways. Analysis indicate that Greece was affected the most, as the country's economy experienced recession from 2008-2014 (Lafleur & Stanek, 2016). Greece has experienced one of the highest rates of unemployment in Europe, reaching an estimated 28 per cent, whereas Italy still the third biggest economy in Europe, with a level of unemployment reaching 14 per cent (Amiralis et al., 2013). A significant percentage of youth (62 per cent) under 25 years of age are unemployed. It is also well documented that the sharp economic decline and austerity measures in Greece, caused extreme hardship to immigrants with many salaries plummeting. Among the population in Greece, migrants were disproportionately affected by the effects of the crisis, especially with regards to their opportunities for employment (Matsaganis, 2013). The literature suggests that compared to the Greek population and immigrants from other nationalities in Greece, Albanian immigrant households have been faced with the danger as their income status has fallen lower compared to others (Lafleur & Stanek, 2016). This indicates that Albanian migrants in Greece have been more exposed to the consequences of crisis which has increased the propensity of this group of migrants to move back to their origin country or migrate elsewhere.

The prolonged economic crisis resulted in the number of Albanian migrants reducing from 2010 onwards (Gemi, 2013). The economic and political crisis in Greece therefore had a profound impact on the trajectory of migration for Albanian migrants in Greece – a pattern which had existed for 25 years. As indicated earlier, migration was highly transnational. New forms of migration for Greece and Italy have emerged for both countries (Maroukis & Gemi, 2013; Mai & Paladini, 2013). In Italy, research has shown a more stable nature of migrants preferring to stay put during the economic crisis and choosing to keep their jobs rather than turn into circular migrants (Mai & Paladini, 2013). This indicates that Italy was perceived economically safer to stay and due to the better regularization system than in Greece, less migrants would return in Albania during the economic downturn. In turn, in Greece, during the most crucial period of the crisis, 130,000 – 140,000 had their permission to stay revoked (INSTAT & IOM, 2014). Due to high unemployment in

Greece, migrants migrated back and forth for three months to make ends meet as they are unable to stay in find work more than that in Greece and are unable to find job in Albania (Gemi, 2013). The newer forms of circular migration have been argued for being akin to pathways of uncertainty caused by the economic instability in the countries of origin and destination and the socio-cultural ambivalences (Mai & Paladini, 2013). Therefore, the advent of the crisis has affected lives of migrants and their transnational practices which have characterised the lives of migrants. The difficult situation being exasperated by the recession, for the Albanian migrants especially in Greece has changed migration flows and increased return migration.

3.6 Effects of the global economic crisis on Albania

In understanding the effects that economic crisis had on return migrants in Albania, it is essential to highlight the effects that the economic crisis had even in the origin country. Statistical data based on reports of UNDP indicate that until 2010, Albania was not as adversely affected by the global economic crisis (UN Albania, 2010). This was due to its fiscal policies and the close supervision of the banking sector that Albania avoided the recession. Even though literature suggests the recession had not had an immediate impact, the economic crisis in Albania had begun before the crisis (UNDP, 2016). It has been evidenced that the economic downturn was recorded during 2008, however a marked immediate continuous fall in the country's growth development production was recorded in 2012 when the GDP growth reached the lowest rates in a decade (0.6 per cent; BTI, 2014). The economic downturn impacted the labour market with a fall in employment, associated with a decline in family income. The lack of employment has particularly affected young people and women resulting in a youth unemployment rate, which reached about 32.5 percent (UNDP, 2014). In this respect, it can be assumed that the economic conditions in Albania as impacted by the economic downturn would make the (re)settlement more challenging for this group of return migrants.

The main areas affected by the crisis were in the decrease of remittances, the effect on certain trade sectors and migration (UNDP, 2010). The report forecasted that the economic downturn would lead to a return of the 'particularly low-skilled Albanian

construction and agricultural workers from that country' (p. 4). Consequences of the economic crisis were evidenced in rising unemployment of youth particularly during the period 2010-2012. Very recent data indicate that the return of migrants has increased the rates of unemployment in Albania by four per cent (BTI, 2016). This indicates that the economic crisis had an adverse impact to an already fragile economy of Albania which can complicate the return of migrants during this period.

This section has discussed about the effects of the economic downturn in Greece and Italy and the group of migrants which has mostly been affected by its consequences are Albanian migrants. The effects of crisis on Albanian migrants in Greece have been exasperated by the still existing irregularity procedures for working and continue to live in Greece. The transnational nature of Albanian migration has changed from that of sending remittances and investing in the origin country to a circular migration as a form of survival for the low-skilled migrants who bear with most of the challenges of economic crisis and instability. The proliferating effects of crisis are felt even in Albania which can further challenge migrants' ability to (re)settle upon return.

3.7 Field sites in Albania

Tirana

The two fields of study for this research are the city of Tirana and Fier. Situated in the centre of Albania, Tirana is the largest city and the most important administrative centre for economic, social and cultural activities. It currently has the highest population density in the country with 811.649 inhabitants (28.1 per cent. INSTAT, 2016). Tirana is considered to be the economic engine of Albania with the highest economic growth in comparison to other cities. The pattern of the economic growth being concentrated mostly in the capital cities, is a typical phenomenon of post-communist regimes (Požani, 2010). The majority of enterprises, whether domestic or international, are located in Tirana, and the main source of economic development has been from the financial remittances coming from migrants. During the

communist period, as the only administration centre, the city enjoyed growth as the most important industrial manufacturing sectors, including textile, engineering, food processing, etc., were located in the city. Between 1945 and 1960, Tirana experienced a population growth of 130 per cent, primarily influenced by internal migration in Albania (Vullnetari, 2015).

As a result, during the transition period, Tirana experienced an unprecedented population growth which increased the demand for housing, land and public services, which found the local government institutions unprepared to respond to such demands (Deda & Tsenkova 2006). The inner city of Tirana went through a marked transformation in terms of urban development. In the absence of public planning and infrastructure, Tirana experienced an ‘informal’ building process, which limited green and environmental spaces. Indeed, since then, numerous urban development projects have been initiated with the aim of transforming the Albanian capital into a more ‘orderly’ city (Brato, 2016). There is a strong disparity among Tirana and other regions. Tirana generates 45 per cent of the economic activity of the country followed by Fier, Vlora and Durres – together generating 30 percent (Xhindi, 2013). Tirana is in itself known as the city of contrasts, with a polarization of some of the areas of Tirana where wealthy and poor reside. For example, the most affluent population resides in *Bllok*, one of the most famous areas of Tirana, which became a very attractive place after the fall of the communism and the place where the most wealthy people live. Some other municipalities of Tirana and peri-urban areas which are mostly affected by internal migration of the population are in stark contrast with the developed parts of Tirana.



Figure 3.0. Map of Albania.

Fier

Fier is located in western Albania on the coastal plain of Myzeqeja. The major economic resources of this town and its districts are agriculture, transportation and trading. (Instat, 2003). During the communist period until 1991, Fier was the second most important economic centre following Tirana. The main industrial sectors were oil refining, construction and agriculture. The primary industrial hub in Albania for chemical, mechanical and energy businesses was also established in Fier. As a result, Fier had an economic development which was associated with high internal migration of people from the surrounding areas. From the year 1969 to 1991, the population of residents increased from 28,000 to 48,000 inhabitants. The collapse of the communist system and its economic system, was associated with a sharp decline in the economy of the city with high rates of emigration and internal migration. Internal migration were the movements of people from the surrounding areas of Fier towards the city, in pursuit of better livelihoods which was associated with an increase in population. In 2004, the population of the city had increased to approximately 83,000 inhabitants (Municipality of Fier, na). The introduction of the free-market economy caused the opening of many newly established enterprises. With relevance to economic indicators Fier and its district is positioned at an intermediate level. The growing population is contrasted with high unemployment, infrastructure issues and lack of sufficient provision of services (Xhindi, 2013).

The two main sites selected for this study represent two cities with different geographical population and relatively different economic development. Even within Tirana, the disparities of economic development in terms of more urban areas and more suburb need to be explored to understand the differences based on location of residence which may differently impact in experiences of (re)settlement for return migrants' families. The density of population of Tirana and the lack of environmental spaces may be an obstacle for children's experiences of return in their playing activities and therefore socialization.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the dynamics of Albanian migration and return migration (albeit separately) with a particular reference to two main destinations of migration, Greece and Italy. The topic of migration was framed focusing on its development since 1990, considering the influences of the period which led to massive migration in Albania. Particular attention was given to the experiences of Albanian migrants in these two countries, drawing on their social exclusion and questions of identity which have engendered stigmatisation and affected integration pathways for migrants and their children. On this challenging path, most striking has been the ability of migrants to integrate themselves into the host countries, by adjusting themselves into the culture and the language of the country and gaining a satisfying socio-economic sense of progress in society. The main aim of presenting the broader evolving socio-economic aspects of migrants and their children during the migration period, is to provide a backdrop to the analysis of my research data to which I discuss in more length in the results section and conclusion (Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8). It was argued that as migrants and their descendants have come to identify with the Greek culture and lifestyle that can impact the belonging and identification of return migrants and their descendants with Albania.

This chapter has discussed about the broader influences including relations between host and origin countries that have amounted for migrants' experiences in Greece. It was suggested that these factors may similarly shape experiences of return migrants in Albania influenced by the perceptions that broader community has about returnees from specific countries of destination. I presented literature on Albanian migrants acquiring experience and skills over the time in migration which have been useful for their overall integration in the host society. It was argued that these skills can be beneficial for the resettlement in Albania, however it was highlighted that Albanian migrants have not always been successful in transferring their skills by being conditioned by the economic context in the origin country.

Particular focus in this chapter has been given to present the factors that have influenced return migration including migrants' own intentions to move to Albania and introducing the policy measures and interventions by the government. The

chapter demonstrated that return migration has received some attention from the policy makers in the process of reintegration of irregular migrants and high skilled migrants, the last group viewed as a source of development for the economy of the country. By highlighting literature focusing on these two groups, the lack of attention by policy makers and researchers for other groups of return migrants and their children is evidenced. The existing literature on return migration has predominantly focused on the impact it has on the economy of the country, doing little to capture the experiences of families and their needs particularly when they return under certain challenging conditions of economic crisis.

The chapter discussed about the economic crisis in the two host societies and Albania. The literature suggests that migrants are the population which has been mostly affected by the crisis and influenced returning. As the economic conditions in both host and origin countries have been exasperated, it is argued that this will put a further strain to the challenging experiences of return migrants. Finally, the two field sites were presented. By comparing Tirana and Fier it is argued that socio-economic conditions of these study locations were somewhat disparate. In this way, it was pointed out that location where migrants have settled will have influence in the way migrants are able to access the labour market or invest. Finally, the changes that Tirana had undergone in the post-communist period including internal and the public infrastructure, are assumed to affect children's experiences in relation to everyday places.

Methodological Approaches and Methods

4.0 Introduction

As outlined in the previous chapters, this thesis aims to research return migrants and their children's experiences and belonging in Albania. The current chapter will focus on the complexities of the methodology and the choice of making a qualitative inquiry rather than a quantitative inquiry. The chapter presents insights and considers the epistemological and ontological stance that this research follows. The chapter is concerned with providing a 'thick description of deep, dense and detailed accounts' (Denzin, 1989, p.83) and aims to establish credibility by describing and contextualizing the research design, participants, and the procedure of the research. The chapter discusses the methods, procedures and the logic behind the choices made that support exploring a diverse sample of children and adults. Further, it provides details on the way data has been analysed and the steps within the procedure. Ethics, dilemmas and other methodological concerns in the fieldwork and in the data interpretation are discussed later in the chapter. The positionality of the researcher and the reflexivity is discussed, by making transparent the methodological concerns and advantages of positionality as emphasized by the researcher and as assumed by the respondents.

4.1 Theoretical and methodological framework

This section discusses the epistemological rationale and the methodological choices which have been used to address this particular research project. Grix (2004) highlights, that in order to produce clear research, it is important that the researcher

understands the philosophical underpinnings, the methodologies and the choice of methods and other procedures. Methodology ‘provides the link between technique and theory’ (Burawoy et al., 1991, p.271), from this point of view, the current research uses qualitative inquiry, which is concerned with the way people make meaning, experiences and make sense of their own lives and social phenomena (Creswell, 1994). Yehuda-Sternfeld and Mirsky (2014) provide another reason to select qualitative inquiry, stating that it is the best methodology to understand personal experiences of people in transition, such as migration or return migration (p.55).

It has been argued that the choice of the methods to study a particular social phenomenon should be situated in the larger understanding of the paradigm of inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Since qualitative inquiry has its basis within the interpretative assumption, which focuses on the process of making sense (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005), the current methodology adopts an interpretative/constructivist epistemological approach which is most relevant to my research. In the heart of this approach, rests the concept of *Verstehen* [understanding], a Neo-Kantian philosophical conceptualization that draws the distinction of social with the natural sciences (Schwandt, 2000). According to Lapan and colleagues (2012), the way people make meaning of the world around them is central to this philosophy and hence every individual is unique and brings uniqueness to understanding life issues. Proponents of this perspective, believe that the world of meaning is understood through an emic perspective or the interpretation of the process by which actors give meaning to social reality (Schwandt, 1998). Understanding the way meanings are created, negotiated and sustained is essential in this approach, and will assist in gaining insights in exploring the meanings that participants make based on their subjective experiences of migration and return migration and the ways they negotiate these experiences.

The above combined with a constructivist paradigm based on the ontological presupposition of relativism which forms the basis of this work, specifically indicating that there is no single reality or truth but there are multiple realities and ‘they are relative to the person(s) who hold particular sense-makings, constructions or meanings’ (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p.46). For constructionists, knowledge is

created and being a realist is not inconsistent with being a constructionist (Schwandt, 2003). Concepts are constructed based on the real world and these constructions are conditioned and impacted by the historical, cultural, economic, political and other methodological presumptions held by the individual (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). This approach, therefore appears to be particularly relevant to the current investigation which aims to understand the experiences of return migration as shaped by broader aspects which may hinder or facilitate the process of (re)settlement.

These approaches position the respondent and the researcher as being actively involved in the process of creating and sharing meaning about phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, 1994), and the methods selected for the current research are chosen based on this assumption. In contrast, while the interpretative approach allows the meanings to be understood, the social constructionist methodology enables the exploration to be ‘filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity’ for the researched and the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln 1998, p.24). These methodologies are therefore particularly relevant to the current thesis as they afford the opportunity to analyse the way social constructions influence the (re)settlement experiences and belonging of return migrants and the way they are filtered through various lenses of gender, social class and age.

Participatory methodology is another approach adopted in this research which is an “orientation to inquiry” (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). Participatory research approaches are not distinct from qualitative methodologies and methods, and belong within the constructivism paradigm (O’Kane, 2008). The advantage of this methodology is in involving research participants in the process of producing knowledge. In this particular type of research, the choice to include a diverse sample has necessitated to employ different methods which have their own theoretical underpinnings. Following this argument, the usefulness of the methods is based on how appropriate they are for the group being studied (Flick, 2009). Central to this approach is the interaction between the researcher and the researched as well as active participation in the process of the knowledge production. The emphasis is on the ongoing process of sharing information and action which facilitates research. Through participatory methodologies (methods such as drawing), children are

involved in this research as a way to grasp their meaning of experiences as they change their everyday places of the past for new ones.

4.2. Research Design

The current research utilises a longitudinal research design. Longitudinal research is most prominent in quantitative research and is also employed in ethnographic research, whereas qualitative studies mostly focus on cross-sectional research. Recently, there has been growing interest in qualitative longitudinal research (QLR) which has emerged as a result of the ‘temporal’ turn in social sciences, facilitating understanding of different social phenomena (Thomson & McLeod, 2015). In view of the fact that in migration research the longitudinal studies are mostly quantitative, in this research, QLR is employed to measure the influencing factors that have contributed to the change (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) as well as the linking points at different levels of analysis (Ryan & D’Angelo, 2017, p.2). Wave one of data collection for this research took place during May-July, 2015, whereas follow-up data collection (wave two) after a period of one year, took place during May-June, 2016.

4.2.1 Recruitment and Sampling

Two field sites were chosen as locations to research experiences and belonging of return migrants and their children (discussed in Chapter 3). In making the decision for the fieldwork sites, I took into consideration evidence from recent national reports in Albania, reporting that the highest number of the population of return migrants was concentrated in the largest cities of Albania (see INSTAT & IOM, 2014). As described in Chapter 3, I chose Tirana as the first main study site as it is where the highest overall population of the country and the largest number of return migrants are located. Tirana is considered to be the engine of the economy in the country with larger possibilities (Pojani, 2010), therefore return migrants have favoured a return to a city which offers more opportunities than other areas. Fier, was chosen as the second location to understand experiences of return migrants and their children, selected with the intention to gain an understanding of the experiences from participants who live into towns which differ relatively in terms of economic

opportunities from the capital city. While data suggest that other cities in Albania are characterised by large in-flows of return migrants, I intentionally avoided working in these locations as recent research work with children of return migrants (in Korça and Saranda) had been conducted (Vathi & Duci, 2015). Social geographers are concerned with the differences that location makes (Valentine, 2005), therefore the aim of choosing participants from different towns will uncover the way location of residence has shaped their experiences, particularly of two cities which differ in terms of employment and investment opportunities.

The fieldwork was intensive during these months and as more than half of the participants are school children, it mostly took place during the months when schools were still open. Another reason for conducting fieldwork during this time of the year was to avoid August which is the month when most people in Albania are on holiday. The fieldwork was prepared in advance and some of the contacts were identified and contacted by email before reaching participants.

In early May 2014, I conducted the pilot study, which consisted of five interviews. The aim of the pilot study was to enhance the validity of the research tools and to test and refine research methods as appropriate. Interviews with two children and three adults were piloted to have representatives from both generations, a sample which was identified through personal contacts. Following the pilot study, some alterations were made to interview questions in terms of clarifying the language and simplifying certain sentences for the children. Additionally, the pilot study identified the need to rearrange the order of certain sections of the interviews. Furthermore, it proved to be of great importance as through these initial participants, I was able to establish contact with many other participants.

Once the recruitment locations and the target group of potential respondents were finalised, two strategies were used to recruit participants. School in Albania ends by June, therefore, my initial source of interviewing participants were schools. In this way, I obtained formal permission from the Regional Directorate of Education in Tirana and Fier and was advised which schools were most populated with children of return migrants. Gatekeepers provided information about the details of the

returned children in their schools and informed some of the parents who consented for their children to participate in the research.

It was not always easy to work in school environments as classes end early and immediately after that children were picked up from school by their parents. Therefore, most of the interviews were conducted during the breaks. Another important source of recruitment mostly for the children was the main Orthodox church in Tirana, as I realised that many return migrants frequently attended church rituals during weekends. In this way, the main locations of recruitment were: two schools in Tirana (one primary and one secondary school) the youth centre of the main Orthodox church in Tirana and three schools in Fier. The day time of the fieldwork was generally dedicated to children and youth participants within the school environment, while afternoons were mostly for the adult participants. Recruitment and interview sections within church took place during weekends, for which in many occasions I ended up attending some of the rituals, which allowed me to gain insight of some of the dynamics of socialization processes of return migrants.

For the adult participants, I started with the contacts that I knew from before in the area where I used to live and recent return migrants had just moved to that area. This was the main point of entry to the return migrant community. Snowball sampling was a useful technique (Bryman, 2004) used whereby participants referred me to other potential respondents. I travelled to the two cities very often based on the availability of participants for the interview. Accessing adult participants in Tirana was not difficult, as I observed that mostly women tended to socialize among each other and they introduced me with their friends, in contrast to Fier where the population of return migrants was relatively smaller. Some purposive sampling was employed to select the sample as I tried to capture a varied set of respondents in terms of age, gender, place of return period of migration abroad (see Table 1). As the main intention of this research was to understand the experiences of migrants returning because of the economic crisis, the majority of participants had returned mostly from Greece and less from Italy. With reference to the country of return, no particular selection was made among return migrants based on country of destination, however the sample to a large degree represents the existing figures and

data of return migrant population who have moved back to Albania during the period of post-2008 (INSTAT & IOM, 2014).

The first characteristic used to select participants was age. To explore the experiences of return migrants and children, it was important for me to select participants based on a broad age range including two generations, parents and their children. Three sets of participants were chosen for the present research: pre-teens, teens and adults. Including children in this research, follows the developments on ‘the new social studies of childhood’ to recognize children as active research participants in their own right (James & Prout, 1990), which is in line with the participatory methods discussed in the methodology section. Respectively, in this research, children could be categorised into either the *middle childhood* 7–12 years (middle age-group c.f. O’Kane, 2008), *teenagers* 13-18 years, and *adults* 30-51 years old. Children and young participants were born in the previous country (only three were born in Albania and grew up in the destination country) and ‘returned’ to live to their parents’ country. Practically, as they have attended school and socialized in another country, they can be considered as migrants to their parents’ country of origin, yet throughout the research, they will be referred to as ‘returning’, which is in line with previous studies on second generation return migrants (Christou 2006; Potter & Philips 2006). For the teenagers, identity formation and particularly ethnic identity is dynamic and in a constant process of construction during the period of adolescence (Phinney, 1989), therefore addressing their return migration experiences and identity changes was essential to meet the aims of the research.

For the adult participants, the choice of respondent age range was made based on the decision to select participants who had families, making family composition another important selection criteria. The reason for this selection was based on the decision to obtain the narrative of the experiences of the ‘returned family’, by sourcing adult participants with families and at least one child. For this reason, and primarily considering that the main objective of the research was to understand the experiences of migrants who have returned because of the economic crisis, I avoided the abundant number of students periodically moving to live to Albania. However, a small sample who had moved to Albania for other reasons, was included (see Table 1 and Appendix F for more details on participants). This variation had the aim to

capture more ‘divergent cases’ to help me understand differences between migration induced by the economic crisis and those who came for other reasons. Duration of stay in migration was another sample characteristic recorded, focusing on migrants who had stayed more than one year on the destination country. A logic for this selection was based on King’s suggestion (1989) that an optimum of length of stay is important to have influenced the participant to have absorbed ‘certain experiences and values’ from the host country. The table below shows participants who have taken part in the interviews as the main method for this research project in the *first wave* of data collection. For the interviews, 29 teenagers and 22 adults were selected, making a total of 51 participants. Adults and children were often from the same family but occasionally from different families. As Table 4.0 indicates, some of the families who had returned were physically separated.

Table 4.0. Individual interviews: Respondent Characteristics

Gender		Years of migration	
Female	30	3-7 years	6
Male	21	8-12 years	12
Teenagers		12-15 years	21
13-18 years old	29	16-21 years	12
Female	17	Years since return	
Male	12	> 1 year	8
Adults		2-4 years	32
30-50 years	22	5-7 years	9
Female	13	< 7 years	2
Male	9	Occupation upon return	
Location after return		Enterprise	9
Tirana	33	Labour (low skilled work)	4
Fier	18	Unemployed	5
Return migration motive		High Skilled work	4
Economic crisis	37	Families	
Planned	10	Families physically separated	8
Studies and job offer	4	Future plans	
Country of migration		Stay in Albania	18
Greece	38	Remigrate	10
Italy	8	Maybe remigrate	11
Belgium	2		
France	1		
Spain	1		
U.S	1		

In a few occasions, the children were sent alone to stay with close family, while parents continued working in Greece, being still in the process of deciding whether to move and settle down in Albania or continue living in Greece. Even though the main reason for most of the participants was the economic crisis, 10 participants had planned their return expressing different reasons for their decision to return, such as longingness or that the migration had completed its objectives.

4.3. Research Methods

In this research, various methods were integrated including interviews, drawings and pictures. It has been advised that in social sciences we need to choose our methods carefully thinking about the ways that our methods can simplify our objective of study and keeping it scientific (Moscovici, 1972). To address this, I considered mixing methods with the aim to provide useful insights into the experiences of return migrants and their children. I acknowledged employing methods which are appropriate for participants' age and to explore experiences of migration and return migration. Interviews are an important qualitative method in migration studies (Winchester, 1996), therefore, I chose interviews as the best way to collect a diversity of meanings about the experiences and opinions people have on a specific topic (Dunn, 2004). The choice of focus group discussions was guided by the fact that they provide a common platform for return migrants of distinct age groups. Family case studies were chosen to facilitate understanding of return migration experiences and the sense of belonging within the family setting by use of various methods. Table 4.1, illustrates methods which are used for each study group.

Table 4.1. Methods used for each study group.

Adults	Teenagers	Children
30-51 years	13-18 years	7-12 years
Interviews	Interviews	Drawing activity
Family case study	Family case study	Family case study
Focus Group	Focus Group	

4.3.1 Interviews

Interviews offer the opportunity to unravel information about the experiences of (re)settlement and belonging for returnees and their children which may not be achieved through other methods, such as questionnaires or observations. Interviewing is more than a simple method of data collection, it is rather a natural form of interaction which based on its flexibility can take place in various situations (Blaxter et al., 2006, p.172). There are several reasons why semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary method for this research. First, semi-structured interviews are constructed based on a structured but flexible way of questioning as the interviewer can engage in probing, which gives the opportunity to get more depth and expand on the responses (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Moreover, semi-structured interviews are organized in a way that they have a focus insofar as they have the intention to receive information through a set of questions, the order of which can be adjusted based on the communication as the situation appears to be more appropriate (Denzin, 1997). It is the flexibility that this method offers which allowed participants to express their accounts on in a comfortable way.

Interviews were the main method used for two study groups: teenagers and adults. The interview guide was prepared in advance based on existing literature on return migration and the objectives of the research. All the fieldwork materials including the interview guidelines were prepared in three languages: Albanian, Greek and Italian. As I could manage interviews in Italian myself, arrangements were made to have a translator for the Greek language for participants who could not communicate well in Albanian. Nevertheless, on all occasions children requested to be interviewed in Albanian. Separate interview guides were prepared for each group (Appendix D and E respectively), however the main structure of the questionnaire remained the same. The interview guides began broadly, capturing the experiences of the present (return), shifting to experiences of the past (migration) and finally capturing future plans of participants. Designing the questionnaire in this way aimed to capture the dynamic influences of different migratory experiences which in turn may impact the future of participants. There are two main features to the qualitative interview: ‘it flows naturally’ and ‘it is rich in detail’ (Dörnyei, 2007, p.140). With this in mind, questions were phrased as openly as possible, to give participants the chance to

express their views as broadly as they could rather than providing short answers. They were phrased in an inviting manner using colloquial language which aimed to establish an appropriate atmosphere to make participants feel at ease and elicit detailed descriptions and feelings through their stories. Questions for example were phrased in this way, “Briefly, could you tell me about...?” (Flick, 2009, p.153).

As part of making participants feel at ease and comfortable, I ensured a mutual understanding during interviews. For example, I rephrased or simplified the questions that were not clear to participants, when they asked for clarity or when I noticed a degree of hesitation during the interview (Dörnyei, 2007). Questions for teenagers were more direct with the intention of overcoming any language barriers, as in certain occasions they took some time to find the right words. Due to the flexibility that semi-structured interviews afford, I worded questions spontaneously based on the interview rather than strictly following the predetermined schedule. Some of the prompts I used during the interview were: “Would you tell me more about that...?” or “How did you deal with that...?”. This was made with the intention to encourage participants to expand on the point further and establish a conversational style (Holstein & Gulbriun, 1995). This endorses the role of the active researcher who is not passively waiting for the respondent to tell the story, but I put effort to relax the participant and offered ways of conceptualizing issues. I often engaged in discussions during the interview and allowed participants to speak about other issues. The challenge of allowing the participant to speak for a long time was that it required me to redirect the interview when it had moved too far from the topic (Dunn, 2004). This however, proved to be constructive as it often provided responses and completed the entire picture of the interview. Interviews were conducted in different locations but mostly in school for the teenagers and in coffee shops for the adults. Interviews were recorded and an interview lasted from 25-110 minutes.

Experiences with the interviews differed based on participants’ social background. Interviews with the adults were generally longer than interviews with the teenagers. Adults narrated more stories and discussed their experiences of migration to a greater extent than children, whereas teenagers instead were more focused on the experiences of the return. I did not artificially dwell on given topics when

participants appeared to have exhausted their responses to particular questions. The end of the interview was an essential phase of the data collection as rapport with the researcher was better established and while the recorder was turned off, the informal discussion which followed revealed a wealth of information which became part of a broader understanding of the accounts. All these additional data were included in the diary, immediately after the interview.

4.3.2 Family case studies

The research involved working with three return migrant families in which both parents were Albanian and their families had at least one child between the age of 7 to 12 years. The main reason for conducting these three studies in the family was to gain a broader picture of the return-migrant family, and as a way of reaching many interviewees at the same time. Two of the families had returned from Greece and had relocated to Tirana (see Appendix F for participant details), and their return intentions were linked with the economic crisis in Greece. The family in Fier had returned from the US due to legal issues preventing them from continuing to live in the U.S.

Data collection for two of the family case studies took place in the homes of participants and one of them was conducted in my family home. Before the family case study was conducted in participants' homes, arrangements were made with one of the members of the family by meeting once or twice in advance of the research activity. A brief family conversation took place at the beginning, whereby I outlined the research aims and the activities, which also served as a warm up session. For participants' convenience, interviews were conducted over the weekend. Bushin (2007) suggests that conducting research within the family is a good way to avoid the multiple layers of gatekeepers (compared to research in school settings) and it allows to grasp the interactions within the members of the family. Managing the entire situation within the family homes was challenging and required flexibility, due to interviewing many people within an unfamiliar setting, which in turn can be time consuming for the members of the family. In conducting interviews with adults, I followed the same procedure which was described in the individual interview

section. The whole process of collecting data for the family case studies took up to 3 hours.

Photo-elicitation and drawing methods were also part of the family case study. Visual methods have recently become more widely used, and are particularly useful for consideration of the 'temporal dimension' (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007), denoting that current experiences cannot be detached from the past and even from the future. This research did not follow the approach of photo-elicitation which prompts participants to self-generate photographs, as it can be challenging to control the types of photographs participants would capture (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010) which runs the risk of a study potentially deviating from its research aims. The intention was rather to evoke memories of the past and the present and a way to prompt more discussion and interpretation. Apart from being a powerful tool to gather data, visual methods are assumed to have the potential to empower the participant and facilitate the development of rapport with the researcher. (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004). Moreover, they are effective as participants can recall positive experiences as well as negative ones (Kleine et al., 2016). For the photo-elicitation activity, participants (women and teenagers) were asked to show five existing photos of the life in the previous country and five of the life in Albania. They were instructed in advance, as to give them time to prepare for the activity. The aim of using photo-elicitation was successful in evoking memories of the past. However, the method had limitations in grasping a perspective of the present as participants claimed to not have available photos due to not possessing smartphones or some of the teenagers had only selfie pictures. The focus of discussions then shifted mostly to the past as they shared memories of life in the previous country. Therefore, while this method was suitable to gain rich accounts of respondents for the period of migration, the reliance of discussions mostly on photographs of the past may be a shortcoming of this data. This may have likely affected in evoking rich insights from the period of return migration.

Overall, my experience with using this method showed the way images can be a useful means of understanding the strong identification with the previous country or the new constructions of identities such as 'the traveller identity' which has developed after the return and was well explained through the descriptions of photographs (Chapter 6). These were particularly useful as through images certain

meanings would not be captured in face-to-face interviews. In the family case studies, children were initially asked to participate in the drawing activity which is described below.

4.3.3 Drawing activity

The fieldwork followed a child-focused approach by treating children as active participants and social actors, able to understand and share their own experiences (Christensen & Prout, 2002). Researching children should be a positive experience for them but it is also ethical if it requires them to do something they feel good about (Warin, 2011). Drawing is simultaneously a visual and a participatory method adopted to engage children in the research process. In comparison to the ethnographic methods, participatory methods are considered to be less invasive and the relationship with the researcher is less defined (O’Kane, 2008). In this way, drawing was selected as a participatory child-friendly and age-appropriate method to instigate and facilitate communication (Leicht, 2008; O’Kane, 2008), and to encourage children to talk about their experiences and feelings. Drawing is considered to be a useful memory-aid (Bagnoli, 2009), making the process of interviewing children more ‘real’ and facilitating their ability to recall memories from their past life in a different country. The method was also used with the intention of reducing any perceived power differential between children and researcher, with a view to facilitating the creation of a more equal relationship (Leicht, 2008). Children within the family case studies were instructed to make two drawings and were asked to portray life in the previous country and in Albania on one page, with the aim of reflecting on their experiences in both countries. They were told that they could draw anything they liked, and that they were free to include people or places that reminded them of life in the previous country and of life in Albania. Respondents were also instructed to portray themselves visually in the pictures. In line with recommendations, instructions were given as broadly as possible with the intention to allow children to tell their story without being overly influenced by researcher demands (Bagnoli, 2009). Completing the drawings took about 20 minutes.

The drawing activity took part in the family case studies but also in one of the schools I conducted the research which followed a similar procedure as above. As discussed above, 10 children in total in the age range 7-12 years old; 7 in school and 3 from the family case studies were part of this activity (see Appendix F. Table 3 for details on participants). Children attended the same school and the drawing activity was conducted in a quiet classroom. For the drawing activity, they worked in group, however interpretations of drawings were made individually. I followed this procedure because working in group gives confidence to children (Greig et al., 2007). However, the individual interpretation format was chosen for practical reasons to make it easy for children to discuss their drawing in a more private way and to capture the individual stories developed in different local and social contexts. Children in research are now frequently treated as active participants (O’Kane, 2008) meaning they have consented to take part in flexible methods of research in which they can have some control over their participation and enjoy the research process. I allowed participants to feel free, to play with the recording equipment, I offered some sweets at the beginning of the interview or offered them to take the coloured pens at the end if they wished. During all my data collection, I dressed in an informal manner and always talked in language appropriate to the social background of the participants.

4.3.4 Focus Groups

Focus groups have become a popular technique to gather qualitative data. The uniqueness of conducting focus group interviews is the nature of group dynamics and the ability to generate data from the synergy of the group (Rabiee, 2004). In this research the focus-group interviews are used as a combined method with the interviews and the family case studies. In choosing participants for the focus group interviews, I opted for some homogeneity (Krueger, 1994) in terms of participants’ characteristics (age range and social class background). Unlike homogenous sampling conceptualizations which recommend that participants should not know each other (Rabiee, 2004), in this research most of the participants knew each other. In line with Kitzinger (1994), involving acquaintances in focus group interviews allows them to relate to each other’s stories and members of the group can challenge each other in an easier way. This then would permit for some degree of trust among

the participants which encourages expressing their point of views. This was relevant in my focus-group interviews as participants felt more comfortable, particularly teenagers who openly discussed their ambivalences upon returning, and the common non-migrant friends who had challenged them within the school environment.

Organizing a focus group interview is not considered an easy process, particularly in terms of logistics. Tasks such as finding the right venue and getting people together at the same time are described as one of the greatest challenges of conducting focus-group interviews (Morgan, 2009). In this research, these issues were not present as logistics and finding participants was straightforward and peaceful places were available. As young people were selected from a school, the interviews took place within the school environment in a comfortable classroom where everyone was sitting around a table. The group discussion for adults was conducted in a coffee shop owned by one of the participants who offered the location for conducting interviews. At the beginning of the session, participants were briefly introduced to the aims of the research and in a simple language and a permissive atmosphere, I instructed the members that while questions will be asked there is no wrong or right answer, only differing opinions.

For practical reasons, a shorter version with a subset of questions from the general questionnaire on Appendix D has been used for the focus-group interviews. I had planned in advance how long each discussion would take, however, on many occasions flexibility was needed to be considerate in balancing and not interrupting participants. My role as moderator was essential in respecting participants and encouraging fruitful discussions. At the outset, participants were asked to take part equally in discussions and during the interviews I took care to prevent discussions from being dominated by some members more than others. In this way, I made efforts to encourage even reticent participants (Bloor, 2001). A group interview session lasted from 1.20-1.50 minutes. Notes are very important during focus-group interviews (Krueger, 1998), however as moderator my focus was on facilitating the session and only some key notes were taken. Following the session, I noted down what could be remembered from the interviews.

The *second wave* of data collection took place during May-June 2015 (see table 4.2). The intention of the second visit was to follow-up a subset of the interviewees from the first wave. It was decided that a sample of 20 participants would be interviewed (11 adults and 7 teenagers); the three family case studies and one of the focus groups for children 7-12 years old were interviewed for the second time. In longitudinal qualitative research, theme saturation is not straightforward but the follow-up sample was still decent in comparison with similar work. The follow-up sample size compares to other cross-sectional work in this area (Dürschmidt, 2016). This was also a way to saturate the data and the sample proved to be large enough to give a decent picture of people's experiences at the second stage. Even though in qualitative research the aim is to gather sufficient depth of information rather than focus on numbers, I did consider that collecting a sufficient 'breadth of experiences' would allow to meet research objectives. The sample was purposively selected from the larger initial sample. Characteristics which determined the selection criteria were based on three aspects. Most importantly, interviews (of the 1st wave) were transcribed and I selected those which represented a diverse sample in the context of having diverse stories of participants who were more adjusted and those who were least adjusted during stage one. The sample included both generations and location was also important to determine the set of factors and broader influences that might have influenced change. For this stage, the interview guide remained the same, except the questions concerning biographical data or information relating to level of the preparation for the return were omitted. All the interviews of this wave were analysed to understand most pressing issues that had emerged in each interview, and a few questions were prepared to follow more attentively in these issues.

The longitudinal approach proved to be a very useful way compared to capturing only a snapshot of experiences with data gathered at one point of time and only a sequence of memories that happen in the past (Thomson, 2009). Nevertheless, Ryan and D'Angelo (2017, p.1) point to some of the challenges of going 'beyond the snapshot' in data collection in migration studies. The authors suggest that migrants can be transient and can change place often, therefore it can be difficult to follow them over the time. Similarly, the second wave uncovered many changes with the sample as some had left the country and others had changed location within Tirana. Although it proved impossible to get information about all wave one respondents, I

found information that five of the teenage participants and their families had re-migrated to another country. Additionally, I was informed by other participants that two adults had changed workplace because their businesses had failed.

Table 4.2: Participants followed in the two waves of data collection.

Method	Wave1	Wave2
Interviews Adults & Teenagers	51	20
Family Case Study	3	3
Drawing Activity Children (7-12 years)	1	1
Focus Groups	2	

4.4 Data Analysis

In the current research, data analysis initiated as part of the data collection. Transcribing is an essential step of the narrative analysis which is used to analyse the content and the structure of the data (Riessman, 2005). Data analysis started during the fieldwork by keeping notes of the themes that were emerging which also served as a guide to what I could enquire in more depth in the following interviews. I attempted to grasp all the details of the interviews of the conversation with the participant including pauses, interruptions and punctuation marks. Transcribing was particularly important to make the decision on the participants who were to be followed up on in the second wave of data collection. On the second wave, some ‘member checks’ were undertaken, as I took some of the data and my interpretations to three of my participants and discussed with them to check and confirm the credibility of the interpretation and the narrative account (Creswell & Miller, 2010). An important part of the analysis was the ‘research diary’ (Burgess, 1981) which was used to record all the field notes particularly at the end of the interviews. The diary was very detailed and it included all my own reflections on the interviews, the interactions with the participants and part of the analysis as they were constructed in the process of the data collection and thereafter.

Interview transcripts of all data generated through the methods employed in this research, were entered into the QSR Nvivo data management program and a process of coding was followed (Bazley & Jackson, 2013). Transcripts were read several times and main themes and nodes were developed. To establish coding based on a longitudinal approach, I had separate nodes for teenagers and adults (analysis of children's drawings will be described below). For example, transcripts of teenagers of the two waves were collated on one node "teenagers". A similar approach was followed for all groups of participants to capture the differences of narratives from wave one to wave two within similar codes. NVivo memos were used to keep instant notes after each interview was coded to manage data and create broad summaries which cannot be grasped when data is selected and spread in extracts of different interviews. This was useful for the broader analysis. Interviews, notes and memo were used a way to triangulate the data from many sources. In this research, NVivo was a very useful tool mostly for data managing for all the methods used in this research and in which I managed 71 individual interviews, 3 focus group discussions, 3 family case studies and 17 drawings. All the interviews were transcribed and analysed in Albanian. Excerpts which were selected to illustrate particular themes were carefully translated by the researcher. Part of the validity of qualitative research is to preserve the meanings between what the participant has expressed and the meaning as interpreted to be as similar as possible. To maintain the meanings as close as possible to the original, after the translation, excerpts were edited by a native speaker and checked back by me, in order to ensure the meaning and the interpretation of the language metaphors or idioms has not changed (van Nes et al., 2010). While collecting data in one language and presenting the findings in another, are common in social research, it needs to be considered that there is a potential for some semantic loss or difficulties in translating certain cultural meanings that are embedded in linguistic expression (Simon, 1995). Therefore, it is essential to consider that language differences may be present when the interviews are translated.

The analysis therefore continued as an ongoing iterative process from the data collection, field notes, analysing transcripts, NVivo memos and the narrative analysis. This multisource analysis from the first stage to the last, produced dense data to manage and interpret, a process which can be quite cumbersome. To support

this process, I ensured to use the same analysis method throughout the data analysis by considering both new and old data side by side and by making comparisons and identifying differences.

Narrative analysis of the interviews was relevant in this research to explore the experiences of return migrants (adults and teenagers), gaining insight of their belongings and the layers of meaning in identification with the origin country. For the main analysis process, from the various approaches of analysing interviews, the narrative turn conveys a pragmatic ontology of the lived experience and the focus of investigation is the experience as a story (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, Riessman, 2005). The narrative turn emerged as a result of the criticisms, and a lessening influence, of positivist perspectives in social sciences. There are disagreements on the origins of the paradigm, however one of the assumptions is that the domain interweaves elements from realism, modernism, post-modernism and constructionism perspectives (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). It is through stories that people can convey their ideas (Riessman, 2008), therefore the narrative turn privileges positionality and does not claim objectivity. Social life is a narrative, and through narrative, researchers are able to understand stories and experiences of the group under study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Within this perspective, the current research follows the typology of narrative analysis as introduced by Riessman (2008). The narrative approach consists of four steps – thematic, structural, dialogic/performance and visual. In this research, thematic analysis was the first method, which is used to identify themes and patterns. After careful reading of produced NVivo codes, it was easier to understand the underlying themes and patterns and find connections in data. Thematic analysis focuses on searching across data ‘to find repeated patterns of meaning’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.86). I followed an inductive approach of thematic analysis by identifying themes as linked to data themselves and providing interpretation. The analysis was focused on the latent level of analysing and identifying ideas and approaches rather than providing a descriptive surface analysis.

Secondly, a structural analysis of the data took place by using Gee’s (1990) and Labov’s (1972) approaches, where I analysed the sequence of the speech acts, used to explain behaviour. The focus was on the meaning that can be gleaned from the

participants' interviews by analysing some paralinguistic utterances and other speech signals. These were noted down while transcribing as well as being part of the notetaking in the fieldwork. Dialogic and performance analysis constituted another step of data analysis. Based on Goffman's approach (1969) on dramaturgical metaphors, social actors have a performative element in social situations of showing their desirable selves. Even in interviews, respondents transmit from their own identity and the narrative is positioned within a broader socio-cultural context which has influenced the narratives as told by participants. In this way, the analysis focused on the multiple voices consisting of the context in which the narrative is produced, the speaker and the listener (Riessman, 2008).

The drawings of children participants were analysed through visual analysis. Visual analysis, part of the narrative analysis, is employed to analyse visual methods focusing on the way images are produced and made with participants in a collaborative way. Images are 'polysemic' as they contain multiple meanings (Posser, 2008) and to avoid misinterpretation, accompanying narrations by children formed an essential part in the interpretation of the children's drawings. When children had finished their drawing activity, I invited them individually to talk about the drawing and to proffer an initial interpretation and description thereof. The aim was to allow children to be able to explain their creative work in an informal manner. This was considered appropriate as the intention of this research was to grasp children's understanding of their situation, rather than to reflect the views of the researcher (Glen et al., 2012). Following a two-phase visual analysis approach, the children's interpretation of their art work was augmented by the researchers' interpretation of the images.

Based on Kolb (2008), during an initial 'participant reading' the children provided the first interpretation of their drawing to help the researcher understand how they conceptualised their experiences. Asking participants to describe their drawing resulted in children explaining how the pictures were composed. Additionally, gauging the reasons for the spatial organization of the images was also part of this initial phase. Children's explanations tended to encompass not merely a description of the picture, but also uncovered feelings that were not represented pictorially (e.g., with regards to perceptions of peers' behaviour). The second part of the analysis

examined the production of the image, the image itself, and the audience (Rose, 2007). Content analysis of the drawing focused on systematically categorizing key elements of the pictorial content (Kolb, 2008). Coding of each picture was supported by Nvivo programme, to classify the main features emphasized in the pictures. Images were analysed based on the categories that emerged. Pictures were coded as a function of the following emergent classifications: (1) places of play (e.g., playgrounds, parks, football pitches) and other spaces (e.g., roads, coffee shops, buildings); (2) play/leisure activities (e.g., scooter, swings, cable car, football); (3) people and self-positioning (e.g., friends or lack thereof); (4) background (e.g., symbols such as flags, use of colours) (see Appendix E, for more details). This provided an overview of the places and elements central to children's lives and affecting their sense of belonging as depicted in their drawings.

Following a process of code consolidation, data for the drawings were collated into a theoretically orientated data set by drawing out both the commonalities and differences among the derived themes and respondents. Initial themes were refined via a process of comparing these comprehensively within and across different categorisations of the data (Tuckett, 1995). To account for possible differences between the two waves of data collection, trajectory analysis was performed by focussing on analysing changes to circumstances and views that were reported by respondents. This was achieved by interrogating the data in terms of changes reported by individuals and in terms of changes that could be identified in the corpus of data (i.e., overall changes reported by groups of respondents; c.f. Grosseohme & Lipstein, 2016). Since the research sought to evoke comparisons between their previous country and Albania, analysis considered identification with the places and people depicted, and how children construed a sense of belonging over time. Photographs with the adults were mostly used to aid the conversation, to make more concrete participants' accounts. Analysis of the photographs consisted in understanding the meanings they held for the respondents and as narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008) was used for the interviews, photographs were used to further illustrate the meanings and themes.

4.5 Ethics and positionality

4.5.1. Ethics

Given the diversity of the sample of participants for this project and the different methods employed, I had to ensure the research adheres to sound ethical principles. Moreover, the topics covered in this research such as belonging, identity, parent-child relations and xenophobic attitudes were potentially sensitive. There is a vast body of existing literature which recognizes the need to be mindful of ethical concerns when undertaking research with minors (UNICEF, 2002; Graham et al., 2013). The process of researching children can be accompanied with ethical dilemmas and is a process which should not be learned in practice, but rather should be taken into account before starting the fieldwork (Greig et al., 2007). Therefore, months before embarking in the field, I prepared carefully by reading guidelines such as ‘Ethical guidelines for undertaking research with children and young people’ (Edge Hill University, 2013), ‘Barnardo’s statement of ethical research practice’ and other guidelines and resources (Robson, 2011). In April 2015, the Faculty of Social Sciences, Edge Hill University gave the project ethical clearance, as part of which I obtained a criminal record clearance before commencing any fieldwork.

Conducting research with children is challenging as researchers must gain permission from different gatekeepers including parents and staff, but most importantly from the children themselves (Fargas-Malet, 2010). The most important ethical issues when working with children are informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. Gaining the consent of participants to be part of the research is essential for ethical integrity and for building a trustful relationship with the participants. For this reason, I had to ensure that children were provided with full information about the research, so that they would provide informed consent and were certain that participation in research is freely volunteered. In line with this, I acquired consent from parents, children/young people and gatekeepers when children were sourced through the school. There was no occasion when I met children without parental consent. When children were sourced through school, head teacher’s formal consent was obtained (Appendix A) and through them of the parents. Once parental consent has been sought, young participants were informed

on the nature of the research in which they will be invited to participate. For children aged 16 years or over, literature suggests that they are considered as competent on their own behalf to take the decision to participate in research (Heath et al., 2009, p.17). However, even though it is lawful to allow them to decide on participating without first asking for parental consent, I gained parental consent for all children aged 18 years or younger (see informed consent for participants, Appendix C). Since interviews tackled many 'family' issues, I believed that parental consent is required for children to participate and discuss about these topics. The practice of receiving parental consent first, and then children consent, was time consuming and there were some refusals, for which I was unable to find out the reasons.

In the school settings, to avoid any sort of coercion from being an outsider, I did not meet the children on my own but a short presentation was made by one of the teachers before the interviews. All interviews started with a short conversation by introducing myself and informing participants of the intention of my research. For the younger group of children (7-12 years) informed consent forms were made child friendly and easy to understand (Appendix B). However, it is recognized that initial consent is not adequate, and "process consent" should be considered. This refers to the right of children and participants to withdraw at any time they wish or even to opt out from parts of project although they have agreed to participate. According to Heath and colleagues (2009), this gives some sense of competency and agency to the young participants. To ensure process consent during interviews and activities, I monitored children's non-verbal cues to capture their willingness to continue. At the beginning, with children we rehearsed ways of saying 'No', when they did not want to reply to questions, stop the interview for a while, or talk to a parent/guardian whenever they wished. This was helpful as in one case, one of the boys refused to answer a question related to the way his behaviour has changed since re-settling in Albania.

Apart from addressing privacy issues, participants were informed that data would remain confidential and anonymity was guaranteed. Their identity was protected by pseudonyms and participants were asked to give their own pseudonyms if they wished to do so. Although participants were instructed not to mention very personal details (names, addresses), in many occasions they did. This information in data was

replaced with unidentified indications (e.g., town A, B). Confidentiality was not breached on any occasion, although during fieldwork preparations I had considered issues of 'limited confidentiality', which can be applied when there is a need to protect children's wellbeing, such as disclosing information that they are experiencing harm or being in danger (Noble-Carr, 2006, p.10).

There were ethical dilemmas faced during the fieldwork for which I was to some extent prepared in advance. The conditions under which the majority of return migrants had moved to Albania had affected their psychological wellbeing of some teenagers and also adults. Many participants' accounts were emotional and expressed psychological discomfort, particularly children when they discussed about the stigmatisation and labelling they had experienced in Albania. Similar emotional discomfort was conveyed from unemployed women as they expressed feeling helpless and concerned about their children. To avoid such issues, children's activity with the drawings in the first wave was conducted in the presence of the school psychologist to help minimise the risk of any potential harm that could emerge in unravelling memories of life in the previous country. This was not the case for the second wave, as it was agreed that children have gained familiarity with me and they felt more comfortable. This was observed particularly when children expressed their excitement during the first wave of data collection.

Interviewing and drawing with children, on two occasions, was conducted in the presence of an adult parent in their homes. The presence of an adult may affect children's ability to disclose information, which they would uncover when interviewed on their own (Bushin, 2007). Coercion by the parents was observed during conversations in the family, as parents would often talk over their children and not allow them finish what they were saying. Further, one of the children in the school turned up for the drawing activity, unhappy disclosing that she wanted to take part even though her parent had not consented. As her parents had not consented research participation, she was not able to take part and that left the girl puzzled as she expressed to have enjoyed the activity during the first section of data collection. For the research, it would have been good to know why her parents allowed her the first time and not the second and what they thought about my research.

During uncomfortable situations, I reacted in a very humble manner, by paying serious attention and prioritising participants' wellbeing. In the case of distressing situations, I asked to stop the interview for a while and take a break. However, in all cases participants wished to speak and I did not insist as I recognized that giving participants time to express their emotions, even by crying was important for their wellbeing (MsCosker et al., 2001). This was viewed as essential, hence all participants expressed a sense of relief at the end as they acknowledged that people did not talk to them about their return experiences. This was a way to give my participants the space to have a voice of their experiences but remaining within my role as a researcher by exploring their meanings more deeply without assuming a counselling role or providing any sort of psychological advice. In addressing serious emotional or psychological problems, I kept a list of school psychologists, and other health and psycho-social centres to contact them. For example, one of the teenage participants showed signs of depression and expressed a willingness to talk to me as she claimed not to trust people around her. In that case, I listened carefully, but I informed the girl that I could not say much, explaining to her my role as a researcher. With her approval, I referred her to the psychologist and ensured she was able to receive professional support. Despite this, I sensed a general neglect from the school staff to adequately care for the psychological needs of these children and teenagers and in addressing their difficulties of adjustment with more sensitivity. These situations did leave me sad and perplexed about the wellbeing of some of the participants.

With regards to disseminating findings to participants, for practical reasons, it was not possible to send draft publications to all the participants. However, a summary of preliminary results on children and teenagers was sent to head-teachers as they expressed their interest to know the results of their children's' schools. Further, I also shared with some of the participants a copy of the article which was published on findings with the pre-teens.

4.5.2 Positionality

Before I embarked on this research and in every step, that followed, I acknowledged my own positionality as a researcher, my personal experiences, cultural aspects and

own views about the topic. The feminist approach is mindful of a reflexive process of research and the positionality of the researcher. In qualitative research, engagement with reflection is important to ensure rigor and accuracy in constructing and interpreting knowledge. England (1994, p.82) stated that research is a process, therefore, it is shaped by the researcher and the researched, whose identities may impact this process. It is only by developing trustful and empathetic relations with respondents that they feel at ease to disclose the truth (Gomm, 2004, p.230), therefore good rapport with participants is a vehicle to establish trust and enhance rigour (Rinke & Mawhinney, 2014). I favoured the role of seeking reciprocal relationships by showing empathy and respect (England, 1994) and often discussing and sharing information with my participants. As participants showed interest and enthusiasm about my own background and professional life, I openly shared this with them and often when needed I shared my past experience as a return migrant. I disclosed this information to avoid the potential power relations and to build trust by discussing sometimes the way I experienced my own return migration. This was the main reason which led me to develop an interest in this topic and the willingness to give voice to a group of people who are thought to be 'going home'. In this way, in this research, I was an "insider by proxy" (Baser & Toivanen, 2017, p.7) as I shared the similarity of the return migration experience with my participants.

In order to get rich data, I developed often friendly relationships as a window to dig deeper and used my insider role as Albanian to facilitate this. It has been argued that insiders or the researchers who study a similar group to them are believed to have an advantage as they can use the knowledge they share with the group to gain more insights and capture some phenomena easier than others (England, 1999). Originating from the same culture as participants, parents in particular, identified with me as an Albanian and through the commonalities of our culture, I was able to connect with them and with the majority of adults' interview cases we were of a similar age. With the high-skilled migrants I shared many similarities in terms of work related interests, socialization and migratory experiences. I tended to maintain a friendly relation in general, as a way to express my thankfulness to the participants but also considering that some of the participants would be interviewed for the second wave of data collection and it was essential for me not to interrupt all the contacts there (including gatekeepers).

It has been assumed that interviewer effect may limit the true effectiveness of the interviews. This refers to the way interviews may have been influenced by the gender or age of the researcher which may have had a bearing in the willingness to reveal information (Denscombe, 2007; Mullings, 1999). While it may be impossible to understand these effects, it was perceived that in the interviews with the teenagers, boys appeared more hesitant to express themselves than the girls. With the females, in general, it was easier and their interviews are longer and more detailed. This could be due to them feeling more comfortable to talk to a female researcher.

Therefore, my experience indicates that positionalities are not static, they are differently perceived by others and as there are many layers of identity some may be more advantageous in some situations and with some participants, while others can feel more uncomfortable. For example, in two cases I was perceived as a journalist, as I noticed participants' hesitation to speak, which was then explicitly expressed by participants. I realised that these participants felt intimidated expressing themselves, which could be linked to a highly politicized environment in Albania, and to avoid this, I tended not to engage in discussions on politics. In a few cases, there were complexities in my positioning as insider and outsider, on the way participants perceived and responded to me during the interviews. This varied in many issues, some of which related to the setting where the interviews took place. For example, the group of younger children often referred to me as 'teacher'. Being unsure about their perception of the 'teacher figure' as negative or positive to them, I emphasized my identity as a 'mother', which I believed would be more acceptable and non-threatening. I disclosed to them that I have a daughter of their age assuming to make a more relaxing space by emphasizing some similarities with them.

Teenagers did appreciate my role of outsider, of someone not being based in Albania as they felt comfortable disclosing more intimate stories and often articulated that they did not trust people around. As an outsider, not being present all the time in Albania, assured them in a way that we do not know common people and that soon I would be away. I realised this in the ways they shared with me very personal accounts about their private life and often they mentioned to me that 'I haven't told this to anyone', which led me believe that I became the "trusted outsider" (Baser &

Toivanen, 2017). Being viewed and reminded of not being there often increased my own consciousness of ‘outsiderness’ and increasingly I found myself confronted by a complex question of ‘Where do I belong?’ This was more present when more personal questions emerged by participants, such as ‘what are your plans after your studies?’

What is important however, is that most of the interviewees appreciated my research as a way to raise their voice on their own problems and issues they were concerned about in their everyday lives and in their future. The way my positionalities were assumed and were negotiated by me as relevant to certain situations, uncovers the assumption that positionalities are not fixed. Baser and Toivanen (2017) suggest to adopt a reflexive approach to employing different positionalities and the need to acknowledge the advantages of one’s positionality and make attempts to provide honest academic work. Instead of focusing on the insider or outsider role, researchers should take a more nuanced view and look at ‘moments’ where they inhabit each role instead of being a main reference point to understand the position of the researcher. This is also in line with the fact that regardless of how much we draw towards the personal symmetries, empathy, care and the insider role (Rinke & Mawhinney, 2014), the nature of rapport is viewed as being different and there are limits of the boundaries and of over-identifying with participants.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided an account and justified the methodological choices for the current research. The first part discussed the methodological and philosophical framework and provided an overview of the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm which has dictated the design of the methodology and informed the research strategy. Details were provided on the background of the study population and the criteria for selecting the participants were discussed. It was described that this research is qualitative and it was conducted in two phases. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the choice of the research methods which have allowed to capture experiences of children and adults by taking into consideration the age of participants.

I discussed the in-depth interviews, focus groups and family case studies. A subsample of participants was followed up in the second year of data collection, the three family case studies and pre-teens, with the aim to capture the changes that had occurred in participants' lives over the time. Further, the chapter discussed about the procedures carried out describing the context in which the research took place and the process. The rest of the chapter dealt with the ethics and the complexities faced in researching children. I discussed on the ethical dilemmas faced during this research were outlined and the ways I dealt with these situations. The chapter has concluded with a self-reflection on my positionality as a researcher and as a return migrant which was the reason to inspire me to conduct this research. I acknowledged my own positionality in the research process as a way to provide honest academic work.

Adults' Experiences of Return, (Dis)Identification with the Homeland and Future Trajectories

5.0 Introduction

The growing significance of return migration challenged dominant narratives that consider migration as a one-way, or permanent, trip. In contrast to conventional linear forms of migration, which view migration or the return as permanent moves, transnationalism describes migration as a continuous normal part of migrant's life (Leo & Kobayashi, 2005). With a particular focus on the relationship between migration and development (De Haas, 2008), the role of return migration in the economic development of the origin countries has been established (Cobo et al., 2010; Olesen, 2002). This relationship emphasizes the advantages of return migration to the economic development of the origin country, as migrants return equipped with skills and human capital (Zaiceva & Zimmerman, 2012). Within this field, a large body of literature has sought to investigate and establish the links between transnationalism and return migration, underpinned by the assumption that migrants maintain close connections with their home country in different ways (Bsach et al., 1994; Vertovec, 2007) and engage in certain transnational practices by investing their financial resources or remittances back in the home country (Fokkema et al., 2013). These connections are made with the intention of returning at some point of their lives (Carling et al., 2015). In line with this, the first section of this chapter will focus on the initial experiences of return, preparation, employment opportunities and the possibilities to transfer the transnational skills in their society of origin.

Return migration occurs for different reasons, such as the economic stimuli or ‘pull’ factors in the home country, for example better wages and economic development, as well as ‘push’ factors from the migrating country, for example the economic downturn (King, 2000). The global economic crisis around the world has reduced demand for labour in the migrating countries, a factor which is likely to lead to heightened return migration (Castles & Vezzoli, 2009). Nevertheless, research indicates that migrants who migrate to Western European countries tend to be reluctant to return and prefer to stay in the host society as they fear the inability to live a ‘normal life’ in terms of work and future prospects in their country of origin (Bygnes & Erdal, 2017). However, some host countries such as Greece have been affected to a greater extent by the global economic crisis, with direct implications in migrants’ jobs and the economic conditions, resulting in migrants leaving the country (Lafleur & Stanek, 2017).

As migrants, mostly have returned with their families, the implications of return migration in the family and the role of social support will be considered. Previous research suggests that returnees are frequently viewed as people who have no problems fitting into their home country and therefore do not experience issues of settlement (see King, 2000). Migrant families are perceived to be fluid and as being formed and reformed in the host country. The constraints that ensue from normative expectations and traditional gender roles lead to women viewing migration as an opportunity and as having an emancipatory role (Anthias & Lazaridis, 2000). However, migration can also reinforce traditional gender roles by emphasizing further roles defined by gender (Ho, 2006), yet the implications that return migration has on the family and the reproduction of gender roles back in the origin country remain unclear and will be discussed in this chapter.

Return migration may not be the end of the migration cycle as new migration patterns may occur based on migrant’s experiences of their return and future plans (Leo & Kobayashi, 2005). Most of the today’s features of migration are characterized by circular migration patterns (Vertovec, 2007). This back and forth type of migration is considered to be flexible, allowing people to avoid categorical decisions related to migration. The geographical distance between the main

migration countries of Greece and Italy as well as changes in regularization procedures for the migrants has led to various types of circulatory migration (Maroukis & Gemi, 2013; Mai & Paladini, 2013). The next section of this chapter will therefore consider return migrants' future plans, their possibilities to permanently settle in Albania or the propensity to re-migrate.

Finally, the chapter will consider return migrants' identification with their home country and the people who have stayed behind. In human geography, mobility has led to home being constructed as multiple and expanding across transnational locations as people identify with more than one locality (Gustafson, 2009; Nowicka, 2007). This may allow identification with both 'here' and 'there' to be strengthened through the fusing of elements of both identities, of the home and the host countries (Salih, 2003). Often these transnational identifications are experienced with ambivalence which, reflected by when returnees realize that they have changed and the people who have stayed behind have changed too (Ghanem, 2003). Albanian migration, has been characterised for its transnational nature due to the geographical distance it has with the main host societies and the liberalization regimes between host and origin countries (Gemi, 2015). With this in mind, the chapter will seek to understand the effects of the transnational migration character and the economic factors as influencing identification and attachment with the origin country.

5.1 Facing a (re)new(ed) reality: Transition, Employment Opportunities and Structural Conditions

Analysis of the interviews of first generation return migrants suggested that the majority of returnees had moved to Albania following the economic crisis in Greece and Italy. Some migrants moved once they had lost their jobs and were cautious of not spending their savings while in the host country. For half of the returnees who moved because of the crisis, returning was the last resort as they hoped for improvement in their economic situation in Greece. Therefore, some of them waited until they had exhausted all possibilities in Greece and realised they were consuming even their last resources:

Besim: After 14 and years of work in Greece, with legal papers [means for staying], insurances and everything, I was left without a job. Two years and a half not working. The past years of the crisis, we were withdrawing 1000 Euro every month for living, with the hope that I would be able to start working again in Greece. Waiting, day after day, 30 months passed. I spent a lot of money and then I thought about Albania. Had we stayed longer, I thought we would have left in debt. I said to my wife, let's go..., they were firing people from work every day (...) we had to, we had to! (*50 years, male, Tirana: wave 1*).

Besim's experiences represent those of the majority of participants who felt compelled to return because of unemployment and their perceived inability to continue living in Greece. The upheaval caused by the unplanned relocation left migrants unprepared in many ways, some of them moving back and forth until they had decided upon a final re-settlement in Albania. The migrants who had still been working had retained their jobs in Greece, resulting in many families being physically divided between Greece and Albania and wives managing family obligations and children on their own. The families who had one or more members in Greece, were the least adjusted and constantly uncertain about the future. In the worst scenarios, migrants who had not been able to frequently visit Albania had lost 'touch' with the reality of the everyday life and had been misled by the available information:

Leka: We had bought one of these TV satellites and they used to show adverts of Albania, displaying some of the best spots in Albania, somewhere in Saranda, some part from here [Tirana] and elsewhere. And Berisha [former Prime minister] used to say: "there will be no salaries under 50 000 Leke [€370]". I would say to my wife: 'wait a minute, the prices are cheap there..., if we both get 50 000 leke, we are okay' (laughs). We will buy a house and a shop, we would do something. When we came here, we were like, oh my God, we found crap! (*Male, family case study, Tirana: wave 1*).

As the quotation indicates, migrants had not been able to fully comprehend living conditions and lifestyle in Albania and relied on information from others or as Leka hinted, on Albanian TV adverts while in Greece. This information, according to the narratives, was based mostly on promises made by political parties during election campaigns. The majority of return migrants who had resided in Tirana were originally from other cities and were unfamiliar with the way of life in Tirana, and they had little local information about the opportunities and lifestyle which appear to have changed over the years. Narratives indicate that some migrants made the

decision to return as quickly as within one month of preparation and formed their decisions on readily available information.

However, these ‘distorted images’ were not observed among all migrants as the majority had paid regular visits to Albania during their vacations. Some of these participants claimed to know the reality better and discussed that being aware of the socio-economic conditions in Albania, was the main reason that they did not want to move to Albania but had built their lives in Greece. Those who were better prepared had a clearer vision, they had some plans and also had chosen the better locations to live in Tirana. Moving to Tirana for the majority of participants located there, was considered to be a strategic plan in order to access better market possibilities and a better education for the children. However, even they, acknowledge that perceptions of recognizing the reality only through the visits was not possible in terms of being able to comprehend the work prospects and structural conditions on a short time. Tirana was not their home town and migrants had little local knowledge which led to changing many times children’s school, their residence or workplace. The beginning of the stage of (re)settling of moving under tensions and consequences of crisis to an undesired move back to the origin country was described as an agonizing transition, which was associated with financial losses as migrants had planned to continue living there.

Returnees who moved because of the economic crisis can be classified as returnees who had ‘*no choice*’ as they wished to continue their migration but their projects and their plans were disrupted in the middle. Many of these participants who were the least prepared for their move, had been working mostly in labour work in Greece and expressed to have faced unemployment or short term and precarious employment. This was one of the main problems returnees faced even in Albania which largely affected their socio-economic conditions. For the migrants who had been working in construction and services (such as cleaning), the labour market was almost non-existent, as according to them, the construction sector in Albania had declined in recent years, these jobs are mainly irregular which would provide a very low salary and would not afford the individual any social security:

Arta: I am looking for a job, I am hoping to work in the public services. I cannot do what I have done in Greece - cleaning houses, I cannot do it here. Why not? Because the exploitation here is larger than there. Not that there was no exploitation in Greece, but at least I was getting paid there. For example, for the kind of job I was doing there, I was paid more than I could get here. Well, you can say, these are the salaries in Albania, but the prices are much higher here. I mean life is difficult in Albania (...) (45 years, female, Tirana: wave 1).

Flori: If I compare the salaries here with the ones in Greece, here it's like nothing compared to there. Work and salary are zero here! There, you could work four to five hours and the money was 20 times higher (...). Whoever works here in the private sector, they employ their own people. Even when I find some work, they do not provide me with social insurances. I receive no social insurances here at all, even though I work. The employer says, I cannot provide that for you, I have my own people. (42 years, male, family case study, Tirana: wave 1).

These two narratives illustrate the local context of the challenging labour market in Albania and that employees are expected to work with low salaries and in precarious conditions. While males worked under these conditions, several female participants remained unemployed in Albania, particularly those in Fier. Families reported that they had experienced economic hardship and in almost all the cases their standard of living had dropped compared to before. However, returnees had accumulated and brought financial savings with them which were used to invest in an old house, in paying house instalments, open a small shop or for living expenses. This illustrates the economic vulnerabilities and precariousness of low skilled migrants as they have experienced an overall downgrading in their employment and quality of life as in comparison to before the return.

The '*completed*' cycle of migration, comprises of several migrants and describes those who have returned because their migratory plans had finished even though the return corresponded with the period of the economic crisis (or even before). This is a small group which is divided into the migrants who had planned to return to the homeland, for example what Nardi (35 years) indicates as "*I was tired of migration*", because they had completed their studies, or periods of employment.

Some of the migrants who had been more successful during migration and accumulated capital and skills had set up a small enterprise. The participants who had been able to set up an enterprise had a longer duration in migration (more than

10 years) and had acquired certain skills. In majority of the cases, the type of enterprise they had invested in, matched the kind of work migrants had been engaged during migration. However, even among participants who had made an investment and were better prepared, the abrupt return had interfered with their plans to continue living in the migrating country which did appear to affect their overall (re)settlement process and the way of approaching the return. In all cases, the enterprise was run as a family business and in a few cases returnees had employed other local people. This indicates that the better skilled migrants and who had sufficient financial preparations appeared to have a better chance of establishing a business and could transfer their acquired skills during migration.



Figure 5.1. Bakery shop in Tirana.

The above picture portrays a bakery shop which is owned by Artan (35 years), and who employs two sales assistants. Some of the migrants like him had been able to capitalize on their skills. Generally, respondents claimed that their work was of a better quality in comparison to similar local businesses managed by non-migrants.

Respondents' ability to capitalize on their migration experiences led them to introducing a good work culture, new products and better quality work than their local competitors, which is highlighted below:

Genti: The hairdressing school I attended is not like the schools they have here (...). Everyone who has been trained in schools abroad is different from the schools they have here. Here, they do a three-month course, which is nothing. You basically learn nothing. Whereas, me and everyone who has been abroad have done at least two years of training. I have done three years of school. Whether you like or not, three months compared to three years is very different. And then add the opportunities we had there and the seminars we have done (30 years, male: wave 1).

The narrative above exemplifies what most of respondents perceive in relation to their skills and experiences gained during migration. Among the skills they have acquired are the technical ones or having developed work culture and perseverance, as he further hinted *'they are supposed to learn from us'*. The skills and the training that most of the participants have received are emphasized across the narratives which will be elaborated in more detail below (see section 5.3.1). Often these cultural skills gained before migration clash with Albanian working culture and ethics as again portrayed by Genti:

Genti: There is no work culture here, no! They don't like rules, they want a free ride. The free ride is good, but within the rules. It doesn't work to always have someone at your back. You need to learn the rules and to work. It was difficult in the beginning for me too, but I got used to it. Until now I have been working alone, only now I have a boy working with me, I could not find before. I fired the girls, they were useless. They did not take responsibility" for the work. No work discipline! (30 years, Tirana, male: wave 1)

Many of the participants indicated that they had fired employees as they were unhappy with the quality of their work. They emphasized a 'lack of diligence' and unwillingness to commit to work rules and conditions. According to respondents, employees did not want to work simple jobs and despite only being employed for a short time period, asked for pay rise. They mentioned that they had trained their employees and trusted them within their work environment, as well as seeking to build very good relationships with them. However, most of the time, they were disappointed, finding that, employees and clients had often deceived them, which had negatively affected their ability to trust their employees. These strained relations

contrasted with the expectations of participants in ways they planned to develop their business, affected work quality and necessitated that migrants had put extra effort into their work.

These return migrants who were doing better had tended to return in earlier phases of crisis than the lower skilled migrants who had embraced the approach of ‘wait and see’ for the situation to change in the migrating country. They were better prepared and had not waited to bear the effects of crisis. The ability to transfer the capital in terms of skills and also financial savings largely depended on participants’ own mobilization in terms of financial preparation, the extent to which they had acquired information but most importantly location. Based on the narratives, location was an important factor for the most successful returnees, as those who were residing in the more central parts of Tirana were more likely to have a family business. Business set up was largely dependent on the accessibility to the markets. Location choices were made based on financial resources of the migrant family or a previous investment, such as an existing house in Fier which “pre-defined” the place of location for return migrants. In Fier, the socio-economic context appeared to be more disadvantageous. The family businesses in most of the cases appears to have failed and narratives highlighted that the market and infrastructure in Fier did not guarantee business progress. Additionally, the transfer of skills prevented many families from fulfilling plans and meeting their plans and expectations:

Rudina: To be honest, when we moved here (...) we had other intentions. My husband was a cook and we wanted to open a small family restaurant and work together. But because we couldn’t do this we are now both unemployed. To open the restaurant, we needed a lot of money, which we didn’t have. So, we thought of renting one as a business. But then we realised that in Fier the “culture” of eating outside is not popular. We saw that the small restaurants could make little income, so for us it wasn’t advantageous (...), so we realized we could not progress in this direction – and I have the impression that these businesses need some networks [she means friends to frequent the restaurant] but we don’t have them..., we don’t have the kind of friendship we used to have twenty years ago (*38 years, female, Fier: wave 1*).

Rudina’s story refers to her family’s inability to open a small restaurant because of the disadvantageous economic context in Fier that obstructed her family to transfer their financial capital and skills. This illustrates that while a few migrants have experienced an upward mobility as they could transfer their capital, for others, the

structural constraints in Albania and the insufficient preparation by the migrants had led to unemployment and economic downgrading. Notably, even for the respondents who had an enterprise, there were feelings of economic instability and increased uncertainty for the future of their business. They pointed out earning modest financial benefits and were engaged in long and strenuous hours of work. Participants conveyed that Albania was undergoing an economic crisis too, a situation which according to those who had moved earlier was evidenced following 2012, a period which coincides with the political reforms in the taxation regime system that had ‘squeezed’ small activity businesses across the country.

The second wave of data collection uncovered fluctuations and changes as their economic conditions appear to have intensified in their respective directions. The small group of respondents who tended to do well in wave one, were better in the second wave and those who were not doing well expressed an exasperation of the situation. Therefore, four of the respondents who were doing well with their business in their first year, highlighted progress and improvement in the second one while the opposite was reported by those working in construction or the unemployment returnees. These two diverging situations of return migrants are portrayed below:

Elida: What has changed during this year?

Anita: It’s good, good! We have been better. Thank God! The work has improved. Each year better and better and we are becoming more stable. As we enter the market we become better. More clients are coming. (42 years, female. Tirana: wave 2).

Flori: It has become worse and worse. More stress and less work. There is little work and even when there is, you work, you get little money. Payment is too low and even for the work you do, you don’t get the money on time. They postpone it! That’s not enough to pay electricity and water, forget about investing in your children or to sending them to school... with one salary (...). This puts you under so much stress, as you have to borrow money to live. And then when you get that money, what to do with it first, to pay off the debt or... So, most of the time you are drowned in stress. This is killing me. I say I am working, but this work is nothing. Thank goodness I am not the one who is managing the money at home... (42 years, family case study: wave 2).

Few participants including Anita, underlined improvement in their business. In such instances, the success and stability of these small businesses was associated with a combination of factors. The level of financial savings the migrants had upon their

return, and the type of the business which was either in hairdressing or bakery services and was valued for its quality in the local market. Furthermore, these migrants tended to perform transnational engagement with the destination countries as they purchased their products and travelled there (this was the case for very few migrants). Transnational connections played a key role for the few highly skilled migrants for employment in both the migrating country and upon the return, as social networks provided support to find job. For the others, the practice of transnational practise constituted mainly on travelling to Greece to renew the yearly residence permits and pay visits to the families and relatives behind.

As indicated even in the narrative of Flori, the latter data collection stage revealed that the low-skilled migrants were struggling with the plummeting salaries in Albania, economic and work instability which had further increased their ambivalence. Apart from the labour market, other structural issues including the welfare system and public services were highlighted as main challenges upon return. One of the main concerns was the health system, as those who had residence permits continued to undertake major health treatments, check-ups and vaccinations abroad. The legal system, education and corruption were also concerning for many respondents. Corruption, political instability and favouritism in major sectors and work places is observed as something which has not changed from before and causes a lot of anger. Linda illustrates this issue in her narrative:

Linda: Nepotism is the main issue here (...). The most important thing that you must see in every country, is the public administration. Our public administration does not have experts because every four years, political parties change the staff. It's not the problem that you are changing people (...) but to take someone from the street and place them in the position of the specialist?! This is dramatic, it's really dramatic. You cannot break this! (...) therefore, the intellectuals, young people with dreams and hopes will not be able to find themselves here. And, I heard somewhere yesterday that they ask for five thousand euro to employ someone as a nurse [meaning bribing]. As a nurse! It means that person has to work two years to make that money (...). The social climate here is very difficult. *(41 years, female, wave 1: Tirana).*

Corruption has been viewed as infecting all parts of life but most importantly the ability to access a decent job. A climate of nepotism, according to Linda, has been established for a long-time in post-communist Albania. Bribery has been something returnees have encountered themselves when they have attempted to access the

public administration for employment or services. None of the returnees, including the high-skilled migrants, were working in the public administration, stressing that strong political connections are needed to access this sector. The interplay of factors including unwillingness to return, economic conditions and an unfair employment system have made many of the returnees believe that they will not be able to settle down, as Eda articulates:

Eda: I have searched everywhere, even in shops to work as a retail assistant. I don't know, they want young girls..., young girls, that's what it is. It came to the stage, where I felt shy to search for a job (laughs). (...) I have registered myself in job centres... as unemployed, just in case. There is no way anything will happen. I think, others here have moved forward and I have regressed. They have caught the opportunities and I feel as if I have moved backwards and I cannot catch them. I will find myself only if I go back. I don't think I will ever catch them up. They have taken all the opportunities and are deeply rooted (...). Here you are like floating in the air (...). Here, you can only find support through family and close people, because the state doesn't function. Whereas there, within the boundaries of the law you were given opportunities. (35 years, female, Family case study, Fier: wave 1).

The inability to have access to employment and the unfair system has caused a sense of despair among the underemployed. Eda has been unemployed for five years and in comparison to other non-migrants who according to her have taken available opportunities she feels she lags behind and will not be able to settle. The shared belief of experiencing regress and not being able to grasp the chances and opportunities is observed among most of the participants. Having left at a young age, return migrants realize that people they knew have either pursued an education, have a more stable job or have formed social networks. In many occasions, this situation led returnees to feel hopeless and as Eda narrates '*I will never catch up their rhythm*' highlighting a perceived inability to feel similar to people who had stayed behind as they realise that reaching the opportunities or social connections requires time. The belief of missing in time and social networks has often produced regrets as many realize they are compelled to start from scratch and contemplate that they could have been better had they not migrated. Such perceptions are further reinforced by a discriminatory labour market as highlighted in the narrative above, which is particularly evident amongst low skilled women as Eda in her age finds herself unfit for the market. This further indicates the local employment context and the more challenging employment environment for women.

The data summarised in this section illustrates the challenges return migrants faced in their early stages of moving to Albania as they attempted to access the labour market. For the majority, the circumstances under which the return has happened has largely determined the overall sustainability of the return. The unplanned return, and lack of sufficient preparation in terms of mobilization of the financial resources, coupled with the socioeconomic conditions in the home country have challenged the processes of (re)settlement and the ability to maintain a livelihood. Moreover, transnational capital conversion and practices to support economic embeddedness are instrumental only for a small group of migrants. The section has highlighted the significance of structural and individual factors as essential to facilitate return migration, which comprise of the structural conditions in the origin country and the individual preparedness by the return migrant.

5.2 Challenges to women and support of family

The findings have suggested that return migration can have implications to the quality of the family life by defining the traditional gender roles and can negatively impact on women's psychological wellbeing. The data revealed that these implications are largely experienced among families who have faced increased economic hardship, have been unable to secure a job, and had subsequently experienced a lack of incorporation in society. Returning to Albania was experienced as a strong ambivalent experience for some women, and unlike men who to some extent were engaged with work, the women who were unemployed but had worked during migration experienced feelings of anxiety and depression during the return. Many individuals reported psychological distress, feelings of estrangement and isolation. The combination of unemployment factors, economic conditions and a perceived lack of autonomy often affected their own psychological state and caused family tensions:

Eda: When we were there, we were more peaceful, whereas now we are very stressed. Sometimes we have a lot of disputes, family disputes, that we would never think about. Because when we came back we had a dilemma. If it was only him who returned, I would stay with the children there even without papers. But because I would keep the children, you don't know how things

would go there. We came but the return is taking us down and down further and it's not that we are finding... I personally feel, I have taken away the right from them [children], I endure feelings of guilt, I feel it. At least I would have sacrificed myself [means by staying in the U.S.] (*Family case studies: 35 years, female, Fier, wave 1*).

Elida: Tell me about life here:

Arta: I have had problems with my health because I wanted to start working but I couldn't. Even though I am 'leftist' [means supporting the political party in power], nobody found a job for me. For the job position I was promised, they wanted someone with a higher degree. We came back, but sad. My husband too had decided to come as he lost his job. My job ended in Greece and my hopes were dashed. (...) We are spending all our savings. (*45 years, female, Tirana: wave 2*).

Respondents' accounts provide an insight into some of the most emotional and ambivalent experiences that return migration has generated within the family and particularly to women. For a few families who were experiencing economic difficulties, these problems are transmitted within the family through disputes among partners, and sometimes among children which will be discussed in the next chapter. Gendered patterns were evidenced as women were the ones to complain and the second wave of data collection uncovered that in one case this situation culminated in divorce and another in attempts to do so. Female respondents often blamed their husbands for being the ones to initiate the return '*I blame him for bringing us back*' or '*this happens when you listen to your husband*', referring to having the family physically divided.

Narratives highlighted that such issues have emerged not only because of the economic factors but also that unemployed women had lost their sense of autonomy. Unlike in migration, women felt more controlled which appeared to be the result of a social environment they describe as more prejudicial. Moving back home for these women became more challenging as they found themselves shifting towards the traditional role of a typical housewife in Albania, taking care of the children and doing chores. In contrast to their husbands, females were less likely to make friends than men. Women expressed that men found it easier to adjust, as either through work or in their social outings men had formed friendships and were able to mentally 'escape' from the family problems. Sometimes they indicated that husbands had changed by going back to the previous lifestyle in Albania of spending more time

out with their friends by what they point to as becoming *'like other men, coffee and friends'*. Therefore, the low skilled women were being challenged by the traditional gender roles as they claimed that men turned to a more 'male oriented lifestyle' and women of the role of 'homemaker'. Moving back, women appeared more concerned about the gossip and conventional social norms which impacted their feeling of belonging to a greater extent and led them to be withdrawn and distanced from others. This led to women feeling as if they have lost their senses of agency and autonomy as gender roles and expectations are challenged upon return. While the impact of return was negative amongst low skilled families, employed women and those engaged in family business did not report any issues within family. They appreciated the sense of autonomy working in their own business provided to them, however this did limit to a great extent their own time for socialization.

As these issues were raised mainly by women, many of them discussed about the presence of the broader family as a source of emotional and practical support. Substantial support was provided particularly for the mothers with small children whose husbands were still working in the host country, and the emotional and instrumental support helped to mitigate feelings of alienation. Childcare advice, hands-on support and assistance were the forms of support that family networks provided and facilitated the return adjustment to a large degree. As Eda mentioned *'the good thing about Albania is that the good and the bad here is shared with people'*, pointing to the assistance she has received from her parents in caring for children or in many other ways. The family support of Arta who reported to be psychologically distressed is illustrated below:

Elida: How is your relationship with your own people?

Arta: We are very connected together, especially now that they see my problems that I cannot find a job (...). I am positive by nature but of course even the family has stood beside us. If I would have been all alone, I wouldn't have been able to make it. (45 years, female, Tirana: wave 1).

Arta's narrative points to the support her brothers and family have provided to her during the difficult situation when she feels most distressed about not being able to find a job. This kind of support alleviated the daily alienation women felt as many had not yet formed social networks outside the family. The family support was

emphasized mostly by female participants in Fier, while in many other occasions the family ties were weakened and migrants lived in spatially distanced areas from them.

This section has discussed about the challenges that returning under difficult circumstances of economic crisis and lack of settlement has had to the family and particularly to women. It was indicated that the challenges faced upon return have impacted the quality life of the family by leading to tensed relations and conflicts. Upon return many families are exposed to traditional gender roles indicating loss of autonomy for women. The data illustrate the role of extended family and kin particularly to women as a source of emotional and social support upon return.

5.3 Multi-layered uncertainties: ‘my mind tells me there is no future here’

Future uncertainty is one of the dominant themes across the narratives. Data suggest that return migration during times of crisis, produces multi-layered uncertainties, consisting of unpredictability about work potentials, economic security and children’s future. Consequently, more than half of the respondents frequently highlighted that returning may not be a permanent decision as the reassessment of their return has reinforced the belief that it is difficult to build a future in Albania. In most instances, the question regarding future plans was a compelling one, highlighting migrants’ inability to make long-term plans mostly because of the lack of opportunities in terms of employment in Albania and restrictions in the ability to re-migrate. Uncertainty and insecurity prevails mostly for the unemployed or those in precarious work conditions while for the migrants who had an investment uncertainty prevails in relation to their future as they expressed concern about the economic instability, and the potential risks for their business. The two situations of the business instability and unemployment are portrayed below:

Elida: What are your plans for the future?

Indrit: At the moment, nothing. We are going to try something else [referring to business]. If we see that it’s not going well than we will return to Italy. It’s difficult to start from the beginning in a place you left. And Italy, at the moment is not doing great either. So, we will wait a bit. I wouldn’t like to re-migrate, but if I see there is no choice (...). Here, you cannot see far, I will try something else and then only time will tell what will happen (...). Maybe it’s transitional, of course it’s transitional, but for the moment... and maybe I also

have lost the temper to wait for things to pass. I have waited a long time. Maybe now I feel still fit for work. Later on, I may not feel the same as age is passing (41 years, male, wave 2. Tirana).

Elida: What bothers you mostly?

Eduart: There is no continuity here. You think you are going on this side and tomorrow the flow takes you on the other. There is no certainty! (...). Abroad you know that if you are in a job, you will work and it will go on. You will progress and you will look at the position because you will also upgrade yourself. Here, it doesn't work like that. Here they tell you "go, it's not a problem. We will get someone else and pay him half the salary I am paying you." And he [employer] finds him. He doesn't only find him, but the person is begging you for the job. Now..., I happen to be with someone who says, "thank God we are receiving a salary." (41 years, family case study: wave 2).

Uncertainties were the result of a perceived inability to make plans for the future and a dim view with regards to the extent to which circumstances would change. This was characterised by multiple concerns. First, respondents working in entrepreneurship expressed the concern about the unstable economy and the tight economic policies in place which make it difficult to manage the business and forecast its progress. Second, as Eduart hinted, there is lack of employment and the working conditions do not ensure continuity and instead of experiencing upward mobility which should progressively characterise work life, in Albania they perceive instability and employment degradation. As narratives above highlighted '*here you cannot see far*', describing uncertainty which holds return migrants in a state of precariousness and temporariness on whether they should continue to live in Albania or consider options to re-migrate.

The stories and reflections shared by the majority of migrants, reveal that re-migration is not desirable, the feeling of being immigrant again is discomforting to most of returnees. Many refer to their age, and what they mention as '*it takes guts to start from the beginning*', highlighting the challenges of re-starting a new life, particularly when the movement involves the entire family. This indicates that return migrants are looking for an anchorage and to settle down somewhere permanently. These tensions of unsettlement and indecisiveness for the future, have resultantly instigated ambivalence and regret. Many migrants expressed that they should have endured the difficulties of crisis rather than returning. As Sonila remarked '*We made a mistake by returning. We could have endured the difficulties, like others, we would*

make it somehow, like all others who stayed. Not surprisingly, regret was expressed by women who face employment difficulties. Considering the structural conditions in Albania, re-migration was the only option for migrants to secure their children a better future:

Elida: Have you regretted moving to Albania?

Mira: A lot. I have, because... of the children. I destroyed their future. For the moment, they are in school, but when they grow up, where will they go? (...) where will they work?! It's a big problem! Nothing functions here: you work only if you are involved in politics or if you have connections. Here it doesn't work based on who deserves it, who is the best. You ask your child all your life to study hard, but then when you demand from him, can you guarantee him that he will be able to work. What will he work as...? (38 years, female: Tirana, wave 2).

Rudina: I have worked there in household cleaning. So, I do not want my daughter to be the age I am now and tell me: 'how am I going to earn for my food?', because here it's survival. To live or survive. Not to live, but to survive. Now, at this age that I am, what type of work can I do? (crying). (38 years, female: Fier, wave 2).

Based on the narratives, children play a significant role in shaping parental decisions about future re-migration intentions. As respondents, have reassessed their lives upon return and express frustration and hopelessness particularly related to socio-economic challenges, they perceive that re-migration would still be the best choice. To make this point, Rudina exemplified that despite being able to work, she cannot find a job, as she does not have the type of social networks for employment, consequently she feels 'unfit' for the work market. The concern for their children's future is expressed by all parents regardless of their socio-economic background and this puts parents into a position to migrate even though the high-skilled migrants feel more fulfilled with what they do in their life, as described by Daniela:

Elida: Do you feel good now?

Daniela: I feel good, but the first opportunity I get, I will leave, especially for my daughter. I can work as a researcher anywhere. I feel good and it's an essential part of life for me to feel good (...). I was very calm there [in Spain]. I think where I am living now is temporary. I want to leave. The period in which I am now, reduces a bit the need to leave, because I really need this work experience, but people shouldn't be egoists. For my daughter, I never want her to stay here. Ok, I can do what I want, but what will my daughter do here?! (32 years, female, Tirana: wave 2).

Daniela's excerpt uncovered that in the second wave she had found job as a lecturer in a University, however as the narrative highlights the return for her family may be temporary. Securing a better future for children is the main reason which extends beyond respondents' personal career or self-settlement, highlighting the way children shape parents' decision-making for re-migration but also an increased sense of temporariness to live in Albania. The insistence for re-migration appears to be influenced even by an intensified insecurity among people in the broader community and an uncontrolled willingness to migrate, illustrated by Linda below:

Linda: People here are becoming aggressive. Aggressive. Uncertainty makes you aggressive. The main thing I now hear is people wanting to leave. And people who have applied [meaning for visa permits in US and Canada] to leave the country are not poor. They are not suffering for food, but people who want to leave public administration or journalists. I know journalists who want to leave to America, to Canada. The journalists of a country want to leave. Well-known journalists. For themselves they can deal with the mish-mash here, we know how to deal, we are born and grown up here. But for our children it will be very difficult, because this country is just going to get worse. And it will remain like the villages which have only old people. Everyone is trying to make money to send their children for education in UK, US, with the hope to find employment there. I see this, and it makes me very sad. (*41 years, female, Tirana: wave 2*).

Then she points further:

(...) You know how Albania is?! When you are good, you are not good. I have lived in the US and when you are not good, there is something to change your mind, you can go somewhere else... Whereas here, pfff, it's a very nice country, with beautiful restaurants and cafeterias but there is no future perspective. It's a country in transit. Albania is turning into a boarding gate. I feel very sorry for this. I want it to be a final destination. It's not final. It is a connection between a travel in life.

Linda's account reflects a general pattern observable in the data that return migrants are fearful about the future. Therefore, willingness to migrate appears to be a situation they have found amongst migrants and non-migrants, which, according to Linda, makes Albania '*a country in transit*', where inhabitants have an 'escapism syndrome'. The number of people wanting to leave the country is concerning for the returnees, as according to them, this highlights that they do not expect an improvement of the situation. For that, they blame not only the broader political structures but even the people, as they often expressed that '*people do not protest*

here’ or *‘do not raise the voice to complain’*. This is perceived as a dramatic situation, particularly when migration involves highly qualified and skilled people which eventually leads to the country experiencing *‘brain drain’*. Yet, although respondents expressed this sense of regret towards the country and people, they seem to be more concerned about their own lives: for many of them Albania is *‘a stop’* and not a permanent home as sooner or later they may leave.

The group of people who were most uncertain about their future despite expressing a desire to re-migrate are the families who are physically separated, particularly those living in Fier. Miranda’s family has a business in Fier but her husband and son are in Greece still working. Considering the conditions, they are uncertain what will specifically happen, however she expresses willing to move to another country:

Miranda: I cannot imagine living here forever. We want to go somewhere else. Here in Albania even wealth has no value, especially before the spiritual conditions. When my daughter completes her studies, we will go. Maybe not to Greece but somewhere better. If we had Greek passports we would be free. We will sell everything we have here and start a new life. Of course, in Greece, it would have been easier but I want something better for my children as there is an economic crisis (...). I am 45 years old and I wouldn’t mind to start once more from the beginning. It would be a dream come true. Here in Albania, you become transformed. You become hypocritical. You can’t say something you don’t like as people immediately want to oppose you. (*44 years, female, Fier: wave 2*).

Separated families like the one above are the least settled as their future largely depends on husbands’ jobs. Families in which one partner (typically the husband) is engaged in cyclical migration, appeared to be in the most precarious state as although they may feel economically more stable than many other families, the emotional and psychological consequences of separation have fractured their sense of self and ability to forecast a future. This then indicates that while migration of one or two members of the family may increase economic stability, its repercussions are more negative than positive, situating these families in a more ambivalent state.

Data suggest that re-migration is however, conditioned by factors which are beyond the migrants’ agency. As the two main countries of destination were experiencing a recession, majority would not choose to go back but they expressed willing to move to countries with stronger economies in Europe. Yet, they perceive the restrictions in

access to working in these countries as limiting these options. Experiencing inadequate structural conditions to build a future in Albania and constrained by the choices and lack of access to work in other countries in Europe, majority of participants experienced ‘mobility entrapment’. Respondents working in low labour who were facing more economic hardship and difficulties with employment frequently remarked that they were open to move to Greece if they would find a job. Accounts exemplify migrants’ openness towards every possibility to move to another country that will enable them to access the labour market:

Elida: How has the return affected you?

Albi: The return has affected me in the way that if something comes up, I would leave now. Even to Greece. If I could find a job there, it would have been better than living here. For me its anywhere, where the job is. I don’t mind at all (...). For now, we don’t know, but we want to leave, I don’t see a green light here. I see, here, things are getting worse. It’s not that it’s a short period and it will pass. Here it was always like this. (*42 years, male, Fier: wave 2*).

Participants like Albi, who are working in construction and those unemployed, expressed the view that they work very little and earn low wages. One of the female participants who blames herself for bringing her children from America to Fier, but also cannot go back because she has no legal permission, expressed her frustration of five years of return: *‘I keep my clothes in a suitcase. My mind tells me there is no future here’*. This statement underlines her firmness to re-migrate and as she could not find a possibility, it also underlines the entrapment and unpredictability to fulfil her plans for re-migrating.

As previously mentioned, data suggest that children’s future is the main reason parents would consider re-migration, stressing that children influence parents’ decision-making of migration. However, in many cases there is a discrepancy as parents plans not always match with those of their children. Often children expressed not willing to migrate as they are hesitant about encountering issues of readjustment all over again. This is illustrated in the following expert:

Flori: We always hope to go back [to Greece]. We can go but we worry about the kids. Even the kids don’t want now. They are adapted with the language and the school. We will see how the beginning of school goes for Artisa, but Gina is different, she is still small and can grasp the language. But Artisa..., I

personally believe, will not stay here! I am waiting day by day if someone gives me a sign [for work] and I leave. I will go and work on my own. Even three months if I work and come back. There is no other solution. With three months of work there, I can make it for the whole year (*42 years, male, family case study, Tirana: wave 2*).

From the family case study above, it is evident that both Flori and his wife share the same opinion about wanting to go back to Greece as they are experiencing economic difficulties, however their daughter does not agree because of the fear of school adjustment, language and friendship. This highlights the crucial role that children play in influencing the decision-making process only this time in the reverse, adding further to the complexities of the return migrant family. As employment issues prevail in many families and trigger the need to re-migrate, this is contradicted by the consideration of children's adjustment issues in new countries. Therefore, Flori's narrative reveals that migrants consider the possibility of engaging in temporary migration of short periods of working in Greece and moving back and forth wherever there is work. It is observed that while socio-economic conditions and lack of options are one of the main reasons for most of those willing to re-migrate, a gender pattern is discerned as women view migration as an openness and a way to acquire back their autonomy and employment.

The return appears to be a permanent decision, for the respondents who are settled with their business and are satisfied with the progress they have made. Parents even in this case reported frequently urging their children to seek ways to migrate after they complete their high school, which indicates the way children shape adults' thinking despite adults' personal plans, as Anita narrated below:

Anita: I would like to keep my children away from Albania.

Elida: What about you?

Anita: For me, going back [to Greece] it's a *closed chapter* [italics mine]. I cannot think to start like I did 25 years ago. I don't have the time; I am not that young to start from the beginning. I don't have the time even for mistakes as things become tighter. (*Anita, 42 years, female, Tirana: wave 1*).

Anita's business is succeeding and although she is very attached to life in Greece, where she has lived for over twenty years, the need for stability anchorage makes some of the return migrants certain about living in Albania. They consider migration

as a '*closed chapter*' and undesired as they dislike the feeling of being immigrant all their life. However, as the narrative indicates, they all encourage children to either study abroad or find a way to re-migrate.

This section has suggested that in this research, uncertainty marks the lives of the majority of return migrants and for many Albania is perceived as a 'stop'. Remigration for the low- and high-skilled migrants is desirable to ensure a better future for the family, having children's needs at the core of these decisions. The data have shown the impact that children have in shaping and remaking lives in transit of return migrant families. A strong emigrating environment in Albania may further influence instability. Amidst economic instability, lack of access to work in other countries and children's future prospects, the return migrant families remain in an uncertain state. The interplay between economic settlement, age and not willing to feel immigrant again are influencing factors to increase the likelihood of a permanent stay in Albania.

5.4 Homeland (dis)identifications and social relations

Powerful narratives of not belonging are highlighted across many interviews, and appear related to participants' specific experiences of return filled with uncertainties and tensions. Belonging is affected in many ways but most importantly it is agonizing for respondents whose migration projects are disrupted and who experienced a return compelled by structural conditions. Narratives indicate that the relationship of the majority of the migrants with the home country is not based on ethnic identification and attachment to the place, but in this specific type of return, it is instrumental and based on the need for security and economic embeddedness as discussed below:

Rudina: I have only the DNA with my family. Nothing else, nothing else. I feel sorry that I say this for my country. It's a beautiful country with cursed people. I am sorry to say this for my country. But, it's a truth I face it every day... So, to be attached to what?... my country does not provide me with any opportunities. What kind of opportunities has my country provided me with? A job? The minimal thing..., I would work my guts out, I don't want money or social assistance... no. A working place. A future for my children. I don't see it here (*38 years, female, Fier: wave 1*).

Elida: Do you feel connected to Albania?

Flora: No no! (laughs). I don't know. I feel like I have moved to a foreign country. I am not happy at all. If I go there tomorrow [to Greece] I will feel better. I would be feeling much more positive. Here it's very bad. It was better there, more freedom. And the economic situation is better. It's so difficult here. And when you have no job, no money you become socially withdrawn. You'll have to listen to the nonsense they say [referring to the in-laws] (*Family case study: 40 years, female, Tirana: wave 1*)

As the two narratives point out above, lack of employment and unwillingness to return have weakened migrants' extent of identification with Albania. They point to a vexed identification with the home, as home does not provide employment or a sense of freedom, issues which were more concerning for women. This strong disidentification was particularly felt among the least adjusted return migrants. They appear to lack the material and emotional security which in turn affects their sense of self, and belonging to the country of origin. This is exemplified by how some migrants shifted from strong narratives of patriotism to deprecation, moaning that the situation has taken too long to improve. This is illustrated by Irfan: "*I wanted my children to be in the land of grandfathers and not be lost in a foreign country*" to "*nothing works here... if I could, tomorrow I would take my children and go to another country.*" This love and hate relationship highlights the inconsistent views produced by an 'unsettled self' found in a place they appear to have not been ready to embed themselves yet. These contradictions manifest from the migrant's undecided or precarious state of internal and external tensions.

It is, however, important to emphasize that disidentification with Albania was particularly common among most of the returnees from Greece. The narratives revealed that returnees in Albania lived an almost identical lifestyle to the Greek way of life, which was observed to a certain degree even among those returning from Italy. Respondents idealise the life of Greece in most aspects, are nostalgic, perform cultural practices, religious rituals, watch TV programmes from Greece and cook the same food. When living in Greece and Italy, migrants all reported having strong networks with other Albanians, whether this was family ties or with other people and visited Albania often, which may indicate that they had fulfilled the emotional needs with the 'home country'. Migrants recalled the difficulties experienced in migration and the big sacrifices over the years to incorporate

themselves in the host society. Respondents' interviews highlighted strong feelings of marginalization and exclusion, as well as difficulties in accessing employment especially in the beginning of their migration. This pressurised the migrants to conceal their ethnic identity and change the religion for those who were Muslims or even Catholics. For example, as Bona says: "*they forced us to say you are Christians, you are vorioepirioties¹*" or change the name. In this respect, the strategies they employed in an attempt to counter stigmatisation and to incorporate into a difficult exclusionary cultural environment may have in turn 'blurred' their ethnic identifications. This indicates that stigmatisation and pressure to hide one's ethnic identity in the host society has sufficiently weakened the feeling of identifying with Albania and this was observed mainly among migrants who had lived for a longer period in Greece.

To further illustrate the above point, it was observed that migrants who had lived in countries other than Greece and to a certain extent even Italy have not felt the pressure to conceal their Albanian identity, reflect a stronger identification with Albania:

Linda: I feel very attached to Albania. And I understood my love for Albania when I lived in the US, I loved it! I love it! When I was here, and people would listen to '*gurra popullore*' [folk music in the south Albania], I would be like, what are these people that are playing this music! I was a bit snobbish. But when I went there, I used to sing with Gezim Nika [Albanian singer] "My motherland, Albania" and I used to cry... maybe it is the longing of the migrant. So, I went to the extreme, but this wasn't fake. I started to love my roots. (...) I love Albania even when it doesn't love me (laughs)! (*41 years, female, Tirana: wave 1*).

Linda had returned from the US and is a high skilled migrant who has received a good job offer in Albania. As she stresses in her narrative, her identity as Albanian has been strengthened during migration as there she discovered her 'roots'. This type of strong attachment shared by her is viewed only in a few cases and it is linked with the migrants' experiences in the origin country, who have been less exposed to

¹ People originating from 'North Epirus', the Greek name for Southern Albania (Vullnetari, 2013: 153).

racism and unwelcoming attitudes. The above narrative is an example that reaffirms the way ethnic identities are imbued in different migratory circumstances which have facilitated for some migrants to openly express and practice their own ethnic identity and cultural practices.

In sum, identification with Albania for most of the returnees was weak and this was a result of the structural conditions in the home country which was reflected in the ways of deprecating the origin country. Similarly, the findings suggest that the migration history of those returning particularly from Greece has led to weakening ethnic identifications with the home country. Migrants returning from countries which have allowed for articulation of their ethnic identity without concealment identify to a greater degree with Albania. This also assumes that homeland identifications are worked and reworked in a continuous process of migration and post-migration experiences.

5.4.1 'Us' and those who have stayed behind

There are many conflicting discourses which emerge to the mismatch between what migrants have expected to find and the reality. Returnees realize that people have changed and have become more individualistic during the time they had been abroad and this causes confusion to them. Data suggest that as they have lived away for a long time, upon return they realize a contrast in mentality of people which is not easily perceptible by participants. In general, they believe that people have become more individualistic and materialistic. Although most of them have been visiting Albania often, they realize that it is not easy to capture the alterations and changes in mentalities. The very aspects the returnees have cherished about the past and some of the values including hospitality and solidarity which they have idealised and expected to find upon return, has distorted the images of Albania they knew. The changes the migrants realize are important as the returnee loses the points of reference which made him familiar with his/her own country. Therefore, they tend to look at the home country with a critical eye and pay attention to its weaknesses. As previously mentioned, migration is considered to be an invaluable experience from which migrants have gained experience and cultural capital. In general, returnees believe that they are better cultured and that the skills and expertise they have

acquired sets them apart from those who have not migrated. They feel that people from the wider community either lament on their low quality of life and unemployment or live a fancier life for which they do not work hard. When asked about what they think of people in Albania, one of the respondents expressed:

Anita: I wouldn't have liked things to be the way they have been and in some aspects, they have developed so much. I am astonished by the contrast. In some things, they have improved so much whereas in others, which they should have improved, like work, ambition, persistence they haven't. They have become even more lazy (...). And then you ask yourself "Wait a minute where do they find all these...?" You have worked all your life. I have worked all my life. I am telling you, I have not removed the work attire from my body for 17 years, and when I came here I see ladies with high heels going early morning in hairdressing (42 years, female, Tirana: wave 1).

The contrast that Anita makes is highlighted by many returnees as they point towards what they perceive as 'laziness' among people, claiming to get jobs they are unqualified for them. A widespread coffee culture in Albania was disturbing to them, for which they considered that people wasted a lot of their productive time in that activity. In contrast, they emphasize the struggles and challenges of migration to save and gather capital, often keeping enjoyment to a low degree. As Ema says: *'I was in Italy for nine years and I never went to the seaside'* discussing further that her migration was motivated by working, saving and investing in Albania, the diligence of which was not found amongst other people. The narratives indicated that comparing themselves with non-migrants was a strategy to balance their own self-esteem and identity and to justify their sacrifices of migration. These dissonances were observed as some migrants regretted not enjoying themselves as much as they would have wanted. Their working routine took over their social life as Anita emotionally described: *"I would have lived better. If in the morning, I took that coffee and hastily ran to work..., I would have sat and enjoyed!"*. This indicates the perceived gains and losses of the migrant status and identity, as by gaining on one side, they realize, they have missed on the other which appears to become evident as they recall their life experiences upon return.

Nevertheless, migration was mainly perceived as an advantage by most of the returnees, not only for the skills they have gained but also broader cultural values. This is felt with particular intensity among those engaged in employment and the

high skilled migrants. However, this enthusiasm is not well received by the broader community and is met with the hesitation and rejection as indicated below:

Linda: Albania is a difficult country not only for the migrants but even for the non-migrants. However, the difficulties for us unfold in two directions, because you come from a different culture. During the time we have stayed there we have become hybrid, in the sense that we have gained from there... we have learned the culture of communicating, of working. We have taken some elements that you cannot find in the everydayness of people who have not lived only here. This makes it more difficult, from the way they understand things. For example, for those of us who move from the US, we have a characteristic, we speak openly. America has taught us to remove the unnecessary talking in conversations, in other words to beat around the bush. They don't like that. You can make enemies easily here. *(41 years, female, Tirana: wave 1).*

From the narrative above it is evidenced that participants distanced themselves from non-migrants by emphasizing the positive aspects of the cultural capital they had gained by participating with other cultures. Linda, and a few other high-skilled migrants were enthusiastic to articulate their cultural 'hybridity' and multiple identifications with the cultures they have been in contact with.

Daniela: I am very open about things. For example, a conversation about homosexuals. I was talking to one of my friends from school and I was very surprised by the way she approached the topic (...). The way my friend insisted the opposite was scary. The thing is that after two years in France and then Spain, I learned other languages, cultures, I learned about some issues that I was not open to before, such as environment or animals' wellbeing. To discuss such things with a friend of mine who had not been in France, it would be absurd. She is stupid they would say. But it exists and in a way, and when you pass a part of your life.... It also depends by your willingness to change, but this is the truth. You learn a language, your brain evolves towards many things, you see things in a different way, and try to be less prejudicial. Before you answer something, you make an assessment of the situation before hand... wait a minute the answer is there. And this is something, I do not even want to go out for coffee. However, I still accept it, I tell to myself, ok, this is how they think.. it's fine... but for having coffee, of course you will choose people that you feel good with and enjoy being with them. *(32 years, female, Tirana: wave 1).*

As Daniela explains in her narrative, while intellectually she identifies with France, she is fascinated by the culture and customs of Spain as she discusses unique traditions and the broad friendship she has formed there. As the few high skilled returnees, have participated and have been open to the inter-cultural practices while in the host country, the transitional cultural elements have influenced their identity

as it shifts in different positioning. For this group of people, migration has been a self-transforming process as they have identified new social realities, reworked in different cultural spaces which cannot be achieved by living in a single country. This illustrates that cultural experiences differentiate migrants from others and the way they are made to feel different makes them question the extent to which they belong in the home country.

In contrast to other migrants, the highly-skilled respondents highlighted their own willingness to embrace the various aspects of cultures they had interacted with. By emphasizing their own cosmopolitan outlook, returnees differentiated themselves from other migrants who according to them live in an ‘enclave’ and remain disintegrated. However, ‘hybridness’ appears compounded and contested by other people as social worlds and understandings diverge. In this way participants frequently characterised themselves as being misunderstood by others, and viewed others as close-minded and not willing to learn. This indicates that hybrid identities often become fractured by the ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ pressures, making return migrants feel estranged. Although challenged, these multicultural elements were often maintained by socializing with like-minded people. Daniela, who had moved very recently, engaged in fewer social activities as she found it difficult to relate and identify with others, but constantly sought to perform a similar lifestyle as in the past, such as by attending cultural activities in the city. This indicates the negotiations of feeling advantaged by the cultural knowledge in comparison to others and the attempts to reconstruct their new habits in a context that ensures retaining such advantages. In other words, this refers to the ways some of the return migrants seek to ‘do’ belonging in the home country by constantly reinventing their identities. However, this is more typical for the higher skilled migrants as the lower skilled, are expected and challenged to a greater degree to fit into the mainstream society (some of this discussed in section 5.2). In majority, migrants have been questioned by non-migrants in Albania ‘*Why did you come back*’ or ‘*as if you came from... it’s just Greece!*’, which returnees perceived as overly judgmental and a perception of a stigma of failure. This relates to the discussion in section 5.3, of the recent ‘escapism syndrome’ of people wanting to migrate, indicating that returning is often viewed as a failure. The stigma of failure from others, exasperates to a greater degree migrants’ own perception of the return as failure of their migratory project as

many realise many losses which makes them question the decision to migrate at the first place.

This section has highlighted the challenges of the return migrant. Migration is viewed as a self-transforming experience to them in terms of acquired skills and the transnational cultural values. For many migrants, the social and cultural capital acquired abroad shaped their migrant identity with which migrants prefer to identify and avoid categorizations based on certain ethnic identities. Hybridity and cultural capital are often challenged and not welcomed by the broader community. This indicates that belonging for migrants is not only a self-defined process but it is influenced by the perceptions of others, often characterized by contradiction and which requires new negotiations and resistance. Local involvement does not appear to be easy for the returnees as they realise the gains and losses of migration experience which increases social alienation and creates a slippery belonging.

5.5 Discussion

This chapter has captured the complexities of experiences of return migration for the adults participating in this research, focusing on their employment prospects, identification with the home, the people as well as envisaged future trajectories. As the majority of the returnees in this research had returned because of the recent recession in Greece and Italy, this chapter has unveiled that return in times of crises is an ambivalent process. Data suggest that even though the return is not forced (or involuntary), the circumstances upon return and the subsequent psychological and socio-economic experiences make this type of return unique and sharing similar features of both voluntary and involuntary return. Unlike many other studies in return migration (De Bree et al., 2010; Konzett-Smoliner, 2016; Metereen, 2014; Ní Laoire 2007; Parutis, 2013), the majority of return migrants in the current research, undertook the decision to return under the difficult conditions of economic crisis in the host society. The circumstances under which migrants have returned, play a determining role in migrants' overall embeddedness, identification with the homeland, and the ability to settle down in Albania. In support of Cassarino's model (2008), the current findings suggest that migrants returning because of the economic

crisis lacked willingness and readiness to return, including both the desire to move and the mobilization of resources (including information, social networks). The findings indicate that as the migrants had to leave the previous country against their will, and their migration plans have been disrupted, this will affect their overall experiences and belonging upon return.

The findings suggest that migrants while migrants were not forced to return, the economic conditions in the host society, disrupted their migration plans. Moreover, the return experiences have been associated with psychological distress, features of return which support limited recent assumptions that challenge distinct binary categorizations of voluntary and involuntary return (Van Houte et al., 2016). Structural circumstances and economic conditions in the home country have hindered decent access to employment and increased feelings of instability for the majority of return migrants in this research. This led to employment degradation and a difficult business environment. In this way, the data point towards a downward mobility for most of return migrants suggesting that re-settlement during economic crisis requires a functional system of relevant economic structures and individual mobilization of resources to ensure facilitation of reintegration and transfer of resources.

The chapter has shown that migrants have become equipped with knowledge and skills which have contributed to their upward mobility in migration and for some even upon return. As they seek to apply this knowledge, they view themselves as the bearers of cultural remittances (Flores, 2009). In this research, return migration was more successful for the migrants who have been better prepared in terms of financial capital and were located in the capital city. Findings suggest that preparedness to return was essential in the success of some return migrants and their ability to initiate an enterprise. However, the ability to transfer the financial and cultural capital was not always possible as skills that return migrants have acquired are not always useful in the local economy. Data support other research which suggests that local economic context does not always facilitate 'capital conversion' or the ability to apply skills and earnings (Carling et al., 2014). This suggests that while preparation to return in terms of mobilization of resources was essential for return migrants, it is not sufficient to determine a successful resettlement upon return. Therefore,

transferability of skills and capital is conditioned by the socio-economic conditions in the origin country and location as return migrants located in better areas in Tirana were more able to develop their business according to their plans.

The data further highlight the consequences that adjustment issues have on the family and particularly women. In this way, the lower socio-economic status in Albania, unemployment and traditional gender norms have affected the quality of the family life and women experiencing psychological distress. These findings are also evident when considering return migrants who have been forced to return (Ghanem, 2003; Kleist, 2017). In contrast to other research (Konzett-Smoliner, 2016) in which partners provide enthusiasm, emotional support and motivate each-other, in the current research, the low skilled migrants reported family tensions and instability. A possible explanation for the differences between the current research and the work of Konzett-Smoliner (2016) is that returnees, of that study, are high-skilled migrants moving to Austria, who are more prepared and in a country with better economic conditions and opportunities. In this research, women are perceived to be more ambivalent about the return. Findings suggest that migration has generally been considered as a positive experience for women as it allows them to acquire more autonomy and live away from the rigid social norms of their society of origin (Parreñas, 2001). This emphasizes the employment as an aspect which is not only a source of income but also a way to participate in the society (Dagdeviren et al., 2017). In this research, more than half of women lost their jobs after the return, exasperated by a situation of 'moving back' to more conventional mentalities of the society in Albania, meaning having to adjust to traditional gender roles. Family ties were an important source of emotional and practical support especially for women who were the most to experience downward mobility and were less socially engaged. As research with a focus on family changes is rare, these data contribute insights to the 'knock on effect' of return migration in 'troubled times' and the need to further analyse the relationship of the family life and return migration.

Uncertainty for the future is one of the main concerns return migration raises during difficult times of economic crisis. This uncertainty is multi-layered including factors of unfavourable local conditions, such as employment difficulties, low salaries, opportunities and resources as well as children's future prospects. For the majority

of return migrants, their lives are in flux and in a precarious state as they revealed disadvantaging conditions to build a future in Albania, however they have little opportunities to re-migrate. This situation reaffirms the hesitation and dilemmas of many migrants in European countries expressing unwillingness to move to their country of origin which are also experiencing an economic crisis (Bygnes & Erdal, 2017). The temporary return appears to some extent to be similar to return migrants in Romania (Pirvu & Axinte, 2012) and Baltic countries (Zaiceva & Zimmerman, 2012) and who prefer to remain in the host country. For the return migrants in this research, the bigger problem unfolds as re-migration to the two main host countries is no longer an option referring to the economic recession in these countries, which has led to migrants experiencing limited opportunities and degrees of instability in the labour markets (Lafleur & Stanek, 2017; Mai & Paladini, 2013). In contrast to the post-enlargement European countries, where migrants benefit from the permeability of borders with all other EU countries (Zaiceva & Zimmerman, 2012), return migrants in the current research, are restricted to freely work and live in other western European countries, which appears to generate a movement entrapment.

Findings further indicate the contrasting ways in which children shape parents' decision-making for future migratory decisions. More specifically, findings have suggested that as parents' intentions to undertake the decision to re-migrate are driven by children's better opportunities for the future, children may hinder their future plans. This contributes to research which addresses the gap of the position of children in the decision-making processes on family migration (Bushin, 2009; Hutchins, 2011) suggesting that particularly in times of crisis, parents' decisions of migration are shaped based on the consideration of children's future needs. The data have further demonstrated that re-migration decisions may also be induced by the high migration rate in Albania, meaning Albania is perceived to be a stop, a 'transit' country. This is a phenomenon of a country with high migration flows, prevalent in countries that are economically unstable and with many people leaving them (Hausmann & Nedelkoska, 2017). These intersecting factors may make Albania not a permanent destination for settlement for many of the return migrants.

In this way, return migration appears not to be the end cycle of migration for many respondents, which challenges existing assumptions that return migration is the end

stage of the migration cycle (Dustmann & Weiss, 2007). Some migrants may turn towards circular migration, which supports previous research with return migration in Albania (Labrianidis & Hatziprokopiou 2005, Labrianidis & Kazazi 2006, Vadean & Piracha 2009; Maroukis & Gemi, 2013). While this pattern of migration may be a flexible way to geographically access the labour markets of the two countries, it is not considered as the best strategy as families bear the social consequences and economic exhausting adjustments. This supports Mai and Paladini's argument (2013, p.64) suggesting that Albanian circulatory migration cannot not be considered as 'politicized celebrations' (Cassarino, 2013), in which both countries gain when the costs of circular migration are taken into account. This indicates, that for the group of 'no choice' returnees who have moved because of the economic crisis, being in precarious conditions increases the likelihood of the engaging in individual cyclical migration, resulting in more physically separated families.

The research has suggested that the extent to which migrants identify with the home country is affected by their ability to settle down and acquire a sense of certainty and security. The data have suggested that unlike return migrants from Ireland or Poland (Ní Laoire, 2007; Ralph, 2013; Parutis, 2013), whose return was propelled by nostalgic narratives, in this research, 'pushed' to move back from the economic crisis in Greece, returnees disidentify with the country of origin as home does not provide sustainability and possibilities for the future. Unlike conceptualizations of simultaneously identifying with 'multiple homes' (Blunt & Dowling, 2006) for home in this research, before the spiritual and immaterial belonging, requires to secure the material, autonomy and stability. The options to have a liveable future are lacking at the moment, and this appears to have affected the identification with the homeland. This reflects an ontological (in)security challenged by the inability 'to keep a certain narrative going' (cf. Giddens, 1993, p.54). In the face of uncertainty, some of the migrants are unable to achieve and forecast continuity and stability. The majority of return migrants live in a state of ambivalence, simultaneously affected by three essential factors: the circumstances of return, conditions upon return and uncertainties for the future. It can therefore be argued that identifications with the homeland are rational and organized based on other grounded elements of employment opportunities and economic conditions, and that there is an over-emphasis of viewing belonging mostly in relation with ethnic identity.

However, an important factor defining identification with the home in this research is the host society from where migrants have returned or the migration history. Findings reveal that the majority of migrants returning from Greece who have experienced stronger pressure to conceal their ethnic identity, have a symbolic identification with Albania. This corroborates research by Lamont and Molnar (2002) and Wimmer (2008), who suggested that in countering racism and stigmatisation, people engage in avoidance of ethnic categorizations. Subsequently, respondents from this group identified more with the Greek way of life, a situation which upon return may lead to 'fragmented identities' (Hedetoft, 2004). This was observed among the migrants returning from other countries than Greece and Italy; which have allowed for articulation of their ethnic identity without concealment, they appear to identify to a greater degree with Albania. The current data then argue that homeland identification is not only individually bounded and equally experienced but it appears to be largely shaped and reworked by specific migratory experiences.

The vast majority of return migrants perceived themselves as being equipped with good work culture ethics, skills which they have acquired during migration. The data suggest that migrants have incorporated these skills in their work and tended to transmit the practices to those with whom they work and interact. These are important values for the participants in shaping their transnational identities and positive self-esteem amidst ambiguity. In support of other studies (Ghanem, 2003), the results indicate that due to the experiences and skills migrants have acquired abroad, returnees consider themselves to be better cultured and developed than others. Nevertheless, data suggest the 'slippery belongings' (Dürschmidt, 2016, p.13) of the inner and outer ambiguities as migrants realise the changes in themselves and others. These changes in some instances appear as self-realizing and in others as feeling behind in comparison to others. This is in line with other research (Kwok-bun, 2012; Parutis, 2013) the findings have demonstrated that social and cultural capital acquired in the previous country are not well-received by societies of origin and many perceive a state of ambiguity. This is perceived even among high-skilled migrants as they experience the disjuncture between what has been achieved is not well-recognized among others. In contrast to other research, there are

differences as particularly females and lower skilled migrants often perceive their migration as a failure which appears to be influenced by the circumstances upon which the return has taken place.

5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has examined adults' experiences of return migration, investigating their employment possibilities, level of identification with the home country, social relations and future paths. Findings have suggested that return migration during an economic crisis creates a unique type of mobility for its lack of willingness to return, the ability to prepare and the experiences upon return. These findings challenge the existing policy-oriented binary categorizations of 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' return migration and calls for the consideration of the development of migration policies and strategies of reintegration of return migrants. The chapter has demonstrated that in contrast to focusing only at an individual level of mobilization and preparation from migrants (Cassarino, 2004), future theoretical conceptualizations need to consider structural conditions as important in shaping positive return migration experiences.

Return migration in times of crisis markedly affects individuals' future prospects and plans. Perceived lack of opportunities in Albania, channels energies in seeking ways for future re-migration mobilities. For majority, the host country is not an option due to its unstable economy, however movement restrictions with other countries increase uncertainty and lead to migrants remaining in a state of flux. This situation may influence individual circular migration for the low-skilled migrants. The findings further suggest that as the majority of migrants are equipped with knowledge resources and skills, the consequences of a potential future remigration of returnees and others would further generate human and brain drain in the country. Additionally, the findings have shown the unease and slippery belonging migrants perceive to have even in relation with the broader community by perceived differences and the changed reality.

The current chapter has shown that return migration in times of crisis is a highly ambivalent experience, making the return a ‘homecoming limbo’, a mental state of instability of belonging and non-belonging in one’s homeland. Identification with Albania was symbolic for most of migrants and largely shaped by experiences during migration. Return experiences have consequences for individuals and families, indicating higher ambivalent experiences based on gender as females undergo reversed gendered roles as a result of unemployment and having to adopt more traditional values. The longitudinal changes over one year are not significant as economic opportunities do not change to a great extent. Comparative research is needed to establish more closely the differences that may emerge in their experiences based on different categories of returned migrants.

These issues have had consequences for individuals and the families, suggesting that future research investigates not only individual experiences of the migrant but more broadly of the family. The longitudinal changes over one year are not significant as economic opportunities do not change greatly. Further, the chapter argues that return migration is not static and may not be permanent for the majority of return migrants. Finally, the chapter suggests that the combination of unfavourable conditions prior to return (willingness and preparation to return), upon return (employment instability and unpredictability of future opportunities) is crucial in determining experiences and possibilities of return migration.

Teenagers: School Experiences, Belonging and Future Prospects

“It’s very difficult to leave the country where you are born, you leave your friends behind, school, and everything you have learned there. It’s like changing life.”
(Alfie, 13 years, Tirana: Wave 1)

6.0 Introduction

The seminal work by King (1977) was the first to document that during return migration young people can face difficulties such as school and language problems. Since then, literature concerning the children of migrants has focused mostly on second generation adult return migrants (Potter 2005; Christou 2006; Potter and Philips, 2006; Wessendorf, 2007; Reynolds, 2008; Sardinha, 2011; King & Christou, 2014; King & Kilic, 2014). This body of work has examined the experiences of adult children of migrants whose return tended to be motivated by family’ narratives of returning to the homeland, or to their ‘roots’ (Wessendorf, 2007; Reynolds 2008). These studies have been important in documenting the extent to which these adults can face difficulties adjusting to their new surroundings, while the extent to which children of return migrants experience similar difficulties is not understood as fully.

Research with teenagers is very rare, who, in contrast to adults, need to manage two identity transitions simultaneously: changing different cultural environments and transitioning from adolescence into adulthood (Gonzales, 2016; Vildaite, 2014). School is the main environment where young returnees encounter others and are challenged by the “new” culture (Adams & Kirova, 2006). Recent literature on Albanian return migration has examined the experiences of schooling of young people and highlights the institutional deficiencies of Albania to support upward mobility and the re-integration of children of return migrants (Vathi et al., 2016).

This research has documented school difficulties for children and the lack of resources linked to the educational systems in the country. In line with this, this chapter initially examines how young returnees experience school, before discussing the difficulties they have faced in relation to school attainment and learning, teaching styles and the role of educators.

As individuals become mobile, their identities and belonging are influenced by their migratory experiences (Hall, 1996), indicating the fluid nature of identity formation. It has been suggested that belonging is not only an individual matter but also a relational and social one, and is central to understanding the socio-spatial practices of inclusion and exclusion (Antonsich, 2010). Research suggests that migrants may feel ambivalent when settling into a new country, with language or accent particularly salient ethnic boundary markers, positioning people as being one of ‘us’ or ‘them’ (Nash, 1996). Further, Valentine and colleagues (2009: b) suggest that belonging is not only about people’s own ‘claiming’ their ethnic identity but also about others’ recognition and acceptance of this identity. With this in mind, the chapter examines teenagers’ sense of belonging and social relations influencing in identity formations and belonging in Albania.

Teenagers’ positioning in everyday life is shaped by influences of cultural norms and gendered power relations. Research has indicated that there are gender differences in the processes of adjustment in migration, with boys experiencing fewer difficulties than girls (O’Connor, 2009). The gendered nature in return migration research suggests further that boys and girls engage in different activities, such as boys with sport and girls (Ní Laoire, 2011). Focusing on the intersectionality of power relations, the current chapter will look on how gendered youth identities are shaped by influences of socio-cultural norms focusing on inequalities and exclusion teenagers experience upon return.

Migration research consistently indicates that the family plays an important role in supporting and facilitating children’s settlement emotionally and practically (Christopoulou & Leeuw, 2005; Ní Laoire et al., 2010). Classic assumptions of ‘segmented assimilation’ (Portes & Rumbaut, 1991) illuminate the way generations may have different views of the social world as they move to a new country. Based

on this, it has been found that migration, for families, may be associated with inter-generational conflicts as children simultaneously seek to assimilate the new culture but while also experiencing disagreement and a lack of acceptance at home (Kwak, 2003). Whilst these conflicts are highlighted in literature in the migrating country, it is important to understand whether these challenges are posed when families move back to the origin country and young people are faced with cultural norms that may be new to them. In this way, this chapter will move to examine the way returning in the origin country shapes intergenerational relations.

The final section focuses on young peoples' future prospects, focusing on their chances of establishing a future in Albania or elsewhere. Literature conducted during the post-economic crisis with Albanian young people living in Greece indicates that despite the crisis, many young people refuse to move to Albania as they view that as a step backward (Michail & Christou, 2016). An abundant recent body of research across Europe has documented that economic crises are frequently associated with psychological distress and uncertainties for the future (Di Blasi et al., 2016). As the majority of Albanian migrants have moved to Albania because of the economic crisis, the chapter will finally examine the future pathways of young returnees. Analysis of this chapter will also draw on the accounts of the parents.

6.1 School experiences

Narratives of this analysis highlight that school was the most important environment for teenagers to determine their experiences of belonging or non-belonging. Data suggest that most of the teenagers have undergone transitional challenges, including changes in school settings, curricula, teaching methods and the social interactions happening within the school environment. For many respondents, the abrupt move to Albania was associated with difficulties arising from the short time parents were given to choose a school for their children. This was reflected in the fact that some respondents had changed school up to three times, as they mentioned to have frequently changed house location or moved back and forth to Greece, until they had settled more permanently. Many of the respondents joined school in the middle of the school term or by the end. Often, teenagers expressed dissatisfaction because

schools had registered some of them one year behind with the justification that children need to reach the learning level of their peers in Albania.

Teenagers reported that they could join any school or geographical area at any time, regardless of their location of residence. Many of the teenagers who were studying in state schools complained of unfavourable learning conditions, describing classes with large number of pupils and worse conditions than they had previously experienced. Consequently, they claimed that they were given little attention and help by teachers. The main challenge however were the lessons, with particular difficulties encountered with the language and science subjects. Lessons were perceived to be more difficult and science subjects as more advanced in comparison to what they had learned prior to moving to Albania. This impacted their overall school performance, by obtaining lower grades particularly in the first year of their studies. Young returnees recounted numerous instances to illustrate that school in Albania was very 'tough':

Elida: Have you faced problems with school?

Alexa: The language was a problem, speaking in front of the classroom and the lessons are very difficult here in comparison to Greece, lessons were much easier there. Meaning something I have done there, something we do here in year eight, there they do it in year nine or even high school. School programme is overloaded. *(15 years, female, Tirana: wave 1).*

Adela: School has been very difficult in the beginning, particularly in sciences, because here..., here I think they burden students much more (...). They do the things much more in advance here, and there used to be lots of stuff that I haven't done there and they have done them here before (...). I used to cry a lot because I was a good student there and I am used to getting high grades, and when I realized that I wasn't doing very well here, I was upset *(17 years, female, Fier: wave 1).*

Teenagers expressed being overly stressed as the Albanian learning programme was viewed as more demanding and overloaded in comparison to schools in Greece or Italy. Like Adela, many teenagers expressed crying and not wanting to go to school as they encountered many difficulties in language and differences in lessons. In contrast, parents viewed schools 'being tough' much more positively. Particularly, respondents from Italy, felt that schools in Italy were not as strong and demanding as they would have liked them to be. Such appreciation of parents was often framed

based on their own experiences of a strict system of education which they recognized as a better learning strategy. Difficulties with the learning process were felt to a greater extent by the young people who were in their final year of the high school studies and their results would influence their entry requirements for higher education. To accelerate their learning, some had enrolled in private classes for the language, which for some of them was a continuing practice they had started in Greece.

Narratives reveal that teenagers' experiences of school were largely impacted by how different the Albanian teaching style was, to what they have been used to. Unlike in their previous schools, teenagers in the Albanian education system were asked to talk about the lesson in front of their peers, followed by a session of questions from teachers. This was described to be a very uncomfortable experience, which placed teenagers as the 'centre of attention'. Numerous participants highlighted what they perceived to be a lack of support of teachers in facilitating the process of school adjustment, and parents had often made complaints about this. Teachers and other school staff were perceived as more authoritarian and strict than those encountered previously, and they were believed to lack the technical and the soft skills to support the newcomers.

Elida: Have you had support from the teachers?

Klodian: Not at all. I was simply telling them, I did not understand and they would be like: "take the books of year 6 and year 5 and learn from there" [the previous years]. I cannot do anything, because I have to continue with my work plan, I cannot stay behind." (15 years, male, Fier; wave 1).

The narrative of Klodian indicates that he received no support from the teacher as these were not perceived to be part of the teaching programme. Teachers often were described as taking sides in classroom, by favouring better students and engaging them in the classroom activities to a greater extent. This emphasises the perceived lack of preparation from schools and of the educational system to deal with social diversity which impacted school performance and obstructed young people's adjustment. The combination of learning barriers and the non-supportive environment has in many teenagers resulted in the perception of being undermined in school:

Elida: Do you think you have changed since you have moved to Albania?

Drini: I think I am very reserved here. We were very open there, you can say anything to the teacher and it's not a big issue. Here I am more reserved, in certain things, I am. For example, when I have any questions for the lesson, usually I do not raise my hand. There is not as much cooperation (*13 years, male, Tirana: wave 1*).

For Drini and some other respondents, the new school environment has negatively affected their sense of self-confidence, and influenced them in becoming more reserved and less willing to actively engage in class. Teachers often were portrayed as conflictual and yelling at pupils for no reason. Some boys reported confrontations with the teachers, which they attributed to a lack of communication and understanding from their side. In interviews, participants frequently recalled their teachers from the past and described them as more approachable and less authoritative. Only a few teenagers in the first wave of data collection reported to have received good support from teachers in Albania and this was mostly in Tirana, where schools were more prepared to support the returned children. In majority, in the first year of their settlement in Albania, the support was perceived more as a gesture of sympathy of teachers towards the 'newcomers' than a consideration of their individual needs or a formal obligation.

The second wave of data collection uncovered changes and improvements in teenagers' lives in many respects. Less adjustment problems were reported and major barriers were overcome. Teenagers described experiencing improvement in results, and their overall confidence and relations with the teachers had become more supportive.

Olta: School is very good, teachers are good and helpful. They don't tease me as they did in the beginning. Now, when I have any problem with the language as for example the letter "sh", "th" [letters in the Albanian alphabet], I still mix them up but not that they make fun of me as before, but now, I join and laugh with them as I do understand the way I said it. While in the beginning they would ridicule me and that would hurt me very much (*16 years, female, Fier: wave 2*).

Narratives highlighted, that over the time, most of the respondents had adjusted to the school environment. The acquired knowledge surrounding the education system,

and increasingly improved interactions with the teachers had influenced to improve on their academic competence and adaptation. Becoming more familiar with the style of teaching and feeling accepted as part of the school environment played a significant part in school experiences.

The most adjusted teenagers were those who were able to pursue extra-curricular activities. Teenagers in general complained about a lack of such activities in Albania, however a small number of teenagers who either were assigned roles within the school or indicated to have personally sought activities, expressed positive experiences and improved friendship relations. This is exemplified by Alma in the second wave:

Alma: School is generally good. My school has started to organize different activities. Besides “Tirana Art Fest” in which the high schools of Tirana participate, my school is one of the four selected for another competition to represent Tirana. I am involved in most of those even though my parents do not always agree. You need a bit of persistence for these. School is good and teachers are really helpful and they are becoming friendly with us. Results have not changed like drastically or... they stand the same. So, I am going with the same rhythm. It is not that we have a massive improvement or decline in results. I haven’t had problems with friends or school (*16 years, female, Tirana: wave 2*).

Although as noted, school results did not always improve, an outcome which can be linked to individual ambitions and objectives. Exploring interests outside the academic environment allowed participants to give less focus on the challenges of adjustment, interact to a greater degree and enact a more positive outlook about the return.

6.2 Belonging: marking insiders and outsiders

6.2.1 Labelling and stigmatisation

Young returnees’ accounts of their experiences in Albania reflected ambivalence as they encounter a lack of acceptance from other peers, most frequently experienced within the school setting. Labelling and derogatory remarks have been deployed with the intention to position returnees as outsiders which has alienated teenagers and

made them feel othered. Labels such as ‘Greeks’, ‘Italians’, ‘Jorgos’ (Greek name) or ‘*efharisto*’ (thank you in Greek) used with a stereotypical connotation were assigned to young returnees from the beginning and remained with them for a long time. As Nikoleta recalls: ‘*All the swearing and offences I received from other classmates...., “the Greek is coming..., and other stuff.”*’ Strong racial narratives illustrated by teenagers have recollected similar xenophobic attitudes experienced in Greece. This is illustrated in the following excerpt:

Ela: We felt much better there. Here, we feel we are migrants.

Ina: Here and there we are migrants!

Ina: Because when we were in Greece they used to tell us, Albanians, Albanians, and when we are in Albania they call us Greeks.

Rea: So, everywhere we go we are foreigners, even here we feel that, because...

Ina: Because of the emigration... that has affected us so much.

Rea: They refer to us as ‘Greeks.’

Elida: How does that make you feel?

Ina: We feel like foreigners even in our own homeland. There is nothing we can do about that. Sometimes even our parents say “what have we done to our children?” because they [referring to other peers] make us stressed. Parents feel guilty that they have separated us from our friends and the school. (*focus group, Tirana: wave 1*).

The narrative from the focus group discussions illustrates the experiences of ‘double alienation’ of feeling foreigners in the two countries. To indicate that, they commonly used the ethnically charged term of “racism”. For some, this was a very sensitive topic as they recounted traumatic experiences of discrimination and racism which mostly occurred in the school environment but also in other places of socialization. Participants’ accounts revealed two important points which appear to have led to stigmatisation and alienation. The first reason was the accent of speaking Albanian with a distinct Greek nuancing, used as the main boundary pointer through name-calling and taunting from other teenagers which marked them as outsiders. The second reason was linked with the fact that moving from Greece was related to teenagers perceiving a prevailing “hatred” among people of these two countries, reinforcing the foreignness, particularly for this group and making teenagers prone to being ridiculed. This is expressed in the narrative below:

Olta: I speak well, but I don’t know, I feel different from others. It’s the accent, the way I speak..., I make mistakes. I don’t know, I find it very hard to

stand at the front of the classroom or to solve the problems in the whiteboard. I am more comfortable talking while I am sitting. We were standing up there too, but here..., I don't know, it feels very different. For example, you stand up in front of the class but if you make a mistake they start making fun of you. I am a very sensitive person and I don't like it if someone makes fun of me. I start to cry. They mock me because of my accent, then they start, you came from Greece, and all the nonsense boys do. Even girls sometimes, but it's more from the boys (16 years, female, Fier: wave 1).

Adela: I blush and I feel very embarrassed. I don't want to attract attention. It was good in Greece, I was sitting on the table, I would talk about the lesson and that's all. Whereas here you have to stand in front of the classroom, the whole class is listening to you, it attracts attention. Or they laugh and make you laugh too ... (17 years, female, Fier: wave 1).

Negative labelling based on accent was the main reason to mark teenagers as different and in many occasions also deflected their attention from learning which appeared to have an effect on the way they think about themselves and the way they perceive others see them. These situations occurred mainly when they stood up to speak in front of the class. As touched on previously, the Albanian practice of asking pupils to speak out at the front of the classroom² reinforces feelings of alienation. Like Adela, many other teenagers described speaking in front of the class as an 'embarrassment', by elaborating on how they 'stumbled' as they attempted to speak in front of others. The situation of talking in front of everyone else about the lesson was perceived as exceptionally uncomfortable, not only because it was unfamiliar to them but it opened the door to stigmatisation, being ridiculed and affecting social interactions.

However, not all experiences were similar in that regard. A different way of attitude was reported from the few teenagers who had moved from other countries than Greece and even Italy. Although even these teenagers expressed feelings of estrangement, they were not stigmatized by other teenagers. This is noted by Drita below:

Elida: How do you find yourself in relation with other peers?

² During the communism period, the education system in Albania followed the Russian model (Neascu-Hendry et al., 1997). Some of these methods including the curricula, pedagogical teaching methods, are still being applied in most of the primary and secondary schools.

Drita: In fact, there [in Belgium] I felt putdown. I did not feel accepted, while here I feel more privileged among my friends, because they think it's a beautiful thing. It is..., as there are a lot of things you can talk about. I have been in the places that they would like to know and visit. So, I had the role of a guide for them. (18 years, female, Tirana: wave 1).

The experience of feeling accepted for teenagers (and other migrants in general) moving from other westernized countries and to a certain degree even Italy, appears to be related to the perception of Albanians for other countries. Drita's narrative indicates the preference that the broader community have towards migrants who have been in western European countries. Therefore, the country of destination where teenagers had lived before appeared to be a crucial factor in determining their relative positioning as insider or outsider.

6.2.2 Liminality and social ascriptions

Young returnees' narratives with regards to their identification with Albania revealed the struggles and the mixed feeling as they straddle in two places. Feelings of lack of belonging towards either place were commonly reported. The perceived differences drawn among 'returned' teenagers and others indicated a complexed positioning of in-betweenness, illustrated in the following excerpt:

Elida: Do you think you are similar to other teenagers here?

Aurora: No, I cannot say that even though I have returned, it is my country I cannot say that I feel entirely, as good as others feel. I feel I am missing something which would make me like other Albanians who have stayed here all the time, who have been part of these years and have never left. I don't know, I feel sorry to admit it, but I feel I am not/ I do not belong here and sometimes I do not belong there. I don't know where I am, I am somewhere in-between (Aurora, 17 years, Tirana: wave 1).

The above narrative indicates that teenagers interviewed in this study, regard themselves as being in a position of in-betweenness, of feeling like a foreigner in both countries. Treated as different by others but also encountering the cultural dissonance increases their sense of 'not knowing where I am' indicating their inner instability that emerges from the conflicting perceptions of the sense of selfhood. It is essential to highlight, that it is not only the perceived cultural differences that have affected the state of in-betweenness for the teenagers, but this is more broadly linked

with the harsh experiences of racism faced in Greece. For instance, Aurora further shared her story that her family encountered conflict by the harsh attitudes of the neighbours in Greece. Feeling foreign and unwelcome in both social contexts situates teenagers in the ambiguous space of being and belonging nowhere.

Others, in turn, do not report racism to this extent, describing living in a more multicultural environment and socializing with children from other cultures. In contrast, participants who had experienced previous discrimination and racism, have developed a stronger identification with Albania. For example, often they refer to Albania as their 'homeland'. While this is not evidenced very often, it was observed that two main reasons had influenced heightening identification with the ethnic country. The first reason was linked with the strong perceptions of racism experienced in Greece which had subsequently evoked a reactive response by increasing hatred with the previous country and strengthened attachment with Albania. This is illustrated in the following narrative by Ardi:

Ardi: There are some moments, you think, to be there, or to be here as I was there. It is simply, I've felt good here because it's my homeland. It is my home, I am not in someone else's home. There, I was in someone's home, in Greek's... home, if I can say so (...). Here it is my home and the warmth of the home makes me feel good. (...) I am Albanian, I want to build my life here. (...) I have been told there "You are Albanian, why would you stay with us, you are different from us". Even friends have told me this, that's why I don't trust people, to make them friends straight away.

Elida: How did this make you feel?

Ardi: It has affected me, not to love Greece, to stay away from Greece and to love Albania. People there are racists. (...) I have felt this at the unfairness with the marks. Teachers would not give me the grades I deserved. I was the best in the class there, but they would not give you the mark you deserved, because I was Albanian and they didn't want me to outperform Greek pupils. (*15 years, male, Fier: wave 1*).

In this instance, Ardi reflects on his lack of identification with Greece, which according to him was an implication of the hatred and racism existing among people of both countries. The second reason was linked with the attachment some teenagers had nurtured with Albania in the previous country, within their family narratives, family visits, factors which in turn may have raised the 'homeland consciousness'. This small group of teenagers exhibited better language skills, stronger connection

with the broader family, as well as local and cultural knowledge which amounted for them to be less prone to ridiculing. This, then indicates that the stronger ethnic identity accumulated in various forms in the migrating country, can mediate adjustment and belonging upon return. Yet, narratives underlined that questions of ethnic identity were not easily answered, as while a small number of participants reported having a strong connection, the majority have a rather symbolic identification. This was illustrated mostly in terms of being a fan with the Albanian team in international football matches or knowing some facts about the culture of Albania. Therefore, this suggests that the feeling of belonging was less about articulations of belonging as intrinsically linked with ethnic identity and more about the need to feel included in the society. For example, while Ardi and some others have a real connection with Albania, the living conditions in Albania, do affect for a full attachment as he starts his narrative by highlighting “*There are some moments, you think, to be there, or to be here as I was there*”. These ambiguities still point that most of the teenagers were in a state of ambiguity influenced by factors other than cultural or ethnic identity (eg., socialisation, lifestyle, opportunities). However, there are a few teenagers who identify only with the Greek culture, the values and way of life, an experience which is commonly observed even among other members of the family.

Narratives highlight that the experience of foreignness in both countries has necessitated that teenagers negotiate these situations in various ways. As articulated below, the construction and the influence of both cultural identities, has impacted teenagers to form strategic ways of navigating through otherness, by usually supporting ‘the other country’:

Nina: I don’t, I don’t... even though it is my homeland, I don’t feel like them, able to say it is my homeland. Even though I may say it, I do not feel it inside me (...). I feel the same towards Greece and Albania. So, when there have been cases when people in Greece used to denigrate Albanians, I would jump to support them. Now, here, Albanians denigrate Greeks and I jump to support Greeks. And, sometimes I ask myself, where do I belong?! In Albania or Greece, which one do I like more? But I cannot separate the two, I love both of them! (*Nina, 13 years, female, Focus group: wave 1*).

Supporting the ‘other country’, as Nina and many others highlight, was a technique which participants appeared to have already acquired in Greece or Italy in the face of

prejudice against people of the origin country as they perceived an obligation to confront others who denigrates their country of origin. In similar situations, these tactics appeared to be useful in Albania as other teenagers prejudice against Greek people. This might appropriately be classified as ‘strategic ways of belonging’, teenagers have acquired to counter prejudices.

The narratives uncovered that in many occasions, participants were made to feel ‘othered’ and differentiated as being non-Albanian by others. Accent, place of birth and place of growing up, were according to respondents, being inadvertently used as markers to exclude teenagers as different and non-Albanian, as articulated below:

Tina: (...) they are prejudicial towards me. They tell me ‘*You are Italian*’. I ask them, how can I be Italian when my mother and father are Albanians? I was born in Albania, so I am Albanian. I tell them I don’t have any relations with Italians, I have lived there, I have friends, I have learned from their culture but that does not make me Italian. Even if I get the Italian nationality, I will never call myself Italian. My brother was born in Italy and they say, he is Italian. He is not Italian, he was born there, but with an Albanian mother and father, it isn’t possible, but it is the prejudice.... You have come from abroad, what kind of mentality do you have? (*Tina, 13 years, female, Tirana: wave 1*).

The account above illustrates that other peers do not recognize Tina as Albanian even though she was born in Albania and emphasizes that even if she had the Italian citizenship, that would not make her Italian. In many occasions these are associated with tense relations and verbal abuse of young returnees striving to assert their Albanianness to other peers. As Nini narrated “*I am not Greek, I am Albanian. It doesn’t matter where you are born but how you feel*”. This portrays the discrepancies in relation to understandings of ethnic identity among young returnees and other peers and the “need” of having to validate their identity to others. Therefore, while some respondents defined their ethnic belonging based on origin and family ancestry, it appears that this was not always recognized by other teenage non-migrants who mostly view young returnees based on whether they have permanently lived in Albania even when they are born in Albania. This was perceived as particularly concerning and disappointing for the teenagers who held stronger ethnic identification.

While many of respondents feel between the two cultures, teenagers challenge transitional conditions as migrant identity and cultural hybridity is favoured. They expressed this by comparing themselves to the dominant group and value the qualities they have gained which to a large degree surmount 'othering' as teenagers position themselves as 'better-cultured' and others as 'narrow-minded'. This form of cultural capital appears to be have been acquired by living into two countries:

Elida: Do you think the experience of 'emigration' has had an influence on you?

Adela: I think it has, because there I had learned different things, I came here..., I have seen two different sides, two different societies, and I see myself as a person who has lived abroad and knows more things than someone who has lived within the territory of Albania. I have seen different mentalities, a different culture. I have learned their language, I have adopted their history, everything basically. That has affected me. For this, I feel good because I can say I have seen the world! (*17 years, female, Fier: wave 1*).

Dario: Sometimes I think I have something extra. I have lived for 12 years in a better developed country than Albania. And, I feel... you can understand how different is someone who has never left Albania. It's obvious (*17 years, Tirana: wave 1*).

Like Adela and Dario, some teenagers feel that past experiences of living in another country situates them in an advantageous position compared to others who have never left the country. They perceive themselves to be 'well-informed', 'open-minded', 'non-prejudicial' and have 'better communication skills' than their peers. In this way, positioning themselves as better cultured eases internal tensions between the competing hierarchies arising from the multiple positioning of the self. This indicates that experiences and cultural values teenagers have gained in living in two countries, is a source of capital and supports to manage feelings of othering.

This section has discussed about the experiences of othering and labelling as a social marker which served to demarcate teenagers as outsiders. The teaching style in Albania has exerted an influence to accelerate the process of labelling. Further, teenagers are in a state of in-betweenness and ambiguity by feeling between the two cultures. Experiences of estrangement in the two countries determine teenagers' positioning and negatively influence their feelings of belonging. Ethnic identification forged in the previous country can have a positive impact to facilitate a sense of

belonging with Albania upon return. Moreover, ethnic identity is not simply claimed but also assigned by others which necessitated for teenagers to revalidate their ethnic identity to others and subsequently negatively affecting social relations. Finally, the data summarised in this section, indicates that teenagers favour a hybrid identification as they have adopted elements from both cultures which mediates feelings of othering in relation to others.

6.3 Social expectations and friendship relations

Narratives reveal that upon their ‘return’ teenagers encounter competing socio-normative systems of their existing way of lifestyle and a new set of social norms and expectations they find in Albania which has a strong impact upon their belonging. Dressing in a different style was another marker of difference which was perceived as incompatible with others’ expectations which challenged young returnees to redefine features of their identity in order to align with social expectations. Gendered behaviour patterns were evidenced as girls expressed more difficulties and barriers indicating that the social norm expectations for them may have been far more exhausting compared than for boys. This is articulated in the two narratives below which depict positioning of hierarchies of difference based on gender as observed in the two waves of data collection:

Alexa: In Greece, we would not think about how we are dressing up. People there would not judge from the way we dressed or the things we did, we were very very..., free. They were not interested in your life. When I came here, everyone was curious to know me, looking at what I was wearing, what I was saying, who was I socializing with (...). If you would be with a boy they would make gossip and say many awful things. And this was the thing, I did not like as I was used to not being interfered in my life, whereas here, they put their nose into others’ business (*15 years, female, Tirana: wave 1*).

Elida: Do you think you feel you are still being prejudiced here?

Lorena: I think they judge me for the way I dress or the style. I have my own style; I like to wear ripped clothes and short T-shirts (...). I have changed here in Fier. (*19 years, female, Fier: wave 2*).

For Lorena, having to change her style of dressing, which was something she was very fond of, was disheartening. In the second year of data collection she had changed her style of dressing and removed her piercing. The change was influenced

by others' judgments but also by a climate which had started during that year, consisting of online pages which intended cyber-bulling of teenagers. The intention of these pages, according to respondents, was to disparage each-other based on their appearances, particularly the way of dressing. This had challenged female participants in changing their previous styles by abiding to the normative social expectations in terms of dressing. This highlights the peer influence, positioning hierarchies of difference as based on gender, which is reinforced by social norms and is likely to happen both in off and online contexts.

The perceived higher pressure for girls to conform with social norms highlights an uneven positioning determined by others, as compared to girls, young boys appeared more readily able to reject the cultural norms as depicted below.

Alfio: They prejudice here even for the way you dress up. For example, these folded jeans here, [shows the jeans to me] it's a girls' fashion. They have started judging because women introduced it as a fashion. Even the boys that I stay with, they wear them like that, they are more modern than others. I simply like fashion, that's it. Others [peers] look at me and tell me, "unfold your jeans, its girls fashion". They say, but I don't give a damn. (*13 years, male, Tirana: wave 2*).

In addition, teenage girls reported that in the past, they socialized in large groups of boys and girls. Conversely, in Albania, particularly in Fier, they discerned a higher degree of gender segregation among peers and more same-sex friendships. Initially they articulated to have started to socialize as they did in the past with peers of both genders. However, in many occasions, the mixed gender socialization was misinterpreted for intimate relationships, which led to gossip concerning topics of morality and 'inappropriate behaviour'. Narratives suggest that gossiping around private matters from others raised issues of lack of trust, the ability to rely on friends for building social relations. They perceived a lack of secrecy and reliance in friends as their personal stories had been shared with other peers. As a result, although teenagers were constantly seeking to socialize, there was a sense of hesitation in investing in developing friendships, meaning that for girls, relations were more fragmented and superficial.

Peers are described as judgmental and influential in their capacity to encourage young returnees to engage in behaviours perceived as inappropriate to the age. As Tina (13 years, female) narrates “*My school friends are prejudicial towards me..., what kind of mentality do you have? How come you don’t have a boyfriend? Or, why don’t you go out..., you could lie to your mum.*” Tina articulates her frustration that her friends insist to influence her to find a boyfriend while she perceives this as inappropriate. In many occasions the peer influence has led to parental disagreements which will be discussed in detail in section 6.3. Accordingly, the perceived lack of acceptance alongside the lack of trust from young returnees has affected their ability to maintain normal friendships and feel withdrawn:

Nikoleta: We are more distanced. They have so many years together. They leave you aside and are not interested in you. They are one group, when they want to they include you in their group and when they want, they let you out (*15 years, F, Fier: wave 1*).

For that reason, primarily in wave 1, when possible, participants tended to socialize with other young returnees as they shared experiences of exclusion in Albania but also similarities they had acquired in their past:

Esma: When I was in year nine, there was a large number of pupils who had moved from other countries and I used to socialize quite a lot with them. They had seen something different and we used to share how we spent our time (*16 years, female, Fier: wave 1*).

These types of friendships among ‘returned peers’ were evidenced even when they had come from different countries. Staying with similar people allowed them to share commonalities and memories of life in the past, a strategy employed to counter initial difficulties in forming friendships with the local teenagers. Narratives highlight that age was a strong determinant to adjustment and socialization, and on the whole, older teenagers expressed most concerns of this kind. Younger teens continuously perceived resettlement in a more successful way. As Tina (13 years, female) suggested, “*You cannot say, because since I was in Italy, it has changed a lot. I was a child back then, I can say I was a small child when I left, I was 10 years old, grade four and the largest part of my “adolescence”, I have been here.*” Settling in for pre-adolescents seemed to be an achievable transition as by moving to Albania for them is perceived as a new phase of their life cycle of making new

friends and the ways of engaging with the new environment are perceived more positively. This is evidenced as in contrast to later teens, pre-teens had developed their childhood elsewhere and have started adolescence, as a new step of their life-course in the new context.

The second wave of data collection revealed many changes with regards to peer relations. Respondents appeared to have established meaningful friendships and recognized that friendship was the most beneficial thing they had built over the time in Albania. Peers are perceived to exert a great influence in their belonging as over the time they built trustful relations which are maintained in everyday socialization, leisure time and other community activities. Some of the teenagers reported to have developed intimate affections and first romantic relationships had emerged. Strengthening peer relations played a significant role in helping to markedly reduce stigmatisation which had previously affected adversely their sense of self and reproduced othering. As articulated below, although labels still were used, they no longer carried a negative meaning or presumed a differential treatment after the formation of friendships:

Elida: Have you made friends?

Olta: Yes, I have three friends. We go out, we talk... it is not like last year when I had only one friend. Now I have many.

Elida: Do they tease you?

Olta: No, I am part of the friendship. They don't call me anymore 'Greek' as before.

Elida: How did you manage this?

Olta: Well, engaging in conversations with them and staying together. Now we speak openly and no longer offend each other.

Elida: Do you feel you belong to Albania?

Olta: Sometimes yes, sometimes not. It's more about the friendship and the family. If I stay here, it will be because of these two. To keep it short, I have support here (*Olta, 16 years old: Fier, wave 2*).

Elida: Do you think people still look at you as someone who has come from Greece?

Alfio: That's one thing. In Greek, we say 'pacarukli' [*pseudonym in Greek*], they put the ..., pseudonym "hey Greek". But I don't... [meaning I don't mind]. I have allowed this myself [laughs], I don't know it makes me feel special. Even when we talk in the morning, or we are in physical education –

“Hey Greek, pass the ball to me”. It’s nothing, they don’t do it to tease me or anything bad (...). We support each other at all times, either in challenging times or good ones. And I have done my part, I trust them, there is no friendship if there is no trust. (13 years, male, Tirana: wave 2).

For Olta and Alfio, friends have played the most significant role to influence in their belonging and as Dario emphasizes *‘friendship is the best thing which has happened to me here’*. As evidenced by Alfio’s comments, some of the teenagers now perceive labels more as ‘pseudonyms’, used in jest without having a negative connotation. They recognize that the very element which made them feel different and excluded, now is perceived as a ‘special’ feature. This indicates that over the time teenagers reposition themselves in ways that make them manage their stigmatisation and in relation with others they feel more accepted, which provides a meaningful sense of belonging.

Overall the findings in this section indicate that particularly during the first wave of data collection, teenagers have felt pressured to conform to the ‘new’ social norms imposing ways of socialization or appearance. The findings however, suggest that there are uneven social patterns as females experience greater pressure from peers and others, indicating the complexities of belonging which are impacted by dominating gendered power relations. Forming trustful friendships over the time played a significant role in dismantling exclusionary practices of stigmatisation and labelling.

6.4 In-between families and individual autonomy

One of the main barriers some of the young people articulate to have faced in Albania is associated with their perceived changed relations with their parents. Many girls reported that their parents have become increasingly restrictive after they relocated to Albania. On many occasions, they feel pressurised and intimidated by their parents as they report stricter curfews, control over friends whom they socialize, or even the style of dressing. They articulate that their parents have been more tolerant before and teenagers enjoyed more ‘freedom’ than now by staying outside for longer hours or dressing up the way they wanted. Alma tells how in

Greece “I used to dress up how I wanted. While here my dad tells me where are you going like this? [implying dressed in this way]. They restrict me a lot.” As Alma and many other girls indicated, they are limited not only in the context of time but also the friends they socialize with. Parents appear to be influenced by the environment and fear that socializing with certain friends may negatively influence children’s lives. The ‘protection’ narrative of parents is articulated below:

Olta: I have many friends and all of my friends either are in relationships, or they fight, split up, get back together again, or they start a new relationship as a form of revenge for the previous one. They do unacceptable things for their age. And my mum, of course, she thinks they will influence me, and that’s why she does not allow me to go out with them or anyone else. Today for example, it’s my birthday and she [the mother] does not allow me to celebrate with my friends. My mum does not let me because she is afraid. (16 years, female, Fier: wave 1).

Olta and her mother were working together in overcoming a problematic situation over an intimate relationship Olta had been engaged in, which became a source of arguments between mother and daughter. Her narratives perpetuate her mother’s, pointing that things in Albania do not go “according to age”. Many girls believed that other teenagers in Albania engage in romantic relations at a very early age and that they lack the necessary control from their parents. Olta’s mother, Rudina (39 years) wept whilst articulating how a few months after moving to Albania, her daughter had ‘slipped out of her hands’, as she caught her speaking on the phone with a boy. This incident was described as ‘shocking’, leading to Rudina becoming more restrictive and preventing her daughter from socializing with certain friends claiming that Olta is too young to find a boyfriend. Restrictions are articulated even in the form of having a more controlled curfew and dictating who children can socialize with:

Aurora: There, I used to have a lot of freedom as we knew everybody. We knew everyone. We knew what kind of people they were and from what type of family they came from. Whereas now for example, if I asked for permission to go for a sleepover in a friend’s house, my parents would not allow me. (17 years, female, Tirana: wave 2).

Narratives indicate further that teenagers experience a number of new identity changes in terms of self-exploration, intimacy or adjusting to the new cultural environment and friendship for the first time. Parents ‘policing’ their children appear

to have impacted their process of adjustment to the new cultural context and as some of the teenagers perceive being restricted to enjoy their lives, they experience a 'developmental limbo'. This is a feeling of ambivalence, of teenagers finding themselves between two conflicting contexts of the outside social world and the context of home. These issues were expressed mostly by female participants in both sites, however in Fier they were more pronounced, highlighting an environment which exerts higher expectations and stricter social norms in the smaller towns of Albania as compared to Tirana.

The second wave of data collection revealed that these experiences were compounded by other influencing factors. Some of the teenagers who returned more recently had visited Greece and that comprised of going back to the previous lifestyle. In the second wave, Nikoleta appeared to be in a depressed situation, as a result of a perceived insufficient communication with her parents. *'They don't allow me to go anywhere or to do anything. They think that if I go out I will make mistakes'*. The perception of stricter levels of control from parents and pressures of others to conform have resulted in many teenagers identifying with their previous country to a greater degree than during Wave 1 interviews. While fear of misconduct appears to be the reason behind intergenerational disagreements, parents' own frustration was equally emphasized by Nikoleta and many other girl teenagers.

Ambra: My mother has become very angry here. They are not happy with the return. My father wants us to re-migrate again. My mom..., maybe because she had friends there and had a chance to meet people, whereas here she is locked in the house the entire day. Maybe because of that she becomes stressed (*female 15 years, Fier: wave 2*).

Similar to Ambra, some articulate that parents are frustrated for moving back to Albania for the opportunities in Albania which often are transmitted to their children. As Lorena (female, 18 years) says: *"My parents transmit all their stress to me"*. These narratives, indicate the strained relationships within the return migrant family are the result of the consequences of economic related issues, parents' unemployment and dissatisfaction with life. Nevertheless, these strained relationships are reported only by girls, pointing to the indirect influence of pressures from cultural normative boundaries that limit girls' abilities to negotiate within their given spaces.

Overall findings in this section suggest that teenagers are situated in between pressures of the outside social world and home. Parents' restrictions and policing is justified within the narrative of 'protecting' their children, however this is influenced by the broader social norms. Further, the challenges of returning in difficult times of crisis has had its impact to the family which is manifested with increased intergenerational conflict.

6.5 Cultivating belonging

For many of the teenagers, the sense of belonging is not perceptible only within territorially defined places, but they take place in transnational fluid spaces. For many of the participants (particularly those returning from Greece), religious identity was suggested to be one of the strongest cultural symbols they had acquired in Greece, and which was still evident once they returned to Albania. Many young people reported attending the church - which was also one of the places I met some of the teenagers while attending Sunday services and youth activities in the Orthodox church of Tirana. Participants articulated that in church 'I find myself' which appeared to establish continuation and redefining the past into the present. The picture below from a family case study depicts the presence of religion practices in their lives.



Figure 6.1. Memories from Greece (Ornela: female, 13 years, Tirana)

To Ornela, the above picture reminisces one of the most important rituals when she and her brother were baptised in a church in Greece. The picture shows the presents they had received from the baptism ceremony, and the deep meanings they represent in their lives was discernible as she passionately talked about the ritual and the people who had attended, highlighting that many of them were Greek.



Figure 6.2. Orthodox Church in Tirana (Alma, female, 17 years)

Conversely, figure two portrays the orthodox church of Tirana, close to the centre of the city in which Alma and her family used to go regularly especially during the first few years of their return. She describes this by saying:

Alma: Church was in fact a support for us when we came. We were baptized from Catholic to Orthodox and we came here we realised that people in church were kind and gave us a warm welcome. We engaged in the activities they offered. I saw that there were many similarities with what they do in Greece. To be honest, church is the only thing which reminds me of Greece. It reminds me of cultural practices, I find priests who speak Greek and I feel better talking to them. They often talk to me about there. That's why I attend church very often, every Sunday I go to church. It is a relaxing place (*16 years, female, Tirana: wave 1*).

Church for Alma and some of the young people, was a space of belonging – a performative site of practicing the authentic version of the Orthodox religion they had come to embrace in Greece. Although narratives initially stressed the belief aspect as a rationale to attend church, implicitly attending church appeared to be mostly associated with the identification of Greek culture and rituals. Church to

them was perceived to be the institution with which they had been exposed to since early childhood, hence performance of these cultural elements was not only the reproduction of the religious identity but the continuation of performances of cultural elements acquired since childhood. Interestingly, most of those who attended regularly, had increased their engagement with church more in Albania. In this way, as participants indicate the identical performance of religious rituals seemed to link to an embodied attachment with the Greece's cultural practices. Ambivalent feelings upon return, in many respondents, evoked nostalgic accounts of the previous culture as they cope with the new place often by romanticizing the past in many ways.

However, it was observed that within the church many social interactions with locals take place as they socialize and travel around Albania together, therefore making church also a space of belonging and socialization. Performance of rituals to this degree appeared to be central only for some of the teenagers, while other return migrant families' religious performance is milder, limited only on the main celebratory rituals such as, Christmas, Easter, lighting a candle, doing the cross while passing the church, etc. The narratives highlight the dynamics of the returned family, the religion of which has been shaped following the cultural values in Greece. However, not all the members have converted, and others belong to other religions such as Muslim or Catholic composing a 'poly-religious family' as indicated below:

Elida: What traditions do you follow in your family?

Dario: We celebrate Easter, it's close to my brother's birthday. It's always the Easter Sunday and also because it is my brother's birthday. We celebrate Christmas. We are Muslims but we continue doing them [meaning Christmas], just a dinner maybe. *(17 years, male Tirana, wave 1).*

Ina: We celebrate all the religions, Muslim, Christian, Orthodox, so everything. We are poly-religious. *(16 female, Focus group, wave 1).*

Aurora: I am Muslim and since I knew it, I also expressed it. I accepted that and I was not trying to change in anyway. I used to say in Greece "I am Albanian, I am Muslim, and I do not want to become Orthodox", I feel it that I am Albanian, I am simply realistic, I am realistic and I want the best for my country. But of course, I feel I am Albanian. *(17 years, female Tirana, wave 1).*

The religious background of Dario's and Ina's families exemplify the composition of many return migrant families. Particularly families returning from Greece, appear to celebrate more than one religion – 'the religious pluralities' which are influenced by both cultures. At the other end of the spectrum, a few teenagers like Aurora expressed with pride not having changed their 'original' religious beliefs and resisting an increasingly religious environment.

Performance of belonging is maintained by participants not only by reinventing religious identities but also in living in transnational spaces. In many occasions, families travelled back to the country from where they have returned either for work or vacation. Narratives suggest that during these visits, the identification with the previous places takes the form of a 'traveller'.



Figure 6.3. Acropolis of Athens (Dario, 17 years, Tirana).

As Dario shares his pictures of Greece, almost all of them are historical and archaeological places. He recounts that they were photographed when he visited Greece after coming to Albania and that he never thought of photographing these panoramas before. As he recalls, the places he had once ‘taken for granted’, including ‘Acropolis’, ‘Monatsiraki’, the ‘parliament’ he now shares detailed narratives of their historical accounts by narrating in a nostalgic way. These representations of the culture and history are now perceived to be reproduced with a different meaning, that of a ‘transnational traveller’ that carry meaningful cultural elements with them. As these appear to be practices that keep participants connected and attached to Greece, they also appear to suggest the fluid nature of identification, now reproduced from the position of a tourist. Some of the teenagers who are not able to pay visits, keep contact with previous friends and people mostly through forms of technology and social media sources. These accounts and pictures overall highlight the bond with the previous country, and for a few the visits appeared to have a stronger effect of missing the previous country as particularly girls go to the less restrictive environment they used to have in Greece.

This section has discussed about teenagers’ ways of belonging which take place within the familiar spaces of church indicating a strong identification with the previous cultural performances and the country. Church is however, a space which connects the past with the present as within these spaces teenagers socialize and forge a sense of belonging. Furthermore, teenagers’ belonging is constructed even in spatial ways as through visits they forge a connection with the previous country.

6.6. Teenagers’ Future Mobilities

“I am going to disappear from here (...) I am not even trying to find myself”

Mario (18 years male, Fier: wave 1)

Although young returnees appear to negotiate a sense of belonging in many aspects of their everyday life, perceived lack of future prospects remains the main issue highlighted in narratives of late teens. The concerns teenagers express are similar to parents’ account on the inability to make a predictable future in terms of work

opportunities. The perceived lack of ability to predict the future is more typical among young people whose families are physically apart and express being unsure what their parents will decide:

Elida: Where do you see yourself in the future?

Melisa: Where do I see myself...! I am like a ball (laughs) bouncing here and there. But I want to continue with what I have started... I will do what my parents decide, that's where I see my future. It doesn't matter where I am, it's important to be with my family. This is the most important thing. Because without the family, I don't think you can make it at my age (*female 14 years, Tirana: wave 1*).

Melisa has been living with her auntie as her parents were in Greece keeping their jobs and were unsure about their future plans. Although she has made many friends in Albania she remarks that *'it's very important that I am with my family'*. Often younger teenagers' narratives express less ambiguity and when they discuss the future, they do not separate themselves from families' projects. Teenagers of the families who are experiencing economic instability, realize the conditions of the family and the limited options for building their future in Albania. Some of these complexities are articulated below:

Aurora: In fact, because I was young, I was a teenager, I thought that since my parents had planned to return, it would be a good thing, a good decision - that something good is waiting for me. I can say I am disappointed, I can say that, because everywhere I go I find young people who have finished their degree and the only thing they do is start working as a waiter. As a waiter, you get paid for 20 000 lekë [in total] per month. And what can you do here with 20 000 lekë? Nothing! When I was 13 years old, for example, I would make as much money [in Greece] as people here make for half a year. This is absurd! (...) and I believe everyone who is my age, no matter if they finish their studies or not, they want to leave here. It's very sad to say I will not stay here in my country, but it is not about willing, which is how it should be! You have to think what should be done. (...) here you have to have a lot of money to live as a human being or you have to have connections, if you have these two then you can live as a human. This is the bad thing about Tirana, that someone is at the top of the pyramid, while others are at the very bottom (*17 years, female, Tirana: wave 1*).

Aurora describes a grim perception of the reality, what she perceives to be a limited access to the labour market. This observation has conceived the idea that even having a bachelor's degree might not guarantee teenagers upward mobility as they realise the lack of prospects in Albania. According to participants, young people

with a higher degree in Albania are commonly working in call centres, or jobs in low services perceived by them to be degrading and under paid. On many occasions, they proclaimed that to find a job in Albania you need to have ‘*miq*’ (referring to connections). Moreover, the emergence of strong social stratification in a society in which wealth appears to be concentrated among a small percentage of very rich people, to participants is agonizing as many perceive themselves falling in the last group.

These perceptions are particularly salient for the late teens who belong in the stage of ending their high school and seeking to make plans for their future. As they perceive limited options in Albania, more than half of the teenage respondents during the first year of data collection expressed the desire to leave the country. Economic conditions in Albania, alongside the lower quality of life compared to the life they had before the crisis in the previous countries, increased their perception that it is difficult to build a future in Albania. As Lorena contends, *“Everything bothers me here, the way of living.../ first of all, there are no jobs here for your future. There is no future here, and I think, what am I gonna do here...? You cannot make plans in Albania.”* Most of them illustrate having lived in the Greek islands with good living conditions, and some of them have been working during the summer holidays, whereas now in Albania participants articulate not being able to access the labour market as a student (indicating the lack of culture of students working, particularly females) and following graduation. In the first year of the data collection, many teenagers expressed being determined to ‘remigrate’, however for most of them, moving back to Greece would no longer be an option. Narratives below draw on participants who appear to be dissatisfied with life in Albania but still prefer to stay.

Adela: In Greece, you could work one day and eat for the whole week, whereas here you work one week to eat one day. Salaries are very low and expenses very high. This has also why we want to go back again. But I can’t go there. I think I can’t anymore. Next year I am in my final year in school, I will decide about my future and I cannot make that move NOW. I am used to living here, it took more than a year to get used to the people, the school environment, everything here. And with the school changes, I cannot do it anymore! (17 years, female, Tirana: wave 2).

Dario: Now I cannot go back anymore. I don't intend to start from the beginning with friendship and everything. Even with the Greek language, I have lost a lot in terms of that. I mean, I know how to read and to write but there are so many things you have to start from the beginning. That's why I am afraid to start my studies there. *(17 years, male, Tirana: wave 2).*

Despite the adjustment problems in Albania, in wave two, many of the young people do not wish to go back to the previous country. Participants articulate that Greece to them remains a country they are attached to, but a dream which for many has ended. This is linked to the economic problems Greece is experiencing, and the subsequent difficulties participants realize in finding employment or building a future in Greece. Data have revealed that improvement with school performance, meaningful friendships, increased knowledge of the local environment, and the language attrition of Greek language appear to be main reasons teenagers would like to settle in Albania. Although they articulate identifying with a modern global life of internationalization wishing to travel and live in a more developed country, for some participants like Adela and Dario the challenges of (re)settlement in Albania have taken its toll on them. Time also plays an important role, as for the teenagers who have returned more than three years ago, they realize the difficulties of being away from Albania at this stage of their life. From the data, it appears that the majority of respondents wish to move to other European countries in the future, to either pursue their studies or for employment. However, narratives suggest that permission to work in other countries is an obstacle for the perceived lack of access to work in other European countries. Yet, many remain positive that in the future they would be able to find ways of studying through scholarships or different educational programmes.

Furthermore, the data suggest that the situation in which the return during economic crisis has happened, combined with other ensuing difficulties, have exerted an impact in their identification with the country and the sense of self which for some continues to persist. The young people who continue to forecast less options and are more embedded by the economic conditions and family problems describe their life in Albania in this way:

Elida: Do you find yourself here?

Aurora: Have I found myself?! No no! I think I have become more mature here, and life here has made me so. But to find myself here, never. It will never happen! But I believe that once I go abroad, as for sure I will, and once I leave, I know that I am going to miss my country... but that will be for one week. I will come, just to release the feeling of homesickness. And then I can say my place is not in Albania.

Elida: I think you were a bit better last year.

Aurora: Life here makes you tough. This is it! You see things with a different eye... Last year I was calmer, all I cared about was the friendship and doing well in school. Now I see things differently, I can see, I can see the problems that my parents have even though they do not talk about them. They do not want us to worry but, but I can see things. You become more mature. I can see them. (*17 years: Tirana: wave 2*).

Aurora's narrative highlights the complexities of intersecting influences that have left her in an ambiguous state and a growing feeling of non-belonging. While for the majority, meaningful friendships, school adjustment contributed to their sense of belonging, for few participants like Aurora, the limitations of the economic and structural constraints have increasingly made them consider (re)migrating. Although the narrative articulates a level of attachment as she refers to Albania as 'my country', there is no future pathway foreseen in Albania. In addition, the second narrative underscores that teenagers are mature and sensitive towards families' issues. Referring to the challenges of adjustment that most of them have encountered, they acknowledge a sense of self-maturation as they articulate '*I have changed, I feel more mature*' or '*life here makes you tough*'. This highlights the resilience that characterizes teenagers as they appear to have learned how to cope with the transitional challenges. This indicates the way in which negotiations and strategies in response to changes have influenced in shaping their identities with ambivalent but empowering effects. Finally, the narratives indicate that as some teenagers are less certain and have faced more challenges, experiences are uniquely shaped by multiple factors and that there is no linear process.

This section has discussed that particularly late teenagers are not certain about their future plans. Inability to predict future employment keeps older teenagers in a state of flux and uncertainty. Being challenged by experiences of exclusion and the gradual re-settlement for many has increased the apprehension of moving away from Albania. Realizing the lack of opportunities in Albania, for many teenagers,

remigration remains the only option. Teenagers act as responsible young adults, concerned about family, economic issues and their future possibilities.

6.7 Discussion

This chapter analysed teenagers' experiences of moving to their parents' originating country, indicating the challenges and strategies of belonging and identification which happen under constrained circumstances occurring within the home and the outside social world. Findings suggest that teenagers experienced school difficulties with the subjects, language, and lack of support from the teachers which negatively affected their academic performance. This supports recent research in Albania (Vathi et al., 2016) which argue that the Albanian school system is homogenous and is unprepared to deal with diversity and address the individual needs of children of migrants moving from other countries. The current chapter, however, extends this by looking at schools not simply as educational institutions but as places in which major socialization processes take place and therefore significantly determine social inclusion and exclusion. This supports the assumption that school can reinforce 'societies' inequalities' (Gonzales, 2016, p.73) and is key to children's acculturation processes and socialization (Adams & Kirova, 2006).

Findings suggest that one of the most pressing issues for young people is the lack of acceptance by other peers and the broader community. Labelling and stigmatisation appear to have alienated children's school experiences and the interaction with other peers. This is corroborated by other research (Eskner & Orellana, 2005; Gonzales, 2016; Joyce, 2010), which indicated that young people have been labelled by their non-migrant friends. Being labelled as a member of a certain racialized group may have an impact in their sense of self-concept and in relation to feeling 'othered' or non-belonging (Anthias, 2008) but also serves to demarcate 'us' from 'them' (Antonsich, 2010; Nash, 1996). Data suggest that accent was a strong identity marker to position teenagers as outsiders particularly in the early stages of their arrival. The teaching style in Albania has exerted an influence to accelerate the process of labelling. Experiences of social exclusion are evidenced in other research in return migration (Ní Laoire, 2011a; Potter, 2006), however in the current research,

stigmatisation is mostly experienced within the school setting, indicating that labelling and the teaching style work in tandem in constructing an exclusionary environment and non-belonging for teenagers.

Empirical data also provide evidence that teenagers experience xenophobia and racism based on the country from where they returned and the differences perceived by the broader community. In contrast to other research in Ireland (Laoire, 2011a) the findings document that teenagers are faced with 'dual alienation' as they have experienced stigmatisation and racism in both countries, and particularly in the first wave had strong feelings of non-belonging and othering. Findings further highlight that ethnic identities are often challenged and contested by others, which has brought tensions and demanded young teenagers to reassure others and emphasize it. This is in line with other research who suggest that belonging and ethnic identity must be accepted and recognized by "significant others" in order to be "taken on" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 44; Valentine et al., 2009b). Here it needs to be noted that as belonging of teenagers is largely influenced by non-migrants and the social norms, the persisting gender powers in Albania appear to differentiate hierarchically, by exerting more pressure to conform to females. This supports other work who suggest that ethnic ties appear to be insufficient to elicit feelings of belonging (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1989), and other power hierarchies reinforce constructing uneven social patterns including gender. Findings in this research, suggest that the existing social norms in Albania tend to exert more demand towards the girls as influenced by the gendered power gendered relations.

This chapter suggests that time has a significant influence in producing change in teenagers' lives. Over the time, friendships appeared to be consolidated as teenagers socialised more regularly, and developed more trustful relationships with peers. This is similar to other research in which trust among peers is considered as 'a source of capital' (Gonzales, 2016, p.109), as in fostering a sense of belonging. In contrast to second generation return migrants in Barbados (Reynolds, 2008) who appear to perceive the role of insider/outsider as something they are used to in the previous country, for the teenagers in this study experiences of racism in both countries were far more distressing. The follow up data, has revealed that over the time teenagers have developed strategies to negotiate certain situations, such as 'supporting' the

other country in face of prejudice or tolerate and embrace the ‘gains’ of feeling different (for example the labelling is accepted and often viewed as appealing over the time). Findings uncovered age-related differences as younger teenagers are more settled as they appear to view changes in a more positive light. From a developmental perspective, adolescents are in the process of constructing their identity (Erikson, 1968) and face conflicting perceptions as they tend to incorporate the two socio-cultural contexts (Zubida et al., 2013). Even friendship influences are stronger in comparison to pre-adolescents (Buhrmeister, 1990) and they are in search for a sense of autonomy. In this light, these findings suggest that later teens are in a process which requires negotiations that emerge from multiple reference points. Therefore, challenges of settling in a new socio-cultural context are more complex for older teenagers, who experience higher social pressures to conform, which contradict with the age-related need for autonomy.

Data discussed in this chapter further indicate that teenagers have to manage their lives within the ‘public’ and ‘home’ domains. Unlike their parents, teenagers appear to negotiate between two cultural contexts as they seek to ‘fit in’ but also maintain certain individual and cultural aspects from the past. The findings in this research suggest that the challenges posed by the duality of contexts appears to be further exasperated by intergenerational conflict. Intergenerational conflict has been widely reported in research on migration and it is attributed to tensions between teenagers’ struggles to balance their attempts to acculturate with the peers and the contrasting traditional values of their parents (Christopoulou & de Leeuw, 2005; Drotbohm, 2005; Dublin, 1996; Vathi, 2015; Zhou, 1997b). In contrast to other research on return migration who found that family and social ties played a significant role in supporting their children’s belonging (Ní Laoire, 2010; Reynolds, 2008), the current research found that parents play a ‘protective’ role which appears to be influenced by the existing normative behaviours in society. In this research, this is further exasperated by parents’ own frustration by the economic crisis which has impacted parent-child relations.

The findings suggest that teenagers are actively seeking ways to cultivate their belonging which is played out in various fronts that take place locally and transnationally. In this way, they young people perform certain religious rituals that

they used to perform in Greece – a way to keep them connected with their previous country. This way of performing certain practices supports Probyn's (1996) notion of belonging as 'being' and 'becoming' as well as Fortier's (2000) understanding of performed belonging via the reproduction of cultural practices through repeated performances of one's culture. This indicates that teenagers in this research do not simply accept and conform to the existing cultural values but challenge them by performing and maintaining the cultural belongings they feel more attached to. Unlike the previous literature where these cultural practices of one's ethnic identity are performed as acts of belonging in the host country (Fortier, 2000; Ní Laoire, 2010; Ugba, 2008; White, 2010), in the current research it is the opposite. The young returnees do not reproduce the religion based on their ethnic identity, but the religious practices they have adopted in Greece. Further, within these spaces teenagers socialize with local people, a practice which facilitates forging local belongings. Therefore, in contrast to previous research, the current findings highlight that some teenagers appear to have a stronger cultural belonging with Greece.

Data have also suggested the transformative nature of religion on the migrant families returning from Greece – many as multi-religious families. Such pluralities in turn can be traced to a wider context of a migrant's need to integrate in a destination country environment (particularly Greece) which has used religion for purposes of exclusion (Vathi, 2015), but also back to a secular post-communist Albania³ of a highly non-practicing country (Tarifa, 2007). In this research, performing cultural practices of the previous country indicates that teenagers still identify more strongly with the previous lifestyle and cultural values. Furthermore, it was indicated that as youth travel to the previous country they display their 'tourist identity' of being connected to familiar places of the past. The current research, therefore extends to understanding that some teenagers perform belonging locally and transnationally that facilitate belonging and maintain connections with both countries.

³ In 1976, the Constitution of Albania under the communist regime of Enver Hoxha, banned religion and any form of religion practicing. Albania in this way became the first country in the world to be declared atheist state (Tarifa, 2007, p. 68).

Research findings further indicate that teenagers' lives are marked by uncertainty about future mobility and possible pathways. Particularly older teenagers' lives appear to be marked by feelings of instability due to the current structural constraints they articulate to encounter. The more concerning issue is indicated to be the inability to predict a 'normal' life in Albania in the long run and therefore many articulated wanting to (re)migrate. Teenagers' concerns about future mobility, the economic conditions and other factors beyond the cultural and ethnic identifications, supports literature suggesting that older teenagers belong in the phase of the 'emerging adulthood' (Arnett, 2004, p.469). In contrast to the theory, instability of this period is not underpinned by seeking life adventures, but a need for more predictability in life. These findings are partially similar to a study with young people in Italy (Di Blasi et al., 2016), which concluded that the economic recession heightened feelings of instability, helplessness and negatively affected their overall psychological wellbeing of young people in Italy (although of an older age). While the present study has not uncovered many psychological issues, the findings indicate the complexity of issues felt in times of uncertainty for teenagers which are not sufficiently addressed in the literature in migration. In contrast to most of the literature in return migration (Ni Laoire, et al., 2011; Vathi, 2015; Knörr, 2005), current findings highlight the dilemmas of the emerging adulthood, where teenagers indicate being preoccupied about future employment and families' economic conditions.

Findings suggest that challenges of being migrant in both countries and the gradual adjustment with school and social relations have elevated the feeling of settling down in Albania. For other teenagers who think about their future mobility and would have preferred to move to another country in Europe, the findings indicate that they feel restricted by the inability to freely work in these countries and follow their dreams (issues which were discussed in Chapter 5). In contrast to other young migrants across Europe for which the EU citizenship has enabled the free movement between home and host countries (Tyrrell, 2010; Ni Laoire et al., 2011), in the context of Albania, lack of access to rights to work in other countries and the economic downturn in the previous country, obstructs teenagers to foresee future plans. Nevertheless, amid uncertainties, in comparison to their parents, teenagers hold a more positive outlook and constantly make 'transnational dreams'.

6.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has highlighted teenagers' experiences of moving to parents' origin country in difficult times of economic crisis. The findings have suggested that teenagers upon return experience challenges with school performance, social relations and within the family. Stigmatisation based on the accent, behaviour and appearance have been the main markers for social exclusion and othering particularly in the initial stages of the return. The influence of peers and broader society to conform to existing social norms has impacted teenagers belonging, impeding females to shape their lives based on more restricted norms. The geographical location is important, showing that teenagers in Fier encounter more difficulties than teenagers in Tirana, which indicates that normative social norms are more restrictive in Fier. The role of the family, typically the parent-child relation is viewed as crucial in the process of adaptation, as parents often may have a greater control over young lives limiting their agency and autonomy.

The follow-up data indicate that young people display agency and constantly engage in building social relations with peers and other practices of inclusion, allowing them to solidify the sense of belonging in most of them. It has been documented that a sense of belonging can be developed and shaped by acquiring places and practices that keep them attached to the previous country and operate as spaces of belonging with the new one. However, the chapter has highlighted the diverging pathways of young people demonstrating that the process of belonging and inclusion does not happen uniformly, but it is constructed as an interplay of factors including gender, age, locality, and future pathways. Younger teenagers view transitional changes of migration to be less salient, whereas older teenagers are bounded by challenges determined by life-stage transitions and lack of opportunities. The role of the economic crisis upon return and its impact on many return migrant families, has negatively influenced in young returnees' lives, as they seek to make critical decisions about their future mobilities in terms of education and employment. This indicates that the ways young people negotiate their identities and belonging cannot be understood in only within the cultural frames of reference but in relation to the potentials of predicting and building a future.

Children Changing Places: Belonging and Social Relations

7.0 Introduction

Until recently there has been a tendency in migration studies for children to figure as ‘baggage’ or as a source of anxiety and burden to adults (Orellana, 2001; c.f. Dobson, 2009), without detailed consideration of their individual experiences, mobility or agency (Ní Laoire et al., 2010). Noting that children’s ‘return’ experiences are atypical because children relocate to a place which may never have been home to them (Knörr, 2005; Tsuda, 2009), more recent research has begun to address this through a more explicit focus on the experiences of family migration (Bushin, 2009). This newer body of work highlights the extent to which children may participate in the family migration decision-making process, and family narratives reveal that the decision to remain or to return often takes into consideration children’s opportunities and needs (Ní Laoire, 2008). While not designed to examine systematically children’s experiences during return migration, these studies have begun to challenge adultism in migration research (White et al., 2011). In line with this research this chapter will contribute on examining children’s experiences in parents’ home country.

Another important current avenue of research, not previously applied to children’s experiences of return migration, highlights the importance of considering children’s experiences in the context of the places and spaces where they live their everyday lives (Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Hackett, et al., 2015). These earlier studies acknowledge children’s everyday localities as important influences on the way they

develop a sense of belonging and of who they are (Christensen & James, 2008). Diminutive existing research highlights that moving to their parents' homeland can be an unsettling experience for young people. Challenging assumptions of unproblematic resettlement to parents' homeland, earlier studies suggest that, owing to cultural differences, return migrants' children can experience feelings of isolation and exclusion, psychological problems such as stress and sadness, as well as difficulties in school (see also Knörr, 2005; Ní Laoire, 2011a; Vathi & Duci, 2015; Vathi, et al., 2016). However, despite the increased interest in this field, existing work has tended to focus on mid- to late-teens while less research has concerned younger children of return migrants.

The current chapter aims to examine the ways in which children of return migrants negotiate belonging and identity by drawing on spatial and temporal encounters that shape their mobilities. Recognising the need to address spatial mobilities as influenced by both local and global processes, some of the studies which have attempted to examine children's connection with places have found that children engage in place-making by connecting to local everyday spaces (Olwig, 2003; den Besten, 2010). Other research suggests that for migrant children, identification is forged through linkages in transnational spaces that encompass both the countries of origin and destination respectively (Mand, 2010; White et al., 2010). The current chapter will therefore, contribute in understanding the way children construct a sense of home through traversing actively different reference points derived from past and present experiences.

Research in return migration has also paid attention to children's 'indoor homemaking'. This previous work documents ways in which children display attachment to their homes by identifying with objects and personal belongings within them (Hatfield, 2010). The importance of households to children's lives is also highlighted in the wider literature on children in general (e.g., Rose, 1995), and the importance of local community influences is also emphasised as impacting children's identity formation and socialization (Jennings et. al., 2006). Seymour's (2015) research, for example, provides a detailed exploration of the way in which interpersonal encounters and peer relations imbue places with meaning, thereby illustrating the inextricable link between the spatial and the social. Olwig and Gulløv

(2003), in this context, also call for the consideration of generational relations and examination of how children and adults negotiate these places since caregivers may both support or hinder opportunities for children. The chapter will therefore, consider children's social relationships and interactions with other children and adults, and considers the importance of these practices on how children develop a sense of belonging over time.

7.1 Confined places of belonging

Children's experiences of moving to their parents' country of origin were characterised by feelings of uprootedness brought on by encountering a reality that was, in many respects, perceived as less fulfilling. Almost all children noted that there were fewer everyday spaces for them to frequent in Albania in comparison to their previous place of residence. In the drawings representing their former country, children frequently visualized places of play (e.g., parks, playgrounds, football pitches, houses, trees), which they imbued with meaning, and which formed the backdrop to the daily routines and activities they recalled. In contrast, the children perceived spaces in Albania to be more confined and as limiting their freedom to engage in active play. The following drawing (Figure 7.1) by Nina illustrates these perceived disparities by representing her life in Greece (on the left) as one that takes place outside in spacious surroundings where she and her friends played under the sun. Albania, in contrast, is characterised by a more built-up environment and that side of the drawing (on the right) does not feature herself.



Figure 7.1: Greece and Albania by Nina (8 years, female, Tirana: wave 1).

Similarly, Erti highlighted that his life in Greece was better by emphasising the significance of spaces ‘...we used to have friends and playing was more fun. We had a ball and the playground was close by. There were green areas, it was better. We had space to play...’. Since most respondents had only lived in Albania for a comparatively brief period, the memories of their previous country of residence they recalled during the first year of data collection were relatively ‘fresh’, and there was a tendency for them to describe in detail the places around their houses or the neighbourhood areas where they used to spend most of their time.

In addition to talking about comparatively more confined places of play, children also noted what they perceived as a lack of unsupervised play in Albania, and reported being routinely expected to follow their parents into adults’ places of leisure, which were seen to lack child-friendly facilities. This is illustrated by Bled’s drawing in which an empty coffee shop is portrayed on the Albanian side (Figure 7.2: right). The left-hand side of the picture, by contrast, depicts a spacious area around the house with him and a friend playing outside in Italy.



Figure 7.2: Italy and Albania by Bled (9 years, male, Tirana: wave 1).

In addition to complaining about a limited number of spaces of play, and these being surrounded by concrete buildings, Bled also contrasted these everyday experiences with an enjoyable trip to the Dajti mountain, which is located to the east of the capital Tirana (on the right of the picture). Here he recalled enjoying a ride in a cable car, and seeing a beautiful landscape. These depictions exemplify the extent to which children were unhappy with their everyday places and sought to counter this dissatisfaction by recalling special outings. In this way, children appeared to create a sense of attachment by travelling mentally from their immediate surroundings to more exciting places of entertainment.

Children reacted to feeling comparatively more confined in Albania by describing how they had become competent in playing in the public places available to them, particularly on the street. Erti, for example, talked about not having a place to play

with his friends and, for that reason, spending much time playing on the street in front of his house (on the right of Figure 7.3).

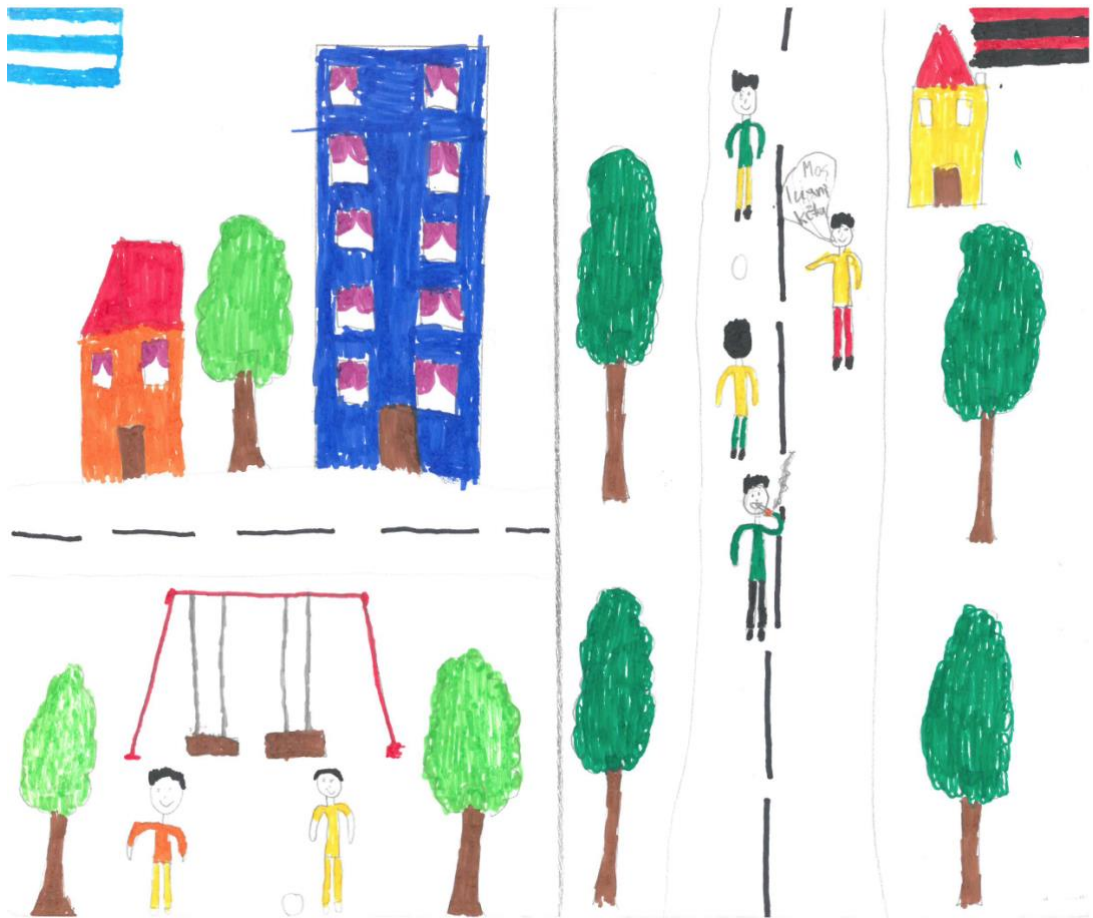


Figure 7.3: Greece and Albania by Erti (10 years, male: Tirana: wave 1).

He remarked: ‘We are playing in the street as there are fewer [public] places compared to Greece. A person here is yelling at us ‘do not play here!’. We played in the street and the neighbours tell us off, and they even threw a bucket of water on us.’ In this example, which echoed another interviewee, the lack of places to play was exacerbated further by the extent to which adults were sent to ‘police’ public spaces. Adults were perceived as ‘banning’ children from using public neighbourhood spaces by pointing to the dangers of the street or the noise they created. Analysis of wave two data did not point to any marked changes with regards to children’s perceived freedom to play in, and use, public spaces.

7.2 Patterns of identification in relation to space

Drawings in both waves frequently depicted elements of nationhood such as the flags from each country, highlighting children's ability to make use of these symbols as a means for distinguishing the different nations from each other. The findings suggest that children's identification with both Albania and their previous country of residence was not confined to a single pattern that applied to all respondents. Overall, children who had been less successful in forging a sense of belonging to Albania, tended to identify more with their previous homeland. In wave one, in particular, two children referred to Albania as their parents' homeland, while emphasizing that their own nationality was that of their previous country where they had been born. However, children's accounts showed evidence that they identified with both countries. As Bled elaborated, *'I would like to live in Italy, I would like ...both. I was born there, whereas my parents are Albanian'*.

All the families of respondents had relocated to Tirana which, except for one case, was a different locality than their parents' hometown in Albania. For the children, the move therefore represented one to an entirely new and not previously known place. This further exacerbated a lack of identification with the capital city. Respondents reported having developed a degree of familiarity with, and a sense of attachment to, their parents' hometowns, as well as having established relationships with their extended families and having developed local friendships to a greater or lesser extent. In this way, parents' decision to move to an unfamiliar place in Albania had made children unhappy and increased feelings of alienation. This is illustrated in Landi's drawing (see Figure 7.4), and in his accompanying narrative, about his parents' hometown, Saranda:

Landi: I have drawn Saranda because my two grannies live there. Nothing connects me to Tirana... I liked living in Greece because we lived in the same building as all my relatives. For example, in Greece when I was alone at home, I would go to my auntie, to my uncle and my grandma. *(10 years, male: Tirana, wave 1)*.



Figure 7.4: Greece and Albania by Landi (10 years, male, Tirana: wave 1).

Landi used more colour than other participants in the Albanian side of the drawing (on the right) but this may have been because of his choice not to draw Tirana, where he lived, but rather Saranda, the town he claimed to be more attached to. In a similar vein, Mario remarked that he felt more connected to his parents' hometown:

Landi: "I don't have any relatives here... It is better in [town A or B] / I like it more there because, with all the people we have there, it looks like a big family ... it is better. It is more quiet and people are not as bad as here, they are a bit better... It would be better if my parents went to [town A] and I could stay with my grandma there". (10 years, male, Tirana: wave 1).

Having lived in Albania for a year longer at the time of wave two interviews, Albania had become more familiar to the children and their attachment to the country had grown. Particularly in wave two, it was apparent that children's sense of belonging had become more complex and multi-sited, and included more localities

than solely the two countries. This is illustrated in Goni's narrative:

Elida: To which place do you feel more attached to?

Goni: I can't say, I like both countries. But I think I belong to Tirana. I feel I am more Albanian, it is the origin of my father, though I was brought up abroad. We are from [town C], we have a hotel in [area near town C] under my name [name of child] where we go for the summer holidays.

Elida: Where would you like to live?

Goni: Tirana, in fact.... I miss my friends in Greece, though.

Elida: Do you have relatives here in Albania?

Goni: Yes, we have, we realized how much we had missed them when we came back. I have drawn the Botanic Park [in Tirana] but now it has closed. That's where I would like to go and play. (*11 years, male Tirana: wave 2*).

In this extract, Goni captures the multiple geographical spaces to which he sees his life being linked. Children's constructions of their 'homeland' appeared to be characterised by recollections of places with which children associated feelings of fondness and intimacy and had friendship and family ties. Analysis of wave two data illustrated that children's identification with Tirana had become increasingly prominent as a function of them becoming more familiar with the locality. Their parents' hometown which, at the time of wave two interviews, continued to be visited frequently by respondents, was cited as a place to which children remained attached and felt connected to.

Wave two data illustrated a marked change in three of the participants' drawings, which tended to no longer focus on children's previous places of play in their former country. Their memories of the previous homeland had become less detailed. Like Olti, who drew his auntie's building in Greece which he had recently visited (Figure 7.5), children appeared to focus less on the neighbourhood spaces where they had played and more on buildings which symbolised current connections to their previous country of residence.



Figure 7.5: Greece and Albania by Olti (9 years, male, Tirana: wave 2).

Olti, together with three other children, who had visited Greece during the preceding year, displayed what might be characterised as a paradoxical effect on how they identified with both Greece and Albania. While he did not identify strongly with Albania in wave one and felt more connected to Greece, visiting Greece as a tourist appeared to strengthen his identification with Albania. On the side of Albania (Figure 7.5; on the right), his drawing portrays his favourite coffee shop which he now enjoys visiting. Greece, to him, is no longer the place where he would like to live but is now regarded as the best country in which to spend his holidays. The visit to Greece appeared to have alleviated some of the respondents' longing for the place. This pattern was evident in wave two interviews. As children reported having met friends and relatives they had previously left behind in their adoptive countries, they appeared more likely to talk about Albania in a positive light in comparison to the previous interviews. By contrast, children who had not had the opportunity of (re)visiting their previous country of residence tended to draw places associated with

more distant memories of their childhood. Mario, for example, commenting on a hotel from he remembered from a long time ago, (Figure 7.6) recalled: *'I like this place, I don't remember anything else. I have been coming here since I was seven years old and I don't remember other places...I don't even remember my own house.'*



Figure 7.6: Greece and Albania by Mario (9 years, male, Tirana: wave two).

This indicates that, with time, children had started to salvage and consolidate some memories, while a degree of fading of memories of the previous immediate places of attachment had also occurred, as they had begun to create a 'sense of place' with their current locality.

7.3 Strained relations and daily activities

When reflecting on their experiences of life in Albania, in the first wave respondents highlighted school as challenging and a number reported that they had moved schools as a result. There was a perception of insufficient support from teachers, or of them being excessively critical and expecting the children to adjust to life in Albania almost instantaneously. Other difficulties encountered by the children at school related to bullying. Respondents reported that they were bullied by their peers because of their foreign accent and children reported being ridiculed for being ‘Greek’. These negative peer relations increased profoundly participants’ sense of feeling excluded. During the first wave of data collection the participants reported that they struggled to make friends and to navigate successfully play activities with others. Their accounts frequently centred on concerns about the behaviour of other children in the community. They believed that other children were less polite, snobbish and arrogant. The participating children reported difficulties in accepting prevailing social norms, which, to them, were both a source of distress and a barrier to fitting in. While frequently voicing their apprehension, they acknowledged that daily encounters with peers had also affected adversely their own behaviour.

Elida: Have these behaviours affected you?

Kledi: In fact, yes, they have affected me. Because when I came from the US I didn’t know any swear words. I only knew two [swear words] in English, that’s all. I now know many in Albanian. Children here all use swear words and that has very much affected my behaviour as well. I am becoming affected because it is the same thing every day and I use them too when I am angry. Sometimes I also have fights with my friends.

Erti: Totally different, in a negative way. It is not that they [other children] do anything to me, but it is how they behave. Children of my age spend the entire day on the internet, wasting their time. Even when they make jokes, they make jokes by swearing. (10 years, male, Tirana: wave 1).

As the narratives illustrate, there was a general awareness among participants that they regarded their own behaviour as being more polite and well-mannered. This was reflected in other children’s use of swear words and the different types of jokes they made, which the respondents had not previously encountered. A further barrier to feeling connected to their peers related to ‘forbidden’ behaviours, such as

smoking, portrayed in Erti's drawings above (Figure 3, on the right), or engaging in too much internet game-playing.

Participants also complained about the way other children, in their view, did not adhere to the 'rules of the game', a further aspect affecting negatively their socialization into the Albanian way of life. They frequently voiced their exasperation with Albanian-born children for not taking responsibility for their actions during rule-based play - a factor that, in their view, complicated the process of fostering relationships with peers. As illustrated in Figure 7.7, on the side of Greece (on the left) Mario represents the enjoyment of playing with friends in orderly manner, as opposed to the Albanian part (on the right), in which Mario plays alone in front of his house.



Figure 7.7: Greece and Albania by Mario (9 years, male, Tirana: wave 1).

The many accounts expressing the apprehension of other children not following the rules of the game is depicted by the well-arranged football pitch, on which Mario further elaborated by stating that:

Mario: Children in Greece do not engage in negative behaviour. When we play football in Greece children accept when they are responsible for a foul, while here they do not accept it... Here, if you swear at someone they fight you back, whereas there [in Greece] if you swear, they would not fight back, instead, they would not be your friend any longer. Here they beat you up and also they would not be your friend. (9 years, male, Tirana: wave 1).

In the second wave of data collection relations with other children had changed for the respondents. Friendships were no longer a source of stress that constrained the children's sense of belonging. Friendship circles had expanded considerably and their feelings of connectedness with their place of abode and people in general had improved. In contrast to before, the children believed that their new friends were better than their previous ones, while some, had started to forget them. They emphasized the similarities they shared with their peers in Albania and acknowledged the role of their parents in supporting them with regards to expanding their friendship circles.

Goni: I have made friends in the neighbourhood and the classroom. They are very good and we tolerate each other. I am friends with the whole class. (11 years, male, Tirana: wave 2).

Olti: Children like to play with me, they always invite me to play... In the beginning, they did not accept me. My dad used to tell me not to beg other children to play with me and now it is them who come after me. In the beginning I had only one friend, the others would not accept me, because when we played I did not want to cheat, and they were used to cheating. (9 years, male, Tirana: wave 2).

In the second wave of data collection, children like Goni and Olti had developed their friendships and no longer tended to differentiate themselves by emphasizing the dissimilarities with other children in terms of behaviour and forming relationships, which were previously cited as obstacles to befriending others. Over time respondents appeared to have become more tolerant towards others and more accepting of them. When asked whether his behaviour had changed in Albania, Olti exclaimed: *'It has changed, I did not know how to behave in the beginning. For example, I did not pass the ball to the boys. As time went by I became even more*

polite.' However, this was not the case for all children and, at times, it was possible to discern a degree of ambivalence as two of the children shifted mentally between their friendship they had recently created and those they had known for longer and missed. For example, Mario mentioned how he has made many friends *during the year but also contended that his best friend remained another 'returned' participant: 'I have many friends here (...) but I stay more with Olti. One day I was unwell, and he carried my bag till we reached home. No one else would do that!'*

Overall, there no longer appeared to be as much of a qualitative hierarchy with regards to children's identification with places of the past and the present and the children's social relationships were perceived as more equitable and comparable to their previous experiences.

7.4 Discussion

This chapter examined longitudinally experiences of children of return migrants to Albania and the ways they negotiate feelings of belonging and identity with an emphasis on children's spatialities. The data indicate that the attachment to the children's previous homeland, established during their earlier childhood, impacted markedly on their experiences of re-settlement. In particular, during the first wave of data collection participants recalled vividly memories of places where they used to play and spend time with their friends. The attachment to these places echoes the theoretical framing of the seminal work by Tuan (1977) which emphasises the significance of people's connections to familiar places. From this perspective, the difficulties reported by participants in this chapter with regards to adjusting to life in Albania, were exacerbated by the social and psychological attachments that remained with their previous homelands.

These findings indicate that the experiences of children moving to their parents' homeland are perhaps akin to those moving to a foreign country. In view of the suggestion that, in comparison to adults, children may be more immersed in their surroundings (Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Gonzales, 2016), the current findings

contribute to this literature by extending it to the children of return migrants. The results document that changing immediate surroundings and the social interactions established within them represents more than a loss of attachment to a locality as children also leave behind childhood experiences, imaginations and the imprints of special memories to an extent. In this way, the findings point to the importance of considering places not only as the terrains where children forge their identity (see Holloway & Valentine, 2000 for a detailed discussion of this) but also as important frames of reference for their feelings of belonging that create a dual embeddedness with places of both the past and the present.

In addition to the impact (memories of) different places had on the extent to which children felt connected to their localities, the longitudinal follow-up interviews highlighted what might be termed a ‘progression in belonging’, whereby children had adapted gradually to their new surroundings. More specifically, findings indicate that, with time, children began to display spatial agency as they became familiar with and better versed at playing in their new local communities. In line with previous work in migration research (Olwig, 2003), this research illustrates the importance of everyday localities in fostering a sense of belonging in the children of return migrants. The process of place-making, in this research, appeared to be actively negotiated and was, for some, associated with conflicting emotions.

For the participants in this research, the places they felt attachment towards were not ‘fixed’ and independent from where they were born or now lived in. In support of Massey’s work (1994), children in the current research not only appeared to familiarise themselves with their new local surroundings, but also with living in a new country and having resided in a previous one. This research findings are therefore an illustration of the extent to which in today’s globalized society local and global places are interconnected and form the backdrop to individuals’ quest for meaning making. Children, from this perspective, accumulate experience and knowledge over time, and this helps them shape their identities and transverse their surroundings (Gonzales, 2016) in a process in which micro- and macro-scales intersect (Kjørholt, 2003 cf. Seymour, 2015).

Confirming the validity of den Besten's (2010) findings, this research highlights that return migrant's children identification is not immutably fixed and contingent upon a particular locality. At the same time, the findings have revealed that children's memories of life in a previous country faded over time, and this appeared to result in reduced feelings of ambivalence towards having to forge a new way of life in Albania. This supports research which suggests that time is essential to show that place attachment is not static but it can be transformed by changes that happen to people, places and processes (Du, 2015). In a similar way, children who had opportunity to visit their previous homeland frequently used this experience to reframe both the way they thought about Albania and their previous country, and this process appeared to strengthen their connectedness to their new surroundings. Here it needs to be noted that the follow-up period in the current research precludes conclusions about whether this reframing continues into adolescence and puberty, and future research with longer follow-up periods is required to address this.

The research findings also point to the significant influence of adults on the way in which children carve out their everyday spaces. Children reported that adults both restricted the locations in which they were allowed to play and also dictated the places they now had to frequent with them. Echoing previous work, findings therefore suggest that children found it difficult to exercise their spatial agency as parents often defined the 'places for children' (as coined by Olwig & Gulløv 2003: p.3), and lived in 'spatial contiguity' with adults that can be associated with complex patterns of authority, dependence and support (Nieuwenhuys, 2003: p.100). This work resonates with other research (Valentine, 1996; Holloway & Valentine, 2000), indicating that public spaces remain under adults' control, impact children's involvement and can limit their spatial agency (Satta, 2015). At the same time, however, the findings indicate that parents' involvement was simultaneously perceived as supportive and regarded as facilitating their socialization. This lends support to conceptualisations of children as social actors who negotiate and follow parents' advice (Seymour, 2015).

The chapter also provides evidence of the important influence of peers on return migrants' children's socialisation and their feelings of belonging. Children's acculturation processes were hampered by 'othered' and racialized narratives which

made children feel ‘out of place’, as theorised by Creswell (1996) and found in previous research with return migrant teenagers (Ní Laoire et al., 2010; Vathi & Duci, 2015). In the current research, which worked with younger children, participants frequently saw their peers as unwelcoming due to the perceived differences and stigmatisation that undermined feelings of belonging. This finding was more discernible during wave one data collection, which was characterised by what might be described as initial resistance to connect. The current findings therefore extend to younger children of return migrants the notion that initial socialization can be impacted adversely by peer relations. The follow-up data, however, indicate that, over time, social interaction with other peers had become a major source of belonging.

The current findings with regards to the importance of children’s everyday places and spaces support the importance of spatial freedom and localities to their adjustment reported in the findings of return migrants’ children to Ireland (Ní Laoire, 2011a). However, differences as a function of the geographical context appear to be present, as returned families in Ireland tended to move to more rural areas, with space for playing outdoors and little supervision from the parents, compared to more confined surroundings in Tirana. These discrepancies between Albania and Ireland are an illustration of how local contexts can have a significant bearing on children’s adjustment to their new surroundings. The current findings reveal further that children’s immediate new surroundings only constitute one of multiple localities in Albania to which children were attached. Illustrating how the widespread phenomenon of internal migration in Albania (Hagen-Zamber & Azzari, 2010) impacts children, participants who lived in the capital frequently recounted meaningful social ties with family and friends in other parts of the country. This supports the view that the presence of family members and associated memories can help forge a sense of ‘place-belonging’ (Antonsich, 2010: p. 647). The current research therefore, reinforces the assumption that, by providing social support and local knowledge, family ties and communities are central to mediating children’s adjustment (Reynolds, 2008; Ní Laoire et al., 2011). In the current research the lack of support appeared to be aggravated by the knowledge that this could have been available had the families chosen to settle in their hometown and not the capital city.

7.5 Conclusion

Findings highlight the importance of everyday places and social relations in influencing their adjustment to life in their parents' country of origin. During the first wave of data collection, in particular, a perceived scarcity of accessible everyday spaces of playing and a lack of acceptance by peers undermined participants' psychosocial adjustment, and made them feel out-of-place. Over time, children appeared able to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings and negotiate the place-making process more effectively via interactions with both parents and peers.

Overall, the current chapter points to the importance of how localities are represented and conceptualised at different levels, both locally and globally, in shaping children's sense of belonging. In this way, their sense of belonging did not appear to be shaped by a single frame of reference (e.g., to local or the national signifiers of belonging) but appeared to be the result of children attributing meaning to multiple localities in relation to each other. Reflecting broader conceptual frameworks (Bhabha, 1994), the current research suggests that the search for belonging in children of return migrants, entails negotiations between places of the past and the present that influence the process of identity construction.

General Discussion and Conclusions

The current thesis examined (re)settlement experiences of return migrants and their children in Albania and their quest for belonging. This final chapter provides an overview of the main findings of the research underpinning the thesis with the aim to highlighting the contribution this work makes to the wider literature. At the outset, the rationale of the research is reiterated briefly. The second section reviews the general findings in terms of transition, experiences and uncertainties at a time of an economic crisis. The second section discusses the main themes and will reflect on the broad challenges of belonging as well as social practices of inclusion and exclusion. The third section discusses belonging in relation to place and space. The fourth section discusses the contributions this research makes in relation to theoretical underpinnings in the field and the methodology. Prior to concluding, several limitations of this research are outlined.

8.1 The rationale for the research

The global economic crisis in 2008 hit the hardest Greece and Italy, two major destinations of Albanian migrants. This resulted in a mass return-migration of Albanians from these countries to their homeland. Return migration received increased attention from scholars and policy makers in recent years, primarily from a development perspective of the countries involved (Castles, 2002; Faist, 2008), and therefore focusing attention primarily on the high-skilled migrants. Return migration, it is widely accepted, tended to be prompted by the economic crisis and occurred under exceptional circumstances as opposed to a free and well-informed choice to return. In this way, the movement of people shares characteristics of both voluntary and involuntary return (INSTAT & IOM, 2014). The conditions under

which this return happened, and the associated return of families of migrant workers make this type of movement unique. Therefore, the (re)settlement experiences of migrants and their children upon return requires examination. In this thesis, I attempted to address this gap by qualitatively and systematically examining return migration during a challenging time of economic downturn, and to document from their perspective experiences of (re)settlement among both return migrants and their children in their quest to belong. To approach this question, the current thesis draws on an analysis of in-depth interviews undertaken with return migrants and their children living in Albania to provide insights into their experiences, the challenges faced, identification with the origin country and to gauge perceptions regarding future prospects.

8.2 Transition, experiences of (re)settlement and uncertainties for the future

The conditions upon which the return of migrant families took place and the experiences of resettlement, specifically regarding preparation, employment opportunities and the future trajectories were the focus of Chapters 5 & 6 which examined experiences of adults and teenagers. Overall, findings with regards to this research strand indicate that the experience of return migration motivated by economic pressures was almost universally perceived by participants to be profoundly unsettling. Findings suggest that return migration, when stimulated by the economic crisis in Europe, occurred under exceptional circumstances for the majority, by affecting the whole family and disrupting the planned cycle of migration. These challenging conditions led to many returning families being physically separated with one or two members remaining behind to continue working. As discussed in Chapter 5, there appeared to be differences with regards to which migrants were affected most severely by the crisis, with low skilled migrants working as labourers or in services sectors bearing the brunt to a greater degree than their comparatively more high-skilled counterparts. This supports other literature suggesting that from the overall population, migrants and particularly the labour migrants have bared the impacts of the economic downturn (Lafleur & Stanek, 2016; Papademetriou et al., 2009). It appears that moving to the origin country under difficult circumstances of return has hampered migrants' ability to prepare

sufficiently for the return, including assessing possibilities, enquiring information and gathering resources. This finding is consistent with work examining preparation of migrants (Meteeren, 2014) and extends it to return migration in times of economic downturn. Not only do data in the current study indicate that the lower skilled returnees were the most affected by the crisis, findings also suggest that they had the most unrealistic views about life opportunities in Albania. This supports Cassarino's model (2004) of preparedness with regards to the 'willingness' to return and 'readiness' factors which can have important implications for return migrants' post-return experiences. Findings from the current study therefore suggest that Cassarino's model which was developed for return migration more generally, appear to hold explanatory value even in the context of return propelled by economic downturn. However, in this research study, it was revealed that the willingness to return outweighs the material preparation (readiness), suggesting that preparation does not mitigate the consequences of an unwanted return.

This research suggested that economic embeddedness of return migrants in Albania was largely depended by the level of preparation (financial, skills, informational and network), the employment sector and the geographic region. Following the transnational approach (Levitt, 1889; Portes et al., 1999; Cassarino, 2004) on the role of financial capital, skills and social connections preparation in terms of, as facilitating the return, it was found that the migrants who were most prepared and better informed to strategize their return were able to transfer their accumulated capital to start a family businesses. Nevertheless, this current study revealed that transferability of capital appeared to be largely dependent on the geographic region of (re)settlement with those located in more urban areas of Tirana having better economic opportunities of (re)settlement such as to set up businesses. I argued that local economic conditions in Albania were the main constraining factor in establishing business and economic stability even among those employed because employment alone did not always guarantee the means of sustaining adequately the livelihood of respondents. This finding can be related to the emphasis De Haas (2005) places on the aggregate conditions in the origin country including the political, economic and social conditions, indicating that opportunities upon return depend on the individual's level of preparation and the context of the origin country. From this perspective, the current study suggests that solely individual preparation of

the migrant does not warrant a successful return, if economic conditions in the origin country and the geographic region do not facilitate economic sustainability.

Potentially one of the most important themes to emerge from the findings summarised in Chapters 5 and 6, is that return migration in times of economic crisis appears to create what might be termed ‘a cloud of uncertainties’ for the returnees and their teenage children. The nature of the uncertainties documented in the research is complex as they derive from the economic and political instability in Albania, as much as from an inability to predict future developments with regards to migration restrictions to freely work and live in other countries. The consequences of returning to countries with relatively weak economies, in times of economic downturn contradicts the predominant assumptions of viewing the return within the migration-development nexus (Kapur, 2004) and the positive implications to the country of return. In this study, findings suggest that many of the migrants are low skilled migrants. Further, as the structural factors in the origin country limit migrant agency, it can be suggested that prior to considering return migration as a possibility for development, for this group of migrants, sustainability and reintegration remain a priority.

The findings suggest that a major uncertainty for return migrants associated with future prospects is the possibility of migrants to re-migrate to other countries. While many of the migrants are doubtful about re-migrating as they consider the challenges of being migrant again, others still consider re-migrating as a sacrifice at affording their children better opportunities for the future. Similar to previous research (Orellana et al., 2001; Bushin, 2009; Hutchins, 2011) the current study also found that migration decision-making was frequently shaped by consideration of children’s future. In contrast, in this research it is documented that future re-migration decisions were often obstructed by children themselves who over the time appear to adjust to the school and friendship in Albania, reinforced by the perceived difficulties of being and feeling migrant once again.

Further, with regards to children’s prospects, in the current research, uncertainties for the future appeared to be linked with limited access of movements as recession does not make the previous country an attractive destination to re-migrate. Research

with migrants in other countries in Europe during the economic crisis has suggested that they tend to stay in the migrating country or turn into circular migration of moving back and forth (Bygnes & Erdal, 2017; Pirvu & Axinte, 2012; Zaiceva & Zimmerman, 2012). Unlike migrants in these countries who benefit from the permeability of borders with all other EU countries, migrants in this research appear to be conditioned by lack of access to freely work in other countries due to movement regimes. This is in contrast, to the mobility turn (Urry, 2002), which rests on the notions of interdependence of the world and the freedom of movement characterising globalization. The findings support Shamir (2005, p.199) who notes that society in a globalized world operates in a differentiated mobility or the 'mobility gap' of limited socio-economic conditions and a regime of movement 'constructed to maintain high levels of inequality in a relatively normatively homogenized world.' In Chapters 5 and 6 it was argued that uncertainties for adults and late teenagers appear to become more complex when possibilities of transnational movements during economic crisis are limited. In the current study lack of access to freely live and work in other countries in Europe appeared to further obstruct the ability of participants to confidently predict their likely future prospects in Albania. In relation to Shamir (2005), this suggests that economic challenges appear to have a marked impact on individuals with regards to the ability to predict future migratory patterns.

In this line, some of the respondents who were experiencing precarious employment in Albania may be more likely to engage in temporary migration, with a family member to migrate in the previous country. As discussed in Chapter 5, many respondents felt that this was often an out-of-choice decision because it led to physically separated families which in turn generated psycho-social consequences. Therefore, unlike dominant views surrounding the advantages of this type of migration promulgated by EC policies (Newland et al., 2008; Cassarino, 2013) it can be argued that while temporary migration may have a mediating effect with regards to reducing the financial stress of returned families, the effects of this pattern of migration may come with human costs. The causes and consequences of human costs in temporary or cyclical migration are overlooked in research and warrants further consideration for investigation.

The data suggested that return migration during an economic crisis impacted profoundly the family structure and the overall quality of the family life. Particularly among lower income families participating in the current research, the 'forced return', working options and economic difficulties frequently appeared to result in family conflicts. Females in this research appear to be the most vulnerable group, because in a working age they experience unemployment and often psychological distress. The impacts of this appear to be reinforced by a more conservative mentality based on gender and family role expectations of females and males shifting back to more traditional gender roles. This supports previous research which suggests that while migration may have an emancipatory effect for women as they gain more autonomy (Attias-Waite, 2012; Pärrenas, 2001), moving back to the origin country may also encompass a move to more defined traditional gender roles in Albania (King & Vullnetari, 2003) which may entail a greater degree of gender stereotypes. Female respondents reported finding gender role expectations more challenging and regressive as they are engaged in more traditional roles in Albania and perceive less employment prospects. By contrast, in the current study men frequently approached the return in a more flexible way, were more readily able to turn to friends for support, and were appeared to have greater employment opportunities. Very little previous research in the field of return migration identifies the internal family relations (Konzett-Smoliner, 2016) and issues that may be impacted by return migration. In this way, it has been shown that gender powers influence to differently shape these experiences showing that unemployed women have less agency. I argue that the crisis itself can have profound and long-lasting effects and produce stressors that affect the quality of family life. Because these are new trends of challenges for return migrant families, the current findings can stimulate further research to detangle the internal dynamics within intra-familial relationships among return migrant families.

Moreover, the data highlight that the family theme is significant and the role of parents appears to have a more controlling effect over their children instead of mediating children's belonging. In contrast to most research in the area (Ní Laoire et al., 2011; Christopoulou & de Leeuw, 2005) where parents and family play a supportive role in children's adjustment, in the current research, parents take a less supportive role. Specifically, parents appear to become more controlling of their

teenager children upon returning to Albania, hindering children from enjoying their previous freedom. Parents have a more balanced role with younger children by supporting and facilitating their socialization processes which positively influenced children's belonging. In contrast, with teenagers (Chapter 6) parents exercised more restrictive rules, causing tense relations. In other research, intergenerational conflict in migration occurred mostly due to tensions as teenagers sought to adjust to the new environment and parents attempted to force cultural norms to their children (Kwak, 2011; Drotbohm, 2005; Dublin, 1996). In contrast, in my findings tensions between children and parents arise not as a result of parents' pressure to transmit traditional cultural values to their children but the parents' tendency to 'protect' their children from the perceived changes in the cultural norms in the origin country. Apart from the changes of the cultural environment, the findings reveal that parents lack of adjustment was implicated by parents' own dissatisfying experiences of (re)settlement which in turn exasperate inter-generational relations. In this way, this contributes to understanding the influence of the cultural norms and intergenerational conflict hindering teenagers' ability to adjust to the new social context.

8.3 Non-belonging and difference

One of the main findings to emerge from the collected data to underpin this thesis concerned participants' feeling of being a migrant for the second time. Particularly for children and young people taking part in the study, experiences of "othering" and non-belonging were elevated for many of the returnees. Belonging and identification for children and teenagers appears to be shaped and influenced by the boundaries set from the broader community and the attitudes of non-migrants towards returnees moving particularly from Greece. The narratives with children and young people reveal that they frequently faced non-welcoming attitudes and xenophobia from the non-migrant children. The data suggest that unlike their parents who are returning to their own home country, teenagers have to negotiate into a new socio-cultural context with which they are unfamiliar and they are viewed as foreigners. This supports other research which suggests that belonging is not only self-claimed but it is largely determined by others (Anthias, 2001, 2008; Antonsich, 2010; Nagel, 1994;

Yuval-Davis, 2006). Experiences of social exclusion in this research appear to be influenced by labelling and stigmatisation often based on their foreign-sounding accent which served to demarcate children as outsiders in their daily interactions. It further appears that these processes of exclusion and labelling are reinforced by the teaching techniques in Albania which, in turn, impact children and youth's educational performance and exasperate feelings of othering.

Data further indicate that the country from which children and young people return can be an important factor in positioning teenagers and children as insiders or outsiders. In my research, it was observed that those moving from Greece reportedly, were more frequently targeted, stigmatized and labelled as a result of their distinct accent. Experiences of social exclusion are evidenced in other research in return migration with children of migrants (Ni Laoire, 2011a; Joyce, 2010; Potter, 2006). However, in contrast, teenagers in Albania report experiencing strong racialized markers of difference. It can be argued that previous exclusionary experiences in the host society exasperate belonging and give rise to feelings of 'double alienation'. This is observed in the current data, as there is a differentiation on the perception of non-migrant Albanians holding disparate attitudes towards return migrants with reference to the destination country, ranking lowest the migrants from Greece and highest migrants from western countries. This differentiation resonates in the way the broader community perceives return migrants and their children based on a selective inclusion following a racial ranking, driven by the culture from where the migrants return. This supports Kibria (2000) who suggests that ethnicities are perceived in different ways by other people. In this way, for the teenagers migrating from Greece, attitudes of non-migrants to this extent appear to be shaped by the antagonistic geo-political relations between the two countries linked with territorial claims and treatment of minorities in the respective countries which date back centuries (see Gogonas, 2009; Vullnetari, 2013). In this way, my results point to the differential treatment of the broader community towards returnees which appears to be based on non-migrants' 'preferences' for certain cultures, by making the experiences more challenging for children and young people returning from Greece.

In terms of identification and belonging, the findings suggest that both adults and teenagers appear to more strongly identify with the lifestyle and cultural aspects of

the previous country. Literature in return migration has indicated that returnees appear to show a strong identification with the homeland but are challenged by others' non-welcoming treatment (Christou, 2006; Ní Laoire, 2008; Ralph, 2013; Steffanson, 2004; Werbner, 2011). In contrast, my findings suggest that migrants returning from Greece appear to be the most affected by the economic downturn and the structural conditions in the origin country, reflected through a 'home coming limbo' of not identifying with the country of origin. This is in contrast to the conceptualizations of multiple homes of people simultaneously belonging in multiple places (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). Identification in this research, requires to secure the material, autonomy and stability as return migrants face challenges of precarious employment, future prospects and lower quality of life. The findings then point to the ontological challenges which appear to be shaped by trajectories of returning under unusual circumstances of economic downturn, lack of resources and the structural conditions in the origin country which tend to influence overall experiences of belonging.

Moreover, my results indicate that lack of identification with the origin country appears to be related to the history of migration. By the approach of drawing distinctions of identifications of migrants from different countries, my findings suggest that migration history works to position migrant's belonging in different ways. For example, data revealed that migrants who have been less pressurised to articulate their ethnic identity in the host society, appear to show stronger identification with Albania. It was evidenced that particularly returnees from Greece indicated a weaker identification and belonging than other migrants. Identification with Greece, tends to be linked to the migratory history of this group of returnees who appear to have been influenced by the cultural environment of the previous country. In this context, acquiring greater assimilation within the host society may have weakened ethnic identifications (Vathi, 2015; Vullnetari, 2015). The findings of this research provide evidence on the ways the migrants have avoided ethnic categorizations in the destination country by adopting strategies to counter social exclusion such as changing names, religion which have led to weakening ethnic agency. This then, supports the argument that belonging and identification are influenced by the boundaries that others set for inclusion and exclusion (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Antonsich, 2010). However, the current findings add by suggesting that

identification in return migration appears to be influenced even by the migration history.

The findings further suggest that return migrants perceive themselves as having better work ethics than non-migrants, and being better cultured in general. Nevertheless, even adults appear to experience estrangement and feel unwelcomed because they feel different and others perceive also them as different. This is similar to research suggesting the migrants are made to feel different and experience social alienation in the home country (Dürschmidt, 2016; King, 2000; Stefansson, 2004; Ralph, 2013; Webrner, 2013). However, in contrast, the current findings highlight the differential positioning determined based on social class. This is in support with Anthias (2001) who suggests that while hybridity may be compounded by others, it cannot be understood in isolation from other constructions of identity including social class and gender. The results reflect this in the case of higher skilled migrants who appear to recognize their skills and advantages of migration to a greater degree than lower skilled migrants who often perceive the return as a failure. Therefore, the disruption of migration which offered better employment, quality of life, and inability to anticipate future prospects appear to have influenced in experiencing feelings of what Bhabha (1997) has called the 'inferiorization' towards non-migrants. This extends to previous research in return migration by showing the differential positioning the migrants appear to situate themselves in relation to others and the way others may perceive returnees based on social class.

In relation to belonging, in contrast to their parents, children appear to actively pursue ways of negotiating and forming belonging. Teenagers and younger children engage in the process of socializing, tolerating other teenagers, accepting or rejecting certain social norms, claiming belonging from others or using certain tactics of insider/outsider to facilitate their adjustment. These are the mechanisms that children of migrants in the current study employed in order to develop stronger feelings of belonging. This is similar with other work (Howarth et al., 2014; Ní Laoire et al., 2011; Haikkola, 2013) indicating the way children and teenagers construct a sense of belonging and display agency and a stronger desire to adjust with the local context (Howarth et al., 2014). In contrast, however, my findings appear to have identified the differences between adults and their descendants, highlighting that adults do not

show similar level of negotiating belonging. The findings suggest the various factors appearing to influence adults' and their children's belonging, for children and teenagers being mainly based on relational aspects, while for adults on structural ones. The research highlights that time is essential to enable a better understanding of the processual nature of belonging. In this research, time as investigated through the longitudinal approach has revealed that while for parents there are little changes evidenced, many children and teenagers in wave 2, experience a progression of belonging by dismantling social exclusion and strengthening peer relations.

In this way, the findings of the current research contribute to understanding experiences of migration as a family project and through a life course lens. Teenagers across migration literature are mostly researched within the scope of ethnicity and identity as forged in transnational spaces (Howarth, et al., 2014; Mannitz, 2005; Phinney, et al., 2001). However, the current work suggests that teenagers seek to make autonomous decisions about their future mobility and are involved with the structural conditions of the family. These findings support conceptualizations of late adolescence which recognizes teenagers as belonging in the stage of 'emerging adulthood' (Annette, 2004), an in-between stage of transition to adulthood characterised by instability as young people seek to make autonomous decisions about their future. In contrast to such conceptualizations, teenagers' instability is not underpinned by adventure-seeking experiences but rather by perceived lack of opportunities and future mobility. In this way, the findings extend to teenage migrants by indicating that experiences of (return) migration in this particular age appear to be influenced by complex decisions about future mobilities and prospects.

8.4 Constructing belonging, places and spaces

By adopting a life cycle lens to examine the return migrant family, this research has uncovered the importance of more specific elements affecting the ability to identify and belong in Albania. The findings highlight, for example, the role of everyday leisure places in children's lives which markedly affected experiences of (re)settlement. In particular, children in the current study emphasised a strong sense

of attachment and connection with their previous places of play and of socialization. Children more than other groups in this research, appeared psychologically attached with the playing environments. This supports other literature which suggests that children are more connected to everyday localities and this plays a significant role in their identity (Christensen & James, 2000; Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; Matthews et al., 2000). However, in contrast, this research has suggested the ways migration experiences for children influence to shape place-making. This research, therefore, contributes to the current debates which emphasize the role of broader scales in researching children (Ansell, 2009; Holloway & Valentine, 2000). In Albania, the findings suggest that children discern a lack of everyday places to play which makes them feel out-of-place and identifying with the previous country of birth. The findings highlighted that changing places for children indicated changing memories of childhood and transcending through the past and the present. Places in this research were not fixed and static and children actively engage in familiarizing themselves with their local surroundings. In addition, time led to the memories of the places of the past fading, which reduced ambivalence and increased attachment to Albania. The research pointed to the way belonging is not static but rather progressive, occurring at various levels. In this way, my findings have highlighted the role of everyday places in children's lives as constructed in spatial ways. Most importantly, the longitudinal approach has supported assumptions which suggest that particularly for children experiences should be considered as running along a continuum of experiences of positive and negative, present at both countries of the past and the present (Punch, 2010). My findings suggest that over the time children appear to create friendship, to improve their school performance, engage in the extra-curricular activities and increase a sense local knowledge and belonging.

While children in the current study tended to view everyday places as essential for helping them foster a sense of belonging, some of the teenage participants spoke about constructing their belonging by attending church and performing similar religious practices as in Greece as an important means of achieving a sense of connectedness. This supports the performative nature of belonging (Fortier, 2000) in as far as teenagers 'do' belonging by engaging in practices that emotionally keep them connected with the previous culture. This supports other literature in migration (Ní Laoire et al., 2011; Ugba, 2008; White et al., 2011) in which migrants perform

cultural practices and construct a sense of belonging. In contrast, my findings suggest that the performed cultural practices did not appear to be related primarily to respondents' ethnic identity but rather to the host country. This indicates a stronger identification with the previous cultural and religious practices, which appear to have shaped the religious composition of return migrant families particularly from Greece. Further, teenagers appear to maintain a strong connection with the previous culture as they visit, travel and strengthen the attachment which is in contrast to other literature in return migration, particularly in the case of teenagers (Ní Laoire, 2011a). This finding then contributes to the literature by indicating that particularly some teenagers still maintain a strong sense of belonging with the previous country and have yet to form a belonging with Albania. The findings further highlight the different effect that visiting the previous country appears to have to teenagers and children, showing that in contrast to teenagers, for younger children, the visits have a mediating effect to increase their belonging with Albania.

8.5 Contribution to knowledge

8.5.1 Theoretical and methodological contributions

This thesis is the first to study a group of migrants and their children who have been 'forced' to return in turbulent times of an economic crisis throughout Europe. There are several contributions made by this research which are summarised here briefly. As was argued in the introduction, previous studies of migrants during the economic crisis period have tended to focus on the effects crises have on influencing return migratory movements (Zaiceva & Zimmerman, 2012). To date, this is the first research study to focus on return migration during economic crisis by examining the experiences of (re)settlement and belonging of adults and their children. The current research suggests that the complexity of returning to the origin country in times of crisis is exceptional and it comprises features of both voluntary and non-voluntary return migration. In this research, although there was no involvement of force to return, this migratory movement is characterised by a lack of willingness to return which in turn appears to have disrupted migrants' migration plans. The inability to prepare for the return, the presence of psychological distress experienced by many

returnees and the unfavourable conditions for employment in the origin country do not account for a voluntary return. These features that constitute this type of return add credence to current thinking (Castles et al., 2014; Erdal & Oepen, 2017; van Houte et al., 2016) that challenge binary categories of ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’ migration and call for a less sharp distinction between the two.

This research has contributed to understanding that return migration in times of economic crisis can affect the migratory movements considered as non-linear and encompassing a circular model (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008; Leo & Kobayashi, 2005; Sussman, 2002). While other countries during the economic crisis are involved in circular migration (Parutis, 2013), this thesis illustrated that the causes and consequences of the economic downturn challenge assumptions that in an era of transnational movement, return migration is fluid and cyclical. The findings have suggested that countries of migration experiencing economic crisis may not be attractive destinations for the future. Additionally, the lack of access to employment in other countries, affects transnational movements which and in turn give rise to ‘moving entrapment’ and uncertainty for the future.

Findings point to the intersectionality nature of belonging where aspects of age, gender, class, locality, migration history, structural conditions exert influence in contradictory and complex ways in shaping experiences of belonging in return migration. For children, other factors including the role of peers, school and places influence in their life experiences upon return. The influence of these factors in return migration support assumptions that challenge “methodological nationalism”, scholars of which have been criticized for putting too much emphasis on ethnicity underplaying other factors and social divisions on migrants’ settlement (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002; Wessendorf, 2017). In other words, findings suggest that experiences of belonging are individual and context specific and the intersect of certain factors exert different influences in the lives of migrants.

In this research, the analysis of younger children’s experiences of belonging has heeded calls for a broader spatial consideration of understanding children’s lives in the interconnection of the local and transnational spaces (Holloway & Valentine, 2000b). The current findings suggest that in examining migrant children’s belonging

and identity, the interrelation of everyday day places and transnational spaces of the past and present need to be accounted for as their lives are shaped within these. Therefore, the analysis has revealed that capturing (return) migration patterns through a family approach by addressing aspects based on developmental life stages is a valuable means of providing insights into the specific experiences of children and adult return migrants. In this way, findings highlight the specific migratory experiences of children, teenagers and adults as shaped by different reference points in their lives and the possibility of changing nature of belonging for each group.

Finally, with regards to methodological contributions, involving both migrants and their children required the use of different research methods which specifically enabled capturing the meanings migrants ascribe to their migration experiences. This made it possible to understand the links and influences that shaped experiences in certain ways during the period of migration and the post-return. The longitudinal nature of this research has allowed the changes that took place over the time in lives of the return migrants to be assessed in a continuum of experiences. The longitudinal approach is largely lacking in research in migration research (see Punch, 2013), therefore the current research contributes to mapping changes of experiences for children and adults in this research domain.

8.6 Limitations of the research and future directions

Several limitations need to be borne in mind when considering the present findings. In line with assumptions underpinning qualitative research methods (Creswell, 2007), the study findings may not be generalized across all return migrant populations. However, current findings may apply in the context of many EU migrants during the times of Brexit, which appears to have affected migrants' plans. Brexit has raised a lot questions of belonging, and as research suggests, EU migrants are in a state of uncertainty and undetermined about certain rights and their future plans (McGhee et al., 2017; Tyrell, 2017). Therefore, uncertainty and issues of belonging appear to be a present-day condition prevalent even among other groups of migrants.

The research focused on return migrants who have moved because of the economic crisis in Greece and Italy, however not all the participants were returnees because of the economic crisis. The inclusion of the small sub-sample who had moved to Albania for other reasons and from other countries enabled more detailed consideration of the real challenges of return migrants propelled to return because of the crisis by identifying divergent cases which helped in emphasizing the differing factors. In terms of the sample, only five schools were included in this research and only two cities. Future research would benefit from supplementing self-report data on which this study relied. The survey studies may explore further the variety of experiences by including additional schools, cities across Albania and rural and urban areas, which can include a large number of participants and identify additional individual or contextual influencing factors.

The methodology of this research was qualitative, which enabled to shed light on the diversity of the return migration experiences, however qualitative research has certain limitations. While the findings of this research may be applying in other contexts, the subjective nature of qualitative data does not allow to apply the more conventional standards of reliability and validity. As the role of the researcher is central in the generation of the data in qualitative methods, it is not possible to replicate the findings of this research (Punch, 1998). Therefore, quantitative research methods would eliminate certain limitations of research rigour and reduce researcher subjectivity. As previously discussed, longer follow-up periods are also required to examine the extent to which the observed findings consolidate over time. Findings uncovered that different stages of migration were associated with divergent experiences of (non)belonging and that in certain migrants, rapid changes took place. The second wave of data collection uncovered that many families or even teenagers had changed place or left the country and because it was not feasible to search and follow this group of migrants in the countries they had migrated to, this remains to be researched in the future.

8.7 Conclusion

This thesis explored experiences of (re)settlement and belonging for Albanian return migrants and their children. The research addresses a significant gap in the literature by focusing on a group of migrants who have returned in an exceptional context of the economic crisis in the host country. In contrast, to more widely studied patterns of return migration, participants in this research mainly returned because of the economic crisis, and findings highlight the complexities and consequences associated with the conditions upon which the return occurred. The ability of participants to reintegrate, for example, was shown to be far from unproblematic. The research highlights migrants' experiences and challenges in relation to circumstances of the return and the structural conditions in the origin country, such as employment constraints and school experiences. The findings of this research have highlighted the challenges of belonging and the contradictory ways that influence migrants and their children in their experiences of return and identification. It points to the importance of researching return migrants and their descendants to uncover the individual experiences, issues within the family including effects that returning in certain context has in the quality of the family. Further, examining belonging in this research has pointed to identification with the place and in relation with the people, indicating that adults' identification is influenced by structural constraints while children and teenager's identification is influenced by boundaries of belonging set by others and places. The research has indicated the fluid nature of belonging for the descendants as they actively seek to construct a sense of connection with the new cultural context. The thesis calls for a sensitive understanding of this migration pattern, experiences of which can be understood by subjective accounts of the return migrant families.

Reference:

- ACIT. (2012). Study on the economic impact of the Greek crisis in Albania. USAID.
- Ackers, L., & Stalford, H. (2004). *A Community for Children?: children, citizenship, and internal migration in the EU*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Adams L.D., & Kirova, A. (Eds.) (2006). *Global Migration and Education: Schools, Children and Families*. NY: Routledge.
- Afshar, H. (1994). Muslim Women in West Yorkshire. In H. Afshar & M. Maynard (Eds) *The Dynamics of 'Race' and Gender* (pp. 127-150). London: Taylor & Francis.
- Allen, L., & Aber, J.L. (2006). The development of ethnic identity during adolescence. *Developmental Psychology*. 42(1), 1-10.
- Alshenqeeti, H. (2014). Interviewing as a Data Collection Method: A Critical Review. *English Linguistics*. 3(1), 39-45.
- Amiralis, K., Alarcao, D., Barrilero, R., Johnson, C., & Morelli, M. (2013). The impact of financial crisis on employment in Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Italy. Mercer.
- Arnett, J. (2004) *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Ansell, N. (2009). "Childhood and the politics of scale: descaling children's geographies?", *Progress in Human Geography*. 33(2), 190–209.
- Ansell, N., & van Blerk, L. (2007). 'Doing and belonging: Toward a more-than-representational account of young migrant identities in Lesotho and Malawi'. In Panelli, R., Punch, S., & Robson, E. (Eds), *Global Perspectives on Rural Childhood and Youth: Young Rural Lives* (pp. 17-28). London: Routledge.
- Anthias, F. (2001). 'New hybridities, old concepts: the limits of 'culture''. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 24(4), 619-641.
- Anthias, F. (2008). "Thinking through the lens of translocational positionality: an intersectionality frame for understanding identity and belonging." *Translocations*, 4(1), 1-20.
- Anthias, F., & Lazaridis, G. (Eds.). (2000). *Gender and migration in Southern Europe. Women on the move*. Berg: Oxford.
- Anthias, F., & Pajnik, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Contesting Integration, Engendering Migration. Theory and Practice* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anthias, F., & Yuval, D. (Eds.). (1989). *Woman-Nation-State*. The Macmillan Press: Hampshire.
- Antonsich, M. (2010). Searching for Belonging – An analytical Frame. *Geography Compass*, 4(6), 644-659.

- Arnett, J. (2004) *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Attias-Donfut, C., & Waite L. (2012). From generation to generation: Changing family relations, citizenship and belonging. In Attias-Donfut, C., Cook J., Hoffman J., & Waite, L. (Eds.). *Citizenship, Belonging and Intergenerational Relations in African Migration* (pp. 40-65). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bagnoli, A. (2009). Beyond the Standard Interview: The Use of Graphic Elicitation and Arts-Based Methods. *Qualitative Research*, 9(5), 547–570.
- Barjaba, K. (2000). Contemporary patterns in Albanian migration. *South-East Europe Review*. 2, 57-64.
- Barjaba, K. & King, R. (2005). Introducing and theorizing Albanian migration. In (Eds). King, R., Mai, N. Schwandner-Sievers, S. *The New Albanian Migration*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press.
- Barjaba, K., & Barjaba, J. (2015). Embracing emigration: The migration-development nexus in Albania. *Online Journal of Migration Policy Institute*. Washington DC.
- Barjaba, K., & King, R. (Eds.) (2005). Introducing and theorizing Albanian migration. In King, R., Mai, N., & Schwandner-Seievers, S. *The New Albanian Migration* (pp. 1-28). Sussex Academic Press.
- Barnardo's Statement of Ethical Research Practice: www.barnardos.org.uk/resources/researchpublications/documents/ethical.pdf
- Basch, L., N. Glick-Schiller & C. Blanc, S. (1994). *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. Basel, Switzerland: Gordon and Breach.
- Baser B., & Toivanen, M. (2017). Politicized and depoliticized ethnicities, power relations and temporality: insights to outsider research from comparative and transnational fieldwork. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1-18.
- Bastia, T. (2011). Policy arena: Should I stay or should I go? Return migration in times of crises. *Journal of International Development*, 23, 583-595.
- Bauman, Z. (1995). The making and unmaking of strangers. In Werbner, P., & Madood, T. (Ed.), *Debating cultural hybridity* (pp. 44-58). London: Zed Books.
- Bazley, P., & Jackson, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Qualitative Data Analysis with Nvivo*. London: Sage.
- Beets, G., & Willikens, F. (2009). The global economic crisis and international migration: An uncertain outlook. *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*. 19-37.
- Bell, V. (1999). Performativity and belonging. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 16(2), 1-10.

- Bergold, J., & Thomas, S. (2012). Participatory research methods: A methodological approach in motion. *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, 191-222.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Bhabha, J. (2008). Independent children, inconsistent adults: international child migration and the legal framework. Innocenti Discussion Paper No. IDP 2008-02. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
- Bhambra, G. K. (2006). Culture, identity and rights: challenging contemporary discourses of belonging. In Yuval-Davis, N., Kannabiran, K., & Vieten, U. (Ed). *The Situated Politics of Belonging* (pp. 32-41). London: Sage Publications.
- Black, R. & Koser, K. (1999). *The End of the Refugee Cycle? Refugee Repatriation and Reconstruction*. (Ed). New York: Berghahn.
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M. (2006). *How to Research*. (3rd Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Bloor, M., Frankland, J., Thomas, M., & Robson, K. (2001). *Focus groups in social research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Blunt, A., & Dowling, R. (2006). *Home*. London: Routledge.
- Brah, A. (1996). *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge.
- Brato, G. B. (2016). "Views of migrants and foreign residents: A comparative European perspective." In *Migration of Rich Immigrants: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class*, edited by Vailati, Alex and Carmen Rial, 179-198. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in Psychology. *Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brockmeyer, B., & Harders, L. (2016). Questions of belonging: Some introductory remarks. *Interdisciplines*, 7(1), 1-7.
- Brubaker, R., & Cooper, F. (2000). Beyond 'identity'. *Theory and Society*, 29(1), 1-47.
- Bryman, A. (2004). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- BTI (Bertelsmann Stiftung) (2014) — Albania Country Report. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung. <http://www.bti-project.org/>.
- Buhrmeister, D. (1990). Intimacy of Friendship, Interpersonal Competence, and Adjustment during Preadolescence and Adolescence. *Child Development*, 61, 1101-1111.
- Burawoy et al. (1991). *Ethnography unbound: Power and resistance in the modern metropolis*. University of California Press.

- Burgess, R.G. (1981). Keeping a research diary. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 11(1), 75-83.
- Bushin, N. (2007). Interviewing with children in their homes: putting ethical principles into practice and developing flexible techniques. *Children's Geographies*, 5(3), 235-251.
- Bushin, N. (2009). Researching family migration decision-making: A children-in-families approach. *Population, Space and Place*, 15(5), 429-43.
- Bygnes, S. & Erdal, M. B. (2017). Liquid migration, grounded lives: considerations about future mobility and settlement among Polish and Spanish migrants in Norway. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(1), 102-118.
- Carletto, C., Davis, B., Stampini, M., & Zezza, A. (2006). A country on the move: International migration in post-communist Albania. *International Migration Review*, 40(4), 767-785.
- Carling, J. & Pettersen, S.V. (2015). Return migration intentions in the integration-transnationalism matrix. *International Migration*. 52(6), 13-30.
- Carling, J., Bolognani, M., Erdal, B.M., Tordhol, R., Oepen, C., Paache, E., Petersen, V. S., & Sagmo, T. H. (2015). "Possibilities and Realities of Return Migration". Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO).
- Cassarino, J. P. (2004). Theorizing return migration: The conceptual approach to return migrants revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 6(2), 253-279.
- Cassarino, J. P. (2008). Conditions of return migrants. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 10(2), 95-105.
- Cassarino, J. P. (2013). The drive for securitised temporariness. In Triandafyllidou, A. (Ed.) *Circular Migration between Europe and its Neighbourhood*, (pp. 2-41). Oxford University Press.
- Cassarino, J. P. (2014). Bridging the policy gap between reintegration and development. *Return Migration and Return Platform*. Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.
- Castles, S. (2002). Migration and Community Formation under Conditions of Globalization. *Journal of Migration Research*, 36(4), 1143-1168.
- Castles, S., & Vezzoli, S. (2009). The global and economic crisis and migration: Temporary interruption or structural change? *Paradigms*, 2, 69-75.
- Castles, S., de Haas, H., & Miller, M.J. (2014). *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (5th Ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chavez, L. (1998). *Shadowed Lives: Undocumented immigrants in American Society*. Texas: Harcourt Brace College.

- Christensen, P., & James, A. (Eds.). (2008). *Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices*. London: Falmer Press.
- Christensen, P., & Prout, A. (2002). "Working with ethical symmetry in social research with children." *Childhood*, 9(4), 477-497.
- Christopoulou, N., & de Leeuw, S. (2005). "Children making media. Constructions of home and belonging." In Knorr, J. (Eds). *Childhood and Migration. From Experience to Agency* (pp. 113-136). Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Christou, A. (2006). *Narratives of Place, Culture, and Identity: Second-generation Greek-Americans Return 'Home'*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Rosiek, J. (2007). Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry: Borderland spaces and tensions. In Clandinin, D. J. (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 35-75). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Clark-Ibáñez, M. (2004). Framing the social world with photo-elicitation interviews. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(12), 1507-1527.
- Cobo, D. S., Silvia, E. G., & Alba, F. (2010). Occupational mobility among returned migrants in Latin America: A comparative analysis. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 630:245.
- Colombo, E., Leonini, L. & Rebughini, P. (2009). Different but not stranger: everyday collective identifications among adolescent children of immigrants in Italy. *Journal of Ethic and Migration Studies*, 35 (1), 37–59.
- Constant, A. & Massey, D.S. (2002). Return migration by German guest workers. Neoclassical versus New Economic theories. *International Migration*. 40(4), 5-38.
- Cooper, F., & Rogers, B. (2005). Identity. In Cooper, F. (Eds). *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, (pp. 59–90). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Creswell, J.W. (1994). *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, T. (1996). In *Place/Out of Place. Geography, Ideology and Transgression*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dagdeviren, H., Donoghue, M., & Mier, L. (2014). The narratives of hardship: the new and the old poor in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis in Europe. *Sociological Review*, 65(2), 389-385.

- De Bree, J., Davids, T., & De Haas, H. (2010). Post-return experiences and transnational belonging of return migrants: a Dutch–Moroccan case study. *Global Networks*, 10(4), 489-509.
- De Haas, H. (2005). *International Migration, Remittances and Development: Myths and Facts—Global Migration Perspectives*, Geneva: Global Commission on International Migration.
- Deda, L., & Tsenkova, S. (2006). Poverty and inequality in greater Tirana: The reality of peri-urban areas. In Tsenkova, S., & Nedovic-Budic, Z. (Eds.) *The Urban Mosaic of Post-socialist Europe: Space, Institutions and Policy* (pp. 151-170). Springer.
- den Besten, O. (2010). “Local belonging and 'geographies of emotions': Immigrant children's experience of their neighbourhoods in Paris and Berlin.” *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research*, 7(2), 181-195.
- Denscombe, M. (2007). *The Good Research Guide: For small-scale social research projects*. Milton Keynes: Open University.
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive interactionism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K. (1994). The art and politics of interpretation. In Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 500-515). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1998). ‘Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research’. In Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Ed.). *The Landscape of Qualitative Research* (pp. 1-34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Di Blasi M., Tosto, C., Marfia, A., Cavani, P., Giordano, C. & Cebulla, A. (2016). Transition to adulthood and recession: a qualitative study. *Journal of Youth Studies*. 19(8), 1043-1060.
- Djajic, S. (2008). Immigrant parents and children: An analysis of decisions related to return migration. *Review of Development Economics*. 12(3), 469-485.
- Dobson, M. E. (2009). “Unpacking children in migration research.” *Children’s Geographies*, 7(3), 355-360.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Drotbohm, H. (2005). Small heroes. Rap music and selective belongings of young Haitian immigrants in Montreal. In Bielefeld, V. (Eds.). *Childhood and Migration. From Experience to Agency*. (pp.185-206). Routledge.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1994) *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York, Avenel, NJ: Gramercy Books.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1994) *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York, Avenel, NJ: Gramercy Books.

- Dublin, T. (1996). *Becoming American, Becoming Ethnic: College Students Explore Their Roots*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple Univ. Press
- Dumont, J. C., & Spielvogel, G. (2008). "Return Migration: A New Perspective." *International Migration Outlook, Part III*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Dunn, K. (2005). Interviewing. *Qualitative Research Methods*. In Hay, I. (Ed.). *Human Geography* (pp. 50-102). Oxford University Press.
- Dürschmidt, J. (2016). "The irresolvable unease about be-longing: Exploring globalized dynamics of homecoming". *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 1-16.
- Dustmann, C. (2003). "Children and return migration". *Journal of Population Economics*, 16(4), 815-830.
- Dustmann, C., & Weiss, Y. (2007). "Return migration: Theory and empirical evidence for the UK". *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 45(2), 236–256.
- Duval, D. T. (2004). "Linking return visits and return migration among Commonwealth Eastern Caribbean migrants in Toronto". *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs*, 4(1), 51-67.
- Edal, M. B., & Oeppen, C. (2017) Forced to return? Agency and the role of post-return mobility for psychosocial wellbeing among returnees to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Poland. In Vathi, Z. & King, R. (Ed.) *Return Migration and Psychological Wellbeing: Discourses, Policy Making and Outcomes for Migrants and their Families*. Routledge.
- Edge Hill University. (2013). *Ethical Guidance for Undertaking Research with Children and Young People*. Research Ethics and Governance.
- Efstratios, L., Anastasios, M., & Anastasios, K. (2014). Return migration: Evidence from a reception country with a short migration history. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 21(2), 171-174.
- England, K. V. L. (1994). Getting personal: Reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research. *The professional geographer*, 46(1), 80-89.
- Erdal, M. B., & Ezzati, R. (2014) 'Where are you from' or 'when did you come'? Temporal dimensions in migrants' reflections about settlement and return. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(7), 1202-1217.
- Erdal, M.B. & Oeppen, C. (2017). Forced to return? Agency and the role of post-return mobility for psychosocial wellbeing among returnees to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Poland. In Vathi, Z. & King, R. (Eds.) (2017). *Return Migration and Psychosocial Wellbeing: Discourses, Policy-Making and Outcomes for Migrants and their Families*. London: Routledge. 39-55.
- Erikson, E.H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Eskner, J. & Orellana, M. (2005). Liminality as linguistic process: Immigrant youth and experiences of language in Germany and the United States. In Knorr, J.

- (Ed.) *Childhood and Migration. From Experience to Agency* (pp. 175-206). Bielefeld and Somerset, N.J.: Transcript and Transaction Publishers.
- Faist, T. (2008). Migrants as transnational development agents: An inquiry into the newest round of the migration-development nexus. *International Migration*, 14(1), 21-42.
- Faist, T. (2013). The mobility turn: a new paradigm for the social sciences? *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36(11), 1637-1646.
- Faist, T., Fauser, M., & Reisenauer, E. (2000). *Transnational Migration. Immigration and Society*. Wiley.
- Fargas-Malet, M., McSherry, D., Larkin, E., & Robinson C. (2010). Research with children: methodological issues and innovative technique. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 8(2), 175–192.
- Favell, A. (1998). *Philosophies of integration: Immigration and the idea of citizenship in France and Britain*. New York: Palgrave.
- Flick, U. (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (4th Ed.). London: Sage.
- Flores, J. (2009). *The Diaspora Strikes Back: Caribeño Tales of Learning and Turning*. New York: Routledge.
- Fokkema, T. (2011). ‘Return’ migration intentions among second-generation Turks in Europe: the effect of integration and transnationalism in a cross-national perspective. *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 20(2), 365-388.
- Fokkema, T., Cela, E., & Ambrosseti, E. (2013). Giving from the heart or from the ego? Motives behind the remittances of the second generation in Europe. *International Migration Review*, 47(3), 539-572.
- Fortier, A. M. (1997). Remembering places and the performance of belonging(s). *Theory, Culture & Society*, 16(2), 41–64.
- Gardner, K. (2007). Lives in motion: the life-course, movement and migration in Bangladesh. *Journal of South Asian Development*. 4(2), 229-251.
- Gardner, K., & Grillo, R. (Eds.). (2002). Transnational households and rituals: An overview, Special Issue, *Global Networks*, 2(3), 179-190.
- Gee, J. P. (1991). A linguistic approach to narrative. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 1, 15-39.
- Gemi, E. (2014). Transnational practices of Albanian families during the Greek crisis: unemployment, de-regularization and return. *International Review of Sociology*, 24 (3), 406-421.
- Gemi, E. (2015). *The incomplete trajectory of Albanian migration in Greece*. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy. (ELIAMEP).

- Germenji, E., & Milo, L. (2009). Return and labour status at home: evidence from returnees in Albania. *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 9(4), 497-517.
- Ghanem, T. (2003) When forced migrants return home: The psycho-social difficulties returnees encounter in the reintegration processes. *Refugee Studies Centre Working Paper*. No 16. 1-59.
- Giddens, A. (1993). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gilmartin, M. (2008). Migration, identity and belonging. *Geography Compass*, 2(6), 1749-8198.
- Gilroy, P. (1993). *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso.
- Glenn, N.M., Camilla J.K., Holt, N.L. & Spence, J.C. (2013). Meanings of play among children. *Childhood*, 20(2), 185–199.
- Gmelch G (1980) Return migration. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 9, 135–159.
- GoA (Government of Albania). (2010). *Strategy on Reintegration of Returned Albanian Citizens*. 2010-2015.
- GoA (Government of Albania). (2014). For the approval of the extended national profile for migration for the year 2014. *Governmental Decision No. 857*. Official Governmental Gazette.
- GoA (Government of Albania). (2015). For the approval of the extended national profile for migration for the year 2014. *Governmental Decision No. 1008*. Official Governmental Gazette.
- Goffman, E. (1969). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. NY: Penguin.
- Gogonas, N. (2009). Language shift in second generation Albanian immigrants in Greece. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 30(2), 95-110.
- Gomm, R. (2004). *Social Research Methodology: A Critical Introduction*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gonzales, R.G. (2016). *Lives in Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.
- Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D., & Fitzgerald, R. (2013). *Ethical Research Involving Children*. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti.
- Greig, A., Taylor, J., MacKay, T., (2007). *Doing Research with Children*. (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Grix, J. (2004). *The foundations of research*. London: Palgrave, Maxmillan.

- Grossoehme, D., & Lipstein, E. (2016). "Analysing longitudinal data: the application of trajectory and recurrent cross-sectional approaches." *BMC Research notes*, 9, 136.
- Grzymala-Kazlowska, A., & Phillimore, J. (2017). Introduction: rethinking integration. New perspectives on adaptation and settlement in the era of super-diversity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.
- Grzymala-Kazlowzka, A. (2016). Social anchoring: immigrant identity, security and integration reconnected? *Sociology*, 50(6), 1123-1139.
- Gustafson, P. (2009). Mobility and territorial belonging. *Environment and Behaviour*, 41(4), 490-508.
- Hackett, A., Procter, L., & Seymour, J. (2015). *Children's Spatialities. Embodiment, Emotion and Agency*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hagan, J., Lowe, N., & Quingla, C. (2011). Skills on the move: Rethinking the relationship between human capital and immigrant economic mobility. *Work Occupation*, 38(2), 149-178.
- Hagen-Zanker, J., & Azzarri, C. (2010). Are internal migrants in Albania leaving for the better? *Eastern European Economics*, 48(6), 57-84.
- Haikkola, L. (2013). Making connections: Second generation children and transnational field of relations. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(8), 1201-1218.
- Hall, S. (1996). Introduction: who needs 'identity'. In Hall, S., & Du Gay, P. (Ed.) *Questions of Cultural Identity?* London: Sage Publications.
- Hammond, L. (1999). Examining the discourse of repatriation: Towards a more proactive theory of return migration. In (Ed.) Black, R. & Khoser, K. *The end of the refugee cycle? Refugee repatriation and reconstruction*. (pp. 227-246.) New York: Berghahn Books.
- Harker, C. (2005) 'Playing and Affective Time-Spaces', *Children's Geographies*, 3, 47-62.
- Hatfield, M.E. (2010). Children moving 'home'? Everyday experiences of return migration in highly skilled households. *Childhood*, 17(2), 243-257.
- Hatziprokopiou, P. (2003). Albanian immigrants in Thessaloniki, Greece: processes of economic and social incorporation. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 29(6), 1033-1057.
- Hausman, R. & Nedelkoska, L. (2017). *Welcome home in a crisis: Effects of return migration on the effects of non-migrants wages and employment*. CID Faculty, University of Harvard.
- Heath, S., Brooks, R., Cleaver, R., Ireland, E. (2009). *Researching Young People's Lives*. London: Sage Publications.

- Hedetoft, U. (2004). "Discourses and images of belonging: Migrants between 'new racism', liberal nationalism and globalization." Aalborg: AMID Working Paper Series 5.
- Hirschman, C. (1994). Problems and prospects of studying immigrant adaptation from the 1990 population census: From generational comparisons to the process of "becoming American." *International Migration Review*, 28, 690-713.
- Ho, E.L.E. (2006). Negotiating belonging and perceptions of citizenship in a transnational world: Singapore, a cosmopolis?, *Social & Cultural Geography*, 7, 385 – 401.
- Holloway, S. L., & Valentine, G. (Eds.). (2000a). *Children's Geographies: Playing, Living, Learning*. London: Routledge.
- Holloway, S. L., & Valentine, G. (2000b). Spatiality and the new social studies of childhood. *Sociology*, 34(4), 763-783.
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (1995). *The active interview*. *Qualitative Research Methods*. Volume 37. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Howarth, C, Wagner, W., Magnusson, N. & Sammut, G. (2014). "It's only other people who make me feel black": acculturation, identity and agency in a multicultural community. *Political Psychology*, 35 (1), 81-95.
- Hutchins, T. (2011) 'They told us in a curry shop': Child-adult relations in the context of family migration decision-making. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(8), 1219-1235.
- Ilean, S. (2002). *Longing in Belonging. The Cultural Politics of Settlement*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger.
- INSTAT & IOM. (2014). "Return Migration and Reintegration in Albania", Tirana: Institute of Statistics and International Organization for Migration.
- INSTAT. (2011). *Migracioni në Shqipëri, Regjistrimi i popullsisë dhe i banesave*. Institute of Statistics, Tirana.
- INSTAT. (Institute of Statistics Albania). (2011). *Population and Housing Census: Fier*. Instat.
- IOM. (2006). *Return and Readmission. The Case of Albania*.
- IOM. (2008a). *Identification of the areas most affected by emigration and return migration in Albania: Profiling of returning migrants*.
- IOM. (2008b). *Readmission and return experiences in the Western Balkan region. Forum Report. Programme for financial and technical assistance to third countries in the areas of migration and asylum*. AENEAS.
- IOM. (2013). *Return Migration and Reintegration in Albania*. Albania: Institute of Statistics.

- Iosifides, T., Lavrentiadou, M., Petracou, E., & Kontis, A. (2007). Forms of Social capital and the incorporation of Albanian immigrants in Greece. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33(8), 1343-1361.
- Itzigsohn, J., & Saucedo, S. G. (2002). Immigrant incorporation and sociocultural transnationalism. *International Migration Review*, 36(3), 766-799.
- James, A., & Prout, A. (1990). *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in Sociological Study of Childhood*. Basingstoke: Falmer Press.
- Jenkins, R. (2008). *Social Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Jennings, J., Aitken, S., Estrada, S. L., & Fernandez, A. (2006). Learning and earning: relational scales of children's work. *Area*, 38(3), 231-239.
- Joyce, A.M. (2010). Return migration from England to Ireland: The impacts of accent on feelings of belonging. *Socheolas: Limerick Student Journal of Sociology*, 2(2), 57-74.
- Kapur, D. (2005). Remittances: the new development mantra?. *Remittances: Development impact and future prospects*, 331-360.
- Kibria, N. (2000) 'Race, ethnic options, and ethnic binds: identity negotiations of second-generation Chinese and Korean Americans', *Sociological Perspectives*, 43(1), 77-95.
- Kilic, T., Carletto, C., Davis, B., & Zezza, A. (2009). Investing back home: Return migration and business ownership in Albania. *Economics of Transition*, 17(3), 587-623.
- King, R. (1977). Problems of return migration: A case-study of Italians returning from Britain. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 68(4), 241-246.
- King, R. (2000). Generalizations from the History of Return Migration. In King, R. (Ed.) *Return migration: Journey of hope or despair?* (pp. 7-55). Geneva: International Organization for Migration.
- King, R., & Christou, A. (2014). Second-generation "return" to Greece: New dynamics of transnationalism and integration. *International Migration*, 52(6), 85-99.
- King, R., & Kilinc, N. (2014). Routes to roots: Second-generation Turks from Germany 'Return' to Turkey. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 4(3), 126-133.
- King, R., & Mai, N. (2008a). *Out of Albania. From Crisis Migration to Social Inclusion in Italy*. Berghahn Books.
- King, R., & Mai, N. (2008b). Italophilia meets Albanophobia: paradoxes of asymmetric assimilation and identity processes among Albanian immigrants in Italy. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 32(1), 117-138.

- King, R., & Vullnetari, J. (2003). *Migration and Development in Albania*. Working Paper. Brighton: Sussex Centre for Migration Research.
- Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of focus groups: the importance of interactions between research participants. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 16(1), 103–121.
- Kjørholt, A. T. (2003). “‘Imagined communities’: The local community as a place for children’s ‘local culture’ and social participation in Norway.” In Olwig, K. F., & Gullov, E. (Ed.) *Children’s Places: Cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 217-235). London: Routledge.
- Kleine, D., Pearson, G., Poveda, S., & Holloway, R. (2016). *Participatory methods: Engaging children’s voices and experiences in research*. Method guide 8. Global Kids Online.
- Kleist, N. (2017). Disrupted migration projects: the moral economy of involuntary return to Ghana from Libya. *Africa*, 87(2), 322–42.
- Knörr, J. (2005). “When German Children Come ‘Home’. Experiences of (Re)migration to Germany – and some Remarks about the ‘TKC’-Issue”. In Knörr, J. (Ed.) *Childhood and Migration. From Experience to Agency* (pp. 51-76). Bielefeld and Somerset, N.J.: Transcript and Transaction Publishers.
- Kolb, B. (2008). Involving, sharing, analysing. Potential of the participatory photo interview. *Qualitative Social Research*, 9(3), Article 12.
- Konzett-Smoliner, S. (2016). Return migration as a ‘family project’: exploring the relationship between family life and the readjustment experiences of highly skilled Austrians. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 42(7), 1094-1114.
- Kosic, A., & Triandafyllidou, A. (2003). Albanian immigrants in Italy: Migration plans, coping strategies and identity issues. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 29, 997–1014.
- Kritz, M. M., & Zlotnik, H. (1992). Global interactions: Migration systems, processes and policies. In Kritz, M. M., Lin, L., & Zlotnik, H. (Ed.), *International migration systems. A global approach* (pp. 1– 16). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Krueger, R. A. (1998). *Moderating focus groups*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Krzyzanowski, M. & Wodak, R. (2007). Multiple identities, migration and belonging: ‘Voices of migrants’. In (Ed.) Caldas-Coulthard, C. & Iedema, R. *Identity Troubles* (pp. 95–119). Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Kule, D., Macellari, A., Papapanagos, S., & Sanfey, P. (1999). ‘The causes and consequences of Albanian emigration during transition: evidence from micro-data’. Working paper no. 46. London: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
- Kumsa, M. K. (2006). ‘No! I’m not a refugee!’ The poetics of be-longing among young Oromos in Toronto. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 19(2), 230-255.

- Kwak, K. (2003). Adolescents and their parents: A review of intergenerational family relations for immigrant and non-immigrant families. *Human Development*, 46, 115-136.
- Kwok-Bun, C. (2012). A returnee's hybridity: Its upside and downside. In Plüss C., (Eds) *Living Intersections: Transnational Migrant Identifications in Asia*. (pp. 19-37). Springer.
- Labov, W. (1982). "Speech actions and reactions in personal narrative". In Tannen, D. (Ed.), *Analyzing Discourse: Text and Talk*. Washington DC, Georgetown University Press.
- Labrianidis, L. & Lyberaki, (2004). Back and forth and in-between: Returning Albanian migrants from Greece and Italy. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 5(1), 77-106.
- Labrianidis, L., & Hatziprokopiu, P. (2005). The Albanian migration cycle: migrants tend to return to their country of origin after all. In King, R., Mai, N., & Schwandner-Sievers, S. (Ed.), *The New Albanian Migration* (pp. 93-117). Brighton: Sussex Academic Press.
- Labrianidis, L., & Kazazi, B. (2006). Albanian return migrants from Greece and Italy: Their impact upon spatial disparities within Albania. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 13(1), 59-74.
- Lafleur, J-M., & Stanek, M. (2016). South-north migration of EU citizens in times of Crisis. Imiscoe: Springer Open.
- Lamont, M., & Molnar, V. (2002). 'The study of boundaries in the social sciences'. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 167-195.
- Lapan, S.D., Quartaroli, M.T. & Riemer F.J. (2012). *Qualitative Research: An Introduction to Methods and Design*. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Lazaridis, G. (2004). Albanian migration into Greece: Various forms, degrees and mechanisms of (in)exclusion. In Baganha, I. M., & Fonseca M. L. (Ed.) *New Waves: Migration from Eastern to Southern Europe*. Metropolis, Portugal: Luso-American Foundation.
- Lazaridis, G., & Wickens, E. (1999). "Us" and the "others": Ethnic minorities in Greece. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(3), 632-655.
- Leicht, Ruth. (2008). Creatively researching children's narratives through images and drawings. In Thomson, P. (Eds.), *Doing Visual Research with Children and Young People*. (pp. 37-58). London: Routledge.
- Leo, D., & Kobayashi, A. (2005). Back to Hong Kong: return migration or transnational sojourn? *Global Networks*, 5(2), 111-127.
- Levitt, P. (1998). 'Social remittances: migration driven local-level forms of cultural diffusion'. *International Migration Review*, 34, 926-948.
- Levitt, P. & Rajaram, N. (2013). The migration-development nexus and organizational time, *International Migration Review*, 47(3), 483-507.

- Levitt, P. and Rajaram, N. (2013). The migration–development nexus and organizational time, *International Migration Review*, 47(3), 483–507.
- Levitt, P., DeWind, J., & Vertovec, S. (2003). International perspectives on transnational migration: An introduction. *International Migration Review*, 37, 565–575.
- Liamputtong, P., & Ezzy, D. (2005). *Qualitative Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (2013). *The Constructivist Credo*. Taylor and Francis.
- Lyberaki, A., & Maroukis, T. (2005). Albanian immigrants in Athens: New survey evidence on employment and integration. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 5(1), 21-48.
- Mabogunje, A. L. (1970). Systems approach to a theory of rural-urban migration. *Geographical Analysis*, 2 (1), 1– 18.
- Mai, N., & Paladini, C. (2013). Flexible circularities: Integration, return and socio-economic instability within Albanian migration to Italy. In Triandafyllidou, A. (Ed.), *Albanian Circular Migration in Greece: Beyond the State? Circular Migration Between Europe and its Neighbourhood. Choice or Necessity?* (pp. 42-67). Oxford University Press.
- Mand, K. (2010). ‘I’ve got two houses. One in Bangladesh and one in London... everybody has’. *Home, locality and belonging(s)*. *Childhood*, 17(2), 273-287.
- Mannitz, S. (2005). Coming of age as ‘the third generation.’ Children of immigrants in Berlin. In Knorr, J. (Ed.), *Childhood and Migration. From Experience to Agency* (pp. 23-50). Bielefeld and Somerset, N.J.: Transcript and Transaction Publishers.
- Markowitz, F., & Stefansson, A. H. (2004). *Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return*. Oxford: Lexington Books.
- Maroukis, T. (2005). ‘Albanian migrants in Greece: transcending “borders” in development’. *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, 7(2), 213-233.
- Maroukis, T., & Gemi, E. (2013). Albanian circular migration in Greece: Beyond the state? In Triandafyllidou, A. (Ed.), *Circular Migration between Europe and its Neighbourhood* (pp. 68-89). Oxford University Press.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Matsaganis, M. (2013). *The Greek crisis: social impact and policy responses*. Department of Western Europe/North America, Berlin.
- Matthews, H., Limb, M., & Taylor, M. (2000). “The ‘street as third space’.” In Holloway, S. L., & Valentine, G. (Ed.), *Children’s Geographies: Living, Playing, Learning and Transforming Everyday Worlds* (pp. 54-68). London: Routledge.

- McGhee, D. Moreh, C. & Vlachantoni, A. (2017). An 'undeliberate determinacy'? The changing migration strategies of Polish migrants in the UK in times of Brexit. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(13), 2109-2130.
- Memaj, F., Hoxhaj, A., & Qarri, A. (2008). The challenges of brain drain in South East Europe: Albania's Case. *International Conference on Applied Economics*. ICOAE.
- Mensah, E.A. (2016). Involuntary return migrants and reintegration. The case of Ghanaian migrant workers from Libya. *International Migration and Integration*. 17, 303-323.
- Michail, D. (2009). Working here, investing here and there: present economic practices, strategies of social inclusion and future plans for return among the Albanian immigrants in a Greek-Albanian border town. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 9(4), 539-554.
- Michail, D., & Christou, A. (2016). Diasporic youth identities of uncertainty and hope: second generation Albanian experiences of transnational mobility in an era of economic crisis in Greece. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 19(7), 957-972.
- Moore, J. (2000). Placing home in context. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 20, 207-217.
- Morgan, D. L. (2004). Focus-group interview and data analysis. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*. 63, 665-660.
- Moscovici, S. (1972). Theory and society in social psychology. In J. Isreal & H. Tajfel (Ed.). *The Context of Social Psychology: A Critical Assessment*. London: Academic Press.
- Moskal, M. (2015). 'When I think home I think family here and there': Translocal and social ideas of home in narratives of migrant children and young people. *Geoforum*, 58, 143-152.
- Moskal, M., & Tyrell, N. (2015). Family migration decision-making, step-migration and separation: children's experiences in European migrant worker families. *Children's Geographies*, 14, 4, 453-467.
- Mullings, B. (1999). Insider or outsider, both or neither: some dilemmas of interviewing in a cross-cultural setting. *Geoforum*, 30, 337-350.
- Municipality of Fier (na). The history of the City. [Retrieved on 14.03.2017]. <http://bashkiafier.gov.al/sq-al/Qyteti/Pages/Historia-e-Qytetit.aspx>.
- Nagel, J. (1994). Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture Author(s): Joane Nagel Source: *Social Problems*, 41(1), 152-176.
- Nash, M. (1996). The core elements of ethnicity. In Hutchinson, J. and Smith, A.D. (Eds.) *Ethnicity*, pp 24-28. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Neascu-Hendry, L., Turek, I., Klecinska, J., Kati, K., & Orlin T. (1997). Implementing human rights education in three transitional democracies: Romania, Slovakia and Albania. In Andreopoulos, G. J., & Claude, R. P.

- (Ed.) *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-first Century*, pp. 499-510. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Newland, K., Anguinias, D.R. & Terrazas, A. (2008). Experiences of circular migration. Migration Policy Institute. [Retrieved on 16.09.2016]. www.migrationinformation.org.
- Ní Laoire, C. (2007). The 'green green grass of home?' Return migration to the rural Ireland. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 23(3), 332-344.
- Ní Laoire, C. (2008). 'Settling back'? A biographical and life-course perspective on Ireland's recent return migration. *Irish Geography*, 41(2), 195-210.
- Ní Laoire, C. (2011b). "Narratives of 'Innocent Irish childhoods': Return migration and intergenerational family dynamics." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(8), 1253-1271.
- Ní Laoire, C. (2011c). "'Girls just like to be friends with people': gendered experiences of migration among children and youth in returning Irish migrant families." *Children's geographies*, 9(3-4), 308-318.
- Ní Laoire, C., Carpena-Mendes, F., Tyrrell, N., & White, A. (2011a). *Childhood and Migration in Europe: Portraits of Mobility, Identity and Belonging in Contemporary Ireland*. Ashgate.
- Nieuwenhuys, O. (2003). "Growing up between places of work and non-places of childhood: the uneasy relationship." In Olwig, K. F., & Gullov, G. (Ed.), *Children's Places: Cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 99-118). London: Routledge.
- Noble-Carr, D. (2006). *Engaging children in research on sensitive issues*. Institute of Child Protection Studies, ACU.
- Nowicka, M. (2007). Mobile locations: Construction of home in a group of mobile transnational professionals. *Global Networks*, 7(1), 69-86.
- O'Connor, J. (2009). *What are the barriers of integration in Ireland?* Unpublished MA thesis, MA in Contemporary Migration and Diaspora Studies, University College, Cork.
- O'Kane, C. (2008). *The Development of Participatory Techniques: Facilitating Children's View about Decisions Which Affect Them*. In Christensen, P., & James, A. (Ed.), *Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices* (pp. 136-49). London: Falmer Press.
- Olesen, H. (2002). "Migration, Return, and Development: An Institutional Perspective". *International Migration, Special Issue 2*, 40(5), 125-150.
- Olwig, K. F. (2003). "Children's places of belonging in immigrant families of Caribbean background." In Olwig, K. F., & Gulløv, E. (Ed.), *Children's Places: Cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 217-235). London: Routledge.

- Orellana, M. F., Thorne, B. C. A., & Lam, W. S. E. (2001). Transnational childhood: The participation of children in processes of family migration. *Social problems*, 572-591.
- Papademetriou, D. G., Sumption, M., & Somerville, W. (2009). *Migration and the economic downturn: what to expect in the European Union*. Washington DC, Migration Policy Institute.
- Parreñas, R. S. (2001). *Servants of Globalization*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Parutis, V. (2013). Returning “Home”: East European Migrants’ Discourses of Return. *International Migration*, 52(5), 159-177.
- Pedraza, S. (1991). Women and migration: The social consequences of gender. *Annual review of sociology*, 17(1), 303-325.
- Pessar, P. (1995). *A Visa for a Dream: Dominicans in the United States*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Phinney, J. S., Horenczyk, G., Liebkind, K., & Vedder, P. (2001). Ethnic identity, immigration, and well-being: an interactional perspective. *Journal of Social Issues*, (57), 493–511.
- Phoenix, A., & Pattynama, P. (2006). Intersectionality. *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, 13(3), 48, 187-192.
- Piracha, M., & Vadean, F. (2010). Return migration and occupational choice: Evidence from Albania. *World Development*, 38(8), 1141-1155.
- Pirvu, R., & Axinte, G. (2012). Return migration-reasons, consequences and benefits. *Annals of the University of Petroșani, Economics*, 12(4), 193-202.
- Pojani, D. (2010). Tirana: City profile. *Cities Journal*, 27(6), 483-495.
- Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. G. (2001). *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Portes, A., Guarnizo, L., & Landolt, P. (1999). *Transnational communities*. London: Routledge.
- Posser, J. (2008). *Introducing visual methods*. ESRC National Centre for Research Methods. Review Paper.
- Potter, R. B. (2005). ‘Young, gifted and back.’ Second generation transnational return migrants to the Caribbean. *Progress in Development Studies*, 5(3), 213-236.
- Potter, R. B., & Phillips, J. (2006:a). Both black and symbolically white: The ‘Bajan-Brit’ return migrant as post-colonial hybrid. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 29 (5): 901-927.

- Potter, R. B., & Phillips, J. (2006:b). "Mad dogs and transnational migrants?" Bajan-Brit second-generation migrants and accusations of madness. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 96(3), 586 – 600.
- Pries, L. (2016). Circular Migration as (New) Strategy in Migration Policy? Lessons from Historical and Sociological Migration Research. In Nadler, R., et al. (Ed.) *Return Migration and Regional Development in Europe: Mobility Against the Stream* (pp. 25-54). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Probyn, E. (1996). *Outside Belongings*. London: Routledge.
- Punch, K. (1998). *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. London: Sage
- Punch, S. (2010). Moving for a better life: to stay or to go. In Kaseem, D., Murphy, L. & Taylor, E. (Ed.), *Key Issues in Childhood and Youth Studies*. (pp 202-216). London: Routledge.
- Punch, S. (2013). Studying Transnational Children: A Multi-Sited, Longitudinal, Ethnographic Approach. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(6), 1007-1023.
- Rabiee, F. (2004). Focus-group interview and data analysis. *Proceedings of the nutrition society*. 63, 655-660.
- Ralph, D. (2013). Managing sameness and difference: the politics of belonging among Irish-born return migrants from the United States. *Social and Cultural Geography*. 13(5). 445-460.
- Ralph, D., & Staeheli, L. A. (2011). Home and migration: Mobilities, belongings and identities. *Geography Compass*, 5(7), 517-530.
- Rasmussen, K. (2004). Places for Children – Children's Places. *Childhood*, 11(2),
- Reynolds, T. (2008). "Ties that bind: Families, social capital and second-generation return migration." Sussex Centre for Migration Research Working Paper, 46.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Sage Publications.
- Riessman, C.K. (2005). Narrative Analysis. In *Narrative, Memory & Everyday Life* (pp. 1-7). University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield.
- Rinke, C. R., & Mawhinney, L. (2014). Reconsidering rapport with urban teachers: negotiating shifting boundaries and legitimizing support. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 37(1), 3-16.
- Ritchie, J. & Lewis, J. (Eds) (2003). *Qualitative Research Practice. A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. Sage Publications.
- Robson, C. (2011). *Real World Research*. (3rd Ed.). United Kingdom, John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

- Rose, G. (1995). "Place and identity: a sense of place." In Massey, D., & Jess, P. (Eds), *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization* (pp. 87-132). Oxford: The Open University.
- Rose, G. (2007). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of visual materials*. London: Sage.
- Rumbaut, R. G. (1997). Ties that bind: Immigration and immigrant families in the United States. In A. Booth, A. Crouter, & N. Landale (Eds.), *Immigration and the family: Research and policy on U.S. immigrants* (pp. 3-46). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Rumbaut, R. G. (2005). Sites of belonging: acculturation, discrimination, and ethnic identity among children of immigrants. In Weiner, T. S. (Ed.), *Discovering Successful Pathways in Children's Development: Mixed methods in the Study of Childhood and Family Life* (pp. 111-164). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ryan, L., & D'Angelo, A. (2017). Changing times: Migrants' social network analysis and the challenges of longitudinal research. *Social Networks*.
- Salih, R. (2000). Shifting boundaries of self and other: Moroccan migrant women in Italy. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 7(3), 321-336.
- Sardinha, J. (2011). 'Returning' second-generation Portuguese-Canadians and Portuguese-French: Motivations and Senses of Belonging. *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 20(2), 231-254.
- Satta, C. (2015). "A proper place for a proper childhood? Children's spatiality in a play centre." In Hackett, A., Proctor, L., & Seymour, J. (Ed.), *Children's Spatialities, Embodiment, Emotion and Agency* (pp. 178-197). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schwandt, T. (1998). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Ed.), *The landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues* (pp. 221-259). Sage Publications.
- Schwandt, T. A. (2003). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics and social constructionism. In Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (Ed.), *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and issues*. (pp. 292-331). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Scott, S. (2006). 'The social morphology of skilled migration: the case of the British middle class in Paris'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 32(7), 1105-29.
- Seymour, J. (2015). "Approaches to children's spatial agency: Reviewing actors, agents and families." In Hackett, A., Proctor, L., & Seymour, J. (Ed.), *Children's Spatialities: Embodiment, Emotion and Agency* (pp. 147-162). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Shamir, R. (2005) "Without Borders? Notes on Globalization as a Mobility Regime." *Sociological Theory*, 22(2), 197-217.

- Sigmon, S. T., Whitcomb, S. R., & Snyder, C. R. (2002). Psychological home. In Fisher, A. T., Sonn, C. C., & Bishop, B. J. (Eds.), *Psychological sense of community: Research, applications, and implications* (pp.25-41). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Simon, S. (1996). *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*. London: Routledge.
- Skrbiš, L., Baldassar, L., & Poynting, S. (2007). Introduction – Negotiating Belonging: Migration and Generations. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 28(3), 261-269.
- Stefansson A. H. (2004). Sarajevo Suffering: Homecoming and the hierarchy of the homeland hardship. In Markowitz, F., & Stefansson A. H. (Ed.), *Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return* (pp.54-75). Oxford Lexington Books.
- Sussman, N. M. (2002). Testing the Cultural Identity Model of the cultural transition cycle: Sojourners return home. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 26(4), 391–408.
- Tarifa, F. (2007). *To Albania, With Love*. University Press of America.
- Thomson, R., & McLeod, J. (2015). New frontiers in qualitative longitudinal research: an agenda for research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 18(3), 243-250.
- Triandafillou, A., & Veikou, M. (2002). The hierarchy of Greekness. Ethnic and national identity considerations in Greek immigration policy. *Ethnicities*, 2(2), 189-208.
- Tsuda, T. (2003). *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland. Japanese-Brazilian Return Migration in Transnational Perspective*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tsuda, T. (2009). “Why does the diaspora return home? The causes of ethnic return migration.” In Tsuda, T. (Ed.), *Diasporic homecomings: Ethnic return migration in comparative perspective*, (pp. 21-43). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Tuan, Y-F. (1977). *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tuckett, A. G. (2005). Applying thematic analysis theory to practice: A researcher’s experience. *Contemporary Nurse*, 19(1-2), 75-87.
- Turner, V. (1974). *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Tyrrell, N. (2017). Supporting young EU migrants in Brexit Britain. *EAL Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.ealjournal.org>.
- Ugba, A. (2008). *A quantitative profile analysis of African immigrants in 21st century Dublin*. Dublin: TCD Department of Sociology.

- UNDP. (2006a). From Brain Drain to Brain Gain: Mobilizing Albania's Skilled Diaspora. A policy paper for the Government of Albania. Centre for Social and Economic Studies and Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization and Poverty, University of Sussex, UK.
- UNDP. (2006b). Brain Gain: Engaging Diaspora in Albania's Development. UNDP.
- UNDP. (2016). Human Development Report. Albania. UNDP.
- Urry, J. (2000). *Sociology Beyond Societies*. London: Routledge.
- Vadean, F., & Piracha, M. (2009). Circular Migration or Permanent Return: What Determines Different Forms of Migration? Bonn: IZA Discussion Paper No. 4287.
- Valentine G., Sporton, D., & Nielsen, K. (2009a). Identities and belonging: a study of Somali refugee and asylum seekers living in the UK and Denmark. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, (27), 234 – 250.
- Valentine, G. (2005). Tell me about using interviews as a research methodology. In Flowerdew, R., & Martin, D. (Eds.), *Methods in Human Geography: A guide for students doing a research project* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 110-126). London: Longman.
- Valentine, G., & Sporton, D. (2009b). 'How other people see you, it's like nothing that's inside'. The impact of processes of disidentification and disavowal on young people's subjectivities. *Sociology*, 43(4), 735-751.
- Van Houte, M., & Davids, T. (2008). "Development and return migration: From policy panacea to migrant perspective sustainability." *Third World Quarterly*, 29 (7), 1411-1429.
- Van Houte, M., Siegel, M., & Davids, T. (2016). Deconstructing the meaning and motivations for return: an Afghan case study. *Comparative migration studies*. 4, 21.
- Van Meteren, M., Engbersen, G., Snel, E., & Faber, M. (2014). "Understanding different post-return experiences. The role of preparedness, return motives and family expectations for returned migrants in Morocco" *Comparative Migration Studies*, 2(3), 335-360.
- Van Nes, F., Abma, T., Jonsson, H., & Deeg, D. (2010). Language differences in qualitative research: is meaning lost in translation? *European Journal of Aging*, 7, 313-316.
- Vanhonacher, W. R., & Chung, S. F. (2005). Transnational or Social Capital? Returnee versus local entrepreneurs. Centre on China's Transnational Relations. Working Paper, No. 7.
- Vathi, Z. (2011). The children of Albanian migrants in Europe: Ethnic identity, transnational ties and pathways of integration. PhD Thesis. University of Sussex.

- Vathi, Z. (2015). *Migrating and Settling in a Mobile World: Albanian Migrants and their Children in Europe*. IMISCOE. Springer Open.
- Vathi, Z. & King, R. (Eds.) (2017). *Return Migration and Psychosocial Wellbeing: Discourses, Policy-Making and Outcomes for Migrants and their Families*. London: Routledge.
- Vathi, Z., & Duci, V. (2015). "Making other dreams: The impact of migration on the psychosocial wellbeing of Albanian-origin children and young people upon their families' return to Albania." *Childhood*, 23(1), 53-68.
- Vathi, Z., Duci V., & Dhembo, E. (2016). "Homeland (Dis)Integrations: Educational Experience, Children and Return Migration to Albania." *International Migration*, 54, 159–172.
- Veale, A. & Dona, G. (2014). (Eds.) *Child and Youth Migration: Mobility in an Era of Globalization*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vertovec, S. (1999). 'Conceiving and researching transnationalism'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22 (2), 447–62.
- Vertovec, S. (2004). "Migrant transnationalism and modes of transformation". *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 970–1001.
- Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 29(6), pp.24-46.
- Vildaite, D. (2014). Negotiations of home and belonging among Lithuanian migrants in Ireland. *Ethnicity Studies*. 2, 48-66.
- Vullnetari, J. (2013). *Albania on the Move: Links between Internal and International Migration*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Warin, J. (2011). Ethical mindfulness and reflexivity: Managing a relationship with children and young people in a 14-year qualitative longitudinal research (QLR) study. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(9), 805-814.
- Warnes, A., & Williams, A. (2006). Older Migrants in Europe: A New Focus for Migration Studies. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 32(8), 1257–1281.
- Werbner, P. (2011). Mothers and daughters in historical perspective: home, identity, and double consciousness in British Pakistanis' migration and return. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 26(1), 41-61.
- Wessendorf, S. (2007). 'Roots migrants': transnationalism and 'return' among second generation Italians in Switzerland. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33(7), 1083-1102.
- White, A. (2011a). Multiple belongings: The experiences of children and young people migrating in the 'new' Europe. In Ní Laoire, C., Carpena-Mendes, F., Tyrrell, N., & White, A. (Eds.), *Childhood and Migration in Europe: Portraits of Mobility, Identity and Belonging in Contemporary Ireland*. Ashgate.

- White, A., Bushin, N., Carpena-Mendez, F., & Ni Laoire, C. (2010). Using visual methodologies to explore contemporary Irish childhoods. *Qualitative Research*, 10(2), 143-158.
- White, A., Ni Laoire, C., Tyrell, N., & Carpena-Mendez, F. (2011). "Children's role in transnational migration." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(8), 1159-70.
- Wimmer, A. (2008). 'The making and unmaking of ethnic boundaries: a multilevel process theory'. *American Journal of Sociology*, 113, 970–1022.
- Wimmer, A., & Nina Glick Schiller. (2002). Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences. *Global Networks*, 2(4), 301–334.
- Wimmer, A., & Schiller, N. G. (2002). "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-state Building, Migration and the Social Sciences." *Global Networks*, (2), 301–334.
- Winchester, H. P. M. (1996). Ethical issues in interviewing as a research method in human geography. *Australian Geographer*, 27(1), 117-131.
- World Bank. (2011). *World Bank, Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Xhindi, N. (2013). *Albania towards a sustainable regional development. The cases of Tirana, Shkodra and Kukes region*. Praxis Kultur-und Sozialgeographie: Universitätsverlag Postdam. 3
- Yaqub, S. (2007) 'Does age-at-migration in childhood affect socioeconomic status in adulthood?'. Warsaw: Report given to the conference Focus on Children in Migration, 20.1 March.
- Yehuda-Sternfeld & S.B., Mirsky, J. (2014). Return migration of Americans: Personal narratives and psychological perspectives. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 42, 53-64.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). "Belonging and the politics of belonging." *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40(3), 197-214.
- Zaiceva, A., & Zimmerman, K. F. (2012). Returning home at times of trouble? Return migration of EU Enlargement migrants during the crisis. *IZA Discussion Paper No. 111*.
- Zeneli, B., Cocic E., Dzebo, A., & Zmejkoski, R. (2013). Brain gain policies and practices in the Western Balkans. Group 484. Centre for Migration.
- Zhou, M. (1997). Growing up American: The challenge of confronting immigrant children and children of immigrants. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23, 63-95.
- Zohry, A., & Debnath, P. (2010). A Study on the Dynamics of the Egyptian Diaspora: Strengthening Development Linkages. *International Organization for Migration*, Cairo, Egypt.

Zubida, L. Lavi, L. Harper, R.A. Nakash, O, & Shoshani, A. (2013). Home and away: Hybrid perspective on identity formation in 1.5 and second generation adolescent immigrants in Israel. *Glocalism: Journal of Culture, Politics and Innovation*. 1, 1-28.

Appendices

Appendix A. Information Sheet for School Gatekeeper

The research titled “Return migration during the economic crisis: Experiences of Albanian return migrants and their children in the quest to belong” is being conducted by Elida Cena from the Department of Psychology at Edge Hill University in the UK, for use in my PhD thesis and relevant journal publications. The aim of the research is to understand the experiences of migrants and their children who have moved to live to Albania as influenced by the economic crisis in Greece and Italy. I am interested to interview the return of children and young people who are now studying in this school and understand their experiences. This research will understand adjustment processes difficulties children have faced upon return and the coping strategies they have used to overcome potential problems.

Therefore, I would like to have your consent to allow me to involve children in this research. For all children that you give permission, I will initially seek parental consent, then will child consent and only then I will involve them in my research. This interview will be conducted by me, giving full privacy and confidentiality to children, ensuring that no risk or harm will be caused in any case. The content of the interview will be analysed by me, and only I and my assistant (who will help with transcribing) will have access to these contents.

This research is very important as its findings will be useful to understand in a rigorous way the difficulties that these young people face in living in a new environment. By vocalizing children’s problems, I also hope to increase the awareness of the relevant institutions to address necessary interventions for the integration of return migrants in Albania. However, there is no guarantee whether measures will take place.

If you have any questions regarding this study please contact the Principle

Researcher: Elida Cena at mobile: (mobile in Albania), email: cenae@edgehill.ac.uk

Questions can also be directed to Elida's Director of studies, Professor Derek Heim, at Heimd@edgehill.ac.uk

Appendix B. Informed consent for participants (teenagers and adults)

Title of research: "Return migration during the economic crisis: Experiences of Albanian return migrants and their children in the quest to belong"

Who is conducting the research?

The research is being conducted by Elida Cena from the Department of Psychology at Edge Hill University in UK, for use in my PhD thesis and relevant journal publications.

Why are we doing this study?

The aim of the interview is to understand the experiences of people who have returned from migration to live to Albania and the experiences they have had during migration.

What is this study about? / What do I have to do?

This study is a one-to-one interview, but in certain cases you may be asked to do some task. The interview will be more like a discussion where you are invited to speak about your experiences during migration and now of life in Albania. The interview will last approximately 50 -60 minutes in a place most convenient for you. I will record the interview, however you may choose to not have it recorded or have the recorder turned off at any point.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part in this research you have the right to stop the interview at any point; you do not need to provide a reason and are free to do so without penalty. You are free to not answer any questions that you do not wish to do so. All responses will be reported in an anonymised form. You have the right to withdraw your data at any time up to a period of 3 weeks after the interview. If you decide to withdraw your details and material will be removed and destroyed.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of taking part?

There are no disadvantages, harms, or risks for you if you take part in this study. If

you indicate or I foresee any signs of discomfort with the questions and issues being discussed, I will stop the interview and give you enough time before we start.

Through this research you voice out your experience and issues that you encounter daily in your life in Albania. This research intends to inform relevant authorities on any difficulties that relate to your return, so that they take necessary interventions to address your needs, however, I do not guarantee whether measures will take place.

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding this study please contact the Principle Researcher

Elida Cena at mobile: (mobile in Albania), email: cenae@edgehill.ac.uk. Questions can also be directed to Elida's Director of studies, Professor Derek Heim, at Heimd@edgehill.ac.uk

Consent form for participants

Title of Study: “Return migration during the economic crisis: Experiences of Albanian return migrants and their children in the quest to belong”

Researcher: Elida Cena

- I agree to participate in this study which is for the fulfilment of a Doctoral Degree in Edge Hill University
- I have been informed about the nature of this study and have read and understood the information sheet
- I agree to take part in the interview session
- I understand that I have the right to decline to answer a question, without penalty, at any time.
- I understand that the content of the interview will be kept confidential and that anonymised data may be used in resulting academic publications.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data within three weeks of the interview, in which case all material will be removed and destroyed.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- I understand that anonymity will be ensured, and I will not be identified by name or any other identifying information within the thesis and any subsequent publications.

- I would like to have a summary of findings send to me, and I understand this might take a year time.

Participant name _____

Participant signature _____

Date _____

Parent/guardian signature _____

Date _____

* If participant is under the age of 18, a parent/guardian also needs to sign to show their consent to the participant's choice.

If you have any questions regarding this study please contact the Principle Researcher

Elida Cena at mobile: (mobile in Albania), email: cenae@edgehill.ac.uk

Questions can also be directed to Elida's Director of studies, Professor Derek Heim, at Heimd@edgehill.ac.uk

Appendix C. Informed consent for children 7-12

Information Sheet and Consent Form

Children 7-12

My name is Elida Cena and I am studying to do some research for children and grown-ups who have come to live to Albania.

I would really like to hear about what you think of living here, whether you have found friends and how you like school. I would also like to know how your life was when you lived away from Albania. You can show this to me by drawing and showing me some of your photographs.



I promise that this talk will be private. I will not tell your teachers or any of your friends, but if you wish, your mum or dad can stay here with us.



I am going to ask you to draw and show me some pictures. This will take no longer than one hour. You can ask for the interview to stop at any time you feel.



It is up to you whether you take part. You can choose to say yes or no.



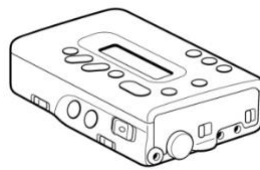
If you would like to know more about my project, please contact me. My phone number is: (phone number in Albania)

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for your help.

Yours sincerely
Elida Cena

If I talk to Elida about her research on “return migration” I understand that:

She will record this interview.



Everything I say will remain private.



I understand that I can stop the interview at any time.

If you understand the statements above, you now need to decide whether you would like to take part in the project.

I have decided that I would like to talk and do some activities for Elida's project on return migration.

Please put a circle around Yes or No.



Please write your name _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Parent/ Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

** A parent/guardian also needs to sign to show their consent to the participant's choice*

Appendix D. Interview Guide (Teenagers and Adults)

Introductory Protocol

Thanks for taking the time to join me to talk about your experiences after returning to live in Albania. My name is Elida Cena from Edge Hill University in the UK and this session is part of my PhD. You have been selected to speak with me today as a (child of) return migrant, who has a great deal to share about experiences of living in Albania, and in (country of migration). My research focuses on understanding experiences of return migrants and their children, on how they have adjusted, what are the difficulties they have faced, how they have dealt with them, have they had support in this process. It also aims to understand how they identify with the home country or the country from where they have returned.

To facilitate my note-taking, I would like to audio tape our conversations today. Please sign the consent form. For your information, only me and my assistant will be privy to the tapes which will be eventually destroyed after they are transcribed. Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) I do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

Interview Guide teenagers (13-18 years old)

Return migration experiences

- What is the reason you (and your family) decided to settle in Albania? [Did you agree with that decision?]
- Tell me about life after you have moved to Albania. [What type of problems have you faced upon arrival?]
- How have you managed to overcome these problems? [if any reported]
- Have you had any problems with the school?
- Do you feel your school results have changed?
- How did you find school here [Other children? Teachers?]
- Have you had any support from the school? [Whom?]
- Have you made any friends? [Who do you socialize with more? How your relationships with peers are developing? How long did it take for you to make friends?]
- What language do you speak with friends? [Why?]
- Was language a problem for you?
- How did the 'return' migration affect you personally and your family?
- Did you have any expectations? [What? Have they been met?]
- Has your quality of life changed while in Albania?

Transnational practices and social networks

- Have you visited Albania often? Has that helped you to get to know the country,
- people?
- Do you keep in touch now with relatives? [How?]
- Has your relationship changed from before? [How?]
- Have they helped you after you came here? [What about now?]

Identification/belongingness with the home/host country

- Do you feel connected to Albania? [Do you feel you belong here? In what way?]
- Do you feel you are the same like other children who have not left Albania?
- What is your attitude towards other Albanians?
- Do you feel you have changed since when you have moved to Albania? [In what way?]
- What cultural traditions, customs do you follow more? What about during life in destination country?

Preparation to return

- Do you think your family was prepared to return? [How? Who has helped you for this?]
- Did you save money for the return? Have you invested in Albania? [How did you do this? Have you had any support from others?]

- Are your parents working? What? What have they worked before coming here?

Migration Experiences

- Tell me about your life before coming in Albania. Have you had problems there? [Can you tell me any case?]
- What about (country of migration) how do you feel? Do you feel you belong there?
- Do you keep in contact with the country you have lived before? [In what way? How often do you go there?]
- Has emigration affected your life? [How? Can you share with me any case?]
- Tell me something about friendship how would you describe friendships here and there? [In terms of mentality, the way of living?]

Where would you like to live? Here, there or elsewhere?

Coping Strategies and Future Plans

- How do you do to overcome problems / difficulties you face [if reported].
- What do you think about opportunities for employment? Do you think you will find the job you like?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- Would you advice other people who are abroad to return?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with me that we have not already discussed?
- Do you think this study is important and is there anything you would add to these questions?

Interview Guide for Adults

Return migration experiences

- What is the reason you (and your family) decided to settle in Albania? [Did you agree with that decision?]
- Tell me about life after you returned to Albania. [What type of problems have you faced upon arrival?]
- How about your children? Have they faced any problems? Have they had any support from the school?
- Can you tell me about your job? Are you happy with what you do? Have you had any support from the state?
- Has your lifestyle changed in comparison to before?
- Did you have any expectations? Do you think they have been met?
- How did the return migration affect you personally and your family?
- How do you find people here? [Are they the same as you thought they would be?]
- Do you feel any improvement since you have returned?

- Has your quality of life changed while in Albania?

Transnational practices and social networks

- Have you visited Albania often? [How often? Have those visits helped in preparing for returning? How about in maintaining relations with the people, the place?
- Do you keep in touch now with relatives and kin? [Do you think they have changed? Do you think they you have changed?]
- Has your relationship changed? [intensified or became weaker?]
- Have they helped you after you came here? [In what way?]

Preparation for return

- Where you prepared for the return? [How? Who supported you for that?]
- Do you have a job? [if yes, how did you find it? Did anyone help you to find that? Had you arranged things from before? What about your partner?]
- Had you prepared by saving money, or investing in Albania? [How did you do that? Who helped you for that?]

Identification/belonging with the home/host country

- Do you feel like home in Albania? [Do you feel you belong here? How?]
- Do you feel you are the same as other Albanians?
- What is your attitude towards other Albanians?
- What cultural traditions, customs do you follow more? What about during life in destination country?

Migration Experiences

- Tell me about your life before coming in Albania. Have you had problems there? [Can you tell me any case?]
- What about (country of migration) how do you feel? Do you feel you belong there?
- Do you keep in contact with the country you have lived before? [In what way? How often do you go there?]
- Has emigration affected your life? [How? Can you share with me any case?]
- Tell me something about friendship how would you describe friendships here and there? [In terms of mentality, the way of living?]
- Where would you like to live? Here, there or elsewhere?

Coping Strategies and Future Plans

- How do you do to overcome problems / difficulties you face [if reported].
- If you would go back in time, would you return back to Albania? Is it the right decision you have made?
- What do you think about opportunities for employment? Do you think you will find the job you like?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?

- Would you advice other people who are abroad to return?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with me that we have not already discussed?
- Do you think this study is important and is there anything you would add to these questions?

Appendix E. Categorization of content for drawings

No of drawings	Category	Contents of the drawings
Four	Spacious places and places of entertainment	Parks and presence of benches. Playing with one friend only in the front yard. Private houses with yards. All in the previous country. 2 drawings even in the part of Albania. School fountain.
Five	Lack of spaces	Coffee shops which are places for adults. High buildings very close to each other. Roads in the side of Albania. Big house without yard.
Seven	Play and play activities	Girl playing in a park with scooter, swing, cable car; playing with ball. Football pitch.
Five	People - Lack of self in the drawing	Not drawing oneself in the drawing of Albania. Not drawing the present city but the city of parents. Many friends in the previous country vs lonely in Alb.
four	Background	Strong colours for the roads in America, dead colours for the road in Alb. Sun in the side of Greece (not Alb). Big empty space in the side of Albania. Presence of flags in the drawing.

Appendix F. Participants

TEENAGERS												
No	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Years abroad	Destination country	Time of residence abroad	Returned (month/Year)	Returned in years	City of residence Albania	Parents returned?	Intentions to (re)migrate	Reasons for return
1	Aurora	F	17	since	Greece	10.5	2011	4	Tirana	Father & brother	Yes	Economic crisis
2	Jeta	F	13	born	Greece	7	2008	7	Tirana	Yes	No	Economic crisis
3	Alba	F	15	born	Italy	15	6.2014	1	Tirana	Yes	No	Economic crisis
4	Altin	M	13	born	Italy	13	2014	1	Tirana	Yes	No	Planned
5	Besnik	M	16	4	Greece	11	2014	1	Tirana	Yes	Not sure	Economic crisis
6	Melisa	F	14	4	Greece	8	2013	2	Tirana	Parents in Greece	Not sure	Economic crisis
7	Drita	F	18	13	Belgium	3	2013	2	Tirana	Yes	Yes	Work terminated
8	Besa	F	16	born	Greece	16	2013	2	Tirana	Mother only	maybe	Economic crisis
9	Lori	F	15	12.5	France	2.5	2015	0	Tirana	Yes	maybe	Economic crisis
10	Drini	M	13	born	Belgium	4	2014	1	Tirana	Yes	no	Planned (work term finished)
11	Alfred	M	14	born	Greece	12	2013	2	Tirana	Yes	no	Economic crisis
12	Nini	M	13	born	Greece	13	2013	2	Tirana	Yes	no	Economic crisis
13	Alexa	F	15	2	Greece	13	2013	2	Tirana	Yes	Yes	Economic crisis
14	Tina	F	13	2	Italy	8	2012	3	Tirana	Yes	No	Economic crisis
15	Alfio	M	13	born	Greece	13	2013	2	Tirana	Yes	yes	Economic crisis
16	Dario	M	17	born	Greece	12	2010	5	Tirana	Yes	Yes	Economic crisis
17	Alma	F	16	1	Greece	12	3 years	3	Tirana	yes	Maybe	Economic crisis
18	Lorena	F	18	born	Greece	18	2014	1	Fier	Father	Yes	Economic crisis
19	Aurora	F	17	5	Greece	11	2009	5	Fier	Yes	Yes	Planned
20	Olsi	M	17	3	Greece	6	2003	8	Fier	Yes	No	Planned
21	Esmá	F	16	born	Greece	14	2013	2	Fier	Yes	Yes	Economic crisis
22	Adela	F	17	5	Greece	11	2014	1	Fier	Yes	No	Economic crisis
23	Olta	F	16	born	Greece	13	2012	3	Fier	Yes	Yes	Economic crisis
24	Ambra	F	15	born	Greece	12	2012	3	Fier	Yes	Yes	Economic crisis
25	Alba	F	13	born	Greece	12	1 year	1	Fier	Yes	not sure	Economic crisis
26	Ardi	M	15	3	Greece	10	2 yrs	2	Fier	Yes	In the future	Economic crisis
27	Mario	M	18	born	Greece	17	Jul-05	2	Fier	Father	Yes	Economic crisis
28	Noni	M	18	3	Greece	12	2012	3	Fier	Father	Yes	Economic crisis
29	Kloidian	M	15	born	Greece	12	2012	3	Fier	Yes	Yes	Economic crisis

Table 1. Demographic data for Teenagers

ADULTS

No	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Civil status	Partner returned?	Place of resid. abroad	Period of resid. Abroad (year)	Returned month/year	Return	Place of residence in Albania	Reason for return	Intention to re-migrate?	Employment
1	Mira	F	38	M	Yes	Italy	10	Jun-11	3	Tirana	Planned	Maybe	Small enterprise
2	Mishel	F	35	M	Yes	Italy	9	2007	8	Tirana	Planned	Yes	Civic society
3	Daniela	F	32	M	Yes	Spain	3	2 months	0.2	Tirana	Studies	Yes	lecturer
4	Artan	M	35	M	Yes	Greece	18	2012	3	Tirana	Economic	No	Small enterprise
5	Bruna	F	48	M	Yes	Greece	20	2010	5	Tirana	Economic	No	Small enterprise
6	Arta	F	45	M	Yes	Greece	17	2013	2	Tirana	Economic	Maybe	Unemployed
7	Dionis	M	40	M	Yes	Greece	19	2012	3	Tirana	Economic	Not sure	business/closed
8	Ema	F	35	M	Yes	Italy	9	2012	3	Tirana	Economic	No	Small enterprise
9	Genti	M	30	M	Yes	Greece	17	2013	2	Tirana	Planned	No	Small enterprise
10	Indrit	M	41	M	Not been	Italy	15	2011	4	Tirana	Planned	Maybe	Small enterprise
11	Endri	M	40	M	Yes	Greece	21	2013	2	Tirana	Economic	No	Small enterprise
12	Linda	F	41	S	Yes	USA	9	2013	2	Tirana	Job offer	No	Journalist
13	Alban	M	37	M	Yes	Italy	10	2012	3	Tirana	Economic	No	Small enterprise
14	Besim	M	50	M	Yes	Greece	17	2013	2	Tirana	Economic	Yes	Construction
15	Dorina	F	33	M	n/a	Cyprus	6	2008	7	Tirana	Planned	Maybe	part-time
16	Anita	F	42	M	yes	Greece	17	2010	6	Tirana	Economic	No	Small enterprise
17	Rudina	F	38	M	Yes	Greece	15	2012	3	Fier	Economic	Yes	Unemployed
18	Miranda	F	44	M	Yes	Greece	18	2013	2	Fier	Economic	Yes	Unemployed
19	Lili	F	36	M	No	Greece	14	2013	6	Fier	Economic	Yes	Unemployed
20	Nardi	M	35	M	Yes	Italy	10	2009	5	Fier	Planned	No	Private
21	Alda	F	30	M	No	Greece	8	2013	2	Fier	Economic	Maybe	Unemployed
22	Albi	M	40	M	Yes	Greece	15	2012	3	Fier	Economic	Maybe	Construction

Table 2. Demographic data for Adults

Table 3. Demographic data for Children 7-12 years

No.	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Country of return	Wave 2
1	Nina	8	F	Greece	Declined to participate
2	Bled	9	M	Italy	Remigrated
3	Gina	8	F	Greece	
4	Lenti	7	M	Greece	
5	Goni	11	M	Greece	
6	Kledi	9	M	USA	
7	Erti	10	M	Greece	
8	Landi	10	M	Greece	Remigrated
9	Mario	9	M	Greece	
10	Olti	9	M	Greece	

Table 4. Demographic data for Focus group – Teenagers

No	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Place of Residence Abrod	Period abroad	Returned	City	Reason to return
1	Ela	F	18	Greece	10	2013	Tirana	Economic crisis
2	Ina	F	15	Greece	born	2013	Tirana	Economic crisis
3	Rea	F	18	Greece	8	2012	Tirana	Economic crisis
4	Nina	F	13	Greece	born	2012	Tirana	Economic crisis

Table 5. Demographic data for Focus group - Adults

No	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Place of Residence Abrod	Period abroad	Returned	City	Reason to return
1	Tini	M	34	Different	5	2007	Fier	Studies
2	Arti	M	42	England	14	2004	Fier	Documents
3	Selim	M	47	Italy	6	2008	Fier	Economic crisis
4	Bona	F	53	Greece	16	2012	Fier	Economic crisis
5	Arjet	M	36	Greece	20	2012	Fier	Economic crisis
6	Valmira	F	32	Greece	2	2007	Fier	Planned