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**LA NOUVELLE
IMMIGRATION GRECQUE
THE NEW WAVE OF
GREEK MIGRATION**

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Students with Migration Background in the University of Crete: A Biographical and Factional Analysis

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article se concentre sur les élèves d'origine immigrante qui ont suivi l'enseignement primaire et secondaire public en Grèce et ont été admis à l'Université de Crète après avoir réussi l'examen national d'entrée. Quinze récits migratoires sont analysés et indiquent que ces étudiants, à travers un parcours ardu de scolarité, d'apprentissage du grec et d'intégration dans la société grecque, ont réussi à s'inscrire à l'université, mais n'ont pas encore la possibilité de se voir attribuer la citoyenneté grecque et de se sentir pleinement membres de la société. La contradiction entre l'acceptation d'élèves immigrants dans le système éducatif et de leur privation de tous les droits résultant de la citoyenneté grecque est soulevée et discutée dans cet article.

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the students of immigrant origin who have followed mainstream primary and secondary education and have entered the University of Crete through the national examination. Fifteen migratory biographies are analyzed qualitatively and indicate that the students, through a rough course of schooling, learning Greek and being integrated into the Greek society, have succeeded to enroll to the University, but they still lack the opportunity of being granted citizenship and feel full members of the society. The contradiction between accepting foreign schoolchildren into the education system and depriving them from full legal rights is an uprising issue to be dealt with by the state.

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Introduction

Exploring the issues relating to migration and the reality created in societies as a result of this population movement involves primarily the clarification of the way in which these phenomena, are approached each time. This is because the mobility of populations is associated with important aspects of multidimensional economic, social, demographic, political, cultural and psychological phenomena. According to recent analyses of the migratory movements worldwide, about 214 million people live outside their home countries in their pursuit for a better life.¹ In the European Union (E.U.), according to the data collected by Eurostat for the year 2012, of the total population of E.U. (503,7 millions) the 33 million were migrants.² Focusing on the case of Greece, immigration was greatly affected by not only the collapse of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 but also by the successive E.U. enlargements in the last twenty years. These developments shaped the migratory flow to Greece from the Balkans as well as from the Central and Eastern European countries, while at the same time, the processes of social and economic globalization have facilitated the development of migratory flows from the Asian countries and Africa (Triantafillidou, 2010).

According to the results of the population Census in 2011, the total number of foreigners living permanently in the country was 911.929 people.³ At the same time, according to the Eurostat data, with reference to the year 2012, the immigrants who lived in Greece amounted to 975.000 of whom 151.000 came from E.U. countries, while 824.000 came from non E.U. countries.⁴ Of course the demographic censuses use as a reference point the migrants living permanently in the country that is, (those who gave a residence permit or those who have already applied together with all the necessary documents, but the permit is still pending). In order for the population of the illegal immigrants to be estimated, Maroukis by combining different data sources (demographic census, workforce statistics data on residence permits, Greek police arrest records and school registrations) estimates that number of illegal immigrants for the year 2007 to be 280.446.⁵

Therefore both the rapid increase in migratory flows in the 90s as well as the crystallization of a permanent and stable migration number of about 10-12% of the country's population, created a new reality (Kontis, 2009). For this reason, within the E.U., the transition was attempted away from a defense

policy towards the migratory phenomenon such as the control of migratory flows and towards an effort to address the issues of discrimination and exclusion (Schierup, Hansen & Castles, 2006). The terms inclusion, integration,⁶ insertion, assimilation, constitute the basic analytical tools both in joint scientific discourse and in terms of political design. These terms are products of social policy interpretation and negotiation depending on the political, social and economic circumstances as well as the peculiarities of each society. However, a key point of differentiation is that the processes of assimilation and inclusion require no modifications, or changes in the structure of societies of migration unlike the process of integration or inclusion (Baubock, 1996). Sayad (2004) discussing these terms, points out that their differences are principally based on the integrity of the individual. During the process of assimilation, individual integrity that comprises the unique characteristics of the migrant becomes less prominent and disappears, something that seems not to be true with the process of integration. Through the multiplicity of definitions ascribed to the terms of integration or inclusion (Markou, 2001, Papadopoulou, 2006, Kontis, 2009), can be concluded that the migrant will become a member of the new society through a complex and dynamic process (Sambatakou, 2009).

However while the integration is associated with the recognition of cultural diversity, the conditions under which this integration will take place vary and often are proportionately opposed. This is why in every society what is or is not accepted is the product of political interpretation (Papadopoulou, 2006). In this way, the dual character governing the process of integration or inclusion is indicated as it relates on the one hand to the migrants who desire to have access to the structures of the host society and the creation of social and cultural relations with members of the broader community and on the other hand in the field of the host society by creating equal relationships and providing equal opportunities⁷ for migrants with nationals (Borkert et al 2007). Therefore, we could say that the degree of integration or inclusion of a person or group in a society is a function of the degree of «absence of economic, social and political distinction between migrant and domestic population groups» (Kontis, 2009).

However, a number of key questions arise: Based on which indicators, which criteria and evaluative processes, the norms and standards are selected in

order to investigate the inclusion and integration of migrants into host societies? In an attempt to answer these questions at a convention organized by the Council of Europe in 1995, was mapped an initial context for the criteria of inclusion.⁸ The E.U. and the Lisbon Treaty in 2000 set the cornerstone in building a common model of immigrant integration which concerned the integration into the labor market in 2004. The Hague Programme bounded common basic principles to enhance integration of legal migrants to the country of settlement.⁹ In the context of European Institutions indicatively, the Zaragora Declaration adopted by the Ministers of E.U. member countries, for migration policy in April 2010 mapped the immigrant integration indicators (key areas of employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship).¹⁰

Access to education constitutes a basic pillar for the integration of migrants in host societies and primarily relates to the existence of support programs referring to the learning of the dominant language and at the same time the preservation of the cultural assets of their native land. However, different approaches concerning the educational policy emerge which are based on the ethno-cultural diversity that they map differently and develop different management strategies.¹¹

In the case of Greece the institutional interventions which deal with the issue of integration of students with an immigrant background¹², are divided into those which were implemented during the years 1975-1980, 1980-1995 and a new approach adopted in 1996 with the enactment of law 2413/ 1996 (Damanakis, 1997 a). Imprinting the Key benchmarks of these institutional interventions, Damanakis states: In the second half of the 70s educational policy had an intense «philanthropic», «privileged» character (leniency and reduced requirements) while at the beginning of 1980s some compensatory measures were taken (the introduction of intensive language courses and compensatory classes) that aimed at helping students to adjust in the Greek educational system¹³. Since then, the establishment and operation of intensive language courses classes as well as coaching classes are governed by laws and government degrees, and also the controls of this function are identified. However, these legislative interventions are dominated by the logic of assimilation since the educational background of the students is totally ignored and the logic of total assimilation seems to imply the loss of ethno cultural

reports relating to the country of origin of the students. It is clear that the prevailing idea is that of the «case of deficit». A new season opens with the enactment of Law 2413/1996 with which is attempted a transition from the logic of deficit and assimilation to the intercultural approach. The purpose of intercultural education is defined in Article 34 as «...the organization and operation of primary and secondary schools to provide education to young people with special educational or social characteristics». In line with this transition, intercultural schools are founded. From 1996 to date 26 intercultural schools have been established all over the country (13 elementary schools, 9 junior high schools and 4 high schools). However, the fact that these special schools were organized to cater for the special educational needs of a particular group of the student population delineates a separation logic. The ethno cultural specificity discriminates towards management in terms that are far from the content, goals and methodology of intercultural education, whose basic principle is the inclusion of native and foreign students (Damanakis, 1997, Markou 2001). Thus, otherness has its own place in separate educational institutions and not a place in the existent structures which could be enriched by it, if of course there would be room for something else. Alongside, these legislative intervention by the Ministry of Education in 1997 already included under the Second Support Framework (Operational Program for Education and Training), four projects under the title «Programs of intercultural education»¹⁴ aiming at improving the integration in the educational system of people of special categories. These integration programs for pupils with cultural and linguistic diversities in the educational system which are implemented to date are as follows:

1. Education for repatriated and foreign students
2. Education for Roma children
3. Education of children of the Muslim minority
4. Greek-language primary and secondary intercultural education in the Diaspora.

However, these programs seem to be moving in the logic of distinction as they refer each time separately to a target-group and the potential application of innovative actions often proposed, limit themselves into distinct types of education that refer to special forms of education provided for the above target

groups such as, host support courses in intercultural and Minority schools.

Focusing on mapping the current situation in Greece, according to the records of the Ministry of Education, the foreign students for the school year 2012/13 amounted to 127.933. Analytical data, for the school years 2011/12 and 2012/13 are presented in Table 1.

Table1: Foreign students in every level of Education and academic year

Level of Education	Foreign Students in every Academic year	
	2011/12	2012/13
Kindergarten	21.033	18.811
Elementary School	76.977	68.654
Junior High School	34.347	30.617
High School	12.958	9.851
TOTAL	145.315	127.933

(Source: Ministry of Education)

At this point, it should be noted that the transformation of educational policy in applied educational practice is neither obvious nor easily manageable. The intention of educational policy does not equate practice. According to Eurostat statistics relating to Greece with reference year 2011, the rate of school dropouts (early leavers from education and training) in the total population was 13%, while 44,9% of students who leave school are foreign students¹⁵. These results are confirmed by the results of a research on indicators of immigrant Integration Policy (MIPEX)¹⁶ according to which the education of immigrants in Greece is not provided by a series of systematic and targeted measures, while at the same time the intercultural dimension is limited only to the migrant populations rather than to all the students in the country (see Godovos, 2007).

However, to have a better mapping of the factors and conditions that have influenced the educational and social progress of children with a migrant background in Greek society, the quantitative and qualitative approaches become important that focus on how the immigration experience is

experienced by them. This is because the experience through the unlimited decoding and interpretations can neither be univocal nor integrated into pre-sorted modes of explanation whether they involve the same migration flows or relate to integration processes in institutions and structures of the host society. For example, the integration of students in intensive language courses, if and when there are such classes constitute the starting point in the investigation of their educational trajectories. Moreover, the way that the migrant student decodes and interprets his educational course can emerge, if one focuses on the subject itself through a qualitative research approach.

Methodological Planning and Sample Formation

This research seeks to explore University students with migratory background account of their immigrant biography and their educational course through the Greek educational system. It looks for aspects of social integration of these students through the study of the way in which the subject experiences any ethno-cultural distinctiveness, having as main points of reference, educational-academic frames and social context. Of course it is for subjects who, at least in a descriptive level, had a «successful» course after graduating from Greek University.

Furthermore, the descriptive information about the sample, such as their attendance at the Greek schools and Universities, determine to some extent the range of descriptive criteria of their membership structures of Greek society. But the empirical findings will be those that will shed light on their integration and most importantly will give them their qualitative characteristics. This is because the way the students themselves experience and narrate their «successful course», can only be answered if one focuses on «setting the gaze of the subject» on aspects of his own path (Tsiolis, 2006).

Therefore, the main aim of the research is to investigate the qualitative terms that constitute the narrative of the migration experience and how these conditions are associated with the accession structures of Greek society. The narrative of the experience, in essence relates to the investigation of the discourse, of the underlying meaning and their place in it. This in turn means that the main aim of the present study is first to outline the way in which the students with migratory biography have received and decode immigration and educational trajectories and to examine the factors that shaped with their

presence or absence the individual narrative parts of their migration experience. In this direction there is a three-dimensional approach, targeting our wider research:

1. Investigate the way in which the subject narrates (the narration is of great interest), his transition in the Greek context, by highlighting the focal points of his migration course.
2. Investigation of the educational path of the subject, with emphasis on how the subject narrates his integration and course in the Greek educational system of primary, secondary and tertiary level.
3. Attempt to correlate the individual narrative parts with the accession structures of the Greek society, the presence or absence of institutional interventions. By that we mean exploring the interface of institutionalized education policy for these students and the way they themselves experienced the Greek educational reality.

This targeting dictated the axes of investigation which are the following:

- a. Family biography (arrival in Greece, elements of family and linguistic socialization in family, friends and relatives networks, contact with the country of origin.
- b. Educational course (conditions under which the transition to the Greek education reality was achieved, learning Greek language, use of the native language, data concerning school socialization, participation or not in the intensive language courses.
- c. Academic framework (selection criteria for attending Greek Universities, factors that facilitated or hindered their admission to Universities, interaction with fellow students, professors and future expectations after graduation.
- d. Social networks (interaction with the Greeks, social connections and ties, discrimination issues with reference to ethnicity.
- e. Integration framework of the Greek society (institutional measures concerning education and naturalization.
- f. Ethno cultural self-placement (management of intercultural records, narration of the national and cultural self, expectations and objectives).

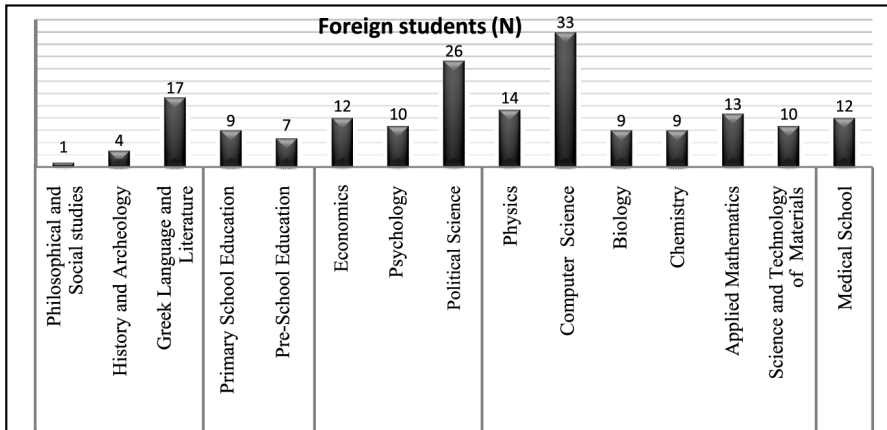
With a starting point the multilevel structural analysis model of Damanakis, on the levels, dimensions and the agents of socialization concerning people who live in multicultural environments,¹⁷ this research focuses primarily on the individual level and at the micro level, while only at the level of interpretative analysis of the findings, it attempts to interface with the process that relates to the mid level.

Therefore, the main research question is: which are the qualities of the narrative of the migration experience of foreign students, as they are displayed by them? Namely how they decode their social and educational course in Greece? The resulting question aim at investigating the way these subjects dealt with and managed the intercultural records and not at measuring and qualifying the integration and, inclusion indicators in Greek society. In the present article, we confine ourselves to present and analyze the findings which relate to the family environment and school progress of the subjects and highlight those factors which the individuals themselves consider that played a decisive regulative role in their course.

The population group of reference in the present study are students with migratory biography at the University of Crete. According to the information we received from the secretary offices of the University departments, a total of 186 students of non Greek origin are currently enrolled at the University, which means that they comprise 1,09% of the total student population. (For the year 2012-2013 the number of undergraduate students of the University of Crete was 17.050 people).

However, it should be noted that two departments did not provide the relevant information and therefore the statistical data are incomplete, even though they appear to reflect to a great degree the ethnic background of students with migration biography. Moreover, it was impossible to control and cross-check the statistical information as the Computer Service of the University receives this information from the secretaries of each department.¹⁸

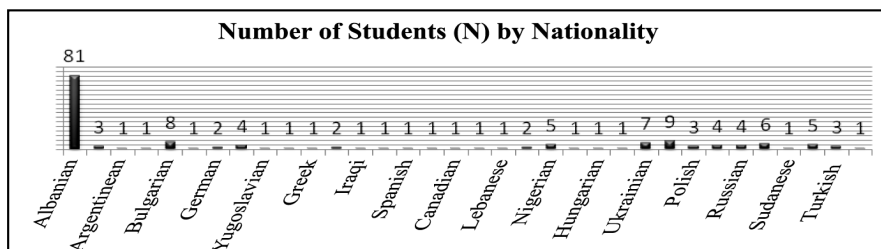
Diagram 1: Allocation of Foreign Students in the University Departments



More specifically, as shown in Diagram I, the highest concentration of students with migratory background is in the school of Sciences and Technology. Since 47 students attend, they constitute 3% of the total population of foreign students of the University of Crete. At the same time, in the department of Computer science 33 students are enrolled, while in the department of Social Sciences 25,8% of the total number of foreign students is enrolled. However, it is worth noting that in the Department of Literature and Letters 17 foreign students are enrolled, which makes it the third Department in the preference of these students. Even though the field of study and the study program of this department have specific requirements regarding the knowledge and use of the Greek language, the number of the foreign students (17) is considered quite high, if we also take into consideration that they are all active students in their attendance of the program.

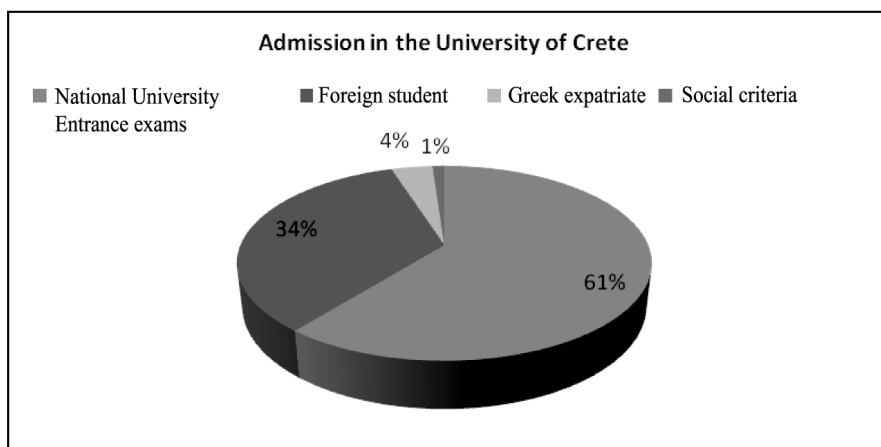
Regarding the ethnic composition of students under study and based on the evidence of nationality the vast majority are of Albanian origin, as shown in chart 2.

Diagram 2: Allocation of Students with Migratory Background by Nationality



Concluding this brief overview of some descriptive information of the reference population group, it should be noted that 61% of these students are admitted to the University of Crete through the National University Entrance Exams, while 34% of them was admitted on the status of foreign students according to the provisions of the law concerning the entrance in the University of students belonging to special categories (foreign students, students who have graduated from high schools of E.U. countries and non E.U countries and are not of Greek origin) as determined by G.G. 272/2007 and its amendment G.G. 1307/2011. These data are analytically presented in figure 3.

Diagram 3:



In the process of setting up the sample under investigation, the element of availability of population groups played a crucial role in the purposive sampling. Thus the sample has been built on both the availability and certain characteristics of the individuals with the basic being graduates of Greek secondary schools and not high school graduates outside or inside the E.U., who have entered Greek University through special examination.

Therefore, the sampling was targeted so that of all the subjects under investigation attending the University of Crete only those who were graduates of Greek schools and who constitute the majority (61%) of this population, were selected. However, it should be noted that the sampling process was based on the method of “avalanche” in which the sample of a subject leads to another and this was because the question of privacy arose.

The sample of the study consisted of fifteen (15) students (4 males and 11 females). Only one subject was born in Greece, while the remaining were born in the countries of their parents and migrated to Greece at young school age. It should be pointed out that of the 15 subjects, 11 are immigrants of Albanian descent and that the migration from Albania took place in the late 90s. Of the total number of the students, six (6) had become Greek citizens, while the remaining nine (9) had not begun the process of citizenship acquisition or their naturalization procedure was pending. Regarding the technique of data collection we should say that the demands and the targeting of the research dictated the choice of the interview as a key methodological tool. This choice of methodology was based on the systematic approach to the migratory experience on the part of the subjects as they required investigation of the discourse as they formulated it and experience on themselves.

This analysis requires both active and methodical «hearing of their narrative» and access to the perceptual filters of the talkers (Patton, 1990). The semi-structured interview as a research tool provided the opportunity of a dialectical search on these data. It should be noted that even though it was not a biographical narrative interview, the students themselves presented some biographical facts, that illustrated the crucial role of the subjective aspect of their migratory and educational biography through the process of registering these experiences mostly on a memory level.

The survey was conducted between the months of April and July 2013 in the University of Crete with the collection of the statistical data from the

services of the University as well as interviewing a subject of the students under investigation (excluding Cypriots).

The present article used data from 15 interviews taken by students with migratory background having as a common ground that they have attended Greek schools and that they are presently admitted into a Greek University. The sample of the study along with its characteristics dictates a set of assumptions and methodological limitations. It should be initially noted that there was a difficulty in the collection of the data that became worse with the inability to collect relevant data from two university departments. Moreover, the analysis of the aspects of the migratory experience, through the exploration of family and school biography is based on analyses which obviously do not have the details of generalization and universalization.

However, it appears that they depict different aspects of the migratory experience and could be used as working hypotheses. However, the discourse that is articulated by the people with migratory background, is often cited as a default reducible to specific criteria relating to integration processes taking place in the host society. However, the discourse analysis that is articulated by these populations and concerns the decoding of their migratory experience is objectively a multidimensional and constantly evolving reason.

Finally, among the subjects of the sample a variation was not detected concerning their integration into the Greek educational system, in that none individuals of the sample attended an intensive language course nor received any form of preferential intervention by the educational system. The only such case was that of a female student from a repatriated school who describes her experience rather as negative, since it followed even there according to her, a systematic way of teaching the Greek language which would meet the needs and expectations of the students in these schools, so that they could better adapt in the Greek society. The language of instruction was English and as she says "*the teachers were more relaxed, more lenient with us but did not significantly help us in learning Greek*" (S.12). (Kontogianni, 2002).

Migratory Biography

The gradual decline of the social / communist regimes in the Eastern European countries during the 80s was the main reason that forced the families

of the students to migrate. Especially with the liberation of the countries of the Eastern block from the Varsovia Treaty (1989) and the free choice of domestic or foreign policy, the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the unification of the Eastern and Western Germany, the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991) and the existence of independent countries, led to the opening of the borders and the transition from the communist system to a more liberal one.

A ripple effect of this transition is the political, economic, social and educational breakdown and bankruptcy of these countries that in some cases came close to the state of anarchy and civil war (e.g. 1997 Albania,¹⁹ Jarvis, 2000).

The idea that the students of the sample group have for their country of origin during the time that their parents chose to immigrate is quite negative. Especially the students of Albanian descent characterize their country «*as a closed conservative society, very poor*» (S6) where «*the government was the large factory and everybody else was the worker in it*» (S1). On a social level they said that the state did not give citizens opportunities for education either as a result of the general economic situation (S2) or due to political beliefs: «*because my grandfather was a political prisoner, my father was not allowed to study at the university even though he was an excellent student*» (S1). Due to the conditions of political instability, high unemployment, inflation, social insecurity and moral degradation that were prevalent in the countries of the former Eastern Block the majority of the students stated that their parents immigrated «*in search for a better life*» (S2). Of course, one of the primary reasons was for a financially «*better life as the student*» (S8) from Armenia stated: «*Our country was fine, but in order for someone to live this is not enough, you need something to eat. We left in order for our parents to find work*». Furthermore, the search for a «*better life*» was not only for financial reasons, as many fathers of our sample had work in their countries before they left. The search for a «*better life*» meant a politically, socially, culturally and morally better life «*as*» for years they were trapped and deprived of their basic needs (S6).

The immigration to Greece of the families of the students took place in most cases in two phases (11 out of 15). For the initial phase a member of the family immigrated and then the rest of the family followed. It is obvious that this happened as it was a novel experience for the people from the countries of the Soviet Union and Albania. It was usually the case that the father left first,

investigated the existing conditions and found a place for the family to settle down before they were reunited (Ieronimakis 2010).

According to the students with Albanian descent, the phases through which the migration for the family members was completed, were in accordance with the general movement of the Albanian migration. Initially, with the opening of the borders between 1989-1990 (A', migratory phase) the father of the family left first and the rest of the family followed during the years 1997-2001 (B' migratory phase) (Maroukis 2010). An interesting point here is that the reunion of the family occurs in 1997 probably due to the socio economic crisis of the time (The fall of "Pyramid Schemes") which worsened the social unrest and crime rates (Alia 2000, Vickers, 1995) and worked as a catalyst for the family decision to immigrate²⁰. Invoking the family reunion, the students explain as «a natural outcome» (S2) the reason why they immigrated. Characteristically they say: *«My mother wanted that we all come here, so that our father was not alone»* (S6) while S8 expressing the emotional void that the absence of one parent creates says: *«this absence was not worth not all the money of the world. We wanted to be all together, that is why we all came to Greece»*.

With reference to the four families of the students that immigrated, we should note that their immigration took place since 1997 and after. It is obvious that these parents took such a decision having information and support from older immigrants. In essence, it was the result of the influence of migratory networks that exist between the country of origin and the country of migration²¹. In the literature, there are references for the family networks and the links of migration (Maroukis, 2010, Iosifidis, 2009).

The way the parents of the students chose to bring their children to Greece was not always legal. The parents who immigrated legally to Greece used taxis or other means of transport to enter the country. In the cases which the legal migration was impossible, the students narrate in an emotional way their trekking through the mountains and the secrecy under which this was accomplished: *«It wasn't easy to decide to flee from our country. After having tried all the legal ways we travelled through the mountains. We came on foot. There were many men who helped up. My mother and my sister were walking, but a man carried me as I was 4 years old. I don't know if I remember these things on my own, or if they have been narrated to me. We had made another attempt, but the police had stopped us, as we didn't have any legal documents. In Athens, an uncle was waiting for us who*

told us not to speak a lot because the police will hear us and will send us back. I was very young and I don't remember many things, but my sister was nervous and very stressed. We were in danger of sending us back. Finally, we have managed to reach Heraklion».

During the first days of their arrival to Greece, the students present a positive picture for their interaction with the native population. In some cases, they talk about the active support they received from the locals after their arrival to Greece. More specifically S4 says: *«In the beginning they welcomed us with open arms. Greece is a very hospitable nation»*. S1 adds: *«my parents left in secret. They followed the railway tracks and arrived at some village in Veria. There a lady approached them and offered them accommodation, and work. They worked in the fields for 15 days picking peaches, they got paid and left. Their destination was the island of Paros. Moreover, many students talk about support they experienced as children from their neighbors. A neighbor helped us a lot. Without any arrangements she looked after my sister together with her grandchildren, when our parents were out to work»* (S6). Additionally, they talk about the strong relationships that were forged between them and the local people. *«As soon as we arrived in Argos, we met the neighbors who eventually became my grandparents and helped us a lot»* (S3).

Generally, what seems to be clear is that the locals on the interpersonal level were supportive to the migrant families and in various ways showed their solidarity and help, as these families were trying to integrate into the Greek society. Moreover, according to literature (Voulgaris et al, 1995, Tzortzopoulou, 1999) the locals treated the first wave of immigrants, that is those who migrated in the 90s with tolerance and stood by them in their attempt to adapt into the new society.

As far as the employment of the parents of the students from our sample group is concerned, the findings of our research are identical with those of other studies (Lamprianidis & Limberaki, 2001, Fakiolas 2000, Psimenos 1999, Sarris and Zografakis, 1999).

The main sectors in which the fathers found work were construction, farming, in some cases the tourist sector, while the mothers worked as cleaning ladies and in the care of children or older people. Of course, as time went by, and the economics of the family improved, the mothers stopped working outside the house, and some fathers opened their own businesses, such as cafeterias, or buildings' construction.

The Conditions of the Students' Integration

We attempted to investigate in the interviews concluded the environment in which our students and their families grew up, as well as the values that defined their upbringing. A dimension which became very clear, according to the opinion of the students was the high expectations of their parents for them. To this vein, S3 told us: *«There were expectations, there always were and then after they are expressed, they become your own and this is a good thing, because if I didn't have any goals, I don't know where I would be now. I am grateful to my mother that I got the Proficiency diploma in English because if it wasn't for her I would never find the time to do it. S5 mentions that his father never reprimanded him nor refused things to him // he just advised his children: Always remember where we left from and what we went through in order to come here. (They walked through the mountains to Greece). Remember the hardships so that you never give up or get lost in strange situations».* Moreover S6 pointed out that her parents considered her being admitted in the University as a one way street for her future and her sister's, as well *«they used to tell us that if we didn't get into the University, and because we live in a foreign country, we wouldn't be able to do anything with our lives. They always motivated us to study and be good students».*

The students of our sample group believe that if it wasn't for their parent's high expectations and demands they wouldn't have entered University, and they owe this to them.

Another dimension that emerged from the interview was that the children grew up listening all the time from their parents the words: *«we are foreigners here».* The parents wanted their children to realize this fact and reminded them every chance they had. As a result when their parents talked to them about manner or behavior, they said to them: *«look here, we are foreigners in this place and you will never be treated fairly, so be careful with your behavior»* (S3). In addition, when they referred to the issues of performance and meritocracy they said: *«because you are a stranger here, you must try harder. You need to try more in order to succeed than you would need to do if you were Greek. If there is a selection between someone from another country and someone who is from the country, the foreigner must try harder»* (S2). Thus the students defining their parents attitude as a *«phobia»* stated that even today some parents have the fear that they are strangers and they may be deported (S6).

This attitude of the families who migrated to Greece is directly connected /

related to the belief that the students expressed *«that there is a general sense of racism around them»* (S2). This discrimination that they claim that it is present in the Greek society, they believe that it is enforced by the legislature and the government which *«are against immigrants»* according to them(S3). They characteristically stated: *«the children feel as strangers due to the strict laws and please note that it is a matter of laws, there is a legal dimension»* (S5).

The students of our sample group reach this conclusion only because of the bureaucracy they had to face in their attempt to become Greek citizens, which even though they had every right to receive, they had a hard time to obtain.

Moreover, some of the students had to recount a negative experience for their dealing with the public services. Relatively, they said *«if they realize that you are from a foreign country, they will treat you very badly»* (S3). *«There were cases that they made me feel bad and degraded»* (S2). Another one added: *«my sister, when she said her name was not helped. Only when she showed her Greek ID did they pay attention to her»*.

Consequently, the students see discrimination mainly on an institutional level rather than on a social one. Moreover, the positive interaction they had with the locals makes them relate to us only by positive experiences of support and help. On the other hand, some students tried to explain the discriminatory behavior sometimes of the local population, by saying that this was the result of the misconception the Greek society has for the immigrants *«that they didn't leave any money in the country and they didn't pay any taxes»* (S1). Several other students attributed this attitude to the fact that the Greek society is an ethnically homogeneous society and *«when something different appears that is other from the accepted, it is understandable that a discriminatory behavior will emerge»* (S4).

It is furthermore clear that the effort the migrant family made to *«integrate»* its children to the Greek society moved in the following direction: to realize that they should put up with any discrimination and they should try even more than the locals to gain the right qualifications in order to have *«a better life»*, which was the reason why the family migrated to Greece. We believe that the parents chose this form of upbringing in order to *«protect»* their children due to their own experience of discrimination when they came to contact with the Greek legislation.

School Biography

As we have already seen from the existing literature, every child's transition from the family environment to the school setting or from one school setting to another, may result in changes in his/her personality or in difficulties depending on how competent or different the environment is (Magnuson K.A. & Waldfogel, J. 2005). The accounts of the students bear witness that this transition to the Greek educational system was a difficult and usually traumatic experience most of the time.

At first, it seems that the age at which the children migrated to Greece influenced to a high degree the way the students, as children experienced the adaptation procedure in the Greek educational system. The students who were born in Greece, or came to the country at a very young age had attended one or two grades in their country of origin and then they continued in their primary grades in the Greek schools, do not seem to have very strong memories from the time they entered the Greek educational system. Moreover, they can not remember how and when they started speaking Greek. According to them, they didn't face any special difficulties as someone mentions: *«in a few months I was able to speak Greek. I remember learning the Greek alphabet and quite quickly indeed»*.

On the contrary, for the children who were older and from higher primary or secondary education, their attending Greek school is accompanied by very vivid memories and their stories illustrate the difficulties they faced during the adaptation period. One student said: *«The transition to school was hard. In the beginning this was the case due to the language problem and because I was older than my classmates»* (S10). Another student adds: *«In the beginning, I felt I came from an outer space, I felt lonely and the other children didn't play with me»* (S2). Moreover, in cases where the schooling of the children was successful in another educational system, the transition to Greek schools is characterized as a traumatic experience. A student (S15) remembers: *«In Albania I was a good student. When I came to Greece I had a very hard time at school. I couldn't learn the language, as there were neither classes nor lessons not even teachers. I went to school and the only words I knew were "yes" and "no". Nothing else. This was very hard for me, as I was no longer the good student I was once»*. In the same vein a student (S12) adds: *«In Nigeria, I was a very good student. For this reason, I finished elementary school at 8 and I would have gone to junior high school, but when we came here I started school from fourth grade»*.

I had difficulties with the language and I was frustrated because I was always a good student. This event ruined my psychology and I felt insecure».

As these children arrived in Greece they entered an organized educational system. When they are asked how they learned the Greek language they don't talk about the special school facilities that were established for the children with migratory background, and as the students of our sample group informed us, no one attended a reception class or a tutoring group. This happened because in most cases this infrastructure was not available at the school that these students went to. But even the one or two cases that the students mentioned the existence of such classes in their schools, they did not belong to the cases of children who received this extra language support. For this reason, every child mentions different mechanisms which worked towards the learning / mastering of the Greek language and it seems that this was achieved not always through the school system. Some students mention the systematic help they received from adults outside school. As S2 said an elderly couple used to help her: *«we had lessons and I had a notebook»* and S7 remembers that a veteran teacher helped her and she is still even today important to her: *«without this teacher, I don't know what I would have done».*

Some other students, as in the case of S4 talk about their peers and their social interaction with the neighborhood children through games such as football: *«I quickly learned Greek and in few months I was able to speak».* Another important mean in the learning of the language, that was mentioned, was television (S6).

There were cases that the learning of the new language was laborious and lonely, as the only mean available was reading, as S11 told us: *«Many times the children made fun of the way I spoke and so I made a big effort and I studied countless hours in order to learn Greek».* Similarly S14 said: *«I had a notebook and I wrote the words I didn't understand and I asked my cousins who were born in Greece and were 4-5 years old to tell me what these words meant. But how such young children could help me? How much do they know? My speaking and writing was very bad. I would read fairytales, when I was 15 years old that were written for 3-4 years old children. This was a mistake. I didn't want to miss a year at school and so as soon as we came here, I immediately started it. However, I should have learned the language first and then go to school. My parents are to blame for this. But how would they know?...they weren't educated. When I entered University I paid for this, as the level was high and I didn't*

have the required background to attend the lectures in Medical school».

Furthermore, several students talked about the role some teachers played in their attempt to adapt to Greek schools. As there seems not to exist a specific educational policy, the teacher as the students say, appear to have a very different attitude in the management of the ethnocultural difference of these students. In that way some teachers helped the children adapt, as they worked not only with the foreign students but also with the Greek students in order to encourage them to come to contact and include them in their group of friends. Student (S2) mentions: *«in the fourth grade I had a teacher who tried hard to teach me how to read and other things like that. She was very nice. After the first trimester, I learned the language. I adapted and I was even invited to parties».* Student (S3) adds: *«The teachers were encouraging. I still remember the encouraging words of my teacher when I gave the correct answer».*

Of course, there were behaviors on the part of the teachers that communicated indifference to the students, a fact that they believe that hindered their school, and social integration as a student remembers: *«I withdrew to myself and I spent hours reading all the books of the library».*

Finally some other students talked about some teacher behaviors that affected their personalities and confirmed once again how unprepared some educators were to handle students who were ethnically and culturally different and found themselves in the Greek schools. Some teachers considered it appropriate to change the names of these students so that they are more Greek, as in the case of student (S8), while student (S3) remembers that it was a small torture every time that in the beginning of the year, the teachers asked which students came from another country. There were also cases where when the students performed well, their teachers handled it badly and clumsily, and made the students feel awkward, while talking to the Greek students.

They would say: *«look at a foreigner who is doing better than you»* (S2). As a result the students from other countries experienced discrimination again. Consequently, we should say that the inclusion of the students into the Greek school system didn't follow a structured procedure, but in most cases it was a personal issue. As a result, depending on the age they migrated and if there was a supportive person in their lives, an educator or not, the students describe their experience of entering the Greek system of education by connecting the adaptation procedure with learning the Greek language.

Discussion

The cases of the students that were studied and presented in the present study were obviously “*successful*” courses of students with migratory background, which seem to be characterized by an effort to become socially included, mainly at a family level. Essentially, it is about the children of the families which have been integrated into the Greek society and have been supported in their efforts to enter University. However, achieving this “*successful*” course is accompanied in most cases by personal routes which become interconnected in the management of a presence and an absence.

By presence, we mean that the ethnocultural characteristics of their country of origin, either as self-determination or as being defined by others, seem to directly or indirectly affect their everyday lives. By absence, we mean that both the students and their families try to manage their integration into the Greek society by the absence of systematic and institutionalized structures for these populations.

- On the Role of the Family

The security valves of the family in the protection of the children are directed towards instilling the sense of “foreign” and that they should strive to pursue and achieve their goals. These goals are mostly connected with their successful performance at school and with being admitted to the University. The continued study of children in tertiary institutions seems to be for most parents a kind of vindication of their migration to Greece and of their choice to come here in search for better conditions for their life and their children’s lives. In some cases, admission to University is an opportunity to escape from the social stereotypes that characterize immigrants, such as low educational level and manual labor.

- On the Role of the Educational System

At the same time, it appears that the Greek educational system, even with gaps and omissions, enables foreign students to partake of Greek education. According to their words, when it comes to public services and institutions they still experience institutional racism as upon their graduation they will be forced to leave the country, especially in the case that they have not been naturalized as Greek citizens. The efforts of the students with migratory

background focus on the way they would better deal with the absence of institutions on an educational level and on a social level as well. More specifically:

- The lack of documentation on their migration to Greece (illegal immigration).
- The lack of structures for learning the Greek language (Most of them were helped by the social environment or it was a solitary individual effort and not through the school system.
- The absence of structures for learning and further maintaining their native language.
- The lack of recognition of Greek citizenship by the relevant services (not granting citizenship).

It has become clear that beyond the narrative of the students for their migratory and educational biography in this study, it is imperative for them to become accepted by the Greek society and also to be institutionally integrated in it. The recognition by the Greek state and the provision of Greek citizenship to foreign students is a prerequisite for accession. As there has been a delay on this particular issue, the students feel that they are left hanging, while they try to live their lives on the borderline between their country of origin and the country they lived most of their lives to become socialized and educated.

The educational policy of Greece is characterized by both a contradiction and an inconsistency. It creates the conditions for accession / integration of foreign populations / students, while at the same time neglects their ethnocultural identity and refuses them to become citizens of the country and fully participate in the mainstream society. In essence, the question that arises is:

Does the success of the students in the Greek education and generally their integration in the Greek society comes with /presupposes a price, which is no other than the loss of their ethnocultural characteristics that relate to their country of origin? Finally, after having paid such a price, they complete their studies and find themselves to have to deal with a limbo situation and this is because, while the Greek state invested in their education, it does not recognize them as «belonging» to this country.²²

These contrasting, often contradictory situations create a new dynamic in the contemporary, multicultural societies and confirm once again the need for renegotiation of the relationship of each state and in our case the Greek state,

with the people who live in its territory and the redefinition of the terms that govern this relationship. In the light of the new data, the concept of ethnic identity should now cease to be defined on static and biological conditions determinally affecting the life and behavior of the people. As a result, many people lack an institutional identity at the level of the subjective self-identification they have conquered. The ethnic identity should now be understood in the context of the historicity of values (Damanakis, 1997, 102) as a result of individual and collective bargaining, as social construct that will evolve and vary in time and space, adapted to the current socio-cultural conditions of each society (Govaris, 2001). So the national self should be seen as an opportunity to enrich and strengthen its position whenever you are given the opportunity to integrate into the group of all those formally «national others».

At the time of writing this text, the issue of long term residence permits or even granting citizenship is discussed, without the framework to be elucidated. It is however, indicative that the issue is of concern to the Greek state and perhaps a solution will be given to the deadlock that is in force until now.

NOTES

1. United Nations Human Rights Office (OHCHR), *Migration and Human Rights*, Report by OHCHR 2012, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/ohchrreport2012/web_en/allegati/6_Migration.pdf.
2. <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00178>
3. Greek Statistical Authority, demographic and social characteristics of the resident population according to Census Population- residencies 2011. http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/A1602/PressReleases/A1602_SAM01_DT_DC_00_2011_03_F_GR.PDF
4. http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Foreign_and_foreign-born_population_by_group_of_citizenship_and_country_of_birth_1_January_2012.png&filetimestamp=20130315154514
5. CLANDESTINO Country Report: Greece, <http://clandestino.eliamep.gr>
6. The term integration was mainly used by the Chicago school. Thomas William and Znaniecki with their book *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, pointed out

that the fragile situation of immigrants is not due to biological factors, but to the change in their daily lives due to immigration.

7. In the field of educational policy often the concept of integration is perceived as part of the cultural homogeneity of society. So equality of educational opportunity is paraphrased in the ability of children of immigrant groups to ignore their own needs and to meet the requirements of a school that is designed to meet only the needs of the children of the dominant group (Markou, 2001, 225-226).
8. A first record of integration indicators based on the findings of the conference is the study: Council of Europe (1997): measurement and indicators of integration. According to these findings, the indicators could be distinguished as indicators of the situation of migrants in areas such as education, and labor market indicators, and attitudes of immigrants, such as personal aspirations e.t.c. See Kontis Antonis (2011). "The economic integration of immigrants in the host country", in Amitsis Gabriel, Gabriella Lazaridis (eds) *Legal and Economic Dimensions of Migration in Greece*, Parazisis, Athens pp. 191.
9. This is the legalization of an integration model aimed at reshaping the domestic social institutions so as to include immigrants in their operations.
10. The main objective of this declaration was the effort to harmonize data from E.U member states based on common indicators to assess the political integration of immigrants. In key areas for the integration of immigrants, individual indicators are included which consider the participation in economic activity, employment, self-employment and unemployment. Moreover, the correlation between qualifications and employment, educational adequacy, school performance and school abandonment, the average disposable income and the risk of poverty, the state of personal health and finally granting citizenship- naturalization and performance status of long term resident immigrants are also considered. See: Huddleston Thomas, Niessen Jan, Dag Tjaden Jasper (2013): Using E.U indicators of immigrant integration, Final report for Directorate-General for home Affairs, European Commission Brussels.
(http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/doc1_37216_243039941.pdf),
Indicators of immigrant integration, A pilot study (2011): Eurostat, European Commission, Luxembourg,
(http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-11-009/EN/KS-RA-11-009-EN.PDF).
11. Note that within the European countries the first steps involving the education of foreigners although occasionally adopted by individual countries, it nevertheless gradually led to a crystallization of educational policy. The first basic setting of the Union for the education of migrant children is the Council Directive of 25 July 1997, which related only to children of migrant workers from countries within E.U. According to it, specific measures are implemented to integrate children into the

- educational system of the host country, while lessons are introduced in the native language and culture within the school. See Damanakis M. (1997 a). “Research for an Educational Policy for Immigrant Children in Europe”, in A. Christidis & Karatzola E. (ed), *The Linguistic Education of Greek immigrants in Europe*. Athens: Centre for the Greek language pp. 33-34.
12. Damanakis notes that the term “students with an immigrant background” includes repatriated students, students from E.U countries and those who came from countries outside the E.U. See: Damanakis Michael (2011): “The Education of Students with Migratory Background in Greece Educational Politics and Pedagogical Discourse (logos)” in Damanakis Michael, Costantinides Stephanos, Michelakaki Theodosia (ed.) *L’ education en Grèce et dans la Diaspora. Education in Greece and in Diaspora, Études helléniques / Hellenic Studies*, Vol 19 (1).
 13. Law 1404/83, No 45, Law 1894/90 No 2, P.D 494/83, P.D 435/84, PD369/85. For an extensive analysis of these legislative interventions see: Damanakis Michael (ed) (1997b): *The education of repatriated and foreign pupils in Greece. An intercultural approach*, Gutenberg, Athens.
 14. These programs were financed under 75% by E.U funds and 25% from national resources. Supervised by the Special Secretariat of Diaspora Education and Intercultural Education and the Special Management Service of the Community Support framework, Ministry of Education.
 15. http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/monitor12/leavers_en.pdf
 16. Migrant Integration Policy Index, <http://www.mipex.eu/greece>
 17. See Damanakis Michael (2007) *Identities and Education in the diaspora*, Gutenberg Athens.
 18. It should be noted that generally a few problems emerged with regard to the data collection not only at the level of the University of Crete (where we noticed that there was not a systematic and uniform way of gathering and recording of these data. Thus we hold some reservations about their accuracy), but also at the level of the Ministry of Education. More specifically, although records exist, relating foreign students in primary and secondary education, there doesn’t seem to be a statistical representation of this population at a level of higher education. That is, no aggregated data on the numbers of foreign students taking part in the national exams and success rates for admission to tertiary institutions in the country. Therefore it is not a comprehensive survey of educational progress of immigrant students.
 19. The large waves of immigrants from Albania to Greece came in two phases.
 - a) In 1990 the socialist regime collapses and the state issues passports to citizens, and
 - b) In 1997 with the financial collapse of the country and the bankruptcy of the savings system of the citizens, which became known as “the fall of the pyramids”.

(Maroukis, 2010: 174, Jarvis, 2000).

20. The period 1992-1996 was for Albania a time of economic growth which raised the hopes for the country's economic stability (Jarvis, 2000). This framework was overthrown in 1997 with «the fall of the pyramids».
21. Indeed as Portes & De Wind (2004, 831) pointed out, these networks can support the conservation of flows even when the initial economic causes have been removed.
22. It is known, moreover, that social rights are insecure when not supported by civil rights.

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