

# Chapter 10

## Transnational Immigration in Rural Greece: Analysing the Different Mobilities of Albanian Immigrants

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### 10.1 Introduction

Rural communities cannot be treated as stable, static and homogeneous places, as early rural theories suggested. On the contrary, rural communities are dynamic and contingent entities and are constantly evolving in view of social and economic restructuring (Woods, 2011, p. 178). The increased mobility of rural society and economy always challenges the constitution of rural communities. Three types of mobility are related to the transformation of rural communities. Firstly, the out-migration of people from rural communities, leading to the depopulation of rural areas, which then challenges their viability and social cohesion. Secondly, the in-migration of people to rural communities, which includes two aspects. One has to do with counterurbanisation and the “return to the countryside” as an inclination of urban populations in developed countries (Halfacree & Boyle, 1998; Mitchell, 2004; Halfacree, 2009a, 2009b). The other aspect refers to the inflow of international immigrants to rural communities which is a recent phenomenon affecting the rural areas of Europe (Jentch, 2007). Thirdly, the members of rural communities become increasingly more mobile; that is, they tend to move for work, leisure and/or tourism or they are part-time residents of rural communities and thereby are in between places.

This chapter aims to depict the spiral evolution of immigrants’ presence in rural Greece. More particularly, the different mobilities of immigrants will be analysed in order to depict both their social integration prospects and their transnationalism in their host rural society. The main focus will be on Albanians, who represent the majority of the immigrant population in the country.

The notion of mobility surmounts the dichotomy of urban/rural since the rural is at least as mobile as the urban. Moreover, many rural places have witnessed significant turbulence due to changes in housing and land markets, local economies and

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cultures, service and retail provisions and rural policies. The rural becomes an arena of cross-cutting mobilities and gradually many rural places have been stripped of their demarcating characteristics (Bell & Osti, 2010).

There is currently a dramatic reconstitution of rural populations and the formation of new rural socioeconomic and cultural geographies (Smith, 2007). Rural population change is much more complicated than depicting a uni-directional movement. More particularly, it includes: movements into, out of, within and through rural places; journeys of a few metres and journeys of many hundreds of kilometres; linear flows between particular locations and more complex spatial patterns of movement; stops of a few hours, days or weeks as well as many decades; journeys of necessity and choice; economic and lifestyle movements; hyper and im-mobilities; conflicts and complementarities; and uneven power relations and processes of marginalisation (Milbourne, 2007).

Woods (2007) refers to the “global countryside”, which implies the existence of global interconnectivity and interdependency of rural places. Globalisation remakes rural places not through a politics of domination and subordination, but through everyday micropolitics of negotiation and hybridisation (Massey, 2005). Rural places are affected by the “globalization of mobility”, which does not refer to the creation of new structures but rather to the multiplication, intensification and stretching of existing networks and processes (Woods, 2007). Migrants frequently come from rural places in their countries of origin and they provide labour for rural places in host countries due to the social and economic restructuring in the latter. Rural communities become “spaces where people of different origins meet, compete and negotiate their place” (Skaptadóttir & Wojtynska, 2008, p. 119). There are complex interrelationships between mobility and place – considering Massey’s “place as throwtogetherness of people” (2005) – which leads to the re-territorialisation of rural places and to translocal rural spaces (Bærenholt & Granås, 2008; Gustafson, 2009; Hedberg & Carmo, 2011).

In this context, “mobility is central to the enactment of the rural” (Bell & Osti, 2010, p. 199). The rural-urban axis is not the only dimension for dealing with rural mobilities. Increasingly, international migration emerges as an issue that cross-cuts the rural-urban axis as people move between rural areas of different countries in search of rural employment. Often, it is overlooked that internal migration is connected to international migration. In some cases, internal movement may lead to international migration; in other cases, the sequence may be reversed. Moreover, internal migrants can be considered a different population group compared to international migrants; there are a number of discriminating factors between the two. The choice between internal and international mobility may be subject to the individual/family strategies of potential migrants who consider the opportunities available to them. Taken together, internal and international mobilities are part of a mobility system that operates at different scales and involves a constellation of countries, and all movements should be seen in connection to the others (King, Skeldon, & Vullnetari, 2008).

Zelinsky (1971) was one of the first geographers who saw the interconnections between territorial and social mobility, stressing that one kind of movement cannot

be realistically analysed while the other is ignored. On this basis, he attempted to integrate the different types of mobility – extending from the shortest, routinised iterative movements to the most adventurous intercontinental movements – under an integrated theoretical schema called “the hypothesis of the mobility transition”. He constructed his theoretical schema by conflating the different phases of the mobility transition with a number of socio-economic transitions (e.g. demographic, occupational, educational) occurring in modern societies (Zelinsky, 1971, p. 277).

The incorporation of migration and various forms of mobility in the same theoretical frame, as suggested by Zelinsky, anticipated the recent “new mobilities paradigm” by nearly 30 years (King et al., 2008, p. 17). The mobilities paradigm does not simply assert the novelty of mobility in the modern world, but rather it seeks to institutionalise “a broader theoretical project aimed at going beyond the imagery of ‘terrains’ as spatially fixed geographical containers for social processes, and calling into question scalar logics such as local/global as descriptors of regional extent” (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 209). The mobilities paradigm emphasises that all places are part of networks of connections and cannot be considered as isolated spaces. Moreover, it is important to mention that the mobilities are related to the “de-territorialisation” processes associated with “liquid modernity” (Urry, 2000a, 2000b) and consequently to the “re-territorialisation” of social activities. There is a complex relationality of places and people who are connected through performances. Mobilities are intermingled with the power geometries of everyday life. Thus, there are places and technologies that enhance the mobility of certain group of people and places that heighten the immobility of others. Mobility is a type of resource that is not equally distributed amongst people.<sup>1</sup> The movement between places can be a source of status and power; where movement is coerced, it may generate deprivation and difficulties (Sheller & Urry, 2006, pp. 213–214). For a number of social groups, the lack of mobility is the real problem, while they seek to enhance their social capital through access to greater mobility. Mobility is instrumental for holding social networks together, while physical travel facilitates face-to-face co-present conversations in order to make links and social connections endure over time (Urry, 2002).

Migration studies are central to the new mobilities paradigm in the sense that the movement of migrants immediately brings to attention the immobility, fixity and stability of non-migrants to specific places (Hannam, Sheller, & Urry, 2006). Much of the social and political discourse on migration that follows the main assumptions of the nation-state sees migration – not to mention the nomadic lifestyle – as a deviation from the normal conventions of settled life and migrants as victims of external forces or suspects who may be seeking unfair advantage over the residents and who therefore pose a threat to the prevailing social order. In such a guise, migration is considered a problem to be tackled and mobility as a potential problem/threat

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<sup>1</sup> Here we could mention the concept of “motility”, which is defined as “the capacity of entities (e.g. goods, information or persons) to be mobile in social and geographical space” (Kaufman, Bergmann, & Joye, 2004, p. 750).

to the receiving societies (Papastergiadis, 2010). One issue central to migration is how the legal frameworks governing migration facilitate some types of mobility while restricting others, such as that of asylum-seekers and economic migrants. The mobility of undocumented immigrants is likewise seen as particularly undesirable by host societies and developed countries: metaphors of uncontrolled flow, “floods”, “tides” and/or “waves” of immigrants are deployed as a matter of course in discussions of the phenomenon of migration (Merriman, 2009, pp. 136–137).

Migration studies are crucial to the politics of mobility. It should be noted that “studies of migration, diasporas and transnational citizenship offered trenchant critiques of the bounded and static categories of nation, ethnicity, community, place and state within much social science” (Hannam et al., 2006, p. 10). This has become possible through the analysis of different types of migrant mobility, of the relationships between dwelling and mobility, and of the way transnational and diaspora networks and other connections are mobilised (Blunt, 2007). Migration should be seen as a dynamic and constitutive feature of social life. Migrants themselves can no longer be considered either passive victims who are “pushed and pulled” by external forces, or deviants who threaten social order (Papastergiadis, 2010, p. 354). This is widely acknowledged by migration researchers, who increasingly consider migration in the context of social transformation both in origin and host countries (Castles & Miller, 2009).

The mobile constitution of society in the modern era implies that mobilities increase the complexity in societies and therefore societies are continually reconstituted as hybrids instead of being simply reproduced (Urry, 2000a, 2000b; Cresswell, 2006; Söderström & Crot, 2010). The concept of mobilities have been harshly criticised for adopting a “mobility fetishism” and for seeing “flows” everywhere, often in a horizontal manner (Canzler, Kaufmann, & Kesselring, 2008; Kaufman, 2010; Knowles, 2010). However, mobility remains a useful concept due to the fact that it emphasises the changing constellations and configurations of mobile and stable elements in modern societies.

In order to use the notion of mobility, it is important to underline two points. First, mobility cannot be considered solely in terms of movement, but it also includes a system of potentials characterised by intentions, strategies and choices. Second, to be mobile is not only an issue of geographical space, but also, and more importantly, of social space (Kaufman et al., 2004; Kesselring, 2006; Canzler et al., 2008).

Three interconnected dimensions of mobility are specified by Cresswell (2006, 2008), which are combined into different “constellations of mobility” and shape the “politics of mobility”. First, mobilities entail movements that are closely associated with place, due to the fact that mobility happens in places and through places. Second, mobilities are full of meaning since they are socially and culturally constructed by different people. In this guise, mobilities can be depicted through discourses, narratives and stories about the fact of movement. Third, mobilities are practised, which means that movements are experienced by people and this experience may be extremely different depending on a number of factors. To sum up, mobilities combine physical movement, meanings and experiences of movement.

## 10.2 Greece as a New Country for Immigration

By the mid-1980s, the southern European countries, which in the past were a labour reserve for Western Europe and North America, experienced migration transition. Economic growth in combination with low birth rates led to serious labour shortages that facilitated the entry of immigrant labour from northern Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece are considered a distinctive sub-group of EU states that underwent significant changes when compared to the rest of Europe. These countries remain demarcated by the key role played by the underground economy in shaping immigrant inflows, by the preponderance of undocumented migration in overall migration and by low governmental capacity to regulate immigrant flows (Castles & Miller, 2009).

Today, immigrants represent a large proportion of the population of southern Europe. According to recent data (2006), over 9 million foreign-born people live in Europe's southern regions, whose overall population amounts to 124 million. Italy has the lowest proportion of foreigners (4.3 per cent), followed by Portugal (7.2 per cent), Greece (8.8 per cent) and finally Spain, which has the largest share (10.9 per cent) (Münz, 2008).

At the end of the 1980s, the collapse of the central and eastern European regimes together with the strategic geopolitical position of Greece as a gateway to the European Union transformed Greece to a recipient of a massive, uncontrollable, inflow of immigrants. Some factors that may explain this phenomenon are: the country's geographical characteristics (long coastlines and borders that are difficult to control), the rapid economic growth of the country, which has narrowed the socio-economic distance from the other EU countries, and the large size of the informal, family-centred local economy, which is mainly based on agriculture, tourism and construction. In line with these developments, young Greeks seek improved living standards and education and thereby they look down on low-status and low-income jobs.

The population census of 1981 recorded 180,595 foreigners (1.9 per cent of the total population), one-third of whom were EU nationals. By 1991, the figure was 167,276 foreigners (1.6 per cent of the total population), one-fifth of them being EU nationals. By 2001, there were 797,091 foreigners (7.3 per cent of the total population), with only 6 per cent of them EU nationals. The main immigrant nationalities recorded by the population census of 2001 were: Albanians (57.5 per cent), followed by Bulgarians, Georgians, Romanians, Russians, Ukrainians and Poles (National Statistical Service of Greece, 2001).

Most of the Albanians arrived in the first wave of immigration to Greece (1990–1995), but many also came in the wake of the collapse of the enormous “pyramid schemes” in Albania's banking sector in 1996. The second wave of immigration (1996–2001) involved much greater numbers of migrants from other Balkan states, the former Soviet Union, Pakistan and India. Recent waves (2002–2010) consist of undocumented immigrants from Africa and Asia, who are mainly employed as seasonal labour.

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 518,675 immigrants had valid residence permits by March 2010. The majority of legal immigrants are Albanians,

**Table 10.1** Immigrants with valid residence permits in Greece, 2010

Nationality	Males	%	Females	%	Total	%
Albania	222,219	74.8	146,050	66.0	368,269	71.0
Ukraine	3,539	1.2	14,997	6.8	18,536	3.6
Pakistan	14,222	4.8	987	0.4	15,209	2.9
Georgia	4,983	1.7	10,074	4.5	15,057	2.9
Egypt	10,454	3.5	2,761	1.2	13,215	2.5
India	9,569	3.2	2,610	1.2	12,179	2.3
Russia	1,876	0.6	9,259	4.2	11,135	2.1
Moldavia	3,240	1.1	7,358	3.3	10,598	2.0
Philippines	2,175	0.7	6,134	2.8	8,309	1.6
Other countries	24,978	8.4	21,190	9.6	46,168	8.9
Total	297,255	100.0	221,420	100.0	518,675	100.0

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs (2010)

followed by Ukrainians, Pakistanis and Georgians (Table 10.1). There are gender imbalances between the different immigrant nationalities. For example, immigrants from Pakistan, Egypt and India are mostly men, whereas immigrants from the Ukraine, Georgia, Russia, Moldavia and the Philippines are mostly women. Moreover, there are 126,000 EU citizens, 45,310 of whom are Bulgarians, 34,151 Romanians and 10,654 Poles (Tsioukas, 2009, p. 52).

The size of the immigrant population in the country is estimated to be much larger than the number of legal immigrants. This is due to the extensive amounts of undocumented immigrants who entered the country in the last years. Judging by the recent figures of the apprehensions at the border, the basic inflow of undocumented immigrants is through the Greek-Albanian border (30 per cent), while there are expanding inflows through the Greek-Turkish borders (29 per cent).<sup>2</sup> A significant change that occurred in the last year is that the immigrant flows shifted from the sea border to the land border with Turkey. Moreover, the changes in the inflows reflect changes in the nationalities of immigrants entering the country. It is evident from Table 10.2 that the number of undocumented Albanians remains the most important, but has been declining over the years. The number of Asians (i.e. Afghan, Pakistani, Bengali, Iraqi, Palestinian) and Africans (i.e. Somali, Eritrean, Algerian, Moroccan) is expanding significantly, accounting for nearly 57 per cent of apprehensions by 2010 (Table 10.2).

One recent estimate for Greece raises the number of migrants to 1–1.2 million or 10 per cent of the country's population (Triantafyllidou, 2009). The consecutive regularisation laws (1997–1998, 2001 and 2005) have resulted in the legalisation of a significant number of immigrants. Although by the beginning of 2010 only 518,675 people had valid residence permits (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2010), a

<sup>2</sup> The figures are made available by the Ministry for Citizen Protection.

**Table 10.2** Apprehensions of undocumented immigrants by region and main nationality per region, 2006–2010

Regions/countries of origin	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 (9 months)
Balkans	65.2	60.3	50.1	50.8	40.6
– Albania	60.3	59.5	49.5	50.4	40.8
Countries of former USSR	2.7	1.7	2.5	2.5	1.4
– Georgia	1.8	1.3	2.0	2.0	1.1
North Africa	1.4	1.0	0.7	0.7	6.5
– Algeria	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.3	4.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.7	4.6	6.4	8.0	8.5
– Somalia	2.7	3.3	4.6	6.1	5.9
Middle East	13.5	17.0	15.7	16.5	11.6
– Iraq	8.6	11.2	10.9	6.1	3.9
Asia	12.4	15.2	24.4	21.1	30.8
– Afghanistan	5.5	10.3	16.8	14.1	21.9
Rest of the world	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
No nationality	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number	95,239	112,364	146,337	126,145	95,398

Source: Ministry for Citizen Protection (2010)

large number of foreigners are in the process of renewing their permits. This nevertheless confirms, to some extent, the estimate that almost one-quarter to one-third of the foreign population remains undocumented.

In terms of immigrants' geographic distribution and their presence in regional/rural labour markets, a large majority of the immigrant population (over 40 per cent) is concentrated in Attica, 15 per cent in central Macedonia, 7 per cent in Crete and in Thessaly and 6 per cent in the Peloponnese and in Sterea Hellas.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, one point to be made is that immigrants show significant geographical mobility, which is related to the seasonal and multifunctional character of the rural economy. Thus, the size of the immigrant labour in many areas varies seasonally with the fluctuations in demand for labour in agriculture, construction and tourism. Immigrants whose residence permits have been issued in one place may well in the meantime have moved and be employed elsewhere. It is assumed that the geographical distribution of undocumented immigrants follows that of immigrants with residence permits, but they also tend to gravitate to areas that need an agricultural labour force and also during the peak tourist period.

Though the bulk of the foreign population is concentrated in the cities, almost one-fifth live in rural areas, with some gender differentiations. Female immigrants tend to live in urban areas due to better employment opportunities for them in services. The proportion of males is higher in rural areas. In general, immigrants tend to accumulate in regions where tourism and services are well developed (e.g.

<sup>3</sup> The data is from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (2010) and refer to residence permits.



Zakynthos with 13.2 per cent, the Cyclades with 9.6 per cent, the Dodecanese with 9.1 per cent, Cephalonia with 9 per cent, Lasithi with 8.9 per cent) or in regions with intensive agriculture (Boeotia with 9.5 per cent, Corinthia with 8.8 per cent and Argolida with 8.6 per cent).<sup>4</sup> Migrant employment in the different economic sectors depends on the sectoral mix of each prefecture. However, at a regional level, migrant employment has been important in agriculture due to its prevalence in the rural areas of Greece. The employment of migrants in the construction sector is a special feature of regional labour markets where there is a dynamic service or agricultural sector. In the majority of regional/rural labour markets, migrants undertake the less skilled jobs, but in the more developed labour markets, migrants also have the opportunity to undertake semi-skilled or skilled tasks. In remote labour markets, migrants take any job available but most of the jobs are unskilled (Papadopoulos, 2009).

## 10.3 Immigrants' Presence and Employment in Rural Greece

### 10.3.1 Methodology

The empirical analysis draws on three research projects that were carried out in rural Greece between 2000 and 2008. The most recent one (2006–2008)<sup>5</sup> investigated the dynamics of immigration flows and the implications for the labour market of immigrant employment in two regions with different sectoral and labour market characteristics. The first region was the municipality of Vouprassia (prefecture of Elia in Western Greece), where dynamic and intensive agriculture has been developing over the past few years using all-immigrant labour. The second was the municipality of Arkadion (prefecture of Zakynthos in the Ionian Islands), where the economy is based on a mutually complementary mix of agriculture, tourism and construction. In the context of this project, survey data were collected by means of a semi-structured questionnaire addressed to immigrants, with 205 questionnaires completed in the two study areas. The respondents were located through snowball sampling because the main objective was to trace and question both legal and undocumented immigrants. In addition, 18 qualitative interviews were carried out with local stakeholders and migrants (Kasimis & Papadopoulos, 2008).

Additionally, quantitative and qualitative material will be utilised from two projects that were conducted in 2000–2002 and 2004–2006 (as a follow-up),<sup>6</sup> which aimed at researching the socio-economic impact of immigrant employment on rural

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<sup>4</sup> The data comes from the Population Census of 2001 and is the only available data on immigrants' employment by sector.

<sup>5</sup> The HuReDePIS project was financed by INTERREG IIIB – ARCHIMED 2000–2006 and involved collaboration between border areas between Greece and Italy, namely western Greece and the Ionian Islands (Greece) and Puglia (Italy).

<sup>6</sup> The two projects were: (a) C. Kasimis, V. Nitsiakos, E. Zacopoulou, A.G. Papadopoulos (2002), *The Implications of the Settlement and Employment of Migrant Labour in Rural Greece*, Universities of Patras and Ioannina (in Greek), (b) C. Kasimis, A.G. Papadopoulos (2006), *The*



Greece. The field work in both periods was carried out in three paradigmatic study areas in rural Greece: an area of intensive agriculture (municipality of Velo, prefecture of Corinth in the Peloponnese), a pluriactive island area (the municipalities of Kissamos and Innaxorion, prefecture of Chania in Crete) and a marginal mountainous area (the municipalities of Konitsa and Mastorochoia, prefecture of Ioannina in Epirus). The main research hypothesis of these projects was that immigrant labour responded successfully to four structural socio-economic needs in rural Greece. One was that they provided a solution to the longstanding shortages of labour in rural Greece, which had resulted from the restructuring of its agricultural sector and rural economy. They also offered a short- to medium-term response to the demographic crisis experienced by the rural population as a result of the rural exodus connected with emigration in 1950–1970. Third, they provided labour that was not available due to the social rejection by the younger generation of life and labour in rural areas. Finally, they offered unskilled labour and therefore they increased the opportunities of the indigenous rural population for off-farm employment. In this context, 293 semi-structured questionnaires were addressed to rural households, a good number of which were also farming households, in the three study areas. Moreover, more than 120 in-depth interviews were carried out with local stakeholders (local agencies, local government, employers, etc.) and economic immigrants in all three areas (Kasimis, Papadopoulos, & Zacoboulou, 2003; Kasimis & Papadopoulos, 2005; Papadopoulos, 2006).

In this chapter, I will use the rich empirical material collected through these projects in order to illustrate several issues. First, I will offer a concise discussion on immigrants' employment and their socio-economic impact in rural areas. Then the different mobilities of immigrants will be depicted, while emphasis will be given to the qualitative aspects of their movements. Third, there will be a short discussion of the social integration prospects and transnationalism of immigrants in a host rural society.

### ***10.3.2 Temporal – Seasonal Mobility***

In the 1990s, migration research in rural Greece was a largely neglected domain. The main focus was the regional labour markets, in which agriculture played a significant role (Lianos, Sarris, & Katseli, 1996). However, more focused research began to be carried out in paradigmatic rural areas and this combined agricultural and non-agricultural characteristics (Kasimis et al., 2003; Kasimis & Papadopoulos, 2005; Papadopoulos, 2006). Since Albanians represent the main immigrant nationality in rural Greece, the analysis of the empirical findings refers to them unless it is stated otherwise.

It has been found that immigrant employment is present both in those households that have a farm enterprise and in those that do not own a farm. In quantitative terms, nearly one-fifth of rural households employ immigrants for different domestic tasks. Such tasks are: house maintenance, taking care of the garden or the orchards, cutting the wood and bringing provisions, and minding the house or minding the children and/or the elderly. Of course in rural areas that have a lower standard of life, the proportion of immigrants doing domestic work is smaller. However, it is important to stress how extensive the use of immigrant labour for domestic tasks is in all the study areas.

Notably, immigrant labour in rural areas mainly concerns the farm households. As many as two-thirds of farm households employ non-family labour. Non-family labour represents one-quarter of total farm labour, while 90 per cent of this is contributed by immigrants. However, there is a significant differentiation of immigrant labour by farm size. Approximately 62 per cent of farm households with less than 5 ha employ immigrants, while 86 per cent of those with over 5 ha do. In addition, the farm households with less than 5 ha represent 71 per cent of farms and make use of 34 per cent of immigrant labour days, but those over 5 ha include the remaining 29 per cent of farms and make use of 66 per cent of immigrant labour days. The relatively larger farms seem to have benefited more from immigrant employment due to the availability of low-cost labour, the opportunities for modernisation, the facilitation of the division between mental and manual labour within the farm and the improved organisation and management of farm holdings.

Immigrant employment should be demarcated into two types: permanent and seasonal labour. Permanent labour is considered by immigrants to be more favourable since it secures a stable income for the entire year, while seasonal labour necessitates extensive geographical mobility, so immigrants then represent a fluid labour force. In quantitative terms, in the study areas, nearly 9 per cent of the farms employed permanent immigrant labour and they absorbed 54 per cent of the total immigrant labour. On the other hand, about 57 per cent of farm households employed seasonal immigrant labour and took up 46 per cent of the total immigrant labour.

The majority of permanent immigrant labourers are Albanians, followed by Bulgarians, Romanians, Pakistani, Yugoslavians and so on. The majority of them perform all the agricultural tasks, the back-breaking jobs such as harvesting, hoeing, loading and weeding; these are tasks that the family labour mostly avoid. However, a significant number performs the more specialised tasks, such as pruning, spraying (fertilising) and using tractors. The latter tasks are given to immigrants as a recognition of their long-term presence in the rural community, due to the fact they are trusted by the local farmers and due as well to the workload (and/or the age) of their employers. Thus, the longer the immigrants stay in the host rural community, the more it becomes possible for them to gain better employment and to undertake more responsible labour tasks.

The Albanians will do all the heavy jobs; they will hoe, they will prune. (Interview 1, p. 9)

Not the tractor . . . Some of us give it. I, personally, don't give it, because they [the Albanians] don't have . . . But I see some immigrants working the tractor. They don't have

a driving licence, they don't have anything and still they get it. It's not that we don't want to give it to them. Simply, I don't trust them in this job. Which is very delicate ... (Interview 7, p. 3–4)

Yes, they perform specialised tasks. Since I am an agronomist, it happened that I discussed it with a farmer, who in the end handed the phone over so I could to speak with the Albanian he had in the fields. I had to tell the immigrant what fertilisers/pesticides to use from the ones his employer already bought. That is, the farmer did not even go at the fields. The spraying was carried out by the Albanian, who used the tractor. (Interview 6, p. 4)

Meanwhile, the farmers who employ permanent labourers consider them their “Black & Deckers” (as mentioned by the farmers), which means toolkits for all kinds of sophisticated tasks. They often go so far as to employ them further by demanding that they perform additional labour tasks in their leisure time. Notably, one out of three permanent labourers performs additional tasks for their employers for extra payment. The tasks they perform include: house repairs, housework (for females), the transport of produce, or work in the (non-farm) family enterprise. This relationship between farmers-employers and their permanent immigrant labourers has two aspects. First, the farmer takes full advantage of immigrant labourers and transforms immigrants to flexible labour in order to solve different problems (i.e., in the household, the farm or the family business) and/or perform miscellaneous tasks. Second, immigrants themselves are upgraded so they become the “right arm” of the farmer – by becoming indispensable; they earn extra income and they “honour” the relationship they have built with their employers. This relationship is part of an unspoken agreement between the two parties. Thus, immigrants are indebted/“obliged” to farmers-employers. The latter introduce the immigrants to their fellow villagers and to other farmers, and they help migrants create personal networks with the locals. This is a way of building up interpersonal social networks between the indigenous population and the immigrants. Those networks are important for both sides but for the farmers it is a way of managing immigrant mobilities. This suggests that what counts most is the power of flows over the space of flows (Hannam et al., 2006; Sheller & Urry, 2006).

Yes, some [farmers] permanently host Albanians at their houses. Sometimes, it is a couple of Albanians, that is, a man and his wife. The man works in the fields and his wife may be working in the fields, or elsewhere, or do domestic tasks. Taking care of the family's children, or doing housework, or taking care of the garden. (Interview 8, p. 23)

In addition, a large majority of permanent labourers either stay in a dwelling that belongs to the farmer or in the same house (on the lower, ground floor or in the basement) with the farmer. Only a relatively small number (40 per cent) have a residence independent/far from their employers. This is an idiomorphic type of social control operated by the farmers, who become guarantors and mediators of immigrants' labour in the rural labour markets.

On the other hand, permanent immigrant labourers enjoy a more stable income – they are not bound to search for day payments with different employers/farmers – since half of them are paid by the month and the other half by the day. Three out of five have insurance, whereas the rest remain uninsured. Even when insured, migrants pay the cost of their social insurance by themselves due to the fact that

farmers do not wish to pay additional labour costs. The farmers are normally in control of migrants' social insurance because, on the basis of their farming activity and crop production, they declare a number of working days to the Organisation of Agricultural Insurance (OGA), where migrants pay the cost of their insurance. It is important to note that immigrants depend on farmers' declarations since the latter are vital for justifying their employment. Thus, permanent immigrant labourers acquire a legal position in the local economies and societies on the basis of their relations of trust with the employer. Of course, these employment relations have become the basis for immigrants to settle in host rural communities and to expand their interpersonal networks.

In the beginning, they came alone and there were many, without women and children. Subsequently, when they consolidated their job positions, they started to bring back their own people. First came their brothers and sisters and next they brought their families. Some got married in the process, because they were young and brought their wives from Albania so that they could put down roots, settle; that is, they found opportune ground. (Interview 15, page 3)

This description illustrates how the interpersonal networks facilitated chain migration and transformed the initial character of Albanian migration to Greece from a short-term seasonal/circular cross-border immigration to long-term transnational immigration (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Vertovec, 2009).

The nationalities of seasonal immigrant labour do not differ significantly from those who work as permanent labourers. Only a small proportion of the seasonal labourers belong to the indigenous population. The majority of the seasonal immigrant labour mainly works doing harvesting, hoeing and loading (80 per cent) and only marginally in pruning, watering, spraying and using the tractor (20 per cent). It will be argued later that in the course of the years, some categories and/or nationalities of immigrants become more acceptable and are entrusted with the more specialised and thereby better-paid tasks. Moreover, it should be taken for granted that seasonal immigrant labour is highly geographically mobile and that such immigrants tend to move from rural community to rural community, depending on the agricultural products collected seasonally, and on the information they receive for labour demand in certain local labour markets.

The farmers employ immigrants as seasonal labour mainly because the immigrants are the only available labour force, the Greeks do not like agricultural employment and the immigrants have a lower cost. The farmers-employers recruit their immigrant seasonal labourers at the local piazzas – in their village or in nearby villages – or they get them through locals or friends from another village. This means that farmers employ those whom they find locally and/or those who are recommended by their social networks. Moreover, the majority of the farmers consider the nationality as a major criterion for choosing the right people for their farm. The preferred nationalities are Albanians, Bulgarians, Polish, Indians and Romanians. Despite the fact of the availability of immigrant nationalities in the particular rural communities, of utmost importance for the farmers-employers is their relations of

trust with the immigrant labourers and, more particularly, immigrants' disciplined behaviour.

Thus, immigrant employment has become a steady characteristic of farm households since the beginning of the 1990s. For the last two decades, immigrants have been providing the majority of permanent and seasonal labour that is necessary for agricultural production (Kasimis et al., 2003; Kasimis & Papadopoulos, 2005; Lambrianidis & Sykas, 2009a, 2009b; Kasimis et al., 2010). Both types of employment have become indispensable to Greek farmers-employers. But apart from agriculture, all economic sectors have benefitted from immigrant labour in the rural areas of the country.

We cannot operate without immigrants anymore. We have expanded our jobs and our land and so on and with no Albanians we can no longer survive. (Interview 6, p. 7)

They [the immigrants] have regenerated all farms, they have cultivated all fields. If they did not exist, most of the fields would be abandoned. (Interview 1, p. 19)

[Without the immigrants] we would face serious problems, because we would have a reduction in production and we could not cope with the demands. We cannot find Greeks; I still search to find some Greeks for permanent labourers and I cannot find any. (Interview 16, p. 9)

This is also clear to the immigrants themselves, who are conscious of the positive impacts of their labour for their farmers-employers and also of the side-effects of their labour for the rural community.

I have been in this village for many years ... I have done all kinds of jobs. Everything. He [his employer] does not let me go away. I will leave him [he says jokingly] and come back in one year. Even now, I do not stay here all year long. I come and go [visit regularly Albania] ... (Paolin, male)

Low wages helped agriculture a lot. At the beginning when we came, many plots were left uncultivated. You could not step in the fields because of the briars. Now the jobs have opened up. They cultivate extensively ... And on the other hand, some [farmers] ... became lazy. You don't see young people [among the Greeks] working in the fields. Only the old men are working ... Those who have another job in the city give the farm plots to us [Albanians] as *misiaka* [a form of sharecropping]. Farms with olives, peaches and oranges. I do all the tasks, we collect the crop and we divide the profits ... (Thoma, male)

The appreciation of the positive implications of migrant employment in the rural economy, in general, is more or less similar amongst farm and non-farm households. The main positive implications includes the following: migrants have covered the demand for wage labour, they have contributed to the low cost of production, demand for goods and consumption has increased, some people were assisted in keeping their enterprises and the locals expanded and increased their business.

### ***10.3.3 Social Mobility***

The immigrant's legal status plays a crucial role in determining mobility and/or immobility, for the simple reason that illegal immigrants live in fear of arrest

and deportation. In the post-2005 period, immigrant flows remain largely undocumented, because they arrived after the last regularisation, which was carried out in 2005 and offered the opportunity for legalisation to a significant number of irregular immigrants.

Most of the immigrants see their legalisation as a ticket to free movement and to organising the migration of their relatives, family and friends. Legal status, the duration of their stay and their nationality are some factors that cross-cut and create “civic stratifications” (Kofman, 2002), which need to be taken into account when considering immigrant mobility and integration prospects in the host country.

If you don't have papers you are like a hare chased by the dog . . . If you have papers, then you may drink a coffee in peace; if you don't have papers you sit on thorns. (Arian, male)

From the side of the indigenous population, the legalisation of immigrants in the post-2001 period implied a number of transformations for the everyday life of immigrants. The immigrants regained their (lost) dignity and self-respect, their social lives improved and they came out into the public space without the fear and the insecurity of the outlaw.

The Albanian has calmed down [due to legalization]. He behaved differently then. He is different now; he's cooled down. (Interview 20, p. 7)

Most of them [the immigrants of the rural community] have valid residence cards; they are allowed to move freely, to trade, to go out . . . And today I could say that they are, to a large extent, integrated into the local society. It won't be an exaggeration to say that many times, it is impossible to tell whether a person is an Albanian or not. You sit in a cafe and you can't tell if a person is an Albanian. I could say that Albanians stand out in a positive way. That is, if you see someone wearing labour clothes, this person will be possibly a Greek, because the Albanian will take care of his appearance before going to the street. (Interview 10, p. 9)

Our research survey has shown that the average Albanian immigrant in Greece has crossed the Greek-Albanian borders at least ten times. A sizeable proportion (30 per cent) have crossed the borders over fifteen times in their lifetimes. This is a reflection of the fact that, in many cases, due to their irregular status, it has not been easy for Albanian immigrants to stay for long periods in Greece. The irregularity has at least two repercussions for immigrants. There is the danger of being arrested and deported, and they can get stuck in their host country, unable to return to their country of origin. The vast majority of immigrants (75 per cent) who have not revisited their homeland are undocumented. The problem is more acute for immigrants who come from countries much further away, beyond the borders of the Balkans (e.g. Asians, Africans).

On the other hand, Albanians with legal status tend to visit their native country regularly. This is a pattern not followed by the other nationalities. Mobility of this type is contingent on the status of the immigrant and the distance from the country of origin. Two-thirds of Albanians visit their country at least once per year, while only one-third of the other nationalities do the same. It seems to be a strategy for Albanians to divide their time between Greece and Albania, especially when their family is still living there or when they are engaged with building a house or making

an investment in their country of origin. Four out of ten Albanian immigrants have built a house in their country with the money they earned during their stay in Greece.

The strategies of Albanians are worthy of closer scrutiny since they constitute the largest nationality in Greece. The majority of them (73 per cent) who have built a house in their country of origin are married with children. They are in most cases immigrants who have been in Greece for over 10 years, enjoy legal status in Greece and have elaborated family strategies with a number of facets to them. Building a house in their country of origin secures the option of return for them, but they also gain a higher social status there due to the fact that they have spent a large sum of money and constructed something that is a source of pride. The second aspect is prefigured by their having built a house for their parents' sake and for the eventuality that they might wish to retire in their homeland. Albanians have therefore created sophisticated strategies for securing social status in their country of origin and have proceeded to lay the foundations for achieving a higher social status in their host country.

Over half of the Albanians and one-fifth of the other nationalities have bought a car from the income they earned in Greece. As for satisfaction from the housing – mostly rented – nearly 70 per cent of the immigrants say that they have gradually found better, often much better, housing than what they had at first. This implies that there has been a noteworthy improvement in the housing situation of immigrants over the last decade or so.

The critical turning point in the career trajectory of immigrants is when they become legalised, which reflects acceptance by the host society and an increased opportunity to be deemed trustworthy and potentially capable of establishing inter-personal networks with the indigenous population. Their legal status allows them to be more mobile, also making it possible for them to have higher expectations of the local labour markets. It became evident from the empirical research that immigrants' employment experience is acquired over time and that most immigrants are highly mobile geographically, occupationally and socially. Those who have succeeded in developing stronger, more effective, extended and varied social networks are better informed about available employment opportunities, and continue to be in a position to make comparisons and choices and are ultimately better prepared to get ahead in the local labour market.

We came straight here ... to Zakynthos ... it is simply that we had some friends from our country, who were here [in Zakynthos] ... They said: fine – we will find a job and they would help us – fine. And so we came here. (Meftoni, female)

I came to the area [municipality of Vouprasia in Elia] in February 1991. I came from Albania on foot. There were six of us kids. We split in Arta [Epirus] and three of us ended up here. At that time, you know, we had no papers, nothing. When I first came I went to the strawberry fields ... Once a year I visited Albania ... There were just 100 Albanians in Nea Manolada. The first Bulgarians came in 1993–1994. Bulgarians and Romanians came at the same time ... When my family came, I left Nea Manolada and settled in Varda. ... I changed houses ... I have been living in Varda for 11 years now. (Aristo, male)

The geographical mobility of immigrants is intertwined with the changes in their legal status as well as their social and occupational mobility. While it is extremely



difficult to single out the most important factors underlying their mobility, it is perhaps worth mentioning that the great majority (83 per cent) of immigrants state that economic factors were the main reason for their moving.

One aspect of geographical mobility, determining migrants' inclination to stay or to move again to another area, is their perception of the way they enter the local labour market. There is a great deal of variation in the intentions of immigrants depending on the character of the local labour market. A significant proportion of the immigrants who work in the agricultural labour market would like to move to another local labour market. Meanwhile, only a very small proportion of immigrants working in the multisectoral labour market would like to move.

The geographical and occupational mobility has proved to be beneficial<sup>7</sup> for immigrants, who mostly say that they consider their current job to be better than their previous jobs. Over the years, immigrants move from agricultural to non-agricultural jobs, but more importantly move from unskilled to semi-skilled and skilled occupations. The longer immigrants stay in the host country, the more they tend to take up skilled employment. This is true for most of the rural labour markets, but the change is faster in multisectoral labour markets and slower in agricultural labour markets.

As for the movement of immigrants across economic sectors, this is also evident in different local labour markets. Comparing immigrants' first and current jobs, it becomes clear that immigrants are quite mobile, but they follow different trajectories in the different local labour markets. In the agricultural labour markets, the proportion of those employed in seasonal wage labour is diminishing, with a significant falloff being noticeable in the availability of regular agricultural employment. Immigrants turn to wage labour in the secondary sector, with a small number undertaking supervisory roles in the agricultural or construction sectors. Due to the sectoral limitations of the agricultural labour market, the proportion of immigrants employed in the service sector remains impressively stable. On the other hand, the multi-sectoral character of the labour market makes it possible for a significant number of immigrants to move between sectors.

In their struggle to survive or to improve their socio-economic situations, immigrants often adopt employment strategies analogous to those of the indigenous population. A significant percentage of immigrants hold down a second job in addition to their main employment. One-third of the immigrants are pluriactive. Albanians are over-represented in the pluriactive migrant populations. Namely, 42 per cent of Albanians are pluriactive, against 9 per cent of the other nationalities. There are two models for pluriactivity: (a) immigrants whose main employment is in agriculture and who have a second job in construction or services (in the agricultural labour market), and (b) immigrants whose main employment is in tourism or

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<sup>7</sup> It is beneficial because it is accompanied by increases in income, in social and employment experience, in expertise in certain jobs and consequently in prospects for integration into the recipient society.

construction and who have a second job in agriculture or services (in the multi-sectoral labour market).

It should be stressed that pluriactivity implies hard work, long hours without much free time, and the availability of employment opportunities, something more typically associated with developed labour markets. As one Albanian put it:

Now I am working in a hotel. I am a cook in the morning and at the reception in the evening. I have a 24-hour shift. (Fation, male).

The longer the stay in the host country, the more the pluriactivity. This is an indicator of greater integration in the local labour market and increased social status in the local society.

### ***10.3.4 Immigrant Transnationality and Integration Trajectories***

More than any other immigrant nationality, the Albanians have brought their families to Greece and more particularly to rural areas. They are the ones who tend to combine all those prerequisites that point towards their integration into the host rural society. They generally have acquired a legal status, which mainly is due to the fact that their majority came earlier than the other nationalities, they have created a chain migration that favoured their family reunification, they constructed interpersonal networks that favoured the acquirement of social capital in the host country, they adopted family and employment strategies similar to those of the indigenous population and they show significant motivation to integrate into the host country.

These people [the Albanians] make an amazing attempt to become Greeks. This is incredible. It is incredible if one tries to interpret this by taking into account the facts. But for me ... I consider this abrupt endeavour to become Greeks unnatural. They do it unconsciously. I don't believe that they have a strategy. They simply have an innate adaptability. It is in their blood. (Interview 5, p. 22)

Whether their adaptation to the Greek socioeconomic conditions and the acceptance of the way of living in the host country is part of their strategic plans remains to be seen. Their attempts are also visible to the indigenous population, who – in certain cases – seem “threatened” by the concerted endeavours of Albanian immigration to “become Greek”.

I say that Albania has culture. Here we found an even better one. But we are neighbours and we are similar. That is, if you help me, I know that I should say ‘thank you’. That's culture. But culture is ... to learn from the others who have more culture. From those who have learnt more than me. And in Albania there are people who have culture. They have school. How is it possible for our kids to learn here without any culture? We have culture. Our children have equal results with the Greek children. And even better. I have heard that. All people are not the same. Every family has a different culture. Some have less, others more ... Every family has a different culture. I don't know why ... But I want to stay somewhere people have culture. (Kastrioti, male)

There is surely an ambivalence about Albanian immigrants' intentions. The indigenous population sees a "pride" in the behaviour of Albanians, who are mostly misunderstood as "undisciplined" or "assertive". In reality, Albanians have attempted to balance their past experience in their country of origin and their current status in the host country. They seek to construct a hybrid identity by improvising in their everyday lives and by putting together a number of idiosyncratic characteristics (i.e. hard work, zeal for social acceptance, interpersonal networks, propensity to move upwards, family strategies, accepting all kinds of jobs, etc.) and this differentiates them from the other immigrant nationalities.

I believe more in Greece because the state continues and does a clean job. And people here are more stable than in Albania. I am mostly Albanian, but to write down that I am Greek no one will come and tell me: 'Why did you become Greek?' What can they tell me? They will keep me by force? If I am not satisfied there, I will leave like.. [how do you say it here?] . . . the birds, yes, the birds. If the birds cannot find food, they fly elsewhere . . . That's what we are. (Kastrioti, male)

Albanian immigrants sense that they are "marginal people"; that is, they are in between two cultures that have different national and social values. Their attempt to bridge the two identities appears to be romantic and contradictory, but also highly desirable.

My fortune is to have two homelands today. What I am saying may be wrong, but my first homeland is Albania and my second homeland is Greece. For me, both are very significant, Greece and Albania. When I go to Albania, nothing keeps me apart from all I have lived in Greece. When I come to Greece, nothing separates me from all I have lived in Albania. (Bibil, male)

Against the worst fears of those amongst the indigenous population who see immigrants as some kind of threat for "national purity", the Albanian immigrants are in favour of a new identity that is more desirable: the European identity and whatever it signifies.

Now we are . . . Europeans, I tell you. (Argyris, male)

## 10.4 Conclusion

Immigrants have become a new but significant factor for the social and economic restructuring of rural Greece. Their settlement in rural communities is based on a number of factors that include the demand for unskilled labour, the substitution of family labour in farming and other small-scale activities in the countryside, the support of the indigenous population by providing all types of labour (i.e. domestic, permanent, seasonal, miscellaneous, flexible) and the new divisions between manual and mental labour. The characteristics of the local labour markets are decisive for the settlement and modes of adjustment of the immigrant labourers.

The consecutive immigration waves have established amongst the rural indigenous population the idea that immigrants constitute a solid but also fluid labour

force that is moulded by the demands of rural economies and societies. The result is that there is an internal stratification of the immigrant populations on the basis of legal status, duration of stay, nationality, family status, social capital capacity and the propensity/motivation to adjust to the host rural societies.

The example of Albanian immigrants is important because it depicts the way that mobilities – both geographical and social – have transformed rural communities into translocal rural places. Albanian immigrants can be considered transnational immigrants who have developed a hybrid immigrant identity that is destined to fit with a number of diverging demands in host rural communities and of different cultural identities. Thus, the mobilities of Albanian immigrants may be seen as part of the new rurality that has been slowly but steadily developing in rural Greece. The immigrants, as a novel component of Greek rural society, should be considered both a revitalising demographic factor and a socioeconomic element that reconstitutes rural places.

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