# Chapter 3
# Integration: National, City and Local Perspectives

Many studies have been conducted on the integration of migrants. Integration has also been at the heart of public discourse on immigration and is a reference term for numerous policy documents. This policy focus has contributed to an often negative political connotation of integration in academia nowadays. Nonetheless, integration remains a central concept in explaining the processes that make migrants part of a receiving society (or, as is often the case, that marginalize them from the mainstream), despite alternative concepts that have been developed over time. These processes are the focus of this chapter, which, following the model of the previous one, is made up of four main sections: a conceptual and theoretical section on integration, a section on the integration patterns of the first generation, then one on the second generation, followed by conclusions.

Each section draws material from the three sites of this study and is written comparatively and thematically. Since integration is conceptualized as a process, rather than an 'outcome', the current chapter describes and analyses patterns, dynamics and strategies of integration of the two main groups of participants in each of the three cities. Findings reveal integration to be a process that changes over time and is significantly affected by legal status and regularization procedures, experiences of discrimination, and socio-economic status and capital. The process of integration, moreover, differs significantly between the three sites and the two generations analysed. Variation between the sites is associated with differences in immigration politics and institutional arrangements. Differences between the generations are affected, in turn, by their different 'spatial cognitions' and an overall difference in aspirations for integration driving the two generations' strategies.

## 3.1   Reviewing Integration: Philosophical, Theoretical and Methodological Aspects

As this research encompasses different sites, groups and two generations, a variety of concepts used to describe the process of immigration and settlement in the receiving country and beyond are relevant. It is important to recognize the existence of other concepts in relation to integration, not least because their definition and use have been built on the basis of progressive research grounded on early work in the field (see Gordon 1964, pp. 60–68). Terms describing migrants' insertion and settlement in the host society can be divided into groups referring to different stages and modes of integration, such as adaptation and acculturation. Other terms, such as incorporation and assimilation, can be classified on the basis of the different philosophies they draw upon. Another division refers to terms that describe the insertion into different systems, networks and structures, the most well-known being the distinction between structural and social integration (Engbersen 2003). In this section, the backbone of the discussion is provided by the concept of integration, seen as an umbrella term that encompasses manifold other terms referring to similar or connected processes.

Since the early stages of academic work in the field, integration has been conceptualized as a process through which a group becomes and functions as a part of a society. According to Gordon (1964, p. 246), 'in social structural terms, integration presupposes the elimination of hard and fast barriers in the primary group relations and communal life of the various ethnic groups of the nation'. However, the evolution of the terminology that describes migrants' patterns of settlement and interactions with the host society has been characterized by a 'politicization' and an increased emphasis on government involvement. Nowadays integration rhetorics are associated with those on state policies, although the roles of migrants' agency and of the migrant communities are acknowledged as important factors (Thompson and Crul 2007).

The notion of integration has returned to the political and academic agenda as an alternative to another major concept, assimilation. Developed in the nineteenth century after the first wave of migrants, in the 1970s and 1980s assimilation was criticized by social scientists for its emphasis on the demand imposed on minority groups to abandon their cultural and ethnic identities and conform to the receiving society's ethnocentric cultural practices and norms (Joppke and Morawska 2003). The new notion of integration is conceptualized as a two-way or multi-actor process, based on mutual change—of both the receiving society and the minorities (Favell 2001). Another dimension of 'new' integration is recognition of cultural plurality, as opposed to the essence of the original notion of assimilation, which emphasized cultural absorption into the mainstream (Joppke and Morawska 2003).

Modern definitions of assimilation have observed these ideological changes and moved away from the idea of integration as a process that forcefully overrules a minority ethnic group's distinctions. Alba and Nee (1997), in redefining the term, take a more 'agnostic' perspective regarding the object of assimilation and maintain

that the process does refer to the involvement of the majority group. In order to avoid the pitfalls of earlier definitions, they define assimilation as 'the decline, and at its endpoint, the disappearance of an ethnic/racial distinction and the cultural and social differences that express it', maintaining that the direction of change will depend upon the minority group, the historical moment and the aspect of group difference under consideration (ibid., pp. 863–864). Different from its previous definition within the straight-line model of assimilation, the concept refers nowadays to a more complex process. Assimilation is increasingly associated with a segmented and multi-path model (Portes and Zhou 1993), which sees the incorporation of migrants as leading variously to upward assimilation into the middle class; downward assimilation into the lower class; and 'enclave' assimilation, which itself can display upward and downward intra-group trajectories (Morawska 2003, p. 134).

The concept of incorporation, on the other hand, is seen as less politically inflected than other major concepts, such as integration, inclusion and assimilation. Thus, it is preferred in some recent migration research (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2009), although it is not clear how this concept resolves the issues associated with the concept of integration.

Nevertheless, interest in assimilation has grown. Joppke and Morawska (2003) maintain that assimilation remains the key concept in explaining normatively the integration of migrants. This is especially so because of a growing emphasis within the assimilation debate put on the socio-economic equalization of life chances between immigrants and the natives, or the structural dimension of assimilation. This stance is supported by Brubaker (2001, p. 542) who argues in favour of the 'return of assimilation'. Brubaker considers assimilation to be a process, rather than the end result of minority groups' integration. The process is seen as taking place in a multi-generational immigrant population, without requiring individual-level changes, and its outcomes are rather heterogeneous; that is, they occur as changes in the features of a group in order to become similar to that of a reference population. These changes are especially expected in the socio-economic realm, as the new assimilation concept is seen as not opposed to difference, but to segregation, ghettoization and marginalization.

A distinction between the dimensions of assimilation is important to understand the underlying dynamics of integration. The first typology was developed by Milton Gordon (1964, pp. 70–71), who distinguished several 'sub-processes' occurring in seven stages. Cultural assimilation or acculturation is the first in Gordon's model; this sub-process may take place even if other types of assimilation do not occur and is seen to be continuous. However, Gordon (1964) considers structural assimilation to be a crucial sub-process, as its occurrence, either simultaneously with or subsequent to the cultural one, leads to the other types of assimilation, while the opposite trend—cultural assimilation giving rise to structural assimilation—is not possible. Gordon's model has since been reviewed and modified, with new models putting more emphasis on structural and economic dimensions of assimilation. According to Alba and Nee (1997), Gordon's multidimensional account overlooks important forms of assimilation. Alba and Nee (1997) further argue that such omission is vital

as socio-economic mobility significantly impacts the social conditions necessary for the occurrence of other forms of assimilation.

The role of *structure* in producing social inequality thus features prominently in these conceptualizations of assimilation, as it is structure that conditions migrants' access to social resources and, consequently, their realization of certain life options. Esser (2004) elaborates on this in an attempt to set out a new theory on intergenerational integration. According to Esser, assimilation can refer both to social integration and to specific patterns of the social structure of a society. In terms of social integration, a process of individual assimilation can occur, which takes the form of inclusion of individual migrants into subsystems of a host country associated with increased similarity with the native population regarding cultural traits, positioning in the labour market, intermarriage and emotional identification with the host society. Secondly, structural integration depends on certain aspects of a societal system: above all, social inequality and social differentiation. With regard to social inequality, assimilation refers to the complete disappearance of variances in education, occupation and income between ethnic groups. Social differentiation, on the other hand, refers to a weakening of ethnic institutionalization or coding expressed in the decline of ethnic boundaries. The converse outcomes of structural assimilation are ethnic inequality and ethnic differentiation, which refer to the persistence of ethnic differences, respectively, on the horizontal plane (e.g., in lifestyle and professions) and on the vertical plane (e.g., in education, professions).

Two more concepts worth analysing in conjunction with assimilation are acculturation and adaptation. Acculturation presents difficulties similar to those of integration and assimilation, as they revolve around the reference population compared to which acculturation takes place and the direction of change and its dimensions are determined (Alba and Nee 1997; Berry 2003). In the model of Gordon (1964), acculturation features as one of the sub-processes of assimilation—that of cultural and behavioural assimilation. Gans (1997, p. 877), however, observes that acculturation is a faster process than assimilation and maintains that the difference between them is based on a more general distinction between culture and society. Accordingly, while acculturation refers to the newcomers' change of cultural patterns with reference to those of the host society, assimilation refers to the newcomers' shift of membership from formal and informal ethnic associations and other social institutions into those of non-ethnic origin and agenda in the same society. Adaptation, on the other hand, consists of relatively stable changes that take place in individuals or groups. This concept is multifaceted, having psychological, socio-cultural and socio-economic dimensions. Each dimension is different in regard to the times and places they occur and the predictors to which they are related; however, they are both conceptually distinct and empirically related to some extent (Berry 2003, p. 30).

More than any other concept reviewed thus far, multiculturalism represents the converse agenda to assimilation. Multiculturalism is a fairly recent term that was first developed in the USA in the 1960s as cultural pluralism, and then appeared in various forms in Canada, Australia, the UK and elsewhere (Glick Schiller 2004; Wieviorka 1998). Nowadays multiculturalism stands for a situation in a society

in terms of demography, as a philosophy, and also as a policy agenda and practice (Parekh 2000). Furthermore, Joppke and Morawska (2003) distinguish between *de facto* and official multiculturalism. The former is common in liberal nation-states and consists of a recognition of minority rights and design of policies that protect minorities within broad human rights and liberal political philosophies. Official multiculturalism, on the other hand, is much less widespread. It goes beyond *de facto* multiculturalism by engaging states in deliberately and explicitly recognizing and protecting immigrants as distinct ethnic groups. Nevertheless, within liberal states' integration policies two major changes are recognizable: a move away from official multiculturalism and the revaluing of citizenship. The latter is associated with a de-ethnicization of citizenship and a move towards *jus soli* as the basis of naturalization regimes.

Apart from differences in the policy agenda, debates on these concepts have given rise to methodological changes in the way that integration is studied. These are particularly relevant to this study due to its cross-cultural design. Although early definitions of concepts such as assimilation and acculturation as well-interpreted by Gordon (1964) refer to a two-sided process in which two cultures meet and affect each other, migrants' integration processes have been expected to happen mainly as a minority group assimilating into the majority. This is based on a unified, reified concept of a state and society as unproblematic, and which is then under threat by immigration and subsequent disintegration, although research has repeatedly shown that no such society exists (Favell 2001; Joppke and Morawska 2003). A current trend in the migration and ethnic minority literature is research that leaves the majority population out of the picture or includes it as a source of discrimination. But this neglects factors that affect everyone alike, such as age, gender and socio-economic status and not necessarily differentially in relation to ethnic origin (Banton 2001, p. 159). Recent research talks about 'fading majority cultures' because of increased communication and growing proportions of the first and second generation in large urban areas, accompanied by the infiltration of the global culture in otherwise perceived homogeneous 'receiving' cultures (Van Oudenhoven and Ward 2013).

As a result, comparative frameworks and a focus on the city as a specific site of integration have been among recent developments in the conceptualization and study of the term. Favell (2001) reminds us that comparative studies using national context as the frame of reference have tended to reproduce national stereotypes. Similarly, Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2009) take a city approach, although they discuss this choice as a call to focus on locality at different scales. Alongside these developments that reject the nation-state as a container of society and as a unit of analysis for integration, other concepts such as cosmopolitanism, (super-)diversity and mobility have emerged. The concept of cosmopolitanism was introduced in the previous chapter. It is thought to have the potential to 'correct' the disadvantages of methodological nationalism and to reflect changes resulting from globalization (Beck and Sznaider 2006; Vertovec and Cohen 2002). Vertovec (2007, p. 1049) notes that super-diversity is the outcome of different factors that mutually condition each other. Among these, legal status is considered to be key and also an element

of difference within the same ethnic group, leading to different social capital and to socio-economic and ethnic ties to different members.

Illegality has been subject of research that tackles both the involvement of the state and impacts on migrants and their integration 'outcomes'. This links to two further theoretical considerations, each derived from a different interpretation of the migration-development nexus (Faist et al. 2011). The first proposition, already acknowledged in the Marxist-inspired migration literature (De Genova 2002; Potts 1990), is that the category of the 'illegal alien' serves to create a class of legally and socially vulnerable cheap labour for employers to exploit whether as overworked and poorly paid agricultural workers (like Albanians in Greece) or as sweated labour in the low-status niches of the metropolitan economy (Albanians in London). The second proposition is that, although illegality is the product of immigration control, its extent varies according to the agency of migrants, for instance, in achieving security of residence, employment improvement and social integration (Ruhs and Anderson 2010). Meanwhile, the increase in transnational mobility (which is a subject of Chap. 4) has further created a proliferation of types of undocumented migrants and reconfigurations of migrant 'illegality'.

## 3.2   The First Generation

### 3.2.1   Structural Integration

#### 3.2.1.1   Regularization and Interaction with Institutions

Since one of the main goals of migration is economic improvement, Albanian migrants have experienced a significant structural integration, especially in terms of the labour market. This process has been highly conditioned by legalization, which is widely considered to be the first step towards integration. For many Albanians, however, 'getting papers' has been a long process, dependent on institutional and economic factors and followed by complications in terms of actual implementation (Glytsos 2005). At all three sites, the lengthy process of regularization and uncertain residence rights have affected migrants' strategies of integration and feelings of belongingness, while creating stressful spatial immobility and affecting migrants' psychological well-being.

Nevertheless, there are important differences in regard to the history of immigration and the regularization process in each of the three countries. While most migration to the three sites has been irregular (King 2003), the different legislative and policy frameworks in place in each of the countries has affected migrants' regularization and, subsequently, their integration. In Greece and Italy, Albanians migrated illegally and over a longer span of time than in Britain. They got regularized after a few years while creating networks with other co-nationals and sometimes migrating and re-migrating back and forth to Albania. The most successful regularization

'story' is that of Albanian migrants in Florence, reflecting three waves of Italian regularization in 1995, 1998 and 2002. Migrants here recognize the role of the right to apply for long-term residence, for family reunification and for Italian citizenship on their perception of integration. As King and Mai (2004) found among Albanians in Lecce and Modena, Albanians in Florence are moving rapidly towards structural integration. They show a high degree of incorporation, especially structurally and occupationally, appearing as a 'mature' immigrant group that experiences settlement and is starting to conceive itself as a minority.

**Box 3.1   Integration Italian Style**

Today I visited an intercultural centre in Pontassieve, a commune in the Florence area. I went to meet one of the ladies working there who had offered help in contacting teachers and Albanian families. I found many Chinese immigrants waiting in the corridor because the centre offered help with their papers. Generations of migrants pass through here, and new groups take the place of older ones. The intercultural centres, as an Albanian mediator commented, are mainly concerned with newly arrived immigrants. Migrants who have been in the country for a long time and have children do not frequent the centres, as they focus on language learning and sometimes help in terms of acquiring papers.

    In the waiting room I saw many posters advertising projects of an intercultural nature. They offered greetings in different languages and pictures of people of different ethnicities. I also saw various kinds of books that would be of use to those teaching Italian to immigrants, such as *The Guide for Learning Italian for Foreigners*. Symbols of integration—regularization, contact between different ethnic groups, language—were neatly displayed here as an inheritance from the older European regimes of integration. However, the approach towards integration in Italy, at least the official stance to it, is interesting as it is based on an understanding of interculturalism as a more advanced form than assimilation, or even multiculturalism. The progressive idea of interaction between the native mainstream and immigrants and of mutual adjustment and change is at the heart of interculturalism. Ordinarily, though, intercultural education is strongly focused on teaching Italian to immigrants, and the policy framework has little to do with changes in the native majority. This speaks of a one-way process of assimilation expected of minority groups. In any case, interculturalism is primarily a regional or even local approach, in use mainly by municipalities in Tuscany. A specialist on immigration and integration at a local level opines:

> When the local government does not offer services to foreign citizens this results in the creation of ghettos, or social enclaves, because the solution to the problems does not come from the institutions but from within the community. In order to prevent this phenomenon we decided to create services that are available and specifically for the foreign citizens.... We also sponsor cultural activities, so we do support the ele-

> ment that relates to the traditions of the country of origin. But if I were completely
> honest we have chosen the way of the services. Basically, you are a foreigner, you
> arrive in a city that receives you...; you are not alone, you have the municipality
> beside you. Because immigration is the mirror of the hospitality that we manage to
> give to the others.

In Greece, acquirement of papers is one of the major factors affecting integration. This is also related to the contradiction that migrants feel: they are long-term residents in the localities where they live, yet they have an insecure legal status. Moreover, Albanian migrants experience a different treatment than migrants of, for example, Russian origin, both informally and in formal terms, in their interactions with institutions and state structures (Psimmenos and Kassimati 2003). Indeed, the unsettled situation regarding residence papers is associated with feelings of humiliation, exploitation, dehumanization and imprisonment (see also Vullnetari 2012). This is on top of migrants' heavy workload and other worries, such as high expenses and their children's future. Unlike Albanian immigrants in Italy, this uncertainty blocks claims of participation in the host society. 'Papers' also impact on belongingness, civic responsibility and engagement, obstructing feelings of being 'at home' and the experiencing of sustainable emotional attachments (Yuval-Davis 2006).

> Agron (male, 42, Thessaloniki): Let me tell you what our real problem is. If we could feel
> some kind of security in the Greek state, in terms of papers I mean, we would be very happy
> here. Because we have escaped the suffering we had in Albania, the children are growing
> up here, and we want to adapt to this state. Just like it is in Germany or Italy, where you can
> get the citizenship, it doesn't matter if you are Albanian or whatever. You can vote in the
> local election for the road where you walk every day, because you are where your job is.
> Albania for us is like a remote, foreign country! Because you are where you eat, where you
> pay your contributions, it's there where you can raise your voice!… But we have been here
> for twenty years and we don't have papers.

In Britain, the Albanian community is composed mainly of those who migrated together with their children at the end of the 1990s. Albanians arrived in Britain when the political discourse was already characterized by a stigmatization of asylum-seekers and their alleged impact on the health and welfare system (Hampshire 2005). The routes that the Albanian migrants followed to enter Britain were limited to claiming asylum as Albanians after the Pyramid Crisis in 1997, claiming asylum as Kosovans after the refugee crisis in 1999, entering illegally through smuggling (usually in the back of lorries), and more recently, though family reunification.

Nevertheless, the Albanian community in Britain is now a 'settled' community. The family amnesty of 2003[1] and the subsequent naturalization of Albanian migrants in the mid-2000s marked important events in this process. The majority of those who now reside in the UK claimed asylum, but the consequences of this choice were more challenging than first predicted. The serious repercussions for their integration in the UK developed throughout the period of settlement, which

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[1] Family Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) Amnesty, introduced by the Home Office on 24 October 2003.

lasted on average 6 years. The immigrants describe their first years of arrival as years of great uncertainty, fear and stagnation. A feeling of fatality, a 'suspended' life and psychological persecution were expressed in numerous interviews as part of the process of applying for refugee status. This was reflected in participants' refusal to be voice-recorded yet again.

> Flutura (female, 43, London): Wait a minute! Will you write my name and other details?… because we have had a terrible time with interviews and papers… Oh, we have filled sacks with papers and interviews and we don't know… We are terribly scared of interviews!

As the migrants themselves recognize, Albanians in Britain had a different starting point also because of the material support they received from the state. Arriving in Britain as asylum-seekers, they became part of various social assistance programmes, which significantly improved their family's access to welfare.

> Qerim (male, 46, London) narrates: I am satisfied with the way this country handled our situation; they have treated me very well, even when I was with a 'negative'.[2]… Because we came here for economic reasons and they gave us the opportunities to achieve something. I came here in 1998 from Italy.… Even though I remained here though I was sent the 'negative' they still gave me a house, nobody stopped me in the street, they gave us help for our children… I am grateful. I know the ones who were returned [to Albania] would speak differently. But they forget that they came here with nothing and returned with their pockets full. We came here with all the others like little children and they let us grow and stand on our feet. For me England is a second mother.

Albanian migrants paid a high cost for their naturalization. They remained cut off from their families for years—a traumatic experience, especially for those who had never migrated before. Many faced a life dilemma—whether to stay and continue the nightmare of waiting for refugee status or 'crack under pressure' and return. The grief of the regularization period was especially pronounced when migrants' close family members were ill or had passed away, and migrants had to decide whether to go to see them one last time or attend their funeral, thereby fulfilling important family obligations according to the Albanian culture, or to stay and further their goal of settling in Britain.

> Mimoza (female, 39, London): We had too much pressure, too much time waiting, waiting endlessly… It was so, so bad!… Yes, I lost my sister six years ago and I couldn't go [to her funeral]. At that moment I wanted to withdraw my application [for asylum] to go back. I don't know what kept us here! I couldn't go.

The process had serious impacts on some migrants' health. Migrants and community activists recollect threats of dispersal, detention and false alarms of them being returned during the years of waiting for the 'brown envelope'—the outcome of their application for refugee status. Migrants suffered stress and depression stemming from the application and the questioning of the Home Office.

Yet, despite the negative consequences, the choice to come to Britain as asylum-seekers enhanced these migrants' integration in other respects. In contrast to Albanians in Greece and Italy, Albanian migrants in the UK were much in contact with state structures throughout the process of settlement and were beneficiaries

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[2] 'Negative' is the term Albanians in Britain use for their asylum request being refused.

of many systems of support. These included access to information and opportunities for education and language training. Moreover, there was no pre-established ethnic community, and little chain migration, so this first wave of migrants came into direct and immediate contact with different parts of the host-society structure. In retrospect, this process of 'socialization' with institutions was empowering and helped them to learn some of the country's social and political rhetoric.

Facing difficult problems in regularization led Albanian migrants to move towards naturalization (see also Da Lomba 2010), although there is a tendency to emphasize the instrumental character of citizenship; feelings of belongingness are usually downplayed when the decision to naturalize is discussed. Migrants' narratives refer to the benefits of having host country citizenship in terms of avoiding the hassle and expenses of paperwork and stress of residence documents and securing freedom of movement.[3] Nevertheless, citizenship is also seen as a means to secure ties with the host country in elderly life and to make return to Albania an option both for them and for their children.

### 3.2.1.2   Integration in the Labour Market

Because of their lack of legal status, many Albanian migrants initially worked 'in the black economy' and were badly exploited. Yet this was rarely voiced as discrimination by the first generation, because the possibility to work was perceived as a valued opportunity. For many, employment was their main goal, so that they could improve their financial situation; therefore they took every opportunity to work during the time they could stay in the host country. Working conditions improved significantly after they gained legal or refugee status and, in some cases, full citizenship. For those who were still in an irregular position, however, the reality of labour-market exploitation persists. This problem is especially felt in Greece.

There are some differences in attitudes towards work between the initial migrants and those arriving later. Bardhi (male, 43, Thessaloniki) recalls that naïve materialistic urge and curiosity about a less materially restricted life prompted his initial migration to Greece:

> Many friends of mine came to Greece, and were telling us how Greece was. Many positive things. They were talking about high wages; for example, after two or three weeks of work you could buy a TV whereas in Albania you would have to work forty years for that! A CD player or tape recorder, or a pair of jeans meant something big for us in those days.

Over time, financial prosperity and economic security generated feelings of belongingness, contrast both with their current symbolic belongingness to Albania and with their past life there. As the migration process 'matures', migrants are empowered to express their opinion on the pros and cons of their decision to migrate. For instance, the difficulties of the integration process and the immediate need to work have affected the family planning of the immigrants. In many families who

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[3] The attitude towards freedom of movement may have changed after the visa liberalization for Albania of 8 November 2010.

migrated in the early 1990s there is a considerable age gap between the siblings. Some immigrants have decided not to have children because of their inability to properly provide for them.

In general, there is some upward mobility in the labour market, especially among those who were educated in Albania or come from urban areas, although most jobs are related to sectors involved in migrant issues, such as healthcare, welfare, law and education. However, many parents experienced a de-skilling process, which they remember painfully.

> Monda (female, 50, Thessaloniki): Although I wear plastic boots and gloves, I am still known as a high-class lady! One should not lower her personality or morality wherever she is. Sometimes you may feel down though… I fell into pessimism after I had an operation… and was asking myself, why did I leave my job in Albania? I was a teacher, why did I have to leave the job? I had only one child, I could have taught him better values probably. I don't know… I regret that I came here… firstly because I cannot work in my profession, secondly in this country we have remained without a pension! And we are not settled yet, we don't have papers.

Integration in the labour market differs significantly across the three sites. Variations are mainly related to differences in accessibility to the educational system, the characteristics of the labour market and the nature of the opportunity structure. Some of the migrants experienced de-skilling and expressed contempt at not being able to enter education to back up qualifications earned in Albania with further qualifications in order to get an office-based job. The education and training system in Greece is particularly inaccessible, while many highly educated migrants in Florence have managed to 'convert' their degrees, a process facilitated by their familiarity with the Italian language. In Britain the educational system is even more flexible.

Integration in the labour market also depends on the structure of employment in the respective cities. Although a dream for a better career was one of the factors that inspired migration, the highly skilled who migrated to Thessaloniki find it very hard to realize this goal, as Monda related above. Consider too, for example, migrants trained in the arts. In Thessaloniki, this sector is underdeveloped. In Florence, the situation is different, as the arts sector is very developed, but there other segments of the highly skilled labour market are less prominent. In London, there is a distinct polarization between the highly skilled and the low skilled (Kostovicova 2003). However, after regularization was completed, a category in the middle was created of people who own their businesses. The British labour market is also more flexible and more experience-based than in the other two countries, providing opportunities for vocational training and voluntary work that are absent in Greece. The main obstacle to the structural integration of Albanian migrants in London is the lengthy regularization procedure, which is reflected in delayed social integration. Instances of exploitation in the labour market are common, usually expressed in very low wages.

> Eliana (Albanian female, 15, London): My parents… it was very hard for them. Cause they had to work at very low, low, low wages, beneath the low wages [that is, minimum wage], cause they didn't know anything. And they had to work extra hard; some were paid £ 100 a day and they were paid £ 25, cause they didn't know any better. They still don't know the

laws, what's right and what's wrong; they know the basics like not stealing and all that, not that they would break the law, but I am saying…They didn't know at the time; they didn't know about human rights. So they were unfairly treated. So they had to work extra hard. And they had the Home Office passports to get.

Among the three sites, Florence appears to be a city with rather particular elements affecting migrants' integration in the labour market and beyond. Firstly, Florence is appreciated by both parents and children as a special place for their integration, due to its left-wing orientation and its reputation as accepting towards immigrants. Florence offers a dynamic and flexible labour market and, therefore, many opportunities for low-skilled migrants in the tourism sector and in the area's industrial enterprises. It is also noted as having more work opportunities for women, such as restaurant jobs in the city centre. The prominence of tourism, however, limits job options in other sectors and restricts opportunities for professional advancement. In general, however, the opportunity structure of Florence is appreciated—both for the economic prosperity it has allowed the first generation and the potential mobility of the second generation. Because of these assets, Florence has been a target for migration within Italy of Albanians who initially settled in the south. Moreover, due to its cultural heritage and international reputation, Florence is an inspiring destination for artists, especially painters. The highly skilled parents interviewed saw Florence as a good location to raise their children, due to its rich cultural capital.

However, Florence is one of the most expensive places in Italy to live, and this creates housing difficulties. Housing problems in Florence were documented long before Italy and Florence became immigrant-receiving areas (King 1987, p. 127). The situation is even more problematic for the Albanian immigrants, since they experience discrimination in the housing market—as immigrants and as Albanians. Long-term immigrants are increasingly buying flats in order to escape the extremely high rents, but also to avoid discrimination.

On the other hand, successful participation in the labour market has changed public opinion towards Albanians in the two Southern European cities under study. This is recognized by the migrants and is attributed to their high participation in the labour market and contribution to the economy. Cases of collaboration and joint ventures between Albanian immigrants and locals are a sign of such participation, which in turn enhances feelings of integration. The arrival of other immigrants and the consequent increase in the multicultural composition of the host countries has reduced the 'visibility' of Albanians as an immigrant group, as was explained by Clara in Florence and by a discussion group of fathers in Thessaloniki.

Clara (female, 41, Florence): In the beginning my brother, who knew very good Italian, would call for a job: 'Hello, I am looking for a job.' 'Where are you from?' This was the first question! 'Look madam, please don't hang up. I am a good person and have a good work experience…' 'But where are you from?' 'I am Albanian.' She would hang up immediately! Whereas now things have changed. You go and present yourself and say, 'I am from Albania', and the employer says 'It doesn't matter [where you are from]'. It's sufficient that you have the required qualities [for the job].

Ismail: They [native Greeks] have started to see the Albanian with a different eye, not like they used to see him in the beginning. And this is due to the Albanians themselves.

Neritan: They have changed it [their attitude] because we [Albanians] work a lot! Albanians are the most correct and hard-working people here in Greece. Although they tried very hard

and with all means *'të na bëjnë rezil'* [idiom: to give us a bad a reputation], we showed who we are!

## 3.2.2 Social Integration

### 3.2.2.1 History of Immigration and Impact on Social Integration

In general, Albanian migrants have prioritized their economic goals over social integration. As a result, their narratives on social integration are much more limited than those on regularization, family and children's education. Participation in cultural events and organizations and clubs is minimal, apart from a few activities of the immigrant organizations, mainly of a cultural nature. Social integration seems to be negatively affected by a lack of networks and of efforts to create them.

> Anila (female, 35, Florence): Can I tell you something? In the fourteen years that I have been living here, I have started this year to go to the cinema because I go with my daughter. Because my husband works every day; on Sunday we are home, what to do first? We have to stay with the children, we have to do the family shopping and this and that… So basically our economic conditions haven't allowed us any kind of entertainment. We do beach holidays in Albania. We are limited in our expenditures for clothing, not to mention brands… We don't have any kind of entertainment.

There is a lack of investment in creating relationships with the locals, which is acknowledged as a missed opportunity for networking and integration. Some long-term first-generation migrants acknowledged the negative effect of their initial minimal contacts with locals on their later reluctance to invest time in establishing relationships with them, despite acknowledging the overall change of attitude of the host society towards immigrants, and Albanians in particular.

As a result, belongingness is mostly felt towards the family. Only rarely do migrants refer to wider friendship circles. Contact and interaction with locals is mainly through work. Across the three cities, but especially in London, migrants differentiate between native and Albanian friends. Albanian friends are intimate friends, while native friends are seen more as casual acquaintances with whom they socialize mainly in the public realm. Friendships, especially among mothers, mainly take the form of family visits to homes. Oftentimes the patriarchal attitude of Albanian men towards their wives is an obstacle to the creation of networks and social integration. Albanian men oppose socialization with other families, apart from their kin or very close friends, and they are suspicious of socialization with natives. This attitude spills over to the socialization of children, especially girls.

> Flutura (female, 43, London): I try to send her [teenager daughter] everywhere so that she does not remain ignorant of life. But my husband doesn't always agree. You know how Albanian men are! When I used to go to the college to take English classes, he used to get nervous. Now he has started with my daughter; he asks why I have to send her there.

Social integration differs a lot across the three cities. It is more developed in Florence, and least developed in London. One of the main reasons for this 'delay' in

London is the Albanian population's relatively recent arrival there coupled with the lengthy regularization process that migrants went through. A direct effect of this process has been a disinclination towards learning the language, though isolation and feelings of stagnation have blocked social interactions of Albanian immigrants with both locals and co-nationals. Hence, in the British case, we can speak of a social integration impasse, which persists despite the emerging success regarding integration in the labour market.

> Mimoza (female, 39, London): Now we are adjusted to this society, but for five or six years we suffered a lot. We didn't have papers, we weren't allowed to work! It was very bad because I wasn't used to being like that, just staying at home doing nothing. I was used to going to work and having a free life. That's why I think it was not good [migrating to Britain]. But now I am working, my husband is working, the children feel English. That's why we are staying, but we are still not happy with this.

Social integration in London was also affected by the dispersal policy the migrants were subjected to upon arrival, which inevitably affected the establishment of relationships with the locals, although dispersal was in many cases followed by internal migration towards London. Interviewees reported having few friends or acquaintances apart from a limited group of other Albanian families. Because of the absence of chain migration, the number of relatives or kin they have in Britain is also small. There is a general feeling of solitude and isolation because of the lack of the supporting kin structure that the first generation was used to in Albania.

Although most of the interviewees, both parents and children, have now received British citizenship (the '*British*', as they call it), some migrants reside on a 'leave to remain' status of a duration of 1–3 years and have to reapply again at the end of this term. A minority were still waiting for the outcome of their refugee application. These 'uncertain diasporans', as Kostovicova (2003, p. 64) calls them, are the most vulnerable group, as they feel isolated and left behind from the rest of the community, those who got the *British*. In Greece and Italy, Albanian migrants have more relatives because of the chain migration in both countries. Partly for this reason, social networks and, in general, social integration are based on and organized around relatives and co-villagers who migrated to the same country or city at various points in time.

Social integration is also affected by differences in patterns of settlement and spatial segregation. In all three cities, Albanian immigrants are generally rather dispersed. In Florence and Thessaloniki many live in the centre of the city, but some have moved to the suburbs to avoid the high rents in the centre. In Florence, this sometimes follows an initial period of living in the city centre as a newly arrived migrant employed in tourism. Immigrant neighbourhoods are not so typical of the two southern cities, but there are nevertheless spatial divisions on the basis of social class and concentrations of well-off city inhabitants in particular areas. These are areas where Albanians do not live. Interestingly, the narratives from Florence and Thessaloniki portray these cities' working-class suburbs as the 'normal' native neighbourhoods where an immigrant can integrate discreetly. In these areas there is thus a more direct contact with the 'mainstream', which affects the overall course of integration.

In London the situation is somewhat different. Here, too, the Albanian population is dispersed, but over a much wider distance given the vast scale of this city.

There are some relative concentrations, for instance, in outer East London (e.g., Ilford and Dagenham), but—another difference—Albanians in London also live in a variety of different ethnic contexts, some in predominantly 'white' working-class estates, others in highly mixed, multicultural neighbourhoods.

### 3.2.2.2   Cultural Similarity and Difference

Perceptions of cultural difference, and of similarity with the culture of the host society, play a role in way Albanian migrants experience social integration. In general, the two Southern European cities offer a contrast with London in the perceptions Albanian migrants have of culture and socialization. But differences are also noticeable between Thessaloniki and Florence, the latter standing more in the middle of a continuum between the 'Southern' culture of a community, centred on family, kin and traditional norms regarding gender, and the 'Northern' European culture based on individuality and equality. An important phenomenon in terms of social integration, especially evident among parents in London, is the 'lagging behind' of the parents. Migration has created a 'social integration delay' since parents became, through their migration, 'disintegrated' from their societies of origin and were unable to socially integrate in the host societies. There is also a difference between the reaction of migrants from rural regions and those from urban areas in regard to relationship with locals. Those from urban areas show a higher predisposition to establish relationships with the locals—both natives and other minorities.

The process of adjustment of the first generation of Albanian migrants in London was marked by culture shock. Once the goal of settlement was achieved, Albanian migrants found themselves in a multicultural environment characterized by a mix of people of different races and ethnicities and, also, by individuality and social phenomena like single-parent families, drugs, gambling, teenage gangs and murders—all of which were unusual in Albania. This prompted parents to concentrate on the family and on the education of their children rather than attempt to establish relationships with people in the areas where they lived. But this is not the whole story. Migrants also appreciated the multicultural environment of London and the presence of people from all over the world, which makes the city less hostile towards foreigners. Feelings of anonymity and comfort thus characterize many migrants' perceptions of these neighbourhoods, and these feelings are enhanced by the lack of marked social stratification in such areas.

Migrants in Thessaloniki, in turn, feel some continuity of their culture and traditions. This is expressed through references to pan-ethnic identities, such as references to the Balkan culture, pointing to the similarities between the Albanian and the Greek way of life. Albanian immigrants in Florence likewise feel an affinity towards the Italian culture—something they felt even before migrating to Italy. As a result, appreciation and adoption of local social and cultural values, followed by a certain strategic mimicry or assertive adaptation (see also Romania 2004) is rather natural for Albanians there.

Tony (male, 41, Florence): I can't say I learnt so much from the Italians, because as far as I can see we are similar as people, it's not the difference between the Middle East and Italy for example, I think it's the same way of living, of thinking, that's how I see it. I haven't had difficulties getting into the Italian way of living. And I have followed the way of imitating them, not because they know more or are better, but because I live here. So I have learnt to lie a little like they do, to be less faithful like they are, so that I can live with them. I have stopped thinking like a pigheaded [man] and started asking what was said, why it wasn't done that way!… So some harsh traditions we inherited from communism I left behind, and I got what I liked in the Italians, the tolerance… I don't know whether it is because they are Italian or because they haven't lived under dictatorship… but on tolerance they have taught me something.

Other parents, however, point to what, in academic terms, we might refer to as the liminality of Florence as a tourist destination, which makes micro-level interaction and socialization with the locals more difficult. The character of Florence as a tourist destination is not new. In fact, Adamson (1993) describes the same patterns in his study on Florence at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the transformation of Florence into a Mecca for foreigners, to the resentment of the ordinary inhabitants of the city. The same insight is found in the Albanian immigrants' narratives, wherein Florence is seen as 'cold' and 'commercial', in contrast to the values that Albanian migrants appreciated back home, in particular the collectivity of life and lack of social stratification. The appreciation of liminality is a sign of integration itself, related to a feeling of permanence and settlement that migrants increasingly experience, as opposed to the short-term nature of newly arriving migrants and tourists.

### 3.2.3   Immigrant and Ethnic Organizations

The role of ethnic or immigrant organizations across the three sites is diverse, although it differs between countries, while the intensity of their involvement and the variety and type of their activities has also changed over time and differs across various organizations within the same country. Their main function is to bring together the Albanian community based on its distinct features and needs in the respective country. Organizing community gatherings on occasions of national celebration and cultural events with Albanian artists are typical activities. Language classes, in the host-country language for the first generation and in Albanian for the second generation, are a common purpose of such organizations.

While a transnational orientation brings about their formation, these organizations contribute to immigrants' structural and social integration (see also Fauser 2007; Schrover and Vermeulen 2005). This is both through concrete projects tailored and funded for these purposes, but also through provison of a meeting point for the immigrants of both generations where networking and socializing takes place (Fig. 3.1).

In London, for example, mothers prepare Albanian coffee and chat about their everyday problems while children attend a class in Albanian or practise traditional Albanian dance. In Thessaloniki, women decided to meet on 8 March every year

**Fig. 3.1** Celebration of the Flag Day by the Albanians in Florence, November 2008

to celebrate Women's Day together, as they used to do in Albania.[4] In Florence community life is more haphazard although there are many more cultural events with Albania as a theme, stemming from Florence's emphasis on art and history in general. These organizations also establish connections between parents and host-country institutions. They can take on the role of mediator between a family and school or social services. This role is especially important in London, where some parents spoke little English and the families had no relatives and social support.

However, the impact of such organizations should be evaluated in relation to the low level of organization of Albanian immigrants across the three sites. Many parents expressed mistrust towards Albanian immigrant organizations and their leaders, some said because of irregularities in these organizations. Competition and lack of cooperation between different Albanian organizations also reduces their impact.

> Agron (male, 42, Thessaloniki): Organizations are of no value here, nobody considers them; nobody recognizes them because of the structure they have. They take funding from the EU through various programmes and don't do much…. They are like the political parties in Albania, divided just like the parties there.

Few instances were found of co-ethnics organizing in Thessaloniki and Florence, and there may have been some bias in the findings for London, since recruitment of many interview participants took place through Albanian organizations. Nev-

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[4] Women's Day is a popular holiday in Albania since the communist regime's times, when it was known as Mother's Day.

ertheless, as Schrover and Vermeulen (2005) observe, the activity and prosperity of immigrant organizations depend on the political opportunity structure and the character of the immigrant community. In line with this argument, the character of organizations in London is more 'ethnic' and those in Thessaloniki are more of an 'immigrant organizations' type. The existence in London of a previously settled Kosovar community, which is more prone towards organization, seems to have played a role in this regard.

Meanwhile, the discourse on multiculturalism has been adopted by Albanian community leaders and activists in London in their efforts to establish a solid community life. This lobbying is perhaps still naïve when compared to the discourse of the old minorities and their lobbying for public resources on the basis of a reified community culture as described by Baumann (1996). Nevertheless, the Albanian diaspora in London imitates the minorities' action and, in the words of Brubaker (2005), sounds rather as a 'stance' or 'claim' of the new Albanian lobby-in-the-making to be counted as one of the many constituent communities of London's multicultural population. A similar attitude is noticed in parents' and children's acknowledgement of the achievements of other minorities, which inspires their integration strategies.

Unlike the 'generous' space, support and funding that Albanian organizations obtain in London, alongside opportunities to affect local authorities' activities, immigrant organizations in Thessaloniki depend on EU funding. In Florence there are hardly any 'functioning' organizations. The Albanian community gets organized mainly on an *ad hoc* basis and for major national celebrations or spectacles with Albanian artists. Albanian migrants acknowledge the lack of and need for such organizations, as places where they can put in requests and their children can socialize and learn Albanian.

> Clara (female, 41, Florence): Albanians in Italy feel like orphans. There is no place where we can go… or you register an injustice done to you or someone else… or even the TV when they say racist things towards Albanians… there is none that can raise its voice for these things!

### 3.2.4  Gender

The integration process has played out differently for men and women, especially in London and Florence. An important differentiating factor has been the histories of immigration and regularization in each host country. In Greece and Italy, men generally migrated first; women followed later. The consequent regularization of women has had an empowering effect on them, which in turn has affected the attitude women assume towards gender relations within the family. The discriminatory gender effect of regularization is especially evident in Thessaloniki where women do not always have independent residence papers due to their work in the domestic sector. They are thus dependent on men. Hence, changes in perceptions of gender and divorce are far less marked, although it should be noted that my sample of

first-generation migrants in Thessaloniki contains more rural-origin and low-skilled migrants compared to Florence.

The traditional division of gender roles 'inherited' in Albania, and reproduced in Albanian immigrant families, is itself a factor affecting the integration of men and women through the impact of this division on structural integration. The typical roles within the family—man as the breadwinner, woman as the child-bearer—have exposed men and women to different segments of the host society's structure and impacted differently their socialization and social integration. Another factor that has played a role is the 'gendered' qualities of the labour market for migrants. For example, in Greece and to some extent, too, in Italy, the jobs accessible to Albanian migrants are construction for men and domestic work for women. Men working in construction with co-nationals or immigrants from other countries learn little about the culture of the place they live, and they sometimes also lag behind in language learning. Domestic work—cleaning, childcare and care of elderly—gives women more direct contact with Greek and Italian society.

In London, where men and women often migrated together, the gendered encounter with the labour market was patterned in a different way. Men took up employment soon after arrival. In general, migrant men had more than one job, which left them little time to explore opportunities for education or socializing. This worked differently for women, as they stayed home with children or worked part-time, while attending courses in further education colleges and taking classes in English. The consequences of these differences started to appear more clearly once the vital issue of status was resolved. In contrast to the findings of King et al. (2006b), this study found that the migration experience had influenced some women's perceptions of gender roles, lead to tension in families and subsequent divorces.

> Mirash (male, 39, London): England has helped Albanians, but it has also damaged them. The Albanian family has been damaged. I know 30–40 cases of people with children divorcing and divorce is becoming a normal phenomenon. The wife says to the husband: 'Fuck off; you've got no chance to touch (beat) me!' Or the husband, father of five, goes to the nightclub!

First-generation Albanian migrants in Florence felt the migration experience had a great impact on their identities and vision of life in general, with men and women referring to different experiences. Mothers in particular point to the possibility to adopt plural roles beyond that of wife and mother. Being able to start a family and bring up children away from kin and shape home life according to their nuclear family's needs, standing up to their husbands and in-laws, interacting with institutions, developing independent work relationships and learning a new working and spending culture are experiences that mothers mentioned as significant. These experiences were built around their own decisions or participation in decision-making in the family. Men, meanwhile, acknowledged changes in their perception of the world, their conceptualization of relationships and interactions in general. They learned more about tolerance and communication, humility and a new way of life, although this division between genders is not always clear-cut.

Nevertheless, the way and degree that integration is experienced in Florence differs significantly between mothers and fathers. Women tend more towards assimi-

lation. They find the migration experience empowering, by 'finding themselves'. They become more active and accumulate human and social capital independently through their work experience and interaction with locals. Although the educational system in Italy is inflexible and makes it difficult for highly skilled parents to convert their diplomas and get into education, mothers took advantages of opportunities to gain qualifications by taking courses, for example, in inter-cultural mediating and social work. Men have lagged behind women in these major transformations experienced. They have tried to hold on to patriarchal concepts of family and marriage. The conservatism of the fathers, coupled with jealousy and the assumed right to restrict and control the wife and family, have hindered the possibility of other members of the family to interact and integrate with locals and co-ethnics.

### 3.2.5   Discrimination

Discrimination is a sophisticated and developing concept dating back to the 1950s. It is thought to be an element of the organization of social life, with family, ethnic group and state being just a few of the most important social 'units' on which discrimination is based. The concept becomes clearer if we see discrimination as a form of selection, whilst unlawful discrimination relates to specific grounds for unfavourable selection, such as gender, race, ethnicity and religion. Discrimination and inequalities are related in a circular fashion; discrimination causes inequalities, and these, in turn, give rise to discrimination (Banton 1994).

The experience of prejudice and discrimination is one of the most defining features of the Albanian migrants' integration story. Discrimination occurs in various domains and settings. The Albanian language appears to be the main factor of 'visibility' for Albanians, since there are no specific 'racial' or significant cultural differences (see also Colombo et al. 2009a). Media has been a major factor in the emergence and worsening of discrimination, more evident in Greece and Italy than in London. There are many instances in the narratives when parents refer to the negative behaviour of Albanian immigrants in the early 1990s and the role that illegal status and the long waiting time period for regularization had on this behaviour.

However, discrimination is not a uniform phenomenon. Apart from changes over time, the generations also experience discrimination differently. The first-generation migrants are quicker to perceive discrimination against them both as migrants and as Albanians; they narrate in more detail these instances and relate to them directly. As the quote of Lida shows below, some adults accept a certain subordination and stick to their migrant identity while justifying these 'costs' of their migration decision with the prospect of a better life for their family. In other cases, an individualist approach towards identification and the lack of ethnic agency described in Chap. 2, reduces Albanian migrants' sensitivity and reactiveness towards discrimination.

> Lida (female, 46, Thessaloniki): There may have happened an injustice, but I have just stepped back, I haven't been aggressive. I haven't shown my real feelings to that person, because we are in a foreign country. This is not our country, we have come here for a better life, a different and more beautiful life, but we can't make the laws here, basically we cannot behave like this is our country. It will never become our country!

> Marios (teacher and community activist, 50, Thessaloniki): For example, there was a football game between Albania and Greece in Tirana and Albania won and so Albanian migrants here were celebrating, and some fascists, nazis and nationalists, with the tolerance of the police, attacked them. Thessaloniki's mayor made some declarations like, 'Well, they have to respect the country that gives them food to eat, they have to keep a low profile and they have to learn that you can only be born Greek; you cannot become a Greek!' But here there are many, many Albanians that respect the way he makes politics! They have told me this is the way that he must do it. They tell me, 'I understand him. If I was him in my country, I would do the same thing.'

There is, however, a difference between the low-skilled and the highly skilled in the way they experience and interpret discrimination. The highly skilled tend to be more analytical, relating their explanations to wider economic and social processes in the host country and to historical factors, national identities, the performance of Albanians as an immigrant group and their personal characteristics and aspirations.

> Dora (female, 43, Florence): Whenever I entered a family [as a domestic worker] I would be thinking how I should behave. I didn't know the language and would wonder whether I would be able to present my true self, because I used to suffer this 'Albanians… Albanians…' especially because I couldn't express myself, I didn't know anyone, so I knew it would take time. Because I had noticed that to be an Albanian or a Moroccan meant that you had a [bad] name on your shoulders, you had an extra responsibility.

These long-term migrants recollect and interpret migration experiences and instances of discrimination within an context of multiculturality and inter-ethnic relations, and also a 'new wisdom' gained through migration itself. This is associated with an analysis of the change over time of the positionality of the main actors that led to a different social categorization of them as migrants and Albanians as a group.

> Demir (male, 52, Thessaloniki): We Albanians, probably incidentally, have made two revolutions in Greece. The first revolution was the economic revolution…. The second process was the help we gave to soften the racism that was cultivated for hundreds of years by the Church and politics. So basically we Europeanized them! If you would compare the xenophobia of 2008 with that of 1992, the difference is huge. In those years you couldn't speak Albanian because people would pick up the phone and call the police!

In other cases, migrants' empowerment and social mobility are evident in their recognition and deployment of social hierarchies or categories in the host society. In several narratives, Albanian immigrants distinguish themselves from other more recently arrived migrants (and also from internal Italian migrants arriving from Southern Italy). On the other hand, migrants recognize the 'new' discrimination now occurring as more subtle and indirect, experienced as an individual's 'acceptance' by the natives 'as an exception to the rule' rather than referring to the positive performance of the Albanian migrants challenging existing negative stereotypes. Pali's story, below, resonates with the findings of King and Mai (2008, p. 189) from other urban settings in Italy.

> Pali (male, 48, Florence): There is a phenomenon that happens… and you are made to feel like you lack something, when someone looks at you in some sort of way and while you are thinking he is being gentle, he says 'what a pity you are Albanian'. You see, when they want to make you a compliment they say to you: 'You don't look like an Albanian!'… This is what people say to you here as a good word, but this is the worst insult, the worst slap [in the face]!

As hinted at above, reasons for the occurrence of discrimination differ across the three countries. In Greece and Italy, discrimination because of nationality is strong. Since discrimination is based on a racialization of difference, as mentioned in Chap. 1, the Albanian ethnicity is the basis for the occurrence and experience of discrimination. In Greece, a salient ethnicity and a very fragile multiculturalism created in the first generation a feeling of being excluded but also 'disallowed' to belong. As Triandafyllidou (2000) observes, discrimination in Italy is likewise perceived as being caused by a strong national identity based on a magnificent cultural heritage, here related also to the particulars of the city.

As a result, labour market discrimination on the basis of origin is blatant in Greece and Italy. Most of the Albanian migrants interviewed were in low-profile jobs in specific sectors of the economy. As mentioned above, there was a clear typology of men in construction and women in domestic work, though this was most strongly in evidence in Greece. Segregation was automatic based on origin; skills and previous education were not recognized. Occupational mobility is blocked by discrimination; or at least, access to the opportunity structure is significantly reduced as a result of it. Interactions with work colleagues are one setting where discrimination repeatedly manifests itself. Demir (male, 52, Thessaloniki) was asked whether he socializes with his workmates after work:

> Yes, I do. But these Greeks have a strong taste for joking. Once we were gathered to have dinner together, when one of the friends of my work boss started to call: 'Hey, donkey!' I didn't answer, but he continued, 'Hey, you donkey?' When he got fed up he said, 'Demir?' 'Yes', I answered. 'What's up?' 'Well, it's a while I am calling you, but you don't answer.' 'I didn't hear you calling me. I heard you calling a donkey and was wondering how come this man knows how to communicate with donkeys. You must have something to do with their kind', I answered, and the whole table exploded in laughter.

In Britain the status of refugee and the associated claims on public funds are seen as a major cause of discrimination of Albanians. Discrimination in London seems to be subtle, less verbalized and directed towards Albanian immigrants mainly on the grounds of them being foreigners and asylum-seekers or people on benefits. Professionals, on the other hand, mentioned another source of discrimination: co-ethnics' resentment of their successful integration and increased competition in the labour market.

> Mimoza (female, 39, London): In fact, living in London, it's not bad; they are used to a lot of people [from different countries]. But some people… they are jealous, because we go to school, we learn, we are able to find jobs. You know in a way, they don't like us… you can see it in their face; they don't like it. Not that they talk in a bad way, but I can see that they are a bit jealous.… first is being a foreigner. And the other: if they see that you have a qualification and are able to find a job, some people may be jealous, 'Why do you come here and get the job?'

Similarly, the discrimination experienced in Florence is described as more subtle. Participants used the term *razzismo sottile*[5] as an indirect expression of their subordination as migrants and as Albanians. This is encountered in the public spaces,

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[5] Italian for 'thin' or subtle racism.

in parks while they try to socialize their children and in celebrations in schools where parents also participate. There are also cases when parents, especially mothers, say that it is also the Albanians themselves who do not make an effort or are sceptical and insecure about their reception by Italians, which in turn blocks their socialization(Fig. 3.2).

Nevertheless, across the three cities, discrimination seems to have changed over time, along with the integration of Albanians in each country. Recently, a more positive representation of migrants is noticeable in the public discourse in the host countries, which has a positive impact on migrants' perception of their integration. In Italy, positive documentaries have been aired on Albania and general political support was offered by the Italian government to Albania in the process of EU integration. In Greece this is less evident, though examples can be found.

> Mirjeta (female, 36, Thessaloniki): I must say that recently we haven't heard the TV speaking badly about Albanians. Quite the opposite, there have been two movies on Albanians, and the characters were positive, the actors themselves were Albanians. They were focusing on immigration and the Albanian migrant was portrayed as hard-working, loyal, although a bit high-tempered, like the Albanian is, but in general good.



**Fig. 3.2** 'No to immigrant camps/ghettos, not in Florence nor elsewhere': anarchists' graffiti on wall surrounding secondary school in Campo di Marte, Florence, November 2008

## 3.3   The Second Generation

### 3.3.1   *Structural Integration*

#### 3.3.1.1   Educational Experience and Performance

Studies on the second generation have found that educational performance affects the second generation's structural and social integration in schools and their future integration in the labour market (Crul and Vermeulen 2003, 2006). Although it depends on numerous individual factors—such as age at arrival, prior schooling, parents' education and stage of integration, language skills and number of siblings—the migration experience as a whole has impacted their school integration. Integration in schools was especially difficult for children who arrived at school age and had to start a 'new' education without the required language skills.

In general, Albanian-origin teenagers have little support from their parents in terms of help with lessons and education choices. This is due to parents' long working hours, their lack of experience with the educational system in the host country and their lack of proficiency in the language. This is a particular problem among teenagers in London, who on average were older when they migrated. Older siblings or cousins living in the host country are main sources of support with and advice on school studies, given that parents are unable to help. Parents' lack of language proficiency makes it difficult for them to assist children in most subjects, although some are able to help with maths. Regardless of their language skills, parents find it difficult to help children beyond elementary school, because of differences in the educational system and a general lack of specialist knowledge of the host country.

> ZV: How do the children do at school?
> Donika (female, 45, London): Unfortunately, I couldn't be of much help to the older ones. Sometimes the second son is a little jealous and says, 'How good, mum, that you can help Jessica. When I was doing the same grade you couldn't help me. You couldn't instruct me or buy me books….' I try to explain to him that at that time I didn't know the language and when you don't know the language it is embarrassing to go to the schools and not be able to speak.

In general, Albanian-origin teenagers have performed rather well across the three sites. Most of those participating in this study reported average to high grades, with girls outperforming boys and showing a greater appreciation of education. There were a few cases of teenagers who were top-performing students and serving in school councils and youth campaigns in London. Some were sports and dance champions and winners of international fashion competitions in Florence. One teenager who participated in this study 'carried the flag' in Thessaloniki as the best student in the school.[6]

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[6] For insights into the significance of these 'flag-carrying' ceremonies see Kapllani and Mai (2005) and Tzanelli (2006).

Teachers are crucial to teenagers' progress in schools. Naturally, experiences are varied. In general, however, relationships with teachers are more positive than those with peers, and fewer instances of discrimination were reported from teachers than from students. For their part, the teachers interviewed reported good experiences with Albanian-origin pupils. The vital role of teachers is illustrated in the following conversation:

> Altin (male, 16, London): Teachers are very important. If you have a good teacher, you learn. Um… extra lessons maybe, but we already do that, because now we gonna have a week off for half-term and my teacher says he will be at school during that week, so if anyone wants to come into the school and do extra work, coursework or whatever, he will be there to help. So really, I think that's very good.
> ZV: Are your parents able to help you with the lessons? Have they been helping you before?
> Altin: To be honest… I mean, they are disadvantaged, they can't speak, read or write English as well as me. So really I don't need their help. They can't really teach me anything I don't know, you know… um… so only teachers really can help me.

However, there are important differences between the three cities in terms of educational system and the provisions that each system makes for the immigrant- and minority-origin students, including the way that diversity is acknowledged in the educational curriculum and by the teachers. Thessaloniki has intercultural schools where children of minority origin go to study, although these schools are open to natives as well. There are also projects that support bilingual teaching assistants to work in schools and help minority-origin students in learning. Florence had three intercultural centres in different areas of the city where trained teachers and bilingual assistants helped students of minority origin to study Italian.[7] In Britain many schools had an 'ethnic minority achievement unit' with trained teachers. They sometimes hired bilingual teaching assistants, who have been crucial helping children in their initial integration in schools.

Parents and teenagers expressed different views on the quality and reputability of education in the host country. While parents in all host countries had reservations about general attitudes towards education, especially the level of discipline that children were subject to in schools (too lax in all cases!), parents in Greece expressed serious concern about the quality of education. Both the parents and children in Thessaloniki make strong references to *frontistiria*—private courses on school subjects that run in parallel to the mainstream educational system—as an obstacle to the teenagers' performance at school. The private courses are impacting the quality of education in Greece, as it is almost indispensable for students to sign up for them, while also affecting the attitude of students and teachers towards mainstream education. Immigrant families lack the resources to sponsor parallel learning. In 2006 a family was quoted a price of € 2700 per year for a child to study five subjects in a *frontistirios* after school. This family decided not to enrol the child there. Since the private courses are especially important to prepare for university entry exams, they have to be factored in as an expense for immigrant families who wish their children to pursue higher education. Parallel private courses are therefore

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[7] The centres were called Giufà, Ulysse and Gandhi.

a cause of educational inequality between immigrant-origin students and natives.[8] Moreover, they can be expected to translate into inequalities in the chance of entering higher education and then highly qualified jobs on the labour market.

> Anna (female, 16, Thessaloniki): Now that we have *frontistiria*, we have this idea in our head that 'good that there are *frontistiria*'… So we go to school, because we have to go to school, not to go there to learn. Basically we have *frontistiria* so we go to school to spend some time with our friends. We have *frontistiria* and we have this idea that we will do well, we don't quite need the school…. So basically we go to school uselessly, we don't learn. The teachers also behave like, 'Let's finish with the book because we have to finish it', and that's it. They don't want to go too deeply with the lessons and teach us. They do the lesson because they have to do it.

Another factor that creates disadvantages for the non-native pupils is the design of the educational curriculum. Many teenagers find subjects such as the Ancient Greek language and history and religion in Greece very difficult to grasp, and impossible for their parents to provide help with. More importantly, these subjects are crucial parts of the scientific track of the educational system leading to university studies. This hierarchical Greek system invites an interpretation through the work of Bourdieu (1989, 2004), who considers family support and scholarly culture and curriculum as two main sites of the aesthetic habitus (Fowler 1997, p. 47), where cultural capital is accumulated.

Teachers, too, were perceived as displaying a different attitude towards minority- and immigrant-origin students, again, especially in Greece.

> Entela (female, 42, Thessaloniki): The behaviour of the teachers towards our children depends on the culture of the teacher, on his kindness. Some teachers are fair, some discriminate against our children, they exclude them, they don't see them with the same eye. I remember one occasion when my son was attending the gymnasium. The teacher had asked a question and he had raised his hand. 'Although I was raising my hand the teacher would not ask me. In the end I asked him, "Sir, I have been raising my hand all the time, why don't you ask me? I know the answer." "Okay, tell us what you know." And then he turned to the students and said to them, "Aren't you ashamed that an Albanian knows better our history?" I told him, "Sir, it is true that I am Albanian, but I am studying in the Greek school, I am studying the same books!"'

In Florence and London unfair treatment by teachers was experienced as more indirect, mainly as teachers imposing a 'double demand' on immigrant-origin teenagers, picking on them excessively or, conversely, ignoring them and favouring interaction with the 'native' students. However, I also noted a tendency for teachers to be too positive in their comments on the educational and overall performance of Albanian-origin teenagers, displaying a kind of political correctness since the group is stigmatized in the countries under study.

This section on the second generation's educational performance closes with observations by some of the teachers who were interviewed. First, as Jorgos (teacher, 42, Thessaloniki) explains, and very much in line with my own observations during the field work, even when teachers are keen to acknowledge and promote diversity,

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[8] This inequality can be accentuated by the existence of private or semi-private schools, which are not accessible to immigrant-origin children due to their high cost.

teenagers lack the agency and, at times, the interest in engaging in such initiatives, preferring a low profile in order to secure invisibility.

> The immigrants' children themselves avoid opening such discussions [about diversity]. They don't want discussions like these to take place… On my part, many times I tell them in class, because I believe it… that it is a richness that there are kids from different countries, who speak different languages, who have different cultures; it's a resource, because it's like having an orchestra where they play violin, guitar, drums, saxophone, instead of having an orchestra that only plays…violin or only the guitar. But there are no structures within the school that will bring this difference out as an advantage.

The role of teachers in the classroom and their ideological perception of diversity often reflected the general ideas on diversity in the country: ethnocentricity in Thessaloniki, a more local identity in Florence, and multiculturalism constructed around large groups of old-established minorities in London. There were also differences related to the number of Albanian-origin students in schools: schools in Thessaloniki and Florence had large numbers of Albanian-origin students, but they kept a low profile and did not counteract discrimination; the very small groups of students in London schools were almost invisible among the highly diverse minority-origin student body there. Some of the teachers' narratives point out implications of the centrality of ethnicity in the host country and the group positioning with respect to the native mainstream and other minorities for the integration of the minority-origin students in schools. Paolo gives a rather extreme view of the 'superiority' of Italian and Florentine culture, whilst John, in London, articulates the ease of overlooking the situation of Albanian pupils in his school.

> ZV: Are there discussions in the class about diversity?
> Paolo (teacher, 57, Florence): Yes, there are. For example, I am personally Euro-centric, so I think that the Western culture is superior… So basically I don't think that all cultures are the same… like American anthropology claims. I insist on the classic culture, on the terms of civilization, of political freedom, of equality between individuals… I think that the Renaissance is the basis of global civilization. The students are in Florence, so I try to teach them the Renaissance [*smiles*]. I am sorry, but this is how I see it.
> John (teacher, 44, London): We used to have two Albanian community workers and they were fantastic people. But now we find that we have less need of somebody with that particular community connection, and we cannot afford as a school to hire a community worker for every small group of students, which is a shame. Do we have Albanian celebrations? No. We've had international evenings in the past where we've encouraged families to come in and do things, but we haven't had that much of a focus on the Albanians.
> ZV: Why would that be?
> John: Partly I think because there aren't as many Albanians as, say, the Turkish and the Indians. They don't seem to also… there aren't… there don't seem to be any really well-known festivals that are associated with the Albanians and that's because… before… you couldn't get into Albania. It was very much a closed country under what's his name? [ZV: Enver Hoxha] Yeah, it was very, very strange. Okay, there aren't a lot of people that know very much about Albania. Even now, when things have opened up a lot more, it's still not a country that a lot of people know about. If I say to friends outside teaching, for example, 'Where is Albania?' They would say 'Well…?'

While there is a striking contrast between the views expressed by the teachers above, it is worth mentioning that the differences between the three countries in their immigration and multicultural policies—and the 'political correctness' that

characterizes the British educational system and prevents the expression of racist views—were sometimes mentioned by the teenagers themselves.

### 3.3.1.2   Future Employment Plans and Transition to the Labour Market

Both girls and boys across the three cities placed emphasis on securing good jobs that would bring them financial security. Living up to their parents' expectations and making their parents proud drives teenagers in their pursuit of educational success.

An interesting phenomenon is teenagers' choice or preference for what might be regarded country-specific professions, such as Formula One driver or fashion designer in Florence, positions in the corporate banking and legal services in Britain, and doctor or teacher in Greece. Of course, such jobs were not mentioned by all respondents, but they were sufficiently typical to create a place-distinctiveness. There were also many cases of boys and girls preferring gender-typical jobs, such as mechanic and plumber for the boys and hairdresser and secretary for the girls. Often, high ambitions for specialized and lucrative jobs have to be sacrificed for more pragmatic choices.

Many Albanian-origin teenagers attended technical and professional institutes or vocational training, which were seen as routes to earlier and 'safer' employment, and some boys studied construction in these institutes so they could work in their father's construction firm. This reflects the growth of private enterprises of Albanian immigrants, especially in Florence and Thessaloniki. A few of the teenagers interviewed expressed contempt at the 'normal' jobs associated with immigrant status (e.g., labourer, domestic cleaner).

There were, however, differences in teenagers' expectations in terms of their future chances in the labour market. Youngsters in London expected fair treatment in employment and a career in accordance to their educational performance. This is in line with the general expectation that a good education translates into good chances of employment and earnings. In the other two cities the situation was different, due to the economic problems faced by Greece (especially) and Italy. In general, there was an emphasis on 'high-return' professions, such as lawyer, working in a bank and having one's own business. Linguistic assimilation is considered an important factor for advancement in the labour market in all three countries. The two interview segments below are typical responses to questions about careers in the London setting.

> ZV: In the future you said that you want to become a dentist, so you definitely want to go to university.
> Darina (female, 13, London): Yes, definitely, without a doubt… because I like to know that I am secure… I like to do things for myself, so that I can be someone in life, not just like any person; I wanna be somebody, yes. So to work for myself, and make my parents proud of me.
> ZV: Do you want to go to university?
> Era (female, 14, London): Yeah, definitely, because I want to have a good career. I don't want to end up having a normal average plain job, cause England is just becoming more and

more expensive and you will need a good job to have a good life. You can't be anything like a cleaner to live properly [*laughs*]. You gonna need a good education.

In contrast to London, teenagers in Thessaloniki and Florence anticipate discrimination in the labour market, in addition to the difficulties they expect to experience when trying to access higher education. Transition to the labour market for the second generation in Italy is expected to be facilitated by the acquisition of citizenship, but most of my respondents had not yet reached that stage. Setting the issue of citizenship aside, we have already noted how, especially in Greece, but also to some extent in Italy, the structure of the secondary education system creates inequalities in terms of access to higher education, which are then perpetuated in career pathways. Furthermore, at both Southern sites, parents mentioned nepotism and corruption in the host society as a phenomenon which would make the advancement of immigrant-origin people even more difficult, due to their lack of networks. This is one of the reasons why many second-generation Albanians at the two Southern sites were contemplating future migration towards North-Western Europe. By contrast, in Britain, parents and children were optimistic about the possibilities offered by the educational system and the flexible labour market.

Nevertheless, wider international research on the second generation and their transition to the labour market has increasingly reported unequal treatment and job status incompatible with educational performance, the former being lower than expected (Fibbi et al. 2007). Heath and Cheung (2007) propose three explanations for differences in the progress of minority-origin people in the labour market. The first is the dominant conception of nationhood, which usually varies between ethnic and civic. The second is patterns of social reproduction, such as rigid class structures versus meritocracy. The third explanation is economic structures and conditions, such as the presence of a deregulated market economy. Since these factors are different across the three sites, it remains to be seen what the future of the Albanian second generation will be in terms of labour market integration, when they come of age.

### 3.3.1.3   Attitudes Towards Citizenship

Attitudes towards acquisition of host country citizenship by Albanian-origin teenagers can be grouped into several categories. Firstly, citizenship is widely cited as a source of better opportunities. These include freedom of movement and integration in the labour market in the host country and elsewhere in Europe. In Florence and Thessaloniki, many teenagers saw citizenship in instrumental terms, as a means to facilitate future migration. Yet many teenagers saw citizenship more broadly, as acknowledging their legal and civic obligations towards the host country, where they would stay. A second category is represented by teenagers who felt citizenship would give them full right to identify as British, Greek or Italian and to ultimately justify their feelings of belongingness to the host country. For them, citizenship represented a deeper connection, instrumental to erase any recognizable difference, especially in relation to institutions.

Ilda (female, 14, London): If I didn't have my passport, people would call you an immigrant. They would make fun of you at school. They would find out somehow, and I would feel really… left out. I really wanted my passport; so… I couldn't wait until I got it.

ZV: Do you want to get Greek citizenship?

Anna (female, 16, Thessaloniki): I do, because it would be easier for me. So basically, I will have the qualifications for a job. If they see Albanian passport… citizenship, they will take a bit more reserved attitude, they will be more distanced. We say there isn't racism, however there is; we all are a bit racist, in all things. But if you are Greek, they see you differently… To me it would mean simply a paper. It is just a paper, it is not anything else; it doesn't change anything else; because I have the Greek culture, the Greek manners, I have taken them essentially because it is here that I grew up.

ZV: What does it mean to you being a British citizen?

Altin (male, 16, London): To me, all it means is that I won't get kicked out of Britain, I can go travel all around the world, because a British passport is very… has got a high status, you know.

There is also a claim on the part of teenagers to have the 'new' citizenship as the institutional recognition of their assimilation, as shown by research conducted in Italy (Colombo et al. 2009b; Riccio and Russo 2011). The Albanian second generation is quite vocal in its claim for Italian citizenship, although this is less evident in the public realm, especially compared to other second-generation groups in Italy.[9]

ZV: What would it mean to you having Italian citizenship?

Aulona (female, 24, second generation, Florence): It's just about papers, because I have already integrated both cultures… both the Albanian and the Italian. I wouldn't feel any difference really; I feel Italian and also Albanian. But citizenship would help me in terms of bureaucracies, more than in terms of personal affairs.

Similarly, teenagers in Greece saw Greek citizenship as a source of rights (free movement, less need to pay money for red tape), but to them it also has a more symbolic meaning: an acknowledgement of them being part of Greek society, which they are constantly reminded they are not. Experiences of harassment because of their Albanian citizenship inevitably create resentment.

ZV: Why do want to apply for the Greek citizenship?

Genti (male, 18, Thessaloniki): So that I am free! So that I don't pay all this money and that I can go everywhere I like! I want to go to Albania, just go, not to wait until the order is released by the police. So that I can go to England, to… wherever. We are like slaves! It's not only the freedom, but also all these years that I have been here. You are the same as the others, why should you be singled out by the others? Why? Because it has happened when I have been with a group of friends, two Albanians and three Greeks walking down the road and the police stopped us 'What are you doing here? Show us your ID.' The Greeks show their ID and then us the Albanians, and they say 'You three go home; the Albanians come with us!' Why should I feel this? It's such a bad thing![10]

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[9] Rete G2—The Network of the Second Generations in Italy (www.secondegenerazioni.it)—has few posts from the Albanian second generation, although they are the largest second generation group in Italy. The cover photo on the webpage on 11 January 2013 portrayed a second generation lady with the caption 'Dateci 'sta cittadinanza e datecela subito!' [Give us this citizenship and give it to us immediately!]'

[10] An important development in attitudes towards citizenship was the change of the Citizenship Law in Greece in 2010. According to Law 3284/2004 Greek Nationality Code citizenship in Greece could be acquired by declaration. This gave the possibility to many Albanian-origin chil-

Citizenship is thus important in relation to experiences of discrimination and also in terms of social mobility, hence its direct association with experiences in education and labour market integration. Citizenship, however, is predominantly mentioned as a 'ticket' to the experience of mobility. This is not only associated with the family-related experiences across the Greek-Albanian border, but also mobility experiences and aspirations of cosmopolitanism, extending their world to European countries and beyond.

### 3.3.1.4  References to the City and Locality

Cities are becoming increasingly prominent in the literature on the incorporation of foreign immigrants (Brettell 2000), although studies on cities and the second generation remain rare. Their earlier relative omission is related to an assumption that has long framed migration studies, namely that nation-states are homogeneous entities. As a result, data taken from research in cities have been considered as representing the situation in the whole nation-state (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2009, p. 183).

Structural approaches dominate studies of immigrants' incorporation in cities, with research mainly directed at ethnicity, policy agendas and immigrant groups' characteristics. Cadge et al. (2009, p. 3) attempts to bring culture into the study of the city as a context, noting that the economic characteristics of localities have been given far more importance than their cultural resources. These authors find that the way incorporation is conceptualized and advocated among officials and stakeholders in a city is related to variations in the way cities create and deploy their 'culture armature'. However, they did not study this role of the city from the perspective of the immigrants. The current study points to a difference between the two generations in the way they refer to the city and locality. Parents evaluate the city in terms of the perceived success of their migration project. The second generation is more engaged in discourses on 'city identity' and culture, and also makes reference to localities within the city. Therefore, the generations differ in their understandings of space and their appreciation of cosmopolitanism (Szerszynski and Urry 2006).

The cosmopolitan orientation and practices found in this study among the first generation are in line with the very limited existing research available on non-elite cosmopolitanism (Kothari 2008; Werbner 1999). Particularly evident in Florence, cosmopolitanism is referred to and symbolically used by the natives and the migrants for different purposes: by the natives to enforce the boundaries and by the migrants to include themselves. Due to its boundedness to locality and the significance of this space for the local identity and the nation-state, this reference to and symbolic use of cosmopolitanism by the Albanian migrants in Florence is 'safe' and does not conflict with the expected loyalty towards them as 'national outsiders' (Kofman 2005, p. 87).

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dren whose parents had resided lawfully in Greece for a number of years to gain Greek citizenship. This law was suspended in early 2013 in order to make the requirements tighter for the applicants.

The time factor and stage of incorporation may also pay a role in this respect. My findings show that aesthetics and cultural capital are important to the long-term immigrants. Kosic and Triandafyllidou (2003)—in one of the very few studies of Albanians in this kind of context—examine coping strategies and identities among Albanian immigrants in Florence. Interestingly, they found no reference to that city's particularities in their respondents' narratives. Sometimes parents' narratives of belongingness and culture noted the cultural distinctiveness of their towns of origin in Albania, showing a 'translocal' appreciation of urban culture (Brickell and Datta 2011). As Farije explains below, the distinct identity of these urban centres is seen as a core element of the Albanian culture.

> Farije (female, 45, Florence): In our culture we had well-known towns, like Përmet and Korça… Towns that would be in the same line and standard with the European or global culture. And then we from the south [of Albania] had a tradition of emigration, so we were more cultured, in the way of working, dressing… We had that, we were more advanced than the others.

The significance of the local urban setting is particularly evident among migrants in Florence. Their tendency towards assimilation is enhanced by the city's special status within Italy. This is reflected in the eagerness of Albanian immigrants—both first and second generation—to embrace the distinctive local and regional identities, to aspire to be *un fiorentino propio,* a 'real Florentine'. Parents and children mentioned identifying with Florence and Florentine identity and culture, seeing it as a reputable culture and a famous and distinct location and accent in Italy.

Florence is also appreciated for its cosmopolitan atmosphere, which creates opportunities for acquiring new skills, such as learning foreign languages, but also offers immigrants an 'experience of the world'. Its great reputation fosters an emotional belonging and ease of calling it home. The qualities of its space and its beauty intensify these feelings of belongingness. Furthermore, although the cosmopolitan second generation still finds Florence too small, it nevertheless stimulates an interest in history and art and an eagerness to become more cultured.

However, the lack of Italian citizenship diminishes perceptions of incorporation, leading immigrants to feel excluded from the 'right to the city' as a political space (Lefebvre 1996, pp. 147–159). The right to the city is also diminished by personal experiences of discrimination. Discrimination is perceived differently depending on the level of interaction and the type of relationship attempted with the locals. Certain spaces in the city centre are viewed as closed to immigrants. Indeed, some are characterized by brutality and harshness, like the *questura* (police office where sojourn permits are issued) and the regularization process (Triandafyllidou 2003), though these have little to do with universal cultural values.

In contrast to perceptions of Florence, parents and teenagers in London relate more to the borough and its composition and character. Albanians in London also referred more to the ethnic composition and the different social conditions in different areas in London. Parents experienced London's 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007) as 'estranging', and both the first and the second generation mentioned unsafe living conditions as a barrier to social integration.

> Donika (female, 45, London): In the beginning when we came here, this [Barking] was a very bad neighbourhood. If you saw a police car driving at high speed, surely it was headed towards our neighbourhood [*smiles*]. This last two to three years has changed a lot. However, it is still full of black people, Polish and Albanians. We see policemen around when they arrest people and stuff them in the police cars just like pigs. But now we are used to having policemen around; we even greet them [*smiles*].
>
> ZV: And why did you say that Plumstead is not really a great place?
>
> Era (female, 14, London): because I consider it boring, compared to the bigger areas like London, being in London you wouldn't compare it to Plumstead, it's small. It's really… like, here in the road there is only chicken and chips shops and Chinese shops. It is not a good place, it's not posh… I don't know, it's not rich.

References to the city and locality are much less common in the case of Thessaloniki, although acknowledgments of it as a big urban space with possibilities of entertainment for young people do occur.

> Endri (male, 18, Thessaloniki): [I am] from Thessaloniki. I think… um, Thessaloniki has a life, you can go out, you can do many things; you can play… enjoy nightlife. [I belong] to Thessaloniki… it is here I am used to now, I don't know Albania… it is here I grew up, here is where my friends are… I feel better here than in Albania.

City and locality can also have more nuanced meanings for the second generation and parents who originate from rural areas in Albania, which is especially the case of the subsample of the participants in Thessaloniki.

> Fran (male, 49, Thessaloniki): For example, when I was young I only rarely went to the city, but now I have become an inhabitant of Thessaloniki! Whereas my son has no problem here; he can return home at 10 PM after he finishes football training.

Fran notes the difference between him and his son in perception of space, because of his own origin from a remote village in Albania. Many teenagers mentioned their adaptation to urban life. This disjuncture between the two generations in terms of 'spatial cognition' is one of the most striking intergenerational discontinuities, which will be further discussed in Chap. 5.

### 3.3.2   Socialization and Integration

#### 3.3.2.1   Social Integration in Schools

School is obviously a key institution for the socialization of minors, and this is particularly so for children of immigrant origin, since for them socialization outside of school may be difficult.

> Aldo (male, 15, Thessaloniki): At school you learn many things, you spend some good hours and you learn interesting things, especially me who is not Greek… It is better for me, who hasn't been born here, that I go to school and learn the language and learn Greek history. I believe that without school there would be no life for Albanian children in Greece!

Shared values in terms of education are one important criterion for socialization in school. Older siblings, and in general those who accept their immigrant origin,

often take educational excellence as a criterion in choosing their friends. Because of ethical considerations it was impossible to interview teenagers who had quit school and had a bad relationship with their family. However, the narratives of those interviewed do reveal that there is a segment of Albanian-origin teenagers in all of the three cities who had performed poorly in education and were subject to disciplinary measures from schools. Some of them had also had problems with the police. Substance abuse, participation in gangs and non-amicable breaks with home are some of the phenomena in London. In Greece and Italy there was a problem of Albanian-origin boys creating their own groups and bullying other students as part of a reactive identification.

Social exclusion and discrimination by peers are common at school. Sometimes educational success is a cause of jealousy from the native children, which can result in physical harassment.

> Maria (female, 12, Thessaloniki): One day we were playing volleyball. One of the children put his hands together like this and hit me on my head, so not with the ball but with his hands, like this. 'This is because you are good in English', he said.

There is a difference, however, in the degree to which children of various origins make friendships with each other. This is especially so because the composition of schools and the presence of minorities is significantly different between London and the other two cities. In London it is common for Albanian-origin teenagers to have few co-ethnics in the same schools, since the Albanian community is geographically dispersed.

> ZV: What is the atmosphere like at school?
> Darina (female, 13, London): We are four girls that stay together: it's me, the other is Somalian, one is English and the other is South American; so we are all *different cultures* [in English]… sometimes when I see those of African origin or the English that stay together as a group, sometimes I feel, like, empty inside because I say 'How bad I don't have one Albanian here', but anyway… But I do have Albanian friends outside of school.
> ZV: Do children of different origins make friends with each other?
> Maria (female, 12, Thessaloniki): In most of the cases they don't. They mostly make friends with those from their own country. When some new child comes who is from another country, like from Albania, other children who are from Greece don't behave well with him. They laugh at him… Towards those from the developed countries, let's say if someone is German, in that case there isn't racism. There are Germans at school; there aren't English, but if there were, there wouldn't be racism towards them. There are Germans and no one says anything, actually they are the best-liked. This happens only with children from countries that don't have good economic conditions, I think.
> Angelo (male, 17, Florence): In my case, having come here at the age of two… they have always considered me an Italian, understand? Not a foreigner; I have never had such problems. But if someone comes… it depends how he behaves. If he is a normal person among the others then there won't be any problems. If instead he starts fussing a bit, the others start 'thinking' about it, understand?

Children who arrived at school age and had to start education without language skills were often a target of bullying. Despite being 'white' they were 'visible' because of a different way of dressing and looking, which are very important factors in socialization and 'acceptance' of teenagers in schools.

> ZV: I would like to know something about your school experience.
> Eliana (female, 15, London): Now it's fine, I like it. And they won't know that I am Alba-nian at school and they don't mind that now. And I have lots of black friends and stuff in school…. In the beginning, because I was new and I didn't know English… And it came to the stage that I had to move school, because the students there were so horrible. because I was new and I had short hair as well and I didn't look like the others and they would sort of treat me differently; treat me like 'woooo'. I got to the stage when I was really upset with that school, so I moved to a different school. And in that [new] school there were Albanians as well, so I could communicate and I had a translator. So that school was better, so I stayed in that school… and they treated me the same.

Racist discrimination and exclusion are sensitive issues in the British educational system, and teenagers there are more aware of their right to react. Those in Thes-saloniki are more submissive and see their silence at times as the cost of future acceptance by their peers. In London, teenagers recognize the importance of the mixed ethnic composition of schools for their 'smooth' integration. The majority of the children interviewed reported making friends easily with other minority-origin children due to the affinity they felt due to their immigrant origin, but also in terms of cultural particularities, such as parents' strict discipline and pressure for educa-tional achievement. They said that the other minority-origin students were easier to socialize with and made them feel more welcome.

> ZV: Has your origin been a source of problems at school?
> Altin (male, 16, London): No, my friends… we all joke about, because all my friends we are different, one black, one mixed-race, one Asian, you know… we are mixed as a group.… Can I mention them? Khan is Asian, Bob is mixed race, King is black; we are all mixed, but we all stay together. There are other groups that stay with themselves, but they don't start trouble with anyone else.… So we all mess about, have jokes with each other: 'Oh, you are Albanian; you are Bangladeshi, you know, whatever… African…', but we only joke about it. I have never gotten into a fight over racism in school.

In contrast to the 'openness' of inter-racial friendships in London, the situation in Florence is more nuanced, while in Greece harassment and exclusion from peers at school is blatant and widespread. One interesting trend is the attitude of Albanian-origin teenagers towards students of the same origin, especially new immigrant-origin children in schools. Teenagers who had experienced assimilation and hidden their Albanian origin tended to exclude such children and stick to their native peers and their own assimilated peer group:

> [E]ven the kids, I don't know, they very easily look down on the others. They're very proud if they're good, they're good students, you know, A-grade students. They're very proud if a Greek child asks them to come to their birthday party or something, because you know parents, 'Ah, she's Albanian, but she's a good girl; she's the best student in the class', she finds it flattering and she goes there and she looks down on the others [of same ethnicity] very, very easily.

There are, however, cases in all three cities whereby the settled second-generation teenagers become the main support to and best friends with the newly arrived chil-dren, whom they help in learning the language, in schoolwork and in integrate them into their peer group. This occurs both towards Albanian-origin children and to-wards children coming from other countries.

Blerim (male, 13, Thessaloniki): When I was in the first and second year… that's what I remember on every occasion… when someone came from Ukraine, they all started laughing at him and insulting him. And I told them, 'Stop it! That's what you did to me and I don't want this to happen to anyone anymore!' And they let him alone, and allowed him to make friends with us… I don't let them offend others anymore… But they didn't know what they were doing those times!

### 3.3.2.2   The Role of the Peer Group

One of the core arguments of this book is that literature on integration of the second generation has been overly concerned with the role of ethnicity and overlooked processes of socialization and the role of friendships and peer group. Very few studies have included the role of the peer group. One of these (Wessendorf 2007a), found that friendships are considered very important by the second generation, impacting their lives on various levels, ranging from daily experiences to generalized feelings of belongingness in the host or home country.

In all three cities studied here, the social life of the teenagers is limited due to the financial constraints that immigrant families face. Therefore, socialization with native peers outside of school is obstructed by different standards of living and modes of social activity. In general, the presence of the extended family and cousins of the same age in the host country makes up for the lack of peer-group friends.

However, socialization and having a strong peer group are often powerful means of feeling integrated. The composition of the peer group also conditions feelings of identification. The importance of the peer group is usually paramount compared to the abstraction of ethnic identity. As a result, teenagers who identify with the culture and identity of the host country and consider themselves integrated look for and in general have native or well-integrated Albanian-origin friends.

On the other hand, teenagers recognize socialization as being dependent on personality. Being 'cool', that is, being socially skilled and successful in age-related activities, can overcome the barriers to socialization based on ethnicity. There is also a growing 'wisdom' among the teenagers, who see that attitudes among natives towards immigrant-origin people vary and that hiding their identity is not necessarily the best way to integrate.

Maria (female, 12, Thessaloniki): A child that comes from Albania to Greece makes friendships only if he is good at sport… He has to be good at sport, have many friends, know the language and be good-looking…. This is enough.
Erjol (male, 17, Florence): I know many Albanians that say Italy sucks, after having been here for many years. They say they want to go back to Albania. No, Italy doesn't suck, it depends if you know how to integrate or not. That's it. It depends on the type of the person, it depends on your networks, it depends on how one speaks to people. And on how one is ready to integrate.

Patterns of socialization and peer-group composition are also affected by the attitude of the parents. In general, parents encourage socialization with natives because it is seen as a source of social capital for the children or a way to make up for the lack of social capital transmitted from the parents. Albanian parents' attitudes in this

respect are in sharp contrast with those found for other immigrant groups (see, e.g., Panagakos 2003 on Greeks in Canada). By the same token, parents sometimes resist socialization with peers from the same ethnic group. Some parents worry about male solidarity and gang behaviour among Albanian-origin teenagers. In London, many parents were worried about their children associating with black peers, because of the latter's perceived link to gangs and violence.

> Donika (female, 45, London): When we came here, my husband… he used to say to our oldest son, 'You shouldn't stay with the blacks, neither with the Kosovans, nor with the Albanians.' I used to argue with my husband, and say that maybe our son should choose his friends himself.

The main difference between the three field-work sites in terms of socialization and the role of peers is the accessibility of the native-origin peers. In Greece, Albanian-origin teenagers repeatedly spoke of the difficulty of socializing with Greek peers, not only because of the prejudice of the native teenagers towards those of immigrant origin but also because of strong opposition to these kinds of friendship by the Greek parents. There is also a parallel tendency to distance from Albanian-origin peers because of the strong stigmatization associated with Albanian immigrants. With the passing of time, Albanian-origin teenagers in Greece are cognizant of a change of the attitude of the host society towards immigrants and towards them. They appear to be politically aware of this change and the impact it has on their positioning in the Greek society.

In London, Albanian-origin teenagers had friends of various nationalities. Indeed, other minority-origin teenagers were often their best friends. They explained these friendships as based on a shared understanding of the strictness and discipline expected by their parents. Many of the teenage girls I interviewed in London told me that they were cut off from after-school clubs and activities, school trips, birthday parties and other activities that were not strictly related to the educational curriculum. A few reported not having any friends, apart from a few relatives and cousins of a similar age.

> ZV: Do you have a life outside of school, friends, do you go out?
> Ilda (female, 14, London): Most of my time is spent in school; when I come home I do my homework, I watch TV, I eat, I go to sleep.… I can't really go out. I am not really allowed. My mum, she doesn't like me going out everywhere; you know how places are sometimes. But I don't want to go either, I don't know, there is nowhere for you to go. I have got my aunties here, my mum's brother is here, and I have got cousins here… like two of my cousins are here, yeah so… I don't really think I need anyone else but my family.

London's complex social geography and spatial-ethnic segregation (and mixing), plus the striking social stratifications experienced there, expose the Albanian-origin teenagers to people from deprived and underprivileged backgrounds, which are resented by the parents.

> Flutura (female, 43, London): The oldest son used to go out to the park and it was hard to bring him back home. He goes out with English boys every Friday. I am actually a bit annoyed because of this; you know, English people here are *bërrnut* [rubbish]; poor, with divorced parents… Worse than us!

The culture of teenage gangs and drugs in 'rough' areas of London has already caused serious issues with teenagers' social integration and education. Some teenagers mentioned how the lack of goal-oriented peers has impacted their own motivation. This experience, especially problematic in the case of boys, shows the impact of segregation in immigrant and working-class areas and the effects of peer pressure in diminishing the motivation of immigrant-origin students to aim for social mobility, as common in the US literature on the downward mobility of some groups in the second generation (Zhou 1997a). In the final two quotes in this section we hear from a father and a teenage girl about the challenges of friendship and peer pressure in the 'difficult' environment of inner-suburban London.

> Fatmir (male, 41, London): My oldest son is now in college and works at the same time. In the second and third year of high school he was rewarded as the best student with a gold medal. But the next year he made very bad friends and completely lost interest in school. In one year! Most of those guys were black, because 90 per cent of the students in that school are black. I don't mind that, my own friends are black. Luckily I noticed in time because here it is very easy for the children to end up in trouble. One of his friends was killed two months ago.
>
> Eliana (female, 15, London): It is just the way England is. The environment here is closed… Not everyone welcomes you, especially in this area. It's hard to live. because if you are different, then it is going to cost you a lot to be different or to even have the guts to try and do something different here, it is difficult… Because there are teenagers with their weed and their crack here which is… and they will try to put you into stuff that you don't want to do. Especially now that like people are at school, girls are at school, smoking, drinking. I don't want to get involved in that. It is easy to get involved in it. It is harder to not get into…. If you say no, they will get angry with you…. You never know what people here will do!

### 3.3.2.3  Immigrant and Ethnic Organizations

In general, Albanian-origin teenagers' degree of participation in immigrant and ethnic organizations is related to parents' attitude towards such organizations. Ethnic organizations are approached by the parents when they want their children to learn Albanian, which in turn improves parents' networks and children's social life. Independent initiatives by teenagers are lacking. Indeed, many interviewees did not know of the existence of Albanian organizations in the city. Nevertheless, where participation does occur, it affects teenagers' identification and integration in various ways. As illustrated by the narrative below, it helps to foster a distinct Albanian identity enriched with the learning of languages and traditional Albanian dance.[11]

> ZV: Why do you come to the Albanian classes?
> Darina (female, 13, London): I just like the idea that something… is done. Because Indians and Africans, they have their own thing, so I said to myself 'I should go, too and see….' I am also keen to learn; I would like to learn better.

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[11] Representatives at the conference 'The promotion of the collaboration between Albanian diaspora in the UK and the central and local authorities for local development' organized in London, 10 June 2011, mentioned that only about 1 % of the Albanian-origin children go to Albanian weekend classes.

> Eliana (female, 15, London): I go to Albanian classes because I learn something new. I meet new people, a different place to be. It's just a different thing to do and I like it. And dance obviously.

Ethnic organizations can also help in countering discrimination. In turn, the activities of such organizations make up for a lack of socialization of the teenagers, constrained by the conservative attitude of Albanian parents towards their children and their fear of problems of youth and crime in London. Albanian weekend classes meant a lot to some of the teenage girls, like Darina and Eliana above. The social aspect of such activities appears as important as the symbolic attachment to Albanian language and identity that they confirm in their narratives. Moreover, these organizations provide a way of practising elementary organizational and entrepreneurial skills and may be a starting point for some of the children in terms of artistic activities.

### 3.3.3   Discrimination

In all three field sites, the teenagers interviewed experienced the burden of a 'stigmatized ethnicity'. Although to a varying and declining extent, the Albanian identity is still articulated in negative terms in the media and in the public discourse. 'Albanian' has become the personification of an inferior status, and the Albanian culture is considered as bearing primitive, uninteresting and ugly features. This is why the teenagers dreaded recognition of their ethnic identity, since negative labelling has caused a contraction of their ethnic status and agency. Although the 'anti-Albanian' discourse is most entrenched in Greece and Italy, it has also appeared in the UK, and has been picked up by children in school.

> Darina (female, 13, London): Yes, once someone had written something bad about Albania in a newspaper, and I didn't like it. I was like, 'What was their problem?'… Albanians here in England… They rob banks. Like 'What the hell?' and this sets a bad view of Albanian people.

Discrimination blocks integration strategies, since being unaccepted causes teenagers to retreat and stop trying to establish relationships with native peers. Discrimination, however, is neither a homogeneous nor standard experience, and apart from ingroup differences, it is experienced differently by parents and children. While parents have accepted the existence of discrimination and responded to it, consciously or unconsciously, with a range of attitudes and strategies, children find it puzzling and hard to accept. Rather than a state of denial, the reaction of the second generation arises out of the frustration. They experience acculturation and a strengthening of ties and belongingness to the host society. Yet, at the same time they encounter the resistance of the 'host' society towards them, which 'grants' acceptance only on the basis of an exclusive ethnic identity, thus preventing the formation of 'healthy' hybrid identities.

There are also age-related differences in perceptions of discrimination: older teenagers personalize and internalize it more, whereas the younger ones see it more

as external and exaggerated. The older children commented on their parents' inability to help them cope with the strong discrimination towards Albanians throughout the 1990s. This points to what has already been emphasized in the literature: that the mode of incorporation of the first generation has a strong impact on the second generation, providing differing amounts of cultural and social capital and exerting differential pulls on their allegiances (Levitt and Waters 2002, p. 15). By analogy, the findings of the current study suggest that the stage of incorporation can be very important. Younger children seem more relaxed towards language use and visits to the homeland. They show more interest in the Albanian language and TV (some of these observations are dealt with in the next chapter). Although attitudes towards Albania and Albanian ethnic identity are not always positive among the younger siblings, they do demonstrate a better capacity to take a stance towards their ethnicity and their identity in general.

There is also a gender difference in the way Albanian teenagers experience discrimination and harassment on the basis of their origin. In general, boys face harsher discrimination, both physical and verbal. They are also more vocal and reactive against experiences of discrimination. Among girls, discrimination is mainly experienced in the form of exclusion and mocking. They are more prone towards hiding these issues from their parents and usually under-report instances of discrimination during the interview—at least as far as I could tell.

Discrimination is also experienced in love relationships, or what is expected in future partnerships.

> Klejdi (male, 17, Florence): To tell you the truth I haven't had problems. The first things I say are my name, surname and then say that I am Albanian. But it has happened with girls, to be fair, or with the parents of the girls more precisely, and because I am Albanian I would have issues with the father of the girls [that I was dating]. But I haven't given it much importance… like it or not, I am Albanian.
> Dana (female, 15, Florence): For example, I was with a group of friends and an Italian guy comes and approaches me, out of interest… When he got to know I was Albanian, he left saying, 'Aww, Albanian! God, no!'

The way discrimination is experienced and perceived by the Albanian-origin teenagers varies from city to city. In both Thessaloniki and Florence discrimination is expressed by the natives partly because of an undesired similarity perceived with the Albanian second generation—in claims of membership, appearance, behaviour and customs. This is evident partly because of the 'broad' space of contact that the second-generation teenagers have with the Italian and Greek natives. '[D]ifferential treatment occasioned by irrelevant unlikenesses' (Banton 1994, p. 91) is, in effect, rooted in the exclusionary definition of national membership in Greece and Italy. In London, contact between Albanian-origin teenagers and natives is 'mediated' by other minorities, so they have the possibility to make use of the 'spaces' created by the multicultural society of London. A paradox arises from the relatively greater cultural similarity between Albanian culture and the cultures of Greece and Italy: discrimination appears stronger in the two countries where the cultural (and geographical) distance to Albania is less, whereas in London the cultural-spatial distance to Albania is greater, but discrimination is less strong.

Teenagers in Thessaloniki express their opposition towards discriminative practices, both as a general principle and in their selection of their friends, boyfriends or girlfriends and future partners. As the parents also realize, children feature both as 'victims' of the first generation's arrival and problematic settlement within a 'homogeneous' host society, and as the strongest agents of boundary-blurring processes. The presence of the children in schools is an everyday reminder of growing differentiation and heterogeneity within Greek society, while their educational success has sometimes caused significant 'ethnic identity incidents' by initiating discourses of national, ethnic and racial identities, with the 'rejected flag bearer' having become the symbol of their discrimination in Greece (see Kapllani and Mai 2005; Tzanelli 2006).

Unlike the explicit discrimination experienced in Greece, the second generation in Florence experiences a more subtle discrimination.

> Lela (female, 36, Florence): When we came here in the beginning, we were people taken and thrown into a society we knew nothing about! Whereas these [the children] who are growing up here, I can't really say that they, the poor children, don't know about it, although there are certain things that they experience… many things that have to do with *razzismo sottile* [subtle racism]… [*sighs*] There are many children in schools, when they reach the age of 12–13 there is a kind of racism… because when you are little you don't understand it… 'Ah, how well you speak Italian! But now you are Italian, you are not Albanian anymore!' It's devastating for the children! This thing that you are Italian, you are not Albanian anymore…. So they wonder, 'Am I Italian because I speak Italian or… because you see me as Italian? And by the way, what's this difference between Italian and Albanian?' There are some painful things for the children [to cope with].

Teenagers in London were generally more relaxed and their perceptions of discrimination were less internalized than in the two other cities. They had a more understanding attitude towards difference and multiculturalism within schools and beyond. Achieving full settlement and citizenship in Britain and the wide range of opportunities expected 'freed' them from strong negative perceptions of Albanian identity.

> ZV: What's your attitude towards the Albanian community in the UK or worldwide?
> Altin (male, 16, London): Um…I think it's good. Some Albanians are doing good work into their community, like setting up schools where my sister goes. She goes to learn Albanian, Albanian dance and all stuff like that, which is good. And then there are Albanians that break the law in England, America, everywhere. That's not good, but you know… I think Albanians make the world [*smiles*] a better world probably… No one can say Albanians are bad for the community or for the world. I mean, that's just stupid, everyone has a unique… has something unique that their country brings to the world, to the community.

Objections towards discrimination indicate awareness of politics of identity and an engagement with the public discourse at an individual level. Banton (1994, p. 5) maintains that 'patterns of inequality established in one generation are easily transmitted to subsequent generations because people grow up regarding them as right and natural'. Albanian teenagers' objection to discrimination is therefore a promising sign in terms of prevention of their downward social mobility in these cities.

## 3.4   Conclusions

This chapter analysed the patterns, dynamics and strategies of integration of Albanian immigrants and their children in Thessaloniki, Florence and London. Both groups' perception and experiences of integration have changed over time and in different stages, making the idea of integration as a process central to our understanding of the phenomenon as a long-term 'outcome' of the settlement of immigrant groups and their descendants. Legal status and regularization have been main factors conditioning the integration of Albanians and their descendants at all three sites. However, different from what most of the literature on illegal migration has found, migrants are not passive receivers of state regimes in this regard. Ruhs and Anderson (2010) contend that the main strand of future research on illegal migration should be the differentiated agency of migrants in their engagement with the state's legal and policy frameworks. While migrants' illegality is widely condemned by states, host country governments have repeatedly taken a pragmatic stance, allowing selective regularization and distinguishing different types of legality and illegality (Ruhs and Anderson 2010, p. 197).

Although the spatial and demographic context plays a significant role in shaping differences in terms of integration across the three sites, we saw that the socio-economic background and capital of the first generation affect the integration of both immigrants and their children. More importantly, the way the two generations perceive their integration is significantly different: parents and children strive to integrate into different segments of the receiving society. In very broad terms, social and cultural integration is much more valued by the second generation, while the first generation puts most of its effort into structural integration. The second generation also expresses a broader perception of the opportunity structure in the host country, unlike their parents' mono-dimensional view of their migration project as aiming towards economic prosperity and education for their children.

The two generations, moreover, differ in the way they experience discrimination and are affected by discrimination differently. While the first generation feels discrimination based mainly on being different from the native population, discrimination towards the second generation is perceived on the basis of similarity. The second generation's physical, cultural and behavioural similarity or identicality to peer-age host-society natives causes the latter to partially 'reject' them, both in social spaces and in other spheres. This syndrome is particularly acute in Florence. Discrimination is thus an important barrier to integration. It obstructs structural integration, which in turn, supporting Gordon's (1964) view, becomes a barrier to social and cultural assimilation. This dynamic is most evident among the second generation. The tendency towards participation in non-ethnic institutions is also stronger among the second generation; however, this participation is obstructed by the low social and cultural capital transmitted by the parents and the general lack of resources.

These differences between the two generations also have a spatial element. Children and parents differ in their understanding of space and geography, and they plan

and evaluate their integration through different spatial frames of reference. Children are more cognizant of their locality, neighbourhood or city. This was especially evident among the Albanian teenagers in Florence. The disjuncture found between the two generations in terms of 'spatial cognition' constitutes one of the most striking intergenerational discontinuities.

Structural and cultural differences across the three sites affect the way immigrants and their children perceive their possibilities for integration and the various processes of integration. The situation in terms of institutional arrangements with regard to education, labour market, housing, religion and legislation is different at each of the sites, supporting the comparative context integration theory (Crul and Schneider 2010).

Referring to the distinction between *de facto* and official multiculturalism by Joppke and Morawska (2003), we see a difference in the way the Albanian immigrants and their descendants are positioned in the three cities. Two revealing examples are the role of immigrant organizations and schooling arrangements. Official multiculturalism in London implies an *a priori* recognition on the part of organizations and schools of the rights of minorities. Yet, in schools, small minorities deriving from new migrations are largely overlooked, as the *a priori* recognition is usually focused on old and sizeable minority groups. *De facto* multiculturalism is taking shape in Florence, as seen in local policies that promote interculturality, which have resulted in smoother integration in schools of the second-generation children, especially those that arrive at school age. In turn, as mentioned in Chap. 1, integration measures are largely absent in Greece, and Thessaloniki has no local policies to enhance integration of immigrants and their descendants. The role of organizations there is far less significant too, as structurally speaking, they are weakly catered for by the state.

Differing appreciations of multiculturalism are apparent in the integration trajectories of Albanian immigrants at each of the sites. Referring to the definition of Gans (1992), we found rapid acculturation of migrants in Greece and Italy, shown most clearly in their religious identities. But also in these two countries the process of assimilation—the shift of membership from ethnic to non-ethnic social organizations and institutions—has been much slower. Acculturation was largely imposed by assimilation pressures in the host society in the early stages of settlement and integration. Increasing signs of intentionality (Todd 2005) appeared in later stages, with more autonomy in evidence among migrants, who consciously adopted acculturation as a general strategy to obtain a more advantageous positioning in the host society, or felt remorse about the early-stage assimilation and identity change that had occurred. This process, furthermore, has gendered patterns, most pronounced in the case of the first generation, with women experiencing a more rapid process of acculturation and integration in general.

In terms of trajectories or patterns of integration predicted by the classic assimilation and segmented assimilation theories, a general upward mobility was found among the first generation at all three sites. In turn, there was very little evidence of ethnic embeddedness. Ethnic embeddedness was mainly found within the Albanian community in London, in pressures placed on girls and parents' expectations of

them. However, the issue here seems more a gendered view on moral values rather than those associated with a typical 'ethnic enclave'—spatially and socially segregated and organized around a common culture or ethnic niche, usually emphasizing differences with the host country's culture. As regards the theory of segmented assimilation, especially in the case of the second-generation teenagers, the three clear 'outcomes' of integration that the theory predicts are difficult to assess, not least because processes of adaptation and acculturation at this age are very complex. Another important element that makes the theory only partly applicable is the lack of a 'transnational' element in the integration of the second generation, which is the focus of the next chapter.