Chapter 5
Intergenerational Transmission of Ethnic Identity, Integration and Transnational Ties

Intergenerational transmission in the context of migration is a largely understudied phenomenon. This is despite significant research on the role of the family in socialization of children and young people, and the significant literature on migration from a generational perspective. After analysing identities, integration and transnational ties, this chapter turns to intergenerational transmission between the two generations. It starts with theoretical and conceptual aspects, followed by sections on transmission of identities, integration and transnational ties, ending with a conclusion.

In this study, intergenerational transmission is shown to be a complex and fragmented process, defined and redefined over time by first-generation migrants and their children and showing differences in terms of content, means and intensity of transmission. Regarding content, generational interaction involves transmission but also disruption, with some values being transmitted and others withheld by the parents. Teenagers are independent actors, not just passive receivers, in the process of intergenerational transmission, making it a two-way process. The means and intensity of transmission emerge as relative to the content being transmitted: the types of ties or identification and integration aspects. This chapter also contributes to the understanding of intergenerational transmission as contingent on the legal status of migrants and regularization processes, showing that these have an important effect on transmission, particularly with regard to integration.

5.1 Intergenerational Transmission in the Context of Migration: The State of the Art

Study of the relationship between generations is limited in the migration literature, although the significance of intergenerational relations in migration is manifold. Condon (2009) relates intergenerational relationships to major events in the migration process: the migration decision, maintenance of family relationships in the place of origin during migration, and the integration of the second generation. As

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these events are interrelated, intergenerational transmission among migrants in the receiving country is found to have features that distinguish it from that in native families (Phalet and Schönpflug 2001).

Much of the existing, limited literature on intergenerational transmission among immigrants is made up of quantitative studies conducted at a macro-level and based on large datasets on the performance of the first generation and how that affects the second generation's economic integration and socio-economic mobility (see, e.g., Bauer and Riphahn 2007; Borjas 1992, 1993). From a theoretical perspective, Esser (2004) adopts a similar focus. He maintains that structure—institutional and cultural factors at the national level—are the most important determinants of intergenerational transmission. Taking the example of the educational system, he attributes a major role in the process to generalized forms of capital, not limited by ethnicity, or to human capital in the form of technical and administrative knowledge.

Condon (2009) maintains that the relationship between the generations has particular relevance within the family sphere. However, more culturally oriented studies have also appeared in the form of surveys based on large samples (Nauck 2001; Phinney and Vedder 2006; Schönpflug 2001). These emphasize inter-group differences and the role of the context and structure in intergenerational transmission. Phalet and Schönpflug (2001) base their study on transmission of values of collectivism and achievement between generations of immigrants on two main assumptions. Firstly, they acknowledge the potential conflict in the process because of the differences in the cultural frameworks of the host society and the sending country. They also, secondly, note that transmission of values can be regarded as more important amongst immigrant families than amongst natives. Taking the case of Turkish families in Germany and the Netherlands, compared to Moroccan families in the Netherlands, they note differences in the context, content, mediation process and intensity of intergenerational transmission. Recent research has attempted the study of intergenerational transmission in the context of African migration (Attias-Donfut et al. 2012), adopting a mixed-method, comparative and transnational approach and offering accounts of development and maintenance of intergenerational relations. However, research that takes a retrospective approach cannot capture children's experience, whilst case study methodologies based on research at the national level do not allow theorization on intergenerational transmission as a process at a micro-level.

The role of context has been disputed in research emphasizing the role of capital transmitted from the first generation—human and cultural capital in particular. For example, Schönpflug (2001) hypothesized that, because of the differences in culture between the sending and receiving country, intergenerational transmission in immigrant families will be either dysfunctional or successful but segregated from the majority culture. This has been a major assumption of intergenerational transmission studies, which are based on the belief that migration disrupts the transmission process, especially when the culture of the host country is very different from the original one. Schönpflug (ibid.) studied the content of transmission and 'transmission belts'—the factors that can enhance transmission—focusing on fathers and sons, working with families in Turkey and with Turkish-origin families in Germany. She suggested that in a discontinuous cultural context parents would be less motivated to transmit their standards and attitudes to the next generation. However, she found that continuity in the cultural context does not enhance intergenerational

transmission. Rather, it was the father's educational level that moderated the intergenerational transmission, with parents' values found to be transmitted more significantly in families with high and middle-level education, but not in those with low education. Adolescence appeared to be a strong determinant of the intergenerational transmission dynamics, with early and middle adolescence being the most favourable for an effective transmission of values, making the inclusion of intergenerational transmission in the study even more important.

Discontinuities have also been found in studies of the intergenerational transmission of language, although the literature on this topic is particularly limited (Casey and Dustmann 2008). For example, Bleakley and Chin (2008) based on micro-data from the 2000 US Census found that parents' English language proficiency significantly and positively impacted the second generation's language proficiency, preschool attendance and educational attainment. Casey and Dustmann (2008), on the other hand, studied the intergenerational transmission of language and its impact in the labour market integration. They found that parental language proficiency does impact the labour market integration of the second generation, but this impact was significant only in the case of girls. This was explained by men's greater flexibility and access to jobs for which language proficiency is not so important.

More importantly, there is a tendency in the second-generation literature to see parents as a 'constant'—both culturally and in terms of settlement and spatial mobility. Migrant parents are seen as static and as the standard by which to measure differences with the children's new identities, whereas the dynamic life experience of parenthood is totally ignored. Getting married, becoming parents, growing old—these life-course milestones of the first generation are not taken into consideration when intergenerational transmission is studied.

In order to analyse the intergenerational transmission, the current study adopts the operationalization of Phalet and Schönpflug (2001) as a guiding tool. They studied intergenerational transmission in terms of content and the characteristics of the mediation process. However, questions on intergenerational transmission in this research were conceptualized as open-ended and the goal was to investigate the process as whole. Complementary to the quantitative research available on the topic, this book examines whether parents are prone to transmit to their children and what, how transmission varies through time and on different topics, and how patterns of integration of the first generation affect the intergenerational transmission to their children and vice versa.

5.2 Intergenerational Transmission of Identity

5.2.1 Transmitting 'Albanianness'

Intergenerational transmission of Albanian identity and culture has taken place according to three main trends. First—but only in a few cases—children report parents actively encouraging them to learn about the history of Albania and about customs and wedding traditions.

Second, there are cases of parents consciously deciding not to transmit their ethnic identity to the children. These were mostly instances in which the parents themselves were experiencing identity contraction, either because of harsh discrimination or as a way to fully assimilate into the host society. Parents may then choose not to teach their children Albanian, not to take them to Albania for visits and not to teach them Albanian customs. Parents usually eventually regret the decision not to transmit Albanian identity, especially where language is concerned. Nevertheless, the consequences of this earlier attitude for teenagers are irreparable in many cases. Teenagers find it hard to learn Albanian at an older age, and many of those who were taught to identify wholeheartedly with the host country's culture refuse to make any effort to connect with the parents' past.

Representing the third trend are Albanian migrants who expect their children to maintain a symbolic identification as Albanian, preserving some customs and respect for traditions and institutions, especially the family. Across the three sites I found a genuine interest among the second generation to learn about the folk culture of Albania—the old traditions, costumes and tales. Skanderbeg is by far the most popular historical figure in the narratives of the parents. Some teenagers in London are, indeed, quite ethnically 'aware' and 'involved', despite their ethnic identification being only symbolic. Some teenagers had taken the initiative to research the history of Albania and became active in cultural causes, such as the preservation of the Albanian language.

> Donika (female, 45, London): Yes, I often speak to them about Albanian culture. My husband tells them how we were raised and how we lived, but I tell him, 'Please, they don't understand.' I tell them about Skanderbeg, my husband sometimes about Enver Hoxha, but I don't like politics. They do like to hear about Albania in general. The youngest one, my daughter, asks me to tell her about the old songs and folkloric music.

Intergenerational transmission (and also disruption) also takes place through foods. These are not always welcomed by the children, but they were invariably mentioned by parents as expressions of their double identity. Some teenagers, too, expressed their double identity and belongingness through the food that was prepared and consumed at home, while those rejecting Albanian identity also took a stand, dismissing 'ethnic' cooking as a principal activity in the Albanian family.

> Mirjeta (female, 36, Thessaloniki): As for the cooking and food, they will like it one time and another time they prefer to eat something else. You know those things we used to like when we were in Albania, for example, *trahana* or *papare*,[1] the children are like '*ewww*'!
> Era (female, 14, London): When we are at home, we speak English, and then we speak Albanian as well. I don't know, we do a bit of both in language, food, everything. Like one night we could have chips and one night we could have… I don't know, something Albanian, like *pilaf* … when it's Eid or whatever… When it's Christmas we have a turkey, but we also have *baklava*[2] like Albanians and it's kind of mixed, if you know what I mean.
> Rudina (female, 18, Florence): No, we cook very Italian, like pasta, things like that. Not Albanian food, or sitting there and cooking for hours, like in Albania. We don't have that… [except] *baklava* [*smiles*]. We make my cousin who lives downstairs cook us *baklava*.

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[1] *Trahana*—food used for breakfast, similar to a handmade cereal. *Papare*—a sweet in central Albania.

[2] *Pilaf*—steamed dry rice, usually served with meat. *Baklava*—a sweet pie, typical dessert for special occasions.

As parents experience strong discrimination and negative stereotypes, they avoid putting much emphasis on ethnic identity. Discussions on Albanianness and Albania are also avoided due to the loaded meaning of 'Albanian' and the very negative connotations attached to it. For some, ethnic identity is transmitted indirectly by counteracting the bad stereotypes that exist about Albanians.

> Clara (female, 41, Florence): When he [my son] was going to school when he was little, he was coming back home crying. He was saying, 'They call me *Albanese*. I don't know why they insult me!' Because at home we tell him that we are *Shqiptarë*.[3] I had to explain to my son that *Albanese* is the translation of *Shqiptar* in Italian. Just like the *Italiani* are called in the USA, so the Albanians are called *Albanesi* in Italy. It was then he realized what was happening. Because listening to the TV and others speaking, he had thought that *Albanese* meant criminal!

Maintaining a positive attitude towards Albania and Albanianness in general and not cutting ties in the face of stereotypes is sometimes the best that parents can do in order for the second generation to not completely lose contact with their roots. Sometimes parents, especially the highly skilled ones, used indirect means, like books and positive documentaries on Albania, to trigger interest or increase knowledge of their children about Albania and its history and culture. DigitAlb service is present in many families and serves the same purpose. Therefore, when parents get engaged in the transmission of ethnic identity, they focus on 'core' elements or myths (Malcolm 2002), such as the language being a very old one in the Balkans. Parents also point to positive changes in Albania, such as the rapid development of tourism. Some among the highly skilled parents take a more proactive approach and try to challenge their children's feelings of inferiority because of their origins. Drawing on a bigger cultural repertoire they refer to important historical events and offer examples of a symbolic value by putting the modern discrimination of Albanian identity in a broader context.

> Pali (male, 48, Florence): I have continuously tried to liberate her [my daughter] from this kind of complex, basically for her not to be afraid [to admit her Albanian identity], although her country of origin is not liked, and there is nothing to be extraordinarily proud about in being Albanian. There are many good Albanian qualities, which should make one feel good. Among others, she also had an American friend. Her answer was, 'Dad, being American is something valuable, being Albanian is not that valuable.'… So yeah, she had this regret for being Albanian.

Parents are also cognizant of the enormous difference between them and their children's generation due to their own very simple childhood, starved of resources and entertainment. This impacts the 'content' of intergenerational transmission, and expectations on the part of the parents (Fig. 5.1).

> Agroni (male, 42, Thessaloniki): We Albanians don't have culture… And besides what to teach to the children? The oldest one comes back from school at 4.40 PM, what to teach her? She will have to do her piano lesson, to have a shower, to do her homework, so when can I teach her the Albanian culture? We had more free time when we were young in Albania, and besides there were different conditions. I used to care for my sister who was younger than me. My mother used to go to work, those were the laws of Enver [Hoxha].

[3] *Shqiptarë* is the Albanian translation for 'Albanians'.

Substantial differences were observed in terms of the intergenerational transmission of identity across the three sites. In Britain, a conservative attitude towards Albanian culture reflects partly the more traditional North Albanian origins of most Albanians there, but it can also be understood as a reactive stance towards a very different culture and environment and a perceived impossibility to embrace it. These differences create a cultural closure, in contrast to the southern cultures of Greece and especially Italy, with which Albanian first-generation migrants are more familiar. On the other hand, the problems of youths in the London suburbs are a real issue for Albanian parents for whom parenting is a top priority. Holding on to the Albanian culture is seen there as a way to protect the family and the children from social problems that many teenagers in the host country face.

As a result, the intergenerational 'gap' is more evident in Britain. Feelings of alienation were expressed by the parents, who suddenly find themselves unable to understand the youth culture around them. Parents in Britain were far more insistent in preserving Albanian culture, which was often equated with strict discipline and having a 'normal' family-centred life. By contrast, at the two Southern European sites, Albanian parents were generally very open towards the host society's culture, as long as respect for the family, education and hard work were appreciated by the second generation. Intergenerational transmission is most direct and linear among Albanians in Florence. According to Phinney and Vedder (2006, p. 182):

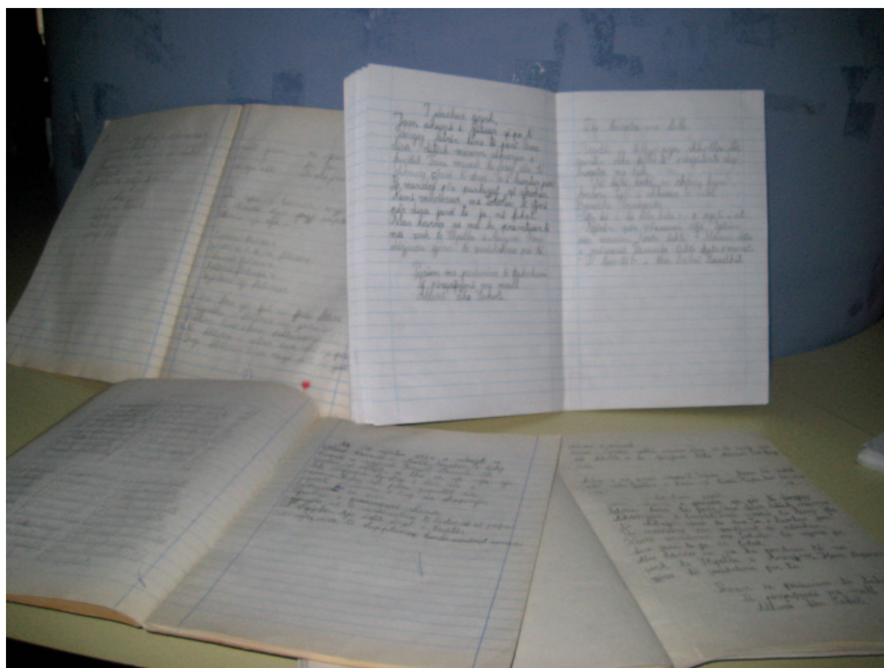

Fig. 5.1 Children's notebooks of Albanian language class organised by the association 'Mother Tereza' in Thessaloniki

> Acculturative pressures, beyond the effect of normal developmental processes, contribute to differences between immigrant adolescents and their parents…. Thus the intergenerational discrepancy is larger in the presence of what might be called an acculturation gap, that is, when adolescents lean towards assimilation and parents wish to maintain their own cultural traditions without assimilating.

The acculturation gap is small in Florence due to the affinity with the Italian culture and language which parents felt even before migrating to Italy. Even children born in Albania were sometimes given Italian names, such as Mario and Aldo. Parents' assimilation helps to soften the intergenerational divide.

> Michelino (male, 46, Florence): Of course, he [adolescent son] has his own mentality but I give him leeway because I know the mentality of Italian children. I cannot stop my child, to separate him from his peers and give him our Albanian mentality when he is making his life with the Italians. He has total freedom from us parents… We understand him, despite our tough life that we had before, we still know everything, although he thinks we don't. We pretend we close an eye, but we still keep an eye on him.

Differences across the three sites are also observed in terms of parents' and teenagers' attitudes towards intermarriages. In general, parents in Greece and Italy were open towards relationships and intermarriage between their children and the locals, despite their preference for the children to marry an Albanian. Albanian partners were preferred less to preserve ethnic identity than to suit the family's status and economic situation. On the other hand, some of the highly skilled urban-origin parents actually preferred their children to marry natives. By contrast, parents in Britain were very much against intermarriage with locals. The element of race, which is not prevalent in Greece and Italy, comes up as one of the most challenging topics for the parents in London. Among them, transnational marriages between their children and Albanians back in Albania were even being contemplated. There were also instances of marriages arranged at an early age for the girls, usually at the insistence of parents so as to prevent intermarriages, especially with people of other races. Parents ultimately dread intermarriages of any kind, expecting such relationships to involve unhappiness for their families and divorce for their children.

> Qerim (male, 46, London): This may be a mistake, but I have reached the point and have told my son, 'Even if she was the worst of Albanians, that's who I want you to marry, so that you stay together.'

As a result of the parents' attitude, many teenagers in London felt pressure to seek an Albanian partner.

> ZV: Do you have a girlfriend? I just wanted to know her ethnic origin.
> Lajmir (male, 18, London): Okay, at the moment, no. But only with Albanians, period! Simply I don't want to mix the race, for the family's sake.

5.2.2 Language

Language is often quoted as a main feature of Albanianness, as part of family tradition and a means to connect with Albanian relatives. Language is transmitted as a resource or as part of identity, but often not accompanied by other elements of

Box 5.1 Sites of Socialization: Albanian Organizations and the Youth in London

Today I was invited to a party organized by an Albanian organization in London for teenagers. For some time I had been planning to visit an Albanian business in London, and this was also an opportunity to do that, too. The restaurant in East London hosting the party looked much like the restaurants in Albania: the way the tables were arranged, the banknotes attached at the bar (thought to bring financial reward), the television tuned to the Albanian channel BBF which promotes commercial Albanian music, and the Albanian food.

A group of boys arrived first. They were of Kosovan origin. The oldest opened his laptop and began to set up the WiFi. When the girls came in they sat in another corner, completely indifferent to the boys. A father came in to see for himself who he was leaving the daughter with. As more teenagers arrived, the pattern became increasingly evident: girls and boys sat or stood apart and did not talk to each other. 'Where are you from?' a 12-year-old boy of Kosovan origin asked me. 'From Albania', I answered. 'Hey girls, this girl is from Albania'; he tried to start a conversation with the Albanian girls nearby. They shouted at him rather meanly and then completely disregarded him. 'They are not girls, man. They are dogs! Whoof!! They are vicious, man!' he said, referring to the rough response from the girls. An Albanian mother in her late thirties approached me:

> Do you see girls and boys apart? I don't know… I don't understand! In my time, we used to make friends, kiss and hug the boys of our class or neighbourhood. But here [in London] only the mountain people [she means the highlanders from northern Albania] have come. They don't let the girls go out, not to mention socialize with boys. I asked one of the families I know whether his daughter was coming to this event. He was totally against it.

At some point Besmir, the boy of Kosovan descent, set up his WiFi and had prepared a rap song and dance with his friend. He started to sing, everyone sat down to listen. The music stopped and it was time to eat. The 'rapper' boy asked, 'Is this *halal*?' He wanted to know about the meat served at the party. I didn't know, but asked the bartender, who swore vigorously that it was *halal* for sure, since he was himself a Muslim.

I left the party both enlightened and confused. Certainly capturing these interwoven identities was not easy, but observing the interaction in these different sites of socialization was fascinating.

Albanian ethnicity or belongingness. Many Albanian parents consider the language as the main common feature and show an appreciation of it as a resource of cultural distinction. This attitude often grows among parents after many years of life in the host country. During the first years of immigration, many parents recall having very little time to spend with family and placing very little emphasis on their children's mastery of Albanian. The difficulties they themselves encountered with the host

country's language also play a role in preventing them from pressuring their children to learn or retain Albanian.

The transmission of language is affected by the migration experience and the stage that parents are at when children are growing up. This is particularly evident in London, where the Albanian first generation is very 'behind' in terms of English language proficiency. In Florence and Thessaloniki, parents learnt the host country's language earlier and quicker, although most were still not proficient in reading and writing. In London the involvement of teenagers in the process of regularization and paperwork provides a passive way for them to maintain some Albanian.

With few opportunities for learning Albanian through formal language classes, language is mostly transmitted in a passive way, through everyday communication at home. Children's language is therefore informal and dialectal, depending on the parents' region of origin in Albania and their level of education. Other less common means of teaching language are limited readings in Albanian, the Albanian media (DigitAlb) and interaction during visits in Albania. However, due to differences in the host-country language proficiency of the parents, this process is fragmented. Moreover, younger siblings tend to be less proficient in Albanian, though they usually have better mastery of the host language. Siblings often speak English, Italian or Greek amongst themselves.

Language proficiency can play an important role in parent-child relations and contribute to the shaping of power dynamics within the family. There is a transnational shift in the positionality of parents and children because of language which impacts on the migration experience in the host country and the transnational experience in the 'home' country for the parents and children, respectively. It should be mentioned once again, however, that the highly skilled first-generation migrants invest more in learning the language of the host country. This enables them to help their children with their lessons, and in general increases the social capital that parents transmit to the children. Lida (female, 46, Thessaloniki) was asked what language she uses at home:

> Both. I had to learn Greek because I couldn't speak when I went shopping. Now I know how to speak and also to read a bit, but I can't write. I actually learnt more from the children. They learnt quickly at school and I picked up a lot from listening to them. They used to laugh at me because I used to make many mistakes. But guess what? Now I am their translator, because they don't speak Albanian, so for some words and expressions they have to ask me.

The intergenerational transmission of language is also affected by discrimination and is part of the overall strategy of integration in the host society. Parents who migrated in the early 1990s preferred to have the language of the host country taught to their children (Zinn 2005). However, more than a premeditated choice, the disruption in intergenerational transmission of language seems to have been a decision made by inexperienced migrants under pressure of strong discrimination in the first years of settlement in Greece or Italy, where more vital issues were given priority. As discrimination is diminished nowadays, and as the second generation comes of age, the lack of proficiency in Albanian is acknowledged as a barrier both for transnational experiences and for other plans, like return and other potential

projects related to Albania. As the second generation comes of age, children start regretting their full assimilation and lack of proficiency in Albanian, which prevents them from interacting with their home country and experiencing the 'simultaneity' (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004) otherwise natural to their transnational condition. This is especially the case of teenagers in Florence where assimilation of the second generation is most evident. Sometimes this regret manifests in feelings of reproach towards parents for their failure to transmit the language.

> Lela (female, 37, Florence): When they were little they didn't mind [not knowing Albanian], but now that they are older… and are confronted more often with Albanians, because there are many Albanians of their generation and more or less they speak Albanian… I see now they would like to speak Albanian. But they speak really badly and they blame it on me. And I say that for me it was fundamental that I teach you Italian. Because that meant for me that the children could be integrated in the institutions and for example be able to stay after school and socialize with the Italian children. And besides the priority of immigrants is to work and pay the rent.

The transmission of ethnic identity and especially that of language is also enhanced by the presence of relatives and grandparents in Italy (see also Levitt 2009). Increasingly, the grandparents visit and, at times, co-habit with their children and grandchildren in Tuscany. In the Italian context this is increasingly common, and with the naturalization of Albanians in Britain the extended family is more present there also.

However, while King and Vullnetari (2006) demonstrated the importance of the 'migrating grandparents' in providing care to the grandchildren in their study of Thessaloniki, my study shows that the role of grandparents is broader. The first impact is shown in the retention of language. Grandparents do not speak Italian (or Greek, etc.) and cannot learn it, so this encourages the family members, including children, to speak Albanian. Furthermore, as grandparents feel far more attached to Albania, they want to watch Albanian TV. Sometimes the arrival of grandparents is the reason for Albanian migrant families to buy the satellite package offered by DigitAlb. The presence of Albanian media in turn has improved the language proficiency of the children.

5.2.3 Ethnicity at a Micro-Level: The Family

Respect for the family is one of the main normative values that the first generation strives to transmit to the second. Against an individualized and materialistic culture of the receiving society, parents hold on to family and kinship solidarity as important values that will ensure happiness and stability for their children. The intergenerational transmission of these values to adolescent children has sometimes taken place, however, against a backdrop of fragmentation of the family due to migration. As a result, the intergenerational transmission is very much affected by the way the bonds and boundaries within the family are played out.

The importance of the family is very strong too among teenagers, although in some cases they also adopt more independent and 'casual' ideas about marriage and family.

> ZV: So what would be your main future life goals?
> Darina (female, 13, London): To finish university, to become a dentist, to have my own clinic, to buy my own house, be happy… Um, maybe have a family, I don't know… I like the single life… just stay with my family, my mum and dad, to have them for a long time.
> ZV: Are there conflicts between you and your parents?
> Sidorela (female, second generation, 22, Florence): [At present] the way I live it's okay for my parents. But maybe there will be problems in the future because I would like to go abroad for some time, but parents want children to stay at home! So they would like that I live in some place close to them so that they can see me almost always! Yes, conflicts of this kind.

On the other hand, compromises on issues of independence, casual dating and night-life have been used by parents' as a strategy against an open conflict of values with adolescent children, or a loss of interest of the second generation towards parents' values systems and the family in particular. In Thessaloniki and Florence, parents are open to children adopting new cultural practices and the host country's ways of behaving. In general a combination of the two traditions is expected from the children, but parents do insist on the preservation of respect for the family. Parents sometimes struggle to transmit a sense of respectable status and authority. Although issues of emotionality and bonding do not take precedence in immigrant families, they are more observed in families of the highly skilled immigrants.

> Dora (female, 43, Florence): We have tried to 'shrink' a little bit and to come to their level so that they understand our existence, because we cannot cancel our past! We need to preserve our past because it is a beautiful past. They [the children] know very well from which family they come from. Because they remember the feasts at home with all the relatives, grandparents and everything… And the values we had… so when we are at home I put the DVDs of their birthdays so that they can see themselves, but also the grandpa and grandma that passed away, the relatives that are far away, some cousins… because it the feelings and the emotions that make you live, because life is not the pub. Life is not the disco!

Within the context of a healthy family, other matters, such as ideological and cultural issues, and especially gender roles, are discussed and redefined. Mothers take care that they transmit autonomy to the daughters while they try to prevent *machismo* and inculcate respect for gender equality in their sons. This is especially the case among Albanian parents in Florence. Some parents would like to pass certain symbolic traditions to the children, but see these traditions within the framework of family life and the collectivity more in general, rather than as fostering a distinct ethnic identity in their children. Self-identification as Albanian is thus related to family traditions and a healthy family life rather than to the group's ethnic identity.

5.2.4 Lifestyle Values and Cross-Generation Tensions[4]

Apart from the intergenerational transmission of the 'core' elements of ethnic identity and important institutions such as the family, communication between the two

[4] Note that despite this aspect being important in terms of intergenerational transmission, this is not a project that falls in the field of social psychology and so cross-generational tensions are not a

generations takes place through an everyday negotiation of values and the shaping and reshaping of daily life practices. At all three sites parents generally praise the host-country culture for its good manners—being cultured was associated with the idea of having *kulturë* under communism, which referred to having good manners and being presentable. This is not to say that intergenerational conflict does not take place. There is a typical 'intergenerational disruption' because of the inability of parents to keep up with the changes taking place in the family because of the impact of social and economic conventions in the host country, usually referred to as a different lifestyle. At a *micro*-level, however, parents notice the differences between their idea of good behaviour and responsibility, and children's adoption of the host country's individualistic attitude, rejection of authority in the family and lack of appreciation of the sacrifices parents have made in order to achieve an improvement in material comfort.

> ZV: Do you speak at home about Albanian and English culture and the behaviour of the children?
> Fatmir (male, 41, London): Every day, every day… something happens with the children and we say, 'We are not English!' or 'We are not African'… For example, when someone comes home, you should stand up to show respect, whereas when I enter my son's room I see the girls and boys with their feet up on the couch saying 'Hiiii'; they just look at me once. They don't have respect, they throw things here and there. We used to have culture, maybe because we didn't have much, I don't know! We used to keep things with care, to clean them. Whereas nowadays, they don't care, 'no problems, I will take another one', they say. This has made people lazy and has affected culture and everything else.

This kind of conflict is especially lamented by daughters, who just want to have a social life like their host-country peers. If parents oppose this, the children put it down to the 'Albanian culture'.

> Anna (female, 16, Thessaloniki): Sometimes… when I go out, because I see my friends who are Greeks, their parents are more free, more laid-back… They return home later… But mine instead are… typical Albanian parents. For example, 'Come back on time', 'Where did you go?' 'Be careful!' 'Don't have boyfriends!' 'Don't do this; don't do that…' the classics! So it is only on these topics that we sometimes have conflicts.

Boys are reproached about sexuality, appearance and nightlife. In some cases parents find it hard to accept boys' nightlife, even when they are in late adolescence. This puts considerable pressure on both parents and teenagers.

> ZV: Would you say your parents would like you to behave in a certain way?
> Alfonso (male, 15, Florence): You could say that. For example, when I wear big trousers, 'Go back and change!'… When I wear hip-hop loose trousers. Sometimes I get ready for school she goes, 'Why have you worn these?' Sometimes when she is not paying attention I just run out of the house quickly [*smiles*].
> Dora (female, 43, Florence): We also had arguments because my husband had that idea, 'Be careful with the girls, the one that you get to know, that's the one you should marry. I don't want you to change girls like the Italians do. We are not Italians!' That's what he asks from them. 'Choose a good girl, and don't play her around, because they are all the same.' And that's where the arguments started, because it's not easy, it's actually very difficult. And then, 'not Italian, but Albanian'.

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main focus of this study. However, the data are testimony to feelings and experiences that participants have expressed in terms of generational issues.

Those second-generation teenagers who rejected the Albanian 'identity' showed a judgemental attitude towards Albanian culture. Parental discipline and rules were often mixed with Albanianness. As a result, intergenerational conflict at times caused teenagers to identify reactively with the host country's culture. While discipline and the strict attitude of parents are considered important features of the Albanian culture, ethnic identification, or at least the choice of the ethnic label (in the case of Genti, below, Greek), is related to the main issues teenagers face in their everyday lives and the way these are handled within the family.

> Genti (male, 18, Thessaloniki): Definitely Greek… Greek. Because I have been here since I was eight years old and it's difficult for me to have the Albanian culture. I don't think the Albanian culture is inferior, but I feel more like a Greek boy. And that's why we have debates with our parents all the time. For example, they reproach me and tell me, 'You are always going out for coffee', basically things like this that I do, understand? The cultural differences between countries. Here teenagers go out every night to clubs and tavernas.… 'What are these people doing?' my mum says. 'How can they go out every night?' I used to tell her, 'I am coming back at 2 or 3 AM.' 'At 10.15 you should be home!' But I used to tell her my friends return at that time. I still have many problems because of this, not only me but all the children that have come here. Because they have grown up here in another way…. Being Greek it's more…. It's like you are free. Greek parents and children don't have that distinction between them.

The issues of discipline and sexuality are especially sensitive in London. Parents' lack of social integration makes them overprotective and cuts the children off from the social life of their peers. This is even more emphasized because of the lack of social and emotional support that parents in Britain face due to their lack of extended social networks and their recency of arrival.

5.2.5 Migrant Identity and the Communist Past

Another problematic theme is the transmission of what was described in Chap. 2 as the 'migrant identity'—the ambition to achieve and excel through hard work. In general the migrant status is not particularly empowering for the parents as key actors in the transmission of this value, especially if they have become de-skilled through migration. Whilst some teenagers appreciate their parents' sacrifice and empathize with the 'migrant identity', which in turn favours a more linear intergenerational transmission of certain values, in many cases children do not welcome the migrant identity discourse. An opposition is created between simplicity and hard graft that the parents are used to (both in Albania and in Greece, or wherever) and the materialism of the teenagers.

> Agron (male, 42, Thessaloniki): Look, there are two main factors. That system [the communist system] taught us many things in different conditions, but now the conditions are different, there aren't the same conditions. We were doing things because of fear, because of ideology, that's why we had that self-containment, but nowadays you can't restrict the children because they have their lives, the mentality is totally different. One day they might even say to you, 'You know what? Why don't you get out of my sight, because I have my own life, I do what I want!' But it's also this other thing, that we cannot provide the same living conditions that Greek, English or German parents can, who have a secure life. We

> still don't know where we are! Although we are in Greece, a bit better than in Albania, and we aren't suffering for water and electricity, but financially… we can't afford much, so we teach the children with that poverty we grew up with in Albania.… But my daughter cannot understand the topic of communism. I have to explain to her the communist theory, the development, the good and bad sides, that it had a principle that everyone had a job, but there was no profit, understand?

Not always is this past known by, or transmitted to the children. In some cases, there is curiosity on the part of the second generation, but there are also cases in which teenagers resist such narratives by the parents. The stories about communism are usually told in order to make clear the contrast between parents' past and children's current opportunities. Communism is usually described in highly negative terms because of its restrictions and lack of options. Yet some parents look back and appreciate the closeness between people and the collective culture, which contrasts with the individual culture in the places where they now live. Certain stories related to communism fascinate the children.

> ZV: What do you know of your mum's past?
> Rudina (female, 18, Florence): I know something, the regime under which people used to live. The communist regime, I know about her family, yes, more or less I know everything… The communist regime was constraining people to do the military service. All women had to attend military service. This has really hit me! How did she do that, I try to imagine. When I told my friend Francesca that my mum has done military service, she started laughing [*smiles*].

Parents often withhold information from their past, especially about the dire poverty and living conditions in Albania, as they feel it is difficult for the children to understand. In other cases, as Le Espiritu and Tran (2002) found among Vietnamese in the USA, Albanian parents point to differences in material resources and opportunities to develop that their children have, compared to the way they grew up. In general, parents who themselves experienced assimilation want their children to see only their new identities. They may withhold information about the communist past to avoid expressions of contempt and pity from the children, which would sadden the parents or make them feel ignorant and weak in front of their offspring.

> ZV: What do you know about your parents' past in Albania?
> Egla (female, 15, Florence): Sometimes when my brother or sister ask many things, they always tell us how in Mirditë they used to carry wood, and they used to travel during the night because they lived in the mountains, my mum used to work when she was young, and they didn't have whatever they wanted to eat, like us here. So when my brother asks for things, my dad says 'Okay, I will get that for you, but think about the way we used to live.'

The issue of materialism is especially salient among the Albanian second generation in Florence, as material goods are embraced as a way to assimilate. This causes an intergenerational 'gap' in both an emotional and a cultural sense. The highly skilled and successfully integrated parents actively challenge this attitude; they refer to global frameworks of understanding poverty and fighting materialism. A highly skilled parent in Florence, for example, took her teenage sons on a trip to Africa to challenge their demand for expensive clothes and their high emphasis on appearance. The difference with these experiences is that they are not only used in order

to discipline or motivate the children; parents are themselves coming to terms with materialism and the severe lack of resources and their materially poor past, especially during communism.

> Lela (female, 37, Florence): I have tried [to give my children a normal life] but not only by telling about the life we had because it's difficult. It's difficult for me to tell them that I saw a banana for the first time when I came to Italy! It's difficult for me to make a comparison of my childhood with theirs! It's impossible! It's unimaginable because they haven't lived that…. I can't make comparisons between my life and theirs because in any case when they came here they had TV, videos, things that for us… I couldn't even think about them. There was only one TV in the neighbourhood; there we used to gather, all the children. Because there were only three 'authorizations' to buy a TV for the whole neighbourhood, so who would get it first? And besides, the TV was bought with a 'lottery'! Forty people from the same cooperative used to contribute monthly to a common sum … [*sighs*] I can never forget these memories because I treasure what I have lived, but it is incomprehensible to the children! It took some time for me to believe this myself and was wondering whether they would understand. But they used to respond to me, 'Mum, that's your life, things that you have done. It doesn't concern me.'

While these findings have particular resonance in the case of the Albanian migrants and their children because of the communist past, they are compatible with other research in the field. Commercial consumption, hedonism and a re-articulation of identity through 'appearance' are found to be characteristics of the Italian society since the 1980s (Ferrero-Regis 2008). In turn, research on materialism and adolescence has shown that increased materialism is strongly related with peer influence and decreased religiosity (Flouri 1999). The findings of the current research show once more the strong tendency towards assimilation of the Albanian youth, seen through their embracing of their peers' socialization and consumption patterns.

5.3 Intergenerational Transmission of Integration

5.3.1 Parents' Settlement and its Impact on Children's Integration

Consistent with other research, this study found the intergenerational transmission process of Albanians in Thessaloniki, Florence and London to be strongly affected by the patterns of integration of the first generation (Levitt and Waters 2002). Across the three sites, parents' lack of proficiency in the host country's language, in particular, was voiced by both children and parents themselves as one of the main difficulties that the families faced. This forced the children to take up many of the parents' responsibilities in terms of managing family life, such as dealing with institutions, doing paperwork and connecting the parents with the outside world. The lack of language skills creates divisions between parents and children and sometimes also resentment among the children towards parents who cannot perform their parental role, especially in school with teachers and peers. More importantly,

parents' inability to communicate and be self-sufficient has damaged parent-child boundaries within the family, as parents have been unable to function and children have missed parents as role models and figures of authority. Parents' lack of experience with the host environment and lack of language skills sometimes led children to feel let down.

> ZV: Has their language been a problem to you?
> Anna (female, 16, Thessaloniki): In the beginning, when I was at school and my mum and dad came to get the grades, they didn't know Greek so well and I felt a bit ashamed. I felt a bit bad. But now they know it well, I don't have a problem.

Especially in London, there are cases of strong 'gendered' perceptions related to children's educational performance and future integration in the labour market. In general, mothers emphasize the empowerment of daughters through education and a potential career, referring to their own experiences of gender oppression in Albania and within their marriages. Their perceptions of gender divisions in labour and family furthermore influence their suggestions of career choices for their children, for sons reflecting the need to earn a living and for daughters the possibility of longer term career-building.

> ZV: How do they do at school?
> Lutfie (female, 36, London): They are boys and as boys they do okay, average. If I had a girl, I would push her more for education so she gets 'a job with a chair' [Albanian way to refer to office-based jobs].
> ZV: Do they want to go to university? What job do they want? What do they want to become?
> Lutfie: Mechanic, plumber, cook—jobs with money.

Parents' evaluation and expectations of their own and their children's integration are often related to their past and their upbringing under communism. For many low-skilled parents, the best outcome of their migration project—economic security and security in the family—is mentioned as satisfactory, although as long-term migrants there is in all cases a critical self-evaluation of their trajectory and the evolution of their economic and social integration in the host country. The welfare and progress of the children was an important reason to migrate, and many parents have made heroic sacrifices and submitted themselves to harsh living and working conditions in order for their children to have better opportunities. Some parents explain these sacrifices in terms of self-denial—'forgetting who we were'—describing a rapid and painful de-skilling process in order to provide the necessary resources for their children's education.

It should be noted once again that the process of settlement followed a different course in the three sites of this study. In Thessaloniki and Florence, one parent generally came first, nearly always the father, and the rest of the family joined him after a few years. This allowed parents to get regularized, find stable employment and learn the language to some degree. This accumulated human and social capital prepared a smoother settlement path for the rest of the family and children.

In Britain, parents and children migrated together in most cases. While parents were keeping their eye on the labour market and financial gains, worrying about the outcome of their status and coping with psychological problems, children had

to adapt to their parents' insecurity and to their inability to function in the country where they were trying so hard to settle. In some cases, this failure of parents to integrate, which then became a burden on the teenagers, led to remarkable development of the latter's agency.

> Qerim (male, 46, London): There are problems between children and parents, but the role of parents should be great; all the vices of the children are parents' deficiencies. My older son, now sixteen, slams the doors around the house, but that's not him, that's me coming home from work at 10 PM and going back the next day to work at 5 AM for years and years when he was younger. Why? Because we were with a 'negative'; my friend was taken from his house with his wife and children at 5 AM and was deported [*sighs*].
> Era (female, 14, London): I would like them [my parents] to speak English because it would make my life so much easier. I wouldn't have to translate for them, you know… all the time. I don't know, when we go to solicitors, when we phone up important people, everything… I translate for them, I do forms, housing and stuff like that.
> Altin (male, 16, London): We had to go and see different people, like judges. We had to go to Croydon, the Home Office. Usually I would go with my mum and dad, because I would help them with translating. I would have to always call, like when someone important would call, an English person would call, I would help to translate that 'I am a foreigner' or whatever, something like that. So yeah, it did get in the way of school.

5.3.2 Transmission of the Migration Project

In general, both parents and the teenagers considered the migration to have been a good step for the family, an opportunity 'for a better life'. Girls were appreciative of the migration so they could live a life without fanaticism and restrictions. There was also an appreciation of the opportunities offered by the host country in contrast to the living standards in Albania.

> ZV: What do you think about the decision of your parents to come to Greece. Was it a good or a bad decision?
> Anna (female, 16, Thessaloniki): A good decision. If we were still in Albania, we would be like my cousins there: a bit poorer…. Okay, it is nicer there. They are more human, closer to each other, but they are let's say… live in poverty. Here in Greece we… are a bit more comfortable, better-off. We are better here, so I think this decision was good.

The only difference of opinion was found among teenagers whose parents were highly skilled and had experienced de-skilling because of migration. They expressed empathy, but at times also contempt, for their parents' decision to migrate.

Especially because of the sacrifice they submitted themselves to in reaching and settling in the host country, parents are very set on the success of their migratory plans, which are largely concentrated on the children. Sometimes the success of the migration project is equated with the realization of children's education, the securing of financial stability and an overall better future.

> Drita (female, 45, London): So far I am very pleased with the children's progress. I hope they will continue this way and I will be the happiest mother in the world if my children become someone. I tell them, 'Look at your mother, how she is living on benefits, like a piece of… Even if I started work, I would be working as a cleaner, so please take my

> example and study hard!' And my daughter comes back from school and says she got a high grade I am in tears because I think I suffered but my children won't.

Parents emphasize taking advantage of opportunities, but also a goal-oriented life, focused on achieving financial security for the family and providing a better future to the children. Children, however, do differ in their perceptions of their parents' migration and sacrifice. Some teenagers, especially those who experienced the first years of migration while they were growing up, bonded with their parents and express empathy for the hardships they suffered.

> Albi (male, 13, London): I think it [my parents' life] is very hard, because they have spent all this like stuff. They have been working to spend money on like a house. Every time she says they worked hard, I believe her. It is really hard to get a house in England, because it costs you a lot. I kind of feel sorry for them.
> Aldo (male, 16, Thessaloniki): My parents have come here to earn money and buy a house and make our future. We are not here to wander around and kill time as the Greeks do. We have come here from another country for a better future…. They want me to go to university because they don't want me to struggle and get exhausted as they did for so many years. They want to see me well-off, with a house, with an office-based job, so that I won't be 'under the sun' like they were when they came here.

Many parents try to 'dilute' the discrimination that their children face and, interestingly, they intentionally avoid inducing negative feelings towards the host country in their children. On the one hand, this attitude shows a consciousness of the politics of identity, an acknowledgement of the existence of ethnic boundaries and an acceptance of the very porous boundaries around the Albanian 'group'. On the other hand, good parenting and children's prosperity seem to take priority over the collective identity and its recognition. There are also cases when parents find it hard to acknowledge discrimination themselves, and especially of their children. This is also a way to react towards a possible diagnosis of their decision to migrate as negative and harmful to their family.

> Monda (female, 50, Thessaloniki): We do not have this attitude… like pushing children to be against the Greeks, because if we would say to the children, 'The Greeks do this, the Greeks do that!' then the child develops hate, because these things are taken from the parents. We don't want the children to have hate. We let them grow with the culture of here. We will give them the Albanian culture, our family tradition, the love and not to forget Albania. Even when it comes to history, we tell them this is our history, this is how things stand. We don't know what historians and states do; that's their job. We are taught this way. They are taught in a different way, and everyone has his own right. We don't induce hate in children… No, no.

Since perceptions of the success of the migration project differ among the first generation across the study sites, there are differences in the way they transmit their family's migration project to the children. Since the realization of a better future for their children is held as one of the main goals of the migration project, the more the first generation gets its migration goals realized, and the more the second generation comes of age, the more the parents feel uncertainty and anxiety about their children's future in the host country. In Greece and Italy, the main issues relate to structural integration. In Greece they are especially associated with an uncertain legal status and a very impenetrable higher education system.

> Pali (male, 48, Florence): Every time we used to have conflicts with my wife around the decision to come to Italy we would be saying, 'Our life is how it is, but we are constructing our daughter's future'. Sometimes this is also an excuse to justify our decisions… putting the welfare of our children first and feeling like a devoted parent. But then when we see that the interest of her generation here for education is zero we wonder whether this was a mistake. We ruined our future, we abandoned mother and father, our job and all the rest… and when we think that things could have gone differently, we wonder whether migrating was not a good decision.

In Britain parents express concern about teenagers' social integration and intermarriages since there are positive expectations about structural integration due to the gaining of citizenship, a prestigious educational system and a flexible labour market. Possibilities of return to Albania are evaluated and contrasted with the chances of entering higher education and getting integrated in the labour market in the host country, while the difficulties of reintegration in the home country are an important theme in these 'British' narratives. Seeing the presence in the host country as an opportunity, mothers in London comment on their children's complacency, individuality and autonomy as distinct values of the second generation, which do not meet parents' expectations. The narratives also give interesting insights into the differences between the (limited) everyday mobilities of children in metropolitan areas, compared to the freedom experienced by the first generation in their premodern home country.

> Mirlinda (female, 34): We enjoyed our childhood, we used to play outdoors, but our children stay closed in at home all the time.
> Arjana (female, 32): Well, our children don't lack anything. This is making them lazy and they are falling behind with the lessons. Here [in England] they have all the possible opportunities. I got engaged by my father at the age of 16 and then I had to quit school. It was really finished at that point!
> Mirlinda (female, 34): It is difficult to bring up children here. They have a lot of freedom. When we were children we didn't even think we could oppose our mothers! Here the child says everything in your face how he feels about something. I mean, we got married and we didn't know what that involved!

The intergenerational transmission of integration, however, can be disrupted by parents' return plans and their parallel investments in a possible return to Albania. This obviously conflicts with children's general aspiration and plans to stay in the host country. Uncertainty about the poorly developed educational system in Greece makes parents pessimistic about their children's future and their decision to migrate with their families.

> Abaz (male, 44, Thessaloniki): I am just worried about the future. The children are in a foreign country. Will they finish school, will they work? What will they do? I am a bit worried about this. Sometimes I even think I made a bad decision for the children, probably I reduced their motivation. It would have probably been better if they were in their own country, in Albania. On the other hand, I think that they are abroad, they are in Europe. Greece is now a European country, there will probably be an extra opportunity… I don't feel very certain, to be honest, about the children's future.

5.4 Intergenerational Transmission of Transnational Ties

5.4.1 General Patterns

Previous research observes that transnational ties develop in two phases: in the beginning they are the outcome of international migration of the first generation, while in a second phase they are passed on to migrants' descendants and seem to develop a life of their own (Faist 2000a). In this study, the process of 'passing on' is dynamic and involves inter- and intra-generational differences, as well as tensions within the nuclear and the extended families of immigrants. The attitude of the parents towards transnational ties has changed over time, with a move from an appreciation of transnational ties because of obligations felt towards those left behind, to a view of transnational ties as more instrumental and dependent on the needs and conditions of the nuclear family in the host country. This change is positively related to the length of stay in the host country (see also Dahinden 2009). As a result, the change is much more evident among the first generation in the two southern sites, where Albanians have a longer 'history' of migration and settlement.

Although, summarizing key findings from the three previous chapters, agency and culture are important factors in determining the identification and integration patterns of both the first and the second generation, structural variables were also found to be important. In the case of transnational ties, both generations experience a higher degree of autonomy in terms of their establishment and maintenance. Furthermore, transnational ties of both the first and the second generation are related to their identification and integration patterns and vice versa.

As a result, the transmission of transnational ties exhibits various patterns with, in many cases, parents and children differing in their attitudes towards return visits. First, the maintenance or disruption of transnational ties may be 'linear'. This is the main pattern found in the field data. Here, the first generation keeps transnational ties and wants to pass them on, involving the second generation in the maintenance of those ties. However, there are also cases where the first generation has internalized stigmatization and discrimination, and therefore is prone to 'loosening' transnational ties. This second pattern affects children's attitudes and their actual establishment and maintenance of ties, not least because they lack resources to do so. Third, intergenerational transmission can show a discontinuous pattern, with the second generation being resistant towards the transmission of ties from the first generation. Or, children might act as independent actors in the establishment of ties, for example through the Internet or by showing keenness to continue visiting, despite parents' estrangement from Albania.

> Dana (female, 15, Florence): My parents don't want to go to Albania. Not at all! It's me who wants to go. For example, we went this year and had a lot of fun. Now they are saying 'after three years'. I really like to go. Next year I don't think we are going. They don't want to go, they don't like it [Albania].

Objective factors may obstruct the transmission of transnational ties. For example, the possibility to return on visits depends on parents' type of employment. Those

who have jobs in services or tourism, and many of those who are self-employed, find it difficult to travel during the holidays, because they have to work during these periods, though this is the only time their children have vacation from school. There are also differences between the highly skilled and the unskilled parents. The former tend to be more aware of the importance of cultivating the native language and of the negative impact of discrimination, which makes them keener on the maintenance and transmission of ties to Albania. They also encourage the second generation to be involved in other activities for cultural exchange.

However, we should not underestimate the differences in the motives of the first and the second generation for keeping ties with the homeland. Parents need to relate to their past in the homeland, to deal with feelings of loss and longing, memories of childhood, of places and of different sensations. They also need to work to smooth the disruption of their life course because of migration.

> Mondi (male, 48, Florence): When I go to Albania I am organized. Usually I go during the winter because of the work in the restaurant. My wife and children go in the summer, me during the winter. I go to Durrës to see my parents and the in-laws, from there to other relatives in Milot, and stay there. If I take 15 days off I divide them five in Durrës, five in Milot and five in Skrapar. I don't come back to Italy without going to Skrapar. Because it's the place where I was born… the nostalgia… it's the place where I was born. I just can't… can't go without seeing it. Understand? I have a picture this big at home.

Discrimination acts as a moderating factor in intergenerational transmission and, as a result, it affects attitudes towards transnational ties. A general dichotomy seemed to exist among the teenagers. Because of discrimination and exclusion in the receiving countries, some children preferred to cut all ties with Albania. Some even refused to say the name of Albania during interviews; they referred to it as 'there'. In these cases, transnational ties were conditioned by the image of Albania in the host countries, and also by the attitude of the receiving society, which considers these ties to be an expression of identification and loyalty towards Albania. In the second case, discrimination and the resultant exclusion in the host society inspired transnational ties as a way to make up for the lack of social life and friends. Nonetheless, teenagers' views on transnational ties, in particular, return visits can change over time.

> Rabije (female, 63, London): My grandchildren have never been [to Albania] since they came here. They refuse to go. They left so early, when they were very little… you know… parents are here with them.
>
> Anna (female, 16, Thessaloniki): We usually go at Christmas and Easter, and sometimes during the summer. We go because my parents want to go. I usually don't want to go. Because I don't have anything to do there, because we have a house in a village, and Albanian villages are… the roads are horrible! I am used to here in Greece where it's different. I don't know the language, nothing. And besides I don't like to go to Albania, that's why.… I will go less often in the future… because my parents will not tell me continuously what to do, and I will do what I want and I don't think that I will go to Albania let's say continuously. I will go sometimes, but not often.
>
> Vilma (female, 15, Thessaloniki): When I go there I get accustomed very easily. Immediately when I get out of the car I get accustomed with the place, I like to go out, to speak with people, to see what they learn, where they live. Because I have come here and I have learnt about Greek history, whereas about my country I know nothing and I like to learn many

> more things…. Here I feel like a stranger, I have been here 10 years and I still feel foreign. I go very often to Albania and I see the differences between the two countries and I see that I am not from here… It seems like I belong more to Albania than here.

In terms of adaptation in the host country and migrants' transnational orientation, my study contrasts with research that has found that a high degree of discrimination in the receiving country to be associated with 'reactive transnationalism' (Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002, p. 72) or a tendency towards engagement in activities that reaffirm migrants' collective identity (Faist 2000a; Popkin 1999). In the Albanian case, experiences of discrimination in the receiving country were found to cause disruption of transnational visits and a distancing of the second generation from transnational ties, since migrants' ethnic identification was linked to their maintenance of ties with the homeland. Transnational orientation is maintained or rejected on the basis of their self-identification, their identification by others, and their perception of the homeland (see also Leichtman 2005, p. 281).

In effect, the attitude towards transnational ties is related to attempts to divert discrimination and integrate into the host society. The identification of the Albanian children in Thessaloniki shows the deep impact that the negative articulation of Albanianness has had on the teenagers' identification and attitude towards their homeland (Vathi 2010a). In Italy, this articulation is more subtle, but the exclusionary attitude of the receiving society towards Italian identity and the pressure to assimilate has caused a similar attitude. There is, therefore, a relationship between identification as Albanian and feelings of affinity towards Albanian culture, and the propensity or lack of opposition towards transnational ties.

The following sections focus specifically on the transmission of attitudes towards visits to Albania and towards return.

5.4.2 Intergenerational Transmission of Attitudes Towards Visits

Despite their change in attitudes over the years, parents acknowledge the lack of social support to them and their families on the part of the host society as well as their children's exposure to discrimination. They see return visits as a source of much-needed support and 'fun time' to ensure a more positive childhood for the children.

> Mimoza (female, 39, London): The first time I went it was very emotional. It was very emotional…. Because I have mum and dad, brothers and sisters and I go to see them. And besides, come on, it's my country…. And for the children, so that they learn their language, the history, to know the places and to know the relatives. It's good for them to know their relatives.
>
> Bardhi (male, 45, Thessaloniki): When my daughter goes to Albania, with grandmothers, grandfathers, with the cousins there, she sees that her country is beautiful, she likes it. Because there during holiday visits she is more free, she makes friends.… All the time they have fun during the summer in Albania, and the communication with caring and loving people like grandparents, uncles, aunts and other relatives… their love is great. Because of this, the visits in Albania remain in children's memories. So my daughter wants to go often and when I ask her 'Do you like Albania?' She is always positive and wants to go. I believe

this is the reason, especially as they are under significant pressure here, with the Greek language… It's very difficult to bring up [Albanian] children in Greece!
Egla (female, 15, Florence): Mum takes these trips only for us. Before we used to go for the grandparents because they were old and we wanted to see them, but if it was for mum and dad they wouldn't go every year, because it's very expensive. But we have come to Italy and we are still very young so they send us every year; if it wasn't for us, they would go once in 2 or 3 years… But they sent us so that we don't stay here all the time, because there isn't much to do as you get stuck at home, everyone minds his own business so.

In the quote of Abaz below we also see how the return visits contribute to children's identification. This is a result of the emotional and social support that second-generation children experience during these visits, which serves as a resource, cushioning the effects of isolation and exclusion in the 'host' country.

Abaz (male, 44, Thessaloniki): My youngest son has a strong feeling of patriotism towards Albania. It surprises me because he came here one year old. We go always during the summer to Albania. He likes socializing there, because he has cousins of the same age. He plays with them, so he likes it better there than here. Here, he feels a bit excluded. Here there are many Greek, Russian and Turkish children but he is not very fast in making friends. He is shy. He has only one friend, so he always says, 'Dad I like it better in Albania.'

Return visits also help in introducing the children to their parents' past and in narrowing the emotional 'gap' between the two generations, which widens during the years of settlement in the receiving society. Many of the narratives refer to the children's lack of knowledge about their parents' past, education and lifestyle. These visits, therefore, help to counter feelings of disruption between the past of their parents and the family's current life as settled immigrants.

Entela (female, 42, Thessaloniki): We go first to see our relatives, I don't want to cut the ties. I want to go and see what's going on, what kind of changes, to see them from up close. I see the changes on TV, but I want to see them in reality. I also want the children to go and see the place. I don't want to distance them from Albania. For example, soon there will be a wedding of one of the relatives in the village of my husband in Lushnjë. And I asked my husband to take our holidays so that we could go with the children, because they don't know what the village looks like! They ask me time after time. So I want the children to go and see the village and the place where their father grew up.

Return visits can be especially significant for skilled migrants, who experience a temporal restoration of their professional identity. They thus provide a unique occasion for children to see this side of their parents' identity.

Fatmir (male, 41, London): When we went to Albania after eight years I took my son and went to the café where we used to go always with my colleagues from the theatre. And musicians were coming, both the professionals and the amateurs… They were coming and were hugging me, 'Hi, how are you?' Everyone. And we sat there for a coffee. My son was staring at us, 'They still respect you, even after so many years!'… That's why every time we go, I feel a different person when I go there.

The first generation's relations with the homeland, and especially with the extended family, condition the return visits of the second generation. But parents' relationships with the extended family are not always positive (see Levitt 2009, p. 1226). Children are sensitive to family conflicts, which in turn impacts on their perception of the homeland and Albanian culture.

> Era (female, 14, London): Yeah, the reaction of people and how they are over there. In Albania people are well… yeah… All they think about is, I don't know… money and things.
> Sidorela (female, 22 Florence): I have not been to Albania because my parents have come here to work. The fact is that when you go to Albania it's not that you have only two people waiting for you, you have the whole community! And when you go there, they all expect something, don't they? Even 10 euros. But if you make the calculations: two hundred people multiplied by 10 €euros.

Some second-generation teenagers find it hard to deal with kinship traditions and conventions of family support in Albania. This is most evident in the narratives of those in late adolescence, who have less appreciation of the affection and support of grandparents (or the grandparents may no longer be alive).

> Rudina (female, 18, Florence): My visits are like this: first of all when we go, we go all together, me, my mum, my cousins. So it's a little bit like sending me to my home [*smiles*]. We go there… okay, I go and see my aunt who lives in Tirana. I go often to her. But I don't feel at home, I feel a little bit like out of place. I go out with my cousins, go for a walk. But then I stay at home and can't wait to come back to my house here.
> Anna (female, 16, Thessaloniki): I go [to Albania], but I don't know anything. For example, when my mum goes she says, 'I feel so well in my village', whereas I don't like it in Albania. Because I don't have friends, I don't know the language, so I have difficulties. Whereas when I am in Greece I have my friends, I know the language, I feel more comfortable… that's it… To them, the visits mean a lot of things. Because they remind them of their childhood, their village, the people… they see their relatives who they love, people they grew up together with, so they have a good time, because they know the language so they don't have problems.

Older teenagers recognize the difference in meaning that these visits held for them and for their parents. Their reluctance to continue visiting is sometimes expressed in contrasting emotionalities of the two generations, as well as in attitudes towards a possible return.

5.4.3 Intergenerational Transmission of Attitudes Towards Return

Children's attachment to the 'host' country and parents' plans for children's education are the main reasons why parents put return plans on hold.

> Lirime (female, 38, London): It's a big one, because we are, you know… we are fighting. We are fighting. It is between us and the children. So that [return] is the big question mark. And we don't know what to do!

There is also a relation between return and intergenerational transmission. Families who plan to return are very oriented towards savings and investment in Albania. These parents put little effort into integrating in the local environment where they live, so the human and social capital they accumulate is very limited. The gap with the second generation in these cases can be enormous. Intentions and plans to return do, however, stimulate parents to teach Albanian to their children and since the family lives cut off from the rest of the receiving society and frequently visits Albania, children are transmitted and independently pick up many Albanian customs and are more in contact with Albanian culture.

> Clara (female, 41, Florence): One of my neighbours left the house 10 years without curtains! And the installations and other wires of the house were on the floor. 'Why should I fix up the Italian house?' she used to say. 'But your children are growing up here. What kind of idea of a home will they have?' Saving everything, she managed to buy two houses, one for each of her children. The children grew up here and they don't want to go to Albania, so the two houses have remained empty. In the end she was forced to buy a home here in Italy.

As mentioned earlier, second-generation teenagers are indecisive about return, although in all three sites parents' decisions to return in many cases depends on where the children will settle. Many parents express their wish to be close to their children in later life. Attachment to the children and the ties that both parents and children establish in the host country make return an unnatural move.

> ZV**:** Where do you see the future?
> Selim (male, 66, Florence): Well, we have an only daughter, so our life is related to hers… according to the tradition of the Albanian family, we are close to our children. So our future is where the future of Aulona is…. Her future is here, because it's here she was educated and got employed. And most likely it's here she will marry, when the time comes [*smiles*].

At times parents use the prospect of return as a threat to the children, to motivate them to succeed in their studies or to show better discipline. This again points to the disjuncture between parents and children in terms of their perceptions of their settlement and belongingness in the host country.

> Flutura (female, 43, London): If he continues like this, my son will do really well. Maybe my daughter will do even better, but she is very shy, only studies. We say to them every night, 'You have to study; if you don't study we will go back to Albania.'

It is very common for parents and children in the same family to have different plans and attitudes towards return. Differences between mothers' and fathers' attitudes are common, too. Where there are differences, Albanian men appear keener to return. They feel less socially integrated abroad and are more symbolically attached to Albania.

> ZV: Where do your parents see their future and your future?
> Altin (male, 16, London): Well, my mum wants to stay here, to be honest.… She wants to earn more money. Maybe build another house in Albania or something. My dad… definitely wants to go to Albania, I think, because his mum is getting old, you know, he wants to spend time with his mum. He goes every summer of course, with us, but he goes winter as well and he leaves us here, so he goes winter to see his mum, on his own. So yeah, he wants to go to Albania for his mum, but he has to stay here for our education, for our future.

5.5 Conclusions

This chapter examined the intergenerational transmission of ethnic identity, integration and transnational ties between first-generation Albanian migrants and their adolescent children. Far from a quantifiable process, intergenerational transmission was found to be complex and fragmented. Its features appear to be changing over time, involving redefinitions of concepts, values and practices and of their

importance, by both parents and children. Intergenerational transmission is largely conditioned by parents' capital and discrimination in the host society. Means and strategies of transmission are focused on counteracting stigmatization and are characterized by a lack of focus on ethnic identity and culture of origin, in favour of equipping the second generation with universal values and lifelong lessons.

Intergenerational transmission, however, was found to have particular features, depending on the content of transmission. Ethnicity is sometimes 'activated' as a way for parents to react to the intergenerational 'gap', which is generally wider in immigrant families. In this dynamic process, parents are the main actors. Furthermore, parents purposefully transmit some values and institutions, while consciously withholding others.

Highlighting the difference between the primordial understanding of ethnicity and the experience of ethnicity in everyday life is also important in the case of the intergenerational transmission. As Kibria (2002) maintains, most research on the second generation has focused on primordial ethnic identity, which is indeed what is referred to by both parents and children when reactive identity or avoidance and rejection of Albanian identity are articulated and experienced. Nevertheless, ethnic identity and its transmission are understood and experienced as major factors in Albanian migrants' and children's everyday lives, especially in relation to 'host' institutions and the public realm. Its impact on migrants and their descendants depends on their socio-economic status as well as their gender (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992).

A main finding of this chapter concerning intergenerational transmission is the role of legal status, since the role of legal status has not been identified in previous research on this topic. The irregularity of parents seems to have a strong impact on the transmission of identity, integration and transnational ties. As mentioned in Chaps. 2–4, the lack of 'papers' affects feeling of belongingness among the first generation. Irregular status hampers integration in particular, especially social integration is concerned. Irregular migrants did maintain contacts with the homeland, via telephone calls and remittance-sending. But irregular status was a barrier to the maintenance of ties in the form of return visits. This reveals a relationship between irregularity and intergenerational relations—a point which has not been made in the existing migration literature. Eckstein (2002) maintains that generations are defined not only by their genealogy, but also by the social conditions they experience premigration and post-migration. As the data presented in Chaps. 2–4 show, there is a blurring of distinction between generations due to the disempowering and alienating effects of lengthy regularization processes.

Nevertheless, the first generation usually prioritizes integration over transnational ties, especially in terms of distribution of family resources and the orientation towards future life goals. This inevitably affects the intergenerational transmission of these ties. Parents were generally keen to transmit symbolic ties and were meticulous in regard to more material ties. However, the second-generation teenagers also acted independently in establishing ties and showing willingness to maintain ties, despite their weakening over time in the first generation.

Finally, the intergenerational transmission of transnational ties is not as automatic and uniform as outlined by the very limited literature in the field. For example, Faist (2000a) observes that transnational social spaces develop in two phases: in the beginning they are the outcome of international migration of mainly the first generation, while in a second phase they are passed on to migrants' descendants and seem to develop a life of their own. The findings show that certain ties are transmitted more easily, whilst others are overlooked or transmitted passively.

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