Social networks and attitudes towards Albanians in Greece. Intergroup contact and prejudice

Alexandra Ntelifilippidi

S2536090

MA in Multilingualism
Faculty of Liberal Arts
University of Groningen

Supervisors:
Dr. Nanna Haug Hilton
Dr. Goffe Jensma

23/06/2014

Word count: 16,673
Abstract

International migration has increasingly changed the composition of populations within the European Union. People from less developed and prosperous countries have migrated primarily to Western Europe to pursue better economic and living conditions. From the beginning of the 20th century, immigration has also affected non-industrialised countries of Southern Europe, like Greece. Greek culture is globally perceived as being hospitable to foreigners and detached from notions such as prejudice and racism. However, anecdotal evidence shows that during the last 25 years and since the massive influx of Albanian immigrants in the Greek territory prejudice and racism seem to have become more dominant among Greeks. In the media and the political discourse, among other sources, Albanians are sometimes depicted as a threat to the Greek ethnicity, national identity and language and as a potential cause of unemployment and criminality. Additionally, due to lack of information about the advantages immigration can bring to cultural, economic and educational aspects, it is difficult to invert this perception. However, there are implications of prejudice reduction toward Albanians through continuous contact in everyday life. This study examines the social networks in relation to attitudes of Greek young adults (21-40 years) in the metropolitan area of Athens, where the largest Albanian population resides. Forty seven participants answered a questionnaire and six of them were chosen for an in-depth interview. Accordingly, I hope to shed some light into the current sociocultural situation and consequently assist language policy makers to form proper policies and implement them in the Greek educational system. It is also hoped that Greece will be urged to take further steps towards the notions of multilingualism and multiculturalism within Europe in accordance with the directives of the EU.
## Table of contents

1. Introduction  
   1.1 Immigration history and demographics  4  
   1.2 Policies and Politics  5  
   1.3 EU frameworks  7  
   1.4 Albanians in Greece and history of Greece  8  
   1.5 The present study  9  

2. Background  
   2.1 Nationalism and its prevalence in Greece  10  
   2.2 Intergroup contact  11  
      2.2.1 Social categorisation and Social Identity Theory  11  
      2.2.2 Prejudice and racism  11  
   2.3 Language attitudes  13  
   2.4 Statement of purpose  14  

3. Method  
   3.1 Participants  15  
   3.2 Materials and Procedures  16  
      3.2.1 Matched guise test  17  
      3.2.2 In-group questionnaire  17  
      3.2.2.1 Questionnaire scoring  19  
      3.2.3 In-depth interviews  20  
   3.3 Statistics  20  

4. Results  
   4.1 Matched-guise test  22
4.2 Analysis of the questionnaire data 22

4.3 Analysis of the interviews’ data 29

4.3.1 Interviewee: Nick 29

4.3.2 Interviewee: John 30

4.3.3 Interviewee: Mary 31

4.3.4 Interviewee: Theo 32

4.3.5 Interviewee: Laura 33

4.3.6 Interviewee: Christy 34

5. Discussion 36

5.1 The attitudes of young Greeks towards Albanians 36

5.2 The relationship between social networks and out-group attitudes 36

5.3 The relationship between intergroup contact and language attitudes 38

5.4 Recommendations for future research 39

6. Conclusion 40

Appendices 41

References 44
1. Introduction

1.1 Immigration history and demographics

Greece is a relatively new immigration pole compared to other European countries, like the UK and Germany (Faas, 2011). During its modern history, Greece was predominantly a migrant exporting country. Starting from the end of the 18th century and until the 1970s millions of Greeks migrated to the U.S, Canada, Australia, Egypt, but also to Western European countries like West Germany, Belgium, and Sweden (Cholezas & Tsakloglou, 2009; Sapountzis, Figgou, Bozatzis, Gardikiotis, & Pantazis, 2013). After WWII approximately 1.2 million Greeks left the country and the reason for this intense migration was mainly the political and economic instability of the Greek state. More specifically, the dictatorial regime which lasted 7 years (1967-1974) and the high unemployment rates were two pivotal factors of the Greek migration of that era (Droukas, 1998). These migrants were defined as ‘guest-workers’ (Gastarbeiter), with an initial intention to work and reside abroad temporarily and afterwards return to their country of origin. They were supported by bilateral agreements with several of these countries in order to prepare them vocationally and linguistically (Glytsos, 1995) and to cover their Social Security expenses. The positions occupied by the guest-workers were mostly unskilled, menial, heavy or unhealthy jobs, which native workers were unwilling to do for the same salary, an image very often depicted in Greek popular culture and literature (Droukas, 1998).

However, after the political changes in Eastern and Central Europe during the 1980s and especially the downfall of several communist regimes of Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union, a new immigration phenomenon surfaced. Eastern Europeans started immigrating in large clusters not only towards Western Europe, the U.S, Australia and New Zealand but also to Southern Europe, towards non-industrialised countries which until then had been predominantly immigrant sending countries, like Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece. Consequently, due to its strategic geography (it constitutes part of the southern external border of the EU) and to the geographic proximity with some of these countries, migrants from Poland, Bulgaria and Romania started entering Greece during the late 1980s and were added on to the already existing ethnic minorities in the country like Vlach, Pomak, Roma, Armenians, Turks and other Asian ethnicities, such as Kurds and Pakistanis. They mainly entered the country either as asylum seekers or illegally and they either remained residing there or moved further to other European countries. Their number was not as considerable as to cause significant turmoil to the Greek government and community compared to the next wave of Albanian immigrants in the 1990s which officially reversed the country’s status from an immigrant exporting country to an immigrant receiving one. After the collapse of Albania’s 45-year Communist regime during which its residents were considerably restricted and isolated compared to other European and even other world countries (Gogonas, 2009), massive populations immigrated mainly to Italy and Greece to pursue better economic and living conditions. Twenty years later, the Albanian population in Greece numbers over 480,000 which is approximately 4.8% of the total population, constituting the most sizable immigrant minority community in the country. The largest number resides in the administrative district of Attica (193,499) and Thessaloniki follows with approximately 102,000 people (EL.STAT, 2012).

The new immigrants to Greece occupied jobs in the formal but mostly in the informal
market usually in unskilled, menial, heavy or unhealthy jobs in agriculture, construction and domestic work such as cleaning and babysitting and some tourist-related jobs (Baldwin-Edwards & Safi, 1999) which native workers were unwilling to do, but were not covered by Social and Health Security, like Greek immigrants had been abroad.

1.2 Policies and Politics

This section briefly summarises the stance of the Greek state toward the issue of immigration. Political discourse and policies related to the matter are considered highly influential for the formation of Greek public opinion. Immigration laws will be shortly discussed in order to provide a general legal framework as representative of the situation as possible.

Despite the residence of so many and diverse ethnicities within its territory, Greece has been perceived to be a culturally and linguistically homogenous society (Sapountzis et al., 2013; Urso, 2009) considering the existence of the outdated 1929 Alien Law (No. 4310/1929), entitled as “entrance-exit, residence, employment, expulsion of aliens, procedure of recognition of foreigner refugees and other provisions” and which was not modified until the 1990’s, when the Albanian immigration challenged this self-perception of homogeneity. But Greece was unprepared for this reality in more than one way. Before the 1990’s, existing immigrants and asylum seekers were just tolerated in the Greek territory mainly because everyone – primarily the government, but the citizens too – pretended not to see them and, besides that, their number was not high (Urso, 2009). The immigration of Albanian people to Greece developed as an issue and a “problem” because of the number of the latter, which made them unavoidably visible. Furthermore, they were not recruited or encouraged by Greece itself, so they were seen as invaders (Urso, 2009). The situation worsened with the opening of the northern overland borders by the foreign ministry, without any plan for documentation, allowing in this way the entrance of a massive population of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers who proliferated across Greece. The admittedly ambivalent stance of the government - implemented in its immigration policies - towards this “new” reality was a crucial factor which influenced its development throughout history.

Firstly, politicians publically manifested that Greece is not an immigration country although in 1991, shortly after the influx of Albanian immigrants, the old law was revisited in order to be adjusted to the current circumstances (law No. 1975/1991). Notwithstanding, this law has been rigorously criticised for being deliberately concentrated on policing and exclusionism since it regarded illegal entry as well as working without permit in the country as a legal offence (Hatziprokopiou, 2008) based on the simplistic belief that this would be an effective solution to the problem; for legally tolerating inhumane treatment by the authorities (Triandafyllidou, 2009), namely, police and border authorities were instructed to immediately deport illegal immigrants even on a massive scale for which the order could be given orally; for dealing with the Albanian issue as a temporary situation (Urso, 2009); and for adding on to the problem of illegal immigration by leaving immigrants in a limbo, without access to a regular status (Droukas, 1998; Skordas, 2002; Hatziprokopiou, 2008).

The succeeding law (No. 2910/2001) addressed the situation more realistically and managed to regularise aliens in a more humanistic way by acknowledging Greece as a host country, setting conditions for a more effective border control and giving opportunities for im-
migrant labour regulation and integration (Hatziprokopiou, 2008), but was still far from effective, its nature instrumental and opportunistic of migration by fostering cheap labour market and letting black labour market flourish in order to reconstruct the economy and enter international markets (Hatziprokopiou, 2008; Triandafyllidou, 2009), causing numerous problems not only to the immigrants but also to the Greek society. Briefly, these two laws were unrealistic, controversial, chauvinistic, problematic and inefficient.

More importantly, the aforementioned practices in combination with the media influenced public opinion considerably, a fact which played a crucial role in how the Greek society treated immigrants of all statuses (illegal, undocumented, repatriated, refuges and asylum seekers). During the first years of the Albanian immigration, news discourse depicted the real and perceived threats this phenomenon posed to the Greek community, a number of themes which will be discussed throughout this thesis and are shown here in the titles of some news items: 1) Criminality: “Albanians and Bulgarians have taken criminality to its peak” (Kathimerini, November 1991), 2) Unemployment: “The invasion of 500,000 unemployed!” (Ethnos, March 1993), 3) Ethnicity and societal integrity: “The invasion of illegal immigrants is a threat to our country” (Mesimvrini, October 1991) & “The illegal immigrants terrorise the borders” (Kathimerini, January 1996), 4) Prejudice: “Banish the beasts from Greece” (Eleftheros typos, June 1993).

Fortunately, a number of influential factors seem to have improved the national migration policy (see laws No. 3386/2005 and 3536/20071, where, for example, provisions for the protection of [immigrant] prostitutes were implemented for the first time). Some of these factors are: strong criticisms from EU NGOs, pressures to comply with EU policies, adaptation to directives and past experience of countries like Sweden, Germany and Britain, the twenty years of Greece’s experience as a host country and the mobilisation of immigrants themselves (Chatzidaki & Maligkoudi, 2013; Triandafyllidou, 2009). Of course, the legal changes (measures for regularisation, family reunion, permissions and green cards) were not radical but rather gradual with limited willingness on the part of the political parties and procrastinating in terms of implementation, despite the existing provisions on paper (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005).

Furthermore, there have been attempts for immigrant integration in mainstream public schools. Reception classes in public schools of Athens and other parts of Greece, like Thessaloniki in northern, Volos in central (Maligkoudi, 2010) and Ioannina in northwest Greece (Damanakis, 1997, 2005) and the foundation of (a few) multicultural schools mainly in Athens and Thessaloniki, were two steps towards changing the “only-Greek” school education in the country. Regrettably, the findings of Maligkoudi (2010) show that a wide range of hindering factors undermine the expected progress. Even though teachers seem willing to assist the proper education of immigrants - in accordance with the desire of immigrant parents to educate their children - and aware of their needs and potentials, bureaucracy, inefficient administration, lack of regulation cognizance among school counselors, even prejudice among staff members seem to impede these efforts (Maligkoudi, 2010).

1 Where, for example, provisions for the protection of (immigrant) prostitutes were implemented for the first time
In conclusion, although the issue of immigration to Greece was initially inadequately dealt with, a few succeeding movements including the modification of immigrant and education policies can provide optimistic expectations. It is suggested that these expectations will be adequately met, if more systematic endeavors towards convergence with directions from the European Union are made.

1.3 EU frameworks

Immigration is a challenge with which most Member States of the European Union (EU) deal. Movement within the European borders and especially immigration from third countries are considered matters of great importance since they entail the movement of and interaction with people from diverse cultural, linguistic, historical, economic and personal backgrounds. Through the scope of protecting the human rights of all people with a special focus on freedom, security and justice (European Council, 1999) the EU recognises the importance of integration for the maintenance of human rights and for the promotion of a democratic co-existence. The significance of the economic, social and cultural value of immigration for the development of European societies is also recognised. EU institutions such as the European Commission (EC), the executive body of the EU and international organisations such as the Council of Europe are involved, among others, in the regulation of matters related to immigration.

Consequently, a number of frameworks has been developed in order to assist the national and local policies of EU Member States with policy coordination, exchange of knowledge and experience as well as with financial support. The importance of common basic principles across Member States legislation is underlined and several programmes and agendas have been introduced and endorsed. Several issues related to immigration are addressed with a strong willing to be adopted by all Member States. The 2005 Communication of the EC towards the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions proposes a common agenda for the integration of third-country nationals in the EU. This agenda covers a variety of areas regarding immigrant integration. Among these are: the prevention of discrimination and the provision of equal rights and obligations at the educational and employment level; provision of adequate and thorough information to immigrants, educational institutions and employers about the advantages of cultural and linguistic diversity; access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way; openness to interaction and intercultural dialogue with immigrants; practice of diverse cultures and religions, which is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights; and the participation of immigrants in the formulation of integration policies.

However, the EC has restricted powers regarding legislation across the EU and its role is basically advisory. Even if the points of the Communication mentioned above appear to be holistic and helpful as far as integration of immigrants is concerned, the reality in several countries of the Union is fundamentally far from the target. The reasons for this vary across Member States due to historical, cultural, and legal differences. More specifically, immigrants in Greece are facing a very different and more challenging reality than those in Western European countries like, for instance, the Netherlands (Joppke, 2007). It is doubtful that Greece will soon converge to common immigrant legislation with the EU. There are still notable issues hindering the
integration of immigrants in the Greek society. Some of them, referred by Baldwin-Edwards (2005), include the insufficient cognisance of the standing national and international legislation - most probably due to low observance by the state authorities - discrimination towards nationalities, and the continued denial to grant long-term residence permits. In general, Greece seems to be lagging behind most EU countries as far immigration and integration are concerned. And although certain EU directives require implementation into national laws they are hardly ever implemented on time (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005). Directives concerning family reunification and social security matters (Regulation 895/2003) have been implemented since 2003 but no progress has been noted to date (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005).

On the other hand, it has been shown that rather restrictive or assimilationist immigration measures have been proved to be more effective in terms of integration than more pliable policies (Koopmans, 2010). But a policy which is effective in one country is not necessarily suitable for another country. Greece cannot be compared to countries such as Germany, Belgium or the Netherlands because the former makes no concrete and serious steps towards immigrant integration policies.

1.4 Albanians in Greece and history of Greece

At the beginning of the 1990s the political situation in Greece was rather unstable due to a combination of historical, political and economic events which affected it directly and indirectly. To mention some, the intention of establishment of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia as a nation-state (currently named Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, FYROM) in September 1991 was perceived as evoking the national tradition and cultural heritage of Greece (Triandafyllidou, 2001). The Greek identity was threatened with contamination, because of the new name which initially FYROM wanted to claim (i.e. Republic of Macedonia) but also because of the symbol of its flag (the star of Vergina), both holding strong political, cultural and historical connotations of the Greek nation-state. Therefore, Greece was in a politically vulnerable position. Moreover, the economic and political instability within the state, in combination with the massive Albanian influx, the integrity of Greece’s national identity and thus its political status was at stake. For a country that during the last three centuries has been struggling to achieve and preserve its political and economic stability, any external (Macedonians of FYROM) or internal (foreign immigrants) threat can be critical for the achievement and preservation of political stability within its territory.

---

2 Macedonia is a geographic and historical region of Greece in the southern Balkans. Even before the establishment of the Modern Greek state in 1830, it was identified as a Greek province, albeit without clearly defined geographical borders. By the mid-19th century, the name was becoming consolidated informally, defining more of a distinct geographical, rather than political, region in the southern Balkans. (source: Wikipedia)

3 The Vergina Sun (also known as the Star of Vergina, Macedonian star, or Argead Star) is a rayed solar symbol appearing in ancient Greek art from the sixth to second centuries BC. It came to prominence following archaeological excavations in and around the small town of Vergina, in Macedonia, during the late 1970s. There it was depicted on a golden larnax found in a fourth century BC royal tomb belonging either to King Philip II of Macedon or Philip III, father and half-brother of Alexander the Great—respectively (source: Wikipedia).
Accordingly, in order to maintain the perceived homogeneity within the country, the government adopted an extremely nationalistic stance towards immigrants with persistent attempts to disallow further foreign entries in the country and expel the immigrants that had already (illegally) accessed Greece. Willingness to exclude or expel members of a minority group, is one of the most severe expressions of prejudice (McLaren, 2003) and in our context, this exclusionist attitude is manifest in policy preferences. This exclusionist attitude is usually created by perceived (or real) threat the out-group is believed to pose to the majority in-group in relation to certain resources (realistic threat) or to certain cultural symbols (symbolic threat). For the latter, nationalism appears to play a significant role, as it is believed that high nationalistic feelings lead to ethnic (out-group) exclusionism (Coenders, 2001).

1.5 The present study

Greek society has now experienced both sides of the immigration coin. Greeks have been emigrants abroad and experienced harsh living and working conditions, prejudice and poverty. But since the end of the 20th century they have been massively exposed to foreign immigration within their own country. The extensive influx of Albanian immigrants have challenged a variety of notions presumed to be entwined in the Greek culture such as democracy, hospitality, humanism and tolerance of the ‘Other’. Nevertheless, as shown in the previous sections, their stance towards ethnic minorities residing in their country has been at least prejudiced and racist, although it would have been expected to be more tolerant, considering their memories and similar past experiences. Immense influence by the media for the construction of a ‘criminal’ Albanian profile has played a significant role, along with the lack of information and knowledge about the phenomenon of immigration in general, as well as about the overall benefits such a reality can offer to the society and economy.

In the present study, the underlying reasons for the specificity of immigration in Greece which has resulted in high prejudice and racist behaviour will be explored. Such reasons stem from historical events and procedures, lack of knowledge and erroneous policies on behalf of the governments. Nonetheless, prejudice seems to have been substantially reduced during the last years, but not as efficient as to improve the situation fundamentally. On account of this observation, this thesis begins with an attempt to explain the situation by employing some theories of prejudice creation and reduction, developed by the social sciences. More specifically, the aim of this study is to see if contact can facilitate prejudice reduction. A research on the sociology of language will be conducted and the structure of the social networks of young Greeks will be explored to see whether young Greeks who interact with members of the out-group are more positive towards them than people who have less or no contact. I hope to help language and immigrant policy makers with more insights about how to construct better educational and integration policies according to the EU directives in order to move one step forward towards being a democratic EU state which supports and provides “personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social cohesion and employability in a knowledge society” (Commission of the European Communities, 2007).
2. Background

2.1 Nationalism and its prevalence in Greece

Nationalistic attitudes, namely attitudes towards the ethnic in-group, have been broadly studied by the social sciences. It is believed that positive in-group attitudes are followed by negative attitudes toward ethnic out-groups (ethnic exclusionism) (Coenders, 2001). In contrast, a group of people of different ethnicity, residing in the same country, is defined as the ethnic out-group and is generally viewed as subordinate or contemptibly different and thus is deprived of the privileges which the majority group enjoys.

Greece is ‘…a country with a strong national identity based on ethnic and cultural definition of the nation’ (Triandafyllidou & Veikou, 2002). Among other issues that the Albanian immigration posed to the Greek community, the phenomenon was also perceived as a threat to the purity and consistency of the Greek national identity. In order to understand the specific meaning attributed to Greek nationalism, it is useful to provide a definition of the term ‘nation’ which is most appropriate to the pertinent context.

Smith (2011) defines nation as ‘a named and self-defined human community whose members cultivate shared myths, memories, symbols, values and traditions, identify with a historic homeland, create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and common laws’. These common cultural features reinforce the distinctiveness of each national or ethnic group in the sense that they are unique and thus, they are the elements that can indicate who belongs to a specific community (in-group member) and who does not (out-group member). Consequently, as Triandafyllidou (2001) argues, for a nation to exist, the existence of another nation is presupposed, from which the former needs to distinguish itself. She also recognises the nation as the most pertinent form of collective identity nowadays, and as the only legitimate source of political power. To illustrate, the feeling of sameness with our in-group and the idea of belonging to this community can enhance the community’s distinctiveness, authenticity, consistency and independence and to which other nations or ethnic groups are perceived as a potential threat, a framework on which the political discourse in Greece in the late 20th century was based. Nationalism played a crucial role on how the Greek government dealt with the new immigration phenomenon. Politicians and the media encouraged Greek citizens to adopt a defensive stance towards the perceived enemies, that is, the foreign immigrants and especially Albanians, who threatened the integrity of the Greek national identity (Droukas, 1998). They did so not only via the immigrant legislation, which rendered illegal entry in the country as a legal offence, but also by their public speeches broadcasted by the mass media.

Greek politics and Greek mass media are generally viewed as two entwined institutions (see also Schudson, 2002). Politics and journalism are two moulding aspects of the peculiarity of Greek society and they are also promptly related to its culture and history. When watching or reading news items from the 1990s until today, it is noticeable that several news agencies (newspapers, magazines and private TV channels), if not the majority of them, sound like
mouthpieces of political parties. Hence the co-reference of these two institutions as highly influencing the Greek public opinion.

2.2 Intergroup contact

2.2.1 Social categorisation and Social Identity Theory

Theory supports that the clustering of people into social categories is fundamental for the creation of prejudice (Allport, 1954). The importance of group affiliations for the formation and indication of intergroup prejudice is also recognised, and is explained by the Social Identity Theory (SIT), brought forward by Tajfel. SIT suggests that by simply being a group member is enough to evoke some basic intergroup differentiation and discrimination (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971) and initiate prejudice towards out-groups. SIT also suggests that people seek to boost their self-esteem through their membership in various groups. This positive identity is derived primarily from comparisons between the in-group and any available or relevant out-group, where the in-group comes out as positively distinct in relation to the out-group(s).

Group differences become more salient when power and status of the in-group is at stake, creating competitive relations between groups which lead to prejudice and discrimination. In the example discussed in section 1.4, the integrity of the Greek national identity was challenged by FYROM, creating political instability, threatening the political status and power of the Greek state and endangering its social dominance. Additionally, the massive influx of Albanian immigrants during the same period fortified the political and social upheaval. Such situations are believed to arouse the endorsement of nationalistic and xenophobic political ideologies and mediate scapegoating strategies on behalf of the in-group towards the out-group which is perceived as a threat (Esses, Jackson, Dovidio, & Hodson, 2005). Social categorisation here, plays a significant role in the social construction of ethnic identity, which is expressly related to power and authority relations (domination). In the Greek society, like in most societies, “... socially constructed groups are hierarchically organised so that certain groups receive a disproportionate percentage of positive outcomes (e.g., money, power)” (Esses et al., 2005). According to the Social Dominance Theory (SDT), this general tendency to form and maintain group-based hierarchy produces forms of group-based oppression, like discrimination, racism and ethnocentrism (Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2004).

2.2.2 Prejudice and racism

Social institutions and powerful individuals are the most essential organs, as with the power of words they are capable of driving and manipulating institutional and individual discrimination (Husband, 1977, p.234). Politicians, the media, schools and employers have the power to decide on a large scale how desired goods (e.g. education, wealth, power, employment, health care) are allocated to groups of society, as well as unwanted elements (e.g. dangerous and low-
paid jobs, contempt, exclusionism). In most cases, the former are distributed to dominant and privileged groups, whereas the latter are distributed to less powerful groups (e.g. immigrant groups), a fact which builds up discriminatory ideologies among individuals in society and due to the social and political power these institutions have, such ideologies legitimise inequality and behaviours that produce inequality (Sidanius et al., 2004). Apart from the aforementioned discriminatory practices, prejudiced attitudes can also be cultivated through ethnic discourse by projecting differences between the in-group and the out-groups, and as a result of their influence on public opinion, these powerful institutions, and especially the news media (Dijk, 1987), are the usual suspects for creating and perpetuating discrimination towards ethnic and immigrant minorities. Opinions and attitudes are formed through highlighted differences regarding, among others, assumed cultural information about the out-group such as norms, values, habits, language, attire and religion. These cultural features are salient enough to influence but also determine attitudes and behaviour towards the out-group because apart from their physical appearance and visibility in everyday life, these features are ubiquitous in intergroup contact.

Besides being a context where intergroup differences are observed and dissociate the in-group from the out-group(s), intergroup contact can facilitate prejudice reduction. Intergroup contact theory suggests that contact typically reduces prejudice. Recent research on European immigration has revealed that prejudice reduction is likely to occur by mere contact (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011), even if facilitating factors, like those suggested by Allport (1954) are not present in the context (i.e. equal group status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, support of authorities, law or custom).

Instead, it has been suggested that learning about the out-group, changing behaviour, generating affective ties and in-group reappraisal are four processes which take place through contact and can change attitude (Pettigrew, 1998). For example, out-group knowledge contributes to uncertainty reduction (Pettigrew et al., 2011) and progressively, to reduction of perceived differences (McLaren, 2003), lessened in-group and individual threat and enhanced empathy. Changes in behaviour may occur when new situations require it, like in the case of immigrant legislation mentioned above; the immigrant law of the Greek state had to change after pressures of the EU and EU NGOs but also after the changing situation after 20 years of experiencing immigration from Albania. Affective ties are formulated through contact and this potential is the main concern and focus of the present study. Digression from convictions such as that in-group norms and customs are the only acceptable and operative in the community can facilitate prejudice reduction, leading to deprovincialisation (i.e. a less solid view of in-groups) and less pride in nationality. These positive contact effects are good predictors of out-group bias moderation, and are also likely to generalise from the individual level – in-group/out-group contact or friendship – to the whole out-group and also other relevant minority out-groups (Pettigrew et al., 2011; Pettigrew, 2009).

Turning again to social categorisation, the primary source of prejudice, recent research has shown how the redrawing of the category boundaries can pave the way for the reduction of negative out-group biases. Theorists, based on the social categorisation theory have developed the model of decategorisation which will (optimally) result in recategorisation in order to contend prejudice. The model proposes that as long as social categorisation results in positive ingroup bias, we should opt for the creation of new superordinate categories that will include the
members of the formerly separate and distinct groups (Sapountzis et al., 2013). Intergroup contact can not only facilitate but also initiate this process. For instance, when several different groups interact with each other daily, like Greek and Albanian people, they tend to recognise some common features and qualities, such as their human nature, shared cultural and historical points and common experience in migration (Sapountzis et al., 2013). This tendency may serve as a good predictor of the positive effects of intergroup contact within the Greek society and is a theme that will be studied in this thesis.

2.3 Language attitudes

Another quality of promptly identifying members belonging to different national or cultural groups (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, & Fillenbaum, 1960) is language. Therefore, language is also related to ethnocentrism (i.e. regarding one’s own group as being the most important; the tendency to see the world mainly from the viewpoint of one’s own language) and intergroup relations, and consequently to discrimination and prejudice. Evaluations of a particular language can extend to the users of this language and reflect generalised and stereotyped feelings towards all members of the linguistic community. However, language attitudes cannot be observed directly and their assessment requires asking questions about qualities of speakers of different languages.

“An attitude is an evaluative orientation to a social object of some sort...” (Garrett, 2010, p.20). Attitudes are not inherent in human nature; in contrast, they are learned through experience and environment (Garrett, 2010, p.11). Language and social context are two interdependent elements and attitudes to language play a significant role for many aspects of social life, like education, employment and power. People hold certain beliefs about their own language and the languages of other people. For instance, English is usually perceived as a passport to international job markets as opposed to Greek which is spoken by a small population worldwide. Power and status relations are promptly related to language and perceptions about languages and their speakers.

The most widespread method to estimate language attitudes among speakers, is the matched guise test (MGT), introduced by Lambert and his colleagues in 1960 in order to observe language attitudes for English and French in Canada (Lambert et al., 1960). It is a technique of eliciting attitudinal responses from informants by presenting them with a number of speech varieties, all of which are spoken by the same person (Garrett, 2010, p.229). This method involves participants listening to apparently different speakers of two or more languages and evaluating those speakers for impressions of their personality characteristics. Since then, this method has been employed to elicit attitudes for different languages or language varieties in multiple contexts. Research on language attitudes has offered a more thorough understanding of a sociolinguistic situation, commonly between a majority and a minority group, like Spanish and Basque in Spain (Reizábal, Valencia, & Barrett, 2004), Australian English and N. Zealand English (Hay & Drager, 2010), Danish and Danish spoken by immigrants as a second language (Jørgensen & Quist, 2001).

This study investigates language attitudes of an indigenous majority in-group towards an immigrant minority out-group (Greek and Albanian people respectively) by applying a MGT and by employing explicit questions about the perceived linguistic and cultural distance between
the two groups. Both procedures constitute parts of the wider, cross-sectional methodological approach followed in my study towards gaining an overall picture of the socio (linguistic) situation.

2.4 Statement of purpose

Having drawn a general framework of the social and political situation in the Greek state regarding Albanian immigrants and provided the relevant theoretical outline, I turn now to explicitly outline my research questions.

The first research question is: What are the attitudes of young Greeks towards Albanian immigrants? To answer this question the social networks of the former group will be explored and in this way two additional sub-questions are generated.

Therefore, the second research question is: How does the structure of social networks influence the direction of attitudes (positive/negative) in terms of frequency of contact (frequently to rarely)?

Additionally, I will explore the attitudes of participants towards their own language and towards the Albanian language in order to observe: Does out-group attitudes relate significantly with language attitudes?

To answer these questions I developed a cross-sectional methodological approach which is described in detail in the following section.
3. Method

A combination of two methods in chronological order were set up and used to collect and analyse data on attitudes of the majority in-group (young Greeks) towards the minority immigrant out-group (Albanians) in the metropolitan area of Athens. The first method was an on-line questionnaire where participants were asked to answer a number of questions regarding their personal and social background, the structure of their social networks, and their views of the Albanian language and Albanians in particular. The second method was an individual semi-structured interview aiming at gaining more insight about how the participants view and experience contact with Albanians. By employing this research design, I want to observe if and in which way intergroup contact (independent variable) influences the perception of the in-group towards the out-group (dependent variable).

3.1 Participants

The questionnaire was distributed in the form of an on-line survey as a public post on my Facebook page in order to have a group of respondents from as many social and cultural backgrounds as possible. Responses were gathered within a period of nine days (23/03/2014-1/04/2014). The total number of responses was initially 62. The target age range is 21-40 and therefore participants aged below 21 and over 40 were not included in the final analysis (N=2). There was one Albanian respondent who was also excluded. Furthermore, 12 participants who do not reside in the metropolitan area of Athens were excluded for purposes of homogeneity, because geography and demographics are considered to play an influencing role for the forming of attitudes.

The final sample consists of 47 individuals in total, 25 males and 22 females, all of whom are Greek citizens and have resided in the metropolitan area of Athens for most of their lives. Table 1 shows the gender and age of participants included in the final analysis. All participants have at least completed the compulsory education of the Greek educational system (lykeio) and their current occupation varies from BA student to unemployed. Table 2 shows the distribution of the participants’ educational status and Table 3 their professional status.

Fifteen out of forty seven participants who answered the questionnaire provided their e-mail addresses in order to participate in the second part of the study, the individual interviews. I chose six of them for the final analysis with an attempt to have representative cases of contact of frequency (frequently, occasionally, never), gender (3 males and 3 females) and attitude (from highly prejudiced to minimally prejudiced). Table 4 shows the general characteristics of the 6 interviewed participants. The names are pseudonyms.
Table 1: Distribution of age and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>27.84</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Educational background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed education</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school (Lykeio)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Distribution of occupational background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational background</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educationalist</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer/Scientist/Architect</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Profiles of the interviewed participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Contact Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td>frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theo</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christy</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>occasionally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Materials and Procedures

Before the beginning of the actual in-group questionnaire, seven questions preceded in order to elicit some information about the respondents’ personal details (gender, age, place of birth
and residence; type of school they attended, educational background and spoken languages; and professional status). Except for being helpful to the research purposes, i.e. to have an overview of the general characteristics of our sample, these questions also served as distractors. Participants did not know the exact purpose of the survey to begin with. In the instructions it was indicated that the aim of the study is to observe what impression several languages and their speakers make and further, how the social network of Greek citizens is structured; no remark was made about immigrants or Albanians in particular. The questionnaire and the individual interviews were conducted in Greek and were translated to English.

3.2.1 Matched guise test

The first method, the on-line questionnaire, was divided in two parts. After answering the general questions, participants first completed a MGT. They heard seven excerpts of Article 26 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in seven different languages and were asked to answer the question “What impression does this speaker make?” and indicate in a Likert’s scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is negative, 2 is relatively negative, 3 is neutral/no opinion, 4 is relatively positive and 5 is positive) to what extent eight different personal qualities apply to the speakers and one to the languages they listened to. For example, they were asked to indicate their first impression of how rich or poor the speaker sounds and how ugly or beautiful they find the language they heard (questions and their instructions are included in Appendix A, p.41). For the seven recordings an Albanian female speaker read Article 26 in Greek and in Albanian. Five additional female speakers of diverse languages were included as distractors. The MGT, which was introduced by Wallace Lambert in the 1960s to explore language attitudes of bilingual Canadians, is modified and employed here aiming at eliciting attitudes of a majority in-group (Greek people) towards a particular immigrant minority out-group (Albanian immigrants). Through the MGT we intended to gain some insight about the unconscious attitudes of the participants towards the language of the pertinent immigrant group. Similarly to the initial general questions, the MGT preceded the explicit attitudinal questions, in order to avoid, as far as possible, any conscious or unconscious biases.

3.2.2 In-group questionnaire

The second part of the questionnaire included 13 additional questions (see Appendix A, p. 41) which explicitly asked about the respondents’ experience, behaviour and opinion regarding Albanians and more importantly, whether or not Albanians are included in the social networks of Greeks and how frequently they spent time together, if this was the case. Most of the questions were open-ended. The in-group questionnaire was preferred because it provides the researcher with a bulk of information in a rather short period of time; participants have prompt access to it through the online survey link and answers are immediately visible and available to the researcher. It also elicits less ambiguous data than the MG method and more concrete conclusions can be drawn from the answers given by the respondents. The focal questions of this part, which were included in the final analysis, where clustered in five thematic categories and for each category one or two questions were employed. The five categories are structured in the following manner: a) general opinion about Albanians, b) opinion about the Albanians the
participants personally know, if they know any, c) perceived linguistic and cultural distance between Greeks and Albanians, d) willingness to get familiar with the Albanian language and culture, e) readiness to help the pertinent immigrant group integrate into the mainstream society. Table 5 shows an overview of the five thematic categories.

The duration to answer the whole online survey was calculated approximately to 20 minutes. Appendix A includes the list of all the on-line survey questions.

**Table 5: Thematic categories of the on-line survey questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>General opinion about Albanians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Particular opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Perceived linguistic/cultural distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Willingness to be involved in the Albanian culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Readiness to help them integrate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questions developed to elicit data for the categories are illustrated below. These questions were included in the final qualitative analysis of the questionnaire.

**Category A:**

1. What is your opinion about Albanians?

**Category B:**

2. What is your opinion about the Albanians you personally know, if you know any?

**Category C:**

3. When I am talking to an Albanian I deal with communication problems regarding their proficiency in Greek (accent, language use, level of acquisition). *(Strongly disagree - Disagree - Neutral - Agree - Completely agree)*
4. When I am talking to an Albanian I recognise cultural differences that hinder our communication. *(Strongly disagree - Disagree - Neutral - Agree - Completely agree)*

**Category D:**

5. Would you like to know more about Albanians and their culture and history? Please justify your answer.

**Category E:**
6. Do you agree that Albanians and immigrants in general should be given the chance to be educated in their native/heritage language? Please justify your answer.

3.2.2.1 Questionnaire scoring

Having described the data eliciting procedures and provided an overall view of the general characteristics of our sample, we turn next to the explanation of classifying the participants’ attitudes. Those were classified in three categories: positive, negative and neutral depending on their answers.

The scoring incorporated the 6 questions which comprised the five thematic categories explained in section 3.2. In order to enhance the credibility of the attitude evaluation, an investigator triangulation was carried out. An additional researcher examined the participants’ answers independently in order to moderate any potential researcher’s biases. Afterwards, the conclusions of the two researchers were compared and applied to the six focal questions of the questionnaire. The scoring methods of the in-group questionnaire were:

Category A and B: Answers such as “we are all equal”, “I see every people in the same way and I only distinguish between bad and good people”, “the same as Greeks”, “good”, “I do not like to generalise”, were classified as positive. Stemming from Allport’s (1954) findings, the perception of equal group status between people, presupposes reduced prejudiced feelings. Furthermore, as positive was regarded when participants attributed positive qualities to Albanians, like “hard-working”, “good family people”, “smart” and when participants felt compassionate towards the specific group about their hard time in Greece and blamed the Greek society for any unaccepted behaviour on the part of Albanians. We classified as neutral answers like “neutral”, “no problem”, “no particular opinion”, or when they attributed both favourable and unfavourable features, like for instance “smart and hard-working, but have some weird reactions sometimes”, “good people but we have a different way of thinking due to cultural reasons”. As negative we regarded answers like “sceptical, but it depends on the people with whom you have interacted”, “negative”, “aggressive”, “of low educational status”, “many of them are good but the majority is rather devious”.

Category C: For questions 3 and 4 the scoring procedure was similar to the matched-guise answers, as these were multiple choice questions based on the Likert’s scale. Here, values 1 (=strongly disagree) and 2 (=disagree) were interpreted as positive, value 3 as neutral, and values 4 (=agree) and 5 (=strongly agree) were interpreted as negative.

Category D: “yes”, “yes, we have several common cultural and historical reference points”, “I know some things but I would like to learn more”, “yes, I am interested in the cultures of other ethnicities”, “yes, it will make me more open-minded” were counted as positive. Answers like “why not”, “only the most basic information”, “no, but I hate history in general”, “I learn from what the Albanians I know tell me”, “I know many things already” were classified as neutral. Finally, any refusal to know further information about the Albanian history and culture was regarded as negative.

Category E: as positive were considered all the “yes” answers and the “yes” answers with justifications like “because it is a human right”, “in order to maintain their roots”. Neutral were considered the answers when the participants were positive but they considered it difficult for the Greek state of affairs or when they agreed conditionally. “No” answers were classi-
fied as negative in every case.

The questionnaire analysis was mostly qualitative and the questions included in the attitude analysis are the six questions referred above. For the interpretation of the responses the data were firstly divided in three categories according to two criteria. Firstly, whether or not the participants spent their free time with Albanians and secondly, how frequently they did so. According to the responses we drew from the participants, the latter were divided in three contact frequency categories. Answers like ‘every day, 3 times a week, very often and 3 times per month’ are clustered as “frequently”. Answers like ‘once in a month, seldom, sometimes, occasionally’ are clustered as “occasionally”. I also listed under occasionally ‘sometimes at work’ and ‘in the English class’ (which is not at school and takes place once or twice a week) because in these cases there is no substantive or frequent interaction with the members of the out-group (‘only the basics’, as indicated by respondents). This kind of contact takes place in almost every context of everyday activities, like saying ‘hello’ etc. The third category is named ‘never’ and includes participants who either do not know any Albanian or never spend their free time with Albanians. After the categorisation of participants in frequency patterns of time spent with Albanians, we examined their answers based on the five thematic units.

3.2.3 In-depth interviews

At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to fill in their e-mail address if they would like to take part in the second section of the survey, namely the individual in-depth interview. The study’s second method is an open-ended, semi-structured interview, an open type of data eliciting method, which allows the interviewees to express themselves relatively freely based on a general framework developed by the interviewer in order to explore a number of themes. In our case, an interview guide was prepared beforehand.

The individual interviews were employed for additional support of the questionnaire’s results and in order to explain and explore further information on the central issues of our study. Indicatively, I pursued to explore nationalistic/chaunistic tendencies as well as ethnic exclusionism and stereotyping. I also opted for observing critical thinking towards the representation of the out-group in the mass media, readiness to help the out-group integrate into the mainstream society and lastly, the personal general opinion for the members of the out-group. Interviews were conducted remotely, through Skype and the time was arranged with each interviewee separately. The duration for each interview was initially designed for up to 20 minutes but this depended on the willingness of the participants to express their opinion in detail. The actual interviews lasted from 15 to 30 minutes. Appendix B (p.42) includes the questions used for the individual interviews.

Interviews were transcribed for content, the data were coded in terms of themes prepared and new themes identified by the participants’ answers. The focus of the analysis was to gain some insight about how our participants view the situation of foreign immigration in Greece and how their opinions are formed towards the out-group under investigation.

3.3 Statistics

A Mann-Whitney U test was applied for the analysis of the MGT results. Language is our independent variable with two scales: Greek and Albanian and the dependent variable is the scores
resulted by the 9 ratings our participants gave for each speaker (8) and their language (1). I wanted to see if there is a significant difference between the ratings our participants gave to the two languages and their speakers. The statistical test was applied twice; once including the average scores for the speakers (poor>rich, unattractive>attractive etc.) and the languages and once including only the language ratings (ugly>beautiful). In the analysis only the attitudes towards Greek and Albanian were included, whereas attitudes towards the distractors were excluded.

Additionally, the same test was chosen with frequency of contact, which was the dependent variable with three scales: frequently, rarely and never, and with the MGT scores as the independent variable. The aim was to see if contact plays a role to the formation of language attitudes.
4. Results

4.1 Matched-guise test

A Mann-Whitney U test indicated that the Greek speaker and the Greek language ($Mdn = 3.9$) is more attractive for Greeks than the Albanian speaker and the Albanian language ($Mdn = 2.7$), $U = 364, p = .00, r = -.82$.

A Mann-Whitney U test was also conducted for the ratings given by our participants only for the two languages. The test indicated the Greek language ($Mdn = 5$) is more attractive for Greeks than the Albanian language ($Mdn = 2$), $U = 163, p = .00, r = -1$.

The test used with the MGT scores and frequency of contact was not significant, which indicates that there is no relationship between the frequency of contact with the out-group and the in-group’s attitudes towards the out-group’s language.

4.2 Analysis of the questionnaire data

Figure 1: General opinion of the whole sample

Nearly half of the Greek respondents had a positive opinion about Albanians. 29.7% had a neutral stance towards them and 27.7% made negative remarks about Albanians (Figure 1).
After being classified into three groups, according to whether or not they had contact with Albanians and according to the frequency of contact (frequently, occasionally and never), the participants’ attitudes were explored. As shown in Figure 2, none of the participants who had frequent contact held a negative general opinion for the out-group. The majority of them was positive and less than 30% were neutral. The people who have frequent contact with members of the out-group tend to see them as equal stating that “we are all humans” and the only distinction they make is between “good and bad people”, or people with whom “we get along” and people “that have different interests and habits”. Furthermore, they seem to understand that the particular immigrant group “has been through a lot” and that “they need our acceptance and our help to integrate normally in the society”. None of them described or attributed any particular or special characteristic related to Albanians.

Half of the participants in the group which had occasional contact with the out-group were neutral towards them, saying that “personally” they had “no issues or problems with them” or that they are “sceptical, but it depends with whom you have to deal with”. 28.6% were positive preferring to see them “like every other person in the community” and had nothing to say in particular for them; others recognised that they are “hard-working people and family men” and that “the Greek society has unfairly marginalised them.” 20% were negative and characterized the out-group as “aggressive”, “uninteresting”, of “poor culture and personality due to poverty and post-war experience”, although some of them were not absolutely negative, saying that they do not have “the best impression, but there are surely many exceptions”.

Figure 2: General opinion for the out-group (A)
Nearly half of those participants who had hardly any or no contact with the out-group were mostly negative (45.5%), while there were more positive answers among them (36.3%) than within the group of occasional contact. 18% of this group were neutral. The participants who were classified as negative tend to view the out-group as “violent”, “devious and aggressive”, “hateful”, “involved with the underground world and drugs”, as having “criminal intentions and behaviour”. Additionally, quite often people with minimal contact with the out-group made positive remarks about them indicating either that “they are people like us” or that they are “good people who have had a hard time in this country”.

**Figure 3: Particular opinion for the out-group (B)**

When it comes to the opinion our participants held for the members of the out-group they knew personally, the situation looks similar for the group which have frequent contact with the out-group (Figure 3). The majority was positive (81.8%), there was no negative answer, and only 18.2% were neutral. The positive answers towards the out-group were similar to the question about their general opinion. They stressed the fact that they view them like they view all the other people, even like they view all the other Greeks. When they commented on the out-group’s particular qualities, they also tended to describe them as everyday-people who “work while studying, pay attention to their clothing, and get along with everyone”. A couple of them expressed themselves more politically, pointing out that “Albanians are OK. Greeks are racists. Not always. They made them, to manipulate them over a perceived national unity, which in a multicultural country like Greece doesn't have a real purpose”.

The patterns for the other two contact groups about the out-group members the respondents personally know, appear to be a little different in comparison with their general
opinion. Both groups gave more positive answers than negative or neutral. Most of them stated that the individuals of the out-group they personally know are “good and polite”, “helpful”, “funny and interesting”, “they are hard-working and very keen to be educated”. The participants who held a neutral stance claimed that they do not know them well, so they cannot form a firm opinion. Some of them both in the ‘occasionally’ and in the ‘never’ group who were somewhat negative, characterizing the out-group as “suspicious” and “with inferiority complexes”, expressed the belief that this outcome is the Greek society’s fault for treating them malevolently.

Although in general our participants were more positive, the group with the least contact gave more negative answers than the two other groups. They claimed that the out-group members they knew showed criminal or offensive behaviour, they were “involved with drugs and the black market”, “the cleaning lady steals from the houses she works for” or just that they do not have a problem with them, but they would not aspire to befriend them.

Four participants in the ‘never group’ (18.2 %) did not express any opinion because they did not know any Albanian at all.

**Figure 4**: Communication problems due to language (C)

The majority of all the respondents (66%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “When I am talking to an Albanian I deal with communication problems regarding their proficiency in Greek (accent, language use, level of acquisition)”. 25.5% were neutral and only four participants (8.5%) agreed with the statement (Figure 4). The differences observed on the two previous questions according to the frequency of contact do not seem to apply here, since we see that a large number of people who do not spend much time with the out-
Almost half of all participants (45%) did not agree with the statement “When I am talking to an Albanian I recognise cultural differences that hinder our communication”. 32% held a neutral stance, 21.2% agreed with the statement and only one participant agreed strongly. Cultural differences are perceived predominantly by people who have the least contact with the out-group, while no one from the ‘frequent’ group seem to consider the differences between the two cultures enough to hinder communication between them (Figure 5).
When asked if they would like to learn about the cultural background of the out-group (Figure 6), the group which had frequent contact with them was in general eager to be involved (72.7%) because they wanted to learn more about “our common cultural and historical bonds” and because “they [Albanian people] are part of our culture and society”. Others claimed that “every culture is interesting”. Two participants claimed that they are not interested in culture and history in general, and one was already aware about the Albanian culture but stated that “due to the political situation in Albania, its history is rather short and culturally poor”.

The group which had occasional contact was mostly willing to learn more about the Albanian culture and history (57.2%) because “we are neighbours”, because they are “interested in all cultures and histories” and because this “will help the out-group feel accepted and therefore integrate more easily”. Three participants were unwilling to learn more about Albanians indicating that what they already know is enough, and that they do intend to “live there”. Three were rather neutral, and answered “yes, but not to a great extent”.

Half of those participants who had no contact with Albanians were not interested in learning more about the Albanian culture. Most of them explicitly stated that they had no interest in the matter, while others said that they already knew enough and that “the Albanian culture has not a significant contribution”. All of those participants held a negative stance towards the out-group in general. However, quite many of them expressed their interest to get involved with the out-group’s history and culture (41%). Among the respondents who were interested were three participants with a negative opinion towards Albanians, and one of them said that “learning about other people’s cultures and histories makes you more open minded”.

Figure 6: Willingness to be involved in the Albanian culture (D)
Two participants (9%) were not absolutely negative since they would like to know some things “maybe later” and “if there is something interesting”.

**Figure 7: Readiness to help the out-group integrate (E)**

When asked if they think that Albanians and immigrants in general should be given the chance to be educated in their native/heritage language (Figure 7), the group of frequent contact was absolutely positive, indicating in most cases that it is “their human right” and that “it is just fair to let them maintain their cultural roots and customs”. Only one participant was sceptical, but only because of the uncertainty that the “Greek schools are able, willing and properly equipped to provide this opportunity”.

People who had occasional contact with the out-group were divided almost equally in three types of answers. Five participants (35.7%) were totally positive to give immigrants this opportunity considering it normal, “yes, like there is a German, French, Armenian school”, “like there are Greek schools abroad” and “of course, it’s their human right”. Four participants were sceptical, but again because the doubted that the Greek schools can provide this possibility or they thought that this should be the case “in order to integrate better in the Greek society and learn Greek more properly and systematically”. Five participants did not agree because “Greek is the official language of the country” or because they believe that “their country should provide this” (Albania) and “they ought to learn the host country’s language in order to integrate into the society” or were afraid that “more will come”. Four of these participants answered negatively in most questions.
4.3 Analysis of the interviews’ data

In this section I analyse and discuss the implications that can be drawn from the participants’ answers. According to these, I set forth the several themes discussed with interviewees which either stem from the interview guide I prepared or which emerged during the interviews. These themes are: the perception of the Greek identity and the entwined implications, the stance towards immigrants and immigrant stereotyping, critical thinking in relation to the media and politics, willingness to help the out-group integrate in the mainstream society as well as nationalism and ethnic exclusionism.

4.3.1 Interviewee: Nick

Nick is 23 years old, he is a university student, works as a waiter in a Greek tavern and has lived in a northern suburb of Athens for all his life. He has attended a private school and had no Albanian peers at school. His mother has an immigrant background from Minor Asia and his father is from Messenia, southern Greece. He doesn’t have any Albanian friends, but he has met and interacted with many Albanian people as he grew up, in his neighbourhood, at work and at the places he went out.

Although Nick indicates that he has “a poised national identity” and appreciates the history of his country, he appreciates other countries’ histories too, finds ethnicity an obsolete concept and does not agree with extreme nationalistic values.

He believes that Greeks have good qualities and potentials for development but they lack trust for each other and for the government and vice versa, a main reason for the fact that Greece lags behind in several aspects but also a crucial factor of the economic crisis. For him hospitality is still a Greek value towards all people, except immigrants.

He considers ‘Greek’ anyone “who is willing to contribute to the well-being of the society and is lawful and corresponds to his obligations to the Constitution”.

He believes that the number of immigrants has already started decreasing, since Greece is no longer a promising immigrant destination due to economic reasons. Besides that, he supports the free movement of populations and is not against immigration. He claims that “… if the government was better organised, we could absorb a socially and economically essential workforce, support a harmonic co-existence and avoid extreme phenomena of prejudice which are easily observed nowadays and which could have been avoided 20 years ago. What we can do now is at least support the immigrants that remain here”.

Consequently, Nick was called to express his opinion about how the stereotyping of Albanians in the Greek society affects everyday life as well as the public opinion. He recognises that during the first years of the Albanian immigration the media “… presented them [Albanians] mainly as a threat, rather than an issue requiring specific and gentle management … but the easiest thing is to blame people … not to mention their enormous influence on public opinion”. He minds that now “… they [the media] have left them alone … they don’t depict them negatively anymore. Second generation Albanians have now integrated, they are part of the society now”. I also discussed with Nick the use of the word ‘Albanian’ as a pejorative. He explained that “… it describes a person working under bad circumstances, due to the menial jobs usually occupied by immigrants, a person living under adverse conditions”. He neither approves
nor uses the word in this way but recognises that “unfortunately” it has remained in everyday discourse.

Nick believes that many members of the out-group have criminal or offensive behaviour and quotes several possible reasons for this behaviour. He claims that it is a logical reaction because besides that “… a vast majority of the first-arrived Albanians were prisoners … reception, social marginalisation and poverty also played a crucial role … this behaviour is not an element of their national identity but of the social identity they obtained here”. He concluded that anyone would behave in the same way under these circumstances.

He finds providing the out-group with the opportunity to be educated in their mother tongue as a suitable method in order to achieve goals such as that “… they [Albanians] will learn Greek more systematically” and consequently “… be useful to the society and productive” and at the same time being given the opportunity “… to develop their mother tongue without losing their heritage elements”.

Nick did not provide a general personal opinion about the out-group because he doesn’t like to make generalisations for a whole group of people. He just commented that “for some reason” every member of the out-group he personally knows is hard-working and stubborn.

4.3.2 Interviewee: John

John is a 23-year-old university student who has lived in Athens for all his life. He attended a public school, where 20% of the students came from an immigrant background and befriended some of them. His father has an immigrant background from Minor Asia and his mother was born and lived in Athens. In general, he spends time with people of diverse ethnicities. He has an Albanian female friend, whom he met at the university and they spend much time together playing group games, going out for coffee and hanging out at the university. He says that they have lots in common with her, many common interests and very similar way of thinking.

His answers regarding Greece and the Greek culture indicate that he has no nationalistic or chauvinistic feelings (“I feel that I am a person of a random nationality”), although he appreciates his country’s historical and cultural contribution. He neither likes nor approves the political situation in Greece. As for the broadly known Greek hospitality, he thinks that “we are hospitable, yes. But only to tourists”. For him the only thing that one needs to be considered Greek is “to speak the language”.

He thinks that the number of immigrants in Greece should be reduced a little because “we cannot host more than we already have… and the illegal immigrants make the situation more complex”.

Admitting that he does not watch TV for the last years, he believes that politicians, the government and the media, and especially the latter are the main and most crucial sources which influence the public opinion, contribute to “the widespread phenomenon of ignorance within our society” and promote the formation “… of a prejudiced and racist behaviour towards immigrants”.

His stance towards the negative stereotypes attributed to the out-groups appears to be rather objective and, according to his experience, besides some petty crimes (like stealing or buying drugs) he doesn’t think that Albanian people are criminals and comments that such actions on the part of immigrants is a result of “their bad economic situation and of their societal
marginalisation”. When John was asked what the connotations of the pejorative “Albanian” are he answered that “it doesn’t mean something in particular. Sometimes we use it when one guy does something silly or choses a funny line to flirt with a girl. No one is offended though, it is not used with bad intentions. It’s like ‘malakas’. It has taken hold among friend’s circles”.

John agrees with giving Albanians the opportunity for mother tongue education and believes that this will benefit both groups because “immigrants will feel accepted and as a result they will be given the chance for better integration in the society. They will not feel marginalised and will be lawful citizens. If you embrace them you will establish better relations. Greeks will benefit too, it will reduce their complexes”. He supports the co-existence with immigrants within the society and it seems that he sees the advantages of a peaceful co-existence for both the in-group and the out-group.

4.3.3 Interviewee: Mary

Mary is 24 years old. She has a master’s degree on communication technologies and is currently working voluntarily for UNESCO. She has been living in Athens for all her life. Her father is from an immigrant background from Minor Asia and from Cephalonia, a Greek island in the Aegean Sea and her mother is from Mesologgi, Central Greece. She attended a private school, where there were no Albanian students. However, she have had contact with Albanians in her neighbourhood, in language lessons and at university. She occasionally spent time while she was a university student with an Albanian male co-student. She indicates that with her Albanian friend they shared the same sense of humour, had the same political beliefs and had the same preferences for entertainment and leisure.

Greece’s cultural contribution and its history is what makes her feel proud about her country. She also likes “our Mediterranean temperament and diet, which also exists in other countries too, Like Spain and Italy” and loves Greece because “it’s logical to love your country… that’s where you grew up and had your experiences, your memories.” On the other hand, she feels embarrassed about what happens now in Greece and about the attitudes some people have (“I don’t like the fact that we mimic uncritically what happens abroad without adjusting it to our actual needs, to the country’s needs and standards… this will be harmful in the end…”).

Mary’s remarks on the Greek hospitality were that “we selectively hospitable and mainly to tourists who bring the money”. She also mentions that people in the villages are truly hospitable giving the example of the old women “… who may be afraid of foreigners or express racism

5 Malakas (Greek: μαλάκας) is a Greek slang word but the usage of the term varies. Common alternative meanings include asshole or jerk, and the contrasting dude, or mate, depending on the context. Used extensively in everyday speech, the word malakas metaphorically defines the targeted individual as one who uses no common sense. It is considered inappropriate to use against strangers, while it is acceptable among close friends, typically among males, resembling the meaning of "dude" or "mate", giving them a sense of friendship or brotherhood. Additionally, females may use the word even in an affectionate way.
orally, but practically, the treat them like humans, they give them food, they give them shelter when in need…”

For Mary, being Greek means “… in legal terms, what is written on your passport. In general, what matters is how you feel, where you want to live, and if you are willing to do something to improve this place, to be interested for the country you like to live in. Otherwise, I am indifferent to which nationality each person is affiliated, I am just a citizen of the world”.

According to Mary the number of immigrants “… should be reduced. Immigrants should leave to find better living conditions. I would have said that it should not be reduced, or remain the same, but in this case something needs to be done for them… to live a better, more decent life”.

Mary was asked how she views various (mainly negative) stereotypes attached to Albanian immigrants. Regarding the ‘criminal’ profile attached to the out-group she suggested two reasons; first, that it’s in some people’s personality and that “they would do it anywhere”; and second that this behaviour “if and when is noted” is a reaction towards their maltreatment on behalf of the Greek society. Mary’s explanation for the meaning of the pejorative ‘Albanian’ is that it stems from the strong nationalistic beliefs of the Greek society, seeing anything foreign as of less value. Except for this “the ‘joke’ about Albanians usually refers to how other people are dressed - ‘You are dressed like an Albanian’ - … they do it to feel better for themselves. But generally it is a joke, it doesn’t mean anything too bad anymore, but it has remained.”

Mary recognises the strong influence of the media on public opinion and their power not only to facilitate ignorance among citizens but also to promptly stigmatise Albanian people “without even saying something negative… when they start the news broadcast with ‘The Albanian’, ‘An Albanian’ etc… so it is very possible that racist feelings are created even if you and your environment are not prejudiced in general”. Besides that, in one of her statements, she implies the affiliation of some news agents with political representatives (“… TV channels are political parties, but that’s another story”).

Regarding immigrant education, Mary discusses that “we [Greece] already have some good multicultural schools with good teachers who contribute to the education of immigrants despite the fact that there is room for numerous improvements”. Nonetheless, she perceives that mother tongue immigrant education is very unlikely to happen within the formal educational system, but recognises the advantages to come in the society, should this idea is realised (“… the advantages for society will be huge. Immigrants have potentials and this has been proved already. Greeks will also benefit… this will make them better persons”.

She did not express any opinion for the out-group because she considers that “we are all humans”.

4.3.4 Interviewee: Theo

Theo is 40 years old and works as a Business Unit Manager for a medical company in Athens. He has lived in Athens for most of his life, he attended a public school in Athens and has studied in the UK for three years. His mother is also from Athens, while his father is from Southern Greece. He had no immigrant students when he was at school. He never spends time with any individual from an immigrant group.
For Theo, being Greek means “…to have an important history, to speak the Greek language, to know the national anthem and the colours of the Greek flag. However, I am not proud of our modern history, especially when I make the comparison with other EU countries”. This statement indicates that for Theo national symbols are signifiers of national identity, but when his country is in the wrong, he is not that supportive. He also perceives Greek people as highly hospitable and outgoing and at the same time “self-destructive because we argue with each other with no serious reason”.

Theo would like the number of immigrants in Greece to be reduced. He is rather exclusionist about the out-group, since he believes that if their number reduced, the bad economic situation in Greece will improve and that unemployment will be reduced in this way (“…there are no jobs either for immigrants or for Greeks. Maybe the situation would be better in this way… that is how I mean it”). This indicated that Theo views Albanian immigrants as a threat for the distribution of scarce resources (i.e. employment). Despite this, he does not believe that the influx of Albanian immigrants contributed to the escalation of the economic crisis and to the high unemployment rates.

Furthermore, he doesn’t believe that Albanian immigrants raised criminality in Greece, although he claims that “quite some of them are involved in illegal activities for two main reasons. Firstly, for survival reasons … clearly because of economic reasons … and secondly because of differences in cultural and educational aspects.”

He recognizes that “politicians and the media, and especially TV are highly influencing the public opinion. They mostly defame the whole Albanian community and depict them as prone to criminality or as the cause of criminality. Now … how politicians treat immigrants clearly depends on their orientation. The radical wing classify them as unwanted; leftists and liberals do not refer to them with disapproval”.

Theo’s impression is that “Greeks are prejudiced toward Albanians… maybe because they are the most visible [immigrant] group, but less than they used to be during the 1990s”. He believes that although racism exists, it remarkably reduced and mentions that many factors play a role to how prejudice is created and one of them is “…demographics. The more visibility of immigrants in a specific region the more prejudiced the people are towards them, I suppose.”

He disagrees with providing the out-group with the opportunity to be educated in their mother tongue and claims that “immigrants should learn the language of the host country, otherwise it will take much longer to integrate. Providing them the opportunity to learn their mother language will not help their integration.”

Finally, Theo was asked to express his own opinion about the out-group: “I think they are smart, hard-working, devious, ambitious … most of them are of low educational level and they usually do not have good manners”.

4.3.5 Interviewee: Laura

Laura is 26 years old, she is working at her father’s company. She attended a private public high school and currently she is studying at an American college in Athens (also private). She had no Albanian peers at school and she knows only one person from the pertinent out-group, the cleaning lady. She has been living in Athens for all her life. Her mother is from Ioannina in northern Greece and her father is from Mesologgi, central Greece.
For Laura, being Greek means that “you will always be without money, that you are outgoing, that you live in a sunny and picturesque country and that you are rude and uncivilised”. She believes that the concept of Greek hospitality applies only to tourists and that for immigrants the exact opposite occurs.

She would like the number of immigrants to be reduced a lot, because she does not “like them and because there are no places left in the job market.”

On the other hand, she does not believe that immigrants played a role for the escalation of the economic crisis and for the high unemployment in Greece (“... it’s the government’s fault, for not being able to handle the situation properly”). Nor does she think that the specific outgroup increased criminality in the Greek society (“...there are criminals and non-criminals in every country... they do illegal stuff and criminal stuff, but this stems from their culture and the way they used to live in their country. To behave like this is not a big deal... that’s how they learned to live... but they are not violent”).

She also claims that she does not agree with how Albanians are depicted in the media (“... they present them as thieves, they treat them as scapegoats... they are blamed for all the wrongs of the Greek society... I don’t agree... and they affect the public opinion”)

She recognises that the Greek community is generally prejudiced (“...we are racists, the scapegoating of Albanian immigrants is now a stereotype and it is stabilised in our minds”) whereas she uses the word ‘Albanian’ as a pejorative (“I also do it sometimes, I say... ‘You seem like an Albanian’. It means that you are a person of low quality. They do it to denigrate each other”)

Laura agrees with including elements of the immigrants; cultures in the school curricula (“... it would help... you will learn more things about them, how they live here, how they lived in their countries, it would help... but I don’t think anyone will take it seriously...”).

When I asked Laura to explicitly express her opinion about the out-group she answered: “In general I don’t like them... I think they are devious and bad people... they sabotaged my dad’s work on purpose”.

4.3.6 Interviewee: Christy

Christy is 29 years old, she is finishing her studies at the moment and she works for a shipping company in Piraeus, Athens. She has been living in Athens for all her life, her father is from Athens and her mother from Kalamata in southern Greece. She has attended a public school and she did not have any peers from an immigrant background. She does not have any Albanian close friend, but she spends some time with an Albanian girl, who is a friend of a friend.

What Christy has to say about Greece, the Greek qualities and identity is that “… Being Greek, means that I am speaking loudly, I am honest, my country has an important history. We are outgoing people. We are cunning, smart-asses, we have vested interests, we are suspicious in our relationships, and there is no trust among us. Basically, yes, we are hospitable, but essentially, no. It depends, it’s 50/50”. Christy says that “in order to be Greek you just have to love Greece”.

Christy would like the number of immigrants in Greece to be reduced a lot. She justifies her answer firstly by saying that Greece is unable to support them and secondly by stating that “they are hard-working people, but they take jobs from Greeks who are forced to go abroad to
search for a job”. She thinks that immigration has affected our economy, “... but not anymore. Now a vast majority of immigrants are legal and have integrated, but the first years, with the black market, they did impose a problem and we didn’t notice it.”

In general she views that the situation was worse during the first years, and now that they have integrated, things are better for both groups. About the ‘criminal Albanian’ stereotype she comments: “Maybe during the first years they did some petty crimes, but I don’t think that this is the case for the present. But everything depends on your background, your environment and with what values you grew up. If you tell me about a girl who lives here for 20 years, I will tell you that she is like Greeks, but I will be suspicious towards a bachelor man who just came two years ago, it also depends on the level of integration”.

She “of course” recognises that the media influence public opinion “… because they always promote the negative aspects” and does not approve the pejorative “Albanian”: “… It’s a joke, a bad joke...they use it to devaluate someone. They say it for someone who misspelled a word, for the way they are dressed... and all these come from the difficulties which Albanians dealt with. Greek was not their mother tongue, so it’s logical to make mistakes, their bad economic situation which didn’t allow them to dress properly... and as they were the most visible immigrant group, they were easy targets for such behaviour... people who continue to say it are just ignorant”.

Her opinion about the education of immigrants is not yet concrete: “It’s good to learn things about other cultures, but learning Albanian will not help Greeks vocationally. Albanians could... perhaps... be given the opportunity to learn their mother tongue, but this may hinder their full integration into the society”.

Finally, she claims: “I think that they [Albanians] are more intelligent people than we are, they have a lower educational level but this is our fault. If they went to another country they would have developed better. I have admired many Albanians. My friend’s friend has achieved a lot, although he had less opportunities than Greeks, who are privileged and make no effort to improve themselves.”
5. **Discussion**

The previous section presented the findings of the three research methods employed, whilst this section discusses and analyses these results with reference to the research questions and the theoretical framework which has been developed to date about intergroup contact and intergroup relations.

5.1 **The attitudes of young Greeks towards Albanians**

The results revealed that a high percentage of young Greeks in Athens is not prejudiced towards Albanians (42.6%) but still, a significant number of people has negative attitudes for the out-group. Nearly one third of participants holds a neutral stance. The following sections will discuss and explain these findings in more detail.

5.2 **The relationship between social networks and out-group attitudes**

The qualitative data elicited by the questionnaire indicate rather clearly that, in the pertinent context, contact reduces prejudice. None of the participants who have frequent contact with out-group members are negative towards the out-group. Contrastingly, people who have limited or no contact with the out-group show an increased negative tendency. As expected, the group which indicated that they have occasional contact stands somewhere in the middle.

The claim that contact reduces prejudice can be further supported by the answers given regarding their opinion about the Albanians who our participants know in person. The negative answers of the ‘never’ group given about their general opinion (45.5%) were significantly reduced for the particular opinion (27.3%). Similarly, the ‘occasionally’ group’s negative answers were reduced by 14% respectively.

As far as perceived communication problems due to language issues are concerned, we saw that the majority of our participants do not usually deal with any, regardless of the frequency of contact. Through this outcome, an interesting assumption can be made. The fact that most participants can effectively communicate in Greek with the out-group denotes that the out-group has linguistically integrated to a great extent, and this is important, since language is a means of accessibility to many essential public sectors such as education and employment and of course, to communication with the in-group in general. Additionally, it has been previously shown that common language, among others, facilitates positive contact effects (Pettigrew, 1998).

Furthermore, I explored how culturally different the in-group perceives the out-group. Pettigrew (1998), in his research of European intergroup contact has found that prejudiced individuals are less likely to seek contact with the out-group due to individual differences between members, and, specifically differences in values and norms. In the process of intergroup contact, limited perceived intergroup differences can reduce threat and eventually lead to prejudice reduction. A positive result from the answers elicited is that a small percentage of the whole sample (23.4%) pinpoints cultural differences with the out-group, whereas almost half of our participants (44.6%) are not negatively influenced by cultural differences and nearly one third (32%) holds a neutral stance. Moreover, the group which has frequent contact with the
out-group gave no negative answers and the ‘occasionally’ group is again somewhere in between. Although the group with the least amount and frequency of contact gave more negative answers compared to the other two groups, when observed in relation to the whole sample and to the other questions, negative answers seem to be lessened.

Willingness to learn about the out-group and readiness to help them integrate, appear to be consistent with most findings of the present study. Again, the more contact, the less negative answers were given in relation to the out-group; and conversely, when contact with the out-group was limited more negative remarks were made towards the out-group. Interesting enough was that the group with the least contact was quite willing to learn about the out-group (40.9%) at least superficially (“...if I have the chance”, “why not?”). Considering the four processes of prejudice reduction mentioned in section 2.2.2, this hints that if they are given the chance to learn about the out-group in a more systematic manner attitude change can occur. Furthermore, most of the participants who disapproved of giving immigrants the chance to be educated in their mother tongue did not do so exclusively due to negative biases towards the out-group, but because they viewed this perspective as hindering the immigrants’ integration to the society or as impossible for the Greek educational system. Hence, we cannot draw clear-cut conclusions about the direction of the participants’ attitudes for the last two questions, but we can assume the implications of ignorance of the advantages of multiculturalism within the society and the exclusionist orientation of Greek education towards immigrants which, unfortunately, predicts that learning about the out-group systematically will not be provided in the Greek schools soon.

Besides confirming the second research question of the present study, the answers revealed some other interesting information about the contact situation. Firstly, our participants spontaneously mobilised new in-group categories in which Albanian immigrants are included. A significant percentage of respondents, mostly of the ‘frequent’ contact group but also in the other two groups invoked the common human nature Greeks and Albanians share when asked to express their opinion towards the out-group. Most of the times this answer was given, no particular description was provided for the out-group maybe because basically, they belong to the same in-group, i.e. mankind. Others referred to the common historical points Greece shares with Albania or to common migration experiences which both Greek people and the immigrants in Greece share. This spontaneous self-categorisation can be interpreted as a good start for prejudice reduction, as suggested by the model of decategorisation. Common history and shared experience can create feelings of empathy, as observed in our participants’ discourse; they seem to sympathise with immigrants who have been dealing with adversities in the Greek society. Empathy can also facilitate prejudice reduction through generating affective ties, like friendships (Reich & Purbhoo, 1975).

I will now turn to the information drawn from the individual interviews, attempting to shed some more light to the formation of out-group attitudes. In the results section each interviewee and their answers were unfolded separately. Here, these answers are discussed according to the main themes concerning intergroup contact theory in situ.

The three participants with regular out-group contact (Nick, Mary and John), know more about the out-group and thus are less threatened and willing to embrace and help the out-group integrate into the society in which both groups reside. They rationalise inconsistent social
behaviour of the out-group (e.g. some incidents of stealing or being involved with petty crimes) which typically detaches the out-group from negative stereotypes. This behaviour is consistent with the disagreement showed towards persistent negative stereotypes ascribed to Albanian immigrants (stereotype disconfirmation). A tendency for behaviour change is also observed, since a comparison and contrast with other countries of the EU are employed by Nick and Mary. The three individuals have less pride for nationality or ethnicity and are less attached to the in-group of Greekness. More specifically, the notion of hospitality is reconsidered and to an extent rejected, while legal practices and immigrant treatment are critically re-evaluated and negatively judged. Briefly, all four interrelated processes for prejudice reduction seem to take place within the group of frequent contact.

The rest three interviewed individuals – Theo, Laura and Christy – have minimal (Christy) to no contact (Laura and Theo) with the out-group. They have little knowledge about various matters concerning the out-group, perceive the out-group as a threat, avoid contact and would like it to be excluded from the society. As discussed above, out-group perceived threat is closely related to prejudice and ethnic exclusionism, whereas lack of prejudice is indicated by willingness to embrace the out-group. Christy, Laura and Theo said that they would like the number of immigrants to be reduced because they are worried about the low economic growth and unemployment. Theo believes that if immigrants leave the country the situation will be improved, probably implying for Greek people, while Christy indirectly implies that the situation with immigration contributes to the bad employment conditions of Greeks (“... Greeks who are forced to go abroad...”). Little contact with the out-group enhances out-group stereotyping; all three participants either explicitly or implicitly consider inconsistent social behaviour as a universal feature of the out-group stemming from its cultural background. In-group favouritism is fundamental for the creation of discrimination towards the out-group and the second group of interviewees made mostly positive remarks towards the in-group. Additionally, Theo employs national emblems to define his (Greek) identity, a sign of nationalism highly related to discrimination towards out-groups.

Nick, John and Mary have regular contact with Albanian immigrants and their answers seem to follow an approximate pattern and so do Theo and Laura’s answers who are the interviewees with the least contact. Christy has intermediate contact with the out-group and her answers are quite diverse. While she appears to be exclusionist towards the out-group she is neither totally negative like Theo and Laura appear to be nor completely open and positive. She disconfirms the stereotyping towards Albanians, recognises that the Greek society mistreated them and towards the end of the interview she stands for the out-group. This outcome can be explained by the suggestion that mere contact can promote prejudice reduction but when not combined with other facilitating factors, like threat decrease through leaning about the out-group or in-group reappraisal, the results cannot be concrete.

5.3 The relationship between intergroup contact and language attitudes.

The statistical results for the MGT showed that, naturally, Greeks evaluate more favourably their own language as well as a speaker who speaks the language, than they do for a speaker who speaks another language, the language of the out-group. Social categorisation, Allport (1954) suggested, is a natural process of the human mind which is needed for an orderly living.
It is also a notion which entails differentiation and discrimination, resulting from the comparison between the in-group and the out-group(s). Therefore, based on the suggestions of SIT (developed by Tajfel et al., 1971), anything different from one’s own community, is somewhat less good, as can be shown by the evaluations for the “community” language and for an out-group language. It should be noted here that zero participants recognised which language they heard in the case of Albanian, so it is rather sure that their evaluations were free from any bias towards the specific out-group. Furthermore, the second test applied showed no significant relationship between language attitudes and frequency of contact. It is possible that if the participants recognised that the language they heard was the Albanian language, the results would have been different.

Two additional assumptions can be drawn from this picture (i.e. the fact that respondents were not able to recognise spoken Albanian). That is, members of the out-group are either scarcely using their mother tongue in public, so Greeks are not familiar with it or that first generation Albanian immigrants do not teach the language to their children. Both assumptions reveal that Albanian immigrants have integrated in the mainstream society and even that they have assimilated into it, losing in this way elements of their heritage culture, such as language.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

This thesis is focused on the metropolitan area of Athens where the majority of Albanian immigrants reside and relate to Greek people daily in various contexts. To my knowledge, there is no previous academic work exploring the themes addressed in the present study. The results of my study could comprise an initial step assisting language policy makers and immigrant policy makers to motivate towards the formation of more effective immigrant integration policies implementing the notions of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the Greek society. Research in other areas of the country is also needed, where large numbers of Albanian immigrants reside, in order to have a more global picture. Consequently, of pivotal significance is also research in Greek schools (general and multicultural) in order to pinpoint discrepancies regarding immigrant education. In this way a more methodical approach of immigrant education will be possible. Education is only one but also crucial context where prejudice reduction practices can be employed. Since educationalists play a highly significant role within this context an extension of the present study should be conducted including staff members in the educational institutions. Attitudes of teachers towards out-group members should be studied, in order to ensure that they are free from prejudiced feelings but also equipped with expertise and willingness to promote multilingualism and multiculturalism in the society.
6. Conclusion

This thesis investigates if intergroup contact can reduce prejudice towards the out-group. Several pertinent theoretical models as well as previous and recent research have been studied. Most research in the European context has found positive correlations between contact and prejudice reduction. The present study also confirms it. Participants who relate to the out-group regularly tend to be less prejudiced. These individuals appear to be open to cultural diversity within the society and embrace the pertinent out-group. They also seem to recognise the advantages such a diversity can bring to the society. On the other hand, little or no contact with the out-group results in higher prejudice towards the out-group. Individuals who have no out-group friendships tend to see the out-group as a threat and avoid contact in general.

However, mere contact cannot battle prejudice and in order to achieve an essential outcome more systematic efforts are required. Of course, the support of institutions is vital, because it would accelerate the process and establish more solid steps towards this end. The results reveal that with a consistent endeavour, full integration of Albanians immigrants is possible, since the pertinent group has already integrated in many parts of social life.
Appendices

Appendix A

PART 1 – Questionnaire

General Information

1. Are you male/female?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your place of birth?
4. What is your current place of living?
5. Which of the following have you completed?
   • Primary school; High school (gymnasio); High school (lykeio); BA university degree; MA university degree; PhD degree; Other (specify)
6. List all the languages you speak including your MT
7. What is your profession?

Matched guise/Verbal guise

Speaker 1 - 7

Instructions: In the first part of the study you will hear seven (7) recordings of the same text and you are asked to indicate the first impression made to you for the speaker of each language. We kindly ask you to indicate on a scale from one (1) to five (5) to what extent different characteristics apply to the different speakers and languages.

-If, for instance, you think that a certain speaker is probably rich, you should tick the box closest to 'rich'.
-If you think that a speaker is poor, you should tick the box closest to 'poor'.
-If you think that a speaker sounds a little poor or a little rich, you should tick one of the boxes next to the extreme values.
-Should you have no specific opinion, please check the box in the middle.

1. What impression does this speaker make to you? (old-fashioned >modern)
2. (Unattractive>attractive)
3. (weird>normal)
4. (unfriendly>friendly)
5. (poor>rich)
6. (stupid>smart)
7. (uneducated>educated)
8. (rude>polite)
9. What is your impression about this language? (ugly>beautiful)
10. Can you recognise the speaker’s language?

Attitudes
1. From which school did you graduate? (Please specify the school’s name, region, if it is a public/private one and describe any other special characteristic of this school [e.g. bilingual, international, for hearing-impaired students etc.]).

2. Where were any foreign students in your school? If yes, how many were they (approximately) what was the ethnicity of their majority?

3. Did you yourself had any foreign friends in the school? If yes, how many and what was their ethnicity?

4. How many Albanians do you personally know?

5. How many of them are included in your social network (e.g. friend, relatives etc.)?


7. What do you think about the Albanians you personally know? Please justify your answer.

8. When I am talking to an Albanian I deal with communication problems regarding their proficiency in Greek (accent, language use, level of acquisition).

   Strongly disagree - Disagree - Neutral - Agree - Completely agree

9. When I am talking to an Albanian I recognise cultural differences that hinder our communication.

   Strongly disagree - Disagree - Neutral - Agree - Completely agree

10. Would you like to learn Albanian? Please justify your answer.

11. Would you like to know more about Albanians and their culture and history? Please justify your answer.

12. Do you agree that Albanians and immigrants in general should be given the chance to be educated in their native/heritage language? Please justify your answer.

13. Do you agree that Albanians should be recognized as an official minority group in Greece like Turkish people (according to the Treaty of Lausanne)

   If you wish to participate in the second part of the survey, which consists of a personal interview which will not exceed the 20 minutes through remote communication (e.g. Skype) please enter your e-mail address here.

Appendix B

PART 2 – Individual interviews

General questions

1. What are you doing at the moment? Do you have any plans for the future?

2. How long have you been living in Athens?

   Where are you from? (Region in Greece). Please provide me with a brief family history (origins)

   Nationalism & Chauvinism

3. What does it mean to you to be Greek?
What is the best and the worst thing about Greece and the Greek culture?

**Ethnic exclusionism**

4. Do you think that the number of immigrants in Greece nowadays should be increased, decreased, or remain the same? Why do you think so?

What does it take for someone to be considered truly Greek?

**Stereotypes**

5. Do you think that Greek are hospitable and polite towards foreigners in general?
6. Do you think that most Albanians have wrongdoing behaviour? Why do you think they do so if and when they do?
7. How do politicians and the media depict Albanians? Do you think that their stance influences public opinion?
8. Do you think that Greek people treat Albanians with prejudice? Why do they do so? Is it the same with all immigrants or just Albanians?
9. Greek people call each other “Albanian” using the word as a pejorative. What are the connotations? Why do they do so? Do you also do it?

Do you agree that courses in the language(s) of immigrants should be implemented in Greek schools? If that happened, do you think that it will bring advantages in the development of cognitive, cultural, vocational, individual, economic skills of both Greeks and immigrants?

**Social Networks**

*No/limited contact at all*

- What is your impression of Albanians? Why do you have this impression? What is your knowledge/experience?

*Occasional contact*

- Where do you know the Albanians you know?

*Frequent contact*

- How/Where did you meet the Albanians you hang out with?
- Describe a normal day spent with your Albanian friend(s). What do you do? What do you discuss about?
- What do you have in common (interests) with the Albanians you hang out with?
References


