

Liza Tsaliki

‘How does the word Albanian make you feel?’ A case study in the representation of the Albanian ethnic minority within the Greek media.

Conference paper

Original citation:

Originally presented at [Media@lse Fifth Anniversary Conference](#), 21st - 23rd September 2008, LSE, London.

This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/21580/>

Available in LSE Research Online: November 2008

© 2008 The Author

LSE has developed LSE Research Online so that users may access research output of the School. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may download and/or print one copy of any article(s) in LSE Research Online to facilitate their private study or for non-commercial research. You may not engage in further distribution of the material or use it for any profit-making activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute the URL (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk>) of the LSE Research Online website.

Liza Tsaliki (Faculty of Mass Media and Communication, University of Athens) and Konstantinos Chandrinou, (i-sieve Technologies Ltd.)

‘How does the word *Albanian* make you feel?’ A case study in the representation of the Albanian ethnic minority within the Greek media’

Abstract

For decades, Greece has been a traditional labour-exporting country, with diaspora being one of the most striking aspects of her history. The reversal of migratory balance occurred in the 1970s, with the first waves of ‘repatriates’. Gradually, as Greece was turning into a net receiver, the migration issue was emerging, causing ripple effects in the country’s social and economic life. According to the 2001 census, there are 762,191 non-nationals living in Greece, coming from no fewer than 195 different countries. However, about 58 percent of all non-nationals come from neighbouring Albania, equating the notion of the immigrant worker to that of the ‘Albanian’. Additionally, Albanians were the first to enter the country once the borders opened up. The predominant national stereotype is that Albanians are petty thieves, and no respectable Greek family would wish to send their children to the same school with ‘the Albanians’. Student intake in private schools in Greece has increased over the years as a result- economic migrants cannot afford private schooling and their children attend state schools. All the same, and despite the fact that the Greek society is indeed, at times, racist and xenophobic, there are also several occasions where multiculturalism has become part of everyday life, as evidenced in the numerous ethnic restaurants visited by Greek nationals. Having said that, within contemporary Greek culture, Albanian origin signifies trouble and raises suspicion, a stereotypical reaction usually reified by the representation of the Albanian community in the Greek media.

This paper wishes to explore the way in which Albanians are discussed in the Greek online and offline media. To what extent do they reiterate stereotypical depictions of the ‘Albanian’? The paper will look into the representation of the Albanian community in the mainstream (broadcast and print) media and compare them to a variety of Greek blogs.

Introduction

The point of departure for this paper was a casual conversation between the two authors on whether or not Greek bloggers might be more progressive and open-minded than the rest (based on the view that blogging represents an alternative and pluralistic public sphere, one that gives voice to all those who are not represented by the mainstream media). We decided to test this hypothesis by taking a usually contentious subject - Albanian immigrants in Greece - and explore the way in which Greek bloggers talked about them. What we hoped to find is that the Greek blogosphere is more open towards the Albanian minority in relation to the mainstream media (which we expected to present a more biased profile in their depiction of Albanians). In order to prove our point, we decided to conduct a quantitative content analysis comparing the representation of the Albanian community in Greek blogs with the way the Greek press and television news bulletins covered it.

Our investigation revolved around the following research questions:

How do the Greek print and broadcast media present the Albanian immigrant community in Greece?

What kinds of mediated notions of Albanian identity do they construct?

There is widespread disbelief regarding Albanians among the Greeks, the national stereotype, given the first chance, constructing them as petty thieves and potential criminals. *To what extent do the Greek mainstream media enhance such portrayals?*

Are Albanian-related issues framed in a conflictual, consensual or negotiated manner?

Do media portrayals offer a positive or negative evaluation of the Albanian immigrant?

Do they contribute to the continuous marginalization of Albanians in Greece by offering polarized representations of them?

In what, if any, different contexts are Albanians discussed in Greek blogs and what kind of sentiment polarity (positive or negative) do related conversations and commentaries exhibit?

This paper will begin by contextualizing the Albanian community in Greece; it will then address the representation of Albanian immigrants in the Greek press and broadcast news. This will be followed by the examination of the ways in which the Greek bloggers choose to comment upon them, before final conclusions are drawn.

A. Putting the Albanian immigrant community into context

The governance of diversity within European multi-ethnic societies has been through three stages: from the late nineteenth century till the mid-twentieth, national and racial stereotypes were closely intertwined and, as a result, ethnic difference was to be abolished. Immigrants were expected to assimilate so as not to stand out from the perceived uniform national culture; by the mid-sixties till the end of the century, however, there was a marked shift to 'integration plus' whereby national norms could, up to a point, host immigrant cultures and become multicultural. As a rule of thumb, claims of immigrant/ethnic minorities to be 'different' gained legitimacy and in public rhetoric it was generally accepted that negative discrimination on racial and ethnic grounds should not be sustained (Grillo 2007: 979); by the early twenty-first century, there was a 'backlash' (ibid.) or a 'cultural-diversity sceptical turn' (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2005). This is a time where all around Europe a moral panic regarding 'difference' emerged, prevalent in populist movements, such as the British Nationalist Party, and in wider public debates alike about the rights and wrongs of different ways of living and the governance of diversity. One argument spreading across Europe is that immigration has led to what Sartori has called an 'excess of alterity' (2002) with countries becoming 'too diverse' (Goodhart 2004), and the presence of communities with values conflicting with dominant 'Western' secular norms threatening social cohesion (Grillo 2007: 979).

When faced with this reality of multi-culturalism¹, Greece was taken by surprise, since for decades it has been a traditional labour-exporting country, with diaspora being one of

¹ The criticism on the notion of multiculturalism is by and large ignored within the Greek public discourse, 'multicultural' being always a positive attribute and something to aspire to reach (as exemplified in the

the most striking aspects of her history. The reversal of migratory balance occurred in the 1970s, with the first waves of ‘repatriates’ (Greek economic migrants and political refugees) returning to the homeland. Migrant workers were first imported in the 1970s, mainly from Poland, Pakistan, the Philippines, Egypt and Morocco (King 2000; Kassimati 2003).

The beginning of immigration to Greece coincides with the border opening in Eastern Europe (a result of the collapse of the former USSR and Eastern European socialist regimes, accompanied by the liberalisation of the economies of these countries) and the adoption of restrictive policies in the traditional destination countries of Western Europe. Political trends, economic and social developments as well as demography and geography have contributed to this major and ‘unexpected’ change of status (Rovolis and Tragaki, 2006)². Gradually, as Greece was turning into a net receiver, the migration issue was emerging, causing ripple effects in the country’s social and economic life, both at urban and rural levels (Kasimis and Papadopoulos 2005)³.

During the nineties, Greece, along with other Southern European countries such as Portugal, Spain and Italy, all of which set up the framework for the construction of a ‘Southern European model’ of migration (King 2000; Labrianidis et.al. 2004), became a destination country for hundreds of thousands of immigrants, who now have settled and work in the country and account for 8-9% of the national population. The Greek labour market was quick to accept the foreign labour force, however, Greek society, which became multicultural without being ready for so much diversity within such a brief period of time, was not. Greek migration policy (most recent legislature, Law 3386/2005) is more about controlling and containing incoming populations rather than truly seeking the social inclusion of immigrants⁴. The 2001 census shows that there is a substantial percentage of immigrants living in Greece together with their families. 17% of the immigrant population consists of children up to 14 years of age, while teenagers between 15-19 years old account for another 8%. Children of immigrants are now part of the Greek student population, better represented in primary and secondary education rather than in higher education (one of the reasons being either they are under-achievers, or that

promotion of various ethnic music festivals and cultural events). For a background into academic and policy discussions on the divisive and separatist character of multiculturalism and the risk it carries for ‘sleepwalking into segregation’ for any society that seeks unbridled versions of it, see Grillo 2007.

² Iosifides et.al. (2007) mention that the Albanian inflow to Greece is related to a series of factors: ease of entry, political and socio-economic developments in Albania after 1990, geographical proximity of the two countries, and demand for a cheap and flexible labour force in various sectors of the Greek economy (e.g. construction and agriculture) which has further been reinforced by the persistence of an extensive informal economy. See also Labrianidis et al. 2004.

³ In the absence of a robust social welfare state in remote rural regions in Greece, the presence of Albanian immigrants has meant that farmers and shepherds found spouses to marry and male workers to help them preserve and expand their economic activities; elderly households found workers to repair their houses and look after their gardens and animals; the labour needed in housing construction and public works was provided; Albanian immigrants even sometimes run the village cafe, thus injecting rural communities with life (Kasimis and Papadopoulos, 2005).

⁴ For a detailed discussion of Greek migratory policy and the particular legal and institutional changes needed for the regularisation and integration of the immigrant population, see Kasimis and Papadopoulos, 2005.

immigrants are young and therefore their children are also young) (Georgopoulou 2007). Second generation immigrants are often treated with derision and are discriminated against, both socially and at school, due to their nationality and immigrant status, and as a result they are socially excluded more often than not.

The sudden influx of immigrants in the 1990s caused a serious fracture within the national psyche, a recurrent and contentious issue on every national anniversary (28 October, 25 March) ever since⁵. The bulk of the immigrant population in Greece (about 75%) originates from the ex-communist countries, mainly from the neighbouring Balkan states (65%), while practically 6 out of 10 immigrants (58% of all non-nationals) come from one country, Albania. The predominance of one single country of origin constitutes a distinctive Greek feature, equating the notion of the immigrant worker to that of the 'Albanian'. Additionally, Albanians were the first to enter the country once the borders opened up, the men-to-women ratio among Albanians being 1.5 men to a single woman (Rovolis and Tragaki, 2006).

The majority of Albanians (55%) report that they have come to Greece seeking work; Greece is not a casual choice for them, instead, for the majority of migrants, Greece was the original desired destination (Labrianidis et al. 2004). Male immigrants are mainly employed in the construction sector; among women, 71% of Albanians are engaged in services - mainly domestic work and tourism. The distribution of economic migrants by duration of residence reveals that 50% of male and 45% of female Albanian migrants report that they have been residing in the country for 5 years or more at the time of the 2001 census. Among the different ethnic groups, Albanians present the highest proportion reporting family reunification as a cause of immigrating to Greece (16.0%) (the respective proportion for Bulgarians, the second biggest immigrant community in the country, is 7.5%) (Bagavos et.al 2007).

The Albanian migration flows of the 1990s were a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by the political, socio-cultural and economic changes and conditions both in Albania and in the various destination countries, above all Greece and Italy. In fact, within current global migratory flows, the recent Albanian migration is seen as an exceptional case because of reasons such as the fundamental role migration played in guaranteeing the economic survival of the Albanian society⁶; its overall magnitude in relation to the size of the Albanian population; the way it emerged, so suddenly, after years of internal mobility restrictions and isolationist politics; the interconnections of these migratory flows with internal migration and the emergence of trafficking and organised crime; the centrality it acquired within migration-related debates and policy-making in Greece (and

⁵ On both occasions, a student parade takes place, causing major public disputes regarding whether or not immigrants have the right to be the flag carriers- an honorary task, carried out by the best student at each school. Many people are vehemently against non-Greek (in most cases, of Albanian origin) students carrying the national emblem on the occasion of a national anniversary, regardless of the fact that they may be the best performers in their classroom.

⁶ Emigration was the only way out of the economically and politically chaotic situation of the country. Albanian families were divided between those who received remittances and were able to survive economically, and those who did not and were economically desperate (Mai and Schwandner-Sievers, 2003).

Italy); and the degree of stigmatisation Albanian migrants were subjected to by the host-country (Greek and Italian) media (Mai and Schwandner-Sievers, 2003). The authors argue that Albanian migrants experience *differential inclusion*, a state in which immigrants are incorporated into some sections of society, above all the labour market, but denied access to others, notably welfare care, citizenship and political participation. In this respect, Italy and Greece exert a doubly articulated influence on the Albanian socio-economic context and on the people who inhabit it: on the one hand, the influence of Italian and Greek capital and institutions enhance the processes of democratisation and economic development within Albania in line with the wider project of European integration. On the other, the economic and geopolitical superiority of the two host countries leads to the construction of a peripheral space inhabited by people who are forced to accept exploitative working conditions in deregulated and service-oriented job markets. As a result, Albanian migrants are faced with multiple levels of social exclusion, exploitation and marginalisation, and are rhetorically underpinned by harsh campaigns of stigmatization (: 943).

The media in particular, both in Greece and Italy, have played a significant role in the stigmatization of Albanians by regularly associating them with crimes of a particularly ferocious or morally reprehensible nature. The Albanian migrant in Greece and Italy has become what Stuart Hall termed the 'constitutive other' (Hall, 1996: 4-5) at times of intense political confrontation and socio-cultural and economic change in both of the host countries. Stereotypical identifications with violence and crime have thus led many Albanian immigrants to resort to subversive coping strategies, such as adult baptism and name changing (Mai and Schwandner-Sievers, 2003: 943-44; Labrianidis et.al. 2004: 1193), in order to avoid individual exclusion and to generate trust with the local host communities.

In Greece, Albanian immigrants are predominantly employed as non-specialised labourers in the construction, service and primary sectors, irrespective of their personal skills and type of work in Albania (were they often were skilled workers in the industrial sector, craftsmen, scientific or technical personnel). This, along with the limited opportunities for formal re-education and training for immigrants in Greece, inevitably leads to gradual deskilling and a decrease of opportunities for upward social mobility, reinforcing 'ethnic specialisation' (e.g. construction for Albanians, personal services for Filipinos etc). In fact, as most Albanian immigrants are channeled to specific working positions through family and ethnic networks, a gradual formation of an 'ethnic enclave' economy takes place. This ethnic mobility entrapment limits the opportunities of Albanian immigrants for wider labour market integration and employment progression according to their education, training or other skills (Iosifides et al. 2007: 1350).

Despite the tight family, kinship, as well as ethnic networks developed within the Albanian ethnic community, all of which help the social incorporation of Albanians in the host society, when it comes to the active participation in NGOs and immigrant associations, research shows extremely low levels of membership in such associations (thus reinforcing the view that the processes of Albanian incorporation in Greek society are mainly informal) (ibid.: 1353). The reasons for this apparent lack of interest are the

fragmentation of these associations (there are more than 10 different national associations for Albanians in Greece, most of which are in Athens), and reduced trust in their capacity to represent immigrant interests (the largest of them count a few hundred members only out of an ethnic population of almost half a million) (Gropas and Triantafyllidou 2005). The case might also be that the high level of stigmatization of Albanians (*Albani*) within Greek society has acted as a powerful deterrent against the active involvement of immigrants in such associations, similar to what Albanian immigrants in Italy have experienced (Mai, 2005).

Furthermore, social relations with Greeks, what Iosifides et al. (2007: 1354) call 'bridging social capital', is very weak and problematizes the very notion of a smooth social incorporation of Albanians into the Greek society. In that respect, it is interesting to see how *Greeks* view the incorporation of immigrants. According to the 2003 European Social Survey, young people in Greece demonstrate a xenophobic attitude towards immigrants who, regardless of race, religion and economic status, are expected to be totally assimilated into the host culture. The 'other' must first and foremost 'accept the Greek way of life', secondly 'speak Greek', and then 'have the relevant qualifications needed'. Within the negative impact of the presence of immigrants in Greece is 'an increase in deviance'; the fact that 'they take away jobs from Greeks'; 'they make Greece a worse place to live'. Overall, young Greeks overestimate the numbers of immigrants in the country (they think there are too many of them) and wish that not many of them were accepted. Their views generally resonate with the views of the rest of the population (Dragona 2007).

The ambivalence towards the influx of immigrants is also exemplified in the work of Kasimis and Papadopoulou (2005: 119-121) where the perceptions of rural households towards migrants is discussed: attitudes range between acknowledging the positive impact of immigrant labour to the local economy and society and seeing them as a threat to the community. Depending on the type of migrant employment; the level of labour shortage; and their socio-economic status, educational level and age, locals showed different levels of tolerance towards the immigrants invariably describing the latter's presence from 'excessive' to 'enough but not too many'.

All of the above serve to reinforce the urgent need for an informed policy framework for the enhancement of the social incorporation of immigrants in Greece. Apart from some piecemeal and *ad hoc* measures, the lack of a relevant policy framework in terms of the promotion of equal rights in the labour market, housing, education and training, religion, culture and civic participation is staggering (Marvakis 2004). The widespread negative image of Albanians in Greece, a barrier of prejudice, xenophobia and discrimination can be eroded only with prolonged social contact between the two groups.

B. The symbolic representation of Albanian immigrants in the Greek press

Among a variety of public portrayals, news representations play a significant role in the way people, culture, politics and social life are represented in the public eye: news representations contribute as to how people see themselves, their own identity and the

identity of the 'others', as well as the relationship between 'us' and 'them'. News coverage is a means for all social groups, let alone an ethnic community, to make their voices heard and communicate their agenda. Which views are covered, and in which ways, depends on the economic and political structure, the institutional role of the press, and the characteristics of the wider media environment (Pietikäinen, 2003: 583). News representations of ethnic minorities have usually been described as biased and partial, favouring the dominant group over the communities of the 'others', the latter frequently being portrayed within a context of problems, crime and disturbance (Cottle, 2000; Halloran, 1998; Teo 2000). Van Dijk (1991) argued that ethnic minorities were mainly represented in the print media in association with crime, violence, social welfare and problematic immigration, claiming that it is through newspapers that elites may affect what 'ordinary' people think, therefore giving racist views popular currency. He went on to suggest that denial of racism was an important part of this process in which positive self-presentation attempts to conceal and deflect actual racist statements.

According to other views, the problematic representation of foreign immigrants in the media is hardly because journalists around the world are racists- more likely it has to do with journalistic practices and the routine of journalistic daily work, which is similar everywhere. Journalists need clear-cut routines in order to be able to make sense of the flow of events and report on it in a comprehensible manner to a deadline and with the resources available (Allan, 1999). What this means in practice is that journalism relies heavily on ready-made material: stories compatible with journalistic routines or stories already covered in another news outlet, in press releases or in agency reports (i.e. the police) have better chances of ending up in the news. The possibility of shaping the news in this way favours groups already in an advantageous position and, conversely, is less favourable to those who do not have such services - and ethnic minorities are seldom in such a position of power (Pietikäinen, 2003:589).

In order to examine news representations of the Albanian immigrant community in Greece, our content analysis of the Greek press consisted of three national newspapers, each one representing a different political orientation: *Ta Nea*, *Kathimerini*, and *Avgi*. *Ta Nea* is an influential national title, part of the Labrakis Foundation, considered to play a significant role in shaping public opinion (Bantimaroudis and Kampanellou, 2007), pertaining to the political centre and the PASOK Opposition; *Kathimerini* is another influential national daily, more elitist than the first title, representing the centre-right and with a critical eye on the conservative government of New Democracy; *Avgi* is a small national daily on the political left. The mainstream print media are here treated, as in other cases too (Winter 2007), as institutionalised (re)producers of dominant representations within public discourse. The detailed investigation or the comparison of the editorial stances of the three newspapers is not among the objectives of our paper. Here, we want to exemplify the current reconstruction of the Albanian community in Greece by investigating the ways in which Greek newspapers frame Albanian-related issues, and we do not pretend to produce representative results (for which a larger sample would have been necessary).

The population of the sample consisted of 540 articles, 403 of which appeared on weekdays and 137 on weekends, between March 2007-March 2008. In order to assemble this content, the researchers visited the online archives of the newspapers and collected all articles that mentioned the words ‘Albanian’ or ‘Albanians’. Statistical significance tests were not calculated because the whole population of articles was used, and not just a sample, over the period under examination. Of the three newspapers, *Kathimerini* carried the lengthiest coverage of the issue with 295 articles (230 on weekdays and 65 on weekends); followed by *Ta Nea* with 129 articles on weekdays and 39 on weekends; and *Avgi* with a total of 77 articles (44 on weekdays and 33 on weekends). The decision was taken to look both on weekday and weekend editions, since the two editions represent, in effect, different newspapers. Newspaper articles were coded on the basis of 27 variables⁷. Frequency tables and cross tabulations are discussed below⁸.

Main findings and discussion

Type of articles

Looking into the weekdays population, just over half of the stories on Albanians (57%) are main articles (reports of events); commentaries account for a modest 18%, and another 14% represents short bulletins. Detailed reports and interviews are rarely encountered (3,7% and 2% respectively). The picture varies slightly over weekends, with 56% of the stories being main articles; a quarter (25%) of them representing commentaries, and only 3% short bulletins. Detailed reports and interviews feature a somewhat higher percentage (5% and 6% respectively). The variation may be explained by the fact that weekend editions often devote more space to detailed accounts and investigations of intricate social, political and economic issues.

Of the newspapers examined, *Kathimerini* is consistently more interested in Albanian-related issues, followed by *Ta Nea* and to a much lesser extent by *Avgi* (*Table 1 & 2*).

⁷ These variables included length of article, type of article, position in the newspaper, title, issue under consideration, the framing of the news piece, the identity of the Albanians in the article, the occurrence of negative or positive evaluations of them, and the source of the news story.

⁸ The reliability test for the print analysis was done according to North, Holsti, Zanninovich και Zinnes (1963): $R = 2(C1,2)/C1+C2$, where C1, 2 is the number of categories all researchers were agreed upon, and C1+C2 is the total number of cases coded by researchers. The equation was applied in 20% of the sample, after random selection. With 0.7 as the minimum and 1 as maximum, here are the results:

VARIABLE	R
TITLE	0.8
SUBJECT	0.8
NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES	0.9
FRAMING	0.7
NEWS SOURCE	0.8

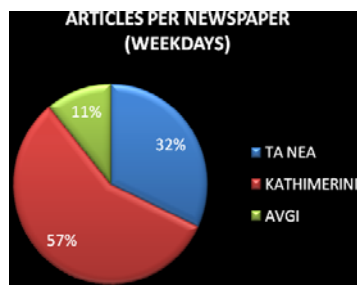


Table 1

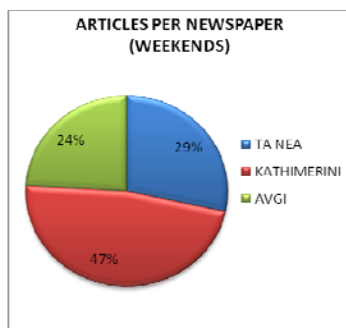


Table 2

Position of the story within the newspaper

When it comes to the position of the story, just over half of them (58%) are found in the main body of the paper during weekdays; about a quarter in adjoining parts of the paper, while approximately in one sixth of the cases (15%), news on Albanians can be found in supplements. This is comparable to the position of the articles on the weekend editions. In our view, this shows that print discourse in Greece is interested in Albanian-related issues only to the extent they make everyday news, as part, that is, of their run-of-the-mill agenda and abstain from conducting extensive and thorough research on them.

In 5% of the cases on week days, Albanian-related articles make the headlines; this comes up to 8% on weekends. Taking into consideration that headlines set the overall tone of the news piece, we contend that these percentages show the lack of media interest in Albanian-related news.

Title of the news story

Significantly enough, in almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the weekday cases (70%), the title of the news story is neutral; in one quarter (25%), it is negative towards Albanians, and only seldom (5%) does the title predispose the reader positively towards them, something replicated over the weekends as well⁹. This is interesting since the title can set the orientation frame of the article, affecting the ways in which readers interpret the rest of the account. Furthermore, titles, inasmuch as headlines, are read even if the rest of the news items are not, and are best recalled (van Dijk, 1988; Wodak, 1996; Pietikäinen, 2003; Gardikiotis et. al. 2004).

When looking across all three newspapers, it becomes evident that in most cases (i.e. both on weekdays and on weekends) the title portrays Albanians in a neutral way (ranging from 31% in *Ta Nea* and 10% in *Avgi*) (Table 3 & 4). Positive representations of Albanians in the title are sparse and almost all of them appear on *Kathimerini*, ranging between 3,5% on weekdays and 5% on weekends. Insofar negative evaluations of

⁹ This is further exemplified in the following: neutral- ‘border guard killed immigrant’ (συνοριοφύλακας σκότωσε μετανάστη) (*Avgi*, 09.11.07); ‘Kosovo’s independence’ (η ανεξαρτησία του Κοσσυφοπεδίου) (*Kathimerini*, 05.04.07); negative – ‘the nationalistic international in action: myth and reality of ‘Great Albania’ (η εθνικιστική διεθνής εν δράσει: μύθος και πραγματικότητα της Μεγάλης Αλβανίας) (*Avgi*, 02.12.07); positive – ‘a better future for Kosovo and the neighbours’ (ένα καλύτερο μέλλον για το Κόσοβο και τους γείτονες) (*Kathimerini*, 17.02.08).

Albanians in the title are concerned, *Kathimerini* ranks on top (one quarter of weekday stories carrying a negative title, compared to 0,7% in *Ta Nea* and 1% in *Avgi*; similarly, 15% of weekend news stories have a negative title in *Kathimerini*, as opposed to 3% in *Ta Nea* and 5% in *Avgi*). What this shows is that, overall, the Greek news discourse is not so negatively disposed towards Albanian-related issues, and that, instead, a moderate tone and style of analysis is adopted more often than not.

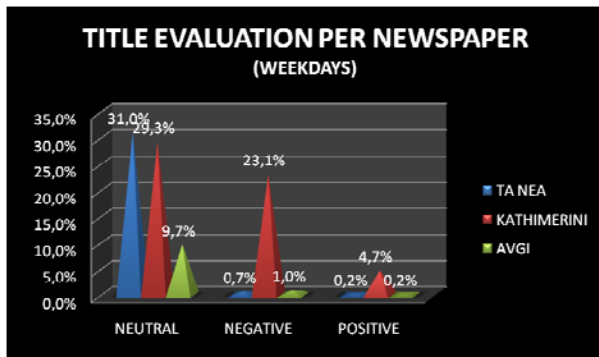


Table 3

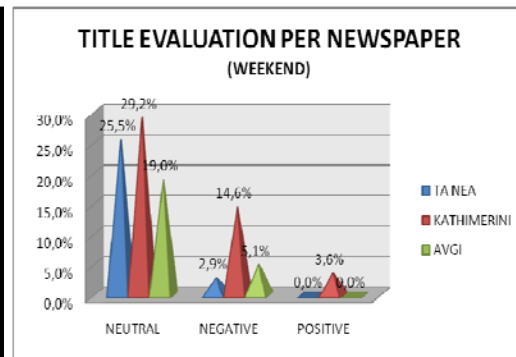


Table 4

Issues under consideration

When we look into the issues under consideration in the articles, the majority of them during the week (approximately half of them) are politically-oriented¹⁰; 18% refer to crimes committed by Albanians, and just under one sixth (14%) have a cultural slant. No other category of issue is worth mentioning. Political interest on Albanians heightens over the weekend, as indicated by 60% of the weekend sample, in itself perhaps a direct result of the fact that weekend editions can afford to devote more space to issues demanding complex political and economic analysis; tied into this may a sharp drop in the percentage of articles which refer to the deviant behaviour of Albanians (7%)- again, we may assume that crime reports are part of the *everyday* subject matter of the news discourse rather than of its weekend edition.

In our view, the overall percentage of articles discussing Albanians within a discourse of criminality and deviance (25%) serve to construct subject positions¹¹ for them only to a *certain extent*; in this respect, we might argue that such reports caricatured the Albanian ethnic community as predisposed to deviant behaviour in a *limited* way only. It would be interesting, however, to examine how Albanian deviance from the established order compares to the deviance of other ethnic communities as well as that of Greeks in the print media¹². Finally, one sixth of the news stories (15%) on weekends also have a

¹⁰ This is directly related to the timing of the sample period, which corresponds to a heightened political (and media) attention in Greece to developments in neighbouring Scopia (FYROM) and Kosovo (and the Albanian populations residing there).

¹¹ See Hall, S. et al, 1978 for a comprehensive discussion of the representation of ‘mugging’ by ethnic minorities on British newspapers in the seventies.

¹² Popular media as well as law enforcement agencies throughout Europe routinely identify members of ethnic minorities as responsible for selling a large proportion of the illegal drugs trafficked and consumed in Europe. Statistics on foreigners’ involvement in drug trafficking are collected and published in but a few European countries, offering an indication of ethnic minorities’ role in the drug market only for those countries that have recently started to attract migration flows (such as Italy, Spain and, I would argue,

cultural slant. This means that approximately 30% of the news pieces on Albanians are culturally-oriented which indicates that the print media in Greece do not portray them always and exclusively as deviants (*Tables 5 & 6*).

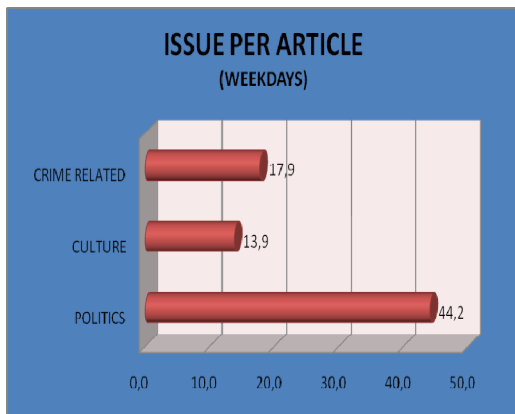


Table 5

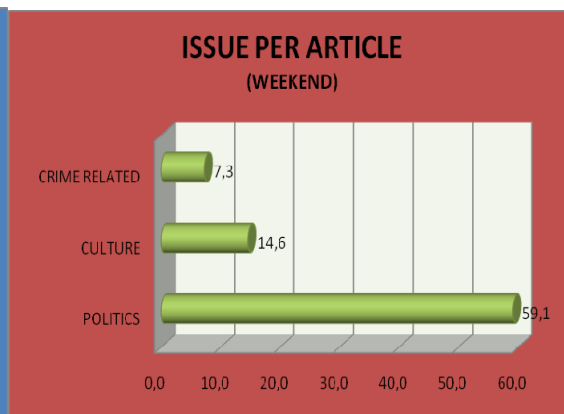


Table 6

In the case of reporting ethnic minorities another point of interest for us was the way in which political and crime-related issues are charged when looking at their title. In politics, articles carrying a neutral title predominate both on week days and weekends (in three quarters of relevant articles), while articles with a negative title represent about a quarter of politically-related pieces. Things change when crime-related issues are examined: in most cases, the said articles carry a negatively charged title (in $\frac{3}{4}$ of cases on week ends and more than half of them on weekdays). Week day articles reporting on crime-related issues regarding the Albanians carry a high percentage of neutral titles (46%), which drops to 30% on weekends (perhaps because, as already suggested, weekend editions devote more space on in-depth analyses of political, social and economic issues) (*Tables 7 & 8*).

Greece too) or have very strict criteria for granting citizenship to foreign residents (such as Germany). In these countries, criminal justice statistics show a staggering overrepresentation of foreigners in drug dealing and trafficking. This overrepresentation should not be considered to represent reality, because it reflects, to a certain extent, selective enforcement. There is a growing role in the import and distribution of multi-kilo shipments of heroin by organized crime groups of ethnic Albanians, who compete with or supplement Turkish organized crime groups. Increasingly, Albanian such groups are involved in cocaine trafficking as well. Research is needed in order to establish whether the statistical overrepresentation of foreigners, along with the emphasis placed on some ethnic groups by intelligence analyses, is reflective of the reality of drug markets in Europe. If so, we need to ask what are the reasons for the disproportionate presence of certain minorities in drug trafficking. Existing material is patchwork-like, based on empirical studies on drug markets in single cities and regions, and identifies the need to distinguish between plant-based and synthetic drugs and their different distribution systems and retail transactions (Paoli and Reuter, 2008). One view offered is that this is a direct outcome of the low socio-economic status and cultural marginalization experienced by migrant communities across Europe. The poor integration of many immigrant groups into their host societies means that they do not identify with the moral condemnation of the drug trade and the political prioritization of the fight against it. As long as drug addiction does not spread within the group, the drug trade is often considered at best with ambivalence, because many members of ethnic communities realize that it has become a source of wealth, prestige and respect for some of them (: 22).

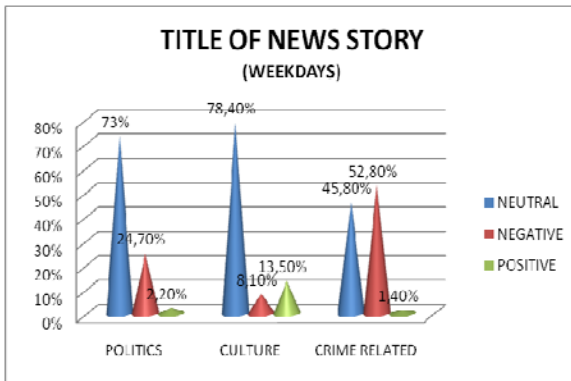


Table 7

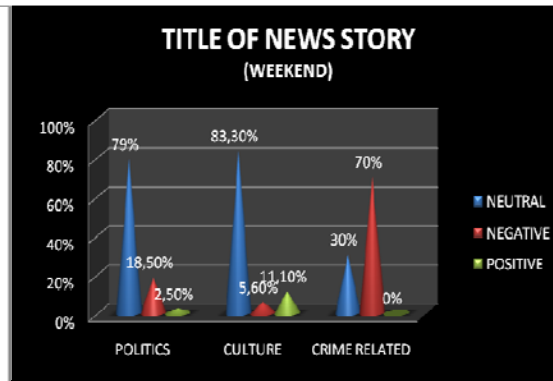


Table 8

Framing of news stories

As expected (Cottle, 2000; Halloran, 1998; Teo 2000), in most cases the Albanian-related news piece is presented within a conflictual frame (45%), and only in very few (7,2%) in a consensual one. What is interesting is the fact that almost a quarter of the news pieces (23%), during the week, are presented in a frame of *negotiation*. Conflictual is the main means of framing news stories over the weekend as well, and at equal measures too (46%); and although less stories are framed in a consensual tone (4%), one third of the articles in the weekend sample (33%) depict news pieces of Albanians within a frame of negotiation. This could be, arguably, an indication towards the gradual and growing incorporation and acceptance of Albanians within the Greek society, something that resonates with our discussion above (Tables 9 & 10).

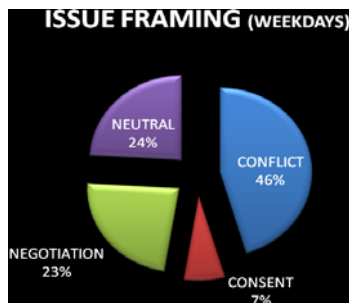


Table 9

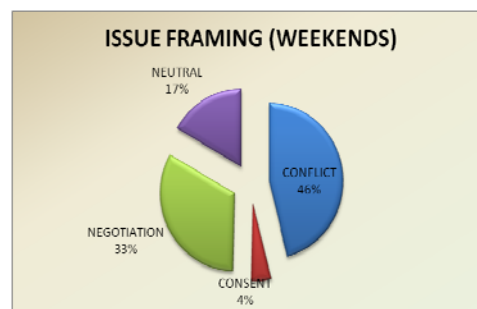


Table 10

If we look at the way the three newspapers frame the most contentious issues, that is political and crime-related stories, it emerges that the centre-left *Ta Nea* frame just over a quarter of Albanian-related political articles in a negotiatory frame (29%) compared to only 9% in the centre-right *Kathimerini* and 7% of articles and left *Avgi*. The highest percentage of political stories presented as a site of conflict belongs to *Avgi* (half of the stories), followed by *Kathimerini* (one third of the political articles on Albanians); only 5% of the political stories on Albanians in the newspaper *Ta Nea* is told in a frame of conflict. None of the three titles present political news in a consensual frame but scarcely (Table 11).

FRAMING PER ISSUE PER NEWSPAPER (WEEKDAYS)

NEWSPAPER	FRAMING	SUBJECT		
		POLITICS	CULTURE	CRIME RELATED
TA NEA	CONFLICT	4,7%	0,8%	2,3%
	CONSENT	1,6%	3,1%	0,8%
	NEGOTIATION	28,7%	1,6%	6,2%
	NEUTRAL	0,8%	18,6%	6,2%
KATHIMERINI	CONFLICT	33,9%	2,2%	17,8%
	CONSENT	1,7%	2,2%	0,0%
	NEGOTIATION	9,1%	2,2%	0,0%
	NEUTRAL	1,3%	3,0%	1,7%
AVGI	CONFLICT	45,5%	2,3%	4,5%
	CONSENT	0,0%	0,0%	2,3%
	NEGOTIATION	6,8%	4,5%	0,0%
	NEUTRAL	6,8%	0,0%	9,1%

Table 11

When it comes to the weekend editions, *Kathimerini* and *Avgi* have the majority of their political articles framed in a conflictual way (45% and 36% respectively compared to naught in *Ta Nea*); *Ta Nea* once again take a negotiatory stance with 40% of the political pieces framed as such, as opposed to 19% in *Kathimerini* and 27% in *Avgi* (Table 12). Keeping always in mind that these news stories reflect discussions about events in Kosovo and Scopia, it becomes evident that *Ta Nea* adopt the most negotiating position about Albanians when it comes to politics.

FRAMING PER ISSUE PER NEWSPAPER (WEEKEND)

NEWSPAPER	FRAMING	SUBJECT		
		POLITICS	CULTURE	CRIME RELATED
TA NEA	CONFLICT	0,0%	5,1%	2,6%
	CONSENT	2,6%	2,6%	0,0%
	NEGOTIATION	35,9%	2,6%	0,0%
	NEUTRAL	2,6%	15,4%	5,1%
KATHIMERINI	CONFLICT	44,6%	3,1%	6,2%
	CONSENT	3,1%	1,5%	0,0%
	NEGOTIATION	18,5%	4,6%	0,0%
	NEUTRAL	0,0%	4,6%	1,5%
AVGI	CONFLICT	36,4%	0,0%	6,1%
	NEGOTIATION	27,3%	3,0%	0,0%
	NEUTRAL	3,0%	0,0%	0,0%

Table 12

Overall, 11% of crime-related news pieces are conflictually framed, and a minimal 2% in a frame of negotiation. The only interesting point to be said considering separate newspapers is that a mere 18% of relevant articles on weekdays in *Kathimerini* is told in a conflictual frame, and another 6% of such articles in *Ta Nea* in a frame of negotiation. The combination of the ethnic identity of immigrants together with the way the story is framed shows that half of the crime-related pieces on ‘Albanians’ (48%) are set within a frame of conflict, and 8% in a frame of negotiation (Table 12).

Portrayal of Albanians

Insofar the way the article reports on Albanians is concerned, in two thirds of the cases, both on weekdays and on weekends, Albanians exist only as an ethnic identity, the word ‘Albanian’ becoming a deprecating, belittling characterization and those it describes reduced to a ‘one-label-fits-all’ homogenous group. This follows patterns of journalistic practice also seen elsewhere¹³, and the choice of terms inevitably creates a certain angle in the news (Walter, 2002; Pietikäinen, 2003). Only rarely are Albanians referred upon as ‘immigrants’, ‘illegal immigrants’, ‘foreigners’, or ‘economic immigrants’, something that may be seen to reflect their invisibility in the eyes of the official Greek state and its immigration policy¹⁴.

When the identity of the immigrants (as ‘Albanians’) is combined with the existence of positive or negative attributes, it transpires that in 7% of the articles Albanian immigrants are qualified in a negative manner, while a minimal 2% describes them in a positive light¹⁵. Although the latter finding is hardly surprising, the fact that only 7% of news stories portray ‘Albanians’ negatively is a further indication of a gradual incorporation of the Albanian community into their newfound homeland. It also alleviates the stereotypical construction of Albanians as Greece’s ‘constitutive other’ within the print news discourse. The situation on weekends hardly changes.

Once we look into the newspaper profile (Table 13 & 14), it emerges that in *Kathimerini* close to half of the articles over-generalize when referring to Albanian immigrants, calling them ‘Albanians’ (43% of the articles on weekdays and 38% on weekends); this happens in a quarter of the stories in *Ta Nea* and only rarely in *Avgi* (2% on weekdays and 7% on weekends).

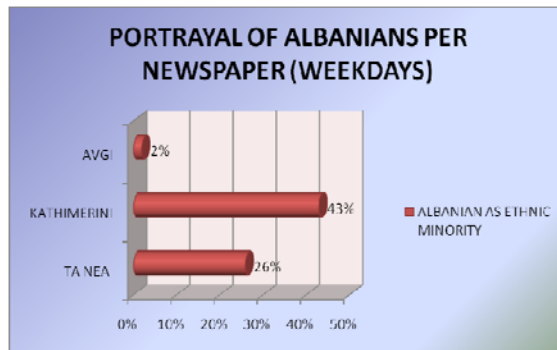


Table 13

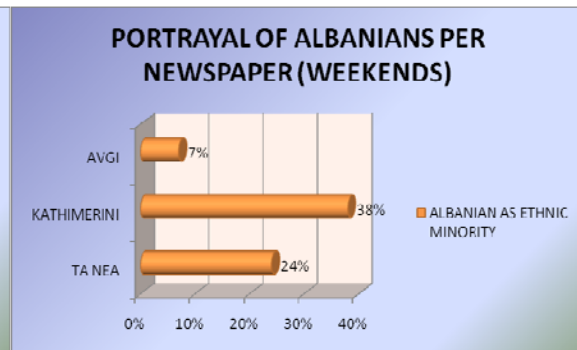


Table 14

¹³ It also replicates the cultural construction of Albanian immigrants as a fixed and stereotypical ‘constitutive other’ (whereby the adjective Albanian is an insult among Italians) by Italian television (Mai, 2005).

¹⁴ Despite the heavy influx of immigrants from various countries in Greece since the early nineties, the state has turned a blind eye to their legalization status and citizenship rights; long delays and a twisted state bureaucracy with self-conflicting procedures are the characteristics of the Greek immigration policy which denies Greek citizenship rights even to second-generation immigrants born and schooled in Greece.

¹⁵ A follow-up study might compare between contemporary media representations of the Albanian immigrant and older ones (when jingoistic reactions from the part of the Greek media and public were more pronounced).

This is also prevalent when considering the extent to which articles are taking into account different social roles for Albanians (e.g. whether they are family men/women or not, whether they have hobbies or are unionized et.c.); despite the evidence that family matters the most among Albanian immigrants¹⁶, news stories' reference on such social roles of the Albanian immigrants is largely absent (2,5% of all articles).

Bearing in mind that all political stories within the period under examination concern developments in neighbouring Kosovo and Scopia, we decided not to look into the kind of attributes (positive or negative) used to qualify Albanian-related political issues (because the majority of them would also refer to the local Albanian populations)¹⁷. More to the point, we thought, would be to examine the extent to which *crime-related* stories treated the Albanian immigrants in Greece: while 18% of such articles did not use any positive attribute (or combination of words) to portray them, and very few found anything positive to say about them¹⁸, on the other hand, a mere 2% of the news stories gave negative depictions of them¹⁹ (Tables 15 & 16). That was an interesting result, in our view, because it actually goes against similar findings regarding the way mainstream media treat ethnic minorities (see above): this might be interpreted as a recession of the degree of stigmatization of the Albanian immigrant in Greece, once again pointing to the level of incorporation of the 'Albanian' in news discourse. Hence, the need to conduct a comparative research on the depictions of the Albanian community in the Greek press during the past 15-20 years becomes paramount.

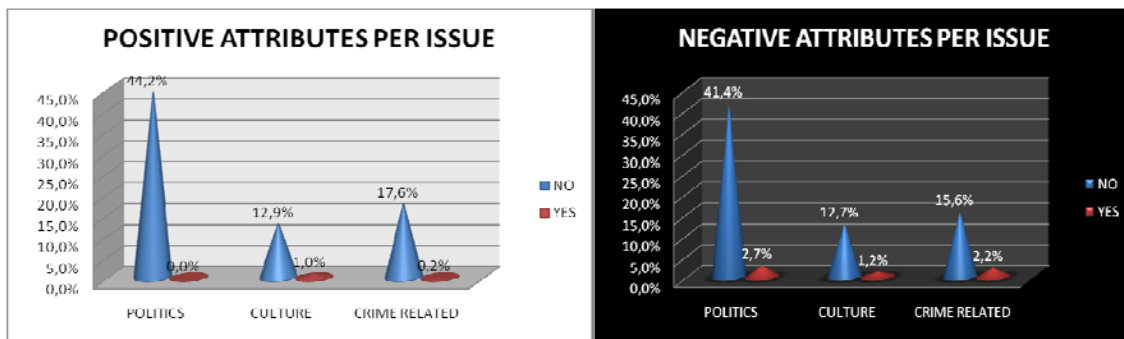


Table 15

Table 16

¹⁶ Kinship and family networks are one of the determining factors for the selection of residence area when migrating to Greece (Iosifides et.al. 2007). Least we forget that strong family and local ties play a significant role in the drug trafficking business as well, ensuring not only the cohesion of the trafficking group but also impermeability to police enquiries; the extended family network is expected to be relied upon in either licit or illicit business (Paoli and Reuter, 2008).

¹⁷ If we looked at the kind of attributes used to qualify political issues considering Albanians, almost 3% of related articles use negative adjectives about them; not surprisingly, there was no political article to be found to actually use a positive adjective on Albanians. This, in our view, is a direct reflection of the ambivalence with which Greek society surrounds the Albanian people whether in Greece or elsewhere.

¹⁸ Examples are: 'capable Albanian craftsmen build fireplaces' (ικανότατοι Αλβανοί πετράδες χτίζουν τζάκια) *Kathimerini*, 23.03.08; 'smiling' (χαμογελαστός) (*Ta Nea*, 01.03.08); 'went through the unfortunate immigrant' (διαπέρασε τον άτυχο μετανάστη) (*Avgi*, 08.01.07).

¹⁹ As illustrated in the following: 'criminal' (κακοποιός) (*Kathimerini*, 13.10.07); 'the specialization of Albanian mafia' (η Αλβανική μαφία ειδικεύεται) (*Kathimerini*, 07.10.07); 'the tariff of Albanian hitmen' (η ταρίφα των Αλβανών εκτελεστών) (*Ta Nea*, 29.03.08); unacceptable, 'Balcan', gestures for a businessman (απαράδεκτες για επιχειρηματία, 'βαλκάνιες', χειρονομίες) (*Avgi*, 18.04.07).

Source of the news story

In 38% of the cases, the source of the news piece is not identifiable; 9% of the articles on Albanians originate from the police and another 7% from other civil services. Although these percentages are rather low, we could argue that print media in Greece follow the pattern identified by Allan (1999) whereby journalistic practice dictates reliance on ready-made material, needing minimal editing, and therefore favoured by journalists with deadlines to meet. Such dependence on the news source usually works to the benefit of the host group rather than ethnic minorities (see above, Pietikäinen 2003) In addition, the majority of articles (almost two thirds of them) come from a domestic news source, which suggests the local interest of the particular news agenda.

C. The symbolic representation of Albanian immigrants on Greek television

Following our analysis of the way in which print media in Greece portray the Albanian immigrant community, we also wanted to investigate how this is represented within the television news discourse. Some accounts suggest that contemporary TV reports paint a negative picture of Albanians. ‘The Albanian’ is immediately and implicitly characterised as: ‘casual work’, ‘marginalised, unemployed, homeless’, often ‘illiterate with no skills’, of low potential and ability, ‘doomed to hard and badly-paid jobs’. The stereotype of deprivation concludes with a blanket condemnation of Albanians as ‘criminals’ or ‘hardened *Mafiosi*’ (Labrianidis et al op.cit.: 1191).

We looked into the evening news in four channels on Greek television, NET (public broadcaster), and MEGA, ANTENNA, STAR (commercial operators). Each one of these commercial operators has a different profile: MEGA takes an oppositional stance against the government, ANTENNA TV has a less clearly pronounced political profile, and together with MEGA they are the two major players in the commercial sector in Greece. STAR channel has established a news profile based on lifestyle and celebrity gossip.

Sixty prime time news programmes were analyzed between March 2007 and March 2008 (five each month), covering both week days and week ends²⁰. Selected dates matched closely the dates of the press analysis. Twenty-six variables were used, the majority of which match those previously used²¹. The presentation and discussion of our main findings will now follow.

²⁰ This translates into 3,120 news stories (13 stories on average per channel X 60 news programmes = 780 news stories X 4 channels = 3,120).

²¹ The reliability test for TV coding was done following North, Holsti, Zanninovich και Zinnes (1963): $R = 2(C1, 2)/C1+C2$, where C1, 2 is the number of categories all researchers were agreed upon, and C1+C2 is the total number of cases coded by researchers. The equation was applied in 20% of the sample, after random selection. With 0.7 as the minimum and 1 as maximum, here are the results:

VARIABLES	RELIABILITY
SUBJECT	1
INSTITUTION	0.75
STORY NATIONALITY	1
SUBJECT NATIONALITY	0.85
FRAMING	0.75
ALBANIAN'S IDENTITY	1

Main findings and discussion

We were hard pressed to find forty two news stories, which comprise a thinly populated sample. This reinforces our argument that the ethnic minority of Albanians receives scant media attention and hence is not well provided with a public forum from which to make its agenda known.

The public broadcaster is marginally more interested in reporting Albanian-related news when compared to the private operators MEGA and ANTENNA (36%: 31% and 26%). STAR channel, renowned for its policy to steer away from ‘serious’ news, only scarcely does it take an interest in Albanians (7%)²² (Table 17).

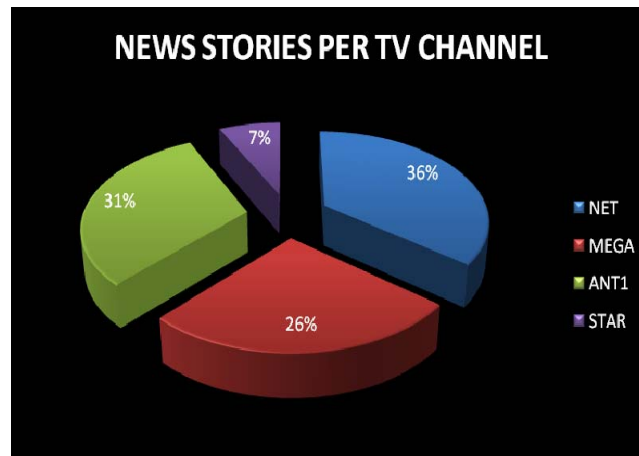


Table 17

Issues under consideration

Similarly to the print media, news interest in Albanians on Greek television heightens in periods of political developments in neighbouring Scopia (FYROM) and Kosovo

ALBANIAN'S AGE	0.9
ALBANIAN'S PROFESSION	1
ALBANIAN'S RESIDENCE	1
ALBANIAN'S EDUCATION	1
ALBANIAN'S CLASS	1
ALBANIAN'S ROLE	1
NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES	0.75
POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES	0.9
TALKING HEADS	1
SOURCE	1
NEWSOURCE	1
SOURCE NATIONALITY	1

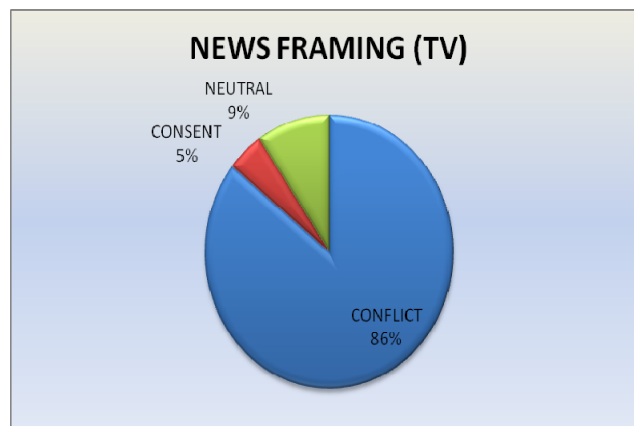
²² True to form, the few times this happened on STAR channel, it concerned a middle-aged ex-reality-game-player, Roula Vroxopoulou, who became famous when she married an Albanian some 25 years younger than her. When her young groom left her soon after the wedding, Roula run after him in Albania only to become an instant celebrity in both countries: she was a constant in a variety of gossip magazines, which did not miss the chance to feed upon the ready-made tearful drama of the abandoned-yet-elderly bride.

(February and March 2008), where local Albanian populations are involved. This needs to be always taken into consideration when discussing the extent to which broadcast news discourse in Greece accommodates issues related to Albanians. In this light, then, looking into the issues under consideration by Greek TV news, we see that Albanian-related news is either politically-charged (in almost half of the cases, 43%²³), or crime-related (38%).

Out of the four channels of the sample, NET is the channel interested the most in politically-oriented news stories about Albanians (24%), compared to MEGA's 12% and ANTENNA's 7%; STAR TV, its news programmes interested only in sensational gossip, is non-existent in this category. Another category of issue under consideration worth mentioning is crime-related news which feature most on ANTENNA news programmes (21%) and much less on MEGA (12%). The public broadcaster barely cares for this category of news story (5%), and STAR channel, surprisingly, totally ignores it. As already mentioned, the only times Albanian-related issues came up on its news programmes, they concerned Roula's cries for help to the Greek and Albanian community so that her groom returned to the marital bed. As a result, family- and relationship-related issues come up with a 7% on STAR TV.

Framing of news stories

Most often, news about Albanians is presented in a frame of conflict (86%), and only rarely are Albanians reported upon in a consensual frame (5%). Combining the representation of immigrants as 'Albanians' (that is only in relation to their ethnic identity) with how certain issues are framed shows that family/relationship-oriented issues are moderately set within a frame of conflict (33%), while crime-related issues are conflictually over-charged (87%)(Table 18). A quick cross examination of television and newspaper coverage (where 33% of family-oriented pieces on 'Albanians' are presented in a context of negotiation and 48% of crime-related ones in a context of conflict) suggests that Greek television news portrays Albanian immigrants in a much more negative manner and, therefore, news coverage of Albanians on Greek television may work to amplify already existing phobic and xenophobic attitudes towards them.



²³ This concerns exclusively Kosovo's independence.

Table 18

Portrayal of Albanians

On TV news, Albanians exist almost exclusively as an ethnic identity (93%), the term ‘Albanian’ branding them as second-class citizens (with no citizenship rights in reality). This one-dimensional depiction of the Albanian minority in Greece may serve to reinforce biased perceptions of them by the mainstream media, as mentioned in the print analysis. If we examine the channel profile, NET, the public broadcaster, and the two commercial majors treat Albanian immigrants predominantly as ‘Albanians’ (33%: 26% MEGA: 26% ANTENNA), and only rarely as ‘foreigners’ (Table 19).

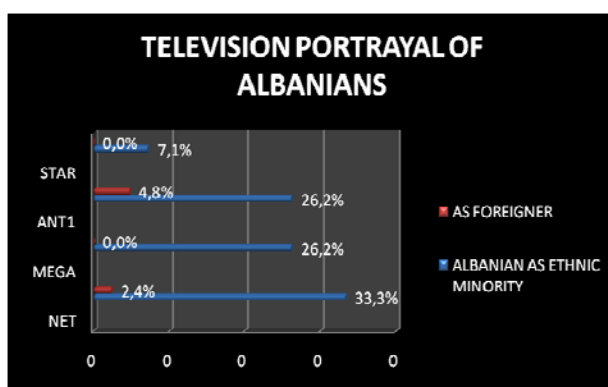


Table 19

When looking into whether there are any positive or negative evaluations of Albanians in Greece in the news (in the form of attributes or any other qualifications and linguistic constructions), it transpires that only 2,5% of the news stories have anything positive to say about Albanians; at the same time, there is only 12% of news programmes which qualifies them in a negative light. Across the four channels, MEGA emerges as the one using the most negative comments on Albanians (13%), while ANTENNA and NET adopt a more moderate voice (5%: 2%). If we break this down in more detail and consider the degree to which the four channels qualify positively or negatively different categories of issues, MEGA once again comes on top of the negative evaluation of Albanians in political issues²⁴ (18%) while none of the other three channels has anything negative to utter about them. Examining crime-related stories, MEGA is the first to use negative attributes to describe the Albanian immigrants (27%), followed by a more moderate ANTENNA (15%) and NET (7%). Our search for positive evaluations of the Albanians in Greece yielded a staggering 33% from STAR TV regarding family/relationship-oriented issues (and the melodrama between Roula and her Albanian stud).

Even so, we believe that the degree to which Greek television news coverage uses negative evaluations of Albanian immigrants is rather low. As with the print analysis, we attribute this to the slow erosion of distance between the immigrant and host communities

²⁴ As mentioned repeatedly, we should bear in mind that political issues refer exclusively to events in Kosovo and Scopia.

and the development of a culture of tolerance within the host society, enhanced by mainstream media discourses.

Source of the news story

Only rarely is the source of the news piece identified, in which case the police predominates (26%). In 90% of the stories covered, the news item originates from domestic sources, something that, similar to the print analysis, points towards the insularity and local interest of the specific news agenda.

D. The Albanian community on the Greek blogosphere

In order to identify references to Albanians in the Greek blogosphere, we first located references to Albanians in blog posts within the given time-span (March 2007-March 2008). Posts were then analyzed and classified following the categories of issues identified in the print and television analysis²⁵. As one would expect, not all categories were represented since blogs are not exactly in line with traditional media. However, it is interesting to note that we had to supplement the list with one extra category, that of jokes, to accommodate the anecdotes, most of them racial, regarding Albanians. Although the print and television analyses covered the representation of Albanians in a much more detailed and extended way, our blog analysis focuses only on sentiment polarity and the consequent negative or positive evaluation of the Albanian community within the Greek blogosphere. This was a first attempt to explore the field and, obviously, the research agenda needs to be extended in a follow-up.

At the time of the study there were roughly 50,000 blogs with posts in Greek and estimates suggested that about 20,000 of these were active. Analyzing the top 1,000 blogs using Google's PageRank²⁶ yielded that a good 80% of all blogs in Greek are hosted under www.blogspot.com or www.wordpress.com. We started off by issuing queries to popular search engines with the stem of the Greek word for "Albanian(s)" restricted to results from these two domains. We also extended our queries to the "Greeklish"²⁷ version of the words.

The blog sites identified were "crawled" and for each of them, "spiders" scanned all posts for references to Albanians. After deep-spidering, our combined queries resulted in 2745 unique URLs, of which 959 URLs contained content within the specified time-span and were further analyzed. We used the proprietary algorithms of i-sieve technologies for sentiment polarity to select only those that sported references to Albanians in context of expressed sentiment. We only considered references in the *main* body of the blog post and not in comments that the post might have, to avoid possible contamination of the data set by the occasional racist spammer.

²⁵ These comprised the following categories: politics, economy, employment, social welfare, public services, education, culture, family/relationships, crime/deviance, natural disasters, tourism, police, judicial, transport, sports, environment (and mixed).

²⁶PageRank is a measure of a site's popularity, developed by the University of Stanford and applied by Google, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PageRank>

²⁷ Greeklish, a portmanteau of the words Greek and English, is Greek language written using the Latin alphabet, a practice that originated in the first days of the Internet, when there were no Greek fonts available, and still in use mainly by Greek expatriates, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greeklish>

Students from the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, at the University of Athens manually classified the first fifty entries according to the category list. These were used by our machine-learning algorithms as "ground truth" training data. We then applied our trained models on the rest of the content and the results were again cross-validated by the same group of students. At the end of the exercise, we were left with 539 URLs, less than 7% of which could not be classified to any of the given categories, either by machine or manually. For each entry, we provided the category under which it was classified (prevailing category, in case of collision); the sentiment around the reference (positive, negative, neutral); as well as the verbatim from the text that tipped the sentiment classifier, to facilitate validation.

Main findings and discussion

Looking at the different clusters of blogs on Albanians (Table20), four categories stand out: politics (representing 32% of all blogs, with 151 posts) and culture (25% of all blogs, with a total of 118 posts) are the prevailing ones; crime/deviance (8%, with 40 posts), and family/relationships (7% of all blogs, with 34 posts) follow suit. Compared to the principal issues under consideration identified in the print and television news analysis, it transpires that we are actually looking at the same categories of issues: political, cultural and crime-related ones in the newspaper coverage, and political and crime-related on television. This pattern suggests that, contrary to what is generally believed and hoped for, the blogosphere, to a large extent, simulates and consolidates an agenda set by the mainstream media.

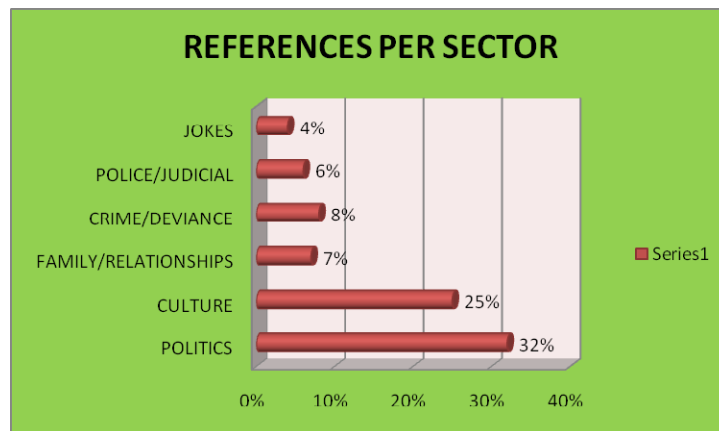


Table 20

If we examine the sentiment polarity of the above categories, we come across some interesting findings. In politics, negative polarity is at its highest, at approximately 40% of the posts (*why did we let one million Albanians enter the country?; if it were up to Greece, Albania would not exist*), followed by about 35% neutral postings (*83 years ago today, 21 January, the Parliament of Albania declares the country a democracy; there are limitless quantities of oil in Albania*) and another 25% positive ones (*to be an Albanian in Greece... [is] to be the prime suspect; but why shouldn't Albanians carry the flag- after all, they only ask to honour our country and our history*). While we were not

surprised by the ratio of negative posts (considering this was a time of heightened political activity and commentary, given the developments in Scopia and Kosovo), we thought the percentage of neutral and positive comments was interestingly high.

In culture, it is neutral sentiments (*I drag my mom in the maze of 'Mary and the Boy'... before the show we share a dessert. A Pakistanian stares at my feet. An Albanian looks at a label that reads 'tickets to Albania'*) that set the pace (around 40%), followed by positive (*why, if I am Albanian and muslim, am not supposed to be allowed to take part?*) and negative sentiments (*I'd rather hang out with a Finn rather than an Albanian or a Georgian*) at equal measures (about 30% each).

In the category of crime-related issues, there is almost an equal split between positive (*we declare that we are anti-racists, sometimes we even believe it, but as soon as the questions are asked, it is the fear that talks- I'm not a racist, but blacks stink, Albanians steal, and Pakistanis are taking our jobs away from us*), negative (*how does an Albanian recipe for desserts start? 'We steal two eggs'*) and neutral sentiments, with positive reactions slightly overtaking the rest. We were intrigued by these findings, as we expected more negative comments and sentiments regarding the deviant behaviour of Albanians.

In family/relationship -oriented posts, half of the postings express neutral sentiments (*according to today's Espresso, there is an Albanian love affair between Roula Koromila and an Albanian singer*), followed by 30% negative (*I see this 'proud Greek', Roula Vroxopoulou, an abomination of Greek television, crying and beating herself up on every other channel so that her Albanian pimp comes back to her, and I feel like puking*), and 20% positive (*Mihali, love does not discriminate among Greeks, Albanians, and Italians*) ones.

Another intriguing category, unique in blogs, is that of anecdotes, charged with neutral sentiments (2/3), and with around 20% of negative ones (*what does an Albanian want in a theatre? To steal the show*).

The overall sentiment polarity of the blog posts found demonstrates neutral and negative sentiments at almost equal degrees (38%: 35%), and 27% of positive sentiments (Table 21). This came indeed as a pleasant surprise, especially if we consider that we expected negative sentiments to reach a much higher level. This, together with the relatively high level of neutral sentiments, shows, in our view, that the public discourse regarding Albanians, as exemplified in the Greek blogosphere, is one of increasing tolerance towards the immigrant 'Albanian'.

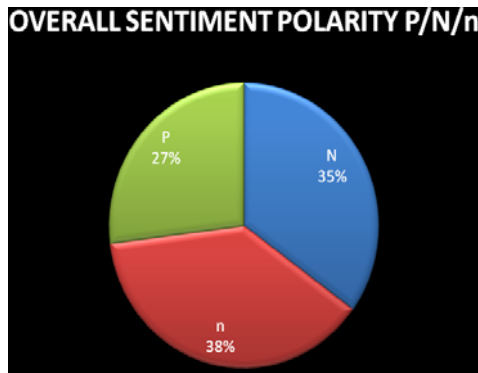


Table 21

Conclusions

What kind of media representations of the Albanian immigrants are articulated within the Greek press and television news coverage? Is the Greek blogosphere more open-minded than the mainstream media or does it reiterate the news agenda set by them? How much easier has it become to be an Albanian in contemporary Greece, as far as the symbolic representations of Albanian immigrants are concerned?

These were the kind of questions that framed our analysis of newspaper and television news content and that of the blogging community in Greece. Overall, we believe that contemporary news discourse, either in newspapers or on television, by and large ignores the Albanian community in Greece: a total population of 540 articles (of which almost half concern coverage of political events in Kosovo and Scopia), in our view, shows that Albanians hardly feature in the print news; in that respect, public discussion about them is scant in this forum. Similarly, we were hard pressed to find 42 relevant items on television news. The relative absence of Albanians in mainstream media coverage may weaken their position and participation in the host society: Albanians are left outside an influential arena for public discussion and decision-making, and consequently it may be more difficult for them to expose a larger audience to their agenda. By failing to articulate the ethnic diversity of the Greek society, news media in Greece may, whether on purpose or not, contribute to a short-sighted construction of Albanian identity—something that media news coverage is not a stranger to (ter Wal, 2002). Furthermore, although this kind of invisibility in the news may also be relevant for many other social groups, the (more often than not) marginalized position of ethnic minorities means that the latter are not represented any better anywhere else. Thus, their position is vulnerable, since media publicity is even more important for them. If ‘[. . .] the media is a place where the nation invents itself - if you are not there, you don’t exist’ (Phillips, 1995: 14), then the Albanian minority in Greece has still a lot to hope for. Significantly for the Greek mainstream media, our research has also shown that *when* represented, Albanians are often portrayed in a positive, rather than negative, light. This, as already discussed, provides evidence that discourses of stigmatization and caricature in the media are ebbing away.

We also found that the print news discourse does not necessarily construct the ‘Albanians’ as Greece’s ‘constitutive other’, as exemplified in the large ratio of news stories with neutral titles; the largely moderate tone and style of analysis in news stories; the limited extent to which the newspaper discourse constructs subject positions of deviance for Albanian immigrants; the fact that almost one third of the news stories regard cultural issues rather than crime-related ones. Insofar television news is concerned, it may be that Greek TV portrays Albanian immigrants negatively more often than the press does, but, still, negative evaluations of them are, arguably, restricted. Even so, mainstream media are still powerful and pervasive enough to construct biased perceptions of them. Fortunately, the overall low percentage of negative representations of Albanians suggests that contrary to the ‘differential inclusion’, the ‘excess of alterity’ and the existence of ‘ethnic enclaves’ they experience, there is a growing incorporation of their ethnic community within the host country. This profile is by and large replicated in the Greek blogosphere as well, as suggested by the unexpected lack of sentiment polarity in Albanian-related blogs, and the existence of a substantial degree of neutral posts. Also unanticipated was the degree to which the Greek blogging community replicated the way mainstream media are producing social representations of migrants. Following a rhetoric of blogs as forms of networked expression, conducive to informal political self-representation instead of an official one; and as channels of authentic expression free from the repressive controls of mainstream media (Coleman 2005; Lasica 2003), thereby enhancing civic engagement and levels of political efficacy (Kerbel and Bloom, 2005; Sweetser and Kaid, 2008), we expected that the blogging community in Greece would have a different viewpoint to offer (much more tolerant, less biased) from newspapers and television when it came to Albanian immigrants. Despite the increased rate of neutrally charged comments on Greek blog posts, it may be that our own expectations have ignored the acquired extensive familiarity with computer-mediated-communication of audiences in Greece: blogging is no longer exotic for them, and instead of being an object of fascination and fetish about libertarianism and civic engagement, it has become more of a practical necessity (Herring 2004). As a result, it functions as an extension of the mainstream media sphere.

We would like to point out the need for a detailed investigation into the existence (or not) of anti-immigration propaganda and racism in the Greek press, much in the way Hartmann and Husband, 1974, McLaughlin, 1999, and Murdock, 1984 worked to detail the true nature of the British press of the time. For one thing, Greek newspapers are a long way away from the idea of the ‘model newspaper’ along the lines of the *Leicester Mercury*: through its positive representation of the multicultural city, the Leicester newspaper was identified by the British government as a model (regional) title, an example to be followed across the country (Machin and Mayr, 2007). Even the counter view supported by the authors²⁸, cannot find its equivalent in the Greek press. Newspaper titles in Greece, either national or regional, have yet to discover multiculturalism the way

²⁸ That is, in a city predicted to have a non-white majority by 2011 and branding its multiculturalism, the paper’s pro-immigrant, multicultural profile was in effect the result of a conscious editorial decision to build social cohesion among the diverse ethnic communities so as not to alienate its main (ethnic) readership (ibid.: 459).

the *Leicester Mercury* has done and are not run like businesses integrated into the model of (British) cities-as-brands.

Although, the public agenda and the media at large increasingly acknowledge that Athens has become a multicultural city, the extent to which it is ready to discuss its minority ethnic communities in terms of ‘assets’ (as Birmingham has done, Chan, 2006) is doubted. Both the mainstream media and the blogosphere in Greece, despite the significant proportion in neutral evaluations of Albanian immigrants, have a long way to go. On a different level, it would be also interested to investigate whether alternative lifestyle models provided by the consumption of Greek media have any role to play in the construction of Albanian identity whether ‘abroad’ or ‘at home’, the way the consumption of Italian television has shaped Albanian imagination and notions of personhood (Mai, 2005).

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Laboratory of Social Research of the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, and Despina Chronaki, M.A. graduate from the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens who co-ordinated the following team of undergraduate students: Georgia Aitaki, Alexis Bikas, Dimitris Dionisatos, Panagiotis Gourgoulios, Maria Hirdari, Stefanos Ikonou, Maria Kaliviotou, Mina Koukou, Danai Lebessopoulou, Tatiana Mihailidou, Katerina Mitsiopolou, Kostantinos Serdaris, Haris Tsitsopoulos, Christina Vrodou,. Without them this research would not have been realized.

References

- Bagavos, C., C. Tsimbos and G. Verropoulou, G (2008) ‘Native and Migrant Fertility Patterns in Greece: A Cohort Approach’. *European Journal of Population*, 24: 245–263.
- Bantimaroudis, Ph. and E. Kampanellou (2007) ‘The cultural framing hypothesis: attributes of cultural alliances and conflicts’. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 12 (2): 80-90.
- Coleman, S. (2005) ‘Blogs and the new politics of listening’. *The Political Quarterly*: 273-280.
- Cottle, S. (2000) ‘Introduction. Media Research and Ethnic Minorities: Mapping the Field’. In S. Cottle (ed.) *Ethnic Minorities and the Media*, 1–30. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Dragonas, Th. (2007) ‘Greek adolescents’ national identity: between the subversive and the familiar’. In P. Kafetzis, Th. Maloutas and I. Tsiganou (eds) *Society- Citizens and Politics: The European Social Survey*, Athens: National Centre for Social Research.

- Gardikiotis, A., R. Martin, and M. Hewstone (2004) 'The representation of majorities and minorities in the British press: a content analytic approach'. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 34: 637–646.
- Georgopoulou, M. (2007) 'Children of immigrants: questions of inclusion in education and society' in *The Social Portrait of Greece 2006* (in Greek), Institute of Social Policy, EKKE (National Centre of Social Research).
- Goodhart, David (2004) Too Diverse? *Prospect Magazine*, vol. 95.
- Grillo, R. (2007) 'An excess of alterity? Debating difference in a multicultural society'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(6): 979-998.
- Gropas, R. and A. Triandafyllidou (2005) *Active Civic Participation of Immigrants in Greece*. Oldenburg: Country Report prepared for the European Research Project POLITIS, www.uni-oldenburg.de/politis-europe
- Hall S, C. Critcher, T. Jefferson, J. Clark and B. Roberts (1978) *Policing the crisis*. Macmillan: Basingstoke.
- Hall, S. (1996) 'Introduction: who needs identity?' In S. Hall and P. Du Gay (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Routledge, 1–17.
- Halloran, J.D. (1998) 'Ethnic Minorities and Television. A Study of Use, Reactions and Preferences'. *Gazette* 60(4): 305–24.
- Hartmann, P. and Husband, C. (1974) *Racism and the Mass Media*. London: Davis Poynter.
- Herring, S. (2004) 'Slouching Toward the Ordinary: Current Trends in Computer-Mediated-Communication'. *New Media & Society* 6(1): 26-36.
- Iosifides, T., M. Lavrentiadou, E. Petracou, A. Kontis (2007) 'Forms of Social Capital and the Incorporation of Albanian Immigrants in Greece'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33(8): 1343-1361.
- Kasimis, C. and A. G. Papadopoulos (2005) 'The Multifunctional Role of Migrants in the Greek Countryside: Implications for the Rural Economy and Society'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(1): 99-127.
- Kassimati, K (2003) 'A historical review of the immigration flows'. In K. Kassimati (ed.), *Migration policies and strategies of acculturation, the case of Albanian and Polish immigrants* (: 34–44). Library of Social Science, Athens: Gutenberg (in Greek).
- King, R. (2000) 'Southern Europe in the changing global map of migration'. In R. King et al. (eds.), *Eldorado or Fortress? Migration in Southern Europe* (: 1–27). London: Macmillan.
- Kerbel, M. R. and Bloom, J. D. (2005) 'Blog for America and civic involvement'. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 10(4): 3-27.
- Labrianidis, L., A. Lyberaki, P. Tinios and P. Hatziprokopiou (2004) 'Inflow of Migrants and Outflow of Investment: Aspects of Interdependence Between Greece and the Balkans'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30 (6): 1183–1208.

- Lasica, J.D. (2003) 'Blogs and journalism need each other'. *Nieman Reports*, Fall 2003: 70-74.
- Machin, D. and A. Mayr (2007) 'Antiracism in the British government's model regional newspaper: the 'talking cure''. *Discourse & Society*, 18(4): 453-478.
- Mai, N. (2005) 'The Albanian Diaspora-in-the-Making: Media, Migration and Social Exclusion'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(3): 543-561.
- Mai, N. and S. Schwandner-Sievers (2003) 'Albanian migration and new transnationalisms'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 29(6): 939-948.
- Marvakis, A. (2004) 'Social integration or social apartheid?'. In Pavlou, M. and D. Christopoulos(eds) *Greece of Migration. Social Participation, Rights and the Status of Citizens*. Athens: KEMO_Kritiki, 88-120 (in Greek).
- McLaughlin, G. (1999) 'Refugees, Migrants and the Fall of the Berlin Wall'. In G. Philo (ed.) *Message Received*. London: Longman.
- Murdock, G. (1984) 'Reporting the Riots: Images and Impacts'. In J. Benyon (ed.) *Scarman and After*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Paoli, L. and P. Reuter (2008) 'Drug Trafficking and Ethnic Minorities in Western Europe'. *European Journal of Criminology*, 5 (1): 13-37.
- Phillips, T. (1995) 'UK TV: A Place in the Sun?'. In C. Frachon and M. Vargaftig (eds) *European Television – Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities*. London: Libbey.
- Pietikäinen, S. (2003) 'Indigenous Identity in Print: Representations of the Sami in News Discourse'. *Discourse & Society*, 14(5): 581-609.
- Rovolis, A. and A. Tragaki (2006) Ethnic Characteristics and Geographical Distribution of Immigrants in Greece, *European Urban and Regional Studies* 13(2): 99-111.
- Sartori, Giovanni (2002) *Pluralismo, Multiculturalismo e Estranei* Rizzoli, Milan.
- Sweetser, K. D. and L. L. Kaid (2008) 'Stealth soapboxes: political information efficacy, cynicism and use of celebrity weblogs among readers'. *New Media & Society* 10(1): 67-91.
- Teo, P. (2000) 'Racism in the News: A Critical Discourse Analysis of News Reporting in Two Austrian Newspapers'. *Discourse & Society* 11(1): 7-49.
- ter Wal, J. (2002) 'Conclusions'. In J. ter Wal (ed.) *Racism and Cultural Diversity in the Mass Media. An Overview of Research and Examples of Good Practice in the EU Member States, 1995-2000*. Vienna: European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia.
- van Dijk, T.A. (1988) *News as Discourse*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- van Dijk, T.A. (1991) *Racism and the Press*. London: Routledge.
- Vertovec, S. and Wessendorf, S. (2005) *Migration and Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Diversity in Europe: An Overview of Issues and Trends*. COMPAS , Oxford.

- W F Chan, W. F. (2006) 'Re-scripting the character of Birmingham's ethnic minority population: assets and others in the stories of a multicultural city'. *Area*, 38(1): 79–88.
- Winter, E. (2007) 'Neither 'America' nor 'Que'bec': constructing the Canadian multicultural nation'. *Nations and Nationalism*, 13 (3): 481–503.
- Wodak, R. (1996) 'The Genesis of Racist Discourse in Austria Since 1989'. In C.R. Caldas-Coulthard and M. Coulthard (eds) *Texts and Practices. Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*, 107–28. London: Routledge.