

The Linguistic Construction of Albanianness in Greece:  
Memes, Names, and Name-calling

Dissertation

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## Abstract

As a result of migration starting in 1990 Albanians constitute the largest ethnic minority and a considerable part of the population of Greece today. This work examines how Albanianess is constructed in Greece through various avenues. First, a linguistic and thematic analysis of internet memes that target the Greek of Albanians shows that the stigmatization of Albanians is still present in the Greek society as it was when they first arrived albeit is less direct. The analysis also shows the enregisterment of a Mock Albanian Greek or a Pan-foreign L2 Greek that is evident and is disseminated through the internet memes. Second, an analysis of semi-structured interviews with Albanian migrants in Greece shows the strategies Albanians have developed in order to navigate this hostile environment in which they live. One of them is to reject ethnic labels such as *Αλβανός* [alvanos] ‘Albanian.MASC’ and *Αλβανέζα* [alvaneza] ‘Albanian.FEM’ that have come to be ethnoracial slurs in Greek along with being used as labels of ethnicity. These are replaced by high register forms that do not carry the slur potential such as *Αλβανή* [alvani] ‘Albanian.FEM’ or have been reclaimed and imbued with positive meanings that express ethnic solidarity. Others reject ethnic labels altogether and show preference for periphrastic constructions centering nationality such as *από την Αλβανία* ‘from Albania’. Periphrasis allows them to make a cautious claim to Albanianess but not the negative indexicality of Albanianess, as well as to cautiously suggest a claim to Greekness.

While Greekness is not something the second-generation can openly claim despite most of them holding Greek citizenships and spending their formative years in Greece, they feel that Greekness describes part of their identities. Another strategy by which Albanians navigate xenophobia is family and personal name changes and Hellenizations which deracialize them, removing the indexical link to their Albanianess, and reracialize them by helping them pass as Greek. These name changes are rooted in power imbalances and assimilatory forces which demand their name assimilation in order to find or maintain employment. Finally, the work examines experimentally the social effect of the name Hellenizations among Albanians. In the experiment, the degree of Albanianess or Greekness of named persons did not affect their employment prospects nor how they are socially evaluated. What emerged as important was the variety that speakers produced, Standard Modern Greek (SMG) or Albanian L2 Greek, suggesting that speech is a powerful factor in these settings. Moreover, Albanian L2 Greek being rated more favorably than SMG attributed to a lowering of acceptability standards when it comes to L2 speech. Overall, the dissertation discusses the linguistic means by which an ethnic minority is racialized, deracialized, and reracialized as individuals attempt to succeed in their migratory project.

## **Dedication**

To my parents Kristinë & Sandër, the first migrants I knew, and to all Albanian migrants.

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## Vita

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## Fields of Study

Major Field: Linguistics

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## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Objectives and main contributions**

Albanians have had a strong presence in Greece since the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Coming out of the isolationist Hoxha regime Albanians were eager to see what was outside the confines of Albania and to seek better life opportunities for themselves and their families in countries such as Greece and Italy. In both they were met with xenophobia sometimes more overtly and sometimes less overtly. In this dissertation I examine how Albanianness is linguistically constructed in Greece, a country in which they are the largest ethnic minority (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2023). I analyze the speech of Albanian migrants in Greece and, in particular, as it pertains to the Albanian Greek that is used to construct an Albanian ethnic identity in Greek social media. I couple this with other ways Albanianness is constructed or avoided such as the navigation of ethnoracial slurs, name changes and Hellenizations, and the evaluation of Albanian L2 speech attributed to Albanian or Hellenized names. Specifically, the research questions I attempt to answer are formulated as follows:

1. How are Albanians represented linguistically and culturally in Greek internet memes?
  - a. What are the features that make up their L2 Greek?

- b. What are the social attributes and general topics/themes attached to Albanianess?
    - c. How are linguistic features and social attributes related to each other?
- 2. What types of linguistic practices do Albanians use to combat or to navigate xenophobic discourse?
  - a. How do personal name choices and name adaptations contribute to this?
  - b. How do labels they choose to reference their ethnicity or ethnic group contribute to this?
- 3. How does degree of Albanianess indexed by an ethnic or adapted name affect the social perception of speech attributed to those names?
  - a. How are L2 speakers evaluated when their names index to a greater or lesser extent their ethnicity?
  - b. How are standard speakers evaluated when their names index to a greater or lesser extent their ethnicity?

To answer those questions, which fall within the frame of raciolinguistics (Alim et al. 2016), I collected and analyzed a variety of qualitative and quantitative data. For the first question I collected 102 Greek internet memes that target the Greek of Albanian migrants. The analysis of the Albanian L2 Greek in the memes shows that there are several features that are attributed very frequently Albanians suggesting that they are perceived by the meme creators as characteristic of Albanian L2 Greek. Such frequent phonological features include the substitution of Standard Modern Greek (SMG) velar and palatal fricatives with velar plosives and palatal affricates. Frequent grammatical features include non-canonical grammatical gender marking and absence of function

words, among others. The memes also show that certain lexical items are frequently attributed to the Greek of Albanians and which, due to their frequency, seem to be emblematic of Albanian L2 Greek. Emblematic Albanian L2 Greek lexical items are *χωρίο* “village”, *χορτάρι* “grass”, *ζάδελο* “cousin”, among a list of other words and phrases that are also related to the stereotypes about Albanians that circulate in Greece. For instance, *χωρίο* “village” is related to the idea of Albanians, and Albania as a whole, as rural. Additionally, *ζάδελο* “cousin” is related to the idea of Albanians as engaging in physical fights but, due to their cowardice, they will only engage in them with the support of other close relatives such as their cousins. As with *dude* and *awesome* which are emblems of the US surfer persona (Podesva 2011), these emblems of Albanianness are not necessarily true to the actual productions of Albanian migrants. Having reached this status, however, means that, to those for whom they are emblematic of Albanianness, the emblems are available to reproduce and to interpret as Albanian. The memes, then, are a venue where an enregistered (Agha 2003, Johnston 2009) Albanian L2 Greek becomes apparent (see also Pinta 2023 and Dickinson 2023 on enregistered language in memes). The enregisterment of Albanian L2 Greek becomes evident also in TV shows (e.g., *Present and In-laws from Tirana*), and social media accounts (e.g., *cjkats\_*) where internet personas perform Albanian characters in pseudo-humorous sketches. These performances of the enregistered Albanian L2 Greek in media match the construction of Albanian and Albanianness in internet memes.

Although the Albanian L2 Greek in the internet meme corpus exhibits some similarity to the L2 productions of Albanians, it does not represent authentic Albanian L2

Greek. The variety present in the memes should be better characterized as Mock Albanian Greek due to the following findings:

1. The unmotivated phonological adaptation of phones that exist in both Albanian and Greek.
2. The unmotivated variation in the adaptation strategies employed for certain phones.
3. The inconsistencies in the adaptations that are performed within the same meme.
4. The inconsistencies about the ‘foreigners’ to which the memes refer.

Mock Albanian Greek can be added to a long list of mock varieties that have been documented (e.g., Hill 2003, Ronkin & Karn 1999, Chun 2004, Slobe 2018). These involve non-authentic productions of speech that is attributed to non-hegemonic and often marginalized groups such as BIPOC individuals and young women. The mock varieties also typically owe their creation to hegemonic and socially privileged groups. As with other mock varieties, Mock Albanian Greek is attributed to Albanians in Greece although it does not represent Albanian’s authentic L2 productions. Additionally, as with other mock varieties, Mock Albanian Greek elevates the hegemonic identity, Greekness, by way of belittling the identity to which it is attached, namely, Albianianness.

Observation (4) suggests that the Greek present in the memes is better characterized as Mock Pan-foreign Greek since the features are not exclusively tied to Albanians. Albanians are tied more closely to this mock variety by way of being the largest migrant group in Greece and, hence, the group of non-Greeks with which Greeks have the most contact. As such, an imagined L2 Greek gets associated with Albanians given their considerable presence in Greece, but it is not precluded from being associated with other

migrant groups. In the US McGowan (2016) found that a similar pan-Asian English variety was performed by actors when asked to produce Chinese L2 English. Due to their lack of knowledge of the intricacies of L1 Chinese, L1 Korean etc., the actors' productions consisted of a mesh of features which they considered "Asian" and which are stereotypical of "Asian" characters and performances elsewhere.

The themes along which the memes construct Albanians evolve around two main axes. One of them addresses what it means to be Albanian, for example (not) enjoying Albanian food or having family members that leave embarrassing messages on one's social media platforms. It also addresses what it means to be an Albanian in Greece, that is, to face assimilatory pressures and the absence of regularization policies. The second, and most prevalent axis is to present Albanians as criminal, violent, unintelligent, uncultured, and rural. The memes that evolve around this axis, by doing so reiterate and perpetuate the stereotypes that are available in Greece about Albanians (Lazaridis & Wickens 1999, Psimmenos 2001, Kapllani & Mai 2005). In addition to reinforcing these stereotypes, the memes also essentialize (Medin & Ortony 1989) Albanians as people who inherently carry these qualities and for whom these qualities are the essence of who they are. The memes also essentialize the Greek of Albanians, by presenting it carrying specific features that distinguish it from SMG. Through essentializing Albanians in this way, the memes create an implicit comparison between Albanians and Greeks. If Albanians are constructed as rural, unintelligent, criminal, violent, and uncultured, then Greeks are the not like that or carry the opposite qualities. Greeks are urban, intelligent, law-abiding, peaceful, and cultured. This difference is highlighted in the memes by non-

standard orthography and Latin script over standard orthography and Greek script that is reserved for Greeks.

For the memes to be interpretable, their creators assume some common ground between them and the meme consumers. In other words, they assume some shared, foundational knowledge to be true in the world (Dancygier & Vandelanotte 2017, Diedrichsen 2020). In this case, in order for the memes to make sense, the common ground assumed is that Albanians are violent, criminal, rural etc. Without this shared understanding about Albanians, the memes would be partially or fully unintelligible to internet users. The existing shared knowledge is specifically conceived as core common ground (Diedrichsen 2020). On the other hand, knowledge that is not shared but is presented as shared by the creator and the meme consumers is emergent common ground (ibid). In the case of Albanian migrants, even if meme consumers do not share the knowledge that Albanians are supposed to be criminal, violent, rural etc., or that the Greek of Albanians sounds in a certain way, by consuming the meme, they are forced to arrive to that conclusion, that is, to take that as common ground, which is assumed by the meme creator, and then to use it as a context against which the meme should be interpreted. This emergent common ground is what contributes to the perpetuation of the stereotypes about Albanians, since even those meme consumers without access to these stereotypes have to assume the stereotypes to successfully interpret the meme content.

As sources of data, internet memes can be useful in identifying the speech patterns allegedly associated with migrant communities (Chun 2013). As in other mass media outlets (Mustafa-Awad & Kirner-Ludqig 2020, Khosravinik 2009) memes can be revealing of the ideologies that circulate about certain social groups. They can also be the

medium by which these ideologies circulate to others with no prior knowledge of the ideologies. Circulation and recycling of content such as the one about Albanians and their Greek comes with harmful outcomes such as the creation, maintenance, or increase in xenophobic, racist, or discriminatory action.

For the second question 36 semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals of Albanian origin that will be referred here as Albanian migrants in Greece. That is, individuals who were born in Albania and came to Greece after their formative years (first generation) and individuals who were born to Albanian parents in Greece or in Albania but came to Greece with their parents before their formative years (second generation). As shown elsewhere (Baugh 1991, Hall et al. 2015, King 2020), the labels that are used to refer to racial or ethnic groups often reveal the social and political conditions that nurtured them as well as the prevalent ideologies about the groups that are labeled at the time that the labels emerged (Motschenbacher 2020). Albanian migrants' preferences among labels that are available in Modern Greek to designate one's Albanian ethnicity is indicative of how they situate themselves upon the world (Duranti 2011, Bucholtz and Hall 2005). For example, Albanians showed dislike for *Alvanos* 'Albanian.masc' and *Alvaneza* 'Albanian.fem'. The dislike is tied to the ethnoracial slur meaning that the ethnic labels have acquired in Greece since Albanians started arriving in the country at the end of the previous millennium. As ethnoracial slurs (see also Hill 2008, Bax 2013, Deumert 2019), these labels carry negative stances towards those the terms are meant to label (McIntosh 2021b). Thus, Albanians' dislike for the label is related to a dislike for the negative sentiment slurs towards their ethnic group. The *Alvan-* labels are slurs not due to their semantic meaning but due to their indexical meaning



(Silverstein 20023). *Alvanos* and *Alvaneza* index a number of social meanings, an indexical field (Eckert 2008), that are related to the stereotypes that exist about Albanians in Greece. By using *Alvanos* or *Alvaneza* language users do more than invoke one's ethnic origin, they invoke the stereotypes about Albanians. The invoked stereotypes being socially undesirable paint the addressee of the slur as carrying those undesirable qualities which are essentializing and contribute to their Othering. Unable to alter their usage as it has been the case with other ethnoracial slurs (Hill 2008, Wong 2005), Albanians resort to reclaiming the slurs and to imbuing them with positive meanings of ethnic solidarity and criticism of the use of the slur by Greeks. This is not to say that there is no disagreement among Albanians about the reclamation itself and about whether Greeks have the right to use the *Alvan-* labels with positive meanings.

Another strategy Albanian migrants have developed in navigating the Alban-ethnoracial slurs in Greece is to seek alternative, non-slur forms as it has been done with other slurs in the past (e.g., Gal 2019). One such form is *Alvani* to refer to a woman of Albanian origin instead of *Alvanida* or *Alvaneza*. According to the interviewees, this learned form does not carry the indexicality of *Alvaneza/Alvanida*, and therefore, it is a preferred alternative. Another alternative is to opt out of terms denoting ethnicity altogether. *From Albania* allows them to shift focus, instead of ethnicity, to origin and nationality and to avoid giving rise to the indexicality of the *Alvan-* labels. Subjects, then, opt for alternative labels in their self-identifications that better represent the identities they want to claim (Hadodo 2023) and which might be different to the labels and identities that others might impose upon them. At the same time, the act of seeking alternative labels allows Albanians to partially end the reproduction of the ethnoracial

slurs. Reproduction of slurs contributes to the normalization of the view of the labeled persons as inferior and it even contributes to their inhumane treatment (McIntosh 2021a, Tirrell 2012, Nagar 2021). Rejecting the slurs is an act of rejecting the potential consequences of the slur normalization.

As mentioned above, the slur meaning of *Alvan-* labels stems from their indexing the negative stereotypes about Albanians. Evoking those stereotypes by uttering *Alvanos* or *Alvaneza* contributes to the perpetuation of those stereotypes as essential qualities of Albanians. Labels such as *alvanofatsa* ‘Albanian-face’ show that the ‘Albanian’ category in Greece is a racialized category that carries innate social and physical characteristics that distinguish them from other categories (Sterk 2023, Alim 20216). These characteristics distinguish them from Greeks who are ideologized as not carrying those social and physical characteristics that Albanians do. Alternatively, Greeks carry the opposite characteristics that Albanians do, that is, they are law-abiding, urban, unintelligent etc. and they have rounded, wrinkle-free faces with small foreheads. Their physical attributes are different than those described by *alvanofatsa* as explained in the interviews: “angled face” “wrinkled from work” with a “large forehead”.

The *Alvan-* slurs cause offense because they designate Albanians as the ethnoracial Other (Said 1978, Coupland 1999). It reminds them that Albanians do not belong and will not belong in Greece. Alternative labels allow them to distance themselves from the Othering and the racialization and to claim their own identities. The periphrastic *from Albania* centers ethnic origin or nationality and not ethnicity. It also does not give rise to the negative associations that the ethnic labels carry. It allows subjects to not directly claim an Albanian ethnicity for themselves, but only loosely be associated with Albania.

Someone *from Albania* could be Albanian, but could also be Vlach, Greek, Roma etc. Since an ethnic identity is not directly claimed by self-identifying as *Albanian*, subjects leave room for interpretation on what their ethnic identification is. That can be indeed Albanian, can be the ethnicity that is predominant in their migratory destination, i.e., Greek, or they could be both Albanian and Greek. By not self-identifying as Albanian they do not evoke the indexical associations that come with being Albanian. Non-commitment to the ethnic label allows to show their distance from the negative associations of Albanianess. At the same time, subjects do not overtly claim *Greek* or the indexicality of being Greek as they do not feel that they have permission to do so.

Another label that subjects of the second generation claimed to be important to them was *Albanian Greek / Greek Albanian*. Although there was no agreement on the order of *Albanian* and *Greek*, the dual ethnic identity was representative of who they are. Despite the preference for this label, subjects did not use this label in their self-identifications in public spaces. Their explanations about this hesitation to openly self-identify with the dual label resided again with the feeling that they do not have a right or permission to claim a *Greek* identity, and therefore they cannot claim a dual identity that contains Greekness. Another explanation resided on the idea of ethnicity as biological substance. Having two Albanian parents, they have inherited from them an Albanian ethnicity. Dual identities are reserved for those who have one Albanian and one Greek parent. They cannot have a dual identity if that identity is not passed on by one of their parents. This is irrespective of the fact that they were naturalized Greek citizens and were in the eyes of the law as Greek as any Greek person born to Greek parents.

*Second-generation (Albanian) migrant* or *second generation* was another term that subjects felt as descriptive of their lived experience and of who they are. This is a label by which they had received residence permits and citizenships in Greece. It was also a label that encapsulates their life trajectory. Along with that trajectory it tells their interlocutor something about themselves; the fact that they were raised as the children of Albanian migrants in Greece. That itself gives a number of other information to their interlocutor such as the lack of integration or regularization policies, and the xenophobia and discrimination they have experienced. At the same time, these labels allow the individuals to seek visibility in Greece and to remind interlocutors that they are a constitutive part of the Greek society. In contrast to similar migratory generations in the US, they are not first-generation Greeks. Maintenance of ethnoracial boundaries is crucial and transracialization (Alim 2016) is not to be attempted.

As noted elsewhere (Ntelifilippidi 2014, Polymenakou 2019, Komninaki 2016), being *Albanian* in Greece means more than being of a particular ethnicity. It means to have certain characteristics, to be of certain social standing, to have a certain education, and to have a certain profession which contribute to the slur meaning of the label. This meaning becomes clear when *Alvanos* is addressed to someone with no relationship to Albania (Komninaki 2016), and it is here where arguments for *Alvanos* as innocent mention of one's ethnicity, fall apart.

Overall, with regard to the labels available in Modern Greek to refer to one of Albanian origin, this work examines the slur use of feminine marked labels that has not been noted before. It also examines where the indexical associations for feminine and masculine ethnic labels converge and diverge and what that means for gendered

ideologizations of Albanianess. The work also examines Albanians' own self-identifications and their interaction with ideologized ethnoracial categories. I show here that dual identities that are present but that are not overtly claimed because Greekness and Albanianess are policed and maintained as separate and distinct. The work also adds another chapter to work on ethnoracial slurs about Albanians in the Balkans that predate the current situation in Greece (Neofotistos 2010, Stavropoulos 2008).

The interviews also highlighted the widespread name changes and name Hellenizations Albanians underwent in Greece which emerged as a phenomenon that was part of everyone's migratory experience. Although name changes among Albanians have been documented elsewhere (e.g., Dritsa 2007, Michail 2009, Giannakopoulou 2020, Petrou 2007), I argue here that these demonstrate the existing power imbalances that imposed many of the changes.

Albanian names racialize the name-bearers as Albanian and point to their Albanian origin. Name changes result in a loss of this indexical association with Albanianess, to an indexical bleaching (Squires 2014). This indexical bleaching leads to a deracialization as there is loss of the association between the name and a particular ethnoracial identity (Bucholtz 2016). Due to the socially non-privileged position Albanians find themselves in, with the name changes they are expected to reject parts of their identities and to replace them with counterparts that are acceptable to the hegemonic group. With the name changes, Albanianess remains hidden, and the illusion of ethnic homogeneity persists.

The ideologies hegemonic groups hold towards the Other can become evident by the amount of effort the first make in pronouncing the latter's names (Hall-Lew et al.

2010, Motschenbacher 2020, Svensson 2024). Moreover, the ideologies people hold, and the sociopolitical context that bears them can become evident by the imposition of spelling adaptations on ethnoracially marked names (also Patrick 2022, Screti 2018, Mácha 2020, Busch 2022). Other times, externally imposed name adaptations go uncontested since contesting them might render the names unrecognizable (Emmelhainz 2012).

Subjects in the interviews stressed the importance of the accurate pronunciation and spelling of their personal and family names which index parts of their identities (Bucholtz 2016, Chen 2021, Obasi 2019, Emmelhainz 2012). How their names are pronounced or orthographically represented indexed information about their culture (Xu et al. 2020, Hassa 2012, Enríquez Duque 2023). Becoming aware of the indexicality of their names (Xu 2020) was followed, for some, by desire to break that association via name changes or adaptations. One subject, for instance, after coming to Greece came to the realization that his Albanian name was “heavy” and Othered him. Today, he preferred what he called the “prettier” and more canonically Greek name that had been given to him by his former Greek employer. Canonically Greek names made subjects feel like they are treated equally to the hegemonic group which constitutes of people with canonical Greek names (Svensson 2024).

Becoming aware of the tie between their Albanian names and Albanianness, some subjects sought to strengthen that tie. This was done through name reclamations or name-spelling reclamations. Some of those who had adopted a Greek name after being given Albanian names at birth, returned to and reclaimed their Albanian names and introduced themselves with them. Others, returned to their non-adapted/non-Hellenized spellings of

their names. With these strategies they strengthen their link to their Albanian identity, culture, and their families (Lombardi 2011, Enríquez Duque 2023). They also contribute to making the Albanian element in Greece visible (Shanmuganathan et al. 2021).

Maintaining the visibility of an ethnic group which has received and succumbed to a great extent to assimilatory pressures in Greece, at the same time, destroyed the illusion of an ethnolinguistically homogeneous state.

The present work is in line with other work that has looked at imposed name changes for those ideologized as the Other (Said 1978) or as not part of the hegemonic group (Davies & Dubinsky 2018, Hill 2008, Scott et al. 2002, Coulmont 2014, Knoblock 2019, Parada 2016). Pressure to change names, which a part of broader assimilatory pressures, are common experiences among migrants (Parada 2016, Coulmont 2014).

What is not common in the case of Albanians is the accelerated pace by which these are happening by being common among the first migratory generation. Among Latinx in the US, for example, these become common in the second or third migratory generation (Parada 2016). Also, in contrast to other work (Gerhards & Tuppatt 2021, Mesthrie 2021) religious proximity does not emerge as a factor determining name change. Adoption of Greek Christian names was common among culturally Christian as well as Muslim Albanians.

Hellenizations or changes of names were many times justified as the means by which subjects could secure or maintain employment and, thus, their livelihood. Subjects feared that maintaining a name that racialized them as Albanian would hurt their employment prospects or their relationships with their Greek employers. This is not an unreasonable fear as it has been already documented that there is bias in hiring

procedures and in teaching evaluations against racialized and minoritized names (Gueguen 2017, Bertrand & Mullainathan 2004, Kline et al. 2022). Albanians recognize that in order to succeed in the job market have to have a certain type of linguistic capital (Bourdieu 1977), Greek or Greek-passing personal and family names.

The indexical potential of graphemes also emerged in the interviews as powerful tool which enhanced or toned-down subjects' ethnic identities. Graphemes such as <υ> or <η> in names had the power to deracialize the name bearers, that is to remove the association with Albanianess. They also had the power to racialize them, that is to create a new association to a new ethnic identity. Due to this power, graphematic representations of names were regularly used by Greeks to impose name Hellenizations and to conceal heterogeneity in Greece. Other times, they were used by Albanians to conceal their Albanianess. Yet, other times, they were used by Greeks to police the boundaries between ethnic groups and to make the division about who is Greek and who is Albanian obvious. Thus, graphemes become the means by which the transracial subjects, those that transgress ethnoracial boundaries (Alim 2016), disrupt and blur those boundaries, and by which transracialization acts are policed and ethnoracial order is restored.

Racialized standard language ideologies dictate ideologies about who is and who is not a speaker of a language which may lead to conceiving people who are racialized as languageless (Rosa 2016a). By extension, ideologies about what is an Albanian or a Greek name or what does an Albanian or a Greek name orthographically look like dictate ideologies about who is or who can be Albanian or Greek. Canonical Albanian or Greek spellings of names racialize one as Albanian or Greek. Non-canonical spellings



deracialize the name bearers, that is, they remove the indexical link to the ethnic identity leading to subjects conceived as ethnic-less. Such imposed orthographic representations prohibit the subject from transgressing ethnoracial boundaries. Canonical spelling is reserved for those that are ideologized as canonically Greek. At the same time, those Albanians who partially Hellenize their names result in partial reracializations, i.e., partial association to Greekness. In this way they are able to claim dual identities and negotiate their ethnic identifications in a context where they are pressured to choose between one or the other. The deracialization, a form of erasure (Gal & Irvine 1995), and the loss of the indexicality to their Albanianess is symbolic. It does not presuppose acceptance into Greekness. Reracialization into Greekness and erasure the visibility of Albanianess is only superficial. Despite being naturalized as Greek citizens, as discussed earlier, Albanians of the second generation cannot overtly claim a Greek identity.

Finally, for the third question a two-part experiment was designed and carried out in which both Albanian and Greek subjects participated. Overall, in both parts of the experiment, the resume task and the speaker evaluation task, the statistical analysis showed that subjects recognize graphematic variation as indexing certain social meanings (also Patrick 2022, Mácha 2020, Screti 2018, Chun 2013). In this case, graphematic variation in names is recognized as indexing Albanianess or Greekness. Despite that, experiment participants in the resume task did not disadvantage named persons in the job market and did not associate them with negative attributes based on the ethnic information they can deduce about them. This is contrary to the experiences narrated in interviews who saw Hellenized names as essential for success in employment prospects. It is also contrary to other work that has found bias against non-hegemonic groups in the

housing and the job markets (Levon et al. 2021, Purnell et al. 1999, Wright 2023, Jackson & Denis 2024).

In the second part, the speech evaluation task, speakers who produced Albanian L2 Greek were evaluated more positively than speakers who produce SMG. That is, they were evaluated as more likeable by all listeners and less aggressive by Greek listeners. As with previous work (Campbell-Kibler 2007, D’Onofrio & Eckert 2021, King et al. 2022, Regan 2022, Sim 2023, Welker 2024), listeners notice variation in speech and this variation is meaningful to them. The positive evaluation of Albanian L2 Greek can be attributed to a shifting standards effect (Deutschmann et al. 2023, Hansen et al. 2017a, Ip & Papafragou 2023). According to this, listeners evaluate L2 speech more favorably than L1 speech because they have different standards for each of them. Listeners lower their standards about “good” speech when they encounter L2 speech and maintain stricter standards for L1 speech. Thus, when encountered with L2 speech, their lowered standards lead to rate L2 speakers higher than the L1 speakers for whom standards are tougher. Despite recognizing the speakers based on their names as more or less Albanian and more or less Greek, the name of the speakers did not matter for their social evaluations. This lack of name effect suggests that when listeners encounter additional visual (graphematic) social information about speakers, they rely on the speech variants produced and ignore that additional information (also Gnevsheva 2018, Paladino Mazurega 2020).

Finally, the ethnicity of the raters was another factor that determined evaluations. Albanian listeners made more fine-grained distinctions between Albanian and non-Albanian names which can be attributed to their greater familiarity with Albanian naming practices. Albanian raters, compared to Greek raters, also evaluated named persons in the

resume task as more hireable, and in the speaker evaluation task, as more likeable, rural, and accented. The hireability and likeability ratings suggest evaluations based on solidarity. The ruralness and accentedness ratings suggest an expanded view of what those concepts mean compared to that of the Greek raters.

Overall, this dissertation explored the different means Albanianness is constructed in Greece. To navigate the racializing discourses still present in the country as well as the assimilatory pressures, Albanians creatively use graphematic variation in the representation of their names and lexical variation in their self-identifications to claim visibility, belonging, and ethnoracial and other types of identities.

Before I discuss the above in detail, in the present chapter I also discuss my own positionality with respect to the research so that readers understand the lens through which this dissertation is written. The rest of the work is structured as follows: In chapter 2 I offer an overview of the literature on naming practices, speech evaluation, the relationship between language and ethnoracial categories, and the Albanian experience in Greece. Chapter 3 presents the collection and analysis of internet memes that target the Greek of Albanians as well as the main findings. In chapter 4 I discuss interviews that were conducted with Albanian migrants, the demographic profiles of the chapters, and the findings on ethnic label meaning and choice. Chapter 5 presents Albanians' naming practices in Greece based on data from the same interviews, and chapter 6 presents the design and the main findings of the resume and speaker evaluation tasks. Finally, in chapter 7 I offer a discussion of the main findings and in chapter 8 I offer some concluding remarks.

## **1.2 Positionality**

In keeping with the tradition of expressing one's relationship to the research undertaken, I take some space to disclose my own positionality. I am myself an Albanian woman of the second generation who was born in Albania and was raised in Athens, Greece from the age of five. Specifically, I come from the north of Albania, and I am a native Geg Albanian speaker. I come from a Catholic Christian family from both sides of my parents and, since I was born after the fall of the communist regime and the reinstatement of religious practice, I was baptized at our local Catholic church as an infant. Growing up in Greece I felt that I was too Albanian, and not enough Greek. I was a Catholic when everyone around me was an Orthodox, I was the “wrong” type of Christian since, as my teachers would explain, *Orthodoxy* derives from *ορθή δόξα* “right belief”. My name, adapted to Greek phonology name, *Ρετζίνα Ντότσι* [redzina dotsi], was too foreign and racialized me as an Albanian. I was [redzina] for my teachers and the official school records, but I was *Τζίνα* [dzina] for my peers and friends which was the name adapted into Greek phonology *Χhina* [dzina], that my family called me. The short name, along with my SMG and phenotype, allowed me to pass as Greek since *Τζίνα* was also short for the Greek *Γεωργία* [jeorjia]. It allowed me to avoid questions about my ethnicity immediately upon making a new acquaintance and to avoid judgmental or suspicious looks because of my ethnicity. Hiding or backgrounding my Albanianess also allowed me to avoid discrimination on the basis of my ethnicity. *Τζίνα* allowed me to pass as Greek and avoid questions about my ethnic background during the year following the completion of my undergraduate studies when I worked as an English language teacher at a private foreign language center in Athens. My excellent GPA gave me the job, but I was instructed by my employer to not reveal my ethnicity to students or parents. She knew

that had parents known that an Albanian was teaching their children, they would enroll their children to a different language center. I knew that and I accepted it and only revealed my ethnicity at the end of the school year to three of the older students, two of whom were Albanian themselves with whom I had developed a close relationship. It remains today my biggest regret that I accepted this and did not at least disclose it to my younger Albanian students seeing what an impact disclosing my ethnicity to the older students had on them. I was painfully reminded of the Albanianess of my name again a couple of months later when I had just acquired my Greek citizenship and I visited my local tax office to update my system information. While adding my new Greek government ID number next to my name, the state employee on duty sarcastically remarked *such a Greek name!*. Again, I froze, I did not react, I kept silent and finished the process without complaint. In my head, in the next few hours, I would have complained to the manager or would have said something directly to her. The truth is I was afraid that the state employee would refuse the service as it has happened countless times to Albanians in government services and that it would cause me a bureaucratic nightmare just as I ended my residence permit renewal hurdles. My name was often Hellenized by teachers or other Greek acquaintances to *Ρεγγίνα* [regina]. My family name would be orthographically Hellenized to *Ντότσι* [dotsi]. Both of these Hellenizations caused me discomfort, but most times I would not correct unless it was for official purposes. I have spent many years hating my Albanian name and considering it “ugly” despite knowing its “noble” origin from Latin *regina* “queen”. When I came to the US, I anglicized the spelling of my name to *Gina*, but as I was coming to terms more and more with my identities, I returned to *Xhina* and *Rexhina*, although the latter was always there in

professional contexts. Now, *Re/Xhina* do not feel strange anymore. What feels strange is *Gina* and realizing the complicated relationship with ethnic identity that I am still processing. This also became clear to me when I discuss my ethnicity to others in the US. Being a dual passport holder now I often claimed that I only mention coming from Greece when inquired about my origin to new acquaintances or to people with whom I have short-lived interactions. My excuse is that people do not know that Albania is a country or know nothing about it but do know Greece or at least something about Greece. What if I never lived in Greece, though? Would I not tell people I was born and raised in Albania? Other instances are my hesitation to call myself Greek in front of other Greeks that I meet in the US even though I address them in Greek. I also have had similar encounters as other Albanians in this dissertation (Chapters 4 and 5) of having to go on long explanations that both my parents are Albanian and that I was born in Albania but raised in Greece and, hence, I can call myself Greek or both Albanian and Greek. Finally, although I do not have an Albanian L2 Greek accent, my parents have one. I have language-brokered for them and I have witnessed the communication difficulties this has caused them and the maltreatment they, and other Albanians and L2 Greek speakers, have experienced due to this in Greece. Many of the people interviewed in this dissertation I have met through a private Facebook group which caters to second-generation Albanian migrants in Greece. I am also one of the moderators of the group and have been since its conception. I am relatively known in the group due to my moderating and posting activity. Additionally, many of the other participants in the interviews are family members or belong to my personal extended family circle. As a consequence, many of the participants belong in some of the same social networks and have a personal relationship

with the researcher. Finally, it should be noted that, due to the above, many of the issues and topics discussed in this dissertation echo my own thoughts and experiences as an Albanian raised in Greece.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Albanians in Greece

Albanians constitute an important part of the population of Greece, accounting, conservatively, for 4% of the total population of the country or approximately 400,000 individuals (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2023). Further, Albanians make up about half (49%) of the population of Greece holding foreign citizenship while other ethnic groups include, in descending order, Bulgarians (4.6%), Pakistanis (4.6%), Romanians (3.7%), Georgians (3.4%), Bangladeshis (2.2%), and others (32.5%) (ibid.: 9). This considerable presence of Albanians is a result of waves of “mass migration” (Mai & Schwandner-Sievers, 2003: 940) into their neighboring country over the last three decades and after the end of the communist regime<sup>1</sup> in Albania at the beginning of the 1990s. The results of the 2023 census are conservative as they do not clarify the number of Albanians who acquired Greek citizenships. Between the 2011 and the 2021 censuses, a considerable number of Albanians, especially of the second generation, was able to secure Greek citizenship due to reforms in legislation. The 2021 census results do not account for those as only data on citizenship (and not race or ethnicity) is reported. The number of Albanians in Greece was reduced by almost a fifth in that decade partly attributed to the way citizenship is reported and partly due to the onward migration of many of these

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<sup>1</sup> Which, interestingly, is frequently referred to by Albanian media as *diktatura komuniste* “communist dictatorship”.



Albanians who secured Greek, i.e., European Union passports (Karamoschou 2018, Karatsareas & Ndoci forthcoming).

As is frequent with situations of migration (see for example Kern & Selting 2011, Woschitz 2021, Baker et al. 2008, Cap 2018), Albanian migrants were received with suspicion and that turned into “intense xenophobic discourse” (Archakis 2022, 399) and resulted in them being negatively stigmatized as violent, “cunning”, “primitive”, “untrustworthy”, and “dangerous” individuals, and “criminal[s]” (Lazaridis & Wickens 1999, 648) who threaten Greek national identity (Psimmenos 2001). As a result, *Αλβανός* [alvanos] “Albanian” has come to be used and be perceived as a slur in Greek (Ntelifilipidi, 2014), with *αλλοδαπός* [aloðapos] “foreigner/alien” having similar connotations. I remember, for example, it being painful to me to have to select *αλλοδαπός* [aloðapos] “alien” in official documents. Relevant to this dissertation, the Greek media has had a large role in the creation, dissemination, and perpetuation of these stigmatized images of Albanians (Kapllani & Mai, 2005).

As might be expected, these narratives have not left Albanians untouched. Albanians have been employed in low-paying jobs (Karamoschou 2018, Archakis 2022) with few prospects for upward mobility even for those who completed tertiary education in Albania (King et al. 2005). Gemi & Triandafyllidou (2021) have characterized the integration of Albanians in Greece as one of differential inclusion, meaning that the Greek society was willing to integrate them into the labor market due to the labor needs and the low cost to employers. However, Albanians found resistance to integrating in other ways such as participating in decision-making as many hurdles need to be overcome to achieve naturalization. They have also suffered verbal (e.g. Avgi 2021) and

physical aggression directed towards them (e.g., Vox News 2024). Characteristic of the latter is the killing of an Albanian football fan in 2004 during celebrations following the win of the Albanian national football team against the Greek team shortly after the latter had been crowned European champions of the year (Archakis 2016). Moreover, prevailing homogenizing discourses (Archakis 2018, 2020; Gogonas 2009) have made it clear that the Albanian language has no place in Greece despite being the ethnic language of a considerable part of the population of the country. For instance, the beginning of Albanian extracurricular courses for the Albanian students of a Greek middle school in Crete was marked by disagreements and protests by much of the Greek student body and parents (Boui 2018). Discrimination towards Albanians need not be overt and blatant in order to be felt by the Albanian community. Microaggressions are still at work even if they are harder to detect and to be pointed at. To give a personal example from an encounter with an -otherwise- well-meaning Greek woman a couple of years ago who exclaimed *και είσαι τόσο άξια* [ce ise toso aksia] “and you are so capable” upon learning I was a PhD student **and** Albanian. In fact, racist discourses can be so hard to detect that they even find their way into antiracist campaigns. For example, Tsakona et al., (2020) discuss how Greek antiracist campaigns promote cultural and linguistic assimilation of migrants as the means to avoid social exclusion and stigma.

All this is of course felt by and well known to Albanians in Greece (Archakis 2018, 2022, 2020; Gogonas & Michail 2015) who have undergone language shift already in the second generation rather than the third that is typical in contexts of migration (Gogonas 2010, 2009; Gogonas & Michail 2015; Maligkoudi 2010; Chatzidaki & Xenikaki 2012). Moreover, op-eds by Albanians such as the one by Xheza (2021) point to a community

that is essentially traumatized by their treatment in the country. This, together with the 2008 Great Recession that Greece felt very intensely, has led many to repatriate. This was especially true of those working in construction, which was mainly staffed by Albanian workers, and which exhibited an 85% job loss post-2008 (Dimitriadis 2022). The Great Recession has led many more (especially those have managed to acquire Greek citizenship) to onward migrate to other northern European countries such as the UK (before Brexit) or Germany (Karamoschou 2018, Karatsareas & Ndoci forthcoming).

The Albanian migration to Greece is often reminiscent of that of the Latinx migration in the US. While Latinxs have been present in the US without migrating (e.g., annexation of Texas, New Mexico, and California), individuals from Latin America have migrated in the US for a while now. Motivations to migrate include seeking better life opportunities and escaping conflict and authoritarian regimes. Also similar to Albanians, these migrants are employed in blue collar, low-earning professions (e.g., agriculture and construction). As with Albanians, this migration is characterized by a difficulty in obtaining documentation and legal residence. Unlike, Albanians (see next section), the strong presence of Latinxs in the US and the large Latinxs communities (e.g., California) have contributed to language maintenance for many generations. Unlike Albanians, however, often the discourses around the Latinxs shift between racializing to ethnicizing. Although racialized and set as dangerous, often the discourses around Latinxs become ethnicizing and their contribution to the US society is highlighted (Urciuoli 2020). Their presence through food and unique culture is not a danger as long as whiteness is still hegemonic. Learning Spanish at school is valid as long as students are learning the basics of the language of the many people in the US for whom this is their ancestral language.

They become threats and the discourses shift to racializing when, for example, calls for bilingual education threaten the hegemony of American English (ibid.).

As with many cases, what *Albanian* refers to is much more complex than what is publicly discussed or known. It can refer to Albanians who simply identify their origins in present-day Albania or Kosova. But those territories also have other types of Albanians: those who identify as Geg or Tosk<sup>2</sup> Albanians; those who identify as Roma or Vlach Albanians; those who identify as Greek but hold Albanian nationality etc. All these groups also complicate the linguistic landscape of Albanianess. In a similar vein, Latinx is not a homogeneous category either in Latin America or the US. Being Latinx is being white, Black, indigenous, mestizo etc., but it is also tied to diverse cultures and national origins.

## 2.2 The speech of Albanian migrants

As mentioned above, Greek linguists have already observed language shift in the second generation of Albanian migrants. The Greek of those Albanians who have not achieved native-like proficiency yet has received attention on the internet and various social media platforms. *Slang.gr* (similar to the Urban Dictionary of the English-speaking internet world) includes an entry titled *Αλβανοελληνικά* “Albanian Greek” which lists a number of features, that according to the entry’s anonymous author make up a variety of “Greek as spoken by Albanians”, along with phrases and sentences that exemplify those features (slang.gr, n.d., *Αλβανοελληνικά*). *Μακαιρώσω* [makeroso]<sup>3</sup> “I [will] stab [you]” is

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<sup>2</sup> Besides dialectal difference, the difference between Geg and Tosk is also discussed in racializing terms. For example, Geg Albanians are discussed in public discourse as taller than Tosk Albanians.

<sup>3</sup> The SMG spelling, also reflective of pronunciation would be *μαχαιρώσω* [maçeroso].

another entry in the same platform that exemplifies a threat as it would have been uttered in Greek from someone “with an Albanian accent” (slang.gr, n.d. μακαρώσω) while it again lists various examples of the word in sentences that contain some of the features listed in the “Albanian Greek” entry. In the popular Instagram account “*cjkats\_*”<sup>4</sup>, the Greek account manager/holder creates daily content intended to be humorous while frequently making use of Albanian words and phrases together with features (similar to the ones in the “Albanian Greek” entry) that are presented as typical of Albanian learners of Greek<sup>5</sup>. The account holder is not the only one making use of such devices as he frequently shares similar content created by his followers on which he is tagged. On YouTube, the channel “LineUp VI”, made up of second-generation Albanian migrants, makes videos aiming to be humorous that utilize similar linguistic resources to the ones utilized in the other platforms. Particularly noteworthy is their series titled *Ξένοι Vs Άλβανοί* “Foreigners Vs Albanians” in which they sketch the differences between Albanians and non-Albanians, making heavy use of Albanian phrases and learner Greek (henceforth Albanian Greek) when they play Albanians and almost hyper-standard Modern Greek when they perform “foreigners”, that is, non-Albanians. Similar linguistic practices are employed in the recent Greek television series *Παρουσιάστε* [parusiaste] “Present!” (Pittaras 2020) that features a character of Albanian origin, Elton.

To the best of my knowledge, the Greek of Albanians has not attracted scholarly attention in Greek linguistics besides the observation about Albanians shifting their language dominance to Greek. Among the few exceptions to this that I am aware of is,

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<sup>4</sup> The account has more than 154.000 followers as of August 4, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> In a recent Instagram story *cjkats* claimed that his content is humorous, and his intent is to make people laugh as a response to the fact that he occasionally hears from his followers that the content might be racist.

first, the Humor and Critical Literacy platform developed by Kapogianni et al. (2018), who include an internet meme about Albanian-accented Greek as an educational activity available to secondary education teachers for engagement with ethnoracially-based language ideologies. The second is the verbal guise experiment conducted by Ntelifilippidi (2014) who shows that Greeks evaluate Albanian<sup>6</sup> more negatively than their native language in qualities such as attractiveness. It should be noted, however, that none of the participants in Ntelifilippidi's study could identify the foreign language they heard as Albanian so it is unclear what they thought they were evaluating when completing the task. This could mean that the participants were not necessarily rating Albanian per se as less attractive, but rather this unidentified foreign language as opposed to their native language towards which we would expect individuals to hold positive feelings.

Apart from the above, in my second Qualifying Paper (Ndoci 2021, 2023) I employed a matched guise experiment to investigate the social perception of Albanian Greek. Broadly, I found that talkers who produced Albanian Greek were judged by Albanian and Greek listeners as more Albanian, rural, aggressive, and as less likeable than those who produced Standard Modern Greek. These attributes also emerged when certain lexical items emblematic of Albanian Greek were present in the speech of the talkers. My findings, therefore, suggest that listeners are aware of a variety of Greek spoken by Albanians and of its distinctive features (phonological and lexical) and attribute social meaning to them.

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<sup>6</sup> Albanian, as in Albanian language and not Albanian Greek.

### 2.3 The ‘Greeks’ and the ‘Others’

Since antiquity, in the geographic area where present-day Greece is, ethnoracial identities have been constructed as those that are Greek and not Greek. This becomes immediately obvious through the onomatopoeic *βάρβαρος* [barbaros] ‘barbarian’ which was used in ancient Greece to refer to non-Greek speakers; the onomatopoeia stemming from the perceived [bar bar] productions of those who did not speak a Greek language such as Persians or Phoenicians. The contrast between those who are Greek and those who are not Greek has persisted over the millennia and largely defines how Greeks today view their own and others’ ethnoracial identities which is underlined by a strong sense of nationalism. Triandafyllidou et al. (1997) discuss the ‘new Greek nationalism’ that views Greek identity as one structured around the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ polar. This nationalism “emphasize[s] the distinctiveness of [the Greek] culture and the uniqueness of their trajectory through history” (ibid. 5). In other words, Greeks view themselves as the descendants of the ancient Greeks with a consistent presence in the present-day Greece for thousands of years (Lefkaditou 2017). They also view their culture as unique in the world, and any attempts by other ethnoracial groups to participate or to share those cultural elements are seen as hostile as they threaten “their collective identity and their existence a nation” (Triandafyllidou et al. 1997, 6). The sense of Greeks as distinct among the nations is also captured in the Greek term *ανάδελφον* [anaðelfon] which describes “a nation deprived of brothers or allies” (ibid.). Arguments towards this have been produced also by geneticists, which although criticized as interpretative rather than relying on data, argue for the genetic distinctiveness of Greeks and the lack of relationship to people who live or have lived close to them (Lefkaditou 2017).

In this context “race, nation, and state are merged together” (ibid. 330). The popular phrase *Έλληνας γεννιέσαι, δεν γίνεσαι* “You are born Greek, you don’t become Greek” is characteristic of this biological nature attribute to Greekness. The difference between Greeks and migrant groups or refugees that are found in Greece is seen as equally biological and this biological difference is often used to normalize discrimination against these groups (ibid.). These groups are to be tolerated as long as they occupy manual labor positions which Greeks will not or refuse to occupy (Kirtsoglou & Tsimouris 2020).

In the process of nation-building, Greece has been very successful in concealing any ethnolinguistic diversity present in Greece (Lefkadiou 2017). For example, the majority of Greeks do not know that there is a Slavophone minority present in northern Greece. Greece has also been successful in assimilating many of these minorities such as the Vlachs or the Arvanites (Abadzi 2004, Triandafyllidou & Kokkali 2010). These groups identify as undoubtedly Greek and are recognized as undoubtedly Greek by Greeks too even though they speak Aromanian and Albanian varieties respectively.

More recently with the arrival of migrants and refugees from Africa and the Middle East to Europe via Greece, the country has seen itself as the protector of the European borders and values (Kirtsoglou & Tsimouris 2020). Europe should be grateful to Greece not only for the protection of its values and its borders but also for giving European countries Western civilization (Lefkadiou 2017). Europe, then, is still the Other, but this Other is allowed to partake in Greek civilization which became Western civilization. Albanian migrants are the archetype of the Other in Greece and “have been ascribed characteristics that inferiorize them in the eyes of the majority” (Lazaridis & Koumandraki 2001, 288). Greekness is “based on racial commonality and superiority”



(Halkias 2003, 223). The Other, not participating in Greekness is, by default inferior. If the Other is Western should at least be grateful for the gift of civilization.

Greece should also be viewed in the European context and the refusal in that context to discuss race and racism (Lentin 2008, Goldberg 2009). Difference and lack of equality is framed as based on culture or ethnicity, but not race (Lentin 2008, Essed & Trienekens 2008, Beaman 2019). Although racism is present, due to the refusal to talk about race and racism, European countries proclaim this image of themselves as color-blind (Beaman 2019) and racism-free that have resolved issues of racial discrimination a long time ago (Lentin 2008). This, naturally, has led to a delayed reckoning with the European colonial past which is only now starting to happen (Beaman 2019). This colonial past together with human enslavement was the basis for racism and the justification of the racial superiority of Europe against everybody else (Goldberg 2009). Greece is following behind other European countries in these conversations about race and racism. It is interesting to note here that Greek *ρατσισμός* “racism” is a general label referring to discrimination rather than only ideologies of racial hierarchies. Along these lines, it is common to hear talk on *κοινωνικό ρατσισμό* “social racism” or *ηλικιακό ρατσισμό* “age racism” without reference to actual racial differentiation.

This context is strikingly different from that encountered in the US where race and racism, products of its colonial history, are part of the public discourse. From this context also emerged the academic work on race and racialization. Race in the US evolves around the powerful Black and white distinction. Whiteness, white ways of being, and white ways of speaking are associated with being American (King 2020). To the opposite side of this is Blackness whose reality is captured by the ‘one drop rule’ that suggests that

having one Black ancestor is enough to make one Black. The converse, however, is not true. A white ancestor does not make one white. A binary is present in Greece but, there, the conversation revolves around being Greek and not Greek. While in its modern history Greece did not have colonies, the colonial conceptions of European racial superiority have made their way to and are well present in Greece. While both Albanians and Greeks are conceived as white, the construction of the main Other in Greece, Albanians, happens in racializing terms (Urciuoli 2013, 2020). Albanians pose a danger for the integrity of Greece. Albanians are the naturally and collectively different and, thus, subordinate to the dominant Greek population. As such, Albanianness cannot offer anything to the constitution of Greekness without smearing it.

#### **2.4 Internet memes**

There is a growing literature over the last years that discusses memes as a meaningful multimodal unit of analysis. Memes fall under the more general rubric of computer-mediated communication (Androutsopoulos 2006). Dancygier & Vandelanotte (2017, 594) argue that the “ideas and emotions [expressed in the memes are] assumed to be shared or at least known by peers within a given discourse community” and this is the presupposition that needs to be fulfilled in order for the memes to achieve one of their main objectives (or that of their creators) which is to produce humor. Some (e.g. Laineste & Voolaid, 2016; Kirner-Ludwig, 2020) have discussed how memes achieve intertextuality while Diedrichsen (2020) encapsulated Dancygier & Vandelanotte’s (2017) idea under ‘core’ and ‘emergent’ common ground in her exploration of the pragmatics of internet memes (see also Wiggins, 2020) and the communicative functions they perform whose creation and distribution resemble the act of conversation. Some

studies on internet memes have focused on their humorous character (Milner 2012; 2013). For instance, Piata (2020) examined the subcategory of ‘Classical Art Memes’ and proposes that their humor derives from the incongruity built from the classical art images and the contemporary language attributed to the figures represented in the art.

While other work has moved beyond humor and has explored their more serious side; for instance, Gal et al. (2016) have explored their activist potential and Glăveanu and colleagues (2018) explored the constructions of recent refugees in Europe. Internet Memes have also been examined as bearers of enregistered codes and the ideologies surrounding those codes and their speakers (Pinta 2023). Dickinson (2023, 23) also examines internet memes as spaces for the emergence of the US Latinx millennial characterological figure which is characterized by bilingualism and “strong ties to Latinx culture” among others. Despite that, Gal et al. (2016) observed exclusionary tendencies in their corpus of internet memes in terms of who gets represented in them and by whom. the anonymity the internet affords to internet users makes the inclusion of potentially hurtful content easier, as it minimizes the potential for consequences towards the creator (Davison 2012).

In the Greek internet meme arena, there is not much work yet with the exception of the recent study by Archakis & Tsakona (2019; 2021), who explored Greek internet memes from their humorous (that ends up being racist) potential and with a focus on those memes that target recent refugees. Interestingly, a meme the authors discuss in their 2021 paper as targeting recent refugees is one that I have found in my own collection of memes to target older Albanian migrants; this commonality seems to speak to the reproducibility of the memes with almost no constraints, in that the same meme might be

used to refer to one group in one post, and it can be used to refer to a different group in another post. In fact, the meme in question is also the meme Kapogianni et al. (2018) propose in their Critical Literacy platform as an activity for ethnicity-based language ideologies, as mentioned earlier, and it is attributed to Albanians.

## **2.5 Other mass media**

The representation of Albanians is not new in the mass media sphere. Kapllani & Mai (2005) have already noted the role of the Greek press in the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes towards Albanians. More recently Greek scholars have turned to social media to examine verbal aggression towards migrants (including Albanians), refugees, and asylum seekers. Pontiki et al., (2018; 2020) and Pontiki (2019) found that while the target of xenophobic discourses on Greek Twitter has shifted towards the newer migrant and refugee groups (i.e. mainly Syrian refugees), the usual discourses about older migrants from Albania are still to be found, although to a smaller extent. Similar shifts in the focus of the concerns for the “Other” have been observed in popular Greek newspapers (Saridakis & Mouka 2017). Other scholars (Mouka & Saridakis 2017; Saridakis & Mouka 2020) show how Albanians and other ethnic minorities in Greek far-right online platforms are othered and framed as enemies of Greece through collocational qualifiers.

Not specific to Albanians, but still relevant, Assimakopoulos & Baider (2017) examined direct and indirect hate speech in comments under Greek and Cypriot news articles about migrants and LGBTQ+ individuals. These discourses in Greece are not an issue just of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century Greek comedy films make use of African characters to make jokes at their expense and reduce their role to being the culturally undeveloped, thus imposing imported colonial views on race into a country

which has not been a colonial power in its modern history (Kompatsiaris, 2017). Similar discourses in mass media are, of course, to be found outside Greece as well. Khosravini (2009) explores the representation of migrants and refugees in newspapers in two periods in the recent British history. Cap (2018) discusses the construction of the fear towards the “Other” in Polish politicians’ statements on recent migrants and refugees. Mustafa-Awad & Kirner-Ludwig (2020) find dehumanizing discourses about Syrian refugees in German, British, and American online news platforms.

## **2.6 Migrants in social media**

The development and expansion of social media has allowed researchers to explore computer-mediated communication through online ethnographies (Androutsopoulos, 2008) and has allowed migrants to now make their own voices heard even when they did not have access to do so before in mainstream media. Moreover, participation in social media has allowed migrant users to keep in touch with friends and family, to maintain existing ties or to create new ones, all of which had been difficult to do so previously (Komito, 2011). Social media has also allowed migrants to forge migrant and diasporic identities (Balalovska, 2012; Bruslé, 2012), to network (Doutsou, 2013), to integrate in a new place (Aguirre & Davies, 2015), to distance themselves from their country of origin or their new home (Georgalou, 2019; 2021b), and to express their emotional reactions towards social happenings (Georgalou, 2021a). Online ethnography has also allowed scholars to understand the multiple and complex types of identities migrants construct through their social media presence as well as the reasons that led them to migrate in the first place (Georgalou et al. 2019).

## 2.7 (Pε) Αλβανέ as an ethnoracial slur

The fact that *Αλβανέ* is used as an ethnoracial slur is not new and has often been observed as a side note in the Greek literature on migration (e.g., Petrou 2007, Polymenakou 2019). The Greek interviewees in Ntelifilippidi (2014) recognize they use it themselves or that they have heard it from other Greeks. Some of them claim it is used jokingly and that “it is not used with bad intentions”, others call it a “bad joke”, while others admit it can be used “to denigrate” or “devalue” others (ibid., 31-35). In attempting to explain what *Αλβανέ* means, the interviewees interpret it as referring to someone who occupies an unskilled job, who works and lives under difficult conditions, who is acting foolishly, who is awkward/creepy when flirting with women, who is cheaply or unfashionably dressed, who is a “person of low quality” (ibid., 34), and who makes mistakes in proper orthography. All these are also themes that have come up in my work with internet memes about Albanians as well. Polymenakou (2019, 24) and Komninaki (2016, 14) also mentions *μοιάζει με Αλβανό* “looks like an Albanian”, *μιλάει σαν Αλβανός* “speaks like an Albanian”; slurs that have arisen due to these interpretations of *Αλβανέ*. Some of the interviewees admit that it is something that is used towards Albanians and Greeks (also, Komninaki 2016) and that it has become commonplace between friends in the same way *μαλάκας* “wanker” has.

The use of *Αλβανέ* as a racial slur towards Albanian pupils has also been observed among kindergarteners (Michail 2009), elementary (Dritsa 2007) and middle school students (Tsiakalou 2007). Sometimes, they are even unprompted, that is, they arise at times when no disputes or arguments among the students are in place (Tsiakalou). Teachers often dismiss the offensive intention of *Αλβανέ* rationalizing it as a joke,

although Tsiakalou (2007) observes that the students towards whom the slur is intended do not interpret it as a joke whatsoever. A Greek teacher in Dritsa's (2007, 52) study explains that "some [Albanian] students have inferiority complex with their origin and whenever someone points it out, they consider it a slur". We see then a first-hand account at renouncing any blame on the part of the Greek society in making 'Albanian' a slur and rationalizing it as a sentiment of shame Albanians have towards their own ethnic identity. A similar situation is found with *Newfie*, a term used to refer to Newfoundlanders in Canada, which outsiders claim is a designation simply indexing regionality, but which Newfoundlanders view as offensive (King & Clarke 2002). Tsiakalou (2007) further notes some crossing among Greek middle schoolers who learn some Albanian "bad" words from their Albanian peers. The crossing is, however, limited to "bad" words which suggest that the Albanian language altogether, and not just *Αλβανέ*, is associated with slurs for them. It is not uncommon for these slurs to become more creative, as reported by one of Petrou's (2007) Albanian interviewees. The Albanian farm worker quoted a Greek man from his local coffee shop (ibid., 413):

*Άσε μας ρε Αλβανέ που μάθατε και εσείς από αυτοκίνητα που μέχρι  
χθες οδηγούσατε μουλάρια.*

"Leave us alone you Albanian; you have the audacity to talk about cars when you have been driving mules till yesterday."

In this quote, *Αλβανέ* is directly associated with lack of modernity, and poverty. The Albanian man cannot contribute to a conversation about cars because Albanians were so poor and backwards that the only means of transport that they could afford were mules.

An example of the slur I encountered on the Greek internet is the one in Figure 1, which was a public comment under a post from a big Greek online outlet featuring an interview with a second-generation Albanian author. Figure 1 further includes a reference to the ethnic stereotypes about Albanians, meaning that of the consumption of beer during breaks in the construction sites where they are typically employed. As can be seen in Figure 2, another public comment from the same post, the author suggests that being defensive towards such phrases is a result of an “issue” that one “carries” and projects to the interlocutor as the latter’s intended meaning.

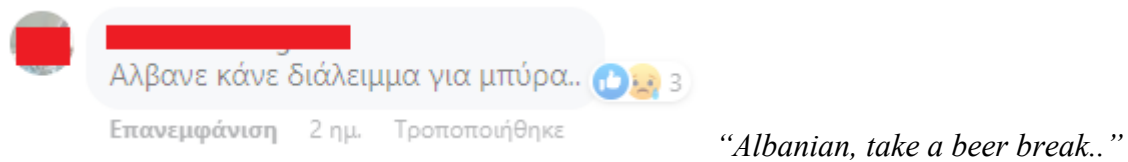


Figure 1: Facebook comment containing *Alvanos* as slur.

*“I hope you get over it one day... Most times we carry the “issue” in our minds and we see it in front of us... something like the joke: go f\* yourself and your jack... Regardless of ethnicity congratulations for any progress anywhere!!!”*

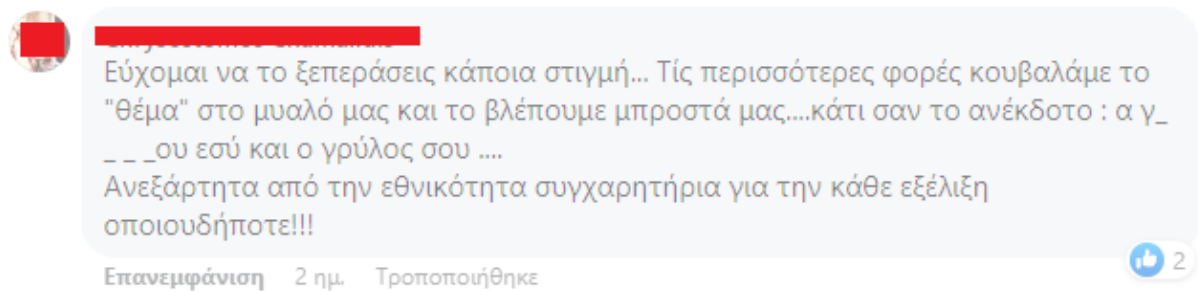


Figure 2: Facebook comment illustrating argument against the slur meaning of *Alvanos*.



‘Albanian’ as an ethnoracial slur does not seem to be new in the Balkans. *Shiptar*, ‘Albanian’ (from *shqiptar*, the word for ‘Albanian’ in the Albanian language), has been used historically by Slavophones to insult ethnic Albanians within Yugoslavia, today mainly Albanians of Kosova, North Macedonia, and Montenegro (Neofotistos 2010, Paca 2019). Neofotistos (2010) traces the history of the term as used among the Albanians of Yugoslavia, how sociopolitical tensions led to the term becoming a slur in the mouths of Slavophones, and how eventually the term was reappropriated with its Slavic stress on the penultimate syllable rather than the Albanian ultimate stress, at least in North Macedonia, as a marker of solidarity among Albanian men. It is not unlikely that similar acts of reappropriation of *Shiptar* have occurred in other countries of former Yugoslavia as well. Neofotistos (2010) also notes that the Albanians of Macedonia employ *Shiptar* with the Slavic stress to refer to the non-modern Albanians of the country, who are juxtaposed to the modern and western-oriented ones. The label *Arvanite*, that refers to Albanian speakers who lived since the Middle Ages in areas of present-day Greece, has also been used as a slur (Stavropoulos 2008). Evidence for this is offered in a 1774 letter by Adamantios Korais, a major figure of Greek Enlightenment, who uses *Arvanitis* to refer to a ‘coarse person without good manners’.

## 2.8 Βρε/ρε [vre/re] interjection/exclamation

As seen in (1), the racial slur is often used by itself. Other times, however, it is used with the interjection particle *ρε* preceding it which makes a brief reference to it worthwhile. *Ρε* is an interjection or exclamation that can be used “with nouns in the vocative case in addressing interlocutors” and “to indicate indignation, often in sentences with offensive content” (LKNOnline, s.v. ρε). In the case of the racial slur, we find *ρε* preceding *Αλβανέ*

in the vocative case marked by the suffix *-ε*. The particle exhibits a rich set of functions in Modern Greek such that *ρε* participates in the organization of the speech event and in the stance-taking of the speaker in relation to the addressee or what is being communicated at the time (Karachaliou 2015). Specifically in narrations, Greek storytellers use *ρε* to mark unexpected events in their stories, to enrich the background information, and to provide subjective evaluations to their narrations. In the ethnoracial slur, for instance, one could argue that *ρε* foregrounds (stereotyped) background information about Albanians (e.g., their criminal record) and those uttering the slur express their stance to the background information invoked. *Ρε* use is not limited to storytellers. Narrative audience members also employ *ρε* in their responses to mark their agreement in the evaluation of the events as surprising or unexpected (ibid.). The interjection is considered to be in variation with *βρε* [vɾe] and a number of other similar and related particles found within Modern Greek and other languages in the Balkan Sprachbund (Joseph 1997). The etymology of these forms seems to lie for many in the vocative of the Ancient Greek adjective [mo:rós] ‘dull, sluggish, foolish, stupid, idiotic’ (ibid.).

## **2.9 Ethnoracial labels and slurs**

Ethnoracial slurs fall under the broader category of taboo words through their function of causing insult (McIntosh 2021b). Uttering a slur involves making the stance of the offender towards the offende clear (ibid.). A well-known reclamation of an ethnoracial slur is that of the *n*-word among Black Americans in the US (Hill 2008). A similar *X*-word euphemization (Bax 2013) is used for the ethnoracial slur *kaffir* in South African English although the slur has not been reclaimed (Deumert 2019). For some scholars,

reclamation of ethnoracial slurs and their association with positive connotations is seen as an option when slurs continue to circulate (Hill 2008). Identifying an ethnoracial slur as a slur comes with finding alternative respectful terms to refer to the ethnoracial groups in question. In Hungary (Gal 2019), but also across most of Europe, there has been a move away from terms such as “gypsy” or “cingan-” in referencing those who identify or are identified as Roma. Even when alternatives are available, slurs do not fall out of use even among well-travelled and educated individuals, even though education and travel are commonly thought as the antidote to racism (Hill 2008 and references therein). The reclamation of ethnoracial slurs does not presuppose universal agreement among members of the ethnoracial group about the use of the term among them or by outsiders (Smitherman 1994). The recipients of ethnoracial slurs often experience them as physically painful (Hill 2008) and their normalization can lead to actual physical attacks and pain. Tirrell (2012) documents how the reference of the Tutsi in Rwanda as ‘snakes’ and ‘lizards’ even contributed to licensing their genocide.

When ethnoracial slurs that are met with opposition in being categorized as slurs, it is often due to the direct implication that those who use ethnoracial slurs are racists (Hill 2008). Being labelled as racist is undesirable and an affront in itself, as racism is associated with lack of education, low intelligence, and backwardness, among other negative traits (ibid.). Oppositions to the reclamation of slurs seem to be grounded on the (false) ideas that (a) the meaning of lexical items is fixed, unchanging, and (b) that language users communicate their personal beliefs intentionally through the lexical items they choose (ibid.). Therefore, the meaning of a term used as a slur cannot change, that is, acquire positive connotations, and by using a slur, language users clearly communicate

their true racist nature. Such views of meaning are contradicted with examples like *tongzhi* in Hong Kong. *Tongzhi* ‘comrade’, a common term of address in communist China, was appropriated and resignified as a solidarity and referential marker among gay rights activists in Hong Kong (Wong 2005). The term was then reappropriated and resignified once again by Hong Kong media outlets to denigrate and undermine the activist groups (Wong 2005). The view that those who use slurs communicate their racist nature draws attention away from systemic institutionalized racism and creates the false impression that racism is only the problem of a small number of biased individuals (Hodges 2015, 2016a). Such views of racism as residing at the individual work towards protecting “white privilege rather than dismantle[ing] racism” (Hodges 2016b). Insistence on the use of ethnoracial slurs is often accompanied by invocations to rights such as free speech and often come from the ethnoracial groups not affected by the slur (ibid.). In other words, individuals in positions of power and privilege will often place their own rights above all else with complete disregard of the rights of others or of those whom the slurs target.

It is not necessary for the production of ethnoracial slurs by the members of the communities that they denigrate to always be a marker of reclamation and positive association of the ethnoracial designation. Indigenous peoples in Bolivia use the racial slur *t’ara* to denigrate other indigenous peoples who do not speak Spanish (Hornberger & Swinehart 2012). Similarly, *Alvane* if uttered by Albanians towards other Albanians does not preclude an intent at offence that has to do with the indexes of *Alvane*. Coupland (1999) categorizes ethnoracial slurs as pejorations which in turn are a strategy for creating the *Other* along with the strategies of homogenization, suppression, displaying

liberalism, and subverting tolerance. McIntosh (2021a) describes how ethnoracial slurs, among others, are employed in army recruit trainings to dehumanize and to rationalize this dehumanization of the “enemy”. Verbal attacks such as “crybabies” and “snowflakes” used by conservative political parties towards their opponents exhibit, according to McIntosh (2020) similar functions as the slurs do in the army trainings, namely making the nation stronger and harder.

### **2.10 Albanian renamings**

Albanian renamings have been noted in the literature on Albanian migration in Greece. This has not really been the case for those who migrated to Italy, another popular migratory destination for Albanians. According to Dritsa (2007), Albanian migrants often seek to baptize and give Greek Christian names to their children to help them integrate within the Greek culture, which places a lot of importance to Greek Orthodoxy. For Michail (2009) and Giannakopoulou (2020) god-parenting relations with Greeks are seen as means to create bonds with the local Greek community and, in turn, to help families establish themselves as local. Re-naming is seen as proof that they are not a threat to the Greek society and that they are willing to assimilate, to adopt elements seen as integral part of a Greek identity, to claim, thus, their belonging (Petrou 2007). At the same time, subjects seek to rid themselves of identifications with Albanianness and the stigma associated with the ethnicity (Giannakopoulou 2020). It should be noted that assimilationist strategies have been employed in Greece for a long time to conceal ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity within the country. For instance, Mackridge (2013) discusses strategies like data distortion that have been used in the Greek space to misleadingly argue for the Greek origin of minority languages such as Arvanitika and Aromanian.

Establishing the origins of these languages as Greek is important in maintaining the illusion of a linguistically and ethnoracially homogenous country (Xydopoulos et al. 2019).

Similar reasons are also to be found about name changes among the first generation of Albanian migrants (Komninaki 2016, Giannakopoulou 2020). The migrants interviewed by Giannakopoulou (2020) assumed new names for their everyday interactions with Greeks, and many did so through baptisms into Greek Orthodoxy. The majority maintained their given Albanian names for their interactions with their family members and Albanian acquaintances. For example, an informant named *Elka* became *Ελλη* [eli] for her Greek employers but remained *Elka* for her family and Albanian circle. Often the motivation was an effort to show alignment with the cultural elements important in their new home. Assuming Greek names was also a way to pass as members of the Greek minority of south Albania which offered certain social and legal advantages within Greece.

Another informant in Giannakopoulou (2020), *Silvana*, reports how her employees decided on her Greek name, *Στεφανία* [stefania] (which she also assumed when she was baptized) by essentially refusing any attempt to call her *Silvana*. Baptisms did not always go together with a full devotion of the subjects to Christianity or a change in their core spiritual beliefs. For Giannakopoulou (2020), accepting the new names was a way for these migrants to minimize their Otherness and the degrees of difference from Greeks. Some highschoolers that she interviewed, that is, members of the second generation, seem to feel much more (positively) strongly about Orthodoxy often presenting their spirituality as a conscious choice rather than something imposed on them. This is

especially true for those who were baptized later in life, that is, not as babies. In light of other cultural information about the Greek context, there is a counter argument to be made about Orthodoxy being imposed on Greek school students. Students are required to attend the morning prayer before classes start every morning, take religious education classes (essentially education into Greek Orthodoxy with minimal education in other religions) for the duration of their elementary and secondary education, and take frequent fieldtrips to their local church during important religious holidays (at least 3 times per school year). This is all in addition to the strong influence Orthodoxy has on all other aspects of life in Greece and runs counter to claims about Greece being a secular country. So strong seem to be these feelings of conscious acceptance of Christianity that one of the teenage informants in Giannakopoulou (2020) claims to have scolded her parents for not questioning their own Islamic faith, which she finds “annoying” (ibid., 161), in search of the true god.

## **2.11 Names and naming practices**

The importance linguists and non-linguists place in names and naming practices becomes immediately obvious when looking at the *Names*, the journal of the American Name Society, and its publication history which today produces four journal issues per year. For instance, the naming practices in the courtroom can have implications about how victims and defendants are viewed by the jury and the subsequent outcome of a trial. In attempting to construct proximity between the jury and the victims, the prosecution, often references the latter by their personal names while avoids them for defendants to create distance (Chaemsaitong 2019). Labels employed to refer to ethnoracial groups and languages also carry significant social meanings. Hadodo (2023) shows that Istanbul

Greeks mobilize the *Romioi*<sup>7</sup> label for their ethnic self-identifications. This constructs an identity which stands in opposition to *Ellines*, a label that is reserved for mainland Greeks. An example from the US illustrating this importance are the names given to the language attributed to Black Americans. At different points in time and in the context of sociopolitical changes various names have been used by linguists and non-linguists alike to refer to this variety or set of varieties (cf. King 2020 and references therein). Names have ranged from Black Street English, Black English, and Ebonics to African American Vernacular English, African American English, and African American Language (AAL), with linguists moving between the last two (or three) in recent years. These naming practices are also revealing of and concurrent to broader social trends and changes. Moreover, each term makes different implications and assumptions about the status of the language. The inclusion of ‘English’ in the name places it among a set of English varieties and highlights its relationship to said varieties. Adding ‘language’ in the name highlights the complexity of AAL and is used to encompass all linguistic varieties used by Black Americans, including Gullah (a creole spoken by Black Americans on the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina). Both ‘English’ and ‘language’, moreover, contribute to a sense of legitimacy to the language which is especially important for the stigmatized languages of marginalized or minoritized groups. Equally complex has also been the history of the terms to refer to Black Americans (e.g., Baugh 1991). Research shows that white Americans react differently to racial labels such as Black vs. African American such that they produce more negative evaluations of ‘Black’ compared to ‘African American’ (Hall et al. 2015).

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<sup>7</sup> Singular: *Romios*; the resident of the eastern Roman empire, which later was used to refer to the Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman empire.



How people pronounce various names can be also informative. For instance, studies have shown that the pronunciation of the second vowel in ‘Iraq’ can be revealing of political affiliation. That is, liberals seem to have a preference for an [a:] production while conservatives for [æ] (Hall-Lew et al. 2010). Some degree of conservatism and attachment to past states can also be inferred from opting for a definite article with countries that do not typically receive one in English. Such examples include *the Ukraine* and *the Congo*, which reflect a period when these terms referred respectively to a region and a river respectively and not countries (Motschenbacher 2020).

The (innovative) use of orthography and script to index identity, stance, or differentiation has been noted elsewhere (Jaffe et al. 2012, and references therein). For instance, looking at Montenegrin tweets, Patrick (2022) found that recently introduced graphemes such as <ś> index a pro-Montenegrin stance as opposed to <s> which indexes a more pro-Serbian political stance. In Galicia, different spellings of a major city, namely ‘La Coruña’, ‘A Coruña’, and ‘A Corunha’ can index ideologies on politics, belonging and autonomy as well as language ideologies (Screti 2018). In Czechia, proposals to change the Czech name of the river *Olše* to *Olza* to reflect common pronunciation have been met with opposition (Mácha 2020). This opposition is related to a fear that *Olza* sounds Polish<sup>8</sup> and might result in compromising the integrity of the region and consequently of the state (ibid.). In German, non-standard orthography sets the communicative norm of online instant messaging among adolescents (Busch 2022). Chun (2013) suggests that online social platforms can become the venues where English non-standard grammatical conventions get associated with particular ethnoracial US groups

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<sup>8</sup> The river runs in the border between Poland and the Czech Republic.

and where these get disseminated with the rest of the world also participating in those platforms. Dahlberg-Dodd (2020) notes script choice in Japanese manga as indexical of their intended audience and the desire of the creators to expand their readership beyond young women.

A lot of research has been dedicated to the study of usernames in computer mediated communication (see Hämäläinen 2022 for a review and categorization). Account holders in WeChat use the usernames to communicate personal (e.g., ambitions, values) and cultural information as well as to refashion and reimagine their identities in the online space (Xu et al. 2020). Looking at the username choice of adolescents in Sweden, Aldrin (2019), similarly notes that some of the members in their sample make choices based on the social image they want to claim for themselves. Adolescents who opt for a username that reflects their offline presence are not infrequent and often explain this practice as an act of maturity (ibid.). In Moroccan online chatrooms, username choices reflect the desire to express identities that range between local Muslim to less local cosmopolitan ones (Hassa 2012).

The adoption of Anglo names by Asian learners of English or Asian students, with the exclusion of those of Japanese origin (Heffernan 2010), who study in English-speaking programs has already been noted in the literature. Often these Anglo names have been given by the English teachers themselves (Chen 2021). Adopting a non-Chinese name functions as a marker of cosmopolitanism and modernity for Chinese college students (Sercombe et al. 2014). Self-chosen names allow individuals to express aspects of their identity and name-bearers also claim that they avoid in this way mispronunciations of their original names by those not familiar with Asian names (Chen

2021). The opposite process, namely, the adoption of Asian names by non-Asian students studying abroad, is not common for reasons which probably have to do with avoidance of cultural appropriation (Unser-Schultz 2014).

Research on names has also examined name choices among married women. Retaining their family last name, hyphenating, or changing a last name seems to be indicative of various factors. In Hawaii, it was indicative of being on the higher scale of income range for women who retained their last name (MacEacheron 2020) while at the same time, the older women got at the time of marriage, the less likely they were to change their last names (MacEacheron 2011). Women choosing to have their marriages take place as civil ceremonies as opposed to religious ones were also less likely to adopt the last name of their spouse suggesting that religiousness can be a major factor determining last name retention among women (Abel & Kruger 2011).

Personal name changes have also been studied in relation to identity construction as they are “intimate part[s] of selfhood” (Bucholtz 2016, 284). For instance, renamings allow transgender and gender-nonconforming adults to affirm their gender identities (Obasi 2019). If identities are conceived as multiple and fluid, name changes are seen as an overt manifestation of that plasticity (Emmelhainz 2012). Personal name changes often accompany a process of becoming more aware of the ethnic or racial associations a name carries (Xu 2020). The close tie between personal names and subject identity becomes often explicit in the names of children and especially when those reflect parents’ hopes or dreams for their offspring (Gao 2011). Maintaining a name with close cultural links is often seen as a means of maintaining the culture alive (Lombard 2011). Imposed renamings or name adaptations may result in an indexical bleaching or deracialization of

ethnoracially marked names, that is, an erasure of the ethnic/racial identities indexed by the names (Bucholtz 2016). In the US, personal names with Anglo and Hispanic pronunciations can carry various social meanings such as the participation of the name holders in multiple cultures and their connection to their ancestors (Enríquez Duque 2023). In Sweden, the prosody accompanying the announcement of non-Swedish names in parliament has been associated with their presentation as non-canonical (Svensson 2024). According to Svensson (2024) this non-canonical quality extends to the conceptualization of the ethnoracial groups of which these names are canonical as not equal to Swedes.

Institutionally imposed personal and family name changes or adaptations have been used by many nation-states with assimilationist policies. For instance, Indian boarding schools in the US systematically imposed English names to Indian children (Bureau of Indian Affairs 2022). Another such example were Greeks in modern Turkey who were required to change their ‘son of’ last name suffixes with the corresponding Turkish *-oğlu* (Davies & Dubinsky 2018). In the US the names of many immigrant groups were Anglicized on the basis of being long or causing production difficulties (Hill 2008). In Canada, in adherence with European naming practices, Project Surname gave, or rather imposed, Anglo last names to Inuit peoples resulting often in dual names one of which individuals used in their dealings with then government and one they were known by in their communities by another (Scott et al. 2002). The majority of personal name changes in France are found among people of migrant origin (Coulmont 2014) which speaks of the pressure migrants feel to assimilate. The Ukrainianization of their Russian personal names and place names in Ukraine is seen by Russian-speaking Ukrainians as leading to

a loss of their cultural identity (Knoblock 2019). Shift towards the naming practices of another cultural group is also observed in cases where an otherwise minority group and people, is the majority in a restricted geographical area. Such is the case with a shift towards Basque names in a Spanish-speaking province of the Basque Country after the end of the Franco dictatorship in Spain and a move towards the promotion of linguistic diversity in the country (Fernandez 2018).

In the US, Latinx-origin names generally have given way to Anglo names among the second and third generations of Latinx communities (Parada 2016). Parada (2016) also notes a strategy among Latinx parents to often opt for names with Latinx and Anglo counterparts as way of balancing between cultural heritage and integration. In another study, Ragone (2012) notes the preference within a Pennsylvanian Latinx community for single last names over double Latinx-typical last names indicating accommodation to Anglo practices in the US. In contrast, maintenance of heritage naming practices is often used as a means of gaining visibility within larger societal structures (Shanmuganathan et al. 2021). In Canada, French Canadian last names were adapted to Anglo names as French Canadians moved to majority English-speaking parts of the country (Picard 2012). In Germany, the adoption of heritage or German names by migrants seems to be related to the degree of perceived cultural closeness. Migrants who came from cultural backgrounds that were different from that of the host country (e.g., different religion, typologically different language) were more likely to choose heritage names for their children (Gerhards & Tuppat 2021). On the other hand, migrants with similar cultural background chose more German names for their children as there was a larger pool of common names to choose from (ibid.). Among Indian South Africans (ISAs) the

westernization of first names seems to be driven to a large extent by religion (Mesthrie 2021). “The continuing high impact of religion” upon Muslim ISAs reinforces the use of traditional names (ibid., 24). For Hindu ISAs, whether converted to Christianity or not, western names index their alignment with “upper-class or successful, globalized” ideals (ibid., 24). Diasporic Indian identity is still preserved through the preservation of the Indian family names.

How a name is presented could affect how that person is socially evaluated and could even affect one’s chances in securing employment. British family names, for instance, underwent stress adaptations through orthography or stress placement in their aspirations for upwards social mobility (Trudgill 2024). Through experimental methods, Gueguen (2017) found that the inclusion or omission of the ‘de’ nobiliary article in front of a last name in French CVs affected the perception of employability of job candidates. Names with *de* ‘of’, especially for women, were perceived as more employable than those without the particle (ibid.). Moreover, how popular a given name is can also affect one’s chances at the job market (Pascual et al. 2015). When looking at the effects of ethnically other-marked names compared to local names in teacher’s evaluations of student work, no statistically significant effect has been found (Nick 2017, Aldrin 2017). From the perspective of the students, college course syllabi are evaluated as more interesting when the name of the instructor includes *professor* or *Dr.* than just titles such as *Ms.* or *Mr.* (Wright 2013). Moreover, evaluations are affected by the gender of the instructor with syllabi containing male address titles receiving more positive evaluations than those with female titles (ibid.). Correlations have been noted in the US between names and the socioeconomic and ethnoracial background of the families in which name-

bearers are born (Levitt & Dubner 2020). Ethnoracial information indexed by a name can also affect one's chances at the job market. Bertrand & Mullainathan (2004) found that job applicants with Black names received significantly fewer call-backs from employers than white names did regardless of discipline or company size. This effect was maintained for competitive resumes with Black names exhibiting a smaller increase in callbacks compared to white names. The bias against Black names persists among large employing companies in the US which also show discrimination against women in the job market (Kline et al. 2022). Speech variety is another factor which can affect job applicant's chances in the hiring process. Levon et al. (2021) found that speakers of southern British English varieties are evaluated as less hireable than speakers of northern varieties or Received Pronunciation. These evaluations are mediated by the age and the origin of the listening subjects. Those over 45 years old and those from the south evaluated southern speakers as less hireable, while there was no accent effect for those who made efforts to be perceived as biased individuals (ibid.). Similar findings are observed in Toronto where L2 English speakers are discriminated against in the hiring process (Jackson & Denis 2024). Additionally, Purnell et al. (1999) found discrimination in the housing market for those who speak English varieties that are associated with non-hegemonic ethnoracial groups. These are findings that persist today (Wright 2023). We can see, then, by the above that possession of legitimate, prestigious varieties, and prestigious or hegemonic names constitute linguistic capital (Bourdieu 1977) and can afford, or have to ability to afford, individuals social and economic capital or even fair access to basic human needs. Conversely, lack of linguistic capital precludes or has the ability to preclude from these or other forms of capital.

## 2.12 Production, perception, and evaluation of variation

Variationist studies have convincingly shown that language variation is often socially stratified (e.g., Labov 1963, 1966) and that linguistic variants or even utterances (Noy 2023) can reveal social identities and orientations. More recently t-tapping has been shown to be common more among Standard Southern British English speakers who attended private schools and among boys in opposition to girls and to those who attended public schools (Alderton 2022). It is suggested that this variation is motivated by performances of authority and informality due to the association of the tap (as opposed to t-glottalization) “with American English and subsequently with its use in popular broadcasting” (ibid., 295). In Chicago, participation in the North Cities Vowel Shift has been ideologically connected with white Catholics. Jewish Chicagoans are metalinguistically associated with New York City English. Acoustic analysis of the latter’s vowel productions, however, show that vowel differences are not related to religion, but to neighborhood (Benheim & D’Onofrio 2023). Those speakers who live in lower socioeconomic status neighborhoods exhibit local Chicago features that are similar to those produced by Catholic Chicagoans. Such findings also suggest that metalinguistic comments, though informative, do not always match speakers’ productions. With Multicultural London English replacing Cockney as the ideologized London variety, Cockney linguistic features have emerged in the speech of speakers in Essex. These features seem to have been re-enregistered as characteristic of a local Essex identity rather than of a Cockney one (Cole & Evans 2021). Looking at variation in the ING productions (velar vs. alveolar nasal coda) of political candidates in rallies, D’Onofrio and Eckert (2022) show that candidates stylistically manipulate the presence or absence



of variability to index various political qualities. For instance, Obama's variation indexes his appropriateness for the role as well as relatability. The absence of variation in McCain does not entail the absence of these qualities, but rather is indexical of qualities such as authenticity and straight-forwardness. In an industrial UK city, h-dropping in words such as *home* is socially structured further than just its previous association to blue-collar workers. Those occupying manual positions in the pottery industry exhibit much more h-dropping than those occupying non-manual positions that involve "interaction with senior management" (Leach 2021, 369). The meaning of linguistic variables is not fixed but is shifting based on the context in which they are found. For instance, Lin & Chan (2022) found that the use of Standard Mandarin features of sibilant rhotacization by a Taiwanese singer can index tradition or a disregard for conventions in different song genres. This research is in line with a view of identity or forms of identity, including of ethnoracial identity, as emergent through linguistic practices (among others) rather than preexisting (Bucholtz & Hall 2005).

Work on speaker evaluation has shown that listeners notice variation in speech and are able to deduce various information about the people who produce that speech. For instance, listeners can make informed guesses about where speakers were raised (e.g., Clopper & Pisoni 2004). People also attribute meaning to linguistic variants and make social judgments about the people who produce those variants. For example, speakers who produce velar or alveolar variants of the English ING variable are evaluated as more or less strong, urban, or gay (Campbell-Kibler 2007). Elsewhere, variation in vowel backness, intonation, and stop burst is associated with speaker's positive or negative orientation towards other people (D'Onofrio & Eckert 2021). Listeners do not only react

differently in terms of the social evaluation of linguistic stimuli. Social information about the identity of the speakers also seems to have cognitive effects on listeners. For instance, Clapp et al. (2023) show that subjects performed better in a word memory task when they heard white, female voices than when they heard Black or male voices.

Outside of the English-speaking world, variation in speech has similarly been associated as indexing various social information or performing various social functions. Speakers of the Osaka dialect of Japanese have been positively associated with masculinity as well as affectionate fatherhood (King et al. 2022). At the same time, they have been negatively associated with aggression and “lower working class” origins (ibid., 305). In Andalusia speakers who produce a distinction between [s] and [θ], in line with broader Castilian Spanish distinctions are perceived more favorably than those who merge the two consonants to [s], in line with the local Andalusian variety (Regan 2022). This data is complicated by the gender of the speakers with women who distinguish between the consonants being evaluated as “more urban and formal” (ibid. 500) than men who produced the distinction. While women with the merger are judged as “lower status, less urban, and less formal” (ibid. 500) than men who merged. Social evaluations of linguistic variables can be mediated by the listeners’ perceived linguistic similarity to speakers. For instance, those speakers who are evaluated more similar to listeners are also evaluated higher in qualities such as status and friendliness (Sim 2023). Welker (2024) shows that widespread linguistic variants can acquire local social meanings as opposed to more widespread meanings due to contact with other languages. Due to contact with Zapotec, s-lenition in Juchitán Spanish in Mexico is perceived as an index of speaking Zapotec and by extension of femininity (ibid.).

Listeners also make judgments about people whom they perceive as native or non-native speakers of a language. L2 speakers are evaluated, for instance, as less credible (Lev-Ari & Keysar 2010). These evaluations do not arise due to the association with foreignness that their L2 speaker status gives them, but due to the processing effort L2 speakers add to listeners compared to L1 speakers (ibid.). Ip & Papafragou (2023) challenge this explanation for the decreased perceptions of credibility for L2 speakers arguing instead that listeners recognize the limited language proficiency of L2 speakers. Therefore, listeners do not expect L2 speakers to be fully transparent in their utterances and, thus, they cannot be fully credible in what they communicate (ibid.).

In evaluating speech listeners also pay attention to other information about the speakers that are available about them, beyond their linguistic cues. Famously, Rubin (1992) showed that the racial information listeners have about speakers can affect their accentedness perceptions even when speakers are producing L1 English. Ethnoracial information can also modulate or accentuate perceptions of accentedness for L2 speakers as well. Listeners evaluated Korean L2 English speakers as equally accented in trials where listeners were presented with audio and audiovisual stimuli from the speakers (Gnevshva 2018). However, when listeners stimuli for German L2 English speakers, they rated the audiovisual stimuli as much more accented (and equal to the Korean L2 speakers) than just the audio stimuli. The finding suggested that participants were experiencing an expectation mismatch seeing a white person, whom they expect to be unaccented, and, at the same time, hearing L2 speech from them. This mismatch causes the accentedness evaluations to rise significantly. When making social judgements listeners will take into consideration the speech of persons even when explicitly told not

to evaluate based on the speech (Campbell-Kibler 2021). L1 vs. L2 speech seem also to be the determining factor in judgements of foreignness or localness when raters are presented with other ethnoracial information about speakers. For example, regardless of looking at Black or white presented persons, Italian listeners will evaluate Italianness on the basis of whether those persons are paired with L1 or L2 Italian (Paladino & Mazurega 2020). In other words, when presented with mismatched information, native speech and ideologically non-native persons or non-native speech and ideological native persons, raters rely on the speech they hear in order to make ethnoracial categorizations (ibid.).

There has been a growing body of research showing that L2 speech is evaluated more favorably than L1 speech, contrary to predictions to the opposite. These predictions rely on nationalist sentiment and standard language ideologies that favor hegemonic, standard varieties over divergence from them. Along these lines, L2 Swedish was evaluated more favorably than L1 Swedish by teachers in training (Deutschman et al. 2023). The authors attribute this to a ‘shifting standards effects’ whereby prospective teachers lower their standards about what “good” Swedish sounds like for non-native speakers. As a result, they evaluate L2 efforts more positively than those coming from native users. Similarly, Turkish-presenting L1 German speakers are evaluated as most warm and competent compared to Turkish-presenting L2 German speakers, German-presenting L1 German speakers, and German-presenting L2 German speakers (Hansen et al. 2017a). This positive evaluation of the mismatch between ethnoracial presentation and speech was present regardless of additional processing effort imposed on listeners which was evident through the longer reaction times (Hansen et al. 2017b). Ip & Papafragou

(2023) also found that L2 English speakers were evaluated as more trustworthy than L1 speakers in contexts where they did not provide enough information about a situation. The trustworthiness evaluations are attributed to the listeners understanding that L2 speakers lack the linguistic resources which would allow them to be more informative compared to the L1 speakers who do not have such an excuse and their underinformativeness could be attributed to deception (ibid.).

Variation and sets of linguistic variants have the potential to be associated with specific language users. With reference to Received Pronunciation, Agha (2003, 231), described the process of enregisterment, whereby “a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms”. Since then, Johnston (2009) has used the concept to discuss the enregisterment of Pittsburghese via things such as the commodification of clothing with printed words with non-standard spelling which reflect Pittsburgh pronunciation (e.g., *dahntahn* ‘downtown’). More recently Dickinson (2023, 231) discusses how internet memes “enregister mixed code, cultural artifacts, and Spanish speaking parents” as characteristic of Latinx youth in the US. Pinta (2023) discusses the enregisterment of Guarani loanwords in Correntino Spanish and their power to index local characterological features such as the Correntino womanizer or the non-modern Correntino as opposed to Argentines elsewhere. Karatsareas (2020) traces the process of enregisterment and then re-enregisterment of Cypriot Greek in the UK. Initially, Cypriot Greek variants such as [tʃe] ‘and’ had been enregistered as ‘village talk’ as opposed to the urban SMG [ce]. In recent years and with the increase of SMG speakers in the UK, Cypriot Greek has been re-enregistered among Cypriot youth as slang. Hadodo (2023) shows how Istanbul Greeks use enregistered

Istanbul Greek features such as [akuyo] ‘I hear’ (vs. SMG [akuo]) to construct their distinct identities as *Romioi*<sup>9</sup> which stands in opposition to SMG-speaking *Ellines* of mainland Greece. Similarly, Babel (2018) discusses terms such as ‘cholita’ and ‘señorita’ used in Andean Spanish to refer to local women. These terms are constructed in opposition to each based on their ideological associations with styles of dress (pollera vs. straight skirt/pants) and language (Quechua vs. Spanish).

### **2.13 Race, ethnicity, and language**

Growing interest in raciolinguistics and the study of how language production and perception inform our understanding of ethnoracial categories and how our understandings of ethnoracial categories inform language production and perception (e.g., Alim et al. 2016; Rosa 2019, Rosa & Flores 2017). For instance, Chun (2016) discusses how expressions such as the onomatopoeic mimicry *ching-chong* is used by a young white woman to racially Other Asians in the US. The racialization and Othering of Asians in Lo (2016) extended to their labeling as ‘newcomers’ in a Los Angeles suburb regardless of the historical presence of Asians in the area that predated that of many white residents who considered themselves local. Along this literature Alim (2016) discusses how he was racialized or ethnoracially categorized based on his appearance and linguistic repertoire, over the course of five days in nine distinct ways. He proposes the ‘transracial subject’ who is “doing and undoing race” by rejecting or claiming racializations (ibid. 47). Transracialization becomes a means to disrupt our conceptions of the relationship between language and race, that is, our raciolinguistic expectations (ibid., 47). This

approach relies to a great extent on racialization happening through the evaluation of external physical characteristics despite of actual language production (Sterk 2023). It is not clear how ethnoracial disruption through the transracial subject would work outside situations where racial information is visibly blurry as in the situations described by Alim. The transracial act of a Chinese American Youtuber who performed AAL in his YouTube did not disrupt racial conceptions (Chun 2013). The Youtuber utilizes features in his speech such as [ai] monophthongization, alveolar nasals in ING, *for rizzles*, and *what's good y'all* which are ideologically linked to Blackness. It was obvious to his audience via their comments that they interpreted his performance as Blackness. In doing so, he performs a Blackness that is linked to hypermasculinity and gang activity. The performance does nothing to disrupt race in the US context. On the contrary, it seemed to reinforce stereotypes about Black men (ibid.). In discussing the linguistic practices of Latinxs in the US, Rosa (2016a), notes how racialized standard language ideologies inform ideologies about who is and who is not a speaker of a language. This results in non-standard language speakers often being framed as languageless, a state of being linguistically deficient. Besides the everyday psychological effects this has on individuals who are racialized as languageless, these ideologies also have broader effects on issues such as language education policies. In the same context, racialized bodies, that is, bodies that are ethnoracially categorized in certain ways, are seen as linguistically deficient even when they produce the hegemonic or standard varieties that are expected of them in certain contexts (Flores and Rosa 2015).

Out of this work has emerged the concept of converse racialization (Mena & García 2021) or deracialization, as discussed by Bucholtz (2016) with reference to the loss of

ethnoracial information that occurs with the anglicization of Latinx names in the US. This work itself draws from the concept of indexical bleaching proposed by Squires (2014), which, in turn, builds on semantic bleaching. While semantic bleaching describes the loss of the meaning of a lexical item when it acquires a grammatical function, indexical bleaching describes the process whereby the meaning of a lexical item or phrase remains the same, but the item undergoes loss of the original indexical associations it carried. This dissertation draws from these concepts, extends, and challenges them when discussing ethnicization as opposed to racialization although the latter has been discussed as encompassing the former.



### **Chapter 3. Albanians and the Features of their L2 Greek in Greek Internet Memes**

In this chapter I discuss a corpus of Greek internet memes that target Albanian migrants and their L2 Greek. I describe how the corpus was compiled and analyzed, the L2 Greek that is attributed to migrants, and how these linguistic features are used to racialize the migrants themselves.

#### **3.1 Internet meme corpus and analysis**

For part of this study, I collected a set of internet memes that target the way Albanians speak Modern Greek. This resulted in a corpus of 102 memes that were collected between 2020 and 2022 from various websites and social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. The search was not automated but was done by hand through various Google and platform-internal searches. Occasionally, memes were provided by family and friends who were aware of this project. *Αλβανός* [alvanos] ‘Albanian’, *Αλβανία* [alvania] ‘Albania’, as well as their Greeklish<sup>10</sup> transliterations *Alvanos* and *Alvania* respectively, were used as search keywords. The searches were meant to identify relevant memes or pages with relevant content. A criterion for inclusion in the corpus was the presence of the keywords in the meme text itself or in the accompanying hashtag, caption, or comment. This was done to ensure that the meme at hand targeted the speech of Albanians and not that of other ethnic groups with a presence in Greece.

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<sup>10</sup> Greeklish refers to a writing system mainly used in computer-mediated communication that makes use of English orthography to represent Greek lexical items (see Mouresiotti & Terkourafi 2021).

For the analysis of the data, each meme was tagged in 3 different ways. First, memes were tagged for the Albanian Greek linguistic features attributed to the speech of Albanians via the presence of non-Greek and non-standard orthographic features. Second, the memes were tagged for the frequent lexical items and phrases attributed to the speech of Albanians. Third, they were tagged according to the themes that emerged on the construction of the Albanian migrant via a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2022) of the text content and/or accompanying images.

## **3.2 Albanian L2 Greek**

### *3.2.1 Phonological features*

Starting with the L2 phonological features attributed to Albanians (Table 1) it is evident that the migrants' Albanian Greek is framed as an L2 or learner variety which exhibits imposition (van Coetsem 1988) from the first language (L1) of the imagined language producers; that is, it exhibits imposition from Albanian. For instance, the absence in Albanian of the Standard Modern Greek (SMG) voiceless and voiced velar and palatal fricatives triggers their phonological adaptation in Albanian Greek to the respective plosives [k] and [g]. Such adaptation strategies are expected as the latter are plosives which do exist in Albanian and have a similar place of articulation and voicing quality as the SMG fricatives.

However, the phonological adaptation strategies are not so neat when we look at SMG phones such as [ð], [θ], and [v] which also get phonologically adapted in Albanian Greek into phones with similar place of articulation and voicing, namely, [d], [t], and [b] respectively. The confounding factor here is that [ð], [θ], and [v] are part of both the

Greek sound system and the Albanian sound system. This congruence would give no motivation to L2 Greek speakers to adapt these sounds in their L2 since these sounds are already present in their L1 and production difficulty is not at issue. Moreover, if we look particularly at the SMG voiceless palatal fricative [ç], which occurs in SMG before front vowels and the semi-vowel [j] (Arvaniti 2007), we find that the adaptation strategies are much more complex than a single straightforward adaptation. SMG [ç] is found in Albanian Greek as a velar plosive [k], palatal affricate [c̟ç], palatal approximant [j], and post-alveolar fricative [ʃ], and there does not seem to be a clear motivation or phonetic basis for this variation. These last two findings, namely, the unmotivated adaptation of phones that exist in both Albanian and Greek and the unmotivated variation in adaptation of certain phones, suggest, perhaps unsurprisingly, that what we find in internet memes is not an authentic Albanian L2 Greek.

SMG	Albanian Greek
x/ç	k
ɣ/j	g
ð	d
θ	t
v	
c/ç	c̟ç
j/ç	j
s/ç	ʃ

Table 1: Phonological features of Albanian Greek juxtaposed with the corresponding Standard Modern Greek (SMG) features.

Figure 3 illustrates the number of times each of the phonological features attributed to Albanian Greek occurred in the corpus in descending order. The bottom four bars

represent the number of occurrences for the Albanian Greek grammatical features. The most frequently occurring phonological feature is [k] (n=24) which, as mentioned earlier, substitutes for the SMG voiceless velar [x] and palatal [ç] fricatives. Another frequently occurring phonological feature (n=13) of Albanian Greek is the voiceless palatal affricate [ç̥] (represented orthographically in the memes as <q>) which substitutes for the SMG voiceless palatal fricative [ç] and voiceless palatal stop [c]. Other phonological features of Albanian Greek include non-standard Greek word stress placement and non-standard Greek vowel choice.

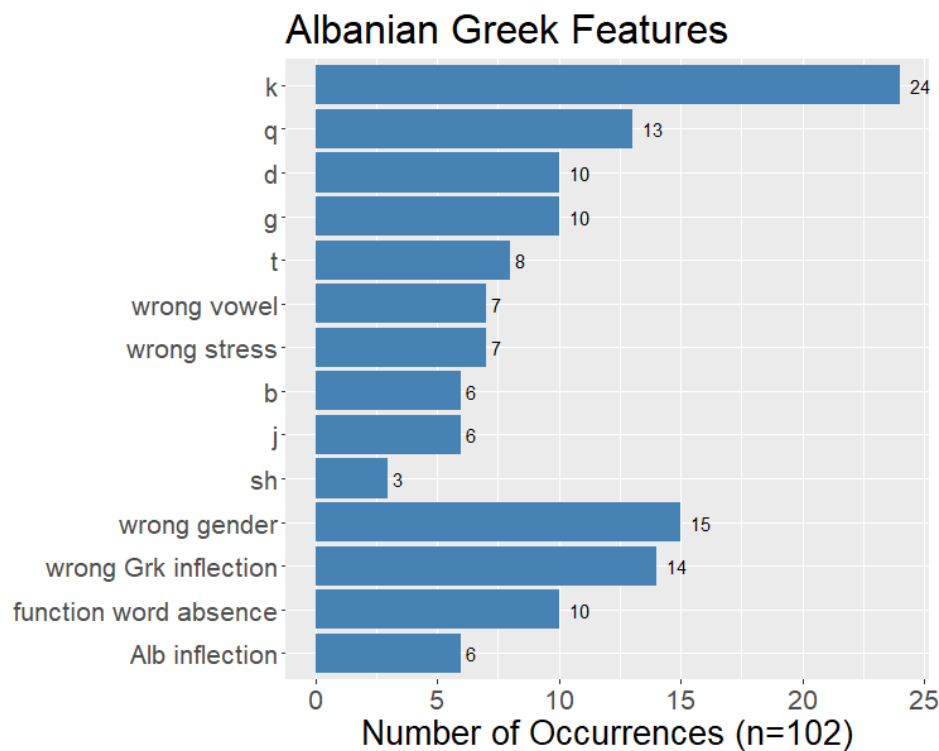


Figure 3: Number of occurrences for each Albanian Greek feature.

### 3.2.2 Grammatical features

In addition to the phonological features, a few grammatical features emerge for Albanian Greek. These include non-standard grammatical gender marking, non-standard Greek inflectional marking, the adoption of Albanian inflectional marking, and absence of function words. Table 2 includes examples of each of these grammatical features and in Figure 3 includes the number of memes in which these features occur. The grammatical feature with the highest frequency (n=15) was the non-standard grammatical gender marking of Greek nouns often manifesting as a lack of gender agreement between a noun and its article, which is required in Greek. For example, one of the memes contains the noun phrase *τη κορτάρι* [ti kortari] “the.FEM grass.NEU”. ‘Grass’ is grammatically neuter in Greek, and it requires the neuter definite article *το* [to]. However, in the meme the noun and its article do not agree in grammatical gender as ‘grass’ is preceded by *τη* [ti] which is marked for feminine grammatical gender.

An almost equal number of times (n=14), non-standard Greek inflectional marking is attributed to the Greek of Albanian migrants in the memes. For example, one of the memes contains the noun phrase *ο παπαγάλο* [o.NOM papagalos.ACC] “the parrot” where the masculine article *ο* [o] is in the nominative case and the accompanying noun is in the accusative case producing a non-standard marking which lacks agreement in case between the noun and its preceding article. *ο παπαγάλος* [o papagalos] would be the standard form, with the final -s on ‘parrot’ marking it for nominative case which agrees with the nominative case of its article.

Imposition from the L1 on the L2, that is from Albanian onto Greek, becomes evident beyond the phonology. At the level of the grammar, it manifests as imposition of Albanian inflectional marking on Greek lexemes contained within Greek frames (n=6).

For example, one of the memes contains *σπανακοπιτ* [spanakopit] instead of the standard *σπανακόπιτα* [spanakopita] ‘spinach pie’. *Σπανακοπιτ* is missing the final *-α* [a] vowel. The absence of the vowel results in a form that is similar to the indefinite form of nouns in Albanian. The indefinite form is further supported by the fact that this lexical item occurs as an item in a list of nouns which would occur in their indefinite form in Albanian. The standard Greek [a] (which does not have a distinction between definite and indefinite forms of nouns) at the end of the noun would result in the definite form of ‘spinach pie’.

Finally, Albanian Greek is characterized by the absence of function words that would otherwise be present in SMG (n=10). In the phrase *έσβησα φωτιά* [ezvisa fotça] “I put out the fire”, the article *την* [tin] ‘the.FEM.ACC’ which agrees with the feminine noun ‘fire’, is absent although it is obligatory in Greek for the sentence to be grammatical. Similarly, in Meme 2, the future marker *θα* [θa] “will” is absent before *σε μακαιρώσω* [se maceroso] “I [will] stab you”. The intended future tense is still evident by the inflection *-σω* [-so] of the verb even with the absence of *θα*.

<b>Grammatical feature</b>	<b>Non-standard example from meme</b>	<b>Standard Greek form</b>
non-standard grammatical gender marking	τη κορτάρι [ti kortari] the.FEM grass.NEU	το κορτάρι [to kortari] the.NEU grass.NEU
non-standard Greek inflectional marking	ο παπαγάλο [o papayalo] the.NOM parrot.ACC	ο παπαγάλος [o papayalos] the.NOM parrot.NOM
adoption of Albanian inflectional marking	σπανακοπιτ [spanakopit] Indefinite from by dropping -α [a] suffix	σπανακόπιτα [spanakopita] Nominative -α [a]; no in/definite distinction in SMG
absence of function words	έσβησα φωτιά [ezvisa fotça] put out fire	έσβησα την φωτιά [ezvisa tin fotça] put out the fire

Table 2: Grammatical features of Albanian Greek with examples from the memes and corresponding SMG forms.

### 3.2.3 Lexical features

In terms of the lexical features attributed to the Greek of Albanians, by far the most frequently occurring one (n=20) is the Albanian *qifsha* “fuck” (Table 3). Others include *ça bën* [tʃa bən] “what’s up” and the discourse markers *moj* “you” and *mor* “you” addressed to women and men respectively. Albanian lexical items and phrases are not the only ones that attributed to the speech of Albanians as a number of Greek words are too, whether carrying the phonological features described above or not. For instance, in the data, the word for ‘cousin’ occurs both as SMG [ksaðerfo] and as [ksaderfo], where there is (unmotivated) phonological adaptation of the SMG [ð] to [d] in Albanian Greek. Phonological adaptations of these frequent lexical items are not consistent. *Μαχαίρ-*

[maçer-] “knife” occurs in Albanian Greek as [maker-] and elsewhere as [mafer-] with the palatal fricative [ç] adapted as [k] and [ʃ] in different memes and with no apparent motivation for the variation in the adaptation strategy.

These lexical items are not accidental as they seem to be related to the stereotypes about Albanian migrants (see also Chapter 2). The Albanian *fuck* is related to the stereotype of Albanians as foul-mouthed and lacking the knowledge of civilized conversation. Similarly, *a* ‘huh’ (n=3) and the informal discourse markers *moj/mor* ‘you’ are related to the use of informal, non-sophisticated speech. *Ti kitas a* ‘what are you looking at, huh’ (n=3), *makeri* ‘knife’ (n=3) are related to the stereotype of Albanians as violent and aggressive individuals who will not hesitate to stab you with a knife if you look at them in the wrong way. Relatedly, *ksaderfo* ‘cousin’ (n=9) refers to the idea that despite Albanians’ violent predisposition, they will not engage in a physical altercation alone but will do so only with additional help from close family members such as their cousins. The frequency with which these lexical items are attributed to the speech of Albanians suggests that they are emblematic of Albanian Greek. *Korio* ‘village’ (n=6) relates to the idea of Albanians always being as rural even if they come from Albanian urban centers and the fact that they were often employed in Greece in agriculture, an occupation which is attached to rural areas. Similarly, employment in agriculture in rural areas and gardening in urban areas could explain the frequency of *kortari* ‘grass’ (n=6). ‘Grass’ could alternatively be related to the stereotype of Albanians as marijuana cultivators and distributors in the Balkans. The frequency with which these lexical items are attributed to the speech of Albanians suggests that they are emblematic of Albanian Greek.



<b>Frequent words/phrases</b>	<b>Gloss</b>	<b>Corresponding SMG words/phrases</b>	<b>Number of occurrences</b>
qifsha	fuck	γαμώ	20
ksaderfo	cousin	ξάδερφο	9
korio	village	χωριό	6
kortari	grass	χορτάρι	6
makeri	knife	μαχαίρι	3
ti kitas a	What are you looking at, huh?	Τι κοιτάς, ε;	3
a	huh	Ε;	3
merokamato	day's wage	μεροκάματο	3
ça bën	what's up	Τι κάνεις;	3
moj/mor	you (colloquial)	μωρέ/μωρή	3
tiropita	cheese pie	τυρόπιτα	3

Table 3: Lexical features of Albanian Greek with glosses and number of occurrences in the corpus.

### 3.3 Construction of Albanian migrants

Turning to the themes that emerged in the construction of the Albanian migrant (Figure 4) we notice that by far the most frequent one is the idea that Albanians are unable to produce SMG (n=65). Immediately, then, the relationship between non-SMG and Albanianess is created. Language difference, especially the failure to produce prestigious variants such as the standard variants, is mobilized to highlight ethnic difference; they are not like us because they do not speak like us. SMG can only be successfully produced by Greeks.

Focusing on the themes that occur more than 10 times in the meme corpus, Albanians are constructed as ‘uncivilized’ (n=37) individuals who curse a lot and have no polite manners, as aggressive (n=21) hot-tempered individuals who will engage in physical violence, criminals (n=19) who engage with illicit behavior such as drug selling,

working class (n=15) individuals who are employed in low-paying, unskilled, manual jobs, and rural (n=13) who come from villages and lack the prestige and affordances of the urban centers. A few other memes construct Albanians as having low intelligence (n=8) and as having creepy/bad flirting techniques (n=3). Based on these themes it is obvious that Greek internet memes targeting Albanian migrants reiterate, reinforce, and as a consequence, perpetuate the stereotypes about this group (Lazaridis & Wickens, 1999, Gemi & Triandafyllidou 2021, Kapllani & Mai 2005). This is despite public (e.g., Chatzi 2024, Meinardus 2024) and academic claims in Greece (e.g., Pontiki 2020) that the stigmatization against Albanians is long over. Nonetheless, not all the emerging themes are on the negative side. There are memes that touch on the experience of being Albanian (e.g., memes about the strict or embarrassing Albanian family and about Albanian food; n=13), and about the experience of being an Albanian in Greece (e.g., illegal migration and assimilatory forces; n=10). Additionally, a couple of memes resist this stigmatization of the ethnic group altogether. Alternatively, then, Figure 4 can be interpreted as (partly) representing the indexical field (Eckert 2008) of being associated with the Albanian language or Albandianness in Greece.

## Themes in Presentation of Albanians

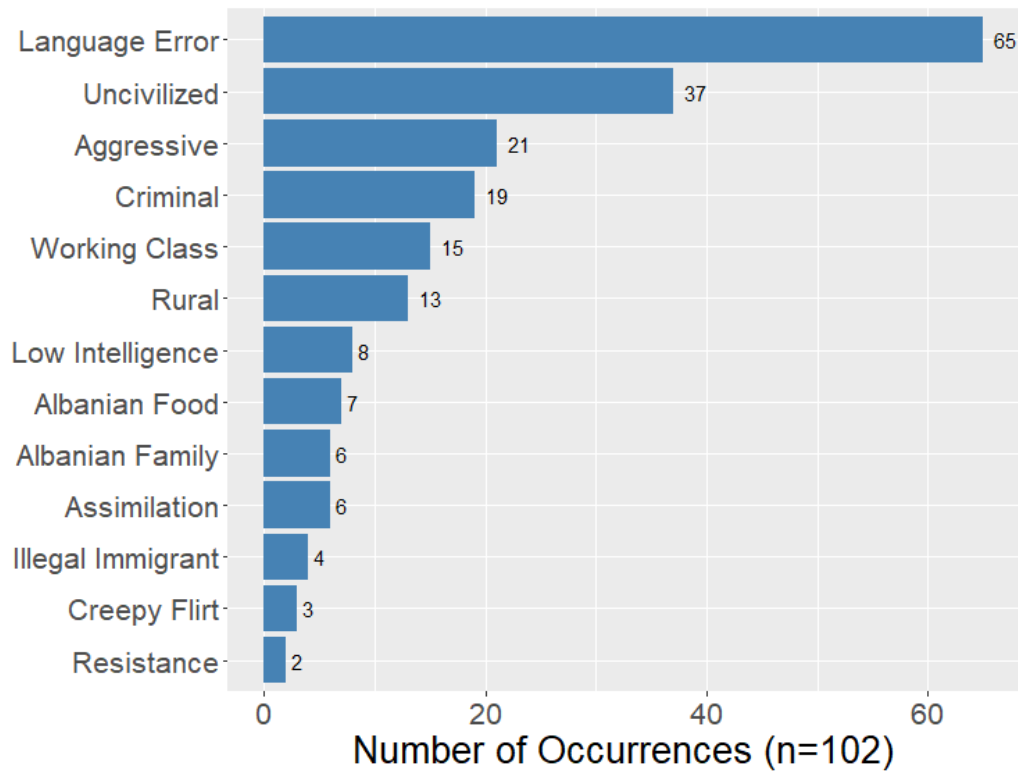
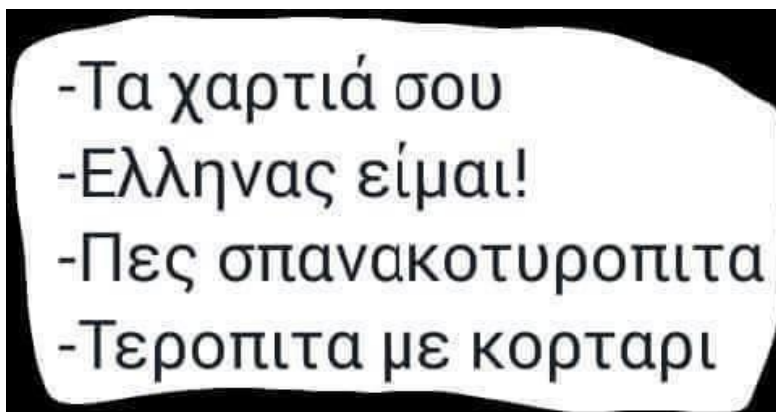


Figure 4: Emerging themes in the construction of the Albanian with number of occurrences.

### 3.4 Illustrative examples of internet memes



Your papers  
 -I'm Greek!  
 -Say spinach cheese pie  
 -Cheese pie with grass

Figure 5: Meme 1

This section presents some memes that illustrate the synopses of the data in Sections 3.2 and 3.3. The first meme (Figure 5) describes a hypothetical interaction between a Greek police officer and an Albanian migrant where the former asks the latter to present their proof of legal presence in the country. The meme relies on the stereotype that Albanians have illegal status in Greece and that they try to hide this fact by pretending to be Greek. It also suggests an image of Albanians as having difficulty producing compound or long Greek words. When the officer asks the person that they suspect to not be Greek to produce *σπανακοτυρόπιτα* [spanakotiroпита] “spinach-cheese-pie” the addressee is unable to do so. That is, they are unable to pass the test of Greekness and produce the long compound word. The civilian’s lie about being Greek is revealed when the civilian fails to produce *σπανακοτυρόπιτα* [spanakotiroпита] and instead produces *τεροπιτα με κορτάρι* [teropita me kortari] “cheese pie with grass” reducing, on the one hand, the compound word making pronunciation easier and revealing their non-Greekness. On the other hand, the imagined civilian turns ‘spinach’, which has been removed from the compound, to ‘grass’ and gives rise to the rural/manual work/drug dealer references that accompany their non-Greekness. Implicitly, then, Greekness is constructed as the opposite of this imagined civilian in the meme, as fluent and perfectly capable of producing complex compounds and not associated with rurality/manual work/drug dealing.

Looking closely at the word for ‘grass’ we notice a word-initial <κ> in the orthography instead of the standard <χ> which suggests that the Albanian Greek pronunciation of the word would be [kortari] instead of [xortari], which is the SMG pronunciation. What is interesting to note here is that the Greek orthographic <χ> is produced in speech in two different ways depending on the following segment. If the

following segment is a front vowel, [i] or [e], or a palatal approximant [j], then the <χ> is produced as a voiceless palatal fricative [ç]. If the following segment is anything other than [e, i, j], then the orthographic <χ> is produced as a voiceless velar fricative [x]. Since the velar fricative [x] emerges in far more environments than the palatal [ç] does, [x] is assumed to be the underlying representation of the phoneme. In Meme 1, the sound of interest is before a back vowel, i.e., an [o]. That means that in SMG this phone should emerge as a velar fricative [x], which is substituted in Albanian Greek by a velar plosive [k], as indicated by <κ>. The usefulness of this distinction between the velar [x] and the palatal [ç] fricative becomes apparent in the next couple of memes.

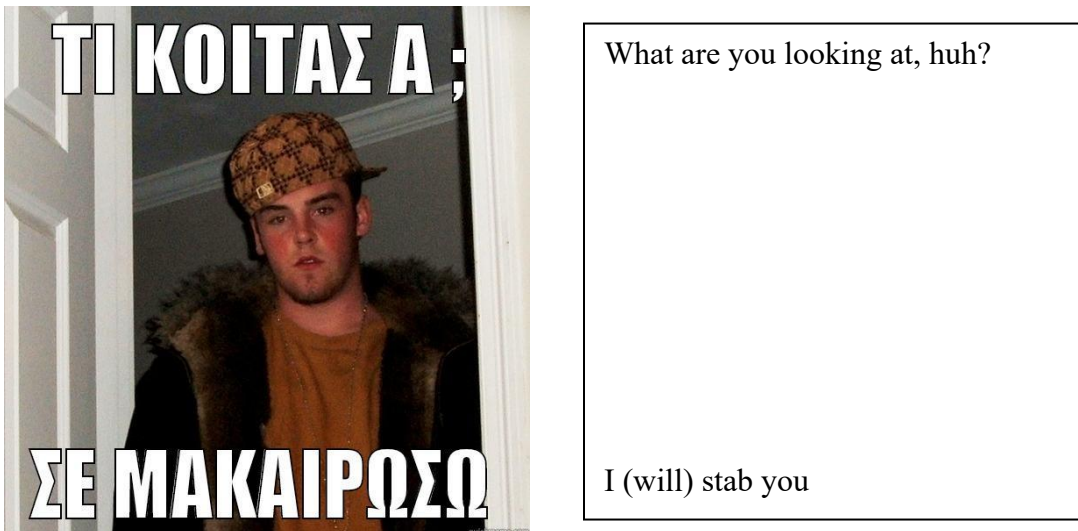
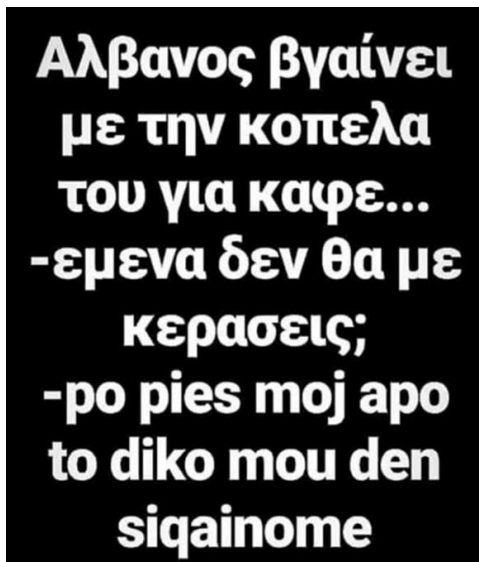


Figure 6: Meme 1

The text in the second meme (Figure 6) constructs the Albanian as an aggressive individual who will not hesitate to commit a crime, i.e., stab somebody, if they look at them in, what they consider to be, the wrong way. The accompanying image tones down the threat to some extent depicting a young man who is perhaps trying really hard to be perceived as tough but failing to do so. Linguistically, in the top line we find the

Albanian interrogative tag *a* instead of the Greek *e*, both of which correspond to the English *huh*. The orthographic <K> in the word for ‘stab’ in the bottom line suggests that this word is supposed to be pronounced by the imagined Albanian as [makeroso] and not [maçeroso], which would be the SMG pronunciation, and which would be instead written with a <X>. The sound of interest here is before a front vowel, i.e., before an [e], which means that in SMG <X> would emerge as [ç] (which occurs before front vowels), but it is substituted in Albanian Greek by a velar stop [k] in this meme. That is, Meme 2 follows the same adaptation strategy into Albanian Greek as Meme 1, although the two target sounds are slightly different in speech production in SMG. I will return to this detail in discussing Meme 3.



Albanian man goes out with his girlfriend for a coffee...

-Aren't you going to buy me [my coffee]?

-[particle<sub>ALB</sub>] [you<sub>ALB</sub>] drink from mine, I (will) not be grossed out

Figure 7: Meme 3

Meme 3 (Figure 7) points to an image of the Albanian as unable to afford to buy a coffee for their girlfriend, or too stingy to do so even if they had the financial means. In terms of the linguistic information available, the first thing to comment on is the switch in

the script which is a switch from the Greek to the Albanian script (given that Albanian uses a variant of the Roman script). This switch seems to highlight the ethnicity of the person to whom this turn is attributed, and to underline the difference between a person who uses the Albanian script as opposed to someone who uses a Greek script. In other words, the difference in script highlights the Albanianess of the user, suggesting that a Greek person would never utter something of the sort. The switch in the script does not entail switch in language. The text is predominantly Greek in the sense that it is a mix of Greeklish<sup>11</sup> with some Albanian lexical items (i.e., *po* and *moj*). The last word in the text includes an orthographic <q> which in Albanian represents the voiceless palatal affricate [ç̞]. This orthographic choice suggests that the Greek word [siçenome] is produced in Albanian Greek as [siç̞enome]. The segment following the sound of interest here is a front vowel, i.e., an [e], as is the case in Meme 2. This time, however, the SMG palatal fricative [ç] is not substituted by a velar stop [k], as in Meme 2, but by a palatal affricate [ç̞].

To illustrate and summarize the adaptation strategies observed in Memes 1 through 3, we can schematize them as in Figure 8. There is an underlying phoneme in SMG represented orthographically as <χ> which emerges as either a palatal [ç] or velar [x] fricative in speech production. The first emerges only preceding front vowels and the palatal approximant, and the second preceding all other sounds in SMG. Both of these get phonologically adapted in Albanian Greek as the velar plosive [k] (Memes 1 & 2), but the SMG palatal fricative [ç] occasionally is adapted as a palatal affricate [ç̞] as well (Meme 3). The same pattern is observed for the voiced set of these fricatives (orthographically

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<sup>11</sup> Greeklish refers to a writing system mainly used in computer-mediated communication that makes use of English orthography to represent Greek lexical items (see Mouresiotti & Terkourafi 2021).

represented as <ɣ>) in SMG as well (Figure 9). <ɣ> emerges as the palatal fricative [j] before front vowels and the palatal approximant and as the velar fricative [ɣ] in front of everything else. Both of these are phonologically adapted in Albanian Greek as the velar stop [g]. Occasionally, the palatal fricative [j] is adapted in Albanian Greek as [jj]. The unmotivated variation in the adaptation strategies suggests the non-authentic character of the Albanian L2 Greek observed in these internet memes. It further suggests awareness, to some extent, of the allophonic status of the palatal and velar fricatives. This awareness manifests in the meme creators treating the segment differently in certain cases in Albanian Greek in order to somehow preserve the pronunciation difference in SMG.

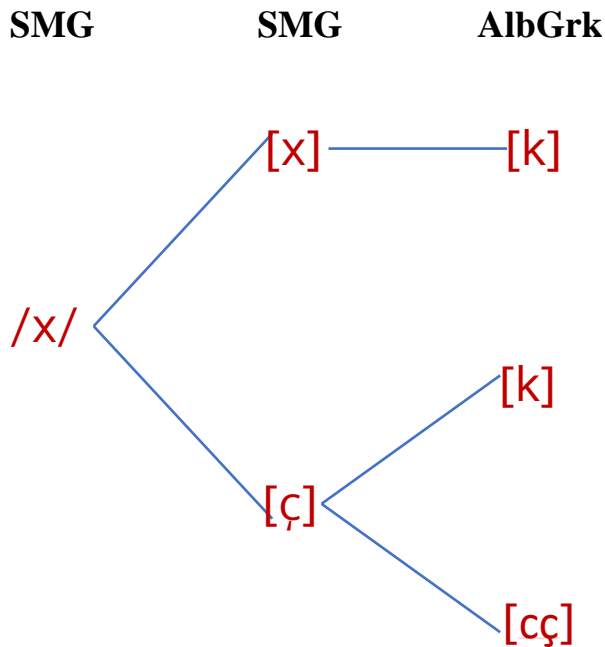


Figure 8: Schematization of the SMG voiceless velar and palatal fricatives and their adaptations in Albanian Greek.



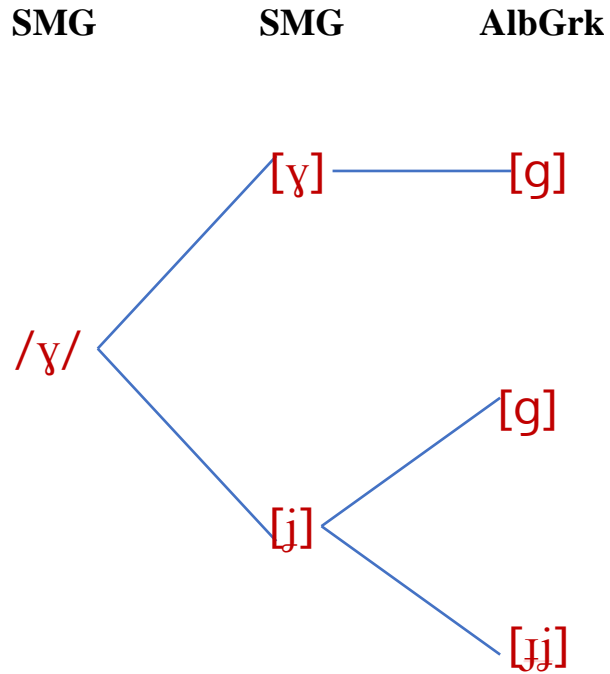


Figure 9: Schematization of the SMG voiced velar and palatal fricatives and their adaptations in Albanian Greek.

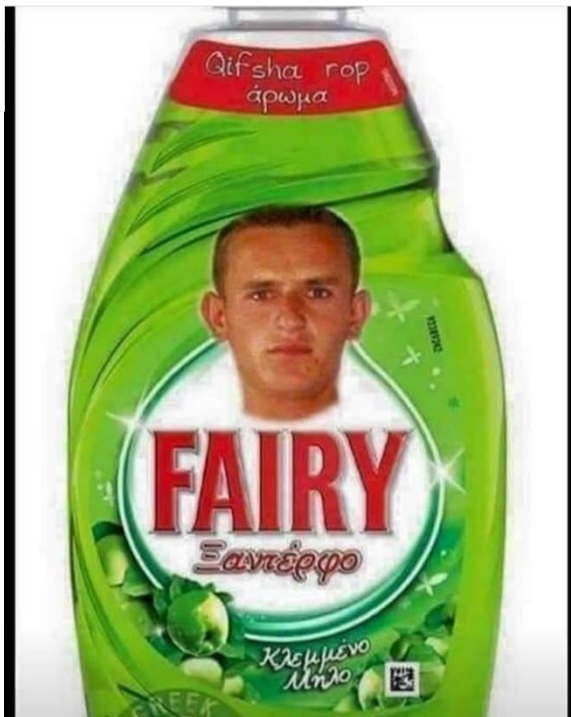


Figure 10: Meme 4

F@\$# your family scent

I (will) bring (my) cousin

Stolen apple

The text in the last meme (Figure 10), on the one hand constructs the Albanian migrant as someone without manners who utters obscenities towards another's family, and on the other hand, as a thief who would steal even trivial items such as apples or who is too poor to afford buying fruit. Moreover, the Albanian migrant is a short-tempered individual who is too cowardly to engage in a physical altercation alone but would only do so by bringing reinforcements, in this case, their cousins. The first thing to notice is a word play between *fairy*, the name of the dish soap brand, and the homophonous Greek [feri], the verb *bring* and its inflection for third-person singular, future tense. This is the wrong inflection, as it is clear from the linguistic context that the first-person inflection is intended instead: [(θa) fero]. In terms of the word for *cousin*, we notice an orthographic <ντ> which in SMG represents [d]. This suggests the word for *cousin* is produced in Albanian Greek as [ksa'derfo] and not as SMG ['ksaðerfo]. There is, therefore, a phonological adaptation of the SMG [ð] into a [d] in Albanian Greek. However, there does not seem to be a motivation for this adaptation since [ð] as a phoneme exists in both SMG and Albanian, the L2 and L1 of Albanians, which means that Albanians would have no reason to adapt it as ability or inability to pronounce is not at issue.

Another observation in the same lexical item can be made about word stress placement. SMG ['ksaðerfo] receives stress in the third syllable from the right, but in Albanian Greek this stress lowers to the second syllable from the right [ksa'derfo] as noted by the accent mark placement above <ε>. This can be explained in terms of transfer to Greek of the word stress pattern from Albanian which stresses the last syllable of a word stem. Following Albanian stress placement then, in [ksa'derfo] the last syllable of the stem which should receive the stress is *-derf-* as *-o* is an inflectional affix which

marks accusative case for masculine grammatical gender. If we look at the top of the meme, we notice that there is another Greek word which receives stress in the third syllable from the right, namely the word *άρωμα* ['aroma] 'scent'. However, as indicated by the accent mark placement above <α> the stress in this lexical item does not shift to the second syllable from the right to become [a'roma] (like it does in [ksa'derfo]). Stress remains on the antepenultimate syllable. This finding shows that there are inconsistencies even within the same internet meme and provides further evidence for the inauthentic character of the Albanian Greek represented in those memes.

Returning to Meme 1, it is worth noting that the same meme occurs in the Greek literature to two different ethnic and religious groups. In one instance, Kapogianni et al. (2018) suggest this meme as an example for a classroom activity about language ideologies stating explicitly that the text in the meme represents Albanian accented Greek. In another instance, Archakis & Tsakona (2021) include this meme in their corpus of memes that circulate on the Greek internet to refer to recent (i.e., post-2015) Muslim migrants and refugees. What is further interesting about the classification of this meme is that Archakis, the author of the 2021 study is also part of the research team in Kapogianni et al. (2018). In other words, he is part of 'et al'. This finding speaks to the ease with which internet memes are reproduced and disseminated due to the nature of the memes and of the internet and how even people studying them closely cannot keep track of the memes' intended group representation. It also provides more evidence that the Albanian Greek encountered in memes is not authentic, but rather a mock stylization that we can call Mock Albanian Greek. Due to this possibility of attribution of the language forms to multiple groups, I further argue that we can even interpret this as evidence for a Pan-

foreign L2 Greek rather than a strictly Albanian L2 Greek variety, paralleling the pan-Asian English that actors in McGowan (2016) produced when asked to imitate Chinese L2 English.

In summary, in this chapter I have shown the linguistic features of an ideologized Albanian L2 Greek as emerging in the Greek internet space. Various findings, namely the unmotivated phonological adaptation of phonemes that exist in both Greek and Albanian, the observed variation in the phonological adaptation of certain phones, the inconsistencies in what gets phonologically adapted, and the inconsistencies about the foreigners the memes refer to, suggest that this ideologized variety is not an authentic representation of Albanian L2 Greek but rather a Mock variety. The chapter also showed the social and personality characteristics attributed to Albanians in Greece which are to a large extent similar to the stereotypes that circulate about them in Greece. Finally, the chapter has illustrated how the two, the linguistic features attributed to Albanian L2 Greek, and the social characteristics attributed to Albanians, come together in memes that circulate on the Greek internet. In the next chapters (Chapters 4 and 5), I show how Albanians navigate the xenophobic sentiments towards them that also become evident in memes.

## **Chapter 4. ‘Albanian’ in Modern Greek**

This chapter describes interviews that were conducted with Albanian migrants in Greece. It explores interviewees’ stance towards the ethnic labels available in Modern Greek to designate someone of Albanian origin. It also explores speakers’ preferences for labeling themselves in terms of their ethnic identity. The ideologies and preferences expressed here are a product of the Greek context where ‘Albanian’ is an ethnoracial slur (see Section 2.7).

### **4.1 Interviews**

In order to investigate how Albanians navigate the hostile xenophobic context of their migratory destination, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 36 Albanian migrants in Greece. The interviews followed a Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967, Charmaz & Belgrave 2014, 2015) approach of allowing the data to formulate the research questions. Participants in this part were the 20 first-generation and the 16 second-generation migrants that were recruited from my personal networks to participate in the experiment. These subjects filled in the questionnaire, the first-generation often with the help of the researcher, and then agreed to have a conversation on their migratory experience in Greece. Interviews revolved around two main axes. One was the ethnic labels used in Greece about Albanian and the labels they prefer for themselves. The other was their name histories and potential name changes or adaptations they have undergone.

Appendix E illustrates the questions around which the interviews were built. Additional questions based on participants' responses and their own discussion interests were asked. General topics covered include the time of migration to Greece, whether they hold Greek citizenship, the name that they were assigned at birth and the story behind it, whether they adopted some other name or version of their name in Greece and the story behind that, whether it has helped them in some way, which name feels more representative of who they are, how are they addressed by different people in their lives, their opinion to others' name changes or Hellenizations. On the matter of labels about Albanians that exist in Greek, topics of discussion included their understanding of the meaning of various ethnic labels (Alvanos (for males), Alban-i/-ida/-eza (for females), S(k)iptar(i)<sup>12</sup>, Alvaniar-a/-is), their experience with these labels, their preference for any of these labels for their self-identifications, and any other labels with which they are familiar. Each interview participant was offered a 20euro gift card. The family members and some participants on the generation above that of the researcher declined the gift cards.

The interviews were conducted between April and June of 2023 and lasted between 11 minutes to one hour and 48 minutes. Oral consent was obtained from all to participate in the study with the right to revoke their consent at any point. 18 of the 20 first-generation and four of the second-generation migrants were interviewed in-person in Athens, Greece with the help of a portable Roland R-05 recorder. The interviews with the rest of the participants were done via *Zoom* and were recorded with the application's built-in functions. The majority of the *Zoom* interviews were with second-generation

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<sup>12</sup> Σ(κ)ιπτάρι [s(c)iptari] from the Albanian endonym *Shqiptari* [ʃçiptari] 'Albanian', phonologically adapted to Greek. Probably [sciptari] has entered Greek through the Albanian-speaking Arvanite presence in Greece while [siptari] could be the slur that entered Greek through Slavic. See Chapter 2 for more on the Slavic slur.

migrants who were generally familiar with the technology. The first-generation migrants interviewed over Zoom were assisted onsite by their daughter who had herself been interviewed for the study a couple of days earlier. Most participants were interviewed alone except for three couples who were interviewed together. One of these couples was interviewed with their underage children present in the room and who often wanted to offer their take in the questions. Data from the children has not been analyzed as no IRB permission had been secured to account for minors. Finally, many of the construction workers interviewed were colleagues and worked together at the same construction site in downtown Athens. The interviews with them were conducted in their lunchroom during their breaks or at the end of their shifts.

The full demographics of the interviewees are presented in Appendix D but some of this information is aggregated here. The 20 first-generation migrants were between 38 and 64 years old at the time of the interviews and were all born in Albania. Most of them migrated to Greece as adults but a few (n=3) had migrated as adolescents between the ages of 14 and 15 (mean=50.5, median=48.5). Yet, these are classified as first-generation migrants due to having spent their formative years and following a first-generation pathway in Greece. This includes close social ties with other first-generation migrants and non-participation in the Greek educational system. Therefore, first generation migrated between the ages of 14 and 34 (mean=22.7, median=20.5). The earliest of them arrived in Greece in 1991, part of the first wave of outward migration that is marked by the fall of the communist regime. The last of them arrived in 2006, a few years before the Great Recession of 2008. All but two lived in Athens although many had lived in other places in Greece before settling in the capital city. The other two lived in Thessaloniki

and those interviews were conducted via Zoom. Their levels of education varied between completing elementary education (n=15), secondary education (n=3), master's studies (n=1), and a PhD (n=1). Most were employed in manual blue-collar professions (e.g., construction workers, caregivers, grocery store employees, plumbers). Although the number of construction workers (n=8) could be attributed to the convenience sampling of the interviewees, it is still in line with the typical professions Albanians are found in today.

The 16 interviewees of the second-generation were between the ages of 23 and 40 at the time of the interviews (mean=30.7, median=31.5). Five of them were born in Greece and the rest had arrived between the ages of 2 and 15 (mean=4.7, median=4). Those not born in Greece were born in Albania where they lived until their migration to Greece with one or both parents. The interviewees from the second generation arrived in Greece between 1991, the first migratory wave, and 2003, just before the 2004 Athens Olympic games, a period marked by prosperity. At the time of the interviews most lived in Athens, a few lived in other Greek cities such as Thessaloniki and Patras (n=4), and a few had onward migrated to other European countries in the last few years for studies and/or work (n=3). Since the last group had been raised and educated in Greece, kept strong interpersonal ties in Greece, and visited the country regularly, their opinions on the interview discussion topics were considered legitimate. In terms of education, five of them had completed secondary education with additional vocational training which, however, does not count as tertiary education. Eight had completed or were about to complete master's degrees, and three were in the process of obtaining a PhD. Compared to the first generation, then, we have a highly educated second generation that is



employed, for the most part, in white collar professions (e.g., program coordinators, marketing, lecturers, students). This is not to say that blue collar professions were absent, but they were represented to a lesser extent (e.g., construction, food service).

In light of the name changes Albanians underwent in Greece that have already been noted in the literature (see Chapter 2) a decision was made to not use pseudonyms for the interview participants as long as doing so will not bring any harm to them. This is an effort on my part to give Albanians their names back and not change them once again (see Guenther 2009 for a discussion of real name usage in qualitative research). At the end of the interviews, permission was asked of all participants to use their real names in the research instead of allocating pseudonyms. All participants accepted and most did so enthusiastically. Many of the first-generation participants often commented that they have nothing to hide or that they have been honest about their experience in Greece and therefore they feel comfortable keeping their name. Only one participant seemed somewhat concerned with the inclusion of her real name at which point she requested that some part of the conversation be redacted. The data was transcribed and thematically analyzed (Braun & Clarke 2022) in NVivo (2023) via recursive coding.

#### **4.2 Label marking masculine grammatical gender**

Mentioning *Alvanos* ‘Albanian’ to the interviewees, most times, triggered an emotional reaction with subjects immediately pointing out its use as a slur such as in the quote below by Kujtim. Admiljan describes how the hearing the term *Alvanos*, even if used to designate the prime minister of Albania, would bring him discomfort due to the negative associations of the label. He admits that this is all despite the fact that he himself identifies with the label. Some took the slur meaning of *Alvanos* as the basis of

understanding the term and discussed their attempts to go back to the original meaning of *Alvanos*, that of designating ethnicity and to when the label was not a slur.

*Ε είναι προσβολή αυτό. Σαν να σε προσβάλει, σαν να σε μειώσει, σαν ρατσιστικό.*

This is an insult. As if they insult you, as if they degrade you, as if racist. – Kujtim

*Εγώ ας πούμε για πολλά χρόνια όταν άκουγα την λέξη Αλβανός δεν θα. Αλλά ακόμα και τώρα όταν την ακούω, βέβαια τώρα πολύ λιγότερο απ' ότι παλιά, κάτι μέσα μου ξέρεις με τσιγκλούσε, κάτι με ενοχλούσε, κάτι με έκανε να αισθάνομαι άσχημα.*

*Δηλαδή άκουγα την λέξη. Μπορεί να την άκουγα στον δρόμο, δεν χρειαζόταν δηλαδή να είναι σε ένα περιβάλλον ας πούμε όπως είναι οι ειδήσεις που λέει 'ο Αλβανός δολοφόνος' ή 'ο Αλβανός'. Δηλαδή ακόμα και αν το άκουγα ξέρω εγώ 'ο Αλβανός πρωθυπουργός', ακόμα και εκεί έλεγα ότι κάτι γίνεται, δηλαδή κάτι μέσα μου με ενοχλούσε. Ακόμη με ενοχλεί αλλά όχι τόσο πολύ όσο παλιά. Δηλαδή, πώς να στο πω; Δηλαδή ξυπνούσε μέσα μου αυτό το, ε τι να πω, ένα αίσθημα ενοχής, ένα αίσθημα κατωτερότητας; Ένα, κάτι αρνητικό πάντως. Ένα feeling αρνητικό το οποίο ήταν και, εντωμεταξύ ήταν οξύμωρο, γιατί Αλβανός είμαι.*

For example, I, for many years, when I heard the word Albanian, I would not. Even now, when I hear it, actually not much less than in the past, something inside me ached me, something bothered me, something made me feel bad. Like, when I heard the word. I could have been hearing it in the street, it didn't have to be in the news that say 'the Albanian murderer' or 'the Albanian'. Like, even when I heard, for example, 'the Albanian prime minister', even then I said that something is happening, something inside me bothered me. Still bothers me but not as much as before. Like, how can I say this? Like, it would awaken in me this, how can I say it, a feeling of guilt, a feeling of inferiority. A, something negative, nonetheless. A negative feeling which was, at the same time it was an oxymoron, because I am Albanian. – Admiljan

*Λοιπόν. Εμείς, εγώ δεν έχω πρόβλημα γιατί Αλβανός είμαι. Και όπου θα πάω, μέχρι και στην ζούγκλα που λέμε, να μου πει ο άλλος Αλβανός, τιμή μου. Από εκεί είμαι.*

*Αλλά το λένε με κακία. Να σε προσβάλλει, να σε. Και δηλαδή σαν να πει, να που λέμε εμείς καμιά φορά, 'μαύρε'. Όχι, δεν είναι σωστό. Εντάξει, θα μου πεις μαύροι είναι.*

So. We, I have no issue because I am Albanian. And wherever I might go, even in the jungle for instance, if someone calls me Albanian, it's an honor. That's where I am from. But they say it in a mean way. To insult you, to. As if they say, like we say sometimes, 'Black'. No, it's not right. Ok, they are Black. – Lulash

When prompted to describe the meaning of *Alvanos*, subjects gave several interpretations starting from the denotational meaning, a person of Albanian origin, to the indexical meanings which are related to the range of social attributes with which Albanianess is associated in Greece. Hence, the indexicality of *Albanian* is achieved through the interdiscursivity (Agha 2005) of the label, that is, the history of use of the label in current and past events and contexts.

*Ε σίγουρα είναι αυτό, μαφία, χόρτο, ή Βλάχε ξέρω εγώ, χωριάτη Αλβανέ (inaudible). Εντάξει και είναι κάτι που τους μένει ακόμα και στους ενήλικες και από τα σχολικά χρόνια. Θα το πούνε αντί να πεις χαζέ, χαζέ, Αλβανέ (inaudible). Δεν ξέρω. Και σίγουρα εντάξει είναι συνυφασμένο με το παρανομία, ναρκωτικά, όλο αυτό, εγκληματικότητα.*

It is definitely this, mafia, weed, or like Vlach<sup>13</sup>, Albanian villager (inaudible). Yes, it is something that still persists to adults even from the school years. They will say it [Alvanos] instead of saying idiot, idiot, Alvanos (inaudible). I don't know. And yes, it is for sure associated with illicitness, drugs, all this, criminality. – Krisilda

*Fjala, σκέτο λέξη Αλβανός συνδέεται μόνο με το κακό. [...] Με τον κλέφτη, με τον δολοφόνο, με τον ψεύτη, με τον. Μόνο αυτό το στοιχείο έχουνε βγάλει μπροστά.*

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<sup>13</sup> Vlach: literally someone of Vlach origin. In Greece often used as a slur to index someone as rural, uneducated, and unmannered.

The word, just the word *Alvanos* is connected only with bad things. [...] With the thief, with the murderer, with the liar, with the. This is the only element they have foregrounded. – Ylli

*Νομίζω είχαν αυτήν την εικόνα του είναι λίγο περίεργος, ότι είναι κάτι ξένο με την κακή την έννοια.*

I think they had this image that he is a bit odd, that it is something foreign with a bad sense. – Rafaela.

*Με κακό τρόπο το λένε. Σαν Αλβανός. Δεν είναι καλοί άνθρωποι (inaudible) το λένε. Ε Αλβανός είναι.*

They say it in a bad way. Like *Alvanos*. They are not good people (inaudible) they say. Well, he's *Alvanos*. – Pjerin

*Αυτοί έχουν την ζήλια μέσα. Έχουνε το εγωισμό οι πιο πολλοί. Και ζηλεύουν άμα σε βλέπουν εσένα να δουλεύεις, αν σε βλέπουν εσένα να είσαι καλά. Αυτοί έχουν την ζήλια μέσα και σε. Πώς γίνεται ο Αλβανός να έχει αυτά και εγώ δεν τα έχω;*

They have jealousy inside. They have egoism most of them. And they are jealous if they see you working; if they see you doing well. They have jealousy inside and. How is it possible that the Albanian has these, and I don't have them? – Petrit

*Θεωρώ ότι πολλές φορές αντιλαμβάνομαι ότι η λέξη Αλβανός, ο τρόπος με τον οποίο χρησιμοποιείται η λέξη Αλβανός από άλλους οι οποίοι είναι μη-Αλβανοί, θα πω Έλληνες, έχει έναν υποτιμητικό τόνο ή έναν υπο-. Μέσα στον τόνο της φωνής τους υποβόσκει μία συνωνυμία του Αλβανού με τον εγκληματία, μία πολύ υποβόσκουσα αύρα (inaudible). Αλλά σίγουρα νιώθω ότι όταν το χρησιμοποιούν οι άλλοι, οι Έλληνες για να αναφερθούν σε έναν Αλβανό είναι, συνδέεται με μία, με ένα αίσθημα λύπησης, με ένα αίσθημα κατωτερότητας, με ένα αίσθημα, οριακά, μια υποτίμηση.*

I think that many times I understand the word *Alvanos*, the way with which the word *Alvanos* is used by others who are non-Albanians, I will say Greeks, has a pejorative tone or a. In their voice tone there is an underlying sense (inaudible). But I definitely feel that when others use it, The Greeks to refer to an Albanian, it is

connected with, with a feeling of pity, with a sense of inferiority, almost, with a sense of pejoration. – Pavlo

*Για ιδεολογικό σκοπό. Δηλαδή όπως το 'Αλβανός είσαι; Δεν καταλαβαίνεις;' Το πιο θετικό που έχω ακούσει, ή μάλλον όχι το πιο θετικό, το μόνο θετικό που έχω ακούσει να συνδέεται με την λέξη Αλβανός, εκτός από τις περιπτώσεις που είναι απλά και μόνο περιγραφικό της καταγωγής κάποιου, που εκεί δεν φέρει θετικό ή αρνητικό πρόσημο, που είναι ελάχιστες περιπτώσεις γιατί, ακόμη και εκεί, η καταγωγή αναφέρεται για κάποιον σκοπό, με κάποιον σκοπό, κάπως συνδέεται με κάτι άλλο, με κάποια ενέργεια που ως επί το πλείστον είναι αρνητική. Αλλά γενικότερα το μόνο θετικό που έχω ακούσει είναι το 'δουλεύει σαν Αλβανός'. Που στα αυτιά μου, βέβαια, κάποιος μπορεί να πει ότι εννοούνε τους πολύ εργατικούς ανθρώπους, αλλά στα αυτιά μου θα μπορούσε άνετα να αντικατασταθεί και 'δουλεύει σαν σκλάβος' ή 'δουλεύει σαν σκυλί'. Οπότε δεν ξέρω πόσο θετικό είναι αυτό αλλά είναι σίγουρα το μόνο θετικό που έχω ακούσει που μπορεί να θεωρηθεί τρόπον τινά τουλάχιστον θετικό και που δεν είναι το 'τι είσαι Αλβανός και κλέβεις;', 'τι είσαι Αλβανός και είσαι ντυμένος έτσι;', 'τι πιο σύνηθες από Αλβανό με όπλο' και πάει λέγοντας.*

For ideological reasons. That is, like the 'Are you Albanos? Don't you understand?'. The most positive I've heard, or perhaps not the most positive, the only positive [thing] I've heard being associated with the word Albanos, besides the instances where it is simply and only used as descriptive of somebody's origin, where it does not carry a positive or negative sign, which are few instances because, even there, the origin is mentioned for some reason, with some purpose, somehow it is connected to something else, with some action that is, for the most part, negative. But generally, the only positive thing I've heard is 'works like an Albanos'. Which in my ears, of course, somebody might tell me that they mean the very hard-working people, but in my ears, this could easily be replaced with 'works like a slave' or 'works like a dog'. So, I don't know how positive this is, but it is definitely the only positive I've heard and that can be considered somehow at least positive, and which is not 'you are *Alvanos* and you steal', 'you are *Alvanos* and

you're dressed like that', 'what's more common than an Albanos with a gun'<sup>14</sup> and so on and so forth. – Pamela

Eneida in her attempt to define *Alvanos*, resorts to 'not-X' constructions rather than to using antonyms of 'X'. This way she defines *Alvanos* as a person who "is not Greek", "not-so-literate", and connected to "not positive representation". This choice is marked since the obvious antonyms available to her would have been 'foreigner', 'illiterate', and connected to 'negative representation'. Her litotes or 'not-X' constructions could be interpreted as strategies to mitigate the force of the antonyms in describing the characteristics *Alvanos* has been stereotypically linked with. Saying 'not literate' is softer than saying 'illiterate'. At the same time the constructions allow Eneida to show that she does not prescribe to these linkages and that she is not expressing her own stance by uttering these interpretations.

*Ε κυριολεκτικά αυτός που κατάγεται απ' την Αλβανία. Σημειολογικά έχει ταυτιστεί με κάτι, με κάποιον ο οποίος δεν είναι Έλληνας, με τον κλασικό μετανάστη, τον εργάτη, τον οικοδόμο, τον ίσως όχι τόσο εγγράμματο, λίγο ας πούμε, τον, ξέρω εγώ, τύπο ο οποίος φαίνεται ότι είναι εργάτης, ότι ξέρω εγώ έχει εργατικά χέρια και παρουσιαστικό ανθρώπου ο οποίος είναι εκτεθειμένος σε κακουχίες λόγω της δουλειάς, σε κάποιον που μπορεί να κάνει λάθη γραμματικά και τα λοιπά ή στην ομιλία. Ναι, έχει συνυφαστεί λίγο με αυτή την σίγουρα όχι θετική αναπαράσταση.*

Literally a person whose origin is from Albania. Semiotically, it has been identified with someone who is not Greek, with the typical migrant, with the laborer, the construction worker, perhaps not-so-literate, let's say a little, I think, the guy who looks like a laborer, that like has a laborer's hands, the look of a person who is exposed to hardships due to work, someone who makes grammatical mistakes in

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<sup>14</sup> Uttered on live TV by Greek newscaster Nikos Evangelatos.

speech etc. Yes, it has been connected a little bit, for sure, with this not-positive representation. – Eneida

*[Χρησιμοποιείται]για να δηλώσει κάποιον που ο ίδιος ή κάποιος γονείς του ή και οι δύο γονείς του προέρχονται από την Αλβανία ή ανεξάρτητα από το αν ο ίδιος γεννήθηκε εδώ πέρα ή όχι. Αυτό νομίζω. [...] Καλά μεταφορικά και πώς χρησιμοποιείται, μόνο υποτιμητικά. Ο κλέφτης, ο παμπέσης, ο αυτός που δεν εκτιμάει. Δεν νομίζω να έχει ταυτιστεί με βιαστή είναι η αλήθεια. Με ναρκωτικά, τον έμπορο.*

[Used] to refer to someone who themselves or one of their parents or both parents come from Albania irrespective if they themselves was born here or not. That's what I think. [...] Yeah, metaphorically and how it is used, only pejoratively. The thief, the non-honorable, the one who does not show appreciation. I don't think it has been identified with a rapist to be honest. With drugs, the dealer. – Enkeled

*Δηλαδή όταν συζητάω εγώ ας πούμε με δύο φίλους μου εκεί πέρα και συζητάμε κάτι ή πίνουμε μία μπύρα ή έχουμε λίγο υψωμένη την φωνή και παραμιλάνε μέσα τους. Ε οι Αλβανοί, κοίτα, μαγκέψανε, ήρθανε εδώ, άνοιξαν τα μάτια.*

Like when I am having a conversation with two friends, for example, or we are having a beer, or we are a bit loud, and they talk to themselves. The Albanians, look, they've become bold, they came here, they opened their eyes. – Andrea

Many migrants, upon hearing the question about *Alvanos*, interpreted it as the researcher asking them about its use as a slur. That is, their first interpretation of the term is the slur and not ethnicity. Due to this interpretation, participants' immediate responses took the form of rejecting the slur. Additionally, they focused their efforts to interpreting *Alvanos* only as a term that references their ethnicity. This is captured in mainly in the reactions of first-generation migrants such as the one by Erjeta provided here. Fatmir, however, cannot move past *Alvanos* as a slur, and its "offensive" intention which is

hurtful for him. *Alvanos* keeps reminding him of the way he is Othered and marked as a foreigner that does not belong to Greece. He marks this linguistically by switching from Albanian (*ktu ta thojn direkt* “here they tell you directly”) into Greek (*φύγε ρε στην Αλβανία, είσαι Αλβανός* “go to Albania, you are Albanian”) which is at the same time a switch from direct to reported speech. He contrasts the situation he has faced in Greece with his experience in England where he had spent some time in the past, and where, according to him, ethnicity was a non-issue.

*Rexhina* Πώς σας φαίνεται αυτή η λέξη [*Αλβανός*];  
*Erjeta* Πώς να μου φαίνεται; Αφού είμαι! Δηλαδή να μου φαίνεται κακό;  
*Όχι, δεν μου φαίνεται. Αφού δεν είμαι Αλβανίδα; Γιατί να μου φανεί δηλαδή κακό;*

*Rexhina* What do you think about this word [*Alvanos*].  
*Erjeta* How should I think about this word? I am one [*Albanian*]! That is, should I think of it is bad? No, I don't think that. Am I not Albanian? Why should I think it is bad?

*Fjala mu m vret per shemull. Kur t' thut kush flaja Alvanos, m' vret. Pse? Pse me e than at fjal per shemull? Asht ofenduse. Kur ta thot, ta thojn me mnyr ofenduse, nuk ta thojn thjesht si ashtu. Qe un kam qen n' angli per shemull. N' angli nuk mund pyste njeri. Me t' pyt, me t' ba pyetje se nga je. Nuk ka t' drejt me t' pyt se nga je. T' thot. Mund ta bejn me mnyra, me gjana, jo me t' than από πού είσαι si t' thujn ktu per shemull. Nga je ti. Nuk ka drejt me ta than nga je. Ktu ta thojn direkt 'φύγε ρε στην Αλβανία', 'είσαι Αλβανός'.*

The word hurts me, for example. When somebody tells you the word *Alvanos*, it hurts me. Why? Why say that word, for example? It is offensive. When they say [the word], they say it in an offensive way, they don't say it simply like that. I have been to England, for example. In England nobody can ask you. To ask you, to ask



you where you're from. They have no right to ask you where you're from. They tell you. They may do it in ways, with things, but not to ask you where you're from like they do there. Where are you from. They have no right to ask you where you're from. Here they tell you directly 'go to Albania', 'you are Albanian'. – Fatmir

A participant who works with children shared another aspect of the meaning of *Alvanos* that was not mentioned by other participants. At educational institutions *Alvanos* has taken on meanings relevant to that context that are still related to the meanings which *Alvanos* has elsewhere as seen in the above excerpts. In the school, according to the student mentioned, the Albanian students engage in transgressive behavior which breaks school rules and norms. This behavior mirrors the stereotypical behavior of adult Albanians outside of the school. Adult Albanians outside educational institutions engage in *transgressive* behavior that breaks social rules and laws. Because of this association of Albanian students and transgressive behavior, the label *Alvanos* in the school has come to be used to characterize transgressive behaviors by students of any ethnicity. *Alvanos*, then, extends to Greek students too who break school rules and act tough.

This exact extension of *Alvanos* to non-Albanians is what also annuls the arguments often used by Greeks when called out as racist for the use of *Alvanos*. Their defense is usually along the lines of *Alvanos* is not a slur but simply an ethnic label. This argument continues with the aggressor (the person producing the slur) claiming that Albanians are embarrassed of their own ethnicity, and this is why Albanians interpret *Alvanos* as a slur. The argument continues that Greeks simply mean it as a term indicating ethnicity. According to this, Greeks are not expressing racist sentiments. Albanians are projecting their own insecurities towards their own ethnicity. However, the use of *Alvanos* towards non-Albanians leaves no room for the ethnicity interpretation. If

the addressee is not Albanian, *Alvanos* is intended to verbally harm. Harm is done through the indexical associations of the label *Alvanos*.

The intention of *Alvanos* to insult sometimes leads Albanians to exhibit great pride towards their ethnicity and towards the labels for *Albanian* in Greek. This reaction seems like an attempt by Albanians to prove to their interlocutors and to themselves that they are not ashamed of their ethnicity. For instance, Flora emphasizes her ethnicity by claiming she's "pure" Albanian. In other words, she is "not mixed" in terms of her ethnicity nor she is associated with any other ethnic identity. Not only is she Albanian, but she's also from the "north" of the country and "from the mountains". These added pieces of information communicate to her interlocutors that there is no way she could (additionally) be of any other ethnicity such as Greek or Vlach that are found in south Albania.

*Rexhina* Το λένε μεταξύ τους από Έλληνα σε Έλληνα ή προς Αλβανάκια επίσης;

*Krisilda* Από Έλληνα σε Έλληνα. Γι' αυτό.

*Rexhina* Και για πες τι νομίζεις ότι πάει να πει όταν λένε κάποιον Αλβανό; Δηλαδή τι εννοούν; Τί χαρακτηριστικά έχει ο Αλβανός;

*Krisilda* Τώρα θα σου πω μια περίπτωση γιατί έχω έναν μαθητή με διαταραχή διαγωγής, πολύ έντονο πρόβλημα συμπεριφοράς που μπορεί να γίνει παραβατικό, ότι το χρησιμοποιεί και με αυτόν είχα πιάσει την συζήτηση και του είχα αναλύσει παραπάνω. Με έναν από αυτούς. Και μου είχε πει.

*Rexhina* Τί ηλικία είχε αυτό το παιδί αν θέλεις να μου πεις;

*Krisilda* Δώδεκα χρονών, πρώτη γυμνασίου. Μου έλεγε το λέμε για πλάκα. Εγώ τους συμπαθώ τους Αλβανούς. Λέω γιατί τους συμπαθείς τους Αλβανούς; Κάνουμε παρέα μου λέει και νιώθω ότι μοιάζω πιο πολύ με αυτούς. Και λέω τι εννοείς δηλαδή; Πώς μοιάζουν οι Αλβανοί και νοιώθεις ότι μοιάζεις πιο πολύ με αυτούς; Ε ξέρεις μου λέει, όλη την ώρα κάνουν αταξίες, όλη την ώρα πλακωνόμαστε, όλη την ώρα θα παίρνουν

*αποβολές, θα βρίζουνε, θα κάνουν, θα ράνουν, πιο μάγκες. Και λέω αυτό δηλαδή δείχνει ότι όλοι οι Αλβανοί είναι έτσι; Δεν είναι όλοι οι Αλβανοί έτσι. Λέω γιατί τους βάζεις όλους στο ίδιο σακί; Ε όχι, αλλά οι περισσότεροι είναι. 'Οι περισσότεροι;' λέω. Εγώ δηλαδή είμαι έτσι; Ε όχι μου λέει εσύ. Εσύ είσαι δασκάλα. Αλλά υπάρχει, ναι, αυτή η νοοτροπία.*

Rexhina Do they say it among them, Greek to Greek, or to Albanians as well?

Krisilda From a Greek to a Greek. That's why.

Rexhina And tell me, what do you think it means when they call someone *Alvanos*? That is, what do they mean? What kinds of characteristics does *Alvanos* have?

Krisilda I'll tell you of a case because I have a student with a behavioral disorder, an intense behavioral problem that might end in transgressive behavior, that he uses it and I had opened up a conversation with him and I had analyzed it to him further. With one of them. And he had told me.

Rexhina What was the age of that child if you want to tell me?

Krisilda Twelve years old, 1<sup>st</sup> year of middle school. He told me we say it as a joke. I like Albanians. I asked him why do you like Albanians? We hang out, he told me, and I feel like I am a lot like them. And I asked him what do you mean? How are Albanians like and you feel like you are more like them? You know, he told me, they are being naughty all the time, we fight all the time, they are expelled out of the classroom all the time, they will cuss, they will do this and that, tougher guys. And I asked him, does this show that all Albanians are like this? Not all Albanians are like this. Why do you place them all in the same category? No, but most are. 'Most?' I said. Am I like this, then? No, not you. You are a teacher. But, yes, this mentality exists.

*Rexhina Όταν σε ρωτάνε για την καταγωγή σου τί λες; Τί απαντάς;*

*Flora Είμαι από την Αλβανία.*

- Rexhina *Λες είμαι Αλβανίδα;*
- Flora *Ναι, καλέ. Πούρο, τους λέω.*
- Rexhina *Τί πάει να πει πούρο δηλαδή; Σε σχέση με τί;*
- Flora *Πούρο. Δεν είναι ούτε ανακατεμένη, από, που, είμαι απ' τα. Πώς το λένε; Απ' τα βόρεια. Απ' την Lezha, έτσι.*
- Rexhina *Αλλά ούτε Βορειοηπειρώτισσα. Μην σε πούνε Βορειοηπειρώτισσα;*
- Flora *Όχι, όχι. Δεν είναι. Όχι ρε. Όχι ρε. Γι' αυτό τους λέω. Καθαρή, καθαρή Αλβανίδα. Α ρε Τζίνα. Καθαρή, καθαρή. (inaudible) Απ' τα βουνά.*
- Rexhina When they ask you about your origin what do you say? How do you respond?
- Flora I am from Albania.
- Rexhina Do you say I am *Alvanida*?
- Flora Yes, of course! Pure, I tell them.
- Rexhina What does pure mean? In relation to what?
- Flora Pure. I am not mixed, from, that I am from. How is it called? From the north. From Lezha, like that.
- Rexhina But neither Vorioiprotisa<sup>15</sup>. So they don't call you Vorioiprotisa?
- Flora No, no. It is not. No. No. That's why I tell them. Clean, clean, Albanian. Xhina. Clean, clean. (inaudible) From the mountains.

Discussing the use of *Alvanos* addressed from a Greek person towards an Albanian person, Krisilda points to a couple of the reasons that it can have a hurtful effect to the recipient. On the one hand, *Alvanos* reminds its recipients of their social status which is below that of the Greeks. This status is presented as the state of affairs not only because Greeks are the hegemonic group within Greece, but also because the world is presented as naturally hierarchizing ethnicities. In this hierarchy, according to the Greek narrative,

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<sup>15</sup> Irredentist endonym used by the ethnic Greeks of south Albania.

Greeks are placed high as the descendants of the great ancient Greeks, the founders of western civilization. Albanians are placed low in the hierarchy, unable to prove great achievements in the history of their own people. The tweet in Appendix F captures succinctly this idea of ethnic and cultural superiority that Greeks hold about themselves. On the other hand, when *Alvanos* is addressed by a Greek person towards an Albanian, it is also a reminder of the latter's Otherness. Albanians are not Greek, cannot be Greek, and cannot have a claim to this country. As such, Albanians do not belong in Greece; they belong elsewhere, in Albania, where they came from. Thus, *Alvanos* is a hurtful slur towards Albanians as it continuously reminds them that they are the Other and they have no place in Greece. The implications of non-belonging that the slur carries can be particularly harsh towards those second-generation migrants who were born and/or raised in Greece and identify with Greekness at least to some extent.

*Σίγουρα όχι. Ο Έλληνας προς τον Αλβανό πάλι θα το χρησιμοποιήσει σαν βρισιά, που δεν είναι βρισιά, με την έννοια της κατωτερότητας πάντα. Εσύ δεν είσαι από την χώρα μου, είσαι από αλλού, να πας εκεί, είμαι ανώτερος από σένα, είσαι κατώτερος από μένα, είσαι πιο χωριάτης, πιο απολίτιστος, πιο.*

Definitely not. A Greek towards an Albanian will again use it as a slur, which is not a slur, with the sense of inferiority always. You are not from my country, you're from elsewhere, you should go there, I am superior to you, you are inferior to me, you are more villager, more uncultured, more. – Krisilda.

### **4.3 Labels marking feminine grammatical gender**

When it comes to the terms available in Greek to refer to a woman of Albanian ethnicity, speakers have a couple of options: *Alvan-i* [alvan-i], *Alvanida* [alvan-iða], *Alvaneza* [alvan-eza]. All three labels share the same base, *Alvan-* and the difference lies in the

suffix that marks feminine grammatical gender, *-i* [i], *-ida* [iða], or *-eza* [eza]. This is the part where a lot of disagreement emerged among the interviewees about the appropriateness of these labels. In the next subsections I present the arguments participants made in favor of or against each one of the three terms.

#### 4.3.1 *Alvani*

Many second-generation participants were in favor of *Alvani* as the form that marks one as a woman of Albanian origin. One of the arguments was that *Alvani* is perceived as less of a derivative of *Alvanos*, the term marking the Albanian origin of a man; rather it is just the (inflectional) feminine form corresponding to the masculine. This pair is analogical to adjectives such as [eksipni]-[eksipnos] “smart.FEM”-“smart.MASC” where the adjectival suffixes *-i* and *-os* mark feminine and masculine grammatical gender on the base. For Ilirida, *Alvani* is the appropriate feminine form as *Alvanos* and *Alvani* share the same base, *Alvan-*. The gender difference arises from the choice of *-i* or *-os* as the suffix which marks the grammatical gender. In contrast, *Alvanida* is interpreted as being farther from the base *Alvan-* as it involves the addition of the *-ida* [iða] suffix which contains three phones (and three letters graphemically) and actually creates a new stem. Three additional phones make the form longer than the masculine *Alvanos* which, for her, suggests that the feminine derives from the masculine and it is, therefore, not on equal standing with the masculine.

*Το Αλβανή βασικά το προτιμώ γιατί έχει την μικρότερη οπτική απόσταση.*

Actually, I prefer *Alvani* because it has the smallest visual distance. – Ilirida

Many, especially the first-generation migrants, had not heard *Alvani* before and did not have particular feelings towards it. Those that had heard of it had strong feelings towards it and saw it as the only grammatically correct form, dismissing all other forms as ungrammatical, ignorant, and interpreting them as slurs. For Ilira, hearing *Alvani* from someone (instead of *Alvanida*) suggests that the other person is sensitive to the slur potential of *Alvanida* and has sought alternatives that are not slurs. *Alvani*, for her, does not carry the slur potential. This is not the case for all interviewees, such as Admiljan, who interprets it as being pejorative when he hears it from the researcher.

*Rexhina* Την λέξη η Αλβανή γυναίκα, την έχετε ακούσει;

*Shkelzen* Όχι, δεν το έχω ακούσει.

*Rexhina* Have you heard the word *Alvani* woman?

*Shkelzen* No, I have not heard it.

*Η Αλβανή. Η Αλβανή έχει κάτι το, ξέρεις, είναι η σωστή λέξη, έχει κάτι το, βάζει τα πράγματα στην θέση τους, είναι έτσι λίγο ακαδημαϊκό. Οποιος χρησιμοποιεί την λέξη 'η Αλβανή' νιώθω ότι με σέβεται περισσότερο, ότι έχει στο μυαλό του, συζητήσει λιγάκι με το μυαλό του ότι ποια είναι η σωστή λέξη, με παίρνει στα σοβαρά. Οπότε το, αν κάποιος λέει 'η Αλβανή', για μένα σημαίνει ήδη κάποιος που έχει κάνει με παιδί μου, έχει κάτσει πέντε λεπτά και έχει αναρωτηθεί ποια είναι η σωστή λέξη προκειμένου να χρησιμοποιήσει ας πούμε την σωστή, ακόμα και την politically correct λέξη ας πούμε. Γιατί ξέρω ότι είναι ένα statement να πεις 'η Αλβανή'.*

*Alvani. Alvani has something, you know, it's the correct word, has something, puts things in place, it's a little academic. Whoever uses the word Alvani, I feel they respect me more, that they have in their head, they have discussed in their head what the correct word is, they take me seriously. So, if someone says Alvani, for me, it means that someone already has done, they have sat down for five minutes and wondered what's the right word in order to use, let's say, the right one, even,*

let's say, the politically correct one. Because I know that to say *Alvani* is a statement. – Πira

*Η Αλβανή. Είναι Αλβανή. Εμένα μου φαίνεται πολύ περίεργο αυτό. Το έχω ακούσει αλλά μου ξενίζει πάρα πολύ. Η Αλβανή.*

*Alvani. She is Alvani. It seems very weird to me. I have heard it, but it sounds very foreign to me. Alvani.* – Admiljan

#### 4.3.2 *Alvanida*

Most subjects considered *Alvanida* as the feminine form of the label that expresses feminine Albanian ethnicity in Modern Greek. This was especially true of first-generation migrants. This was not true across the board, however. Πira's preference above for *Alvani* is explained by her objections towards *Alvanida*. She reflects she probably considers *Alvanida* inappropriate due to her previous “negative experiences” with the label. Her encounters with *Alvanida* have been in contexts where the label is used in a pejorative way towards women of Albanian origin, whereas this has not been the case with *Alvani*. Such an interpretation ignores, however, that *Alvani* is often an unknown term or is unrecognized as an option to refer to an individual of Albanian origin as seen in Shkelzen's comment above.

*Rexhina: Οπότε ο άνδρας που είναι από την Αλβανία είναι ο Αλβανός. Η γυναίκα που είναι από την Αλβανία, πώς λέγεται;*

*Petrit: Αλβανίδα.*

Rexhina: So, the man who is from Albania is Alvanos. The woman who is from Albania, how is she called?

Petrit: Alvanida.



*Ενδεχομένως να το συνδέω με αρνητικές εμπειρίες που να είχα η ίδια ας πούμε ως παιδί όταν λέγανε ξέρω εγώ ‘α η Αλβανίδα’, ‘άντε μωρέ με την Αλβανίδα’. Ενώ αποκλείεται κάποιος να έλεγε ‘άντε μωρέ με την Αλβανή’.*

Perhaps I associate it with negative experiences that I myself had, say, as a child when they would say like ‘oh the *Alvanida*’, ‘never mind the *Alvanida*’. Whereas there was no way someone would say ‘never mind the *Alvani*’. – Ilira

The fact that *Alvanida* is considered by the subjects as the most generally accepted variant to label a woman of Albanian ethnicity does not mean that the term is free of the slur potential that *Alvanos* has. Interviewees were able to point to a number of indexical meanings to which *Alvanida* could give rise when used as a slur. For instance, Eneida, using again litotes constructions to mitigate the force of her expressions and to dissociate herself from them, describes *Alvanida* as a woman who “is likely not very scholarly, literate” and who “does not dress very fashionably” instead of using the antonyms “illiterate” and “unfashionably”.

*Νομίζω το Αλβανίδα είναι λίγο πιο. Για μένα το Αλβανίδα είναι λίγο πιο, το ακούω λίγο πιο chill. Δεν ξέρω πως να το εξηγήσω. Το ακούω λίγο ότι δεν είναι τόσο, δεν ενέχει την υποτίμηση (inaudible) αυτός ο όρος.*

I think *Alvanida* is a bit more. For me *Alvanida* is a bit more, I hear it as more chill. I don’t know how to explain it. I hear it a bit that it is not so, this term doesn’t have the disparagement (inaudible). – Pavlo

*Δεν γνωρίζω αν γραμματικά το Αλβανή ή το Αλβανίδα είναι πιο decent, αλλά έχοντας διαβάσει λίγο πάνω σε αυτό, έχω δει ότι το Αλβανή είναι πιο αποδεκτός όρος, τουλάχιστον γραμματικά. Πρώτον, και δεύτερον, το Αλβανίδα ίσως επειδή έχει χρησιμοποιηθεί κατά κόρον επίσης, και σχεδόν ποτέ δεν χρησιμοποιούνταν μόνο για να περιγράψει την καταγωγή μιας γυναίκας. Αλλά τις περισσότερες φορές αυτό να μεν υποδείκνυε την καταγωγή της γυναίκας αλλά παράλληλα ήταν από μόνο του*

υποτιμητικό με όλα όσα αυτό εμπεριείχε γιατί συνήθως ήταν η Αλβανίδα καθαρίστρια, η Αλβανίδα εργάτρια, η Αλβανίδα που δούλευε στα χωράφια, η Αλβανίδα που έκανε οποιαδήποτε άλλου είδους δουλειά όπως το να περιποιείται ας πούμε ηλικιωμένους και ηλικιωμένες και τα λοιπά, να καθαρίζει σπίτια και όλα αυτά. Οπότε ακόμη και αν κάποιος μου έλεγε σήμερα ότι το Αλβανίδα είναι πιο γραμματικά σωστό, νομίζω ότι δεν θα μπορούσα να το χρησιμοποιώ.

I do not know whether grammatically *Alvani* or *Alvanida* is more decent, but having read more on it, I have seen that *Alvani* is a more accepted term, at least grammatically. First. And second, perhaps because *Alvanida* has been used mainly, in addition, and almost never has it been used solely to describe the origin of a woman. However, most times, on the one hand, while this signified the origin of a woman, at the same time, it was by itself derogatory with all the meanings it contained because usually it was the *Alvanida* cleaner, the *Alvanida* laborer, the *Alvanida* that worked in the fields, the *Alvanida* that did any type of job such as taking care of the elderly etc, cleaning homes and all this. So even if someone would tell me today that *Alvanida* is more grammatically correct, I think I wouldn't be able to use it. – Pamela Zoe

*Το Αλβανή είναι σαν να 'να μην πούμε Αλβανίδα' ρε παιδί μου γιατί είναι και αυτό συνυφασμένο, σαν το Αλβανός, με μια τύπισσα η οποία μπορεί να μην έχει, παίζει να μην είναι πολύ λόγια, εγγράμματη, να μην ντύνεται ξέρω εγώ πολύ μοντέρνα, ξέρεις, η εργάτρια. Και το Αλβανή να είναι πιο. Δεν ξέρω μου ακούγεται λίγο πιο εκλεπτυσμένο.*

*Alvani* is like “let's not say *Alvanida*”, because it is also associated, like *Alvanos*, with a dudette who might not have, is likely not very scholarly, literate, who, like, does not dress very fashionably, you know, the laborer. And *Alvani* is more. I don't know, it sounds a bit more refined. – Eneida

*Το Αλβανίδα το ακούω πιο πολύ στις ειδήσεις δηλαδή απ' το Αλβανή. Ότι χρησιμοποιείται πιο πολύ στις ειδήσεις, εννοώ, με ρατσιστικό περιεχόμενο σαν κατάληξη.*

I hear *Alvanida* more in the news in comparison to *Alvani*. That it is used more in the news, I mean, with racist content eventually. – Ilirida

#### 4.3.3 *Alvaneza*

Among the variants available to label Albanian women in Modern Greek, *Alvaneza* was identified immediately by most of the interviewees as a slur. Interviewees rejected the term altogether and clarified that they would not use it to refer to themselves nor to other Albanians. Those who identified the slur potential of *Alvanida* regarded *Alvaneza* as more insulting than *Alvanida*. As with *Alvanos* and *Alvanida*, subjects were able to identify the indexical field of *Alvaneza*. This field often overlapped with the indexical field of *Alvanida*, but also carried heavily negative associations not found with *Alvanida*.

*Marilena:* Κάποιοι το λένε και Αλβανέζα.

*Rexhina:* Για πες. Πώς σας φαίνεται το Αλβανέζα;

*Marilena:* Δεν μου αρέσει έτσι όπως το λένε.

*Rexhina:* Γιατί;

*Marilena:* Πολλές Ελληνίδες λένε Αλβανέζα. Δεν ξέρω, δεν μου ακούγεται καλό στο αυτί μου.

*Rexhina:* Είναι σωστό;

*Marilena:* Εγώ πιστεύω όχι, είναι λάθος. Εγώ πιστεύω ότι είναι Αλβανίδα.

*Rexhina:* Και πώς μου είπες εσύ; Σου φαίνεται και άσχημο μου είπες ε;

*Marilena:* Ναι, δεν ακούγεται καλό. Δεν μου ακούγεται εμένα καλά αυτό το. Και πολλές φορές εγώ διορθώνω τις πελάτισσές μου.

*Rexhina:* Και τί σου λένε;

*Marilena:* Όχι Αλβανέζα τους λέω. Και μου λένε το ίδιο πράγμα είναι.

*Marilena:* Some even say *Alvaneza*.

*Rexhina:* Tell me. What do you think about *Alvaneza*?

Marilena: I don't like how they say it.  
Rexhina: Why?  
Marilena: Many Greek women say *Alvaneza*. I don't know, it doesn't sound right in my ears.  
Rexhina: Is it correct?  
Marilena: I believe not, it's wrong. I think it is *Alvanida*.  
Rexhina: And how did you say it? You said it sounds ugly?  
Marilena: Yeah, it doesn't sound good. This doesn't sound good to me. And, many times, I correct my clients.  
Rexhina: And what do they tell you?  
Marilena: It's not *Alvaneza* I tell them. And they tell me it's the same thing.

Marilena mentions she dislikes *Alvaneza* and that she even corrects her clients when they use the term. It is interesting that the Albanian here is the one correcting the Greek grammar of her Greek clients. By correcting the ungrammatical forms her clients produce, Marilena asserts her expertise over Greek grammar and by extension she lays a claim to Greekness. At the same time, she positions herself as more educated than her clients, which goes against stereotypical images of hairdressers as persons with basic education. Her clients reject the ungrammaticality of *Alvaneza*, and Marilena's claim to better understanding of Greek grammar, by placing *Alvaneza* as synonymous to *Alvanida*. This strategy also allows clients to evade any potential accusations of using a slur, by placing *Alvaneza* at the same level as the more generally accepted *Alvanida*.

Rexhina: Για πείτε έχετε ακούσει την λέξη Αλβανέζα; Το έχετε ακούσει αυτό; Αλβανέζα.  
Violeta: Όχι. Δεν το έχω ακούσει.  
Rexhina: Αντί για Αλβανίδα, η Αλβανέζα.

*Violeta:* Δεν το έχω ακούσει.  
*Martin:* Αλβανέζα. Ναι. Τί; Προκλητική. Πώς λέγεται;  
*Rexhina:* Προσβλητικό ε;  
*Violeta:* Δεν το έχω ακούσει.  
*Martin:* Αλβανέζα. Το λένε με...  
*Violeta:* Αυτός βγαίνει πιο πολύ και.  
*Martin:* ...Με ένα ύφος. Με ένα ύφος σαν.  
*Rexhina:* Πώς; Τί ύφος;  
*Martin:* Ύφος ρατσισμού.  
*Rexhina:* Ναι.  
*Martin:* Βγάζει τον ρατσισμό.  
*Violeta:* Δεν το έχω ακούσει.  
*Rexhina:* Δηλαδή έτσι χαμηλό. Δηλαδή κάποιος που είναι πολύ χαμηλά.  
*Martin:* Σε μηδενώνει. Σε μηδενίζει. Όχι σε μηδενώνει. Σε μηδενίζει. Και δε. Εγώ δεν τα γουστάρω αυτά. Δεν μου αρέσει.

*Rexhina:* Tell me, have you heard the word *Alvaneza*? Have you heard this?  
*Alvaneza.*

*Violeta:* No. I haven't heard it.

*Rexhina:* Instead of *Alvanida*, *Alvaneza*.

*Violeta:* I haven't heard it.

*Martin:* *Alvaneza*. Yes. What? Provocative<sup>16</sup>. What's it called?

*Rexhina:* Offensive huh?

*Violeta:* I haven't heard it.

*Martin:* *Alvaneza*. They say it with...

*Violeta:* He goes out more and...

*Martin:* With an attitude. With an attitude like.

*Rexhina:* How? What kind of attitude?

*Martin:* Racist attitude.

<sup>16</sup> In Greek *προκλητική* [proklitiki] 'provocative' and *προσβλητική* [prozvlitiko] 'offensive' start with the same bound prefix *προ-* [pro], hence Martin's confusion.

- Rexhina: I see.
- Martin: It brings out racism.
- Violeta: I haven't heard it.
- Rexhina: Like low. As if someone stands very low.
- Martin: It redutes you. It reduces you. It doesn't redute you. It reduces you. And I don't. I don't dig these things. I don't like it.

For some participants, *Alvaneza* is a legitimate term that is used to refer to Albanian women. This is especially common among first-generation migrants. For instance, this is the term Petrit chooses to refer to Albanian women even though he is responding to a question that contained *Alvanida*. In a sense, then, he ignores *Alvanida* that was used by the interviewer, and corrects it to *Alvaneza*. Additionally, through reported speech, Petrit places *Alvaneza* in the speech of Albanian women in Greece who use the term in a derogatory way towards other Albanian women. In arguing for the ungrammaticality of *Alvaneza*, Petro draws an analogy between *Alvanida* and *Ellin-ida/Aggl-ida*. *Ellinida* [eliniða] and *Agglida* [agliða] mark feminine gender with the derivational suffix *-ida* [iða] just like *Alvanida* does. In this logic, if *Ellinida* and *Agglida* are considered grammatically correct, *Alvanida* should also be considered grammatically correct. Petro, however, fails to draw an analogy between *Alvaneza* and *Suid-eza* [suiðeza] “Swedish.FEM” or *Vietnam-eza* [vietnameza] “Vietnamese.FEM” which also mark feminine gender with *-eza* [eza]. If *Suideza* and *Vietnameza* are grammatical, this should make, by analogy, *Alvaneza* also grammatical and acceptable as a term denoting a woman's Albanian ethnicity.

*Η ίδια είναι Αλβανέζα και λέει ‘ήρθαν οι Αλβανέζες και μας το παίζουν εδώ’. Το έχω ακούσει εγώ ξέρεις στις πλατείες με τα παιδιά όταν έβγαινα εγώ.*

She is herself Albanian and says “*Alvanezes*<sup>17</sup> came here and act like”. You know, I have heard it in the parks when I would go with the kids. – Petrit S.

*Petro K:* Γιατί το σωστό είναι Αλβανίδα. Γι’ αυτό. Ή το Αλβανέζα, ούτε αυτό είναι το σωστό.

*Rexhina:* Για πες μου για το Αλβανέζα.

*Petro K:* Ούτε αυτό μ’ αρέσει. Γιατί δεν είναι το σωστό. Είναι Αλβανίδα. Είναι Ελληνίδα, είναι Αγγλίδα, είναι, και πάει λέγοντας. Οπότε γι’ αυτό δεν το θεωρώ σωστό.

*Petro K:* Because the correct one is *Alvanida*. That’s why. Nor *Alvaneza*, this is not correct either.

*Rexhina:* Tell me about *Alvaneza*.

*Petro K:* I don’t like this either. Because it’s not correct. It’s *Alvanida*. It’s *Ellinida*, it’s *Agglida*, it’s, and so on and so forth. So, that’s why I don’t believe it’s correct.

Flora did not find *Alvaneza* offensive and categorized it as a variant used “in village[s]”. For her, *Alvaneza* is a legitimate variant in as much as regional varieties are legitimate. By reducing *Alvaneza* to a dialectal variant, she also reduces the potential of the label to act as a slur. *Alvaneza* is not a slur, it is simply the label some people have for labeling that ethnicity in their non-standard dialect of Greek. As the conversation progressed, she also associated the variant with older people, suggesting that *Alvaneza* is age-gradient and that it is more commonly used to refer to Albanian women among older age groups. Thus, *Alvaneza* is further legitimized as a variant and its potential as a slur is further reduced. Similar views about *Alvaneza* are also expressed by a couple of second-

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<sup>17</sup> Plural of *Alvaneza*.

generation migrants who view it as age-gradient. It should be noted that these individuals grew up in more rural areas so there might be a correlation between *Alvaneza* and the rural origin of the people who use it. Even if this correlation is true, it still does not preclude the variant being intended as a slur. For instance, Krisilda, who grew up in a rural area, calls the use of *Alvaneza* “derogatory” and proceeds to lay out the indexical meaning of the term. As in other places in the world, there is a general stereotype in Greece that people living outside large urban centers are less educated, lack tact, and are less tolerant towards the ethnic “Other”. All this ideologization of non-urban people suggests that they might be likely to be verbally more overtly xenophobic than people who are ideologized as urban. As a consequence, they might produce slurs such as *Alvaneza* much more frequently than people living in urban centers and might lack non-slur alternatives from their repertoires that might be available to people from the urban centers.

*Flora:* Την λένε μερικοί και Αλβανέζα.

*Rexhina:* Ποιοι το λένε αυτό;

*Flora:* Αλβανέζα ποιος το λέει ρε;

*Rexhina:* Εσύ να μου πεις.

*Flora:* Η Αλβανέζα. Είναι οι απ’ το χωριό νομίζω. Απ’ το χωριό είναι οι περισσότεροι. Ναι, ναι, απ’ το χωριό. Έχω ακούσει και στο χωριό εγώ.

*Rexhina:* Πώς σου φαίνεται εσένα το Αλβανέζα; Σου αρέσει;

*Flora:* Αλβανέζα, εντάξει. Δεν τέτοιο. Απλώς λέω είμαι. Όντως στο χωριό του Γιάννη τους έχω ακούσει να λένε Αλβανέζα.

*Rexhina:* Πού είναι το χωριό του Γιάννη;

*Flora:* Στη Βόνιτσα. Αλβανέζα. Μπορεί να. Ξέρεις, Αλβανέζα, έτσι. Δεν την λένε Αλβανίδα ας πούμε. Αλβανέζα. Ποιος ξέρει; Τους έρχεται πιο...



Rexhina: Πώς σου φαίνεται; Σου φαίνεται σωστό εσένα; Σου φαίνεται οκ;

Flora: Εντάξει. Αμα είναι. Εξαρτάται. Αμα είναι με τους μεγάλους ανθρώπους, έχει να κάνει. Όπως είναι η...

Rexhina: Τί εννοείς;

Flora: Κοίτα, όπως είναι η διάλεκτος, όπως έχουνε στο χωριό ας πούμε, μιλάνε αλλιώς. Έχουν το τέτοιο. Όπως λέμε εμείς ' πρόβατα ' ας πούμε. ' Πρατίνα ' μου λέγανε εμένα οι γιαγιάδες. Κατάλαβες;

Flora: Some call it *Alvaneza*.

Rexhina: Who calls it like this?

Flora: Ugh who is it that calls it *Alvaneza*?

Rexhina: You tell me.

Flora: *Alvaneza*. It is the people from the village, I think. Most are from the village. Yes, yes, from the village. I have heard it in the village too.

Rexhina: What do you think about *Alvaneza*? Do you like it?

Flora: *Alvaneza*, ok. It's not like. I just say I am. Indeed, in Yannis' (husband) village I have heard them say *Alvaneza*.

Rexhina: Where is Yannis' village?

Flora: In Vonitsa. *Alvaneza*. It might be. You know, *Alvaneza*, like that. They like don't call it *Alvanida*. *Alvaneza*. Who knows. For them it's more...

Rexhina: What do you think about it? Do you think it is correct? Does it sound ok to you?

Flora: Fine. If it is. Depends. If it is with older people, it depends. It's like...

Rexhina: What do you mean?

Flora: Look, it's like a dialect, it's like they have it in the village, let's say, they speak differently. They have the thing. How we say [provata] "sheep", let's say. [pratina] "sheep" the grannies would say to me. Do you see?

*Αλβανέζα. Χωριάτισσα, πιο αμόρφωτη ας πούμε, πιο αγράμματη, η καθαρίστρια, πιο λαϊκός άνθρωπος, κάπως έτσι.*

*Alvaneza. The village woman, a more uneducated let's say, a more illiterate, the cleaner, a more lay person, something like that. – Krisilda*

Based on the quotes presented here, it is clear from subjects' interpretations that the labels discussed above are not only labels of ethnicity, but, to a large extent, are also indexical of social class, including profession, social standing, and education.

#### **4.4 Self-identifying ethnic labels**

During the interviews, subjects, on the one hand, expressed their opinions on the labels available in Greek to designate Albanian ethnicity. On the other hand, they expressed the labels they personally prefer to refer to their own ethnicity or the labels with which they self-identify.

##### *4.4.1 Από την Αλβανία “from Albania”*

A large number of participants expressed discomfort towards *Alvanos* and *Alvan -i/ -ida/-eza*. The discomfort was present despite their professions of pride towards the ethnicity and their own identifications as fully or partially ethnically Albanian. To handle this discomfort, many of subjects expressed preference for *από την Αλβανία* “from Albania” when disclosing their ethnicity. This choice moves away from making a statement about ethnicity and makes one about nationality and/or geographical origin. At the same time, it leaves room for negotiation in terms of ethnic identification. It allows the speaker to not commit to an Albanian ethnicity. It also allows the speaker to suggest that they could claim or identify with another ethnic category. *From Albania* does not

mean Albanian. Where one or one's ancestors were geographically born does not entail that they identify with the ethnicity that is adopted by the majority of the people born in that place. A case in point are Albanians from Kosova who identify as *Albanian* rather than *Kosovar* when asked about their ethnicity. The term *Kosovar* refers to their nationality and geographically places them as *Albanians* from the country of Kosova, but the term does not index their ethnicity like *Albanian* does (Jano 2013).

In the excerpt below, Marilena immediately comments on the interpretation of *Alvanos* as an ethnoracial slur that intends to harm the addressee. For her, *Alvanos* immediately “labels” one as a person who carries negative characteristics. Because of this first “ugly” interpretation of *Alvanos*, she prefers “from Albania” as a better designation of one's origin which is “nicer”. Despite the interpretations of *Alvanos* as a slur, participants also acknowledged that its meaning depends, to some extent, on the speaker's intentions. This is represented below by Niko in his comment about “pronunciation”.

*Όχι! Εγώ παράδειγμα λέω είμαι από την Αλβανία. Ούτε Αλβανίδα λέω, ούτε Αλβανέζα. Είμαι απ' την Αλβανία.*

No! for example I say I am from Albania. I neither say *Alvanida*, nor *Alvaneza*. I am from Albania. – Merçeta.

*Marilena* Γιατί η λέξη Αλβανός έχει. Πώς να στο πω; Έχει χαρακτηριστική πολύ τέτοια, αρνητική σκέψη. Με το που ακούς αυτήν την λέξη, Αλβανός, σαν να σε κατηγορούνε για κάτι.

*Niko* Η γνώμη μου είναι ότι αναλόγως πώς θα το προφέρει ο άλλος. Αλβανός. Δεν λέμε και Έλληνας; Και Αλβανός. Το ίδιο πράγμα είναι. Αλλά...

*Marilena* [Πώς το λέει.]

Niko [Αμα το λέει.]  
 Marilena Ναι, αν θα πει ‘ο Αλβανός!’  
 Niko Ο Αλβανός είναι λίγο.  
 Marilena Πιο έτσι.  
 Niko Χτυπάει. Αμα το λέει.  
 Marilena Δηλαδή εμένα θα μου άρεσε να πει ‘από την Αλβανία’, δηλαδή να το πει πιο όμορφα. Όχι να το πει με άσχημο τρόπο.

Marilena Because the word *Alvanos* has. How can I say it? It has a big characteristic thing, negative though. As soon as you hear the word, *Alvanos*, as if you’re accused of something.

Niko My opinion is that it depends on how the other person will pronounce it. *Alvanos*. Don’t we say Greek too? *Alvanos* as well. It’s the same thing. [But]

Marilena [How they say it.]

Niko [If they say it.]

Marilena Yes, if they say ‘the *Alvanos*!’

Niko ‘The *Alvanos*’ is a bit.

Marilena More like.

Niko It aches you. If it’s said.

Marilena Like, I would like if they said ‘from Albania’, that is, to say it nicer. Not to say it in an ugly way.

#### 4.4.2 Αλβανοελλην-ίδα-ας “Albanian Greek” and Ελληνοαλβαν-ή-ός “Greek Albanian”

Many of the study participants mentioned that the labels that they felt that represented who they are were not the ones that they would use in public when asked about their ethnicity. The terms *Greek Albanian* and *Albanian Greek* that index double ethnic identification are such prime examples. Most of second-generation participants expressed that these labels represent how they feel and how they think about themselves. This

challenges single-ethnicity notions that see ethnicity as hereditary, unmalleable, and monolithic. Similar phenomena have been observed in the Basque Country where code-switching between Basque and Spanish challenges monolithic understandings of what it means to be Basque today (Elordui 2022). However, none of the interviewees said that they use these labels about themselves when disclosing their ethnicity to others. A couple of explanations justified these choices. One, is that the *Greek Albanian* or *Albanian Greek* labels have been misinterpreted in the past when subjects have made attempts to use them to refer to themselves. Their interlocutors have understood the double labels to mean that one parent is Albanian and that the other is Greek and, therefore, the person who used the double labels identifies with both ethnicities. This misunderstanding would lead to awkward explanations from the subjects that both their parents are Albanian, but that they themselves identify as both Greek and Albanian having been raised in Greece. Eventually, to avoid these interpretations of *Albanian Greek / Greek Albanian*, the subjects avoid using the double labels altogether. Thus, *Alvanos* and *Alvan-i/-ida* are the preferred terms when participants discuss their ethnicity.

A second reason that emerged as an explanation about not using the double label, which is closely related to the first reason, was the resistance they have found from interlocutors towards their use of *Albanian Greek* or *Greek Albanian*. Participants voiced hesitation to use such labels because they feel that they have not been given permission to use them. Specifically, they expressed that they feel they do not have permission to claim a Greek ethnic identity, so a double identity, *Greek* and *Albanian*, seems out of reach for them. This is despite the fact that all but one of these individuals hold Greek citizenships. That is, they are nationally Greek, and through a rigorous process of naturalization, they

have been deemed Greek enough in the eyes of the law, but they are still unable to call themselves fully or partially Greek.

The dual label itself is under negotiation for the members of the second generation. Most participants expressed doubt about the order of the ethnic labels *Albanian* and *Greek* in the formation of the dual label. A general preference was expressed for *Greek Albanian* with subjects claiming they “cannot explain why” that sounded like the most appropriate order. A few questioned this ordering by offering examples of dual identities in the US, such as *Greek American*. There, dual labels are formulated with the migratory ethnic background followed by the designation of nationality of the destination country. Analogically, then, in the Greek context, the ordering would be *Albanian Greek*. Some subjects expressed that they had not heard this ordering, however, and although rarely, the term they were vaguely familiar with was *Greek Albanian* and not *Albanian Greek*. The doubt in word order also manifested in participants asking the researcher about the appropriate ordering of the terms. They sought advice from someone who was presented to them as a linguist, and whom therefore, they saw as an authority who could clarify the order which they could then reproduce with confidence.

A couple of participants from the second generation deviated from their peers about the feeling expressed towards the dual identity. In doing so, they aligned with the views of those who misinterpret *Albanian Greek* and *Greek Albanian* to mean that an individual is born to one Albanian and one Greek parent. In this view, ethnicity is a biological category that is inherited from ones’ parents along with other biological traits such as eye color. This biological reality is fixed and not subject to social forces that might render it negotiable or shifting between generations. The individuals who hold this view feel that,

since they have not inherited a Greekness from at least one of their parents, they cannot claim a Greekness for themselves with the dual labels. *Albanian* is the only identity they can claim unquestionably and with confidence because this is the ethnicity that they inherited from their parents. Violeta, who was raised in Greece since the age of three, has a firm belief in this view even though she clarifies that she “love[s] Greece very much” and that she “imagine[s] herself spending the rest of [her] life” there.

*Rexhina* Οι λέξεις *Ελληνοαλβανίδα* ή *Αλβανοελληνίδα* σε αφορούν;

*Stefania* Ναι, ναι. Εγώ αυτό. Αν μου έλεγες ότι πες μου τι νιώθεις, χωρίς να προσπαθείς να. Γιατί εγώ αν με ρωτάνε λέω *Αλβανίδα* και κάποιες φορές λέω και *Ελληνίδα*, σκέτο.

*Rexhina* Ναι.

*Stefania* Λέω να μην κάθομαι τώρα να λέω όχι νιώθω μισό-μισό, όχι. Κατάλαβες;

*Rexhina* Ναι.

*Stefania* Αλλά άμα δεις μέσα μου, ξέρω εγώ, *Ελληνοαλβανίδα* νιώθω.

*Rexhina* Το χρησιμοποιείς να δηλωθείς όταν σε ρωτάνε: τι είσαι; *Ελληνοαλβανίδα*.

*Stefania* Όχι, όχι. Ποτέ.

*Rexhina* Γιατί;

*Stefania* Ε θα κάτσει να μου πει ο άλλος τι εννοείς; Έχεις την μαμά; Δεν έχεις και τους δύο γονείς από την *Αλβανία*; Δηλαδή κατευθείαν πάει το μυαλό τους στην καταγωγή, στο αίμα. Κατάλαβες; Δεν μπορούν να δεχτούν το θέμα του πολιτισμού και της παιδείας και που γεννιέσαι. Αυτό που εμένα μου γίνεται σχεδόν πάντα είναι η ερώτηση αν έχω και τους 2 μου γονείς *Αλβανούς* γιατί δεν φαίνομαι. Γιατί θέλω να σου πω ότι πάντα σκέφτονται τους γονείς. Δεν μπορούν να.

*Rexhina* Do the words *Greek Albanian* or *Albanian Greek* pertain to you?

Stefania Yes, yes. I that. If you asked me to tell you what you feel, without trying to. Because if I am asked, I say *Albanian* and sometimes *Greek*, by itself.

Rexhina Yeah.

Stefania I say [to myself] Am I supposed to explain no I feel half and half, no. You understand?

Rexhina Yeah.

Stefania But if you, let's say, look inside me, I feel *Greek Albanian*.

Rexhina Do you use it to state what you are when you are asked about it? *Greek Albanian*.

Stefania No, no. Never.

Rexhina Why?

Stefania The other person will start asking what you mean. Is your mom? Are not both your parents from Albania? That is, immediately their mind goes to origin, to blood. Do you see? They cannot accept the issue of culture and education and where you're born. What I always get asked if both my parents are Albanian because I do not look [Albanian]. I'm trying to say, they always think about the parents. They can't.

*Rexhina Οι όροι Αλβανοελληνίδα ή Ελληνοαλβανίδα σε αφορούν;*

*Violeta Δεν θα το έλεγα.*

*Rexhina Για εξήγησέ μου.*

*Violeta Θα σου πω. Εγώ αγαπάω πάρα πολύ την Ελλάδα και θα, φαντάζομαι τον εαυτό μου να περνάει και όλο μου το υπόλοιπο της ζωής. Αγαπάω και την χώρα, και την ιστορία της, και πολλά πράγματα, και τον πολιτισμό της, αλλά θεωρώ ότι η καταγωγή μου είναι καθαρά αλβανική. Εννοώ είναι κάτι με το οποίο γεννιέσαι. Εντάξει δεν είναι τόσο απόλυτο. Βέβαια σου λέω, ειλικρινά αγαπάω την Ελλάδα, και σίγουρα αν είχα να διαλέξω μεταξύ των δύο χωρών θα διάλεγα την Ελλάδα γιατί*



*εδώ έχω ζήσει και έχω περάσει και όλη μου την ζωή. Αλλά δεν νιώθω Ελληνίδα.*

Rexhina Do the terms *Albanian Greek* or *Greek Albanian* pertain to you?

Violeta I would not say that.

Rexhina Explain this to me.

Violeta I'll tell you. I love Greece very much and I would, I imagine myself spending the rest of my life [here]. I love this country, and its history, and many things, and its culture, but I think that my origin is purely Albanian. I mean it is something with which you are born. Ok it is not so absolute. Of course, as I told you, I sincerely love Greece, and for sure if I had to choose between the two countries, I would choose Greece because here I have lived and I have spent my whole life. But I do not feel Greek.

*Petro Το χρησιμοποιούνε [με αρνητική έννοια], αλλά Αλβανοί είμαστε. Μόνο Αλβανός θα πω ότι είμαι.*

*Rexhina Ναι. Αυτή, αυτές οι λέξεις που ακούγονται τελευταία, Ελληνοαλβανός-Αλβανοέλληνας, πώς σου φαίνονται;*

*Petro Σαν να μην υπάρχουνε. Σαν να μην υπάρχουνε. Είσαι Αλβανός ή Έλληνας.*

*Rexhina Οκ. Οπότε δεν σε αφορούν εσένα αυτές οι λέξεις;*

*Petro Όχι, όχι. Καθόλου.*

Petro They use it [in a negative sense], but we are Albanian. I will only say that I am *Alvanos*.

Rexhina Yeah. This, those words that are heard recently, *Greek Albanian*, *Albanian Greek*. What do you think of them?

Petro As if they do not exist. As if they do not exist. You are either *Albanian* or *Greek*.

Rexhina Okay. So those terms do not pertain to you?

Petro No, no. Not at all.

#### 4.4.3 Δεύτερη γενιά “*second generation*”

*Second generation* was another term that participants in the study felt was representative of their identity. It also emerged as descriptive of participants’ lived experience and life journey. Still, few mentioned that they use this term when asked about their self-identification. Again, *Alvanos* and *Alvan-i/-ida* are the terms that subjects eventually use for themselves. *Second generation* is the elliptical form of ‘second-generation migrant’. This is the term that institutionally has been ascribed to those Albanians who were either born in Greece or came to Greece at a young age with their parents. The parents of this second generation are the first generation in the order of migration who came to Greece after their formative years and matches typical classifications of migratory generations in the migratory literature (e.g., Fajth & Lessard-Phillips 2023, Müller-Suleymanova 2023). Many second-generation migrants in Greece have received five-year residence permits under this institutional classification. More importantly, however, many have received their Greek citizenships by falling under this definition of second generation (among fulfilling other bureaucratic criteria). One participant who is also involved in activist action about migrant rights in Greece additionally supports ‘Albanian migrant’ as a self-identifying term. For her, the fact that she is a migrant, albeit raised from a young age in the destination country, is the factor that fully captures her lived experience, has defined her formative years, and indexes her social standing and treatment in the present.

Rexhina Ο όρος Αλβανίδα μετανάστρια 2<sup>ης</sup> γενιάς σε αφορά;

*Violeta* *Ναι.*

*Rexhina* *Για εξήγησέ μου.*

*Violeta* *Ε νομίζω ότι αυτή είναι η κατάσταση μου. Αυτό που έχει συμβεί στην ζωή μου. Επειδή οι γονείς μου κάποια στιγμή στην ζωή τους αποφάσισαν να μεταναστεύσουν εδώ, οπότε αυτό είχε ως συνέπεια εγώ να έρθω σε μια πολύ μικρή ηλικία εδώ και να ζήσω.*

*Rexhina* *Εσύ προσδιορίζεσαι έτσι; Δηλαδή συστήνεσαι ως έτσι όταν σε ρωτάνε από που είσαι;*

*Violeta* *Όχι.*

*Rexhina* *Οκ. Απλά αντιλαμβάνεσαι την εαυτή σου εσύ ας πούμε;*

*Violeta* *Ακριβώς.*

*Rexhina* *Does the term *second generation Albanian migrant* pertain to you?*

*Violeta* *Yes.*

*Rexhina* *Explain this to me.*

*Violeta* *I think that this is my situation. What has happened to my life. Because my parents at some point in their lives decided to migrate here, so this resulted in me coming here at a very young age and to live [here].*

*Rexhina* *Do you orient yourself as such? That is, do you introduce yourself as such when they ask you where you're from?*

*Violeta* *No.*

*Rexhina* *Okay. So, let's say, you just understand yourself in this manner?*

*Violeta* *Exactly.*

*Rexhina* *Το χρησιμοποιείς το *Αλβανοελληνίδα* για την εαυτή σου; Δηλαδή συστήνεσαι έτσι;*

*Ilirida* *Όχι ακόμα. Δηλαδή ακόμα και σε επίπεδο ομιλιών και συζητήσεων πολύ συχνά μπαίνω ως, και το λέω εγώ εννοώ να μπω έτσι, ως μετανάστρια δεύτερης γενιάς. Γιατί θεωρώ ότι είναι δύο διαφορετικά πράγματα. Δεν, δηλαδή έχω αρχίσει, είμαι οκ με αυτήν την*

ταυτότητα. Θέλω να μεταβώ σε αυτήν την ταυτότητα. Γιατί θεωρώ πολιτικά ότι είναι το πιο σωστό, υβριδικές ταυτότητες. Αλλά κάτι δεν με αφήνει σε συναισθηματικό επίπεδο να πάω εκεί ακόμα.

Rexhina Ναι.

Ilirida Αυτό.

Rexhina Μίλησέ μου λίγο για το μετανάστρια δεύτερης γενιάς που μου είπες ότι συστήνεσαι έτσι.

Ilirida Ε είναι το πιο αντιπροσωπευτικό για μένα, νομίζω. Εννοώ άμα πεις σε κάποιον μετανάστρια δεύτερης γενιά ή σε κάποιον βασικά ομοπαθή, καταλαβαίνεις πολλά πράγματα ρε συ. Είναι ολόκληρη κοινωνική κατηγορία που καταλαβαίνεις πολλά πράγματα. Είναι πολύ προσδιοριστικό.

Rexhina Do you use *Albanian Greek* for yourself? That is, do you introduce yourself as such?

Ilirida Not yet. That is, even in the context of talks and discussions I very often enter as, and I mean I ask to enter as such, as a *second-generation migrant*. Because I think that these are two different things. I have not, like, I have started, I am ok with this identity. I want to transition to this identity. Because I think that politically it is more correct, hybrid identities. But something doesn't let me at an emotional level to go there yet.

Rexhina Yeah.

Ilirida That's all.

Rexhina Tell me a bit about the *second-generation migrant* that you mentioned earlier that you introduce yourself by.

Ilirida It is more representative for me, I think. I mean, if you address someone, a *second-generation migrant* or actually someone with the same troubles, you like understand a lot of things. It is a whole social category that you understand a lot of things. It is very orienting.

#### 4.4.4 Αλβανά (μεταναστά) - *Alvana (metanasta)* “Albanian (migrants)”

Although only mentioned by two subjects, the non-binary term *Alvana* was also brought up as a term to designate persons of Albanian origin in Greece. In those instances, *Alvana* was not used as a self-identifying term. Rather it was used by the speaker discussing other unidentified people with which she shares a migratory journey. The term is morphologically marked as neuter, plural, and nominative. This marking, along with the singular neuter, has been on the rise in Modern Greek in recent years as gender inclusive (Argyriou 2023). Some speakers will opt to use these neuter forms when referring to non-binary individuals, when the gender of a someone referred to is not important, or as a generic and gender-inclusive term. This marks a slow shift in Modern Greek from using masculine grammatical forms as the default for mixed-gender groups or for generic references to persons. Similar practices with the generic masculine are encountered in other languages that mark grammatical gender, famously Spanish, and any attempts to replace the masculine as generic are initially met with objections (Argyriou 2023). The participant who used *Alvana* also produced *Alvana metanasta* “Albanian migrants” marked for plural neuter. *Alvana metanasta* is used to collectively refer to Albanians in Greece highlighting again the significance of the migratory experience as a defining characteristic of the Albanian population in Greece.

*Ας πούμε οι συμμαθητές μου στο σχολείο, όσα ήταν Αλβανά, επειδή ήμασταν, κάπως είχε τύχει όλα να είμαστε από νότια Αλβανία. Τα επίθετά μας πέρναγαν πολύ ως ελληνικά.*

Let’s say my classmates in school, those who were *Alvana*, because we were, it somehow happened that we were all from south Albania. Our last names passed for Greek a lot. – Merilena.

Φυσική απειλή όχι ιδιαίτερα, αλλά ένιωθα πάντα, και ειδικά ως παιδί, που το έβλεπα και από συμμαθητές μου, πώς συμπεριφέρονταν και τα λοιπά, και άλλα μεταναστά Αλβανά, ότι ήταν ντροπή να ξέρουν οι γύρω σου ότι είσαι Αλβανίδα.

Not that much physical violence, but I always felt, and especially as a kid, that I saw from my classmates, how they acted and that, and other *Alvana metanasta*, that it was shameful for the people around you to know you're *Alvanida*. – Marilena.

#### 4.4.5 *Alvaniola*

A few participants, who are part of the same social networks, mentioned *Alvaniola* [alvanola] as one of the terms they have heard used for Albanians in Greece. None of them indicated that they personally use the term for this purpose, however. The same participants also offered that they first encountered the term at a public-facing event about Albanian migration that took place in Athens in February 2023 where they participated as speakers in the event panel or as audience members. At the event, one of the panel speakers, an artist and activist, self-identified as *Alvaniola* stating that they would like to *κουιρεύσω* [kuirefso] “queerify” the position of authority they have been presented as with their role as a speaker in the event. They further add they prefer the term *μαχητική Αλβανιόλα* [maçitiki alvanola] “militant *Alvaniola*” to better represent who they are. Although the speaker does not explicitly state this, based on the small number of Greek words ending in -jóla/-jólá<sup>18</sup>, it is most likely that *Alvaniola* is a blend based on *Alvan-i/-os* and *καριόλα* [karjola] “bitch, slut”. Other subjects who mentioned *Alvaniola* during the interviews seem to agree about the two constitutive parts of the term. The latter is a reclaimed term by the Greek queer community which suggests that a similar

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<sup>18</sup> Others include musical instruments (e.g., [vjola] “viola”) and similar slur words towards women (e.g., [xazovjola] “silly, plain”) since -jóla/-jólá mark feminine grammatical gender.

reclamation is happening with *Alvaniola* as a term which “queerifies” the ethnic label *Alvan-i-os*. Attitudes towards *Alvaniola* varied from full embracing of the term to praise of its creativity and to rejection because it sounds *cute αλλά χαζούλικο* “cute but silly”.

*Μου άρεσε πάρα πολύ! Μου φάνηκε ποιητικό μέχρι αηδίας. [...] μου φάνηκε τέλειο. Έχει κάτι παιχιδιάρικο, έχει κάτι queer μέσα. Αν χρησιμοποιείται έτσι.*

I liked it a lot! I thought it was poetic to the core. [...] I thought it was great. There is something playful, there is something queer. If it’s used like that. – Ilira.

*Είχα πάει σε μια συζήτηση των ΑΣΚΙ πριν κάποιους μήνες και ένας εκ των συνομιλητών (βιολογικό φύλο άνδρας) χρησιμοποίησε αυτόν τον όρο για να αυτοπροσδιορισθεί. Πράγμα το οποίο ένιωθα να με εκπροσωπεί κι εμένα και να νιώθω ταύτιση. Κι έκτοτε μου αρέσει να χρησιμοποιώ αυτόν τον προσδιορισμό αν και εντελώς slang και αδόκιμο. [...] Αναφέρθηκε από ένα άτομο που μιλούσε για την μητέρα του. Και γενικά για τις μετανάστριες Α γενιάς. Για το πόσο αγωνίστηκαν στην Ελλάδα, για το πόσο δύσκολο ήταν αυτό που έπρεπε να κάνουν. Να εργάζονται από το πρωί μέχρι το βράδυ και παράλληλα να φροντίζουν την οικογένεια, το σπίτι κλπ. Και κατέληξε να λέει ότι (ο ομιλητής) ότι το μεταναστευτικό του background τον κάνει να νιώθει περήφανη αλβανιόλα. Γενικά μου αρέσει όταν πλάθουμε εμείς τα ίδια νέες λέξεις για να προσδιοριστούμε. Και καλά κάνουμε. Γιατί ίσως οι υπάρχουσες λέξεις δεν μας χωράνε. Μου φαίνεται τρυφερό και ταυτόχρονα αστείο και ειρωνικό το αλβανιόλα. Και δεν θα την χρησιμοποιούσα σε κάθε πλαίσιο προφανώς. Αλλά στα οικεία μου περιβάλλοντα μου αρέσει να χρησιμοποιώ τέτοιους προσδιορισμούς.*

I went to a discussion by ASKI a few months ago and one of the speakers (biological sex man) used this term to self-identify. Which I felt that represents me and I felt like I identified. And since then, I like using this orientation even though its completely slang and illegitimate. [...] It was used by a person who talked about his mother. And, in general, about first-generation women migrants. About how much they struggled in Greece, about how difficult what they had to do was. To

work from morning till evening and at the same time take care of the family, the house etc. And the speaker ended up saying that his migratory background makes him feel like a proud *Alvaniola*. In general, I like when we coin ourselves new words to define ourselves. And it's good we do that. Because maybe the existing words do not fit us. I think *Alvaniola* is sweet and at the same time funny and ironic. And I wouldn't use it in every framework obviously. But in my familiar contexts I like to use these kinds of identifiers. – Rexhina B.

*Rexhina* Έχεις ακούσει κάποιον άλλον όρο που να χρησιμοποιείται για να αναφερθεί σε άτομα αλβανικής καταγωγής στα ελληνικά;

*Eneida* Έχω ακούσει το Αλβανιόλα.

*Rexhina* Πώς σου φαίνεται αυτό;

*Eneida* Γελοίο. Μου φαίνεται γελοίο. Αλλά την έχω, το έχω ακούσει από και καλά *queer*, όχι και καλά, *queer*. Εννοώ ότι όχι από άλλους, από *queer* Αλβανά άτομα να το χρησιμοποιούνε σαν τύπου *reverse pride*. Σε μια παρουσίαση αυτό. Το οποίο μου φαίνεται χαζούλικο. *Cute* αλλά χαζούλικο. Έχω ακούσει το...

*Rexhina* Τί σημαίνει Αλβανιόλα;

*Eneida* Είναι σαν το καργιόλα αλλά με το Αλβανίδα μαζί. Δηλαδή είναι πώς λέμε περήφανα πουτα-, περήφανα πουτάνες; Ξέρεις ότι πας να κάνεις *reverse*. Αυτό.

*Rexhina* Have you heard some other term that is used to refer to individuals of Albanian origin in Greek?

*Eneida* I have heard *Alvaniola*.

*Rexhina* What do you think about it?

*Eneida* Ridiculous. It sounds ridiculous. But I have heard it from so called, not so called, from *queer*. I mean, not others, but from *queer Alvana* individuals that use it in a sort of *reverse pride*. [I heard it] at a presentation. Which sounds silly. *Cute* but silly. I have heard...

*Rexhina* What does *Alvaniola* mean?



Eneida It's like [karjola] “bitch, slut” but together with *Alvanida*. That is, you know how we say *proud slut, proud sluts*? You know, like you're going to reverse it. That's all.

#### 4.5 Other terms

The rest of the conversations revolved around some more recent terms that are used to refer to Albanian migrants. Participants' stance towards and interpretations of those terms, *Alvaniar-a-is*, *S(k)iptari*, are given in the next sections along with terms offered by participants themselves, *Turkalvanos*, *alvanofatsa*.

##### 4.5.1 *Alvaniara & Alvaniaris*

First-generation migrants expressed no familiarity with *Αλβανιώρα* [alvaɣara] “Albanian.FEM” and *Αλβανιώρας* [alvaɣaris] “Albanian.MASC” when the term was mentioned to them. Some, even if they expressed unfamiliarity with it, exhibited dislike and suspicion upon hearing the term. Most familiar with *Alvaniara* and *Alvaniaris* were those of the second generation. For instance, Pavlo mentions that he uses it “for fun” towards his older sister to joke on the fact that she doesn't hold a Greek citizenship, whereas he, who is younger than her, does hold a Greek citizenship. That is, he recognizes a slur potential in the word, but reclaims it in playful interactions with his sister where it is not interpreted as an insult. Most likely the interpretation is one of indirectly criticizing Greeks who use such ethnoracial slurs towards Albanians.

Ilira, a second-generation migrant, did not recognize *Alvaniara/Alvaniaris* but evaluated the terms positively for their creativity like *Alvaniola* described earlier. The creativity in these terms lies in the gender-marking suffixes, *-ώρα* [ara] for feminine and -

άρης [aris] for masculine. These are not typically used in Greek to mark ethnicity, but are found in other adjectives (e.g., ζηλιάρια [zilara] “jealous.FEM” and ζηλιάρης [zilaris] “jealous.MASC”). Not all Albanians of the second generation had similar reactions to it, however. Violeta only sees the terms as slurs and admits that this is probably the case because her experience with the terms has only been one where they are used as slurs. Finally, even though Marilena finds them funny, she expresses hesitation when these are produced by Greeks towards Albanians. She expresses fatigue with Greeks pushing the boundaries of what ethnic labels or slurs are acceptable to playfully use with or around Albanians. Even when this involves Greek friends, she feels that they don’t have the right to joke with these terms since they are not really committed to understanding her lived experience as an Albanian in Greece. Not understanding where she comes from, for her, is not true friendship and it takes away one’s right to attempt humor with and about ethnic labels.

*Rexhina Έχετε ακούσει την λέξη Αλβανιάρης ή Αλβανιάρια;*

*Petrit Όχι.*

*Rexhina Οκ. Πώς σας φαίνονται αυτές οι λέξεις τώρα που σας τις είπα εγώ;*

*Petrit Αυτό δεν είναι κάτι σωστό να το λες. Αυτό το λες, παράδειγμα το Αλβανιάρια, αυτή είναι πολύ, σαν προσβολή είναι. Δεν είναι. Να σε λέει κανονικά, δεν είναι προσβολή.*

Rexhina Have you heard the word *Alvaniaris* or *Alvaniara*?

Petrit No.

Rexhina Ok. What do you think of these words now that I said them?

Petrit This is not right to say. You say this, for instance, *Alvaniara*, she is very, it’s like an insult. It’s not. To be callrd normally [Alvan-i/-ida], it’s not an insult.

*Με την αδερφή μου π.χ., που ξέρω εγώ μέσα στα όρια της πλάκας. Τώρα θα μου πεις βέβαια τι πλάκα, υποδηλώνει και τα διάφορα στερεότυπα τα οποία μας έχουνε κολλήσει στο μυαλό. Θα την πω, ας πούμε, Αλβανιάρρα γιατί δεν έχει ακόμα την ελληνική υπηκοότητα η αδερφή μου. Και εγώ είμαι ο Έλληνας της οικογένειας. Πολλές φορές τους κάνω bullying. Την αδελφή μου θα την πω Αλβανιάρρα. Τους γονείς μου ξέρω εγώ μπορεί να τους πω ρε παιδί μου τι κάνω εγώ ο Έλληνας ανάμεσα στους Αλβανούς.*

With my sister for example. Where it's like within the framework of joking. Well, you can ask, is that joke, it suggests a bunch of stereotypes that they have stuck in our brains. For example, I will call her *Alvaniara* because my sister doesn't have yet the Greek citizenship. And I am the Greek one in the family. Many times, I'll bully them. I will call my sister *Alvaniara*. To my parents I might say, what am I, the Greek, doing among these Albanians. – Pavlo

*Rexhina To Αλβανιάρρης και Αλβανιάρρα τα έχεις ακούσει;*

*Ilira Οχι. (laughs). Τι σημαίνει αυτό;*

*Rexhina Δεν ξέρω. Για πες μου εσύ πως σου φαίνονται. Άμα τα άκουγες τώρα, τί θα νόμιζες ότι σημαίνουν;*

*Ilira Μου φαίνονται σαν το 'αλανιάρρα, αλανιάρρης'. Είναι τέλειο!*

Rexhina Have you heard [alvanara] and [alvanaris]?

Ilira No. (laughs). What does that mean?

Rexhina I don't know. You tell me how it sounds to you. If you heard it right now, what would you think it meant?

Ilira It sounds like [alavara], [alavaris]<sup>19</sup>. It's amazing!

*Rexhina Ναι. Τις λέξεις Αλβανιάρρης και Αλβανιάρρα τις έχεις ακουστά;*

*Violeta Ε ναι.*

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<sup>19</sup> The feminine and masculine forms for loafer, drifter.

Rexhina Αυτές τι πάνε να πούνε;

Violeta Δεν ξέρω. Νομίζω ότι αυτό είναι επιτομή της αηδίας στο δικό μου το μυαλό. Νομίζω ότι μόνο προσβλητικά μπορεί να το χρησιμοποιήσει κάποιος. Εντάξει είναι θέμα, ξέρεις, και των βιωμάτων που έχει ο καθένας. Μπορεί αν είμαι και λίγο δραματική αυτήν την στιγμή αλλά...

Rexhina Yeah. Have you heard the words *Alvaniaris* and *Alvaniara*?

Violeta Of course.

Rexhina What do they mean?

Violeta I don't know. I think that this is the epitome of disgust in my head. I think that someone can only use it as an insult. Ok, you know, it has to do with the experience that one has. I may be a bit dramatic right now but...

*Γενικά αυτές τις λέξεις που μου φαίνονται αστείες, δεν ξέρω. (inaudible) Είναι αλήθεια πως από άλλους (inaudible). Δεν μου έχει τύχει πολύ συχνά εκτός από Έλληνες. Μου έχει τύχει να ακούσω από Έλληνες και καλά για πλάκα. Νιώθω ότι, νιώθω πλέον ακόμα και εκεί που λέμε ότι 'α είμαστε φίλοι οκ, σε αφήνω να το κάνεις'. (inaudible) Εμείς έχουμε καταλήξει ένα αστείο πλέον για τους Έλληνες. Και πέρα από αστείο δεν μπορούν να τους μιλήσουμε σοβαρά για το βίωμά μας (inaudible) πραγματικά αν (inaudible) θα το έκοβα μαχαίρι από όλους γιατί νιώθω ότι έχει περάσει τόσο πολύ ως πλάκα που (inaudible). Δεν θέλω να σε ακούσω να μιλάς (inaudible). Γιατί μόλις πας να πιάσεις σοβαρή συζήτηση για το βίωμά σου, (inaudible) πάρα πολύ επιφανειακά (inaudible) καθόλου.*

In general, these words sound funny, I don't know. (inaudible) It's true that from others (inaudible). It hasn't happened [that I've heard them] very often besides Greeks. It has happened that I've heard them from Greeks supposedly jokingly. I feel that, now I feel that even when we say 'we are friends, cool, you can do this'. (inaudible) we have ended up being a joke for Greeks now. And beyond the jokes, we can't speak to them seriously about our experience (inaudible) honestly if

(inaudible) I would cut it cold from everyone because I feel that it's been passed as a joke to such an extent that (inaudible). I don't want to hear you speak (inaudible). Because as soon as you try to open up a serious conversation about your experience, (inaudible) very superficially (inaudible) at all. – Marilena

#### 4.5.2 *S(k)iptari*

*Skiptari* [s(c)iptari], the Greek L2 variant of the Albanian endonym *Shqiptar* [ʃçiptar] was another term that participants evaluated. Several first-generation participants expressed a preference for *Skiptari* over *Alvanos*. The preference is one for the endonym, even if it is produced with L2 phonology, over the Greek exonym which is often used as a slur. Kujtim associated the term with older Greek speakers, whereas Ilir associated it with Arvanites, assimilated albanophones of present-day Greece, and with Greek speakers close to the Albanian-Greek political border. That is, for Ilir the term is used within Greece by those with some significant knowledge of Albanian or significant contact with Albanian speakers due to their proximity to Albania. Like Ilir, several participants further clarified that *Skiptari* is appreciated because the speaker attempts to create proximity with the addressee by producing it. The speakers exhibit knowledge about Albania and that they are making an effort to form a personal relationship with the addressee. By comparison, then, *Alvanos* is dispreferred due to the lack of this effort.

- Rexhina* Έχετε ακούσει οι Έλληνες να λένε ‘α αυτός είναι Σκιπτάρι’;  
*Kujtim* Ναι, και αυτό το λένε. Σπάνια όμως. Σπάνια. Αλλά το λένε, ναι.  
*Rexhina* Δηλαδή ποιους έχετε ακούσει να το λένε αυτό;  
*Kujtim* Οι πιο πολλοί οι μεγάλοι άνθρωποι.  
*Rexhina* Και πώς σας φαίνεται αυτό; Δηλαδή άμα κάποιος σας πει ‘ε Σκιπτάρη’.

Kujtim Όχι, εντάξει. Πιο καλά μου ακούγεται έτσι παρά να μου πει  
Αλβανός.

Rexhina Have you heard Greeks say he's *Skiptari*?

Kujtim Yeah, they say that too. Albeit rarely. Rarely. But they say it, yes.

Rexhina So, who have you heard say it?

Kujtim Most times older people.

Rexhina And what do you think of this? That is, if someone calls you 'hey  
*Skiptari*.'

Kujtim No, ok. It sounds better like this than being called *Alvanos*.

*Σκιπτάρης e perdorin οι Έλληνες που είναι Αρβανίτες γιατί ξέρουν τί σημαίνει αυτό.  
Έλληνας-Έλληνας, δεν το ξέρει και δεν το χρησιμοποιεί. Μόνο Έλληνες του  
μεθορίου, δηλαδή του που είναι από τα σύνορα κοντά που μπορεί να μην είναι και  
Αρβανίτες, αρβανίτικη καταγωγή επειδή ξέρουν τις λέξεις, τί σημαίνει. [...] ξέρω ότι  
αυτός τί εννοεί απλώς προσπαθεί αυτός να έρθει λίγο πιο κοντά σου ότι και καλά  
ξέρει ότι είναι, ξέρει ας πούμε, το λέει, προσπαθεί να πει στην γλώσσα σου. Όλα  
παίζουν ρόλο, οι λέξεις, ο τρόπος.*

*Skiptaris* is used either by Greeks who are Arvanite because they know what this means. A Greek-Greek person doesn't know it and doesn't use it. Only the Greeks of the border, that is, those who are close to the border that might not be Arvanite, of Arvanite origin, because they know what the words mean. [...] I know what he means, he is just trying to come closer to you, as if he knows what it is, as if he knows, he says it, he is trying to say it in your language. Everything plays a role, the words, the manner. – Ilir

Andrea mentioned that friends of his with other-than-Albanian migrant origin have used *Skiptar* to refer to him. In the excerpt below he recounts how his friends, being aware of the offensive meaning of *Alvanos*, avoid using it when addressing him. Rather they make use of the L2 Greek *Skiptar* as a slur-avoidance strategy. This shows how widespread the

interpretation of *Alvanos* as a slur is, such that its meaning as a lexical item designating ethnicity becomes opaque and language users seek alternative terms to express the ethnicity under discussion.

*Rexhina* Το έχετε ακούσει από Έλληνες να λένε Σκιπτάρι; Α ήρθε ο Σκιπτάρης;

*Andrea* Εντάξει, όχι... το έχουμε ακούσει αλλά πολύ σπάνια από Έλληνες. Πιο πολύ από άλλα κράτη το έχουμε ακούσει.

*Rexhina* Εσάς πώς σας φαίνεται το Σκιπτάρι αντί για *shiptari*;

*Andrea* Από Γεωργιανούς, από Ρουμάνους.

*Rexhina* Α το ζέρουνε ε;

*Andrea* Ναι. Δηλαδή το εκφράζουν Σκιπτάρι. Από Κούρδους. Ναι. Εγώ έχω φίλο που μου λέει ε Σκιπτάρι, ρε Σκιπτάρι. Ναι.

*Rexhina* Πώς σας φαίνεται εσάς αυτό;

*Andrea* Καλό εντάξει. Αφού δεν μπορεί να με πει Αλβανό, μου λέει, γιατί νομίζει ότι με προσβάλλει, λέει Σκιπτάρι. Γιατί κανονικά το όνομα τα δικά μας είναι *shiptar*, δεν είναι Αλβανό. Αλβανό το βγάζει η Ελλάδα. Γιατί η Ελλάδα, να λες αστυνομία, είναι ανάποδα. Όλος ο κόσμος το έχει *polícia* [*politsia*], η Ελλάδα το έχει αστυνομία. Όλος ο κόσμος έχει *ambulanca* [*ambulantsa*], εδώ το έχει ασθενοφόρο. Με κατάλαβες; Εγώ κάνω αυτή την διαφορά. Αυτή την σύγκριση κάνω.

*Rexhina* Have you heard Greeks use *Skiptari*? Oh here comes *Skiptari*?

*Andrea* Well, no... we have rarely heard it from Greeks. We've heard it much more from other countries.

*Rexhina* What do you think of *Skiptari* instead of *Shqiptari*?

*Andrea* From Georgians, from Romanians.

*Rexhina* They know it, huh?

*Andrea* Yes. That is, they pronounce it as *Skiptari*. From Kurds. Yes. I have a friend who calls me *Skiptari*, hey *Skiptari*. Yes.

*Rexhina* What do you think about that?

Andrea Good, ok. Since he cannot call me *Alvanos*, he tells me, because he thinks he offends me, he says *Skiptari*. Because normally our name is *Shiptar*, it's not *Alvano*. Greece makes it *Alvano*. Because in Greece, when you say 'police' it's upside down. Everywhere in the world it is [politsia], in Greece it is [astinomia]. Everywhere in the world it is [ambulantsa], here it is [asthenoforo]. Do you see? I make this distinction. This is the comparison I make.

Not everyone evaluated *Skiptari* in a positive light. Enkeled sees this “marked choice” compared to *Alvanos*, and as an attempt to showcase knowledge about Albania and the Albanian language, knowledge that is superficial and lacking. Ilira distinguished between *Skiptari* and *Siptari*. She stressed the importance of knowing the history of *Siptar* as a slur in the languages of former Yugoslavia, rejected it as a term, and opposed potential reclamation for this same reason. Given that these disagreements were mainly voiced by participants of the second generation, it seems that there is a generational divide about *Skiptari* and the use of the term is still under negotiation as are many of the terms that have been mentioned so far.

*Ναι. Ναι, αλλά είναι λίγο ψιλο-δήλωση. Δηλαδή. Δεν μπορώ να. Δεν το νιώθω ότι είναι αμαρκάριστο όπως το Αλβανός. Δηλαδή οποιοσδήποτε πει πως εκτός από Αλβανός και Αλβανίδα, είναι μαρκαρισμένος αρνητικά στο δικό μου μυαλό. Είναι μια δήλωση. Κάτι, κάτι θες να πεις. Το τί θες να πεις, εξαρτάται το context. Δηλαδή δεν μπορώ να σου πω τώρα ξεκάθαρα τί, και με τι αφορμή το είπε (inaudible). Φαντάζομαι το Σκιπτάρης μπορεί να το πει κάποιος ο οποίος είναι λίγο φτασμένος στο μυαλό του και νομίζει ότι έχει ένα background ιστορικό, γεωγραφικό ας πούμε, ότι κάτι ξέρει. Δηλαδή (inaudible) μαλακίες. Αλλά μπορώ να φανταστώ να το χρησιμοποιεί ένας τέτοιος άνθρωπος. Δεν νομίζω να το έλεγε ένας λαϊκός άνθρωπος (inaudible). Κάποιος ο οποίος έχει μια ψευδαίσθηση ότι κάτι ξέρει (inaudible).*



Yes. Yeah, it's a bit of a statement-ish. That is. I can't. I don't think its unmarked like *Alvanos*. That is, whoever says anything beyond *Alvanos* and *Alvanida*, is negatively marked in my head. It is a statement. Something, you're trying to say something. What you're trying to say, depends on the context. That is, I can't tell you clearly now what, and with what occasion someone said It (inaudible). I imagine *Skiptari* can be said by someone who is less bright and thinks they have a historic, geographic background let's say, that they know something. That is (inaudible) bullshit. But I can think a person like that using it. I don't think a lay person would say it. Someone who has an illusion that they know something (inaudible). – Enkeled

*Αυτό στην Ελλάδα που δήθεν λένε τώρα οι Έλληνες, έχει γίνει ξέρω εγώ όπως έμαθα στην ομάδα. Αυτά είναι μπουρδες. Αυτά είναι μπουρδες που έχουνε κάνει ξέρω εγώ internalize fully ότι 'α μα και εμείς λέμε Σιπτάρ' ξέρω εγώ 'γιατί το χρησιμοποιούνε στο τάδε τραγούδι και'. I don't give a shit που το χρησιμοποιούνε. Πρέπει για κάποιες λέξεις, η ιστορία είναι πολύ πιο σημαντική από την προσπάθεια, ξέρω εγώ, να αφαιρέσεις το ταμπού από μέσα τους. Δηλαδή εγώ επιμένω λίγο σε αυτό, στην ιστορία. Όχι στην ιστορία. Στην ιστορικότητα της λέξης.*

This in Greece that supposedly Greeks say now, like, it has happened as I learned in the group. This is nonsense. This is nonsense what they have like internalized fully that 'we can also say *Siptar*', like, 'because they use it in this song'. I don't give a shit about where they use it. For some words, the history should be much more important from like the attempt to remove the taboo from them. I insist on this, in history. Not in history. In the historicity of the word. – Ilira

#### 4.5.3 Τουρκαλβανοί 'Turkish Albanians'

Kristina introduced another term used to refer to Albanians and that is *Τουρκαλβανοί* [turkalvani] "Turkish Albanians". She mentions it is a term used frequently by her elderly employer towards Albanians including Kristina herself. *Turkalvani* is a pejorative term

used in Greek to refer to Muslim Albanians. Here *Τουρκ*- “Turk” is a religious designation and is used as the first part of the compound and a modifier for *Alvani* “Albanian”, the second part of the compound. This meaning of *Turk* is probably a remnant of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans (under its *millet* system) where designations such as *Turk* and *Greek* referred to religion, Muslim and Orthodox respectively. What’s more interesting in Kristina’s narrative is that despite her clarifications that she is Christian, her employer refuses to correct the term used towards her. The employer exerts his power by making generalizations and misidentifications and by refusing to be corrected. He even refuses to recognize that her name is Kristina, the epitome of a Christian name. The first part of the compound *Turk*- with its associations with the Turkish element and/or Islam is not without evaluative judgements in a country where Orthodox Christianity is overwhelmingly the norm. To be Muslim is undesirable; therefore, to be Albanian and Muslim is even more so.

*Rexhina* *Ok. A ke nenstetsin greke? Έχεις ελληνική ιθαγένεια;*

*Kristina* *Jo. Kalamajvet me zor i’a dhan maj. Car me mar un ashtu? S’na napin kurr ne. Ne na mισούν. Μισούν. A si thuhet? Τουρκαλβανοί na thujn per dit.*

*Rexhina* *Kush thut ashtu?*

*Kristina* *Ke puna, ku punoj.*

*Rexhina* *T’ thujn Τουρκαλβανοί? Ty?*

*Kristina* *Po.*

*Rexhina* *A e din se je katolike?*

*Kristina* *Po i tham un, jam katolike. Po car me ba, jan rracista. Merzitem boll, m’ dhem shpirt po. Car me fol? Pse je tu qesh?*

*Rexhina* *(inaudible) per ata si m’ the.*

*Kristina* *Per dit, jo...*

Rexhina *Na nuk jena mysliman. Un kujtova Τουρκαλβανοί i thojn myslimanve, po na nuk jena mysliman.*

Kristina *Un tham a e kam emrin Kristine?*

Rexhina *Po!*

Kristina *Kristine, car do me than? Krisht! Krishti, kam emrin un, emri Kristian, Kristine.*

Rexhina Okay. Do you have the Greek citizenship? Do you have Greek citizenship?

Kristina No. The kids barely managed to receive it. What am I supposed to get? They'll never give it to us. They hate us. Hate. How is it called? They call us *Turkalvani* everyday.

Rexhina Who says that.

Kristina At the work, where I work.

Rexhina They call you *Turkalvani*? You?

Kristina Yes.

Rexhina Do they know you are Catholic?

Kristina Yes, I tell them, I am Catholic. But what can you do, they are racist. I get upset a lot, my soul aches. What to say? Why are you laughing?

Rexhina (inaudible) for what you told me.

Kristina Everyday, no...

Rexhina We are not Muslim. I thought *Turkalvani* refers to Muslims, but we are not Muslim.

Kristina I tell them, is not Kristina my name?

Rexhina Yes!

Kristina What does Kristina mean? Christ! Christ, I have the name, Christian name. Kristina.

#### 4.5.4 Αλβανόφατσα 'Albanian-face'

Eneida mentioned another term used with reference to Albanians in Greece:

*αλβανόφατσα* [alvanofatsa] “Albanian-face”. This is a compound with *αλβαν-* “Albanian” and *φάτσα* “face”. Eneida proceeded to mention the characteristics of someone with an Albanian face: “squared/angled face”, “large forehead”, “wrinkled face from work”.

Albanianness, then, is not only associated with a set of social characteristics but also physical characteristics. Theoretically, these physical traits would make a person with an *alvanofatsa* identifiable as an Albanian in Greece even though those same features are to be found on Greeks as well. If we were to conceptualize a world where these physical traits of someone with an *alvanofatsa* were exclusively Albanian, then it would suggest a state of affairs where ‘Albanian’ is more like a racial category rather than an ethnic category. It is the lay conceptions of race that assume physical differences among racial groups. Albanian, then, within Greece is not simply a person of a different ethnic background but of similar phenotype. Albanians are even more different from Greeks because they also have physical differences which, supposedly, tell them apart. Calling one an *alvanofatsa* is a way to racialize them as Albanian and to remove them from the racial category Greeks are in. This myth of the *alvanofatsa* is debunked quickly as is evidenced by the countless “you don’t look Albanian” comments that Albanians have been the recipients of over the years as also mentioned by interviewees.

Summarizing, speakers have many choices available in Modern Greek to refer to a person of Albanian origin. Favoring one label over another and expressing value judgements towards them suggest how subjects situate themselves within the world they live in (Duranti 2011). *Alvanos* and *Alvan-i/-ida/-eza* are labels that call attention to a set of

indexical associations, most of which are stereotypical and negative depictions of Albanian migrants in Greece. This is the very quality that renders them slurs and that allows them to be repeatedly used and interpreted as slurs. Subjects engage with these labels and navigate the racialization and Othering that the labels perform.

## **Chapter 5. Name adaptations and name changes: Racialization, Deracialization, Reracialization**

Based on the interviews described in Chapter 4, in this chapter I investigate the naming strategies Albanians in Greece have adopted in order to deal with the xenophobia towards their ethnic group (see Chapter 3). I explore personal and family name changes or retentions, the ways individuals are racialized with ethnically marked names, name adaptations with a goal to deracialization, and the social meaning of adaptations or lack thereof. Not all participants in this study share social networks or are part of the same communities of practice. They each have their own stories and backgrounds. Despite that, they are a coherent group to be analyzed together as they share migratory experiences and encounters with Greek institutions and other social agents. I lay out those experiences in their own words while centering participants' own voices.

### **5.1 Family name changes**

From my interviews it emerged that family name changes occurred among Albanian migrants and especially those of the first generation. For example, the spouse of one of the interviewees who migrated to Greece in the 1990s, changed his family name in order to secure entry to Greece. This change was also done officially in Albania, and it is the family name by which his spouse met him. It was not until later on before their marriage

that the spouse confessed to having changed his family name, a name which the family maintains to this day.

Another participant admitted that her family name changed when her father attempted for the first time to cross the border into Greece. According to her, the family name was *Hoxha* ['hodʒa]. This is a borrowing from Turkish *hoca* [ho'dʒa] 'teacher' and also happens to be the last name of the former communist dictator, Enver Hoxha. Due to its relationship with the dictator and the fact that the name is recognizable as belonging to Muslim families, the father decided to abandon the family name to make his crossing easier. He decided to adopt the name of the village from which he came as it is a family name found in Albania and it does not identify one as being a member of a particular religion. The strategy worked and the village name is the name that he and his family now hold in Greece and Albania.

In interactions with clients, besides adopting a Greek name (discussed in Section 5.2), Ylli adopted a Greek family name. Specifically, Ylli evoked his father's personal name, *Lazer*. He Hellenized *Lazer* via a vowel quality change and the addition of the *-ou* affix which often marks Greek family names and presented it as his family name. *Lazer* became *Λαζάρου* [lazaru] which is a name encountered among Greek family names as well. Ylli clarified that he would use this name in informal dealings with clients, for example, when giving an estimate about the cost of a project. He would never use *Lazarou* in official documentation or in places where there would be permanent record of it. For Ylli, deracialization via family name-change and adaptation is legitimized because it helps him professionally. The force of this deracializing act is mitigated at the same time by the involvement of his father's name, an act which further legitimizes the process

of deracialization. Ylli does not completely reject his family or where they come from because that information is still carried on, albeit in a different way.

*Dhe me mbiemer un kam, shpesh her kam, shum vene, kam rre per shemull me mbiemrin. Kam perdor emrin e babs si mbiemer. Edhe duke elinizu per shemull. Per shemull, jo Ηλία Λάζρι, po Ηλίας Λαζάρου. Lazri e kam ba Λαζάρου. Shpesh her kshu. [...] Per pun, po. Se doshin ashtu, me kalu, m' iu, me kalu ma leht. Aty. Nuk ishte dokument ose letra shtetrorre.*

With the last name too, I have, frequently I have, many places, I have lied for example about the last name. I have used the name of my father as last name. Hellenizing it for example. Not like [ilia lazri], but [ilias lazaru]. I have turned [lazri] into [lazaru]. Many times like this. [...] for work, yes. Cause they wanted like this, to pass, to pass easier. There. It was not in documents or government papers. – Ylli

## 5.2 Personal name changes

Personal name-changes were also part of the deracialization Albanians underwent in Greece. Adopting a Greek name or adapting one's name to be Greek-passing leads to the loss of the indexical association of the individual with Albanianess, hence to a deracialization (Bucholtz 2016). This process is the opposite of the racialization that individuals are subjected to due to their Albanian name. Name changes were a well-known phenomenon to the Albanians back in Albania as can be seen from the quote by Admiljan, below, who was determined to keep his Albanian name upon arrival to Greece.

*Admiljan* Δηλαδή εγώ ήμουν από αυτά τα άτομα που στην Ελλάδα ήρθαν συνειδητοποιημένα ότι εμένα με φωνάζουνε έτσι, έχω αυτή την



*θρησκεία, και δεν πρόκειται να αλλάζω. Ό,τι και να μου πείτε εσείς, δεν πρόκειται.*

*Rexhina* *Ναι. Οπότε ήξερες όταν ήρθες στην Ελλάδα ότι θα συναντήσεις όλο αυτό;*

*Admiljan* *Ναι, εννοείται. Ναι, ναι, ναι, το ήξερα, ναι. Ναι, ας πούμε γιατί είχα, είχα τον πατέρα μου κυρίως που πηγαينوερχότανε μέχρι να εγκατασταθούνε εδώ το '97, έλεγε ας πούμε τον φωνάζουν Αντρέα, τον φωνάζουνε Νίκο, τον φωνάζουνε Γιάννη, τον φωνάζουν Μιχάλη. Και έλεγα γιατί; Αφού έχεις όνομα, έχεις το όνομά σου. Ε λέει δεν μπορούν να το πούνε ας πούμε οι Έλληνες.*

*Admiljan* So I was one of those people who came to Greece very conscious that my name is this, I have this religion, and I will not change. Whatever you all tell me, there is no chance.

*Rexhina* Yeah. So you knew when you came to Greece that you will encounter all this?

*Admiljan* Yeah, of course. Yes, yes, yes, I knew, yes. Yeah, because I, like, had, mainly my father who went back and forth until they settled here in '97, he would say that they call him Andrea, Niko, Yianni, Michali. And I was asking why? But you have a name, your name. Well, he would say, the Greeks can't, like, say it.

Almost all the first-generation men interviewed mentioned that they had been given a Greek name by their Greek employers when they migrated to Greece. For example, *Shkelzen* became *Λευτέρης* [lifteris] by his first Greek employer when he first migrated to Greece. His employer cited a difficulty in pronouncing his Albanian name as the reason to assign *Shkelzen* a Greek name. As many others like him, *Shkelzen* was never baptized as *Lifteris* and never changed his personal name in official records. The Greek name followed him in subsequent employment situations and in other cities he later relocated to

after he left his first employer, the one who had renamed him. In situations like these, renamed migrants maintain their Albanian name for their interactions with family members and acquaintances they have made before their migration to Greece. Their Greek name is used in their interactions with Greeks, such as their Greek employers and neighbors, and sometimes it extends to their Albanian co-workers. In a sense then, the functions that each name performs are neatly compartmentalized. For Shkelzen, and others, this situation of double identity is a necessary evil and not something in which they feel like they can have much of a say. It is a matter of accepting the name in order to have work, a necessity for their survival in their migratory destination. The tie of the name change to survival does not afford them negotiating power to reject the renaming and insist on the acceptance of their Albanian name.

*Shkelzen* *Να σου πω πιο πολύ δηλαδή έτσι με αυτό το όνομα κυκλοφορώ.*

*[...]*

*Rexhina* *Και οι Αλβανοί συνάδελφοι εδώ πέρα σας φωνάζουνε Λευτέρη;*

*Shkelzen* *Οι συνάδερφοι που εργάζομαι μαζί τους, ναι.*

*[...]*

*Shkelzen* *Η ανάγκη σε κάνει να δεχτείς ό,τι. Και πρέπει να συμβιβαστείς θέλεις - δεν θέλεις.*

*Shkelzen* *To be honest, I mostly go around with this name [Lefteris].*

*[...]*

*Rexhina* *And the Albanian colleagues here call you Lefteri?*

*Shkelzen* *The colleagues that I work with, yes.*

*[...]*

*Shkelzen* *Need forces you to accept anything. And you have to compromise whether you want it or not.*

Similarly, Sander's [sandeɪ] first Greek employers cited difficulty in pronouncing his Albanian name. Since they were more familiar with the English name *Alexander* [alekzandeɪ], they decided to call him that even though the same sequence of sounds, which they claimed was difficult to pronounce, was still present in the English name. Thus, the English name was preferable to the Greek employers than *Sander* which racialized him as Albanian. Eventually they Hellenized *Alexander* to its Greek version, *Αλέξανδρος* [aleksanðros]. Finally, they shortened it to *Αλέκος* [alekos] which is a common shortening for the Greek name. After a series of re-racializations *Sander* became *Alekos*, but never in official hiring documents, where *Sander* was maintained. For Sander, the existence of *Αλέκος* is not a bother and he accepts the need for a Greek name due to pronunciation difficulties. He never introduces himself, however, as *Alekos* and admits having difficulty turning around when called by it.

Αντρέα [adrea] had heard that, upon arriving in Greece in the 1990s, it would be wise for him to adopt a Greek name and not introduce himself as *Artur* [artur], the name he used until his migration to Greece. He originally adopted *Γιάννης* [janis] and, when he was once stopped for identity verification by a police officer, he claimed to be *Andrea* and a Christian. According to Andrea, the police officer made an agreement with him that if he presented a passport with that first name he would be allowed to stay in Greece. Andrea officially changed his name in Albania after this agreement, so he presented himself to the police officer as *Andrea* and was allowed to stay. The name change was not followed by baptism in Orthodoxy, however. Even though *Artur* was the name his mother had chosen for him, for Andrea, the renaming was an essential strategy in order to succeed in his migration project. In explaining his choice, he said he realized it was

necessary to navigate “racism” and to “gain the trust” of the Greek people. Today, this is the name he is known by to everyone in Greece and it is his governmental (official) name; *Artur* is used only by old acquaintances in Albania and his wife, but interestingly not his children.

*Το έχω αλλάξει, βέβαια. Αλλά απλώς θέλω να πω. Artur είναι το όνομα που έχει βάλει η μάνα μου και μετά λόγω δουλειά εδώ στην Ελλάδα, ρατσισμό και τέτοια, θέλανε Αντρέα. Και αναγκαστικά πήγα και το άλλαξα το διαβατήριο και το έκανα Αντρέα. Με αυτό το όνομα είμαι.*

I have changed it, of course. I just want to say. Artur is the name my mother gave me and afterwards due to work here in Greece, racism and stuff, they wanted Adrea. And I was obligated and went and changed the passport and turned into Adrea. I have this name. – Adrea

The deracialization was not complete. Andrea did not adopt the final -ς [s] that marks the nominative case of men’s personal and family names in Greek. That is, he did not become *Αντρέας* [adreas]. The [a] found initially in both names also allowed him to maintain some connection to his Albanian name. Additionally, although his family name was Hellenized to *Ντουρμίσση* [durmisi] with final ita <η> [i] instead of iota <ι> [i] in the healthcare system, it eventually was re-racialized back to Albanian at a later time when it was changed to the Albanian spelling of the name. Andrea attributes this change to him being from a “third country” and some policy change that allows names originally written in a Latin script to maintain that spelling in Greek institutions and not be transliterated to the Greek script. This policy spared migrants a lot of bureaucratic trouble as they often would have their names transliterated into Greek in different ways across government agencies. Andrea commented that he prefers the iota <ι> spelling of his family name

because ita <η> would entail the addition of a final -ς [s] to the name which would “violate” the name by inserting additional phones. Appealing to reciprocity, he claims that it would be equally unacceptable if, on the other side, he went on to Albanicize Greek names.

*Όχι, δεν θα μου άρεσε Αντρέας. Αντρέα. Ντουρμίσι, όχι Ντουρμίσης. Γιατί. Πώς να στο πω; Παραβιάζει το επίθετο που λένε δηλαδή. Το μεγαλώνει το επίθετο. Εγώ το θέλω με τα γράμματα που υπάρχει, δεν θέλω να βάλεις ούτε παραπάνω, ούτε. Αλλά τώρα το Αντρέας θα με ενοχλούσε. Γιατί να μου πεις Αντρέας; Δεν μπορώ να βάλω εγώ [kostiʝa]. Κώστας είναι Κώστας. Μανώλης είναι Μανώλης. Δεν μπορώ να πω εγώ [manoliis]. Να το συνεχίσω με [i].*

No, I wouldn't like [adreas]. [adrea]. [durmisi], not [durmisis]. Because. How can I say this? It violates the last name as they say. It lengthens the last name. I want it with the existing letters, I don't want you to add not even one more. But now, [adreas] would bother me. Why call [adreas]? I can't say [kostiʝa]. [kostas] is [kostas]. [manolis] is [manolis]. I can't go saying [manoliis] with [i]<sup>20</sup>. – Adrea

Sometimes the Greek name did not follow the subject around. Rather, the subjects acquired a new Greek name with each new employer. That is, they were being renamed and deracialized over and over again. The number of times this happened to Niko is indicative of the non-tolerance towards any names that would racialize him as Albanian and the urge to conceal his Albanianess by any means. Niko was born Ndoc (Standard Albanian [ndots]; Geg Albanian [nots]) and went by Ndoc until he migrated to Greece at seventeen. There, he was renamed as *Νίκος* [nikos], *Νότης* [notis], *Λουκάς* [lukas], and *Σωκράτης* [sokratis] ‘Socrates’ by different employers as he moved between various jobs.

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<sup>20</sup> That is, long font high vowel instead of short vowel which the name has in Modern Greek.

Today, he himself prefers *Niko*. *Niko* is the name even his Albanian friends and Albanian extended family members use for him, and it is the name he introduced himself when he first met his Albanian spouse. *Niko* also commented that the name is “prettier” and that, if he had the chance, he would adopt it officially. It was also the name he preferred to be identified with in this study. For him, *Niko* was still pretty close perceptually to *Ndoc*, so the change is not drastic, and therefore he is not fully abandoning his given name. *Niko* justified his name change by referencing the difficulty Greeks had in pronouncing *Ndoc* and the mispronunciations, such as [ndok], that would result in the process. What is interesting is that the Standard Albanian pronunciation of his name, with the prenasalized plosive [ndots], indeed can cause pronunciation difficulties for L1 Greek speakers as Greek does not have these types of clusters in word-initial position<sup>21</sup>. However, the form [nots], the pronunciation of his name in Geg, his native dialect, and the version of the name known by family members, would not pose any pronunciation difficulties to Greek speakers. Nonetheless, [nots] would be still perceived as non-Greek by Greek listeners. Hence, what we observe is *Niko* adopting the standard version of his name, with initial [nd-], a form he would rarely hear growing up in the Geg-speaking part of Albania, to justify the difficulty Greek speakers would encounter in attempting to reproduce his name. His native pronunciation of his name, which could be reproduced more easily by L1 Greek speakers, is completely ignored. *Niko* is not only a name which Greek speakers are more familiar with. It is also, in his view, a “pretty” name. In discussing his Greek names *Niko* and *Lukas* he commented:

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<sup>21</sup> Consonant clusters like these exist in Greek names word-medially but across syllable boundaries, e.g., Αντόνης [an.do.nis].

Ωραία. Και τα δύο ωραία. Εντάξει, είναι λίγο πιο εύκολο να το πεις. Πιο ωραία.  
[...] Εντάξει. Το όνομα Ντοτς είναι αρχαίο όνομα αλλά βαράει πολύ ξέρεις, είναι.  
[...] Εγώ δεν είμαι, με το όνομα δεν είμαι ευχαριστημένος. Είναι πολύ βαρύ, πολύ  
ξεχωριστό, πολύ έτσι.

*Good. Both are pretty. Ok, it is easier to say. Nicer. [...] Ok. [dots] is an ancient name but hits a lot, you know. It's. [...] I am not, I am not pleased with the name. it is very heavy, very distinct, very like this. – Niko.*

For Niko, his Albanian name is ancient which assigns to it some kind of prestige and it connects him to his ancestors. This prestige is not enough to make *Ndoc* an acceptable name. Not as much as *Sokrates*, an ancient Greek name, which he also had been given at some point. *Ndoc* is “heavy” due to the sound symbolism of the consonant clusters and loses prestige because it “hits a lot”, that it is, it is evidently Albanian, and it racializes its bearer immediately. The prestige of his claimed antiquity is not strong enough to surpass the obstacle of sounding Albanian in present-day Greece.

Later in the interview Niko adds that he does not like *Ndoc* for it being “heavy” and “distinct”. Unpacking these, we see that *Ndoc* is dispreferred because it racialized Niko as Albanian due to its obvious indexing of Albanianess. The name is also characterized as “heavy” which could be interpreted as a metalinguistic comment on the sound symbolism of the phones that make up the name. The prenasalized stop at the beginning of the name and the affricate at the end endow the name with weight and additional indications that the name is not Greek. The implicit comparison is that Greek names are light, that is, they have fewer consonant clusters like these. *Ndoc* became “heavy” and “distinct” only after coming to Greece at seventeen. Until then, in Albania, his name was unremarkable and did not bear any particular “weight” in the part of the country where he

was raised. Niko, then, has adopted the hegemonic ideologies about name appropriateness and ethnic identification after his migration to Greece to the extent that he was willing to abandon his so-called “ancient” name in his attempt to be perceived as less Albanian.

It should be noted that his deracialization is only partial. Niko never goes to the next step of morphological Hellenization with his name, by adding a nominative [s] to his name and turning it into *Nikos*. He also maintains his Albanian family name which he has passed on to his children, who at the same time carry Greek personal names. His partial deracialization then allows him to occupy this in-between space between racialization and deracialization where he has adopted a Greek name but not the full Greek morphological markings that go with the name. He is detached from Albanianness, but at the same not fully attached to Greekness. A similar strategy was employed by a couple of other subjects in the study. For instance, Albi was baptized and adopted *Πέτρο* [petro] ‘Peter’ in Greece, but never fully Hellenized it by adopting the Greek nominative marker -s. He never became *Petros*, and therefore, he never fully aligned with his Greekness and his re-racialization as he never fully aligned with his deracialization in the first place.

Difficulty in production by Greeks was often cited as a reason for personal or family name changes. Indeed, there is some truth to such an explanation. For instance, *Ylli* [yli] ‘star’ became *Ηλίας* [ilias] due to such a difficulty, as Standard Modern Greek does not have a high front rounded vowel [y] nor a velarized lateral consonant [ɭ]. An L2 Greek version of the name would be [ili]. The replacement of *Ylli* with *Ilias* is potentially motivated by the phonetic similarity of L2 Greek [ili] and of the Greek name *Ilias*. This match is potentially reinforced by the fact that Greek *Ηλίας* [ilias] and *ήλιος* [ilios] ‘sun’



share a sequence of phones which may lead Greek speakers to falsely connect them etymologically. The process of connecting the two could go as follows: (a) [ili] means ‘star’, (b) [ili] sounds like [ilias], (c) [ilias] is etymologically related to [ilios] ‘sun’, (d), [ilias] is an appropriate Hellenization of [ili] due to being co-hyponyms of a set of nouns referring to celestial objects. Thus, the folk etymology provides another reason about why *Ηλίας* is good candidate to replace *Ylli*. In the case of Ylli, his Greek name, *Ilias*, has spread to his Albanian family and friends to the extent that his sister, Flora, during her own interview with me, referred to him as *Ilias*.

The argument of production difficulty to justify Hellenizations does not hold many times. For example, *Artur* [artur] was renamed *Αντρέας* [adreas] due to similar arguments by his Greek employer about production difficulty. This explanation does not really hold in light of the Greek word *αρτηρία* [artiria] ‘artery’ which has an almost identical sequence of sounds to *Artur* save for the vowel. If Greek has a native lexical item that has such a similar sequence of sounds, then pronunciation is not a problem. Once production difficulty is eliminated as the motivation for the name assignment, social evaluations of the Albanian name seem like a plausible alternative explanation. The reasoning behind the change seen here is that indexical association of *Artur* with Albianness cannot be allowed to happen in Greece. It must be remedied. To be remedied, the culprit, the Albanian name, has to go, and its place has to be taken by a Greek name, which is much more acceptable.

Adoption of Greek names for the second generation was typically accompanied by baptisms in the Greek Orthodox church and by official name changes. The Greek names were adopted after the second-generation children had spent some years answering to

their Albanian name. Second-generation subjects who had not been baptized admitted that offers of baptism had been made to them or to their parents by Greek acquaintances. The process involves the Greek acquaintance taking the role of the godparent and Greek name-giver. Offers for godparenting relations came from the broader Greek circle of the Albanian family including employers, neighbors, and teachers. Rexhina B.'s father had received offers to baptize his young daughters, but he thought this a decision for them to make and not him. Eventually, his daughters became adults and never sought baptism. None of the subjects who did not get baptized expressed regret over the baptism not taking place nor towards not having had a Greek name. Some did express, however, that this was not always the case in their lifetime and that as children they were keen on the prospect of baptism. Enkeled stated that as a child he had a desire to be baptized and to take on a Greek name. For him a Greek name would be the ticket to pass as Greek and to evade questions on his ethnicity that his Albanian name would raise. Questions about ethnicity that functioned as constant reminders that he does not belong.

*Ορισμένες φορές κάποιοι άνθρωποι από το εργασιακό περιβάλλον του πατέρα μου κυρίως του είχαν προτείνει κάποιες φορές όσο ήμασταν μικροί με την αδερφή μου να βαπτιστούμε. Δεν ήθελε ο πατέρας μου, δεν ενέκρινε κάτι τέτοιο ή, εν πάση περιπτώσει, θεωρούσε ότι καλύτερο θα ήταν να κρίνουμε μόνες μας καθώς θα μεγαλώνουμε άμα θέλουμε εμείς να κάνουμε κάτι τέτοιο. Και μεγαλώσαμε, ενηλικιωθήκαμε, αλλά δεν βαπτιστήκαμε, όχι. Δεν αποφασίσαμε να γίνουμε χριστιανοί.*

Sometimes some people mainly from the workplace of my father they had suggested when me and my sister were young to get baptized. My father didn't want that, didn't approve of something like that or at least thought it was best that we judge by ourselves as we grow up if we want to do something like that. And we

grew up, we became adults, but we didn't get baptized, no. We didn't decide to become Christians. – Rexhina B.

*Αρχικά δεν πιστεύω. Θεωρώ ότι και να πίστευα δεν θα πίστευα στο μυστήριο και σε όλο αυτό το, σε όλο αυτό το κομμάτι, λίγο το πιο, στα δικά μου μάτια, συμβολικό. Θα ήθελα όταν ήμουνα πιο μικρός γιατί ήτανε συνδυαστικός κρίκος η θρησκεία ή το θρησκευτικό όνομα όταν μεγαλώνεις. Οπότε ένιωθα ότι άμα είχα ένα ελληνικό όνομα, δεν θα χρειαζόταν να με ρωτήσουν από πού είσαι, από, όλο αυτό που πάει πακέτο με το αλβανικό όνομα. Οπότε σίγουρα ζήλευα πάρα πολύ τα παιδιά που βαφτιζόντουσαν μικρά.*

Let me say that first I do not believe [in god]. I think that even if I believed, I would not believe in this ceremony and all this, in all this thing, the, in my eyes, the more symbolic [part]. I wanted when I was younger because religion or the religious name was the connecting part while growing up. So, I felt that if I had a Greek name, they wouldn't have to ask me where you are from, all the baggage that goes together with the Albanian name. So, I was definitely very jealous of the children who would get baptized young. – Enkeled

Pamela acquired Zoe as her second name at the age of seven. She stated that the desire to get baptized was cultivated by comparing herself to her classmates and thinking that “I am not baptized, and I do not have a Christian name” like the others do. The decision to get baptized *Zoe* was then a no-brainer when it was suggested by a family friend who had by that point baptized nine boys. After the baptism she went by *Zoe* exclusively. This changed at eighteen when she had to renew her Albanian passport and was given the option to not include *Pamela*, her Albanian name, in the passport at all. For her that was a wake-up call which led her to put *Pamela* in front of *Zoe* knowing very well that this meant that she “would not be able to erase her Albanianness” with this decision. For Pamela Zoe, her Albanian name, *Pamela*, was closely tied to her Albanian

ethnicity and letting that name fall into disuse would mean loss or at least a suppression of part of her identity. Today, she uses both names. *Zoe* is used by her family and those whom she has known since her baptism. *Pamela* is the name by which she is known among her colleagues in the northern European country she has onward migrated and by the Albanian social networks she has built over the last few years. When talking about *Zoe*, she confesses that her Greek name has been very important to the process of her “coming out” as Albanian. Having *Zoe* as a name allowed her to evade questions about her ethnicity which the use of *Pamela* would have raised. Thus, she could avoid being put on the spot to talk about her Albanianess, which in Greece was “negative and shameful”, and allowed her to admit it in her own terms. Secondly, for her, the name *Zoe* protected her as a child when she was vulnerable, allowing her to eventually understand as an adult what it meant to be growing up as an Albanian in Greece.

*Για εμένα ήταν πάρα πολύ σημαντικό. Νομίζω πως αν δεν είχα το Ζωή δεν θα είχα επιβιώσει συναισθηματικά. Νομίζω θα αναγκαζόμουν να αντιμετωπίσω κάτι που δεν ήμουν έτοιμη να αντιμετωπίσω τότε. Πρώτον. Δεύτερον, αν δεν είχα μπει σε αυτήν την διαδικασία, να έχω αυτό το καταφύγιο, ίσως ένα βίαιο come out, όπως το αποκαλώ το να αποκαλύψω την ταυτότητά μου χωρίς να το θέλω, σε μια Ελλάδα που οτιδήποτε αλβανικό ήτανε κατακριτέο και αρνητικό και ντροπιαστικό. Νομίζω θα μου ήτανε πολύ δύσκολο και δεν θα μου έδινε και την ευκαιρία να δω τι μου έχει συμβεί.*

For me it was very important. I think that if I didn't have *Zoe* I wouldn't have survived emotionally. Firstly, I think I would have been forced to face something that I wasn't ready to face back then. Secondly, if I hadn't been in that position, to have this refuge, perhaps a violent come out, as I call revealing my identity without it being my intention, in Greece where anything Albanian was reprehensible,

negative and shameful. I think it would have been very hard for me and it wouldn't have allowed me to realize what had happened to me. – Pamela Zoe

Some interviewees claimed that adopting a Greek name helped with their business endeavors. Ylli for example, compared himself to his occasional co-worker and cousin, *Miri* (< *Fatmir*), who does not have a Greek name. Ylli, by introducing himself to their clients as *Ηλίας* [ilias], believes that he is able to build rapport and better business relationships with them than *Miri*. In a separate interview, *Miri* also brought up this point by reinforcing that Greek clients seem more engaged with *Ηλίας* than with him when discussing business matters even if they became their clients by being *Miri*'s acquaintances. According to them, clients, therefore, seem to ignore *Miri* because of his Albanian name and to prefer Ylli due to his Greek name even though they know that Ylli is Albanian as well. When asked about this, *Miri* provided an explanation which was reminiscent of Tennessee Williams' famous line in *A Streetcar Named Desire*: "I don't want realism. I want magic!". For *Miri*, Greeks "like lies". Greeks would prefer an obvious lie, them knowing that *Ilias* is probably not his real name, to hearing his Albanian name. In other words, for him, Greeks prefer to see the name assimilation and re-racialization by the adoption of a Greek name in their dealings with Albanians. If they have to be engaged with Albanians in some way, it should be under the assurance that they Albanian is doing anything in their power to hide their Albanianess and to assimilate even when completely hiding their Albanianess is not possible (e.g., via their L2 Greek).

*Edhe, edhe ke klientat e mi per shemull. Dakort qe ai flet ma shum me mu sepse asht, mu 'm njef (). Po te klientat e Mirit kur t' shkoshim, para se ato flitshin me*

*Mirin m' fillim, por kur u prezantoshë ne un si Ilia, muhabete, per me pyt per shemull mu drejtoshin mu. E Ilia si thu ti per shemull? U duksha un ma i dicka, sikur iu afrosha (inaudible) ma afer atyne. A kupton?*

And you have my clients for example. Naturally that they would speak more to me because I am the one they know. But when we went to Miri's clients, they would speak to Miri in the beginning, but when I introduced myself as Ilias, in discussions, to ask questions for example, they addressed me. What do you think Ilia? I appeared more like, as if I came closer to them (inaudible). You see? – Ylli

*Do t' tham ne i gja se un punoj me Yllin per shemull edhe Ylli e ka emrin Ηλία [ilia]. Shum her kur shkojm ne per pun ai mund. Per shemull klienti qe kam un, edhe kur t' nigjoj emnin Ηλία [ilia] i duket ati se ky asht ma ashtu edhe merret ma shum me ta se me mu. Se un i dukem shiptar, ai duket ma helenizum m' i fjal. A e ke para sysh?*

I'll tell you something. I work with Ylli, for example, and Ylli is called Ilias. Often when we go to work he might. For example, my client when they hear the name Ilias, they think that he [Ylli] is more like this, and they address him more than me. Because I appear Albanian to them, he appears more Hellenized put simply. Do you see? – Fatmir

Some rejected Greek names that members of the hegemonic group attempted to impose on them. For example, Erjeta [er'jeta] 'air + life' resisted her colleagues' insistence in calling her Ζωή [zo'i] 'life'. For her, despite partially keeping the semantic relationship to her Albanian name, Ζωή was not enough. Erjeta was also adamant about keeping a strict transliteration of her Albanian personal name in Greek Εριέτα [erjeta]. This became evident when the new sign of her store arrived with the Greek spelling of the name Εριέτα [erjeta]. A single or a double <τ> [t] does not make a difference in the quality or the quantity of the produced consonant. The two <τ>, however, do Hellenize

her name and it is this Hellenization that Erjeta resists when she requested the sign maker to redo the sign with the single <τ>.

*Erjeta* Κοίτα με είχανε ρωτήσει πολλές φορές. Ούτε εγώ ήξερα. Ήξερα ότι Jeta θα πει ζωή, τους έλεγα ότι Άρωμα Ζωής. Δεν ξέρω πως να το μεταφράσω. Κάποιες φορές θέλανε να φωνάζουνε Ζωή κάτι που δεν μου άρεσε και αυτό και προτίμησα ας πούμε πάλι Εριέτα. Δεν μου άρεσε.

*Rexhina* Ποιος σας το πρότεινε, σας το έλεγε ας πούμε το Ζωή;

*Erjeta* Όταν δούλευα. Τα κορίτσια ας πούμε που δούλευα μαζί για πιο εύκολο. Λέω όχι, θα μάθετε το όνομα γιατί δεν μου αρέσει Ζωή. Οπότε δεν ήθελα.

*Rexhina* Οπότε δεν σας κάλεσε ποτέ κανείς Ζωή;

*Erjeta* Όχι, όχι, όχι. Δεν. Γιατί ήτανε πιο εύκολο όταν τους έλεγα ότι μεταφράζεται ας πούμε Άρωμα Ζωής, ε λέει θα σε φωνάζουμε Ζωή. Και της λέω όχι, γιατί δεν μου αρέσει.

[...]

*Erjeta* Ελληνικά το όνομα Εριέττα γράφεται με δύο ταυ, το οποίο εγώ το έχω κρατήσει γιατί το έχω με ένα και δεν ήθελα να το κάνω με δύο. Οπότε και στην ταμπέλα έξω το έχω με ένα.

*Rexhina* Α σας είπε κανείς να το βάλετε με δύο;

*Erjeta* Ε το είχανε κάνει πολλές φορές λάθος και το διορθώσαμε.

*Rexhina* Που ας πούμε;

*Erjeta* Όταν κάναμε την ταμπέλα ο μηχανικός επειδή δεν το γνωρίζει ότι ήτανε λατινικό όνομα και το έγγραφε λάθος και λέω όχι πρέπει να διορθωθεί γιατί είναι με ένα ταυ όχι με δύο ταυ. Για να είναι ελληνικό. Ας πούμε όπως το έχω και στην ταυτότητα. Και στην ταυτότητα με ένα ταυ το έχω γιατί έτσι είναι.

*Erjeta* Look, they had asked me many times. I didn't know either. I knew that Jeta means life, and I would translate as 'Scent of Life'. I

don't know how to translate it. Sometimes they wanted to call me *Zoe* 'life' which I didn't like and I still preferred Erjeta. I didn't like it.

Rexhina Who suggested it, who called you *Zoe*?

Erjeta When I was working. The girls I worked with, for ease. I said no, you'll learn the name because I don't like *Zoe*. So, I didn't want.

Rexhina So, nobody ended up calling you *Zoe*?

Erjeta No, no, no. Not. It was easier when I told them that it translates as 'Scent of Life'. So, we'll call you 'Life'. And I told her no because I don't like it.

[...]

Erjeta In Greek the name is spelled with two <τ>. Which I have kept [the Albanian spelling] because I have with one <τ> and I didn't want to have it with two. So, in the store sign outside I have it with one.

Rexhina Did someone tell you to have it with two?

Erjeta They made a lot of mistakes, and we corrected it.

Rexhina Like where?

Erjeta When we did the sign the mechanic because he didn't know it was a Latin name and he spelled it incorrectly and I said no, it has to be corrected because it is with one <τ>, not with two <τ>. To be Greek. Let's say like I have it in my ID card. And in my ID card it is with one <τ>, because it is like this.

### 5.3 Name adaptations (Hellenizations)

Family and personal name changes are two of the strategies Albanians have employed, whether willingly or not, in navigating the xenophobic discourses they have encountered in Greece. A less radical strategy has been the adaptation or Hellenization of their existing Albanian names. A well-known example is the addition of a final [s] in men's family names which is typical in Modern Greek where family names are marked for



gender. Although this phenomenon did not occur in my data all that frequently, I still wanted to present such an example I came across to show how common it is. The case in point was the October 2023 candidate for Athens city council, Tisiano Balla [tisiano bała], who adapted his family name to *Μπάλλας* [balas] in his campaign materials (see Appendix G). While the double <λλ> [l] in Greek echoes graphically (but not phonically) the double <ll> [ɬ] of his Albanian name, and therefore maintains some kind of visual connection to the Albanian version, the final -ς [s] Hellenizes the name to be Greek-passing. It is interesting to note that his email and social media handles in the same campaign materials maintain the Albanian spelling of his name with no Hellenizations (see Appendix G). In what follows I present the linguistic means by which Hellenizations were attempted or achieved by the participants in this study.

Kristina's personal name is often Hellenized to the Greek version of the name, *Χριστίνα* [xristina], by her Greek employers, neighbors, and acquaintances. Kristina admits that although she has attempted to correct the interlocutors about the Hellenization, she has not been successful in being addressed by the Albanian version of her name although Greeks do not have difficulty producing names such as that of the famous Portuguese football player *Κριστιάνο Ρονάλντο* [kristjano ronaldo]. According to her, this deracialization is not significant as both versions are equal to her. Even though she would prefer to be addressed by the Albanian version of the name, Kristina, she explains that she has had to accept *Χριστίνα* [xristina] because she is in Greece. As explained in Shehu (2021), Albanian migrants are ready to give up some of their rights, such as the right to self-determination in terms of personal names, because they are allowed to exist in a place that is not theirs. Migrants feel like “uninvited guests” and,

therefore, in Greece they must do as they do in Greece. They also have to give up some of their basic rights, such as the right to be addressed by their preferred name, because they have been allowed to stay and build their lives in Greece.

In the process of searching for employment, Enkeled, was aware that his last name, *Bilali* [bilali], would racialize him as Albanian. To avoid this racialization, he adapted his last name to be more Greek-passing by modifying its orthographic representation in Greek. The typical transliteration of his last name in Greek would be *Μπιλάλι* [bilali]. In business cards, which Enkeled used to advertise his tutoring services to primary and secondary school-age students, his name appeared as *E. Μπιλάλη* [e bilali]. Enkeled followed two strategies here. First, he included only the initial of his first name which avoids any racialization whatsoever. Second, he changed the way the front high vowel [i] at the end of his last name is spelled. In Modern Greek the value of orthographic *ita* <η> is a high front unrounded vowel. Typically, any high front vowel in foreign names is transliterated in Greek with the *iota* <ι>. Iota is also seen as the simplest transliteration strategy for names, which is the recommendation to professionals translating European Union documents in Greek (European Union Interinstitutional Style Guide 2022). In the business cards, Enkeled, made the decision to transliterate his name with an *ita* <η> so that it would be more Greek-passing. He believed that a Greek-passing last name would give him better chances for call-backs by people interested in his tutoring services. This was especially imperative as the tutoring he offered was in Greek language and literature. He feared that parents would not trust someone with an Albanian name to tutor their children in Greek courses. This concern had nothing to do with his credentials as Enkeled had a BA in Greek philology, an MA in Balkan and historical linguistics, and, at the time,

was a PhD candidate in Balkan and historical linguistics. His idea came with the caveat that the people who sought his services expressed surprise to find he was a man and not a woman. This was a natural inference from the spelling of *Bilali* in Greek with a final <η> as that letter alone, and without the final masculine -ς [s], typically marks feminine grammatical gender in Greek family names.

There is another instance of Hellenization with Enkeled beyond the case of his last name which was self-initiated. *Ledi*, the short version of his name by which he is known among family members and acquaintances, was first transliterated by his first-grade teacher as *Λέντη* [ledi] instead of *Λέντι* [ledi]. Similar to the last name, the ita <η> is more consistent with Greek spelling practices than the iota <ι>, and moreover, the Hellenization was imposed to him by the teacher. This was Enkeled's first encounter with the orthographic representation of his name in Greek and has remained the way he still represents it today.

*Enkeled* Το μετά να το κάνω εγώ είναι όταν είχα, μοίραζα κάρτες για ιδιαίτερα θυμάμαι τότε συνειδητά δεν είχα βάλει το όνομά μου Ενκελέντ, είχα βάλει έψιλον-τελεία-Μπιλάλη. Και το Μπιλάλη με ήτα να φαίνεται, να είναι όσο γίνεται πιο ελληνοφανές το επίθετο.

*Rexhina* Για εξήγησέ μου. Θεωρούσες ότι θα σε βοηθούσε με την εργασία;

*Enkeled* Ε σίγουρα. Ναι, ναι. Είναι κιόλας τέτοια η φύση του επαγγέλματος, που θα έκανα φιλολογικά μαθήματα, που δεν ξέρω κατά πόσο ένας μέσος Έλληνας θα εμπιστευόταν το παιδί του για τα ελληνικά έναν Αλβανό.

*Rexhina* Ναι.

*Enkeled* Και δεν ήθελα και πολύ να το διαπιστώσω, να το μάθω.

Enkeled When I did it, I was distributing business cards for private tutoring. I remember then I consciously did not put my name as Enkeled, I had put “Ε. Μπιλλάλη”. And Bilali with *ita* <η> to appear, the last name to appear as Greek as possible.

Rexhina Explain this to me. Did you think that it would help you in work?

Enkeled Definitely. Yes, yes. And the nature of the profession is such, that I would be tutoring on philological classes, that I do not know to what extent the average Greek would trust the Greek of their child to an Albanian.

Rexhina Yeah.

Enkeled And I was not dying to figure it out.

Name Hellenizations are not always migrant-initiated. Discussing her Albanian family name *Paskali* [paskali], Marilena, admits that sometimes it is misheard as the Greek variant of the last name, that is *Πασχάλη* [pasxali]. The Greek variant includes two Hellenizations. One is the perceptual correction of [k] to [x] which is a Greek but not Albanian phone. The other adaptation, when the name is misheard as Greek, is the spelling of the name-final high front vowel with an *ita* <η> which is a typical feminine marker in Greek family names, as mentioned above. It replaces *iota* <ι> which is the typical transliteration into Greek of non-Greek high front vowels (also mentioned in Enkeled’s case above). Marilena will choose to not correct her interlocutor for non-official purposes as it allows her to maintain the understanding that she is Greek. She will correct her interlocutor only when she feels “safe” to do so. Correcting to the Albanian variant of her name will raise questions about her ethnicity which for her have been unpleasant in the past. Maintaining the illusion that she is Greek by not correcting her last name allows her to avoid similarly unpleasant situations. When asked if she would

Hellenize her last name if she got the chance, Marilena responded negatively although she admits that at eighteen her response would have been different. Her Albanian last name “carries her lived experience”. It carries her racialization and all the consequences of that racialization for someone living in Greece. Rather than avoid racialization, she seeks the racialization via her last name so that she can claim visibility in the hegemonic culture and respect for who she is. Being deracialized by Hellenizing her last name would mean to lose what it meant to grow up in Greece and to lose the chance for visibility.

*Γενικά όταν ακούνε το όνομά μου, το επίθετό μου βασικά, δεν καταλαβαίνουν ότι είναι αλβανικό. Γιατί πολλοί ακούνε Πασχάλη, χι-ήτα. Πέρα από τις φορές που πρέπει να είναι σωστά το επίθετό μου και από τις φορές που αισθάνομαι safe να το διορθώσω. Εκεί που δεν αισθάνομαι safe να το κάνω, δεν το κάνω. Η εκεί που νιώθω ότι ε δεν έχουμε και πολύ χρόνο τώρα να εξηγούμαι, πώς να το γράψω, τι είναι, δεν μπαίνω στην διαδικασία. Το αφήνω να το γράψουνε Πασχάλη. Αλλά όποτε το γράφω, πολλές φορές όταν έχω διορθώσει και έχω πει ότι είναι Πασκάλι, ε δεν έχω περάσει και πολύ καλά με τις ερωτήσεις. Κάπως.*

[...]

*Γιατί μέσα στο επίθετό μου είναι το βίωμά μου. Δεν θέλω να το σβήσω αυτό από μένα. Είναι. Το έχω και περηφάνεια ας πούμε να καταλάβουν ότι ναι είμαι μεταναστευτικής καταγωγής, είμαι εδώ και απαιτώ τον σεβασμό σου. Δεν υπάρχει λόγος να μου συμπεριφερθείς άσχημα γιατί κατάλαβες ότι το επίθετό μου δεν είναι ελληνικό. Δεν ξέρω. Ναι, θέλω να το κρατήσω αυτό το επίθετο και δεν θέλω να το αλλάζω.*

Generally, when they hear my name, actually, my last name, they can't tell it's Albanian. Because many hear [paskali], *chi-ita*. Besides the cases where my last name has to be properly written and the time that I feel safe to correct it. When I don't feel safe, I don't do it. Or when I don't think we have enough time for me to explain, how it's written, what it is, I don't go into the trouble. I let them write it as

[pasxali]. However, whenever I write it, many times whenever I have corrected it and I have said it is [paskali], I haven't had the best time with the questions.

Somewhat.

[...]

Because my last name carries my lived experience. I don't want to erase this from me. It's. I am even proud if people figure out that I have migratory origin. I am here and demand your respect. There is no reason to treat me badly if you figured out that my last name is not Greek. I don't know. Yes, I want to keep this last name and I don't want to change it. – Marilena

Name Hellenizations are often initiated by employers in governmental institutions.

For instance, when Pavlo received his Greek citizenship, he was asked by the police officer who was issuing his Greek identification card if he wanted to Hellenize his Albanian name. Specifically, he was asked if he wanted to change his name from *Πάβλο Τοπάλλι* [pavlo topali] to *Πάβλος Τοπάλης* [pavlos topalis]. The Hellenization would entail:

- a) Addition of final [s] in his personal name which marks men's names in Greek for nominative case and masculine grammatical gender.
- b) Deletion of one <λ> [l] in his family name. The double <λλ> is reflective of the transliteration of the Albanian spelling where <ll> stands for a velarized lateral [ɬ].
- c) Replacement of *iota* <ι> with *ita* <η> in his family name to orthographically represent the vowel in the ultimate syllable.
- d) Addition of final [s] in his family name which marks men's family names in Greek for nominative case and masculine grammatical gender.

This series of Hellenizations make his personal name completely Greek and turn his family name into its Greek version.<sup>22</sup> Pavlo declined this offer, on the one hand, so that there is cohesion in the way his name appears in Albanian and Greek official documents, and on the other hand, so that his identification with Albania is not completely lost. Like Marilena, Pavlo seeks racialization rather than deracialization. Also, like Marilena, Pavlo was one of the few second-generation subjects in this study who was born in Greece and not Albania. This allowed his parents to baptize him, as is typically done in Greece, in the Orthodox church as a baby and to give him a Greek personal name in the first place without him ever having an Albanian name. His birth certificate therefore always carried the Greek version of his name, *Πάβλος* [pavlos], with the masculine nominative -ς [s].

Prior to his naturalization as a Greek citizen, Pavlo took a step further in his racialization and his attempts to center his Albanianess. He requested that his name be changed in the birth certificate, which was based off of his baptism records, from *Πάβλος* [pavlos] to *Πάβλο* [pavlo] to reflect how his name appeared in his Albanian passport. With this act Pavlos is actively seeking a reracialization. [s] in his personal name racialized him as Greek. By removing it he is reversing his racialization, changing it to something his parents avoided with their initial name choice. He is racialized as Albanian. Removing the [s] indexes his Albanian “roots”. Like Marilena, Pavlo did not always feel comfortable with his Albanian family name without the final [s]. He narrates feeling “dysphoria” hearing his Albanian family name during roll call at school, but eventually overcame it as it represents “who [he is]”.

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<sup>22</sup> Τοπάλη [topali] is a family name found in Greece. Probably both the Albanian and Greek versions etymologically derive from Turkish *topal* “a person with a limp”.

His older sister Pamela Zoe had a few more stories to share about Pavlo's name which he was too young to remember and narrate himself. The first concerns when Pavlo started kindergarten and his teacher decided to render his name in Greek characters as *Πάβλος* [pavlos], which is a departure from the standard Greek spelling *Παύλος* [pavlos]. Although the pronunciation quality remains the same, the departure from the standard spelling indexes Pavlo as non-Greek. According to Pamela Zoe, the teacher explained her non-standard rendering as rational since Pavlos is not an Albanian name and therefore the child cannot have a name with a Greek spelling. For the teacher *upsilon* <υ> is reserved only for Greeks as it indexes Greekness; non-Greeks do not qualify for *upsilon* as it would misrepresent them as Greek. It would misracialize them and that would be problematic as ethnoracial categories should not be blurred or crossed, in her view. It is important to keep the categories distinct and clear to avoid any transracial subjects (Alim 2016). Orthography here is mobilized to help keep the lines between Greek and Albanian clear. The second story concerns one of his elementary school teachers who reprimanded him for spelling his family name in the Greek way, that is *Τοπάλης* [topalis], instead of *Τοπάλι* [topali] even though the latter was the official transliteration of the family name at the time by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For the teacher, Pavlo should not be "appropriating Greekness" by spelling his last name with an *ita* <η> [i] and final <ς> [s]. Rather, he should be sticking to his Albanianess which calls for an *iota* <ι> [i] in the last name. As was the case with *upsilon* in the first story, *ita* is reserved for Greeks. Non-Greeks should be staying away from using these letters in their names, should not cross the line to Greekness, and should not transracialize.



*Κάποια στιγμή ένας, στην πέμπτη δημοτικού, ένας δάσκαλός του, του απαγόρευσε να βάλει το -ς και το ήτα και του είπε ότι εσύ είσαι Αλβανός και όνομά σου είναι Τοπάλι με γιώτα και δεν θα οικειοποιείσαι ελληνικότητα. Οπότε δεν ήταν το ‘να είσαι περήφανος που είσαι Αλβανός’, ήταν το ‘δεν θα γίνεις ποτέ Έλληνας ποτέ, Αλβανέ’. Και έτσι του το άλλαξε και του έβαλε Τοπάλι με γιώτα και, όχι Τοπάλης. Το οποίο έφερε αρκετά μεγάλη βαβούρα μετά γραφειοκρατική γιατί ήτανε μέχρι τότε έτσι, και μετά ήταν έτσι και το απολυτήριο υπήρχε θέμα.*

At some point, in fifth grade, a teacher forbade him from putting [s] and the ita and told him you are Albanian, and your name is *Τοπάλι* [topali] with iota and you won't be appropriating Greekness. So, it was not ‘you should be proud you're Albanian’, it was ‘you won't ever become Greek you Albanian’<sup>23</sup>. So he changed it and wrote it as *Τοπάλι* [topali] with iota and not *Τοπάλης* [topalis]. This caused many bureaucratic headaches afterwards because until then it was like that, and then after there was an issue in the high school diploma. – Pamela Zoe

Many participants had stories of frustration to relate about the time they acquired Greek citizenship and were issued their Greek identity cards and passports. The frustrations pertained to the ways their personal and family names were transliterated in the Latin script in their newly acquired Greek documents in addition to their name being represented in the Greek script. Another frustration emerged from police officers' suggestions<sup>24</sup> to Hellenize their names as they appeared in the newly issued Greek identity cards and passports. For example, Stefania stated that she and her father had to correct the police officer who issued her Greek identity card when he rendered her family name in Greek as *Κώστα* [kosta] rather than *Κόστα* [kosta]. *Κόστα* had been the Greek transliteration of the Albanian name since the parents arrived to Greece and before their

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<sup>23</sup> Slogan chanted often in the early- to mid-2000s towards Albanians by Greeks. Still present today.

<sup>24</sup> National identity cards and passports in Greece are issued in local police stations and civilians are assisted in the process by police officers.

children were naturalized as Greek citizens. Though orthographic *omega* <ω> and *omicron* <ο> have the same vowel quality in Modern Greek, that is, the mid, back rounded vowel, they do not evoke the same Greekness perceptions. Omega is emblematically Greek and is found in very few scripts<sup>25</sup> beyond Greek compared to omicron. By correcting *Κώστα* to *Κόστα*, Stefania and her father reject the Hellenization and reracialization of Stefania as Greek, bring to the forefront her Albanianess, and reject the power the Greek official exerts over her with this Hellenizing act during the naturalization process. Modest described a similar, yet less invasive experience, when he went to the police station to obtain his Greek identity card for the first time. There, the police officer gave him the option to Hellenize his name any way he wanted, which Modest refused as that would change the way he had been used to spelling his name his entire life.

Admiljan did not adapt his name but admitted that in anticipation of his naturalization as a Greek citizen, he mused on the potential Hellenizations of his personal and family names. His goal was that when the Hellenized names were back-transliterated to a Latin script, they would be close to the original Albanian spellings. This is how he came up with *Αδμιλιανός Δροβάνικος* [aðmiljanos ðrovanikos] which would yield in Latin *Admilianos Drobanikos*. The Latin transliteration would be very close to the Albanian spelling *Admiljan Drobaniku*. Additionally, the Hellenized name would follow the Greek conventions for marking nominative masculine names with the addition of *-ος* [os] at the end of the personal and family name. Such a Hellenization would have accomplished multiple effects:

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<sup>25</sup> Notably Coptic and Cyrillic.

- a) to deracialize the name from its association with Albanianness;
- b) to re-racialize the name as Greek or as aspirationally Greek since it is easily recognizable as a non-Greek name by Greek speakers;
- c) to index Albanianness when back-transliterated to a Latin script in dealings with non-Greek speakers.

A simple Hellenizing act, therefore, could allow Admiljan to index affiliations with and dissociations from different ethnic identities depending on the person he has in front of him. This strategy did not reach completion as Admiljan was not given the opportunity to Hellenize his name upon receiving his Greek citizenship.

<b>Albanian</b>	<b>Greek</b>	<b>Latin</b>
Admiljan	Αδμιλιανός [aðmiljanos]	Admilianos
	→	→
Drobaniku	Δροβάνικος [ðrovanikos]	Drobanikos

Admiljan also shared an encounter he had with a police officer when he went to issue his Greek identity card upon receiving the Greek citizenship. The officer's comment is of particular interest:

*Καλά η αστυνομικός μόνο που δεν με έβρισε. Η αστυνομικός μου λέει τί το θες λέει το ελληνικό διαβατήριο εσύ; Έχεις τόσα πολλά σύμφωνα λέει, πώς θα τα γράψουμε; Και τις λέω, θα τα γράψεις λέω, όπως θέλω εγώ, όπως μου επιτρέπει ο νόμος. Αυτή εντωμεταξύ (inaudible) να μου κάνει ολόκληρη διαδικασία. Γιατί με το που έβαλε το ονοματεπώνυμο με τους ελληνικούς χαρακτήρες από κάτω βγήκε του ΕΛΟΤ και της λέω δεν θέλω έτσι. Και μου λέει πώς το θέλετε. Λέω όπως είναι στο τέτοιο. Α μου λέει θα πρέπει να το ξαναγράψω και αυτά, και λέω να το ξαναγράψεις, γιατί όχι.*

The only thing the police officer did not do is to insult me. The police officer told me ‘what do you want the Greek passport<sup>26</sup> for’. There are so many consonants. How are we going to write it? And I told her, I told her you’ll write it the way I ask you to, as the law allows me. In the meantime (inaudible) she started a whole process. Because as soon as she put the first and last name with the Greek characters the system output the Latin transliteration by ELOT<sup>27</sup> and I told her I don’t want it like this. And she asked me how I wanted it. And I told her as is on the thing [i.e., birth certificate]. She told me, oh I have to write it again, and I said you should write it again, why not. – Admiljan

For the police officer a name like *Αντ.μι.λιάν Ντρο.μπα.νί.κου*<sup>28</sup> [ad.mi.ljan dro.ba.ni.ku] has too many consonants, therefore, its claim to Greekness is dubious. This is despite the fact that many of these graphemic consonant combinations produce single phones in speech (e.g., <ντ> = [d], <μπ> = [b]). She even expressed indignation for having to write so many consonants and having to correct the Latin transliteration of the name that is automatically generated by the Hellenic Organization for Standardization’s software. For her, Greek names do not have many consonants, and anything that does not adhere to this principle is not Greek. With this comment she rejects Admiljan’s claim to Greekness despite his fulfilling the criteria for naturalization. She even ignores that Greek actually has complex consonant clusters in its system which may result in syllables with three consonants in onset position and one in coda (Mennen & Okalidou 2006). Given this, the number of consonants in syllables in Admiljan’s first and last name is actually below what is allowed in Modern Greek. None of the syllables have more than one

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<sup>26</sup> A speech error; he meant to say Greek identity card. Later in the interview Admiljan clarifies that the passport issuance was much more pleasant.

<sup>27</sup> Hellenic Organization for Standardization.

<sup>28</sup> Graphemic consonant clusters represented in bold.

consonant as coda, most have only one consonant as onset, and only one has two consonants as onset, namely <Ντρ> [dr]. Greek even has a native word, *ντροπή* [dro.pi] ‘shame’, with the same initial syllable as [dro.ba.ni.ku]. This comment by the police officer, ironically, polices who can have a claim to Greekness even though it is not within her duties to do so. It also reminds Admiljan that he is not Greek and that he does not belong despite what his naturalization says.

Ilira [ilira] did not officially Hellenize her name but went through phases of name Hellenization while still in school. During her first two years in Greece her name would appear in school transcripts as *Λύρα* [lira]. The Hellenization here is, first, the elimination of the high front vowel in the first syllable, and second, the spelling of the remaining high front vowel with an *upsilon* <υ> [i] rather than an *iota* <ι>. This choice, though it does not change the quality of the vowel in Modern Greek, is markedly more Greek.

Additionally, *λύρα* ‘lyre’ is a well-known traditional Greek music instrument which reinforces the Hellenization and the potential of the name to pass as Greek. The effect of Greekness is so strong that Ilira related a more recent encounter she had in Crete where the lyra is commonly played by local musicians. As she was chatting with a nail technician at a beauty salon, the technician called Ilira *πολύ πατριώτισσα ρε κοπέλα μου* ‘girl, so patriotic’ when she misheard her name as *Λύρα* [lira] and mistook her as being proudly Cretan in that she had been given the traditional Cretan instrument as a personal name.

When Ilira entered middle school, the initial high front vowel re-entered her personal name and she was known until the end of the secondary education as *Ιλίρα* [ilira]. According to her, it was a personal choice to spell her name with the upsilon

because it looked more *αρχαιοπρεπές* “ancient [Greek]-like”. It would thus boost her racialization as a Greek to some extent and at the same time deracialize her as Albanian. During the same time, her last name, *Aliaj*, was spelled in the same contexts as *Αλίαη* [aliaj] instead of *Αλίαϊ* [aliaj]. The final ita <η> instead of iota <ι> Hellenizes the name as it is in line with many family names marked for feminine gender in Greek. Ilira admits that the ita spelling still racialized her as non-Greek, but perhaps it gave her bonus Greekness points for trying to pass as Greek. The transliteration of Albanian <aj> in family names is conventionally done with an alpha followed by an iota with a diaeresis, thus, as <αϊ> in Greek. The diaeresis on the iota is a spelling convention which indicates that this sequence of vowels should be pronounced as [aj] and not as an [e] which would be the case were the diacritic absent. Therefore, ita <η> Hellenizes the family name and deracializes it by removing the association with Albanianess as ita never receives a diaeresis.

When she was participating at the National University Entry Examination as a high school senior, Ilira had to return to the official transliterations of her names, that is, those without all the Hellenizations they had undergone. It was the first time she presented herself to her peers and teachers as *Ιλίρα Αλίαϊ* [ilira aliaj] which unquestionably racialized her as Albanian. She described this experience as “stripping” (*απογύμνωση*) and as “outing” herself in terms of her ethnicity to people who had known only her Hellenized names and who were raising questions about this novel, to them, spelling. Although she felt this change in spelling as “foreign” to her, she quickly came to terms with it, and it helped her transition to a phase without a Hellenization of her name.

*To transition ήτανε σαν εκ νέου outing γιατί λες και, λες και το Αλίαη με ήτα ήταν ελληνικό ας πούμε. Ούτε χριστιανικό αλλά μου έδινε παρόλα αυτά ένα 5% παραπάνω ανήκειν ας πούμε. Ενώ το transition από ήτα σε γιώτα με διαλυτικά ήτανε fullstop ξέρω εγώ ξένο. Οπότε ήταν έτσι εκ νέου, έτσι λίγο σαν απογύμνωση ας πούμε. Ότι δεν μπορείς ούτε το ήτα να διατηρήσεις. Όχι, εδώ με γιώτα και διαλυτικά που δεν είναι καθόλου μα καθόλου ελληνικό ας πούμε. Αλλά την ίδια στιγμή επειδή ήτανε και εποχή που εγώ έτσι λίγο είχα I had come to terms, με το θέμα αυτό, α εντάξει, το δέχτηκα κάποια στιγμή. Αλλά θυμάμαι στις πανελλήνιες να πρέπει να εξηγώ πάρα πολύ τί είναι αυτό το γιώτα με διαλυτικά και τέτοια.*

The transition was a re-outing, as if Aliaj with ita was Greek. Neither Christian, but it still gave me an extra 5% of belonging. While the transition from ita to iota with diaeresis was like fully foreign. So, it was like a re-, like a stripping let's say. You can't even retain ita. No, here with iota and diaeresis that it is not Greek whatsoever. And at the same time because it was a time where I sort of had come to terms with this issue, I like accepted it at some point. But I remember during the Exams to have to explain a lot what is this iota with a diaeresis, and the like. – Ilira

It should be noted that the Hellenized family names becoming Greek passing could be attributed to Arvanite family names that were Hellenized in the past. Arvanites were groups of Albanians, mainly from the south of present-day Albania, that during the Middle Ages moved and settled mainly in Attica and the Peloponnese of present-day Greece. Attica and Peloponnese are important as they are the first parts to form the Greek state in modern history after independence from the Ottoman empire in the 19th century. Arvanites brought with them, among other things, their Albanian language and family names. These Arvanite family names were adapted and incorporated into the Greek set of family names after a long process of Hellenization of Arvanites<sup>29</sup>. This allowed for newly

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<sup>29</sup> The Hellenization was facilitated by their Orthodox Christian faith as well.

Hellenized Albanian names to sound Greek enough in as they resemble, in their adapted forms, adapted Arvanite family names.

#### **5.4 Latin script transliterations.**

Many participants recounted their experience with the Greek to Latin transliterations of their personal and family names. This typically happened to the second-generation participants who had acquired Greek citizenship and were issued Greek identity cards and passports that require a transliteration of the personal information in the Latin script. The process of issuing the identity cards and passports is done at select municipal police stations and the officers make use of software by the Hellenic Organization for Standardization (ELOT) which automatically renders the names in Latin script from Greek. Transliterating from Albanian (a variant of the Latin script) to Greek and then again to Latin (closer to English spelling) came with problems, as it can be imagined. *Ilirida Musaraj* became *Ιλιρίντα Μουσαράι* [ilirida musarai] in Greek, a spelling which orthographically represents fairly accurately the Albanian pronunciation. This was due to the happy coincidence that the phones that make up the name are part of the sound systems of both Greek and Albanian, and thus no adaptation was required. However, when Ilirida went to receive her Greek identity card, her name was transliterated into Latin as *Ilrinta Mousarai*. Comparing the Albanian, *Musaraj*, and the Latin, *Mousarai*, spelling of the name it is hard to see the connections between the names unless you are familiar with Greek. The non-adherence to the Albanian spelling of the names when they were transliterated in the Latin script brought discomfort to the participants. Ilirida requested that her name retain her Albanian spelling in Latin because it looked like a “different person”. She and others in her position are allowed to request



alternate spellings by an official declaration at the police station and by presenting an Albanian birth certificate that exhibits the Albanian spelling. Commenting on the Latin transliterations, Admiljan mused on the shock of Albanian border police officers upon looking at Albanian names in the IDs of border crossers that are back-transliterated to Latin script from Greek. Admiljan brings another factor here, the judgements that Albanians without migratory history might cast on these name Hellenizations, whether voluntary or involuntary.

*Ναι, φαντάσου τώρα όμως να έχεις την μεταγραφή του ΕΛΟΤ και να μπεις στην Αλβανία. Θα τρελαθεί ο αστυνομικός (inaudible)!*

Yeah, imagine you have the ELOT transliteration and you enter Albania. The police officer will go mad (inaudible). – Admiljan

Ilirida was able to reject the deracialization and maintain her Albanian spelling that is more representative of who she is. Ilira was not aware that this was an option, exclaiming “wow, I had no idea” during our interview. Thus, she did not question the Latin transliteration for her family name from *Aliaj* [aliai] to *Aliai* [aliai]. Even though this spelling is faithful to her Albanian pronunciation, the final <j>, which is common in Albanian family names, is lost and makes for another instance of deracialization. Ilira made some efforts to maintain the Albanian spelling in various international conferences she attended, but eventually she gave up and uses *Aliai* in trying to maintain cohesion in the spelling of her family name when it comes to professional settings.

Similarly, Enkeled did not know of and was not presented with the option to maintain his Albanian spelling on his Greek identity card. In fact, there is a third option which allows citizens to maintain both the Albanian spelling and the Latin transliteration

from Greek. As a case in point, I was given the option to have my family name appear as “Ndoci or Ntotsi”, that is, with both Latin spellings and the disjunctive “or” between them. Similar to Ilira, Enkeled Bilali was not aware of either option and his name was transliterated in Latin via Greek as *Enkelent Mpilali*. When I asked him if he was given the option to have both spellings with the disjunction, Enkeled admitted he was surprised as he had not heard of this possibility from any other acquaintance and that he was “just learning from [me] (i.e., the researcher) that you have a say in this”. At the time, Enkeled was concerned about bureaucratic problems that might arise with the different Latin spellings of his name that were available in different public agencies. On a more emotional level, he disliked the Latin transliteration via Greek as “they are not [his] name and last name”. His frustration was coupled with the fact that the Albanian phones that make up his Albanian name are also available in Greek so that there were no pronunciation difficulties to Greek speakers; thus, the transliteration into Latin was actually unnecessary.

<b>Albanian</b>	<b>Greek</b>	<b>Latin</b>
Ilirida Musaraj →	Ιλρίντα Μουσαράι [ili'rida musa'rai] →	Ilirinta Mousarai
Ilira Aliaj →	Ιλίρα Αλίαι [i'lira a'liai] →	Ilira Aliai
Enkeled Bilali →	Ενκελέντ Μπιλάλι [enke'led bi'lali] →	Enkelent Mpilali
Rexhina Ndoci →	Ρετζίνα Ντότσι [re'dzina 'dotsi] →	Retzina Ntotsi

*Που εγώ ήμουν σε φάση σας παρακαλώ, αφήστε το όνομα έτσι όπως είναι, δεν. Είναι σαν να είναι διαφορετικό όνομα και διαφορετικός άνθρωπος. Τελείως.*

I was like please, leave my name like it is, I don't. It's like it is a different name and a different person. Completely. – Ilirida.

*E random. Τελείως random. Αλλά δεν ήταν, πιο πολύ σκεφτόμουνα το γραφειοκρατικό κομμάτι. Μην έχω πρόβλημα σε κάτι αλλά ήτανε okay, δεν είχα κάποιο θέμα ιδιαίτερο. [...] Μου κλωτσάει γιατί δεν είναι αυτό το όνομα και το επίθετό μου. [...] Ναι, δεν είναι Enkelent ούτε Mpilali. Είναι Enkeled Bilali. Είναι κάτι το οποίο, δεν είναι ότι λείπει από την ελληνική και δεν μπορεί να προφερθεί ως πούμε.*

Random. Completely random. But it was not, I was mostly thinking about the bureaucratic part. So that I don't have problems in things, but it was okay, I didn't have any particular issues. [...] It rubs me the wrong way because this is not my name and last name. [...] yes, it is not [enkelent] neither [mpilali]. It is [enkeled] [bilali]. It is something, it's not like it is absent from Greek and it cannot be pronounced, for example. – Enkeled

## 5.5 Mispronunciations and misspellings

Participants also reflected on the misspellings and mispronunciations of their personal and family names. Violeta has heard various mispronunciations of her family name, *Pemaj* [ˈpemaj] (‘tree’ + family name suffix -j) which she refers to as “killers” reflecting the feeling that name butchering has on her. Greek speakers have produced it as [peˈmaj] and [pemaˈi] both of which retain the same sequence of sounds but fail to place the stress on the first syllable. This stress shift is not due to some Greek stress rule that might restrict stress placement to the ultimate and penultimate syllables of a word as Greek has a three-syllable window for stress placement (Arvaniti 2007). Notably, Violeta admitted that due to the frequent mispronunciation of her last name as [peˈmai] in the school context, she was unaware until quite older of its “correct”, Albanian pronunciation with the stress on the first syllable. Consequently, for a long time, she herself adopted that stress for her family name. Another mispronunciation of her family name, *Pemaj*, has

been [re'madz] which can be attributed to the quality of the grapheme <P> as [r] in Modern Greek. Additionally Greek speakers produce <j> as [dz] phonologically adapting the [dʒ] quality that the <j> grapheme has in English.

Krisilda shared a similar story about her own family name *Lubonja* [lu'boŋa] which would be mispronounced by Greek speakers as [lubondza]. Here too, the <j> grapheme is being pronounced as a [dz] instead of palatalizing the preceding nasal grapheme as it does in Albanian.

*Μου φαίνεται κακό το οποίο έχω υιοθετήσει με τα χρόνια ως παιδί ακούγοντας στο σχολείο και εγώ βέβαια. Αλλά είναι, εξακολουθεί να είναι λάθος. Εννοώ είναι λάθος απόδοση του ονόματος στα ελληνικά. [...] (inaudible) Θα σου πω. Γιατί ως παιδί δεν γνώριζα. Επειδή (inaudible) το όνομά του το άκουγα κατά κύριο λόγο από την δασκάλα, οπότε παρέμεινε, αποτυπώθηκε αυτό ως το σωστό. Και μέχρι μια άλφα ηλικία, αρκετά μεγάλη, δεν ήξερα καν την ύπαρξη του σωστού του τονισμού.*

It ([pe'mai]) sounds bad which I have adopted through the years as a child hearing it in school. But it is, it still is wrong. I mean it is incorrect rendition of the name in Greek. [...] (inaudible). I'll tell you. Because as a child I didn't know. Because (inaudible) I would mainly hear my name from the teacher, so it remained, that was inscribed as correct. And up until some age, pretty old, I didn't even know the existence of the correct stress. – Violeta

## 5.6 Attitudes and follow-up questions

Many participants expressed their disagreement towards externally initiated name changes or adaptations. *Violeta*, in Greek *Βιολέτα* [vjoleta], shared that the Hellenization of her name to *Βιολέττα* [vjoleta], with two <τ> [t] distances her from the Albanian name which she would prefer to keep. For Pavlo the proposed Hellenization of his last name when he was naturalized as a Greek citizen was out of the question. It would mean a

disconnection to his family which does not have a Hellenized name as they are not Greek citizens. Hellenization would also mean a disconnection from his “roots” and “origin”. Rejection of the Hellenization is a rejection of the externally proposed deracialization that at the same time alienates the subject from their immediate family. For Pamela Zoe the loss of her Albanian name, *Pamela*, would also mean loss of the story behind her name. Although the name might seem like a westernization, Pamela actually shared that her parents were unaware of the western name. Pamela was devised by merging the first syllables of her father’s name, *Pasho*, her mother’s name, *Merçeta*, and [lav], the Albanian pronunciation of English *love*. To lose Pamela, would mean to lose carrying her parents’ love, of which she was the product as the first child early in the marriage.

**Pasho** + **Merçeta** = [lav] “love” → **Pamela**

*Γιατί το όνομα είναι, ξέρεις, κάτι πολύ συγκεκριμένο και το original είναι αυτό. Οπότε θα ήθελα να γράφεται ακριβώς έτσι όπως είναι. Και με παραξενεύει και η προσθήκη γράμματος να σου πω την αλήθεια.*

Because the name, you know, is something very specific and the original is this. So, I would like it to be written exactly like it is. And the addition of a letter seems odd to me to be honest. – Violeta

*Αλλάζει το επίθετό μου. Δεν είναι το ίδιο επίθετο ας πούμε. Εντάξει, δεν είναι. Όλοι, ο μπαμπάς μου, η μαμά μου, ξέρω εγώ, είναι δύο λάμδα γιώτα, και εγώ, και η οικογένειά μου γενικά. Και εγώ τί, θα είμαι ένα λάμδα και ήτα; Δηλαδή το βρίσκω ότι λες και γίνομαι από άλλη οικογένεια ξέρω εγώ (inaudible). Λες και δεν είμαι από το Τοπαλλέικο. Από άλλο Τοπαλέικο. Με την έννοια ότι ξέρεις είναι λίγο έτσι μια επαφή με την οικογένειά μου, με τις ρίζες μου, με την καταγωγή μου. Γι’ αυτό το κράτησα ας πούμε.*

It changes my last name. It is not the same last name let's say. Okay, it is not. Everyone, like, my dad, my mom, have two <λ> [l] and <ι> [i], and I, and my whole family in general. And I what? I will have one <λ> and <η> [i]? It seems as if I come, like, from a different family (inaudible). As if am not from the [topali] family line. From the other [topali] family line. In the sense, like, you know, it is kind of a connection with my family, with my roots, with my origin. That's why I like. kept it. – Pavlo

When asked about whether their Hellenized and Greek-passing names have helped them, Niko and Marilena agreed with the statement. Their explanation centered around the sentiments that they sound *πιο ωραίο* “nicer”, *πιο καθαρό* “cleaner”, and *πιο συνηθισμένα* “more common”. Re-racialization via the adoption of Greek-passing names helps individuals' foreignness pass undetected since more typically Greek names do not raise questions about ethnicity. Re-racialization also ameliorates the disadvantages that come with having an Albanian name, a name that is viewed as unpleasant or dirty.

Fatmir (> Miri) never adopted a Greek name despite efforts from employers and Greek acquaintances. Proposed names had been *Μιχάλης* [mixalis] and *Δημήτρης* [ðimitris], both of which he rejected. Fatmir went on to relate a recent incident where a Greek friend of his wife suggested to her that they find a Greek name for Fatmir. To which the wife replied to not bring this up to Fatmir as he is adamant about keeping his Albanian name. For him, his name is his true self, so that adopting a Greek name would be to lie about who he is.

*Un thosha kam ni emen. A t' pelqen ti me t' erdh me t' emen falso, me t' emen tjeter se nuk jam un i thosha un. T' pelqen i thosha un. Nuk i vite mer m' fakt ashtu. Mas anej fillun ta kuptu se un nuk nrishoj edhe m' pranun ashtu.*

I would tell them I have a name. I would tell them would you like me to come with a fake name, with a different name that it's not me? Do you like it, I would tell them. In fact, they didn't like that. Then they started to understand that I would not change and they accepted me like that. – Fatmir

In summary, I have shown here the process of deracialization that Albanian migrants of first- and second-generation migrants have undergone in Greece. The deracialization was the outcome of indexical bleaching by which the indexicality to Albanian ethnicity is lost (Bucholtz 2016). Indexical bleaching is achieved via personal and family name changes and adaptation, to the extent that these no longer index Albanianess. Based on participants' narratives, in Greece there was and there is no tolerance for names that racialize one as Albanian. To that end the name changes and adaptations often lead to a reracialization of the migrants as Greek. Internalizing this intolerance for Albanianess results in Albanians sometimes themselves seeking deracialization of their Albanian personal and family names. Other times, due to Hellenization pressures, Albanians seek to reracialize themselves as Albanian and diverge from names that would racialize them as Greek.

## **Chapter 6. The effect of gradient ethnic information on job prospects and social judgments**

In this chapter I discuss the design and the findings of a two-part experiment which investigated gradient ethnic information and its evaluation by experiment participants. Specifically, the experiment investigated how gradient ethnic information available about persons might affect their job prospects and how they are socially evaluated. Participants evaluated (a) the hirability of Albanian or Greek names who presented the same job qualifications, and (b) evaluated Albanian- and Greek-named speakers in terms of likeability, aggressiveness, ruralness, and accentedness. I first discuss in detail the experiment methodology, and then the results of the resume task followed by the results of the speech evaluation task.

### **6.1 Experiment design and analysis**

#### *6.1.1 Participant recruitment*

An experiment was designed and carried out in order to examine the social effects of having an Albanian name. It took the form of an online survey and was designed and administered in Qualtrics. The experiment consisted of two tasks: a resume task and a speech perception task, both of which are described below. Subjects of both Albanian and Greek origin participated in the experiment. Participants had the option to complete the



experiment on their desktop computers, laptops, tablets, or smartphones as long as they were in a quiet place.

The Greek subjects were recruited via Prolific, an online crowd sourcing platform. Demographic characteristic filters were set in the platform to ensure that the subjects participating in the experiment were of Greek origin. Criteria included (a) being adult, (b) speaking Greek, (c) speaking Greek fluently, (d) having Greek as their primary language, (e) having Greek as their earliest language in life, (f) being born in Greece, (g) residing in Greece, (h) having spent most of their life before turning 18 in Greece, and (i) being Greek nationals. Additional questions on the ethnicity of the participants were included in the survey to ensure the Greek ethnicity of the participants. The motivation for these criteria was to ensure participants' proficiency in Modern Greek and great familiarity with Greek culture, its social structures, and the Greek sociolinguistic context. Including subjects with a lack of proficiency in Greek or with non-familiarity with the Greek context would yield misleading results. Additional demographic information was collected at the end of the survey. Prolific affiliates that were filtered by the platform as fulfilling the above criteria were notified that a survey was available for them to complete. A total of 120 participants completed the survey. On the experiment's demographic questions, one of the participants self-reported being a second-generation Albanian migrant, born in Greece to Albanian parents, so their data were pooled with the data from the Albanian participants. In total, data from 119 Greek subjects were analyzed.

Of the 119 Greek participants, 42 self-identified as women, and the other 77 self-identified as men. The mean age of these participants was 28.7 and the median age: 27. Of these participants, 29 had completed secondary education, 11 had completed

vocational training, 58 held BA degrees, 19 held MA degrees, and 2 held PhDs. Of the 60 Albanian participants, 32 self-identified as women, and the other 28 as men. The mean age of the Albanian participants was 37.2 and the median 34. Of these participants, 19 had completed elementary and secondary education, 7 had completed vocational training, 11 held BA degrees, 21 held MA degrees, and 2 held PhDs.

Data from Albanian-origin subjects were collected via other recruiting methods as there was need to recruit first- and second-generation Albanian migrants in Greece. Prolific does not offer these levels of specificity in its subject demographic filtering, so alternative recruitment methods were explored. A convenience sample of 20 first-generation Albanian migrants was recruited from the personal social networks of the researcher. A snowball technique was also employed to some extent through which subjects from the researcher's network suggested and assisted in recruiting additional subjects that fulfilled the demographic criteria. The criteria of interest were that (a) they were of Albanian origin, (b) had migrated to Greece as adolescents or adults, (c) were living in Greece, and (d) self-reported that they spoke both Albanian and Greek comfortably.

In order to explore the effects of age of migration (or migratory generation), a convenience sample of second-generation participants was also recruited to participate in the experiment. As second-generation were labeled those who were born in Greece to Albanian migrant parents or who migrated to Greece at a young age. Migrating by the age of 11 was set as a cut off point for the categorization as a second-generation migrant which is the age children in Greece are in their last year of elementary school. An exception to this classification was made for one of the participants who migrated to

Greece at 15 but who identified with the second-generation and not the first. This participant completed their secondary and tertiary education in Greece and maintains close interpersonal relationships with the more canonical second generation. Two other participants who came to Greece at the same age, at 15, were classified as first-generation migrants due to not completing secondary and tertiary education in Greece and maintaining close interpersonal relationships with members of the first generation. Classification decisions, in short, were not made solely on age of migration, but also on other information pertaining to integration based on schooling and social networks, as well as self-identifications.

A total of 16 second-generation subjects offered data for the survey. To this population, the data of the one Prolific participant was added who was identified in the survey as being a second-generation Albanian migrant. Apart from this one second-generation subject the rest of the second-generation subjects were recruited via the personal social networks of the researcher, a small-scale snowballing technique, and the social media.

With reference to the latter, 23 additional experiment participants were recruited via posts to a private Facebook group bringing the total of Albanian participants to 60. For reference, the group at the time had approximately 500 members. This is a closed group with strict ethnicity and migratory generation criteria operating on an honor system. To be granted membership, individuals have to self-report that they are Albanian second-generation migrants from Greece in order to join. If members are identified as not fulfilling any of these criteria after having joined the group, they are reported to the group administrators and are removed with an explanation. Occasional reminders about these

criteria are also made in the group via posts so that members who are not second-generation Albanian migrants from Greece can leave the group voluntarily. I am relatively known to the group members as I am one of the four group administrators, am a member of the group since its inception, and am moderately active in the group via posting, commenting, and reacting to posts or comments. The majority of the second-generation experiment participants were recruited via the networks I have built through participation in this Facebook group. It should be noted that a number of the Albanian participants (n=11) did not live in Greece at the time the data was collected but had moved abroad for study or work. Their second-generation status and their recent onward migration ensured that their data was reliable as they are all proficient Modern Greek speakers and had spent most of their formative years in Greece.

The hourly wage for the Prolific participants was set at \$16 per hour. Participants ended up receiving a third of this amount as the experiment took approximately 20 minutes to complete. The Albanian participants entered a drawing for one of the 20 gift cards worth 20 euros each. Many of the participants, especially those in the family circle of the researcher refused to enter the drawing.

### *6.1.2 Resume task*

The first part of the experiment was what I termed a Resume Task. In this, subjects were presented with a job posting, one seeking to fill an Assistant Accountant position. The position posting is given in Appendix A. After the posting, subjects were presented with a one-page resume of an applicant for the position. Appendix B shows the resume used in the experiment. After being encouraged to read both of these resume prompts, subjects were asked how likely they were to hire that applicant for the Assistant Accountant

position if they were responsible for the hire. The rating options ranged between ‘1 – I would never hire this person’ and ‘6 – I would definitely hire this person’. No middle response was offered in order to force subjects to choose between hiring or not hiring the candidate even if the differential in the choice was small as that between 3 or 4.

The position of ‘assistant accountant’ for the experiment was decided upon as it represents a position that would require a higher education degree that would lead to a prestigious office (“white-collar”) job as opposed to the unskilled, manual jobs that Albanians are thought to stereotypically hold. A fitting posting was found at a well-known Greek job-search webpage. The ad constructed for the experiment was based on that ad in order to reflect realistically the types of qualifications typically required and the types of benefits such positions provide. The resume task ad was much shorter and was stylized with a company logo to create the illusion of a real ad. On the presented resume end, a similar tactic was employed whereby a sample resume of a Greek accountant was detected with the help of a Google search and this was used as the basis for the construction of a resume appropriate for the position. A decision was made to not make the candidate presented either qualified or unqualified for the position but rather just moderately qualified. Specifically, while the ad asked for candidates with two years of experience in accounting, salary compensation, and logistics, the candidate presented in the resume held two years of experience in other finance-related positions. The goal was to examine whether the information participants receive about the ethnicity of the candidate would sway them towards evaluating the candidate as qualified enough for this position or not.

All subjects saw the same job call and the exact same resume. The only difference between subjects was the name of the applicant they saw on the resume. A third of the subjects saw ‘Anxhelo Gjoka’ [andzelo dzoka], an Albanian name written in the Albanian script. Another third of the subjects saw ‘Ατζελο Γκιοκά’ [adzelo gjoka], the same Albanian name written in the Greek script, in other words, the Albanian name transliterated to Greek. And a final third of the subjects saw ‘Άγγελος Γκιοκάς’ [agelos gjokas], the Hellenized Albanian name. The Hellenization derives from the Greek version of Anxhelo [andzelo], namely Άγγελος [agelos], and from the Greek nominative singular final [-s] in the family name, [gjokas]. Note that Greek morphologically marks family names for gender and that final [-s] applies only to the last names of men. The experiment was designed in this way so that the ethnic information conveyed by the names is more or less Albanian in a gradient way. ‘Anxhelo’ conveys the most information about the Albanian origin of the applicant as it is an Albanian name written in the Albanian script. ‘Ατζελο’ conveys some information about the Albanian origin as it is an Albanian name written in the Greek script. This variant also carries some Hellenization by being written in Greek letters. ‘Άγγελος’ conveys the least information of the Albanian origin of the applicant as it is the Greek version of the name written in the Greek script and is fully Hellenized. The Hellenized name is a name a Greek might have that has no relationship to Albania, but that potentially has Arvanite origin. Due to this, it is a name that would not raise any suspicion to the everyday person about the potential non-Greekness of the name bearer. Table 4 summarizes the three variants of the resume name and gradient ethnic information conveyed in each. Confirmation of the ethnic origin perceptions of these names is provided in Chapter 6 which discusses the experiment results.

<b>Name version</b>	<b>IPA</b>	<b>Ethnicity status</b>	<b>Written</b>	<b>Details</b>
Danjel Zhyta	[dɔnɛl zyta]	Albanian	Albanian name + Albanian script	Emblematically Albanian two-syllable last name and Albanian digraphs: <i>xh</i> and <i>nj</i>
Ντανιέλ Ζίτα	[dɔnɛl zita]	Moderately Albanian	Albanian name + Greek script	Non-Greek first and last name, lack of final -s for masculine nominative case of personal and family name, non-Greek τζ <sup>30</sup> [dz] in spelling
Δανιήλ Ζήτας	[ðaniil zitas]	Hellenized	Hellenized name + Greek script	Greek version of first name + final -s in family name

Table 4: Name versions in resume task with details about the ethnic (i.e., Albanian) information conveyed.

The design aimed at examining the likelihood of someone with markedly Albanian origin securing employment. Specifically, it examined whether the amount of information, that is, gradient information, conveyed by the applicant’s name about his Albanian origin would affect his employability chances. Put differently, it was examined whether the Hellenization of an Albanian name would benefit a candidate in the job market. These questions were motivated by the attested name-changing and name-Hellenization strategies employed by Albanian migrants in Greece as discussed in Chapter 5.

Qualtrics, the platform hosting the experiment, was set to randomly assign one of the three name variants to each of the experiment participants. The platform was also set

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<sup>30</sup> See Joseph (1992) for the foreignness and the negative language ideologies surrounding [dz] in Modern Greek.

to balance the number of participants assigned each name variant in order to yield comparable results.

### *6.1.3 Speech perception task*

#### 6.1.3.1 Speaker evaluation

The second part of the experiment was a speech perception task which examined listeners' social evaluation of Albanian L2 Greek. In the experiment, participants were presented with 9 Greek audio sentences of 1-2 seconds each. Participants heard one sentence at a time and on their screens saw what they were informed was the name of the sentence producer. A disclaimer was introduced on the instructions page that any similarity with persons familiar to them was incidental. They could hear each sentence up to two times to limit non-spontaneous responses which could arise from taking too long to respond with additional replays and which could compromise the reliability of the data. After each audio and first + last name pair, participants rated the speakers with regard to their agreement with the following four statements:

- The speaker sounds likeable.
- The speaker sounds aggressive.
- The speaker sounds like they are from a rural area.
- The speaker sounds accented.

Ratings were done in a one to six Likert scale where '1' represented 'completely disagree' with the statement, and '6' represented 'completely agree' with the statement. The rating scale choices are based on Ndoci (2021), who found that Albanian L2 Greek speakers are evaluated as less likeable, more aggressive and more rural than L1 Greek speakers. The



present experiment builds on Ndoci (2021) and explores how ethnic information conveyed by the name of the speakers affects their evaluations additionally examining the effect to perceptions of accentedness.

To achieve this each participant heard in a randomized order nine Greek sentences and at the same time saw the name of the sentence producer at the top of their screens. Six of these sentences were produced by two Albanian and Greek bilingual men representing different male-identifying speakers. Three more SMG sentences were included as filler distractor sentences and were produced by monolingual Greek-speaking women. The motivation behind examining only evaluations of men is that Ndoci (2021) tested only judgements towards male voices and therefore the data is only reliable with regard to male voices. The motivation for testing only male voices in Ndoci (2021) originally was the strong gendered character of Albanian L2 Greek and of the widely circulating stereotypes about Albanian migrants in Greece in general (see Chapter 3 on the Albanian in internet memes). Of the six tested, non-filler sentences, three were produced in Standard Modern Greek and the other three were produced with a phonological variable that marked the speaker as Albanian L2 Greek speaker. The audio stimuli were tested previously in Ndoci (2021) and are presented in Table 5, which also describes the L2 features.

Sentence	Translation	Variety	L2 Feature
Μην ακουμπήσεις το ταψί με το [k]έρι και καείς [min akubisis to tapsi me to kerɪ ke kais]	Do not touch the oven tray with the hand and burn (i.e., as it will burn).	Albanian  L2  Greek	[k] instead of SMG [ç]  in [kerɪ] ‘hand’
Πρέπει να κόψουμε το [k]ορτάρι στον κήπο [prepi na kopsume to kortari ston cipo]	We need to cut the grass in the garden.	Albanian  L2  Greek	[k] instead of SMG [x]  in [kortari] ‘grass’
Πάρε καλύτερα το μα[çç]αίρι του ψομιού [pare kalitera to macçeri tu psomju]	You better take the bread knife.	Albanian  L2  Greek	[çç] instead of SMG [ç]  in [macçeri] ‘knife’
Έχω μόνο ένα γκρι γιλέκο [exo mono ena gri jileko]	I only own a grey vest.	SMG	SMG; no Albanian L2 Greek features
Εγώ την ταινία την βρήκα μέτρια [ego tin tenia tin vrika metria]	I found the movie average.	SMG	Not SMG; no Albanian L2 Greek features
Πήραμε ένα μεγάλο τραπέζι για την κουζίνα [pirame ena megalο trapezi ja tin kuzina]	We got a big table for the kitchen.	SMG	SMG; no Albanian L2 Greek features

Table 5: Tested sentence stimuli with or without Albanian L2 Greek features.

The tested stimulus producers were two Albanian and Greek bilingual men in their late 20s who were born in Albania but were raised in Greece from a young age. They produced two versions of the utterances included in the experiment, one in SMG and one in Albanian L2 Greek throughout the utterance. Specific emblematic Albanian L2 Greek segments were later spliced into the SMG utterances using Praat (2020) such that the result had two utterances that differed only in the presence or absence of an Albanian phone.

Each experiment participant was randomly assigned to one of three lists and heard and saw the audio + name stimulus pairs in a randomized order. All the participants heard the exact same audio stimuli illustrated in Table 5. The difference between lists was the variant of the speaker's name that the participants were shown. For instance, when hearing the first utterance in Table 5 those that were assigned List 1 saw the Albanian name Anxhelo Gjoka [andzelo dzoka], those who were assigned List 2 saw the transliterated name Άτζελο Γκιόκα [adzelo gjoka], and those assigned List 3 saw the Hellenized name Άγγελος Γκιόκας [agelos gjokas]. In essence participants in all lists saw two Albanian names, two transliterated names, and two Hellenized names. Of each of these pairs, one was paired with an Albanian L2 Greek utterance, while the other with a SMG utterance. Appendix C shows all the name variants used across the three lists.

The names were chosen among common Albanian personal names and family names in Wikipedia. Attention was paid to including names that had characteristically Albanian graphemes such as the digraphs <xh> [dʒ], <gj> [dʒ/gj], and <dh> [ð], as well as <q> [çç] which was frequently attributed to the speech in internet memes (see Chapter 3). Additional names were chosen for the filler utterances that were produced in SMG by

women. These were common women's names in Polish, Turkish, and French and were identified with the help of a search engine.

#### 6.1.3.2 Perception of name Greekness and Albanianess

After the speech perception task, participants were presented with the names of the speakers they had just heard in a grid. This time they were asked their perceptions of the ethnic background of the named individuals solely judging by their names. They responded to "I believe this person is Greek" and "I believe this person is Albanian". The Greek subjects only responded to the latter question due to a design error. The rating scale was between "1 – Is not Greek/Albanian" and "6 – is definitely Greek/Albanian". These questions aimed at identifying that the names used in the experiment fulfilled their goal in providing gradient information on the ethnicity of the named individuals. At the end of the experiment, participants filled out their demographic information, giving their age, gender, level of education, whether they are ethnically Albanian, the age at which they migrated to Greece, the languages that they speak, and the place they live currently.

#### 6.1.4 *Experiment data analysis*

Before the experiment data was analyzed, datapoints from each individual participant were examined to determine attention to the experiment by the use of different levels of the scales or lack thereof. Datapoints that were invariable across a scale, e.g., only 3 ratings in the Albanianess evaluations, were discarded from the analysis. Subsequently, the data was statistically analyzed via ordinal mixed effects regression models (cumulative link mixed models; Christensen 2019) for each one of the rating scales of the speech perception task. That is there was an ordinal mixed effect model built for

‘likeable’, ‘aggressive’, ‘rural’, ‘accented’, ‘is Albanian’, and ‘is Greek’. Each of the models had these rating scales as the dependent variable with the three-way interaction for guise, name variant and rater ethnicity as the independent variable predictors.

Predictor significance for each model was determined through a stepping down process of log-likelihood model comparisons. Models also included random effects for participants, name seen, and list with an additional within-participant random slope for guise.

Three additional ordinal regression models (cumulative link models; Christensen 2019) were built for each of the rating scales in the resume task, that is for ‘would hire’, ‘is Albanian’, ‘is Greek’. For ‘would hire’ and ‘is Albanian’, the full models included the two-way interaction between name variant and rater ethnicity. The full models were stepped down via log-likelihood model comparisons to determine predictor significance. ‘Is Greek’ only tested name variant as a predictor due to absence of datapoints for this scale from Greek participants (see Section 6.1.3). Significant interactions or independent categorical variables with more than two levels were tested for further significance with post-hoc pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means. The post-hoc tests included Tukey adjustments for the multiple comparisons.

## **6.2 Resume task findings**

### *6.2.1 Evaluation of Albanianness and Greekness in the resume task.*

The ordinal mixed effects regression for the Albanianness perceptions of the name variants in the resume task revealed a main effect of rater ethnicity (Table 6). Overall, Albanian participants were more likely to evaluate the names as Albanian than Greek

participants were ( $p=0.003$ ). Additionally, there was a main effect of name variant suggesting that subjects evaluated the factor levels differently ( $p<0.001$ ). Finally, there was a significant interaction between name variant and participant ethnicity ( $p=0.001$ ). Multiple post-hoc pairwise comparisons between the interaction levels showed that for both Albanian and Greek participants the Albanian names written in the Albanian and the Greek script were not significantly different from each other ( $z=2.53, p=n.s.; z=1.77, p=n.s.$ ) although their means appear to be so at first (Figure 11). These name variants were, however, perceived as more Albanian than the Hellenized names for both Albanian ( $z=5.09, p<0.001; z=3.63, p=0.004$ ). and Greek subjects ( $z=6.53, p<0.001; z=4.38, p<0.001$ ).

In terms of the Greekness perceptions, there was a significant main effect of name variant (Table 7). A post-hoc pairwise comparison between the levels of the name variant variable showed a similar pattern as the one about the Albanianness perceptions of the names used in the resume task. The Albanian names written in the Albanian and the Greek script were not significantly different from each other ( $z=0.67, p=n.s.$ ; Figure 12). However, they were both evaluated as significantly less Greek than the Hellenized name, as expected ( $z=3.36, p=0.002; z=3.03, p=0.007$ ). The mean values for the Greekness perceptions are lower than those for the Albanianness perceptions suggesting that subjects were more confident making judgements about the Albanianness of the names than about their Greekness (Figures 11 and 12).

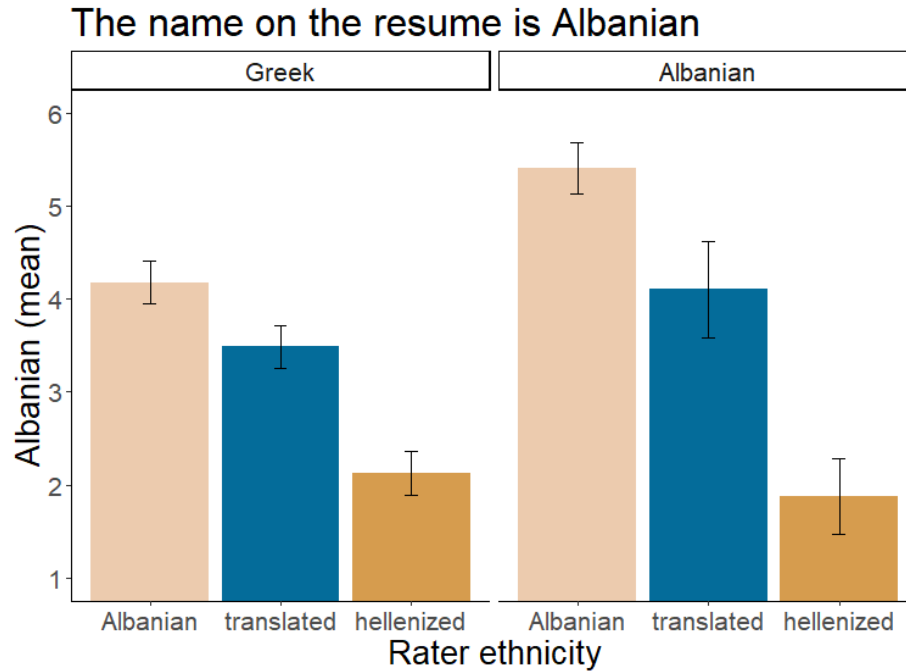


Figure 11: Mean Albanianness ratings based on name variant and rater ethnicity.

Coefficients	X <sup>2</sup> value	Degrees of freedom	p value
Spelling x AlbanianOrigin	13.67	2	0.001
Albanian Origin	8.429	1	0.003
Spelling	61.712	2	<0.001

Table 6: Log-likelihood comparisons for the ordinal model for Albanianness with name variant and rater ethnicity as predictors.

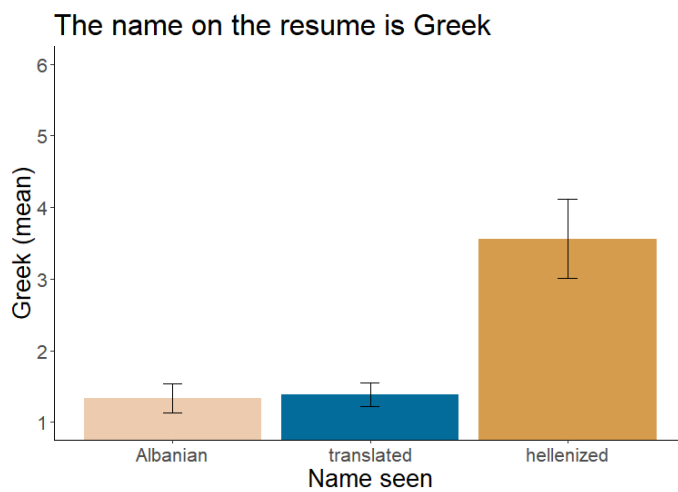


Figure 12: Mean Greekness ratings based on name variant.

Coefficients	X <sup>2</sup> value	Degrees of freedom	p value
Spelling	15.76	2	<0.001

Table 7: Log-likelihood comparison for the ordinal model for Greekness with name variant as predictor.

### 6.2.2 Hirability ratings

An ordinal regression about the likelihood of hiring the named person in the resume showed that there was no significant effect of name variant (Figure 13). That is, the Albanian, the transliterated, and the Hellenized name variants were not significantly different from each other. This runs counter to the expectations based on the interviews and participants' claims that their name changes and adaptations were often driven by the hope of better employment opportunities. There was however a significant effect of participant ethnicity (Figure 14). As seen in Table 8, Albanian subjects were more likely ( $p < 0.001$ ) than Greek subjects to report that they would hire the named individual in the resume task.

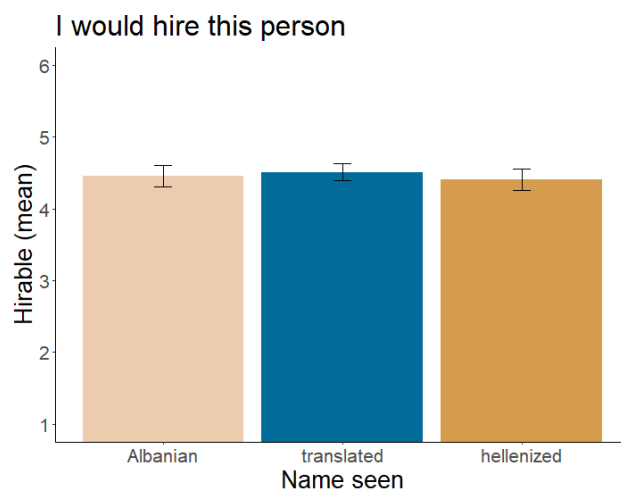


Figure 13: Likelihood of hiring named person for the position indicated at the job posting by name variant.



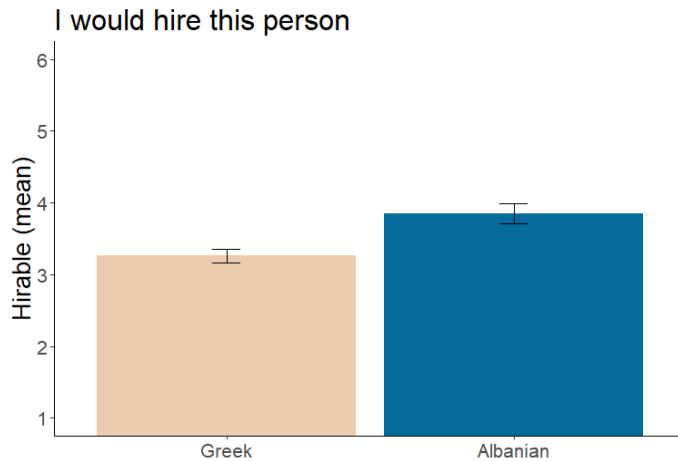


Figure 14: Likelihood of hiring named person for the position indicated at the job posting by listener ethnicity.

<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup> value</b>	<b>Degrees of freedom</b>	<b>p value</b>
Spelling x AlbanianOrigin	3.635	2	n.s.
Albanian Origin	14.358	1	<0.001
Spelling	0.666	2	n.s.

Table 8: Log-likelihood comparisons for the ordinal model for hirability with name variant and rater ethnicity as predictors.

### 6.3 Speech evaluation task findings

#### 6.3.1 Evaluation of Albanianness and Greekness in the speech evaluation task.

In the speech evaluation task, there was the expected effect of name variant in the evaluation of name Albanianness with raters treating the name variants differently ( $p < 0.001$ ; Table 9). There was also an additional main effect of participant ethnicity (Figure 15) with Albanian subjects being more likely than Greek subjects to judge the names as Albanian ( $p < 0.001$ ). In addition to these two main effects, there was a significant interaction between rater ethnicity and name variant. Multiple post-hoc pairwise comparisons showed that for Albanian participants the Albanian name written in

the Albanian script was more Albanian than the Albanian name written in the Greek script ( $z=4.76, p<0.001$ ). The latter was in turn perceived as more Albanian than the Hellenized name ( $z=6.4, p<0.001$ ). For the Greek participants there was no difference between the Albanian names written in the Albanian and Greek script ( $z=1.47, p=n.s.$ ). Both of them however, were perceived as significantly more Albanian than the Hellenized name ( $z=8.68, p<0.001; z=8.95, p<0.001$ ).

For the Greekness evaluations, there was a significant main effect of name variant ( $p<0.001$ ; Table 10). As expected, the pairwise post-hoc comparisons show that the Hellenized name was perceived as more Greek than the Albanian name written in the Greek script ( $z=7.52, p<0.001$ ; Figure 16). In turn the Albanian name in the Greek script was perceived as more Greek than the Albanian name in the Albanian script ( $z=3.55, p<0.001$ ).

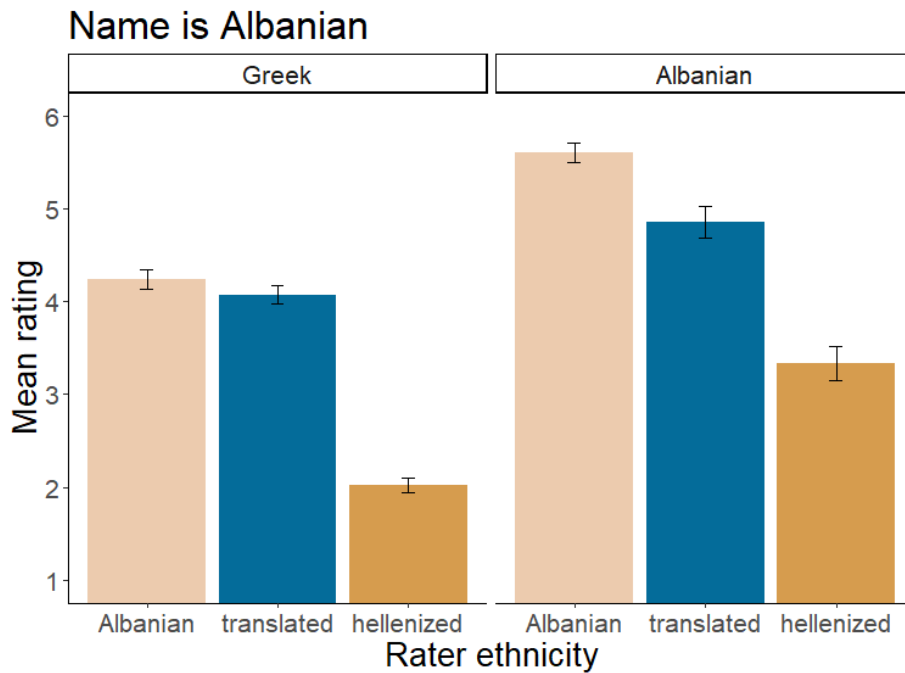


Figure 15: Mean Albanianness ratings based on name variant and rater ethnicity.

Coefficients	X <sup>2</sup> value	Degrees of freedom	p value
Spelling x AlbanianOrigin	22.053	2	<0.001
Albanian Origin	68.789	1	<0.001
Spelling	404.46	2	<0.001

Table 9: Log-likelihood comparisons for the ordinal model for Albanianness with name variant and rater ethnicity as predictors.

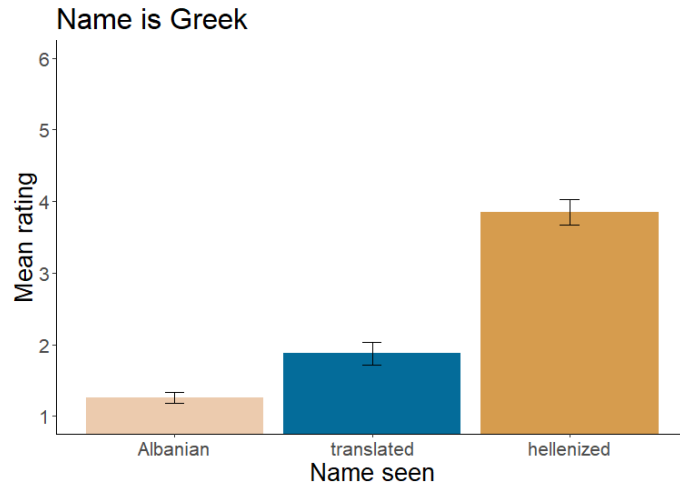


Figure 16: Mean Greekness ratings based on the name variant participants were presented with.

Coefficients	X <sup>2</sup> value	Degrees of freedom	p value
Spelling	41.41	2	<0.001

Table 10: Log-likelihood comparison for the ordinal model for Greekness with name variant as predictor.

### 6.3.2 Evaluation of likeability, aggressiveness, ruralness, and accentedness

The ordinal mixed effects regression on the likeability ratings did not indicate an effect of name variant. The only significant effects included a main effect for the variant heard and a main effect for listener ethnicity (Table 11). Speakers who produced Albanian L2 Greek were rated as more likeable than those who produced SMG ( $p < 0.001$ ; Figure 17).

Albanian subjects were also more likely to rate the speakers as likeable than Greek subjects were ( $p < 0.001$ ; Figure 18).

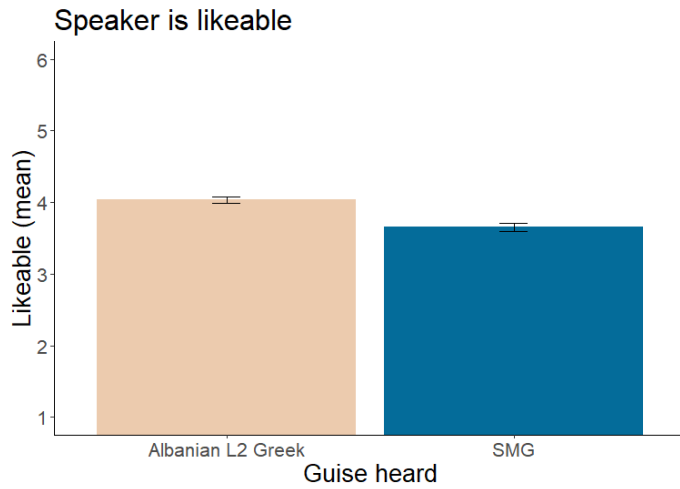


Figure 17: Mean likeability ratings based on guise heard.

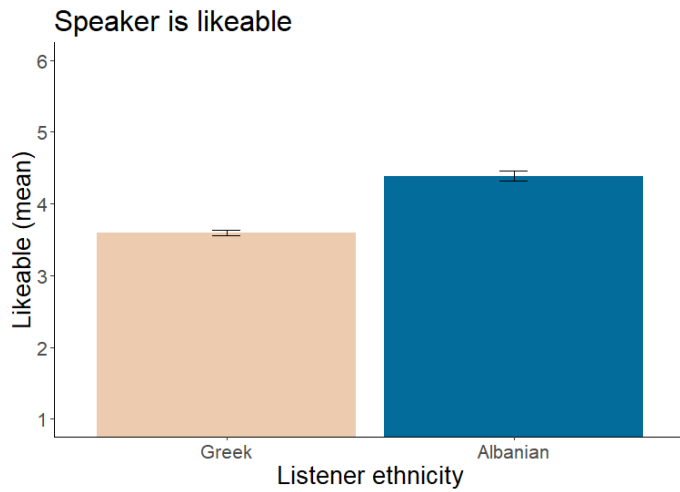


Figure 18: Mean likeability ratings based on listener ethnicity.

<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup> value</b>	<b>Degrees of freedom</b>	<b>p value</b>
Spelling x UnAccented x AlbanianOrigin	0.405	2	n.s.
UnAccented x AlbanianOrigin	0.729	1	n.s.
Spelling x Albanian Origin	1.106	2	n.s.
Spelling x UnAccented	1.691	2	n.s.
Spelling	1.724	2	n.s.
UnAccented	44.877	1	<0.001
AlbanianOrigin	34.587	1	<0.001

Table 11: Log-likelihood comparisons for the ordinal model for likeability with name variant, guise, and listener ethnicity as predictors.

For the aggressiveness perceptions, there was a significant main effect of speech guise and a significant interaction between speech guise and listener ethnicity (Table 12). Overall, the SMG guises were rated as more aggressive than the Albanian L2 guises ( $p < 0.001$ ) although the raters utilized the lower end of the rating scale (Figure 19). Additionally, when the guises are broken down by the ethnicity of the raters, we see that Albanian raters did not treat the guises differently to statistical significance ( $z = 1.36$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ ). Greek participants did rate the guises differently, with the speakers who produced SMG being evaluated as more aggressive than those who produced Albanian L2 Greek ( $z = 4.48$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Generally, subjects utilized the lower half of the aggressiveness rating scale suggesting their hesitation to offer negatively loaded evaluations.

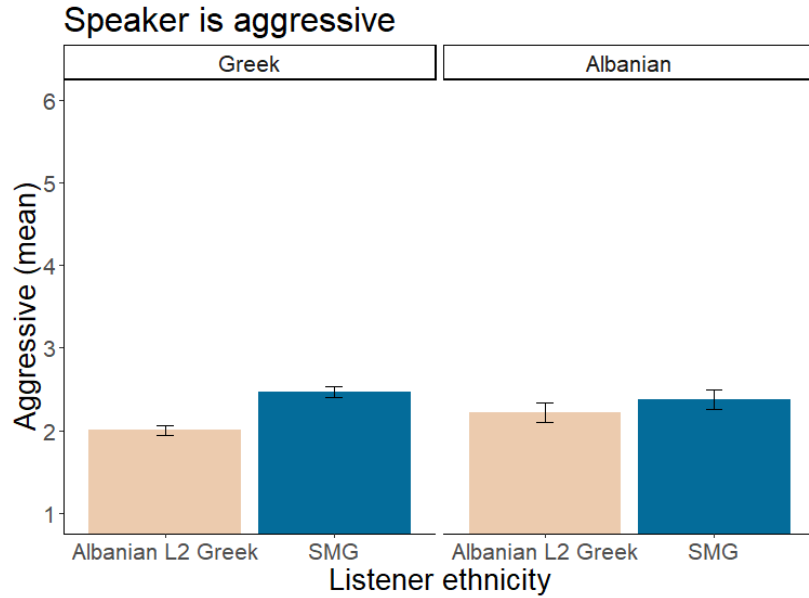


Figure 19: Mean aggressiveness ratings based on listener ethnicity and guise.

Coefficients	X <sup>2</sup> value	Degrees of freedom	p value
Spelling x UnAccented x AlbanianOrigin	1.496	2	n.s.
UnAccented x AlbanianOrigin	7.339	1	0.007
Spelling x Albanian Origin	2.98	2	n.s.
Spelling x UnAccented	0.798	2	n.s.
Spelling	1.359	2	n.s.
UnAccented	37.226	1	<0.001
AlbanianOrigin	<0.001	1	n.s.

Table 12: Log-likelihood comparisons for the ordinal model for aggressiveness with name variant, guise, and listener ethnicity as predictors.

For the ruralness perceptions, the log likelihood comparisons showed two main effects of speech guise and rater ethnicity (Table 13). There was no effect of name variant. The guises who produced Albanian L2 Greek were evaluated as more rural than those who produced SMG ( $p < 0.001$ ; Figure 20). Additionally, regardless of guise Albanian participants generally evaluated speakers as more rural than Greek participants did ( $p < 0.001$ ; Figure 21). It should be noted that participants were hesitant to offer strong

evaluations in terms of ruralness which is evident by their use of the lower half of the rating scale.

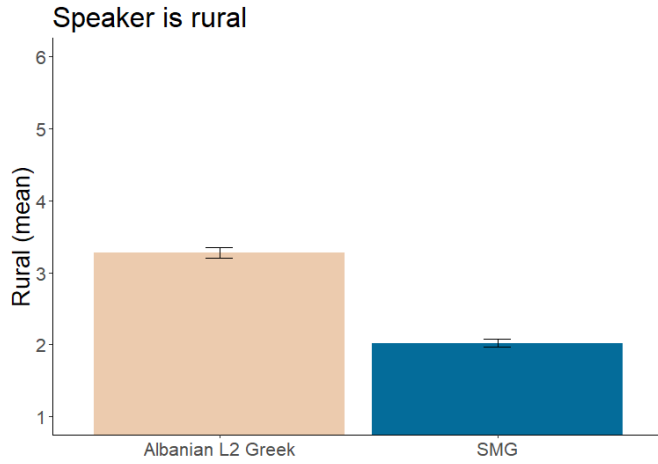


Figure 20: Mean ruralness ratings based on guise.

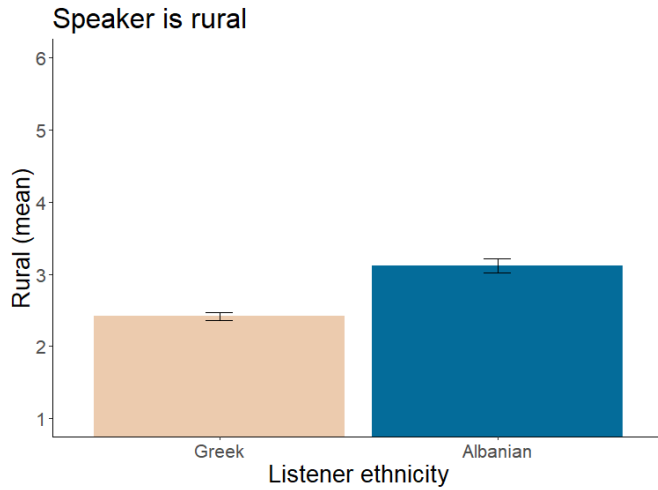


Figure 21: Mean ruralness ratings based on listener ethnicity.

<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup> value</b>	<b>Degrees of freedom</b>	<b>p value</b>
Spelling x UnAccented x AlbanianOrigin	3.073	2	n.s.
UnAccented x AlbanianOrigin	0.791	1	n.s.
Spelling x Albanian Origin	1.106	2	n.s.
Spelling x UnAccented	0.135	2	n.s.
Spelling	1.2	2	n.s.
UnAccented	220.9	1	<0.001
AlbanianOrigin	18.22	1	<0.001

Table 13: Log-likelihood comparisons for the ordinal model for ruralness with name variant, guise, and listener ethnicity as predictors.

For the accentedness perceptions there was again a main effect of guise and a main effect of listener ethnicity but not one for name variant (Table 14). As expected, the guises who produced Albanian L2 Greek were evaluated as more accented than those who produced SMG ( $p < 0.001$ ; Figure 22). Additionally, Albanian listeners, regardless of guise, were more likely to evaluate the speakers as accented than Greek listeners were ( $p < 0.001$ ; Figure 23). A factor analysis was conducted to investigate potential correlations between the rating scales.

The factor analysis was performed using the *factanal* function in *R* (R Core Team, 2023) and the results are presented in Table 15. Ratings for the Greekness perceptions are not included in the factor analysis due to the missing values (see Section 6.1.3). The high values of the loadings for ‘Rural’ and ‘Accented’ suggest that these variables are correlated and that raters treated them in a similar manner and did not really differentiate between the two scales. No other dependent variables seemed to be correlated.



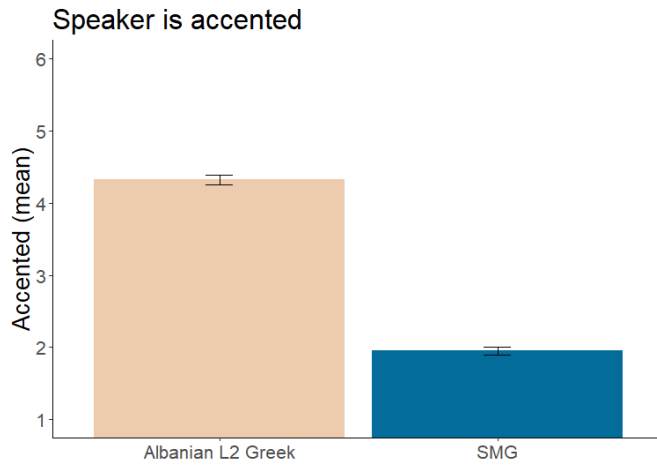


Figure 22: Mean accentedness ratings based on guise.

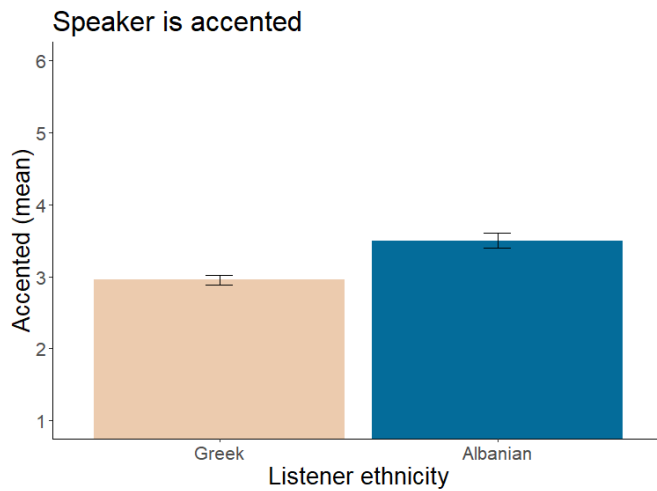


Figure 23: Mean accentedness ratings based on listener ethnicity.

<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup> value</b>	<b>Degrees of freedom</b>	<b>p value</b>
Spelling x UnAccented x AlbanianOrigin	0.075	2	n.s.
UnAccented x AlbanianOrigin	1.543	1	n.s.
Spelling x Albanian Origin	0.602	2	n.s.
Spelling x UnAccented	0.391	2	n.s.
Spelling	2.736	2	n.s.
UnAccented	548.99	1	<0.001
AlbanianOrigin	13.121	1	<0.001

Table 14: Log-likelihood comparisons for the ordinal model for accentedness with name variant, guise, and listener ethnicity as predictors.

	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>
<b>likeable</b>		-0.361
<b>aggressive</b>	0.195	0.978
<b>rural</b>	<b>0.665</b>	0.173
<b>accented</b>	<b>0.930</b>	
<b>is Albanian</b>	0.177	

Table 15: Factor analysis output for tested rating scales. Bolding, added for legibility, highlights factors with high loadings.

In this chapter I have shown that in the experiment listeners ignored the ethnic information provided by the names assigned to the speakers. Listeners instead focused their attention to the speech variety that they heard, Albanian L2 Greek and SMG. As a result, their responses varied based on the variety produced and not on the name variant attached to the speakers. Additionally, listeners avoided making negative evaluations for Albanian L2 Greek. Instead, they rated SMG as less likeable and more aggressive than Albanian L2 Greek. In turn, speakers who produced Albanian L2 Greek were evaluated as more rural and accented than speakers who produced SMG. In the next chapter I discuss the implications of these findings.

## Chapter 7. Discussion

### 7.1 Albanian L2 Greek in internet memes

In the internet memes analysis, I have shown that certain Albanian Greek phonological features are present more frequently in the meme corpus, which suggests that they are also more salient as markers of Albanianess and of Albanian L2 Greek. Such examples are the velar plosive [k] standing for the SMG palatal [ç] and velar [x] fricatives, but also the palatal affricate [t͡ʃ] occurring in place of the SMG palatal fricative [ç] and palatal plosive [c]. Moreover, certain lexical items are frequently attributed to the Greek of Albanian migrants, which suggests that they are similarly salient and emblematic of Albanian Greek. Such examples include *χωριό* ‘village’, *ζάδερφο* ‘cousin’, *χορτάρι* ‘grass’, and *qifsha* ‘fuck’. These lexical emblems are related to the stereotypes that circulate about Albanians in Greece, e.g., that they are rural and involved with drugs and violence, among others which racialize and stigmatize Albanians as an ethnic group with these qualities. Similar examples of lexical emblems in the US context include *dude* and *awesome*, which are emblematic of the California surfer persona (Podesva 2011). The frequency with which these phonological and lexical features are attributed to Albanians leads them to easy identification, association with Albanians, and further imitation in internet memes or other internet outlets (e.g., Canakis 2023 on Tik Tok videos). I argue, then, that an enregisterment of these features as characteristic of the speech of Albanian migrants has occurred in Greece (Agha 2003, Johnstone 2009) and that internet memes

have become a popular locale today for the emergence of such enregistered language (see also Pinta 2023, Dickinson 2023). The enregisterment is evident beyond the memes analyzed here in Greek TV series and the performances of Albanian characters by second-generation Albanian migrants. Examples include the series *Παρουσιάστε* ‘Present’ (Bezou & Vogiatzakis 2020) and *Συμπέθεροι από τα Τίρανα* ‘In-laws from Tirana’ (Papathanasiou & Reppas 2021). These performances carry many of the linguistic features described above and the Albanian characters possess many of the social attributes described as well. The performance of the enregistered speech becomes evident in the natural productions of the actors in interviews which are characterized by the presence of SMG across the board.

It is important to keep in mind that the Albanian Greek and the Albanianness constructed in memes reflect how the variety is imagined by the meme creators and does not necessarily reflect fully authentic Albanian L2 Greek. The Albanian Greek of the internet memes should, thus, be labeled Mock Albanian Greek to better reflect that construction. This finding adds to the literature on mock varieties that have been analyzed in the past such as Mock Spanish (Hill 1993, 2001), Mock Ebonics (Ronkin & Karn 1999), Mock Asian (Chun 2004), and more recently Mock White Girl (Slobe 2018). This classification arises from a number of observations in the meme corpus: 1) the unmotivated phonological adaptation of phonemes that exist in both Greek and Albanian (e.g., the voiced dental fricative [ð]); 2) unmotivated variation in the phonological adaptation of certain phones (e.g., SMG palatal fricative [ç] occurs as velar plosive [k] or palatal affricate [tʃ] in Albanian Greek); 3) inconsistencies in what gets phonologically adapted even within the same meme (e.g., [ˈksaðerfo] ‘cousin’ shifts its stress to

[ksa'derfo], but ['aroma] 'scent' does not become [a'roma]); and finally, 4) inconsistencies about the foreigners the memes refer to (e.g., Albanians or recent Muslim migrants and refugees). This last observation further points to a Mock Pan-foreign Greek rather than an exclusively Mock Albanian Greek. Thus, similar to the association in the US of Mock Spanish with Latinxs (Rosa 2016b) or of Mock Asian with the Asian Other (Chun 2016), the memes show that Albanians in Greece are racialized as Mock Albanian/Pan-foreign Greek speakers regardless of their actual linguistic productions. Mock varieties are also reminiscent of the English hyperforeignisms described in Janda et al. (1994) whereby English speakers produce loanwords that are not adapted into English, but also do not make an attempt at reproducing the source language phonology either.

In terms of the social construction of the Albanian migrant, the images are not all negative. We find memes that address the experience of being an Albanian (e.g., memes about strict or embarrassing family members, and memes about Albanian food). Some memes also address specifically the experience of being an Albanian in Greece (e.g., memes about assimilatory pressures in Greece, and about having undocumented migrant status). Similar patterns are also identified in Dickinson (2023) and in the memes about the US Latinx millennials and their relationship to Latinx culture including food, family relations, and language. Nonetheless, the majority of the memes do reiterate the usual stereotypes about Albanian migrants under the guise and license of humor. Albanians are essentialized (see also McIntosh 2005 on language essentialism) as criminal, uncivilized, working class, rural, aggressive, and of low intelligence. This essentialization eventually reinforces the existing stereotypes and further perpetuates them. An indirect comparison also arises in the process of constructing the Albanian between Albanians and Greeks,

indicating what Greeks are like or at least what Greeks are not like. Greeks are defined on a relationship of opposition to Albanians, i.e., they are not like Albanians. They are not criminal, uncivilized, aggressive etc., but rather they are the diametric opposite of that: law-abiding, civilized, friendly/calm etc. This opposition becomes at times more obvious in the memes with the use of non-SMG orthography and switches in script which carry meaning (Dahlberg-Dodd 2020), in this case highlighting ethnic difference.

The attributes of Albanian migrants as well as the linguistic features attached to them are presented to those consuming internet memes as common ground. In order to interpret the memes and in order for the memes to achieve their goal to produce humor (among others), the creators assume some core and emergent common ground among them and the meme audience/consumers (Dancygier & Vandelanotte 2017, Diedrichsen 2020). Common ground is core if indeed there is this common set of knowledge between the two sides of the meme production and reception chain. On the other hand, common ground is emergent in instances where the shared knowledge does not exist between the production and reception ends but the reception end has to construct it in order for the memes to make sense. With specific reference to the Greek memes about Albanian migrants, the construction of Albanians as violent, uncivilized criminals and the characteristics of their L2 Greek is assumed as shared knowledge between the creators and the meme consumers. That is, it is core common ground for the interpretation of the memes. In the event that this is not shared knowledge, the audience has to deduce that Albanians must be violent, uncivilized criminals and that the non-SMG features they are presented with are characteristic of Albanian migrants. That is, this interpretation that the audience has to make emerges as common ground in order for the consumers to be able

to interpret the meme. Emergent common ground is what contributes to the perpetuation of the stigma and stereotypes around Albanians and their L2 Greek even among those not familiar with the ethnolinguistic context of Greece.

I have shown that memes can be useful sources of data for a number of reasons. First, they can reveal the features that seem to characterize the speech of migrant communities (also Chun 2013). Second, as seen in other mass-media outlets (Mustafa-Awad & Kirner-Ludwig 2020, Khosravini 2009, Assimakopoulos & Baider 2017), memes can reveal the existing ideologies about those same migrant communities. Third, they can be the vehicle through which linguistic features that are associated with particular ethnic or racial groups are imbued with social meaning that is related to the ideologies about those groups. Finally, internet memes can also be the medium through which these ideologies about ethnoracial groups are disseminated and become available to the next generations growing up in a given community, especially those that do not have first-hand experience or knowledge of the ideologies when they first came into existence.

Finally, I argue that despite the current discourses about the integration of Albanians in Greece and the xenophobic attitudes belonging to the years of the first arrival of Albanians (e.g., Pontiki et al. 2020, Chatzi 2024, Meinardus 2024), these attitudes and discourses are still well present. They are not blatantly racist, but fall within the realm of microaggressions, and the guise of humor, in part, helps them pass under the radar of ‘racism/xenophobia’ as their (re)producers can evade racist intent and attribute their (re)productions to humor. These discourses eventually become evident under the right analytical (e.g., internet memes) or experimental set-up (e.g., Ndoci 2021). Such

discourses work towards elevating Greekness by way of disparaging Albanianness. They are not harmless as they come with a variety of social, economic, psychological effects for vulnerable groups such as migrants. Take for instance the case of the language used against Muslims and migrants in India during the COVID-19 pandemic which contributed to further marginalizing those groups (Nagar 2021). An extreme case of the effects of hate speech comes from Rwanda where derogatory terms licensed the Tutsi Genocide in 1994 (Tirrell 2012). With particular reference to Albanians in Greece, trauma emerges as a central theme in the narratives of second-generation migrants about their lives in Greece (Ndoci & Xheza et al. 2021).

## **7.2 Albanian slur and ethnic labels**

It has been found in other work (King 2020, Baugh 1991, Hall et al. 2015) that terms to designate ethnoracial groups can be indicative of the sociopolitical context in which they originated. Terms can also be indicative of the ideologies surrounding the ethnoracial groups they label at a given point in history (Motschenbacher 2020). With reference to the ethnic labels available in Modern Greek to refer to one of Albanian origin, subjects express value judgements and motivate their preference of one label over another suggesting how they situate themselves upon the world (Duranti 2011, Bucholtz & Hall 2005). One of the main sentiments expressed towards many of the available labels is aversion. The aversion towards the labels and the interpretations subjects made about the labels show that they have come to be ethnoracial slurs and have moved away from simply indicating the ethnicity of the referent that they had before the arrival of Albanian migrants in Greece. Nonetheless, the labels are still used with the latter meaning.

Aversion to the label is related to interpreting the slur as communicating the negative



stance of the slur user towards the slur recipient (McIntosh 2021b). By saying *Alvanos* or *Alvan-ida/-eza*, the slur user is giving rise to the indexical associations of what it means in Greece to be Albanian. This is in opposition to other work in the philosophy of language (Hedger 2013) that identifies the offense of slurs in their semantics. These meanings are negative and giving rise to them suggests to the recipient that the slur user holds this negative stance towards the person labeled *Albanian* because their Albanian qualities are negative and undesirable. Unlike other words that are used and interpreted as ethnoracial slurs, which makes them taboo words to be avoided (McIntosh 2021b), the use of *Alvan-* slurs has not diminished. As these slurs continue to circulate, subjects resort to reclaiming them and associating them with positive meanings since they cannot completely halt their usage (Hill 2008, Wong 2005). Albanians mentioned a similar reclamation process for some of these terms (*Alvanos*, *Alvaneza*, *Alvaniara*) as seen, for instance in the US with the reclamation of the *n*-word. The reclamation is tied to the reclaimed labels indexing ethnic solidarity and criticism towards the hegemonic group that has used them as slurs. As with the *n*-word (Smitherman 1994), there is no consensus among the participants in this research about which terms are to be reclaimed, if any, and about their rules of usage as reclaimed terms. For instance, there is no agreement whether slurs should be reclaimed in the first place and, in the event that any of them are reclaimed, whether Greeks are permitted to reproduce them.

Identifying the labels as slurs has led in many cases to their (partial) reclamation. Aside from reclamation, subjects showed that have been looking for alternative labels to talk about the ethnic identity as seen, for example, with the label *Roma*, which is used as an alternative label for the widespread slurs about the group (Gal 2019). One way

Albanians do this is through seeking alternative morphological forms to mark feminine gender (e.g., *-η* [i] instead of *-ίδα* [iða], *-έζα* [eza]) which are seen as more respectful or as lacking the slur potential. As in Hadodo (2023), subjects' preference for one form over another is indicative of the identities they want to claim for themselves that might stand in opposition to the identities imposed on them by others. Another way is to avoid the adjective *Alvanos* / *Alvan-i/-ida/-eza* altogether, and to use the periphrasis *from Albania*. Subjects called these periphrastic constructions “nicer” and see them as not evoking, or not evoking to the same extent, the negative associations that the *Alvan-* root does. *Alvan-* as a slur serves to normalize derogatory and inhumane ideologization of the people who are racialized as such. As shown in other work (McIntosh 2021a, Tirrell 2012), attaching such labels to groups of people rationalizes their treatment and dehumanization by the hegemonic group. In the case of Greece, identifying Albanianness with undesirable and malicious characteristics serves to normalize and legitimize xenophobic action and legislation.

To return to the offensiveness of the *Alvan-* derived labels, this seems to be rooted in the indexical associations related to being Albanian in Greece. Being Albanian in Greece is not only related to carrying one's cultural heritage to the migratory destination, but it also means being violent, criminal, working class, blue collar, unintelligent, and uneducated, among other negative things. To label one as *Alvan-*, therefore, is to evoke all or part of these associations about their person. These qualities are evoked as essential qualities of someone who is labeled *Alvanos* or *Alvan-ida/-eza*. The labels are thus essentializing and racializing Albanians as an ethnic group with these characteristics (Hill 2008) thereby contributing to the perpetuation of their Othering and stigmatization.

Together with labels such as *alvanofatsa* “Albanian-face”, the category ‘Albanian’ in Greece is racialized as a category with inherent social and personal traits along with physical traits that set them apart from other ethnoracial groups (also Sterk 2023, Alim 2016). Specifically, they set them apart from the hegemonic group, Greeks, with whom these words create an implicit comparison. If Albanians are racialized as having an *alvanofatsa* that is characterized by an “angled face” “wrinkled from work” and with a “large forehead”, as explained by Eneida, then Greeks do not have such a face. Their faces are not wrinkled from working exposed to the sun for many hours each day like Albanians working in agriculture or construction. Their faces are not angular, they are rounded because they have ample access to healthy, nutritious food. Being Albanian is, then, also to be of certain social standing and socioeconomic class and being Greek is to be on the other end of that standing. The *Alvan-* labels racialize the labeled subjects in all these manners and the offense ensues. The physical characteristics that racialized them as Albanian are biological, their “large forehead”, but also the outcome of their socioeconomic standing, their “angled face” which is “wrinkled from work”. Albanian in Greece, then, is not only an ethnic category but also a racial one with visible physical characteristics according to lay conceptions of racial difference.

Albanians dislike and dispreference for the *Alvan-* labels stem from the racialization that they cause. The labels set them as the ethnoracial Other (Said 1978, Coupland 1999) that does not belong, does not and cannot have a claim over the place they migrated to. Seeking alternative labels is an effort to divorce themselves from the racialization and to construct their own ethnoracial and other types of identities. Preference of high register *Alvani* over *Alvanida* and *Alvaneza* shows an attempt to

discuss ethnic identity without the indexical meanings that the other two carry. *From Albania* shows a move away from ethnic identity and the racialization that comes with it. The discourse centers around nationality or geographical origin and not on ethnicity. The phrase maintains the association with Albania but not necessarily with an Albanian identity. Associating with Albania shows where one was born or from where their ancestors geographically originated. It does not make an overt claim about identifying with the ethnic identity that is prevalent in that area. It leaves the matter of ethnic identification vague and open. The subjects who self-identify with *from Albania* could identify as Albanian or not. They could identify with another ethnicity, for example, the prevalent ethnicity of their migratory destination. Alternatively, they could identify with both the ethnicity from their place of origin and that of their migratory destination. Claiming any of these ethnicities does not happen overtly, that is, it is not materialized through the labels they chose in their ethnic self-identifications. Overt claim to Albanianess, through the use of the ethnic label *Albanian* does not happen. The avoidance of the ethnic label allows subjects to avoid evoking the negative racialization of Albanians. When the subjects are not claiming *Albanian* as an ethnic identity, they are also not claiming the indexicality of being Albanian. They do not ascribe to all the negative things that Albanians have been stigmatized as; therefore, they do not claim the *Albanian* label. Claim to Greekness does not happen overtly because subjects do not feel they have a right or permission to claim that identity. Non-commitment to Albanianess leaves space to claim another (additional) identity even if the claim does not materialize in words. With that identity also come the indexical meanings associated with the identity which subjects also do not overtly claim. I argue, then, that *from Albania* creates a

cautious duality by cautiously and indirectly claiming ethnic identities that subjects cannot claim directly.

At the same time the labels that subjects claim for themselves in their self-identifications are revealing of the types of identities that feel that represent them. The dual labels *Albanian Greek / Greek Albanian* are, for the most part, representative of how subjects from the second generation feel about their ethnicities. A subject will not, however, use these labels in front of others, especially Greeks, despite how descriptive they are of their feelings. Albanians of the second-generation do not feel they have the right to claim a Greek identity because both their parents are Albanian. They also have been raised with the “you’ll never become Greek, you Albanian, you Albanian” slogan. No matter how proficient they are in Greek, no matter how much they change or adapt their names, no matter how much they reject or tone down their Albanianess, no matter how much they dissociate from their Albanianess, they do not have permission to claim a Greekness. Greekness cannot be claimed even if they have acquired Greek citizenships and, in legal terms, they are Greek citizens. Since they cannot claim a Greekness, and since they do not overtly identify with Albanianess, then, they cannot publicly claim a dual identity that contains both Albanianess and Greekness.

Another label that emerged as important was that of *second-generation (Albanian) migrant* or simply *second generation*. This label was described as representing who they are and what their migratory experience was. It is characterized by their involuntary migration through the migration of their parents, the first generation. They are children of those migrants and, with this label, they recognize that their experience as Albanians in Greece is not the same as that of the first generation. *Second generation* is not only a term

used in migration studies, but it is also an institutional one by which they are described in Greece by government agencies and policies. Institutionally recognized as such, they gained permanent residence and access to the work market as adults, and eventually, they gained access to Greek citizenship. This institutional label also became a label by which they themselves identify with and adopt in their self-identifications. In other words, their identities are still characterized by migration. They are migrants once removed from the migratory decision. Despite getting naturalized and being educated in Greece, they are still seen and see themselves as migrants. They do not see themselves, for example, as *first-generation Greeks*. There is no space for transracialization (Alim 2016) as the ethnoracial boundaries have to be maintained. In places like the US, the migratory second-generation is called the *first generation*. *First generation* in this case means *first-generation American*, and not *migrant*. Had they migrated to US, these subjects would have been the first-generation Americans. In Greece, they see themselves through the eyes of the hegemonic group. They are migrants and will continue to be migrants. The label containing *migrant* reminds them again of their non-belonging and their inability to claim a Greekness. Hence, the inability to claim the label *Greek* for themselves.

Compared to work that explains away *Alvanos* as a joke (Ntelifilippidi 2014), it is clear that for the participants in this study such is not the case. This is not to say, however, that the term is not to some extent reclaimed and used among Albanians as a solidarity marker or to criticize xenophobia towards their ethnic group. My findings also parallel those in Ntelifilippidi (2014), Polymenakou (2019), and Komninaki (2016) about the meanings indexed by *Alvanos*, namely a blue-collar, poor, unintelligent, unfashionable person. Being Albanian is also to have physical characteristics that

racialize one as Albanian. It is to “look like an Albanian” in Komninaki (2016, 14) and to have an *alvanofatsa*, as mentioned by Eneida (see Chapter 4). As in Komninaki (2016), the intention of *Alvanos* to offend becomes clear when it is addressed to Greeks, where the interpretation of simply signifying the ethnicity does not hold. Although participants in my work do note the supposedly playful use of *Alvanos* (also in Tsiakalou 2007), via crossing (Rampton 1995), they make it clear that this is undesirable practice for them.

The current work also explores the slur potential of the feminine-marked ethnic labels referring to Albanians in Modern Greek which have not been explored before. It shows how the indexical meanings of the masculine and the feminine overlap in some ways but also diverge in others which are related to gendered stereotypes about what it means to be Albanian in Greece. Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, this work explores for the first time Albanians self-identifications and how those interact with ideologized ethnoracial categories. Specifically, this study brings to the forefront the dual ethnic identities that are present, but do not find overt expression due to the still very much present policing of ethnic boundaries still very much present. Finally, my work offers more insight into Albanian ethnonyms and slurs that are not solely a Greek phenomenon after the Albanian migration to Greece, but actually predate it due to the presence of ethnic Albanians in the former Yugoslav states (Neofotistos 2010) and present-day Greece during the Ottoman empire (Stavropoulos 2008).

### **7.3 Naming practices among Albanians**

The investigation of the naming practices of Albanian migrants in Greece offers more evidence regarding the personal name changes and baptisms that Albanians have experienced in Greece (Dritsa 2007, Michail 2009, Giannakopoulou 2020, Petrou 2007,

Komninaki 2016). The co-existence of two personal names, as mentioned in Giannakopoulou (2020), was also evident in my data; among the first generation of migrants, instead of the Greek name completely replacing the Albanian name, the most common outcome was the Greek name being used in the public sphere and the Albanian being present in the private sphere. The Albanian name is to remain hidden, not to be noticed from Greeks. It is as if the hegemonic group cannot cope with the reminder that Albanian names, and by extension the people who carry those names, Albanians, are present in Greece. The reminder would destroy the illusion of an ethnically homogeneous country. Maintaining this illusion superficially through names, even though it is present in other ways (e.g. in Albanian L2 Greek), seems more important.

Drawing from Bucholtz (2016) about Latinx names in the US, my study also expands this work by identifying name adaptations among Albanians as another way to be deracialized, namely, to lose their association with Albanianess and subsequently to be reracialized as Greek or partially Greek. I also go beyond investigating personal names and examines the processes of deracialization and reracialization in family name adaptations and translations, a topic which has not been investigated before. The dissertation, moreover, discusses the institutional and social pressures that lead to these name changes and Hellenizations. Previous work (Dritsa 2007, Michail 2009, Petrou 2007) has focused on name changes as integration strategies that help Albanians create relationships with Greeks and to show that they understand and are willing to participate in the naming and religious conventions of their migratory destination. However, they ignore the unequal power relations that exist between Albanians and Greeks and the assimilatory pressures that the migrants face. These pressures violently lead to name



changes that require the subjects to reject part of their identities and replace them with imposed and hegemonically-sanctioned counterparts. This replacement does not entail acceptance into the hegemonic culture or ethnicity as it arose in participant interviews in Chapter 4.

The efforts members of the hegemonic group made in pronouncing Albanian names were seen as indicative of the ideologies those others hold towards the ethnicity of the named persons (Hall-Lew et al. 2010, Motschenbacher 2020, Svensson 2024). Imposed spelling adaptations and transliteration strategies of names arose as indexical of the ideologies people hold or of the sociopolitical context encompassing the adaptations (Patrick 2022, Screti 2018, Mácha 2020, Busch 2022). Some Albanians are willing to accept or to not contest adaptations for fear of complete mispronunciation of their names which might render them unrecognizable (Emmelhainz 2012).

The spelling and pronunciation of personal and family names as well as their form altogether were important resources for the subjects which can index aspects of their identities (Boucholz 2016, Chen 2021; Obasi 2019; Emmelhainz 2012). Pronunciations and orthographic representations of their names carry information about their culture (Xu et al. 2020, Hassa 2012, Enríquez Duque 2023). Deracializations via name changes or adaptation were often preceded by a process of becoming more aware of the association with Albanianness that the names caused and a need to evade that association (Xu 2020). When subjects became aware that a relationship with Albanianness is undesirable in Greece, the need arose to break that relationship. Niko, for instance, lived 17 years as *Ndoc*. It was not until he migrated to Greece at 18 that *Ndoc* became “heavy”. It is at this time that Niko realized that *Ndoc* Othered (Said 1978) and racialized him to an ethnicity

that was non-canonical and undesirable. The realization came with a dislike for the name he carried till then and a preference for a canonically Greek name which was described as “prettier”. As discussed in the Swedish context (Svensson 2024), non-canonical names can extend to non-canonical ethnoracial groups for which the non-canonical names are canonical. Non-canonicity stands in juxtaposition to the hegemonic names and the hegemonic group and suggests a lack of equality to that hegemonic group. Seeking a canonical name in that context is striving to be perceived and treated as equal, that is, to participate in equality.

For some subjects, becoming more aware of the loss of the association to Albanianness that name changes or adaptations entailed led subjects to seek out their reracialization with that identity via name or name spelling reclamations. Famously, though not the exact same process, Muhammad Ali sought his self-determination through rejecting what he called his “slave name” and adopting a name that better reflected his beliefs. Maintaining their Albanian names means to maintain the link to their culture (Lombard 2011). Parallel to work by Shanmuganathan et al. (2021), maintaining Albanian names contributes to maintaining the Albanian element in Greece as both present and visible. Albanian names give visibility to Albanians and represent the ethnic diversity within Greece that is often downplayed or concealed in the project of nation-building through ethnic homogeneity. As with Latinxs in the US (Enríquez Duque 2023), maintaining their Albanian family names and the personal names assigned to them by close family members also allows Albanians to maintain a connection to their families and ancestors.

The research further adds to the literature of institutionally- or hegemonic group-imposed name changes for those conceived as the Other (Said 1978) or as deviating from the hegemonic group (Davies & Dubinsky 2018, Hill 2008, Scott et al. 2002, Coulmont 2014, Knoblock 2019, Parada 2016). As exemplified here with Albanians, these are common pressures faced among migrant groups (Parada 2016, Coulmont 2014). The name changes among the first generation of Albanian migrants in Greece show an accelerated shift towards the hegemonic group names compared, for example, to Latinxs in the US who shift to Anglo names in the second or third generation (Parada 2016). In South Africa the maintenance of traditional names among Indian South Africans was influenced by religion (Mesthrie 2021). Those of Muslim faith maintained traditional names compared to those of Hindu faith who westernized their names motivated by upwards socioeconomic mobility (ibid.). Among Albanians the picture is a bit more complicated due to the particular relationship of Albanians with religion. Albania is broadly credited with the peaceful coexistence of different religious groups; most notably Sunni and Bektashi Muslims, and Catholic and Orthodox Christians (Young 1999). The Hoxha regime declared the country atheist in 1967 and, in effect, prohibited any religion and religious practices taking place in Albania. Prohibition did not necessarily cause religious belief to completely disappear. For example, my own family remained Catholic and practiced Catholicism in the private family context but could never do so publicly for fear of state punishment. After the end of the Hoxha regime in 1990 and the freedom to practice religion, many Albanians resumed their religious expressions and practices. A large proportion of the culturally Muslim<sup>31</sup> or Christian Albanians, however, remained

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<sup>31</sup> The largest religious group in Albania.

secular in practice (Vickers 1997, cited in Young 1999) and only culturally Muslim or Christian. Without the strong influence of religion, it was easier for Albanians to change or accept changes to their own or their children's names via baptism to Greek Orthodoxy. Many of the interviewees with Catholic background mentioned that they "had [their] own religion" when they came to Greece. Even if they were born during the time of state-imposed atheism, which meant they did not have an official baptism to the Church, they claim to have carried their religion with them during their migration. The fact that they were already Catholic Christians, made them less likely to additionally convert to another dogma of Christianity, that is, Orthodoxy, which is an important part of Greek identity. To a large extent the secularity of culturally Muslim Albanians, therefore, offered a fertile ground for baptisms and name changes when in Greece. Comments such as "I had my own religion" create a contrast between Christian and Muslim Albanians with the former constructed as religion-having and the latter as *religionless* due to which they were more prone to adopt Christianity and, consequently, Christian Greek names. This stands in opposition to what was observed with migrants in Germany where religious proximity motivated names deriving from the hegemonic group for children of migratory background (Gerhards & Tuppatt 2021). For Albanians in Greece, religious closeness with Greeks is the motivation for non-conformity, whereas distance is motivation for conformity to hegemonic names.

Name changes and adaptations or simply accepting those imposed to them externally seem also to be motivated in the interviews by job prospects. Participants mentioned that accepting name changes by their employers was seen as the best option they had as they did not feel they could go against the person on whom their livelihood

depended. For them, accepting the idiosyncrasies of their employer, including their own renaming, was necessary in order to build or maintain good relations. For others, like Ylli, name Hellenizations were a way to build trust and better relationships with clients. For others, like Enkeled, name Hellenizations were a means to find employment in the first place. Therefore, assimilation via names seems to be a prerequisite for employment opportunities for Albanians in Greece. This does not seem to be tied to blue collar or white-collar professions as subjects in both fields expressed the pressure to hide their Albanianess indexed by their names and to be racialized as Greek for their employment opportunities. The finding echoes other work (Gueguen 2017, Bertrand & Mullainathan 2004, Kline et al. 2022) that has shown a bias based on racialized names in hiring or teaching evaluations for minoritized groups. It is important, then, for subjects in order to succeed in the job market to possess a certain kind of linguistic capital (Bourdieu 1977), namely, Greek or Greek-passing names. These, along with their other qualifications (studies or work experience/knowledge), improve Albanians' employment opportunities and, eventually, secure their livelihood.

The stories shared in the interviews also showed the indexical potential of graphemes as they are employed and interpreted by Greeks and Albanians to tone down or enhance ethnic identities. In other words, graphemes seem to index or racialize, deracialize, or reracialize name-bearers as Albanian or Greek. For example, <υ> in the Greek spelling of *Πάβλο* [pavlo] seems to racialize the name-bearer as Greek. This was a misracialization according to the teacher who refused to have this Greek grapheme be added to his name and instead orthographically represented the name as *Πάβλο* [pavlo]. Although there is no difference in the pronunciation, for the teacher it was obvious that

<v> indexes Greekness and should, therefore, be reserved for true Greeks. Given the fact that Pavlo was the son of Albanian migrants, he could not have a claim to Greekness, according to the teacher. Therefore, he could not have a claim to a grapheme that is indexical of Greekness. A non-canonical spelling of *Pavlo*, then, has to be employed, to index this lack of Greekness or to highlight the non-relationship to Greekness. In cases like these, the transracial subject (Alim 2016) emerges through the graphematic representation of the name. The subject is racialized as Greek or Albanian through the graphemes chosen to orthographically represent their name. The transracialization that might cause an Albanian subject to pass as Greek is policed by members of the hegemonic group, and racial order is restored.

Rosa (2016a) discusses racialized standard language ideologies that inform ideologies about who is and who is not a speaker of a language, resulting in people racialized as languageless. Extending this work to the orthographic/graphematic representation of names, it can be argued that ideologies about what is a Greek name inform ideologies about who is Greek or Albanian. Canonical spellings racialize the name-bearer as one way or another. Non-canonical spellings deracialize one from the ethnicity in which the name is canonical making the name-bearer ethnicless. Graphematic non-canonicity of name representation strips the name-bearer from the right to claim a certain ethnicity. Non-canonicity ensures the transracial subject does not blur ethnoracial boundaries but remains always non-Greek. Graphematic canonicity is reserved for those ideologized as true Greeks, those that do not transgress ethnoracial boundaries. Partial or complete reracializations through name changes and adaptations allow Albanians to negotiate their ethnic identifications and to claim dual identities. They

are both Albanian and Greek or either Albanian or Greek at different times and in different contexts. Claiming multiple ethnic identities happens indirectly as claiming them overtly comes with pushback from those who see ethnicity as biological substance and therefore non-malleable (see Chapter 4).

Deracialization, or what Gal and Irvine (1995) term erasure, is mostly symbolic. Name changes contribute to the erasure of the Albanian presence in Greece only superficially. This erasure of Albanianess and racialization via name changes and Hellenizations does not entail acceptance into Greekness. Albanians are still Albanians despite their upbringing in Greece and despite being naturalized as Greek citizens. Deracializations and racializations also demand that Albanians perform a lot of labor. It demands that they assure Greeks that they are like them, that they come in peace, that they are not a threat, that they tend to the feelings of Greeks and their worries about the presence of this ethnic group in their country. This demand is not bidirectional. All the demands fall on Albanians. There is no demand on the Greeks to tend to Albanians' feelings and experiences of xenophobia.

#### **7.4 Gradient ethnic information in speech evaluation**

The experimental part of this dissertation investigated the gradient ethnic information raters have about a speaker and the effect that information has on those people's chances at the job market and in the way they are socially evaluated. Gradient ethnic information presented to experiment participants took the form of associating voices with personal and family names that were fully Albanian (i.e., Albanian names written in Albanian script), partly Albanian (i.e., Albanian names written in the Greek script), and not Albanian (i.e., Hellenized Albanian names written in the Greek script). The experiment

tested the effect of those names on the chances of being hired for an assistant accountant position. It also tested the effect of the names on the evaluation of Albanian L2 or SMG. That is, there were contexts where participants are presented with matching and mismatching information. Matching stimuli consisted of SMG speakers who had Hellenized names or Albanian L2 Greek speakers with Albanian names. Mismatching stimuli consisted of SMG speakers with Albanian names or Albanian L2 Greek speakers with Hellenized names.

The statistical analysis showed that there was no effect of name variant either in the resume task or the speech evaluation task. That is, people were not evaluated as more or less likely to be hired for a position nor were they evaluated as friendly, aggressive, rural, accented based on how Albanian or Greek their name was. This does not mean that participants were not able to identify the names presented to them as Albanian or Greek. Participants picked up on the ethnic information conveyed by the name variants and evaluated them as more or less Albanian and Greek as expected. Albanian names written in the Albanian script were evaluated as belonging to Albanian people, less so the Albanian names written in the Greek script, and even less so the Hellenized names written in the Greek script. Similarly, the Hellenized names written in the Greek script were evaluated as belonging to Greek people, much less so the Albanian names written in the Greek script, and even less so the Albanian names written in the Albanian script. Therefore, despite identifying the tested names as Albanian or Greek, they did not evaluate the named persons differently in the experiment tasks based on the ethnic information conveyed by each name. This finding, moreover, runs counter to the claims made in the interviews by the participants (see Chapter 5), namely, that name changes



and name Hellenizations were essential in order to succeed professionally and financially in their migratory project.

What seemed to matter for participants' evaluations was the speech guise that they heard, namely, Albanian L2 Greek or SMG. Albanian L2 Greek speakers were judged as more likeable, less aggressive, more rural, and more accented than SMG speakers. The accentedness of Albanian L2 Greek is to be expected as standard varieties are often perceived as non-accented and everything else deviating from it as accented. The finding on rurality is in line with Ndoci (2021) and a general stereotypical association of Albanians with rurality. In the Greek consciousness, Albania is conceived of as rural and as lacking urban centers. Moreover, many Albanians in Greece were employed and continue to be employed in agriculture, thus this work which is found outside Greek urban centers and which is equally conceived of as rural despite population density. This is not to say that Albanians are not found in urban centers across Greece (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2023) although residing outside the two largest Greek cities, Athens and Thessaloniki, is often considered residing in rural Greece regardless of ethnicity. What is different from Ndoci (2021) is the likeability and aggressiveness evaluations which have been reversed in this experiment with Albanian L2 Greek being evaluated as more likeable and less aggressive. An interpretation of this finding is that participants were much more aware of the purpose of the study, especially when they could recognize through the name stimuli that ethnicity was of interest in the study. It has been also a few years since that experiment was conducted in 2020. In the intervening years it could be the case that subjects have become more cautious of expressing sentiment that could be interpreted as xenophobic. Picking up from the names that the experiment is interested in

ethnicity could have prompted them to overcompensate in their evaluations and rate Albanian L2 Greek more favorably than SMG.

Another factor that emerged as important in the experimental findings was the ethnicity of the participants. Albanian participants made more fine-grained differences between the Albanian names written in the Albanian or the Greek script, evaluating the latter as less Albanian than the former. This can be attributed to their intimate experience with Albanian names compared to Greek subjects. Moreover, Albanian participants rated the named persons in the resume task as more hireable than Greek participants did. This is regardless of the name variant they were presented with. Additionally, Albanians evaluated Albanian speakers as more likeable, rural, and accented than Greek subjects regardless of the guise heard. Greek subjects also perceived SMG speakers as more aggressive while Albanians did not differentiate between the two guises. The hirability and likeability ratings by Albanians suggest evaluations based on solidarity with people whom they potentially recognize as sharing an ethnicity. The ruralness and accentedness ratings suggest that Albanian subjects have a more expansive view of what constitutes an accent and what makes one rural compared to Greek subjects who seem to be more conservative towards that. The latter group also seems to be more cautious about making negative associations for speakers and seeming biased, especially about those that are socially disadvantaged, as seen by their evaluating SMG speakers as more aggressive than Albanian L2 Greek speakers.

This shift towards a more favorable evaluation of the non-standard variety compared to the standard one seems to reflect a general shift observed in recent years. For example, Deutschmann et al. (2023) found that Swedish teachers in training

evaluated L2 Swedish more favorably than L1 Swedish. The authors explain this as a ‘shifting standards effect’ whereby the teachers lower their standards about what “good” Swedish looks like for L2 users and, as a result evaluate L2 productions higher than L1 productions for whom the standards remain high. Along similar lines, Turkish-presenting L1 German speakers are evaluated as the most warm and competent among other people who present as Turkish or German and who produce L1 or L2 German (Hansen et al. 2017a). In other words, there seems to be an expectation that people who present as non-German cannot produce L1 German, so when they actually do, this mismatch skyrockets them in the evaluation scales for positive attributes. Finally, Ip & Papafragou (2023) show that L2 English speakers are evaluated as more trustworthy than L1 speakers even when they are being underinformative in their linguistic productions. This advantage of L2 speakers is attributed to an ideologized lack of linguistic resources which would allow them to be more informative. Therefore, the L1 speakers are socially penalized because they do not have such an excuse and should be more informative. It could be argued, then, that in the case of Albanian L2 Greek there are similar effects of shifting standards that are observed elsewhere. Listeners have lowered their evaluative standards about Albanian L2 Greek speakers compared to their standards about SMG speakers. As a result of the shifted standards, the evaluations for L2 Greek are more favorable than those for L1 Greek, for which the standards remain strict.

Returning to the lack of effect for the name variant factor, one interpretation is that experiment participants were potentially not paying attention to the names whatsoever. Another interpretation is to view the non-effect as some evidence for the importance of the audio stimuli when listeners make evaluations about speakers. When confronted with

additional ethnic information coming from the names, listeners seem to tune out that information and to focus on the audio stimuli for their evaluations. Other research has shown in the last years the importance of the audio stimulus. Campbell-Kibler (2021) shows that listeners will not ignore the audio stimuli even when explicitly instructed to do so. Additionally, when subjects encounter mismatching information between audio and visual stimuli, they rely on the audio for their accentedness and nativeness judgements (Gnevsheva 2018, Paladino & Mazzurega 2020). Similarly, it seems that to deal with the “visual noise” that the names are adding through the ethnic information they convey, subjects in the present experiment, focus their attention to the audio stimulus and evaluate solely based on it.

Finally, participants notice variation in language and make interpretations about people. They notice variation in script and in spelling and make interpretations about the meaning of the variation. Patrick (2022) shows that graphematic variation in Montenegrin tweets indexes the political stance of the social media users. In the Czech Republic graphematic variation in the spelling of a rivers in a contested region indexes the politics of territorial protection (Mácha 2020). Screti (2018) shows that graphematic variation in Galicia is similarly tied to political stance and ideologies of linguistic difference. Variation in spelling has the ability to index information that readers can interpret to assign people into ethnoracial categories (Chun 2013). In this case, participants in the experiment interpret variation in script or graphemes as indexical of the ethnicity of the named person.

People also notice variation in speech and assign meaning to that variation. Variation in speech production has been shown to index, among others, strength,

sexuality, stance, socioeconomic background, formality, friendliness, and ethnoracial identity (Campbell-Kibler 2007, D’Onofrio & Eckert 2021, King et al. 2022, Regan 2022, Sim 2023, Welker 2024). Through the speech perception task, we see that there is a similar association of Albanian L2 Greek features with various social meanings pertaining to likeability, ruralness, and accentedness. The lack of effect of the ethnic information encoded via names in the resume task, however, seems to run counter to other work that shows discrimination in the job and the housing market that has been observed elsewhere (Levon et al. 2021, Purnell et al. 1999, Wright 2023, Jackson & Denis 2024). It remains to be seen if this finding is representative of the job search reality of Albanians in Greece or if it is a task effect. For instance, in an experiment that follows the Levon et al. (2021) paradigm where raters evaluate hirability based on speech guise, are job applicants who produce Albanian L2 Greek evaluated as equally hireable to applicants who produce SMG? Can a bias be detected there towards L2 Greek speakers that puts them at a disadvantage during the hiring process? Could this lack of bias in the resume task be attributed to the non-hiring background of the experiment participants? Does this lack of bias persist when these experiments target hiring professionals. Finally, is the absence of bias tied to the job? Could more or less prestigious positions be considered more or less acceptable for marginalized applicants such as Albanian migrants? All the above constitute follow up experiments that could flesh out hirability and its relation to ethnicity in the Greek context.

## Chapter 8. Conclusion

This dissertation has attempted to sketch how Albianness is constructed in Greece after the migration of Albanians in the country post-1990. I have showed that the Greek internet space is one of the venues where enregistered Mock Albanian Greek and Mock Pan-foreign Greek circulate (Agha 2003, Hill 2008, Ronkin & Karn 1999, Chun 2004, Slobe 2018). With the mock variety also stereotypes about minority ethnic groups are circulated, reiterated, and perpetuated. Presenting this information as common ground (Diedrichsen 2020) leads to further stigmatization of these vulnerable groups along with a re-introduction of the stereotypes to those with no prior experience with the group. Greek internet memes can be revealing of the ideologies surrounding ethnic minorities as well as the grammatical and phonological features that characterize their speech. The analysis of the features of the speech attributed to Albanian migrants shows that is better described as Mock Albanian Greek. The classification as a mock variety is based on a few findings: the unmotivated adaptations of shared phones, the unmotivated variation in adaptation strategies, inconsistencies on the adaptation strategies observed within the same memes. Inconsistencies about the minorities to which the mock variety features are attributed suggest the enregisterment of a Mock Pan-foreign Greek variety (McGowan 2016).

The construction of Albanians centers on quintessential Albanian elements such as controlling or embarrassing family members, non-gourmet Albanian food, and the

migratory experience (also Dickinson 2023). In the majority of the memes, however, Albanian migrants in Greece are stereotypically constructed as unable to produce SMG, criminal, uncultured, violent, rural, working class, and unintelligent, among other traits. Constructing Albanians as having these undesirable qualities creates an implicit juxtaposition with Greeks as not carrying those negative qualities. Greeks are not like Albanians or are the polar opposite of Albanians, they are tied to SMG, and they are law-abiding, cultured, peaceful, urban, middle or upper-middle class, intelligent etc. This difference is often visually highlighted via script choice and non-canonical Greek spelling. Findings such as these highlight the persisting xenophobic discourses in Greece which contradict popular narratives about the respectful treatment of these minorities. Unveiling and confronting persisting xenophobia is the first step in building inclusive and equitable social structures.

Albanian migrants are well aware that their essentialization and racialization is not only restricted on the internet space. They have developed strategies to navigate the xenophobia towards their ethnic group in their migratory destination. One such strategy is a careful choice of the ethnic labels in how they self-identify in a context like the Greek one where the Greek *Alvanos* and *Alvan-ida/-eza* ‘Albanian’ have become an ethnoracial slur (Ntelifilippidi 2014, Polymenakou 2019, Komninanki 2016). Albanian participants were able to describe the indexical meanings which make the label a slur and which overlap with the construction of Albanians in the Greek internet memes. Although there is no universal agreement among Albanians about their stance towards *Alvan-* labels, there was general agreement that they constitute slurs. Many exhibited augmented pride towards the label in an attempt to downplay its slur potential. As with the English *n*-word

((Hill 2008), participants also reclaimed it for use among other Albanians as a marker of ethnic solidarity and a criticism to Albanian-directed Greek xenophobia. Many avoided the term altogether by opting for *from Albania*. The periphrasis shifts the discourse towards nationality and geographic origin and away from ethnicity. Those who identify as *from Albania* do not commit to a direct identification as Albanians as well as the stereotyped indexicality of Albanianess. At the same time, they allow space to claim another ethnic identity, perhaps the dominant one in their migratory destination. The claim to Greekness does not happen directly; rather it is approached cautiously. They also make a cautious claim to dual ethnic identities with a cautious claim to Albanianess and a cautious claim to Greekness. Another strategy for their ethnic self-identifications is choice of higher register morphological markers that do not carry the slur potential as, for them, high register is inherently non-offensive.

For the second generation of Albanian migrants, another term resonated with them as descriptive of their identities, namely *Albanian Greek* or *Greek Albanian*. However, none of the people interviewed admitted that they use the label for themselves when identifying to non-second-generation individuals. This is due to the misunderstandings to which the dual label can lead and the series of clarifications that would have to ensue on their part, crucially explaining that both their parents are Albanian, but that they identify as both Albanian and Greek because they were raised in Greece. There were also a few subjects for whom the dual ethnic label was not meaningful, a position related to holding views of ethnic identities being hereditary and having biological substance rather than social. For them, they cannot be Greek as well as Albanian since their blood, i.e., their



biological origin, is Albanian from both parents. Dual labels are to be reserved for those who have one Albanian and one Greek parent.

What was a general consensus among the second generation that *second-generation (Albanian migrant)* was descriptive of who they are and of their lived experience. As *second-generation migrants* they align themselves with the institutional and hegemonic view of themselves as migrants. They are not Greek, they do not belong, and they do not have a claim to Greekness or to Greece despite fulfilling naturalization criteria. They are Albanians once removed from Albania. Despite feeling that Greekness is part of who they are, they will not claim that identity for themselves. Their migratory experience is a better descriptor of their identity. It allows them to identify as Albanian removed from Albania into a country where they are not indigenous. The term also brings to the forefront the bureaucratic hurdles and xenophobia they have to navigate at the same time in their status as Albanians in Greece. Calling themselves Greek would overshadow what it means to be ethnically Albanian in that country. The term, then, brings visibility not only of the ethnic diversity that exists within the country (Shanmuganathan et al. 2021), but also functions as a reminder of the stigma and systemic issues ethnic minorities have to deal with in their daily lives.

Another strategy Albanians have developed in navigating xenophobia in Greece is personal and family name changes. Many times, these are imposed renamings or name Hellenizations that lead to loss of the indexical links to their Albanianess (Squires 2014). That is the name changes lead to a deracialization from Albanianess (Bucholtz 2016) and a reracialization to Greekness. This reracialization to Greekness is superficial since, as mentioned in the previous section, subjects do not want or are not allowed to

participate in Greekness. Even self-initiated renamings or Hellenizations were, according to participants, motivated by a desire to belong and fit in and have canonically Greek names that will not index their Albanianess and, by extension, stereotypical associations that come with being Albanians. Another motivation was that renamings and Hellenizations were seen as important capital that would help them in the job market and in maintaining employment, and thus secure their living in their migratory destination.

In the experiment, however, name Hellenizations did not arise as important factors in the hiring or in the ways named speakers are socially evaluated. While this could be an artifact of the experimental design it also suggests that speech production is much more important in evaluations when listeners are confronted with additional ethnoracial information about the speakers. It also adds to the literature that shows the importance audio stimuli play in these experimental designs (Campbell-Kibler 2021, Gnevsheva 2018, Paladino & Mazurega 2020). Favorable evaluation of Albanian L2 Greek speakers that also emerged is in line with other work showing a shifting standards effect (Deutschmann et al. 2023) which leads to L2 varieties being more positively judged than L1 varieties (Hansen et al. 2017a, Ip & Papafragou 2023).

In this dissertation I have sketched a picture of what it means to be an Albanian in Greece. Despite the widespread narratives, the stigmatization towards Albanians is still present and it is still felt by them. Due to this, they seek ways to do and undo identities that will be true to who they are and to their aspirations while at the same time they navigate power imbalances and their positioning in society. With the work outlined above I hope to have contributed to our understanding of the relationship between language use and migrant ethnic identity in several ways, by bringing to light:

- how migrant ethnic identity is constructed and emerges from various linguistic practices
- how social actors use semiotic resources to create meaning in terms of ethnicity
- by examining how these resources are used to racialize and in other instances to deracialize
- how identities are made latent or put in a state between latent and visible
- how others evaluate and interpret those practices when combined with L2 speech
- how do subjects navigate xenophobia
- how acts of racialization and deracialization affect the social lives of subjects.

Processes of public and mass dissemination of stereotypes and reproduction of stigma can be very harmful for socially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as migrants. It is important, then, that:

- a) we understand how these processes operate and we raise awareness about the consequences they can have on the individuals they target
- b) we understand how social agents combat their disadvantaged positions in order to evade negative effects, and
- c) we understand the effects of those navigation strategies agents employ. Finally, with this work I hope to have contributed to the raciolinguistics dialogue by showing that transracial subjects disrupt conceptions of ethnic boundaries by utilizing a number of linguistic resources: their names, their names' presentations or pronunciations, the ethnic labels they choose for themselves and others in other

to blur ethnoracial categories which are the outcome of hegemonic use of those resources.

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**Appendix A.** Position ad used for resume task in Greek (original) and English.



**Σολ & Μαρ**

Η εταιρεία **Ήλιος και Θάλασσα Α.Ε.** αναζητά για το ξενοδοχειακό συγκρότημα **Sol y Mar** στη Βουλιαγμένη Αττικής, να καλύψει την ακόλουθη θέση: **Βοηθός Λογιστή**

<p><b><u>ΠΡΟΣΟΝΤΑ</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Πτυχίο ΤΕΙ ή ΙΕΚ Οικονομικής / Λογιστικής κατεύθυνσης</li><li>• Σχετική εμπειρία τουλάχιστον 2 ετών</li><li>• Καλή γνώση της Αγγλικής Γλώσσας</li><li>• Γνώση Λογιστικής, Εργασιακών-Μισθολογικών &amp; Αποθήκης</li></ul>	<p><b><u>Η ΕΤΑΙΡΙΑ ΠΡΟΣΦΕΡΕΙ</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ικανοποιητικό πακέτο αποδοχών</li><li>• Εργασία σε ένα ευχάριστο, δυναμικό και αναπτυσσόμενο επαγγελματικό περιβάλλον</li></ul>
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Ενδιαφερόμενοι-ες παρακαλούνται να στείλουν **πλήρες βιογραφικό σημείωμα** στην ακόλουθη ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση: [hiring@solymer.gr](mailto: hiring@solymer.gr)



**Σολ & Μαρ**

**Sol & Mar SA** is seeking an **Assistant Accountant** for the hotel resort Sol & Mar in Vouliagmeni, Attica.

<p><b><u>QUALIFICATIONS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Associate's or Bachelor's degree in Finance or Accounting</li><li>• Relevant experience or at least 2 years</li><li>• Good knowledge of the English language</li><li>• Knowledge in accounting, salary compensation, logistics</li></ul>	<p><b><u>WE OFFER</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Satisfactory earnings package</li><li>• Work in a pleasant, dynamic, and developing professional environment</li></ul>
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Candidates should send their full resumes in the following email address: [hiring@solymer.gr](mailto: hiring@solymer.gr)

**Appendix B.** Resume used in resume task in Greek (original) and English.

Πελοποννήσου 15 Νέα Σμύρνη, Αττική 694-445-7802 dz.accountant@gmail.com	
<b>DANJEL ZHYTA</b>	
<b>ΕΠΑΓΓΕΛΜΑΤΙΚΗ ΕΜΠΕΙΡΙΑ</b>	<i>Μάρτιος 2022 – σήμερα:</i> Τραπεζικός Υπάλληλος, Εθνική Τράπεζα, Νέα Σμύρνη Πρακτική Άσκηση  <i>Μάρτιος 2020 – Φεβρουάριος 2022:</i> Υπάλληλος Ταμείου, Κωτσόβολος Α.Ε., Λάρισα
<b>ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ</b>	Πτυχίο Λογιστικής και Χρηματοοικονομικής, Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας (2022) Βαθμός: Λίαν Καλώς  <i>Φοιτητής Erasmus, Freie Universität Berlin</i> Χειμερινό εξάμηνο 2019  Απολυτήριο Λυκείου, 1 <sup>ο</sup> Γενικό Λύκειο Θήβας (2013) Βαθμός: Λίαν Καλώς
<b>ΔΕΞΙΟΤΗΤΕΣ</b>	<i>Microsoft Office</i> Cambridge International Diploma in IT Skills Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint  <i>Αγγλικά (B2 – Πολύ καλή γνώση)</i> University of Michigan, Certificate of Competency in English  <i>Γερμανικά (B1 – Καλή γνώση)</i> Goethe-Zertifikat
<b>ΕΠΙΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑΚΕΣ ΔΕΞΙΟΤΗΤΕΣ</b>	Άριστη συνεργασία Προσαρμοστικότητα και ευελιξία Ευγένεια
<b>ΣΥΣΤΑΣΕΙΣ</b>	Διαθέσιμες εάν ζητηθούν



Peloponnisou 15  
Nea Smirni, Attica  
694-445-7802  
dz.accountant@gmail.com

## DANJEL ZHYTA

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE** *March 2022 – today:*  
Bank employee, National Bank of Greece, Nea Smirni,  
Internship  
*March 2020 – February 2022:*  
Teller; Kotsovolos SA, Larisa

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**EDUCATION** BA in Accounting and Finance, University of Thessaly (2022)  
GPA: Very well  
  
Erasmus Student, Freie Universität Berlin  
Winter semester 2019  
  
High school diploma, 1<sup>st</sup> Lyceum of Theba Θήβας (2013)  
GPA: Very well

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**SKILLS** *Microsoft Office*  
Cambridge International Diploma in IT Skills  
Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint  
  
*English (B2 – Very good knowledge)*  
University of Michigan, Certificate of Competency in English  
  
*German (B1 – Καλή γνώση)*  
Goethe-Zertifikat

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**COMMUNICATION SKILLS** Excellent collaborator  
Adaptable and flexible  
Polite

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**RECOMMENDATIONS** Available upon request

**Appendix C.** Names used in speech perception task.

<b>List 1</b>	<b>Written</b>	<b>List 2</b>	<b>Written</b>	<b>List 3</b>	<b>Written</b>	<b>Accompanying utterance</b>
Anxhelo Gjoka	Albanian	Άντζελο Γκιόκα	Transliterated	Άγγελος Γκιόκας	Hellenized	Alb. L2 Grk
Adrian Gjini	Albanian	Αντριάν Γκίνι	Transliterated	Αδριανός Γκίνης	Hellenized	SMG
Λάζαρος Κούκης	Hellenized	Lazer Kuqi	Albanian	Λάζερ Κούκι	Transliterated	Alb. L2 Grk
Μάρκος Μπεκίρης	Hellenized	Mark Beqiri	Albanian	Μαρκ Μπεκίρι	Transliterated	SMG
Πετρίτ Τζάφα	Transliterated	Πέτρος Τζάφας	Hellenized	Petrit Xhafa	Albanian	Alb. L2 Grk
Διμίτερ Ρέτζα	Transliterated	Δημήτρης Ρέτζας	Hellenized	Dhimitër Rexha	Albanian	SMG
Simone Laroux	French	Σιμόν Λαρού	Transliterated	Σιμωνίδα Λάρου	Hellenized	SMG*
Σοφία Νοβάκη	Hellenized	Zofia Nowak	Polish	Ζοφία Νόβακ	Transliterated	SMG*
Ντενίζ Ακσόι	Transliterated	Ντένη Αξόη	Hellenized	Deniz Aksoy	Turkish	SMG*

\* = names used in filler sentences.

**Appendix D.** Interview participant profiles.

#	Name	Born (age)	Gender	Gen	Year arrived to Greece; Age	Origin (Albania)	Education	Lives	Occupation
1	Admiljan Drobaniku	1985	Man	2	2000; 15	Korça	MA – linguistics (prev political science)	Athens/Thessaloniki	Student
2	Andrea Durmishi	1970	Man	1	1997; 27	Fieri	Elementary	Athens	Construction
3	Eneida Qesari	1990	Woman	2	1993; 3	Saranda	MA (social anthropology, MA in political science)	Athens	Marketing

#	Name	Born (age)	Gender	Gen	Year arrived to Greece; Age	Origin (Albania)	Education	Lives	Occupation
4	Enkeled Bilali	1992	Man	2	1997; 5	Korça	PhD linguistics	Thessaloniki	Student
5	Erjeta Zanaj	1983	Woman	1	2005; 18	Vlora	Secondary	Athens	Hairdresser
6	Fatmir Pemaj	1977	Man	1	1996; 19	Lezha	Secondary	Athens	Plumber
7	Flora Pemaj	1975	Woman	1	1998; 23	Lezha	Elementary	Athens	Employee in food service
8	Ilira Aliai	1986	Woman	2	1997; 11	Saranda	MA – Curation (BA German)	Berlin (prev Athens)	Student Exchange coordinator
9	Ilirida Musaraj	1997	Woman	2	2003; 6	Vlora	MA sociology (BA political science)	Athens	Archive Manager
10	Krisilida Lubonja	1999	Woman	2	0; born there	Korça	MA special ed (BA Greek philology)	Komotini	Student – special ed teacher

#	Name	Born (age)	Gender	Gen	Year arrived to Greece; Age	Origin (Albania)	Education	Lives	Occupation
11	Kristina Ndoci	1965	Woman	1	1999; 34	Fush Kruja	Elementary	Athens	Care giver
12	Kujtim Ahmeti	1977	Man	1	1991; 14	Puka	Elementary	Athens	Construction
13	Leonard Prendi	1981	Man	1	1996; 15	Shkodra	Elementary	Athens	Glass shop owner
14	Lulash Marku	1966	Man	1	1991; 25	Shkodra	Elementary	Athens	Construction
15	Marilena Papaqaku	1983	Woman	2	1993; 8	Fieri	Secondary Vocational school - IEK	Athens	Hairdresser
16	Niko Gjoka	1977	Man	1	1996; 19	Lezha	Elementary	Athens	Fruit/veg store employee

#	Name	Born (age)	Gender	Gen	Year arrived to Greece; Age	Origin (Albania)	Education	Lives	Occupation
17	Marilena Paskali	2000	Woman	2	0; born Patras	Permeti	Secondary – IEK ergotherapy	Patras	Employee
18	Martin Gega	1973	Man	1	1991; 19	Lezha	Elementary	Athens	Construction
19	Vjoleta Gega	1977	Woman	1	1998; 21	Lezha	Elementary	Athens	Home assistant
20	Modest Ndoci	1991	Man	2	1999; 8	Lezha	Secondary	Athens	Boat employee
21	Pamela Zoe Topalli	1988	Woman	2	1991; 2	Lushnja	PhD Psychology	Turku (prev Thessaloniki)	Lecturer – student
22	Pasho Topalli	1959	Man	1	1991; 32	Lushnja	PhD Thess in agriculture	Thessaloniki	Own plant businesses
23	Merceta Topalli	1960	Woman	1	1991; 31	Lushnja	MA Albania in agriculture	Thessaloniki	Stay at home (prev plant store owner)

#	Name	Born (age)	Gender	Gen	Year arrived to Greece; Age	Origin (Albania)	Education	Lives	Occupation
24	Pavlo Topalli	1996	Man	2	0; born Thess	Lushnja	MA in technology management (BA computer science)	Delft (prev Thess)	Student – TA
25	Petrit Sana	1975	Man	1	1994; 20	Shkodra	Elementary	Athens	Construction
26	Petro Kutra	1988	Man	2	1996; 8	Gjirokastra	Secondary – TEE cooling	Athens	Construction
27	Pjerin Zezaj	1965	Man	1	1998; 33	Shkodra	Secondary vocational – fish science	Athens	Doorman
28	Rafaela Ndoci	2000	Woman	2	0; born Athens	Lezha	Secondary	Athens	Flight attendant
29	Rexhina Blushi	1991	Woman	2	1997; 6	Elbasani	MBA (BA psychology)	Athens	Employee customer support

#	Name	Born (age)	Gender	Gen	Year arrived to Greece; Age	Origin (Albania)	Education	Lives	Occupation
30	Sander Ndoci	1965	Man	1	1995; 30	Lezha	Elementary	Athens	Construction
31	Shkelzen Dunga	1977	Man	1	1991; 15	Puka	Elementary	Athens	Construction
32	Stefania Kosta	1997	Woman	2	0; born Agios Nikolaos	Korça	MA & BA political science	Athens (prev Agios Nikolaos)	Food service)
33	Violeta Pemaj	1994	Woman	2	1997; 3	Lezha	Phd in food technology (BA in biotechnology)	Kalamata (prev Athens)	Student – lab employee
34	Ylli Pemaj	1974	Man	1	1991; 17	Lezha	Elementary	Athens	Plumber
35	Danjela Pemaj	1984	Woman	1	2006; 22	Fush Kruja	Elementary	Athens	House assistant
36	Ylli Senka	1971	Man	1	1992; 21	Fieri	Elementary	Athens	Construction



## Appendix E. Interview schedule

### 1. Questions about naming practices

- When were you born? Where?
- Where did you grow up?
- When did you come to Greece?
- What did you study?
- Where did you live in Greece?
- What do you do for work?
- Do you have the Greek citizenship?
  - When did you get it?
  
- What is the name & last name you were assigned at birth?
- Did you have a nickname growing up?
- Is there a story behind your assigned name?
- How did it get translated in Greece (birth/family certificate)?
  - Did you use any other names in Greece?
  - Any other last names?
  - Did you get baptized?
- Did you ever write your name differently?
  - -η/-ι , -ς, change stress? Adapted otherwise?
- Did you change it in some document?
  - School? Passport? Id? Greek? Albanian?
- Is there any story(-ies) about how this(these) name(s) came to be?
  - Who suggested those changes?
- How did you feel about them?
  - How do you feel now about them?
- Do you maintain those changes?
- Which one do you like best?
- Did you feel you had a choice on the matter?
- What name do you feel most yourself in?
  - Do you feel that name is you?
  - Does it represent you and who you are?
- Would you change your name if you could restart?
  - Would you have done something different?
- Do you think it helped you pass as Greek?
  - To avoid conversations about your origin/ethnicity?

- It helped you otherwise?
- Do you remember any particular instances?
- Has your Greek / Hellenized name helped you (you think)?
- Do your parents have the same spelling/name?
  - How do you feel about this difference in the last names?
  - Does it hide your relationship?
- How does family call you?
  - How do Greek neighbors/ employees/ friends/ teachers call you?
  - Do you have a preference which to use in different contexts?
  - Do you have any stories about these? A misunderstanding?
- Any stories when the name was correctly pronounced/spelled
  - Or mispronounced/misspelled?
  - How did you feel about it?
- What does your name mean to you?
- How do you introduce yourself?
- What ethnicity do you say you are when you are asked?
- Anytime people see/hear your name and ask you where you are from?
  - How does that make you feel?
  - How do you respond?
- How do you feel when Albanians change or adapt their names?
- Last comments? Thoughts?

## 2. Questions about ethnic labels

- Do you use any of these terms (for yourself)?
  - Αλβανός/Αλβανή/Αλβανίδα/Αλβανέζα/Σκιπτάρ(ι)/Σιπτάρ(ι)/Αλβανιάρης-αρα
  - When? With whom? Why not?
  - With other Albanians?
  - With other Greeks?
  - Do you remember such a situation?
- What if Greeks used them towards you?
- How do you decide who to use them with?
- Have people used it with you?
  - Do you remember such a situation?
- Have you heard others use it?
  - Do you remember such a situation?
- Are any of these terms offensive? Why?
- How do you respond when people ask you where you're from?
- Do the terms Greek-Albanian or Albanian-Greek represent you?
  - Why or why not?
- How do you feel when people say “re Alvane”?
- What do you think people mean when they say “re Alvane”?

- What do you mean when you say “re Alvane”?
  - When would you use it? What situations?
- What do you think is the differences (if any) between Αλβανή/-ίδα/-έζα?
  - Is -eza wrong or offensive? Why?
- Would you use s(k)iptari for you or others? Why?
- Which of these labels do you prefer for you and other Albanians? Why?
  - Under what conditions each?
- Do you disprefer any of them? Why?
- Do you wish people stopped any of them? Why?
  - Either Greeks and/or Albanians
- Are there other/alternative terms to designate one with Albanian origin?
- What if a Greek person uses these in solidarity and not trying to offend?
  - How do you feel about it?
  - Is it okay? Not? Why?
- Is 2nd gen migrant as a term relevant to you?
- Last comments? Thoughts?

**Appendix F.** Tweet illustrating Greek self-importance.



**Appendix G.** Flyer of 2023 city council candidate.

Υποψ. δημοτικός σύμβουλος  
**ΤΙΣΙΑΝΟ ΜΠΑΛΛΑΣ**  
Ηλεκτρονικός Μηχανικός

**Κώστας Ζαχαριάδης**  
Υποψήφιος Δήμαρχος Αθηναίων



**ΑΝΟΙΧΤΗΠΟΛΗ**



**ΤΙΣΙΑΝΟ ΜΠΑΛΛΑΣ**



Είμαι απόφοιτος του Τμήματος Ηλεκτρολόγων & Ηλεκτρονικών Μηχανικών του Πανεπιστημίου Δυτικής Αττικής. Εργάζομαι στον ιδιωτικό τομέα στον χώρο της πληροφορικής και των υπολογιστικών συστημάτων. Είμαι μέλος του Δικτύου νέων μεταναστευτικής καταγωγής «οι Ορίζοντες». Έχω υπάρξει μέλος σε αλβανικούς συλλόγους, καθώς σε διάφορους κοινωνικούς φορείς και κινήματα από τα μαθητικά μου χρόνια για την καταπολέμηση οποιαδήποτε μορφής ρατσισμού, την ισότητα.

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