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Migration and Changing Urban Geographies in the European South: Evidence from the Case of Immigrants in Thessaloniki

SUMMARY

The cities of Mediterranean Europe are turning into multicultural metropolises at a time of socio-economic restructuring and urban transformation. This paper focuses on the case of Thessaloniki in Greece, bringing about evidence from various sources, mainly official statistics and fieldwork research that combined quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (in-depth interviews) methods. It examines the processes of socio-spatial integration of immigrants in the city, in order to investigate the relationship between migration and the dynamics of urban change. The specificities of Thessaloniki's experience are discussed in relation to its distinct features of migration at present as well as to its history of urban development. The analysis sheds light to some characteristics that might be common in other city-cases across Southern Europe. The paper argues that immigration, albeit not the major force of urban transformation, inevitably challenges established social uses of space and alters the urban landscape, producing new or alternative urban geographies, as immigrants gradually form an organic part of the city's corpus. For Thessaloniki, with its long multicultural past and its painful integration into the Greek national state, immigration today questions the city's identity.

KEY WORDS: Thessaloniki, immigration, socio-spatial integration, Southern European cities, urban change

The story of migration unfolds on specific local communities; it is told through people's everyday life, practices, experiences, relationships, etc., which are inevitably attached to particular places. The conditions of immigrants' integration are determined by the particular local environment where they settle: their labour market integration depends on the structures of the local economy; their residential experiences on the local housing market, the degree to which they are generally "accepted", or not, is related to socio-cultural peculiarities, the public discourse on immigration, the level of development of inclusive civil-society institutions locally. For the migrants themselves, the locality where they settle becomes *their* place, temporary or permanent. For the local communities, the presence of immigrants brings visible or less obvious changes: it challenges established uses of space, it alters its landscape, it questions its identity.

In the past 15 years, Thessaloniki has become a new home for migrants from the Balkans, the former Soviet Union and other parts of the world, in a period of transforming local geographies and of growing interaction beyond national borders. The aim of this paper is to explore the position of immigrants in Thessaloniki and the ways by which their presence and activity affects the image of the urban space, real or perceived,

and its dynamics of change. It draws on empirical material derived from fieldwork research, comprising of both quantitative and qualitative elements. More specifically, it builds on the results of a questionnaire survey of Albanian and Bulgarian migrants living in the city and of a number of in-depth interviews with some of the participants.[1] This evidence is enriched by additional sources, including official statistics, newspaper and ethnographic notes from the fieldwork. The paper starts with an introduction to the city, by posing the crucial question about the place of immigrants within its history, its identity, its urban structures and landscape. It proceeds with an analysis of the migrants' housing conditions and residential trajectories. It then explores broader dynamics regarding the migrants' experiences and social uses of space in the city. Finally, the discussion moves to an account of Thessaloniki's experience within the broader context of urban Southern Europe, as the Greek immigration experience shares common characteristics with Southern Europe as a whole (see King, 2000).

1. The context of reception: Thessaloniki's past and present

Thessaloniki has been historically an important commercial port and a major city in two empires: the Byzantine and the Ottoman. Trade has been traditionally the cornerstone of the city's economic life (Μοσκωφ, 1978), while under late Ottoman rule it was one of the first industrial centres in the area that later formed the Greek nation state (Leontidou, 1990: ch. 2). Today, it exhibits most of the characteristics of the Mediterranean city (Leontidou, 1990, 1996), with one notable exception: the city's history is no longer visible in the urban landscape.[2] Mazower (2004: 12) pictures it as "A forest of densely-packed apartment blocks and giant advertising billboards sprouted where in living memory had been cypresses and minarets, stables, owls and storks". His description points to the city's multicultural past, which lasted until the first half of the past century. Thessaloniki hosted large numbers of Sephardic Jews after the *Reconquista* and their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula. Until the early 20th century, Jews formed the majority of the city's population among Christians and Muslims. For a long period, urban life was characterised by coexistence between the three "communities", on the grounds of the hierarchy and rules imposed by the Ottoman administration. At the dawn of the century, the city, already home to a mosaic of peoples, was faced by contradictory

[1] The research took place between 2001–03 in the context of my PhD (University of Sussex, UK). The questionnaire survey generated a sample of 208 respondents (138 Albanians and 70 Bulgarians), 49 of whom (30 and 19, respectively) were interviewed in-depth using a structured but flexible schedule. While more than one third of the participants had entered Greece illegally, only 4 were undocumented at the time of the fieldwork. Females represented about 30 percent among Albanians and half the Bulgarians, while one third of the Albanians and nearly 30 percent of the Bulgarian respondents were of ethnic Greek origin. The two methods combined aimed at collecting information about: the demographic profile of the migrants; their reasons, modes and patterns of migration; their residential experiences and labour market integration; their education, skills and employment history; their formal and informal networks; aspects of their general living conditions, daily practices and own perceptions about their experiences.

[2] By this I mean that the city lucks a "compact" historical district similar to those surviving in other Southern European cities. Exceptions might be some Byzantine churches, a number of Roman and Byzantine monuments, scattered mansions of the old urban commercial and industrial elites, the traditional downtown bazaars, and the "Upper Town", the erstwhile Muslim quarter.

processes of westernisation and tradition which unleashed the forces of nationalism.

This history, well embodied in the urban landscape until not so long ago, has now faded after less than a century within the borders of the Greek nation state: Bulgarians departed at the outcome of the Balkan wars, the Turks left with the exchange of populations after Greece's defeat in the 1922 Greco-Turkish war, and the Jews were deported (and many killed) by the Nazis during World War II. But it was not only historic turbulences, capitalist development and urbanisation that have eliminated the traces of history from its landscape. This was also the result of conscious attempts to redraw the city's identity on the basis of national and religious considerations, as well as political and electoral interests. So what might once have been the "historical" city is now limited to scattered old buildings, while the core of Thessaloniki comprises of relatively newly-built blocks, as a result of the Great Fire of 1917, the coming of Asia Minor refugees, urban planning policies especially since the 1960s, and lately the earthquake of 1978 (Leontidou 1990: ch. 4–5; Hastaoglou-Martinidis, 1997).

Table 1: Foreign nationals in Greece, Athens and Thessaloniki: top 10 nationalities

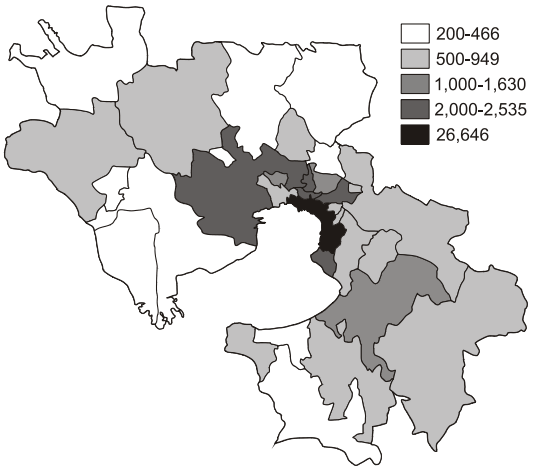
Greece			*Athens*			*Thessaloniki*		
Total population	*10,934,097*			*2,805,262*			*1,084,001*	
Foreign nationals	*761,813*	*7.0*		*274,882*	*9.8*		*66,941*	*6.2*
Albania	438,036	57.5	Albania	145,544	52.9	Albania	31,611	47.2
Bulgaria	35,104	4.6	Poland	9,199	3.3	Georgia	10,467	15.6
Georgia	22,875	3.0	Cyprus	8,962	3.3	Russia	4,612	6.9
Romania	21,994	2.9	Bulgaria	8,698	3.2	Armenia	2,962	4.4
USA	18,140	2.4	Romania	6,971	2.5	Bulgaria	2,931	4.4
Russia	17,535	2.3	USA	6,745	2.5	Cyprus	2,809	4.2
Cyprus	17,426	2.3	Ukraine	6,663	2.4	Germany	1,301	1.9
Ukraine	13,616	1.8	Pakistan	5,868	2.1	USA	975	1.5
UK	13,196	1.7	Turkey	5,657	2.1	Romania	723	1.1
Poland	12,831	1.7	Iraq	5,569	2.0	UK	715	1.1

Source: NSSG, Census 2001, Usual Resident population

Today, Thessaloniki seems to be regaining part of its lost multicultural character, as it increasingly hosts people of diverse origins. A population of nearly 1.1 million was recorded in the Prefecture during the 2001 Census, 10 percent of Greece's residents; over 70 percent lived in the Thessaloniki Conurbation and over one third in the Municipality. The Prefecture concentrated 8.8 percent of Greece's foreign population; nearly 67,000 foreign nationals, forming a share of 6.2 percent among the local population. The main nationalities were Albanians (47.2 percent) and Georgians (15.6 percent), followed by Russians, Armenians and Bulgarians. The table above compares the origins of migrants in the city with the situation in Athens and Greece as a whole. Clearly, Thessaloniki has some particularities in the composition of its migrant "stock", hosting mainly migrants from the Balkans and the former USSR, as compared to the prevalence of migrants from the Balkans nationally and a far greater diversity in Athens. This development gives birth to questions regarding the place of immigrants in the city.

Taking their labour market integration first: among 32,000 migrants in the Prefecture who declared their profession in the 2001 Census, 23.3 percent were employed in construction, 21.1 percent in manufacturing, 7.4 percent in agriculture and the remaining majority in various services. Findings from my own research confirm official data and reveal important details. The work migrants do is mainly manual, physically demanding, often of a servile character, and, for the majority (63 percent), in low-skilled positions: domestic workers (cleaners, carers, maintenance/repair workers), manual labourers (in manufacture and construction), and assistants in retail stores and trading companies. One in four was a skilled labourer (machine operators, craftsmen, skilled builders, painters, electricians, plumbers, etc.) and only 11 percent were professionals, entrepreneurs and white-collar workers. There is a clear differentiation in employment patterns of male and female migrants: men mostly work as manual workers in construction sites, factories, workshops, trading companies and storerooms, while women are usually employed as domestic servants and carers, manufacture workers (clothing), assistants in cafes, bars and restaurants or in retail shops. The main types of employers were either small/medium-sized enterprises, in many cases family owned, or individuals and households, reflecting broadly the crisis of small businesses and the expansion of the middle classes. More than one third of the respondents were employed informally at the time of the fieldwork. In general, the incorporation of migrant labour so far reflects the local productive structures of Thessaloniki, characterised by both traditional, informal, labour-intensive activities and modern, formal, capital-intensive ones (Βαϊου and Χατζημιχαλησ, 1997: table 4.9).

Map 1: Non-EU citizens in Greater Thessaloniki

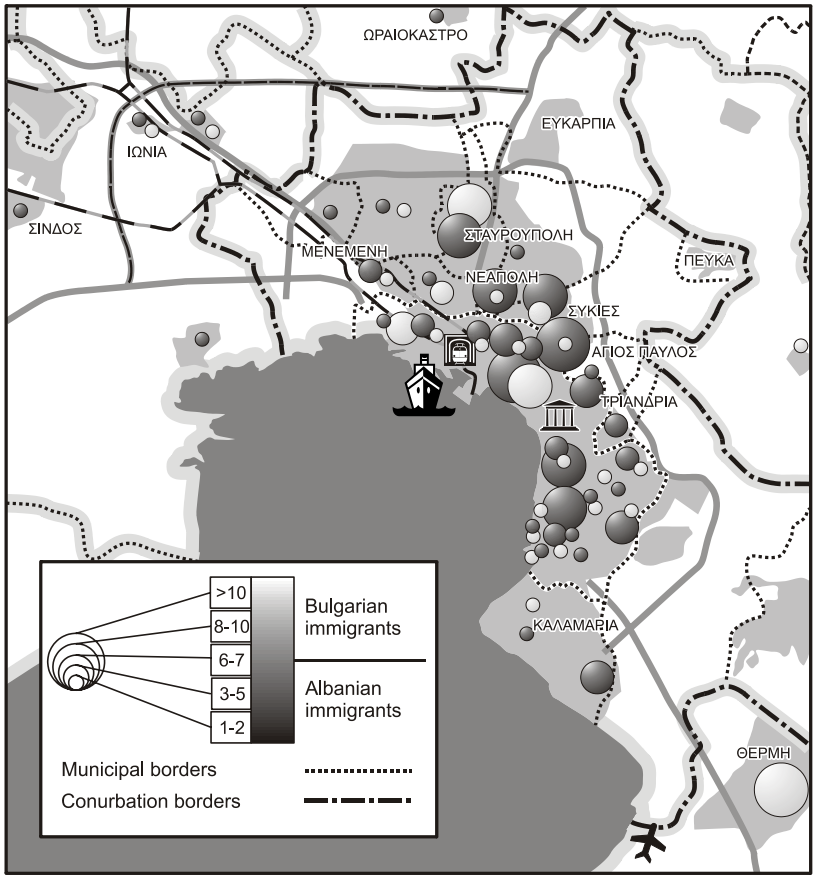


Source: NSSG, Census 2001, Usual Resident population

Map 1 pictures immigrants' residential distribution at the time of the Census: more than half lived in the inner-city, with higher concentrations in the Municipality of the Thessaloniki and the north-west part of the Conurbation (see map 1). Similar are the results from my survey: more than half of the respondents lived in the Municipality and another 30 percent in the rest of the Conurbation, particularly in north-western districts

where rents are generally lower. As shown in map 2, Albanian immigrants, partly due to their numbers, appear to be spatially dispersed all over the city, while smaller groups like the Bulgarians seem to form smooth concentrations in specific areas (e.g. around the Railway Station, the suburb of Thermi at the southeast).

Map 2: Areas of residence of Albanian and Bulgarian immigrants in Thessaloniki



As the city geographically spreads along the coast, its social map is divided between the prosperous, more expensive and better-conserved areas of the south-east and the poorer and cheaper areas at the north-west, with the Municipality in-between being highly diverse. There exist relatively "downgraded" (i.e. overpopulated, with older buildings, cheaper rents, etc.) neighbourhoods within the Municipality (e.g. Kassandrou Str., Vardaris) and in eastern Thessaloniki (e.g. Foinikas), but by no means can they be characterised as "clusters of poverty", while there are also "nice" areas in the north-west (e.g. Oraiokastro). In some north-western districts, there are significant concentrations of social groups living in relatively "vulnerable" conditions: migrants, Roma, single parent

families, unemployed, etc. (Tsoulouvis, 1996). Unemployment rates for instance exceeded 12 per cent in most north-western areas during the Census (except of Pefka and Triandria). However, even in such neighbourhoods the population remains ethnically and socially mixed. As we are going to see, the spatial patterns of migrants' residence depend on work availability, rent prices and the migrants' social networks, but have not so far resulted in clustering within "problematic" areas. For example, Efkarpia (north Conurbation), the area with the higher unemployment during the Census (nearly 16 percent) attracted only 0.6 of migrants in the Prefecture, who formed a share of 5.4 percent among its population. Social divisions in Thessaloniki are generally not that sharp, partly due to the existence of a wide middle class dispersed all over the city, and partly to the relative diffusion of economic activities (Leontidou, 1990: ch. 5; Λαμπριανιδησ and Λυμπερακη, 2001: ch. 7). Instead of a horizontal social differentiation the case in Thessaloniki seems to confirm Leontidou's (1990, 1996) thesis about vertical residential divisions, i.e. the wealthier segments of the population living on the upper floors (Λαμπριανιδησ and Λυμπερακη, 2001: ch. 7). The inner city and the surrounding districts, especially to the north-west, are generally marked by older buildings, more compact structure and high population density.[3] Also, north-western districts have resulted from "anarchic" urbanisation of the previous decades, while construction patterns in the east have generally followed a more planned path (see Leontidou, 1990). Since the early 1990s (Βελεντζασ et al., 1996), housing prices have been increasing across the city, particularly in the centre and the popular eastern districts and suburbs. The city-centre itself concentrates the highest proportion of tenants as opposed to homeowners, as it attracts more people looking for relatively temporary residence.

Today, the city is expanding in all possible directions. The key urban trends that Leontidou (1990) identified in the case of Athens are evident here as well: speculation in the housing market, suburbanisation of the middle classes, increasing homogenisation of the urban space with clusters of wealth and poverty speckled across the city. In the late 1980s, rises in labour costs, the rigidities of the Greek labour market, and the inability of small enterprises to modernise in the advent of intensifying international competition interrupted the fragile dynamism of the previous decades and led to crisis (Chronaki et al., 1993). The 1990s witnessed many companies shutting down and a rapid growth in unemployment, picking at 13.4 percent in 1999, and remains 10.1 percent at the end of 2005 (NSSG, Labour Force Surveys). Industrial decline continues with the shutting-down of enterprises, decentralisation of large industries and relocation of manufactures abroad (Βαϊου and Χατζημιχαλησ, 1997).

Nevertheless, restructuring processes and the overall "good" performance of the Greek economy during the second half of the 1990s (reaching EU standards and entering the monetary union), seem to be giving way to a new economic dynamism, which includes forms of neo-industrialisation and the development of an internationally competitive industrial complex in the area (Komninos and Sefertzi, 1998). The urban eco-

[3] For example, according to a study by Velentzas et al. (1996: table 6.1), the share of buildings built before 1970 exceeds 85 percent in certain central neighbourhoods (including the city-centre itself); only 23 percent of the blocks in the Conurbation as a whole were built after 1980.

nomy is undergoing trends of further tertialisation, informationalisation and proliferation of larger companies applying capital-intensive methods (Γιαννακου and Καυκαλας, 1999). Personal consumption has increased significantly over the past three decades, and is characterised by both the persistence of mass demand for "fordist-type" products and services and the shift towards more individualised forms of demand (Γιαννακου and Καυκαλας, 1999). Moreover, restructuring processes transform the patterns of urban development, with visible impacts on erstwhile familiar landscapes. Urban planning is directed towards regeneration projects targeting the hosting of European-wide infrastructure, the attraction of dynamic economic activities and the revitalisation of areas marked by technological devaluation (Γιαννακου and Καυκαλας, 1999). As a result, economic activity is being spatially relocated: the leisure industry expands in the historical centre while it also moves towards the eastern suburbs; trade mostly concentrates downtown (small specialised shops) or on the outskirts of the city (large commercial houses), etc. However, old forms coexist with new ones: historical buildings and blocks dating back to the 60s–70s stand next to "post-industrial" spaces; high-tech services might be found in areas with labour-intensive workshops; open public spaces continue to be "used" by people even in zones of private entertainment. All this suggests that immigration takes place in a period of urban transition; we are going to see some of the ways by which it actually contributes to social and spatial change in the city.

2. Immigrants in Thessaloniki: Housing conditions and residential trajectories

Table 2 summarises housing conditions for the respondents at the time of the fieldwork. More than 70 percent lived with their families, the vast majority (81 percent) in rented flats, of whom about half paid rents of less than 200 Euros a month. Home ownership was the case for only 9 percent. Most respondents occupied flats on first or second floors; about 65 percent had a housing space of less than one room per person. Only 27 percent enjoyed central heating, while 11 percent had no heating at all.[4]

Is there a relationship between immigrants' housing conditions and their residential distribution across Thessaloniki? What are the factors shaping their geographical patterns of settlement? In general, the findings suggest that the level of the rent might determine more the specific properties that migrants occupy than the location itself. One should consider additional factors that shape migrants' choice of a property and an area to live. The detailed interviews uncover reasons such as the quality of homes, the size and age of the properties, but also the schooling of children, the number of household members that are wage-earners, the presence of relatives or friends in the area, etc.

[4] There were differences related to certain characteristics of the respondents (e.g. by ethnic origin, gender, family status, etc.), but no clear pattern could be observed apart from a general tendency of some sections of the sample to enjoy better housing conditions. Apart from the rather obvious tendency of those "better placed" in the labour market (high earners) and in the host society (ethnic Greeks), other factors might also play a role (family sizes, different migration strategies, lifestyles, etc.). The relevant information concerned the household (not the individual) and thus has depended on household types and sizes; therefore, such differences stand more as a fact rather than providing direct explanatory elements.

Table 2: Immigrants' housing conditions, in (%)

Period in current property (N=175)		*Housemates (N=192)*		*Rent (N=145)*	
less than 6 months	29.6	family	70.8	50-150	17.9
6–11 months	12.6	other relatives	12.0	151–199	22.8
1–3 years	20.1	friends	13.5	200–249	30.3
3–5 years	17.0	employer	3.6	250+	29.0
5 years or more	20.8				
Size of property (N=207)		*Floor/type (N=170)*		*Heating (N=208)*	
up to half room per person	32.9	inappropriate/ground	25.9	central heating	26.9
half to one room per person	31.9	1st	25.3	no heating	10.6
one room per person	22.2	2nd	19.4	oil/wood stove	62.5
more than one room per person	13.0	3rd & higher, house	29.4		

The location of the workplace might constitute another factor, although fieldwork findings suggest that the place where immigrants work does not generally depend on where they live (or *vice versa*). The geography of migrant labour rather reflects Thessaloniki's economic geography as well as the peculiar character of migrant labour in respect to three of its key features: its *flexibility*, partly owned to widespread informal employment, its concentration in specific economic *sectors*, as we have seen, and the importance of *social networks* as a means of accessing work. Table 3 cross-tabulates the area where migrants work with their employment sectors and residential areas. Clearly, the results reflect key elements of the urban economic geography. First, we have a relatively centralised structure: the city-centre concentrates numerous activities, mostly services of all types. Secondly, the main industrial complex is located in the north-western part (Sindos area) and a second manufacturing zone is found in the south-east (Thermi-airport area). Thirdly, commercial activities are generally diffused although inner-city neighbourhoods, marked by small retail trade and large commercial outlets, are located at the outskirts. Smaller-scale activities in all sectors (retail trade, cafes, bars and fast-foods, small manufacturing units, etc.) are dispersed all over the city (e.g. see Chronaki et al., 1993, on diffused industrialisation). Migrants working in construction do not have a fixed workplace: significant concentrations were found in the centre (for renovation/repair works mostly) and at the south-east (where new construction activity is intense, while the suburbanisation of the middle classes towards these districts generates a demand for repair works, i.e. roofing, tiling, painting, etc.). Lastly, immigrants working in personal services (house repair, cleaning, domestic work, care) tend to concentrate in the (more affluent) central and south-eastern areas, but many work for more than one employer and thus in different places ("home-working" in the table mostly refers to live-in domestic helpers/carers).

Job location and place of residence do not coincide for the majority: this was more common among inner-city residents, while those living in the outer city tend to work closer to home. The results point to the *flexibility* of migrant labour: not only immigrants tend (forced by necessity) to accept *any type* of job, but also they are would travel *anywhere* in (and around) the city for work. This relates to what Sassen (1995: 113) calls immigrants' "sensitivity to job location" in the context of a local labour market. Immigrants in Thessaloniki are generally looking for work; and almost any job is welcome, wher-

ever the workplace is located. Many of the jobs they do, due to their character and sometimes casualty, mean unstable or diverse workplaces. Moreover, the ways through which they tend to find employment, waiting in *piazzas*, for instance, or through friends/relatives and word-of-mouth, make them indifferent to the workplace itself. *Piazzas* represent a fixed "market-place", where migrants gather to look for work and employers know that they are going to find cheap labour; such work can be of any type and it can be located anywhere. On the other hand, migrants' social networks, the basic way of accessing employment for most, could also be seen as a non-market factor partly determining the location of jobs. What Sassen (1995: 106–7) calls the "place-based knowledge about jobs that immigrants are most likely to do" is manifested in our case in a peculiar way. Firstly, there is generally a weak connection between immigrants' residential area and the location of their workplace. The former reflects the urban social geography and the conditions of the local housing market, but it is also related to individual/household factors (condition of property, family needs, etc.). The latter mirrors the urban economic geography, but also depends on the "space" migrants occupy in the local labour market (certain types of jobs, in certain sectors) and to the character of their labour (flexibility, low cost). Secondly, migrants' decision about moving to a particular place for taking a job is not that much a factor of the job itself, but rather more a factor of where their contacts are located. For many, their contacts are so widely diffused around Thessaloniki that they could practically work in any part of the city. For some, whose networks are denser and spatially concentrated in particular areas, the place of residence is usually close to the place of work.

Table 3: Job location, area of residence and sector of employment

		*Workplace area**											*Total (N=188)*
		Municipality			*Conurbation*		*Metropolitan*		*Greater*		*Home*	*Varied*	
		CN	*E*	*W*	*CNW*	*CSE*	*MNW*	*MSE*	*GNW*	*GSE*			
Sector	manufacturing	1.1	1.1	2.7	2.7	1.1	8.5	3.7	4.8			1.6	*26.6*
	construction	1.6			0.5			2.1				12.2	*16.5*
	personal services	1.6	2.1			0.5	0.5	1.6		0.5	3.7	5.9	*16.0*
	maintenance & repair	0.5	0.5					0.5			0.5	3.2	*5.3*
	hotel & restaurants	3.2	1.1	1.6	1.6		0.5	1.1				0.5	*9.6*
	trade & retail	4.3	2.7	2.1		1.6	1.6	1.1	0.5	0.5			*14.4*
	other services	6.4		2.1		0.5					0.5	1.6	*11.7*
*Area of residence**	CN	8.0	1.1	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.1				1.6	6.9	*20.2*
	E	3.7	5.9	2.7	0.5	0.5	2.1	0.5		0.5	1.6	7.4	*25.0*
	W	1.6	0.5	1.6	0.5		0.5					3.2	*8.0*
	CNW	4.8		3.7	3.2		5.9	2.1			1.1	4.8	*25.5*
	CSE					2.7		1.1			0.5		*4.3*
	MNW	0.5					1.6		0.5				*2.7*
	MSE							6.4				1.6	*8.0*
	GNW								4.8			0.5	*5.3*
	GSE									0.5		0.5	*1.1*
	TOTAL	*18.6*	*7.4*	*8.5*	*4.8*	*3.7*	*11.2*	*10.1*	*5.3*	*1.1*	*4.8*	*25.0*	*100.0*

* CN = Municipality Centre & North, E = Municipality East, W = Municipality West, CNW = Conurbation North–West, CSE = Conurbation South-East, MNW = Metropolitan Area North–West, MSE = Metropolitan Area South–East, GNW = Greater Thes. North–West, GSE = Greater Thes. South–East

Still, of course, the price of the rent plays a crucial role in deciding about the area, and even more so about the property itself. Migrants living in the more densely-populated central and north-western districts, tended to occupy smaller and relatively older properties, and higher shares of them were in bad-quality accommodation in basements or ground floors. On the other hand, the presence of immigrants in "nice" areas, mostly to the south-east (where 12.5 percent of respondents lived) appears to be related to factors ranging from work availability to the role of social networks. Clearly, cheap accommodation is preferred by the majority, and low rents, expectedly, usually mean bad-quality housing, properties lacking basic facilities, or small inadequate apartments. Home-sharing strategies and overcrowded accommodation have also been observed in individual migrants' attempts to reduce the cost of their living expenses. The quality of a property is though not always associated with the rent. What has been reported by many interviewees as bad-quality housing that was at the same time expensive, points to the existence of *exploitative conditions* in the housing market, steaming from high demand and the vulnerability of this special category of tenants. Common practices include: situations where landlords avoid signing tenancy agreements, or sign false ones, to escape the relevant taxation; renting properties that were not built to be used for accommodation, such as storerooms in the basements of inner-city buildings, *de facto* exempt from the relevant taxation; splitting of properties in order to host a higher number of tenants, often without providing basic facilities in the separated spaces (kitchens, bathrooms). The migrants' undocumented status in the past was sometimes used as a means of convincing them to accept the terms of tenancy, or even to vacate the property without notice, under the threat (or simply the fear) to inform the authorities.

Access to housing has not been an issue as such, as it has depended almost exclusively on private sector lettings. There have been, however, non-market obstacles, i.e. common prejudices about immigrants in Greece and xenophobic attitudes that are apparent in their daily interaction with (some) locals. The interviewees' residential experiences in the city have been marked by *discrimination* while looking for a property, in the sense of landlords refusing to let their property to a foreigner (particularly to non-ethnic-Greek Albanians and especially to young unaccompanied males). The share of respondents who said that they had such an experience approaches 40 percent. Still, however, this has not been an *exclusionary* phenomenon as such. The housing market, as any other market, operates in terms of exchange, of supply and demand: if a landlord refuses to rent a property to a migrant family, someone else will accept. And in most cases, any initial hesitation would disappear over time, when relationships between migrants and landlords or neighbours reach a more personal level.

The gradual fade-out of experiences of discrimination points to the need of a more dynamic understanding of the housing experiences of migrants in the city, by taking into account their position *before* the fieldwork took place. Many of the interviewees talked about harsh conditions initially and negative experiences in the past: whatever their housing circumstances were at the time of the fieldwork, things had been worse in the beginning for the majority, especially for unaccompanied males during the first ambiguous years. Clandestine status, uncertainty and fear had pushed people to practices such as overcrowded collective lettings, sleeping at the workplace, or even in the open air. A

dynamic account would reveal the *trajectories* that individuals have followed in the destination place in terms of residence. Following these trajectories on the basis of the interviewees' experiences, we see that immigrants' quality of housing gradually improves, as shown in table 4. This illustrates significant relationships between the years migrants have in Greece and their housing conditions: the longer someone has been in the country, the longer s/he tends to settle in a particular property and the more likely s/he is to own a property or live in upper floors. In addition, greater shares of those who are in Greece for 9 years or more stay with their families and enjoy a larger housing space. Finally, the share of respondents who declared themselves "satisfied" with their housing conditions at the time of the fieldwork is notably high (73 percent) and gets higher as the number of years migrants have been in the country increase, reaching 78 percent for those with 9 or more years in Greece.

Table 4: Housing conditions improve over time

	Period in Greece (years)					*Pearson's Chi-Squares*	
	up to 2	*3–4*	*5–8*	*9+*	*Total*		
Period in property (N =175)							
up to 6 months	10	14	14	11	49	χ^2 value	13.727
7 months to 2 years	11	6	15	19	51	df	6
more than 2 years	4	19	23	29	75	sig. (2-sided)	0.033
Type of property (N =208)							
own	1		2	16	19	χ^2 value	28.535
rent	21	41	53	53	168	df	6
guest/employer	6	6	6	3	21	sig. (2-sided)	0.0000
Floor (N =170)							
inappropriate*/ground	12	13	10	9	44	χ^2 value	13.110
1st, 2nd	11	18	19	28	76	df	6
3rd & higher/house	3	9	17	21	50	sig. (2-sided)	0.041

* basements, storerooms, wagons, etc.

In the course of the 10–12 years prior to the fieldwork, there have been several key developments that determined crucially the migrants' residential trajectories. The acquisition of legal status, made possible after 1998, seems to have played an indirect role, by offering migrants a feeling of security necessary in order to invite family still abroad and by stimulating improvements in the migrants' employment conditions (stable work, social security, etc.). Other factors were related to family issues (e.g. family members joining from abroad, the birth of children, etc.), and the overall improvement in the migrants' position, the schooling of children, changing migratory strategies (the decision to stay) and subsequent lifestyle values (from savings and remittances to improved quality of life). Gradually, migrants become part of the city-life and their activities are marked by greater visibility, as we are going to examine next.

3. Emerging communities: leisure, socialisation and the urban space

Places of work and residence crucially determine migrants' lives in the city; but what happens with spaces *in-between*, out-of-home, but not-at-work? How do migrants

experience the public space and to what extent do they embrace private spaces of consumption or entertainment? And how do these relate to new relationships and geographies produced by their presence in the city? Perhaps not as often as the locals do, or in different, less costly ways, immigrants nevertheless make use of their free time to meet with friends, entertain themselves, "go out", consume: to this, the city provides the terrain. The majority of respondents (40 percent) did go out frequently (at least once in two weeks), despite facing the financial burden of their situation and, sometimes, discrimination and non-acceptance. Naturally, there is a high degree of diversity, in terms of age, family status, the area where they live, their employment conditions or lifestyle, etc.: for instance, young single people below 30 with no children tended to go out more often, especially those with language fluency who socialised with Greek people. More than one third of the respondents, especially young people, preferred the town centre, confirming the relatively centralised leisure industry of Thessaloniki, while the neighbourhood is mostly preferred by married couples over 40.

Immigrants tend to use the same places as Greeks, depending on lifestyles, ages and cultural backgrounds: in that sense, trendy bars and nightclubs are as common as taverns and traditional local coffee shops. Although the diversity of choices is naturally almost as varied as the sample itself, the fieldwork allowed for two key observations. Firstly, migrants in Thessaloniki, especially younger ones, are "inserted" at large within the *dominant*, media-promoted, leisure-consumption culture and thus tend to use the same spaces of private entertainment. This is particularly true for the groups studied here, both coming from neighbouring states where contemporary popular culture (commercial music and dance, club-culture, etc., but also traditions and *cuisine*) do not really differ much from those of Greece.[5] This aspect of immigrants' entertainment choices makes them "invisible" to the local population, although there is a degree of inequality in the frequency of such practices, due to heavy work schedules and limited financial resources. Secondly, we can also observe *alternative* forms of entertainment and socialisation within community structures, in places that function as meeting-points (mainly or exclusively) for migrants (common especially among respondents of an older age, usually males). During the last decade, coffee shops and bars that attract migrant customers have emerged all over the city; the owners have been in many cases Greeks, but increasingly we find migrants taking over as entrepreneurs.[6] This seems to be even more common among other migrant groups in the city, who appear to have established stronger community bonds and whose community-oriented lifestyles are far more visible in cer-

[5] It is worth noting that some interviewees, especially younger ones, would refer to certain city nightclubs, or to Greek pop-stars. Many shared the local habit of going to one of the expensive but popular live-music nightclubs on a Saturday night; or the widespread culture of a long coffee time on a quasi-daily basis. Exceptions relate to the background and socio-economic conditions of the migrants: respondents with high educational level who worked in specialised qualified jobs (scientists, artists, etc., proportionally far more represented among Bulgarian migrants) expressed different cultural values with respect to leisure and thus preference for different types and places of entertainment (theatre, opera, etc.).

[6] Interviewees have mentioned various such places around the city, while I had personally the chance to visit a couple of "community" bars downtown. Some of these might be used as meeting points for people from the same area in the home country, although nothing like that was encountered during the fieldwork.

tain neighbourhoods (e.g. Georgians around the "Courts Square" at the heart of the city). This takes us to consider two additional aspects of migrants' presence in Thessaloniki that are related to the emergence of "ethnic communities" with notable, or less visible, impacts on the city's life and landscape. The first concerns the gradual establishment of civil-society structures within migrant groups through the formation of community organisations. The second has to do with the development of "ethnic" market niches on the basis of migrants' needs and entrepreneurial activities.

Fieldwork material suggests that the organisational performance of Albanian and Bulgarian migrants in Thessaloniki has been poor so far and collective membership appears limited in scale. This is not a finding *per se*; apart from describing the situation during the fieldwork, one has to acknowledge the short history of migration to Greece and the late regularisation measures. Albanians have managed to form various organisations over time: two major associations, a local branch of a literary club and several small organisations of ethnic Greek and Vlach Albanians. This was not the case for Bulgarians, who still lack organised community structures locally, apart from an "elite" Greco-Bulgarian association and pre-existing networks of ethnic Greeks. Numerous organisations of other migrant groups have also been recorded.[7] Many of these have national and transnational ties, while some had been assisted and collaborate with local organisations, anti-racist groups, political parties, NGOs and Trade Unions (e.g. Γλαρνετατζησ, 2001). Activities include legal advice, social support, cultural events, promoting community solidarity, campaigning for migrants' rights and against racism, etc. Despite the rather low participation rates of the majority of migrants, the role of community organisations as spaces of socialisation, collective identification and sometimes interaction with other groups and with locals remains important. They come to add a multicultural "spice" in the city's "map" of civil society groups, composed of various political, professional, cultural, religious, etc. organisations (Οικονομου, 1999).

On the other hand, the past 15 years have witnessed the emergence of specific "ethnic" niches in the local economy. These include a growing range of businesses offering products and services directed primarily to immigrants (e.g. communication and money-transfer services, job-finding agencies, translations, newspapers, special products, food, etc.), with migrants themselves increasingly being involved as entrepreneurs. For reasons related partly to cultural proximity, there are no particular visible types of "ethnic businesses" that are distinctive of the groups in my study, apart from a number of stores trading goods from the home countries, as well as translation businesses. There are though other, less distinct niches where these and other immigrants increasingly practice self-employment, usually in professions they have done as waged workers in the past (e.g. undertaking projects in construction, painting and house-repair). However, the relevant cases encountered during the fieldwork as well as observations regarding the activities of other migrant groups in the city (e.g. Georgians, Chinese) are

[7] E.g. the long existing Armenian community and church, several associations of African workers and students, several refugee organisations (Afghan, Turkish and Iraqi Kurds, Palestinian), established communities of Philippinos, Yugoslavians and Georgians, various associations of ethnic Greeks from former Soviet countries, etc.

indicators of a trend that will be more and more prominent in the near future. Apart from serving settled migrant communities in specific parts of the city, with notable impacts on their landscape and character, they seem to be gradually "discovered" by locals and embraced as "exotic" or "alternative", as often recorded ultimately in the city's press.

Finally, crucial is the role of the *public* space, where in general migrants' presence is visible. Given their necessity to generate an income and, in many cases, to support families back home, with a limited budget that does not allow for frequent outgoing and consumption, and perhaps also because of different habits and cultural approaches to space, open spaces seem to be particularly important in migrants' lives. Within the public urban space, migrants develop leisure practices that somehow "escape" the market: the neighbourhood itself, some pedestrians' zones in urban streets, parks and squares, etc., become places where migrants meet each other, socialise, play, etc. It has become common to hear foreign languages in streets or buses, or to encounter foreign newspapers in local convenience stores. The neighbourhood, in particular, has been the primary space of the migrants' public existence, located immediately outside of the private domain of residence. Recent research has showed that immigrants' children are much more involved in sports than Greek kids and practice it outdoors, in the neighbourhood itself, parks or fields.[8] Obviously, this is not exclusively a feature brought by immigration. Despite the suburbanisation of the middle classes and the spatial restructuring of economic and leisure activities, neighbourhood life is far from disappearing and is now being enhanced by migrants' local outdoor practices. Moreover, job-finding *piazzas* too have been among the few places where migrants could have a public presence, functioning not only as "market-places" where they would directly sell their labour, but also as meeting points, places of recreation and socialisation. Finally, as many interviewees stated, going "for a walk" (downtown window-shopping or by the seafront) has been for years a basic leisure option.

One should again consider dynamic elements conditioning their experiences of space: how and in which ways have things changed over time? A rather obvious observation concerns the shift from invisibility to visibility: but what have been the factors that shaped this transition? The issue one should consider in discussing this aspect of migrants' presence in the city is certainly that of *illegality*: prolonged undocumented status has denied migrants the right to a public presence. As suggested by the interviewees' experiences, irregular migrants are trapped in a social space limited from "home-to-work". Hiding not to be arrested by the police and avoiding busy public places led many towards a lasting "invisible" existence, suffocating between the private sphere and the workplace. Regularisation may offer immigrants a more visible public existence; but the little free time left after a long working day might hinder migrants' capacity for going out and enjoying themselves long after legal status is obtained, making thus the "home-to-work" space a permanent situation. This leads us to consider a second issue that stems from the migrants' position in the local *class structure*, which practically concerns their financial situation and living conditions, as well as the factors that have been at the heart of their decision to emigrate at a first place. The struggle to sur-

[8] Survey by the Paediatric Clinic, Regional General Hospital at Athens (*Ta Nea*, 03.05.2004: N58).

vive and generate an income, the necessity to support families back home, etc., have weighted critically on the leisure practices of migrants and still remain the case for many. Lastly, there are practicalities emerging from the ways authorities (i.e. the police) have been treating migrants to date. The fieldwork material suggests that even when migrants manage to acquire legal status, frequent controls and arrests continue to be the case for many, disturbing their everyday routine also with respect to their free time and experiences of space. This is particularly evident at a local neighbourhood level, where the passage to "visibility", especially for young single men, is marked by frequent interruptions by police officers, with whom migrants often may come to hold a personal acquaintance. Finally there is the issue of *discrimination*: immigrants, particularly Albanians, often come across incidents of offensive behaviour, whether in public or private places, as soon as their nationality is known. Nevertheless, the research suggests that such incidents gradually fade out from migrants' daily experiences; either because the basis of interaction widens to embrace newly formed intercultural relationships, or simply because they become rare cases lost in the vast anonymity of the city.

However, neither prejudice nor the way the legal framework is applied function as *exclusionary* mechanisms as such, in the sense of denying migrants the right to access the public space. By contrast, it appears that the open urban space is being used and enjoyed to a greater extent by immigrants, as leisure culture for the host population is increasingly moving towards consumption and as entertainment options are more and more oriented towards the private sphere. The space that remains "abandoned" by locals is gradually "taken over" and used by newcomers. Individual migrants perhaps will gradually abandon such practices as their material situation improves and consumerist values prevail, a trend already present in the lifestyles of many of the interviewees. Exclusion from *the use* of public space might come as a consequence of developments that promote new social uses, i.e. policies or processes of urban regeneration-gentrification, aiming at transforming the image of the city and specific places within it, in order to be used for investment, consumption, tourist attraction, etc. One example from my fieldwork concerned the experiences of ethnic Greek Bulgarians in the south-east suburb of Thermi: there, local police actively forced migrants out of the district's main square, where they'd meet for reasons of job-finding or socialisation. In his study of the local media discourse, Pavlou (2001: 140–5) explains how immigrants' exclusion from the public space is related to "city marketing" policies: public perceptions of the "proper" use of urban space promote regeneration that will "clean" it of immigrants, whose visibility is "annoying" as they "harm" its public image. The discourse became rather hostile when in 1997 Thessaloniki was Europe's Cultural Capital and certain areas underwent processes of regeneration and reorganisation of their social uses. This kind of discourse, argues Pavlou, might be based on existing problems of degradation, criminality, prostitution, etc., which are misleadingly connected to the presence of distinct social groups (migrants, Roma, beggars, drug-addicts, etc.).

Nevertheless, inevitably the presence of immigrants continues to reshape the face of Thessaloniki: certain areas become places where immigrants gather, in order to meet each other or to look for work.[9] Moreover, the demand for specific types of services on

[9] Examples are the Aristotle University campus, the Courts Square, the Railway Station, all at the heart of the city, as well as other local points (motorway junctions, parks, etc.)

the part of the migrants and the entrepreneurial action of both themselves and of locals, transform the urban landscape in certain streets and neighbourhoods, giving it multicultural characteristics.[10] I should note that the groups studied here do not exhibit particular *visibility* within the city, due to certain aspects of cultural proximity, as mentioned by many interviewees, but also a degree of *adaptability* to the local environment, especially in the case of Albanians. In general, however, immigrants add new "colours" and character in the changing urban morphology and they develop new social uses of space, which acquires a particular meaning for them and becomes their "place". In the narratives of many interviewees, the city is "imagined" as a new home.

4. Migration and place in Thessaloniki and the Southern European experience

With respect to the socio-spatial integration of immigrants, three are the key elements that need to be stressed: their pathways in the housing market, in relation to the transforming social geography of Thessaloniki; their daily experiences of urban space, in relation to its changing social use; and the migrants' perceptions of, and identification with the city, in relation to its changing character and identity.

In Thessaloniki, migrants tend to rent cheap, old, inadequate properties, in many cases in areas inhabited in the past by Asia Minor refugees or internal migrants. This applies, to an extent, to other Mediterranean cities: from Athens (Iosifides and King, 1998) to various Italian cities (King and Mai, 2004; Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2003) and from Barcelona (King and Rodriguez–Melguizo, 1999) to Lisbon (Malheiros, 2002).11 It thus appears that newcomers occupy a space gradually abandoned by some locals, which they share with those who remain (students, low income families, old people). This raises concerns about deepening segregation. Although traditionally Southern cities are generally characterised by relatively mixed residential geographies, certain migrant groups exhibit higher degrees of segregation: Moroccans and Filipinos in Barcelona, Cape Verdeans in Lisbon, Chinese in Milan (Malheiros, 2002: table 2). Segregation levels, however, do not necessarily imply socio-spatial exclusion, as Musterd (2003) maintains, taking the case of Amsterdam as an example: he reminds us that social inequalities and polarisation might be more important than residential distributions as such. Thus, even when sharp segregation is not the case, high concentrations of mi-

[10] For instance, in the Vardaris area, below the Egnatia street, there is a growing Chinese market (mainly clothing stores) that has emerged during the past few years (during the fieldwork, I witnessed the expansion of this small "Chinatown", counting 4 shops on the main street in 2000, 21 in 2002, while many more had mushroomed in the surrounding streets in my last visit in 2003). In the "Courts Square", at the heart of the city, now a meeting place for migrants from the former Soviet Union (mainly Georgia), one observes the development of several small businesses, from street traders to specialised food stores and ethnic restaurants with self-descriptive, place-specific names (e.g. "the Caucasus tavern").

[11] High concentrations of migrants in specific "working class" districts of Athens that hosted in the past refugees and internal migrants have been noted in the studies of Psimmenos (1995, 2001) and Halkos and Salamouris (2003). Similarly, in Barcelona's central districts, Moroccans tend to "replace" Andalusian immigrants (King and Rodriguez-Melguizo, 1999). In Northern Italian cities, immigrants occupy spaces previously inhabited by migrants from the South (King and Mai, 2004).

grants in *specific* degraded areas might be alarming, as Halkos and Salamouris (2003) suggest for the case of ethnic Greeks from the former USSR in Western Attica, and Psimmenos (1995) found for Albanians around Omonia Square in Athens.

However, in the case of Thessaloniki, the research suggests that the processes of incorporation have been rather smooth, in comparison to other urban settings. In the absence of a strong and open social housing sector, the residential experiences of migrants have been determined largely by the market, which inevitably generates exploitative conditions, and which exhibits some distortions either rooted in xenophobia or related to a widespread culture of informality that is not uncommon in Greece. Moreover, obviously the migrants' experiences of housing and residence have depended on, and reflect, their position in the urban labour market. But the evidence presented here suggests that the patterns of "insertion" of newcomers in the urban corpus follow the mixed social geography of the city. In fact, one could argue that the dynamics of immigrant settlement enhance the city's social mix in an even more diffused way, leading towards a social map that goes beyond the traditional division between North–east and South–west: as Labrianidis and Lyberaki (2001) have written, the presence of immigrants produces a *new social geography of the city*. Alongside with broader urban dynamics, this may counterbalance segregation trends, making the city a patchwork of social and ethnic diversity. So, although the general features are common across Southern Europe, the main difference is simply that in Thessaloniki social polarisation and segregation patterns are not that sharp. There is no evidence of dense immigrant "clusters" (and Albanians, as we have seen, are "all over" the city), while the "cheap" districts where migrants tend to settle are not necessarily the most "deprived" ones. To what extent such trends will continue in the future remains an open question, depending on a combination of factors ranging from the broader trends of urban restructuring to the specificities of immigration and integration, especially regarding the second generation.

The second issue concerns the social uses of space, particularly in view of recent urban planning trends and regeneration-gentrification projects targeting consumption and tourist attraction. "City marketing" (see Παυλου, 2001) and the increasing use of certain parts of the urban space for private investment exclude migrants, among other groups, from the use of certain spaces, symbolically and practically. The authorities tend to relate existing social problems to the presence of immigrants, who therefore have to be removed. Elsewhere in Southern Europe we observe similar conflicts: for instance, in Naples's Piazza Garibaldi the politics of security and of the image of the historical centre gave way to an exclusionary discourse over migrants' presence in the area (Dines, 2002). In Athens, the concentration of large numbers of migrants around Omonia Square has been subject to constant debates and projects for reshaping the face of the area (Ψημμενος, 1995), especially in the context of building a new underground station or, more recently, the preparation for the 2004 Olympics. Such issues of contestation over space bring to mind Lefebvre's concept of "the right to the city".

Nevertheless, it seems that in Southern European cities such policies do not always have exclusionary outcomes. As immigrants tend to use public spaces, a culture of "openness" is reproduced, which is familiar to Mediterranean societies where traditionally much activity takes place in the open space (Leontidou, 1996). As Malheiros

and Ribas-Mateos (2002: 303) put it: "The tradition of using open spaces by immigrants that frequently live in low-quality and surcharged dwellings is contributing to a change in the appropriation strategies in some Southern European metropolises… The celebration of cultural diversity and the new multiethnic character of the cities also take place in the public space". Processes of restructuring generate simultaneous trends towards both "privatisation" and "devaluation" of space and locals increasingly tend to "consume" leisure/entertainment and abandon places that are "out of fashion". As Psimmenos (1995) writes on Albanians in Athens, in "socially dead" places, migrants organise space in different ways than "us", developing alternative social uses. Immigrants in Thessaloniki use open spaces in multiple ways: as places for rest, meeting points, job-finding areas, and increasingly entrepreneurial activities.

Thus, on the one hand, market forces determine the socio-spatial integration of immigrants: e.g. concentrations in cheap areas, ethnic entrepreneurship in districts with high migrant presence, etc. On the other, informal processes of settlement, neighbourhood life and socialisation in public spaces condition immigrants' daily experiences of space. Place becomes a crucial component of the migratory experience and acquires particular meanings for migrants (King, 1995), whose "mental map" now reflects their social experiences of space (Iosifides and King, 1998), in respect to work and housing, but also socialisation and leisure. For many of the participants in this research, Thessaloniki seems to have been a consciously selected choice, because of history, old cross-border links, proximity and convenience. Its virtues are highlighted and defended with strong feelings of identification: this city is now their home.

Inevitably, the image of the city is transforming: the dialectics of immigrants' integration produce "new cultural encounters" (see King, 2000), which are place-specific in character and scope. After all, the urban space constitutes a dynamic terrain where identities constantly interact (Papastergiadis, 2000: ch. 1). As in all the new multicultural metropolises across Mediterranean Europe, changes in their landscapes suggest also changes in their identity. In Lisbon, for example, the religion of immigrants not only plays a crucial role in integration, but it is also an important factor of cultural and spatial change – with new "religion townscapes" transforming the image of the city (Fonseca and Esteves, 2002). This is not yet evident in Thessaloniki, given the cultural background of the majority of its migrants, but it is relevant in the Athens' case, where informal temples are already in place, while the planned building of a mosque has stimulated much controversial debate. In addition, immigrants may come to play a role in historical and cultural processes regarding the identity of a place. For instance, the role of immigrants in the strengthening of Catalonia's regional identity has been crucial, with an increasing number speaking the Catalan language instead of Castilian Spanish (King and Rodriquez-Melguizo, 1999). In Thessaloniki too, with its long multicultural past, the interplay between history, identity and contemporary processes of migration and incorporation is of particular interest and importance for the character of the city.

5. *In lieu* of a conclusion: Thessaloniki's (second) path to multiculture?

In analysing immigrants' exclusion in Athens, Iosifides and King (1998) discuss the extent to which the Greek capital experiences trends similar to those observed in

the so-called global cities. According to Sassen (1991), these include tertiarisation of the economy, restructuring of consumption, informalisation and precariousness of employment, and intensifying social polarisation. Such "post-modern" characteristics are common in Southern cities, where they actually predated post-fordist restructuring as *alternative*, rather than "traditional", patterns of urban development (Leontidou, 1996). Now these change in the advent of restructuring, with certain implications for both space and people. To an extent, Thessaloniki too exhibits characteristics similar to those observed in global cities, although at a much smaller scale and regional in scope. During the past decades, it has been undergoing deep socio-economic and socio-spatial changes. On the one hand, there are parallel trends related to similar processes of internationalisation, economic restructuring and socio-spatial reorganisation (e.g. Hatziprokopiou, 2004). On the other, as the major European cities become nodal centres of the global economy or regional centres of economic importance, Thessaloniki attains a similar function in the south-east corner of Europe, by "regaining" its Balkan hinterland in an increasingly unified transnational space (see Labrianidis et al., 2004). At both levels, migration now forms a dynamic part.

At the same time, the city has been at the heart of major events that shook Greece's internal public life throughout the 1990s. At the beginning of the decade, it was the epicentre of nationalistic demonstrations objecting to the use of the word "Macedonia" in the name of the neighbouring state. In the mid 1990s, religious citizens guided by local priests demonstrated against the use of a Roman monument (Rotonda) as a cultural centre and finally succeeded in turning it into a temple. When it hosted the Cultural Capital of Europe in 1997, its authorities decided to highlight its Byzantine Orthodox past, downplaying its Ottoman and Sephardic traditions. In the early 2000s, the city was shaken again by massive demonstrations organised by the Church against the non-inscription of religious beliefs on the new ID cards issued by the State. Of course, immigrants could not escape being affected in such a xenophobic environment. It was here that severe cases of police brutality took place at several points throughout the 1990s: the most striking example is an incident that took place in 1998, where off-duty policemen tortured an Albanian migrant until he collapsed, while in the meantime they were shooting occasionally, drinking and dancing and singing slogans praising the dictatorship. And it was here (in the suburb of Mihaniona) that a clever Albanian pupil was not allowed to become a flag-bearer, with xenophobic reactions and endless debates on "what does it mean to be a Greek" (Kapllani and Mai, 2005). However, despite this quite "hostile" environment, immigrants' patterns of settlement in the city have not produced serious socio-spatial tensions at large. To what extent this relative "success", against all odds, will remain sustainable in the near future?

Historically, cosmopolitanism and long-distance interaction shaped the urban character of Southern European societies (Leontidou, 1990). This intercultural tradition is now "rediscovered" in Mediterranean metropolises through immigration (Malheiros and Ribas-Mateos, 2002). Thessaloniki was for centuries a multiethnic city of transnational importance at the crossroads between East and West. Certainly, this history was not always marked by peaceful coexistence; but the Jewish majority lived for centuries next to Muslims and Christians (Mazower, 2004). Among them, other cultures added to

the city's cosmopolitanism: Bulgarians, Albanians, Armenians, Vlachs, Gypsies, Western Europeans and others. Rather than being segregated in closed "communities", Thessaloniki's inhabitants used to live together and their daily lives and relationships were based on their locality of origin, neighbourhood contact and professional occupation, rather than on ethnic identification (Mazower, 2004). But the spectres of history haunt present-day developments in another way, too. In Greek popular culture of previous decades, Thessaloniki is known as "the mother of refugees" (προσφυγομάνα), a title that the city acquired with the successful reception of Greek refugee populations from Asia Minor in the 1920s. Many of those fleeing from burning Smyrna and other places in Turkey were given temporary shelter in the old Caranvanserai at the heart of the city, the building currently hosting the city's Town Hall.

In the Ottoman years, caravanserais were the hostels where people would stop for the night. Ribas-Mateos (2001: 36) has intriguingly described the "Mediterranean migratory space" as a "new caravanserai" on the road of many migrants towards a better life. Today, Thessaloniki evolves as an important setting within this space. The city itself becomes a new caravanserai for migrants from the Balkans, the former Soviet Union and other parts of the world. This study reveals that migrants gradually form part of the local community; they might not break their links with their home countries, they might be assimilated or pushed towards the social margin, but they are "here" and here they build their lives. Analysing the patterns of immigrants' integration within this context helps us understand the contradictions through which such a process is taking place. Space, after all, is a social product; rather than remaining the unchanging scenery of a static social geography, it is transformed accordingly and develops. As "all urban residents become part of the polis" (Malheiros and Ribas-Mateos, 2002: 306), emerging communities turn Thessaloniki into a colourful mosaic of peoples, however divided socially it might be. They become an organic element of the city's life and identity, a structural component of its development, altering both its morphology and its ways of understanding itself. Their presence and action, but crucially their interaction and fusion with the local population, re-establish in the emerging post-modern metropolis of today the image of the multicultural city it once had been.

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MIGRACIJA I MIJENJANJE URBANIH GEOGRAFIJA NA EUROPSKOM JUGU: POTVRDA NA PRIMJERU IMIGRANATA U SOLUNU

SAŽETAK

U doba društveno-ekonomskoga restrukturiranja i urbane transformacije gradovi sredozemne Europe pretvaraju se u metropole. Rad se usredotočuje na primjer Soluna u Grčkoj, izvodeći dokaze iz različitih izvora, većinom službenih statistika i terenskoga istraživanja koje je kombiniralo kvantitativne (upitnici) i kvalitativne (dubinski intervjui) metode. Istražuju se procesi društveno-prostorne integracije imigranata u grad kako bi se ispitao odnos između migracije i dinamike urbane promjene. O specifičnostima solunskoga iskustva raspravlja se u odnosu na njegove jasne (osebujne) migracijske crte danas i povijest njegova urbanoga razvoja. Analiza objašnjava neke karakteristike koje bi mogle biti uobičajene i u drugim južnoeuropskim gradovima koji su uzeti kao primjer. U radu se tvrdi da imigracija, premda nije glavna snaga urbane transformacije, neminovno propituje ustaljene socijalne uporabe prostora i mijenja urbani krajolik stvarajući novu ili alternativnu urbanu geografiju dok imigranti postupno oblikuju organski dio gradskoga korpusa. Današnja imigracija dovodi u pitanje identitet grada Soluna, s njegovom dugom multikulturnom poviješću i bolnom integracijom u grčku nacionalnu državu.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: Solun, imigracija, društveno-prostorna integracija, južnoeuropski gradovi, urbana promjena

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MIGRATION ET CHANGEMENT DES GÉOGRAPHIES URBAINES DANS LE SUD EUROPÉEN : CONFIRMATION À PARTIR DE L'EXEMPLE DES IMMIGRANTS DE THESSALONIQUE

RÉSUMÉ

A l'heure de la restructuration socio-économique et de la transformation urbaine, les villes de l'Europe méditerranéenne se transforment en métropoles. Le présent article se penche sur l'exemple de Thessalonique, en Grèce, en s'appuyant sur des preuves issues de diverses sources, pour la plupart puisées aux statistiques officielles et à une recherche de terrain combinant les méthodes quantitatives (questionnaires) et qualitatives (entretiens approfondis). L'auteur explore les processus d'intégration

socio-spatiale des immigrants dans la ville en vue d'étudier le rapport entre la migration et la dynamique de la transformation urbaine. Il évoque les spécificités de l'expérience de Thessalonique au regard des traits particuliers de son immigration et de l'histoire de son développement urbain. L'analyse éclaire certaines caractéristiques qui pourraient être communes à d'autres villes du Sud de l'Europe prises comme exemples. L'article expose que l'immigration, bien qu'elle ne soit pas la force principale de la transformation urbaine, interroge inévitablement l'utilisation sociale établie de l'espace et transforme le paysage urbain, en créant une géographie urbaine nouvelle ou alternative à mesure que les immigrants modèlent graduellement une partie organique du corpus de la ville. Pour ce qui est de Thessalonique, avec sa longue histoire multiculturelle et sa douloureuse intégration dans l'Etat national grec, l'immigration d'aujourd'hui remet en question l'identité de la ville.

MOTS CLÉS : Thessalonique, immigration, intégration socio-spatiale, villes du Sud européen, changement urbaine