Albanian Immigration to the USA in the XXth Century and its Cultural Impact

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Rezumat

Migraţia albaneză în SUA în secolul XX şi impactul său cultural

Poporul albanez a întâmpinat numeroase dificultăţi din cauza restricţionărilor de ordin politic. Cu toate acestea, au reuşit în permanenţă să-şi construiască, pentru ei şi pentru familiile lor, un viitor mai bun. O soluţie pentru o viaţă mai bună a fost cea a imigrării, iar Statele Unite ale Americii au devenit ţinta principală.

Studiul de faţă şi-a propus să studieze începuturile şi dezvoltarea fenomenului imigraţionist albanez în Statele Unite, motivele care au stat la baza acestuia, obiectivele urmărite de imigranţi, precum şi efectele înregistrate atât în societatea albaneză, cât şi în cea americană. De asemenea, studiul reflectă şi transformările care au avut loc la nivelul vieţii cotidiene a albanezilor, care s-au adaptat la modul de viaţă american.

Au fost analizate surse de documentare diverse pentru a pune în discuţie mai multe puncte de vedere ale unor autori care au studiat acest fenomen.

Keywords: *Albania, USA, immigration, Melting Pot, Salad Bowl, social integration.*

Introduction

„I thought I was going to walk on golden pavement, but I found I have to pave the street with golden cobbles."

This was the articulation of an Italian architect who headed as other immigrants to the Promised Land, America, usually called the *„nation forimmigrants*." This label is attributed to two good reasons: *„First, the country was settled, built and developed by generations of immigrants and*

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their children. Second, even today, America continues to take in more immigrants than any other country in the world."[1] No one would immigrate in another country if not obliged by certain circumstances. Before dealing with immigration and its impact, there is the need to have a clear definition of what it is. A definition that complies better with this phenomenon is „*Immigration is the act of moving to or settling in another country or region, temporarily or permanently. In other words, an immigrant is usually someone who intends to reside permanently, and not a casual visitor or traveler*."[2]

Albania, as well as other countries of the world, has got its own history of creation and progress. Since the beginning of its formation as a country it has had to face up different problems related to specific spans of times, which have been characterized by conflicts or restrictions. Thus, some periods have been filled up with the struggle of the Albanians to make Albania be accepted in the world arena; others have been characterized by war with its consequences and at last the end of World War II, which led to different outcomes, such as the creation of the new countries and the liberation of the existing ones. This led to the necessity to have a government for each country and the leaders were the distinguished figures during World War II. Albania escaped from one war and it fell in another „war," that of communism. The new government established some laws to implement it and thus all the people had to obey the rules of the state party. One of the main principles of this government was to stay in the country and to work for it. The centralized economy and the banning impoverished the country despite the reforms of the government. The collapse of communism was the desire of the optimist Albanians.[3] Most of them headed towards the west. Nevertheless, the history of Albanian immigration dates in the early XXth century. Thus,

[1] D. K. Stevenson, ***American Life and Institutions***, Washington D.C., 1992, p. 14.

[2] http://www.centipedia.com, April 2005.

[3] Elez Biberaj, ***Shqipëria në Tranzicion, Rruga e Vështirë drejt Demokracisë*** (Albania in Transition, The Difficult Way towards Democracy), Ora, Tiranë, 2001, p. 55-108.

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the beginnings of Albanian immigration in the USA, its reasons, as well as its impact will be the focus of this paper.

Albanian Immigration to the USA

Despite the hardships the Albanians have undergone in the course of history, still the history of immigration to the USA dates earlier in the XXth century. Thus, as far as Albanian immigration is concerned, it is divided into three phases:

Phase I begins in the end of the XIXth century and ends in 1920, with the creation of the independent Albanian state. It is to be stressed that the Albanians were the last to head towards the USA, because they had preferred to immigrate in the Balkan countries or the European countries that bordered Albania. There are scarce data related to the first person to arrive to the USA and the exact year. According to bibliographic sources the first person to arrive in the USA was an unidentified man from Korça, who landed in the Promised Land in 1876, but soon he left the USA and headed for Argentina. In 1877, the Albanian priest Prend Doçi went to the USA, and then he returned in Albania in 1883. According to other sources, the first immigrant who settled and remained there was Kolë Kristofori, in 1884. After 6 years he returned in Albania and made his friends immigrate to the USA after telling them about life in the USA. Consequently, in 1892 he returned to the USA with 17 other people from his village and they formed the nucleus of the Albanian Diaspora in the USA. In 1900, there were many people heading towards the New World. They were mainly from Korça, Gjirokastra, Berati and their outskirts.[4]

Phase II includes the period between the two World Wars. The immigrants who headed for America during the second phase had another reason to immigrate, the political one. Thus, a sort of political immigration took place considering that most immigrants from Albania in this period left because of political factors. These included disagreements with the country's communist regime and the political pressure they expected to be placed on them, in some cases because of

[4] Valentina Duka, ***Shqiptarët në Rrjedhat e Shekullit XX*** (The Albanians in the Onflows of the XXth Century), Tiranë, Panteon & Afërdita, p. 9.

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their collaboration with Italian and German occupiers during World War II. The communist Albanian government heavily discouraged immigration by establishing political and legal barriers to immigration and labelling it a crime.[5]

The last phase, that is Phase III, includes the period after the World War II.[6] But the Albanian immigration to the USA started to regenerate and the history of Albanian immigration in the modern times has had three phases: an early outflow of immigrants before 1944, a more recent Diaspora of those who left 1945-1990, and a significant outflow following the 1990 breakdown of the communist leadership that had been in power since 1944. As far as the early outflow of immigrants is concerned, it is mainly related to the fact that before 1944, the USA and some Latin American states were the main destination countries. There are only scarce data to measure the flow of Albanian immigration before the 1990s. The establishment of the communist regime attempted to ban immigration and label it as a crime. The immigration of one relative or family person would lead to the deportation of the entire kin in the most remote areas of Albania. Children from that kinship were expelled from universities and the adults were obliged to work only in the farming fields. They were all under the observation of the member of the council and of the party. None of the Albanian should have any kind of relation with these deported people as they were considered as the Enemies of the People. As well, they had no rights to return in their hometowns.[7] This is what an old lady, who underwent the deportation from the communist regime, declares nowadays only because her cousin crossed the border of Albania by accident. The lady continues by stressing the fact that the immigrant was not allowed at all to communicate with his family members. Although he could send a letter to his family, the letter was not delivered to it.

Most of the people who left the country before 1944 did it because of economic factors, and the Albanian governments, during that time, were mostly indifferent to these flows. Whereas the immigrants of the

[5] ***Ibidem***.

[6] ***Ibidem***.

[7] Oral history, an old lady who suffered deportation.

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third phase headed towards America after communism collapsed and Albania fell in a transition period, that of post -1990. This can be broken down into some streams, the 1991-1992 stream, which was completely uncontrolled, when approximately 300.000 Albanians left the country; the 1992-1996 stream, when a similar number immigrated, mostly illegally, despite the temporary improvement of the economy and better border controls; and the 1996-1997 stream, immediately after the collapse of various pyramid schemes, which wiped out the savings of hundred of thousands of people. In the national unrest that followed, a combination of unemployment, poverty, and economic hardships led to the immigration of around 70.000 people within a few months. Finally, since 1998, a gradual improvement in economic, political and social conditions and favourable immigration policies in two key receiving countries, Greece and Italy, have increased legal immigration and reduced illegal flows.[8]

As mentioned previously, the first Albanian immigrants, in accordance to the reasons of immigration, can be classified into two groups: the economic and political immigrants. The one that immigrated for economic reasons wanted to gain some money and afterwards return beside their families, whereas the second group, thus the political immigrants were obliged to immigrate because of political reasons and had no chances to return as they would have been punished for this. The mass of Albanian immigrants in the USA was formed by the economic immigrants. The intensity of the Albanian immigration in the USA changed according to the social, political and economic circumstances of Albania.[9]

The economic immigration of the Albanians in search of better opportunities in the world is the most widespread. In the previous economic immigrations there were some rules, dictated by the instinct of survival of the family. Never since the XVth and XVIIIth centuries have the Albanians abandoned their land in such great numbers and confusion,

[8] Barjaba Kosta, ***Albania: Looking Beyond the Borders***, August 2004.

[9] Edwin Jacques, Shqiptarët.Historia e Popullit Shqiptar nga Lashtësia deri në Ditët e Sotme (The Albanians, the History of Albanian People from the Antiquity till Nowadays), Tiranë, Kartë e Pendë, 1995, p. 28.

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and at a great risk of life. The Albanian immigrants' number in the USA has varied, according to the social and economic circumstances and according to some statistics there are different estimated numbers of Albanians who immigrated in the first decade of the XXth century. *„According to a bibliographic source, until 1900 there were not more than 42 Albanians living in Massachusetts, the main center of the Albanians in USA. Whereas according to the official federal documents of 1910, there were 625 Albanians. This source has claimed that before 1900 there were 128 Albanians, and from 1901-1910 their number increased in 1807 Albanians. From 1911-1914 there were 1528 Albanians coming to America, whereas their number declines harshly in 1915-1919, when there were only 694 Albanians living in USA."*[10]

There is no exact data about the Albanian immigration in the USA and this is the reason why it is claimed that it is more than 100 years since the first Albanian immigrant settled in the USA and mainly the reasons were the economic and political. The first immigrant in the USA settled in Boston, in 1884, and he was from the southern Albania, exactly from the surroundings of Korça. It is difficult to find out the exact number of the Albanians who have immigrated in the USA in the first phase, until World War I. One of the reasons was that the Albanians being under the occupation of Turkish, they entered the USA with Turkish passports, and thus they were considered as Turkish immigrant in the lists of immigration offices in America, some others were considered as Greek. But some of the people who had immigrated in the USA who were F. Noli, F. Konica, gave some estimated quotas of Albanian immigrants in the USA. According to Noli, there were 30.000 Albanians who sent in Albania $ 3 million of remittances per year and quite all the the southern part of Albania lived with these remittances. While Konica from 1885-1914 gave an estimated number of Albanians who had immigrated in the USA, the number was bigger and it had reached 80.000. There is neither today an exact number of Albanian immigrants in the USA and there is no information about the space they occupy in the USA. Mostly, they are concentrated in Detroit, Chicago, Boston, Washington surroundings and

[10] Valentina Duka, ***op. cit.***, p. 12.

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these Albanians have come from different parts of the world, such as from Italy or other European countries.[11]

The Albanians have tried to immigrate in different European countries and America in different ways and, sometimes, they have really struggled to be in the New Land. Albania is considered to be one of the main sources of immigrants towards the USA and also the main source of asylum seekers. 10.000 Albanians enter the USA every year as well they attempt to find different ways to enter the USA as asylum seekers,; refugees and struggle to gain any of these statutes in the USA. Another problem for the Albanians to immigrate is the income. It costs a lot for their pockets to immigrate and they sometimes could not afford it. The travelling to the USA of the Albanians by ship cost $ 50 and it was very expensive for them, so they had to borrow money from their relatives and this was a problem, because the number of the Albanian immigrants was growing.

As all the other nationalities ,the Albanians' reasons as well have developed and new reasons have appeared, that is the educational one and others. Now there is a considerable number of Albanians who immigrate for educational reasons, even though the majority of Albanians immigrate in Italy for this reason.[12] When counting the percentages of the Albanians who immigrate nowadays towards the USA, according to what they declare when they arrive in the USA, there are the following data:

Reasons	Percentage
Work	54 %
Family Reunification	13 %
Repatriation	7 %
Asylum/Refugee Status Seeker	1,6 %
Educational	3,4 %
Other Reason	21 %

Table 1: Categories of Albanian Immigrants in the USA[13]

[11] ***Ibidem***, p. 16-30.
[12] http//www.shqiptaret ne amerike/30/10/2003, February 28, 2005.
[13] http//:www.migrationinformation.org , May 2005.

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Considering that the number of Albanian immigrants in the USA has been really low, lately the US government has tried to give some priority to them, because they wanted to create diversity. Thus, the US government has implemented a policy that accepted many Albanians to apply for the Green Card Lottery and then the number of Albanians accepted is higher compared to the other immigrants whose countries had a higher number of immigrants.[14]

So, as all the other groups of immigrants coming from different countries in the world, even the reasons for the Albanians were quite the same, thus the economic, the political, the persecution, family reunification and lately the educational reasons. The difference between the Albanian immigrants and the other nationalities was that they were the last to immigrate in America, as they were mainly focused in the neighbouring countries and did not spread in other countries.

The Melting Pot and Salad Bowl Metaphor in the American Context

„America is God's crucible, the great Melting Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming"[15] (Izrael Zangwill)

Referring to the US society, it is inevitable to come across two metaphors, the Melting Pot and the Salad Bowl one. The upper statement is a bit of dialogue from Zangwill's greatest hit, a four-act melodrama that opened in Washington in 1908. The speaker is David, a young composer. The play is ***The Melting Pot***, a phrase that has lived ever since.[16] This idea is associated with the facts of the XIXth century in USA. During this time, the immigrants coming to America worked to shed their historic identities and adopt the American way. Additionally, the use of English language as well strengthens the Melting Pot ideology.[17] When entering a country, people decide either to be a complete part of this country or to preserve their native culture. Many different nationalities and ethnic

[14] http//:www.a history of immigration laws 7/2004, May 2005.

[15] Ian A. Nielsen, ***Immigration and the American Experience. Race and Ethnic Relations***, 4th edition, 1994/1995, p. 210.

[16] ***Ibidem***.

[17] Maria Hsia Chang, ***Multiculturalism, Immigration and Aztlan***, 6/10/1998, 29/8/2005.

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groups that immigrated to America have been quickly assimilated. They have largely lost or intentionally given up many of those specific markers, which would make them different from their neighbours. This process is called assimilation or „Americanisation" - becoming thus part of the ***Melting Pot***. This has characterized the immigrant experience in the American History.[18]

There is a problem when mentioning the metaphor of ***Melting Pot***, because everyone that considers himself a nationalist would believe that they are to be completely dependent in the American culture. ***The Melting Pot*** is a metaphor for the way in which heterogeneous societies develop, in which the ingredients in the pot, people of different backgrounds and religions etc. are processed until they lose their discrete identities and yield a final product of uniform consistency and flavour, but which is quite different from the original inputs.

Negative aspects of the ***Melting Pot***. Idea of Assimilation can have negative implications for minority or native cultures, in that after assimilation the distinctive features of the minority or native culture will be minimized and may disappear altogether. This is especially true in situations where institutions of the dominant culture initiate programs to assimilate or integrate minority cultures. With assimilation, immigrants lose their original cultural and often linguistic identity and so do their children. Immigrants who fled persecution or a country devastated by war were historically resilient to abandoning their heritage once they had settled in a new country. Assimilation can also be forced, as well as voluntary.[19]

How can the idea of ***Melting Pot*** be described and what does it imply in reality?

The term ***Melting Pot*** implies the absorption of disparate cultures into a new or hybrid culture. It implies the loss of cultural identity or ethnic uniqueness. At one time this may have been the *American Ideal*,[20] but today this ideal has been replaced with the concept of *cultural*

[18] Ian A. Nielsen, ***op. cit***., p. 30-40, 50-57, 169-173.

[19] Maria Hsia Chang, ***op. cit***.

[20] Joseph M. Laufer, ***Beyond Traditional Boundaries: A Cross-Cultural Study of the Meaning of the Quincentenary***, 10/10/2005.

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diversity. There is increasing emphasis on the preservation of cultural and ethnic identity, while at the same time becoming a part of the making of American society. How do we describe this? Some use the analogy of a mosaic, where each stone is unique and maintains its identity, while blending to form a larger, integrated and harmonious composite. Another acceptable analogy to the fabric of America is that of the *Patchwork quilt*.

In fact, America has always been considered a ***Melting Pot*** of Cultures, but is it really a Melting Pot? Do all the immigrants get assimilated in the USA?

People had always said that the USA was a ***Melting Pot*** of Cultures, where they could find different cultures, homes, and it belonged to every culture, to every home and every type of respect equally. But it is not true, now they are having a categorizing America by the prudish hand of man and for narrow-minded speakers. The title ***Melting Pot*** in New York has resulted to be a misleading term, because the immigrants have not melted in the mass and this mid century it has been shown that they want to rule America and the other countries through American strength.

Apart from the ***Melting Pot*** metaphor, there is another theory which refers to the American society. That is the ***Salad Bowl*** metaphor. It is referred to the fact that not all the immigrants in the USA have reached to be completely assimilated in the US culture then there is another metaphor used to describe the US society. It is important to consider when this metaphor started to generate and when it is used. America was traditionally called a ***Melting Pot***, which was a pretty good metaphor and the foundation of a national mythology to encourage assimilation by new immigrants. Then multiculturalists came along with their ***Salad Bowl*** metaphor and things have never been the same. The ***Salad Bowl*** concept has been pushed hardest and most smugly by Canadians. The trouble with the ***Salad Bowl*** metaphor is that, in a tossed salad, the individual ingredients all retain too much of their individual character.[21]

The implementation of these metaphors into the American society has replaced each other. Thus, the American society has been time to time

[21] http://discardedlies.com/entries/2005/05/where_are_your_grandparents_from.php

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a Melting Pot and a Salad Bowl. At present, the Americans do not believe anymore in the idea of Melting Pot theory and in a survey done to the Americans there has come out that only 20% believe that America is still a Melting Pot, whereas 60% believe that immigration is bad and the other part believes that immigrants wind up on welfare.[22]

The Albanian Case in the frame of the Melting Pot and Salad Bowl metaphor in the USA and their impact

The Albanian immigrants in the USA are one of the last waves. Heading to the USA for better opportunities, the Albanian immigrants have attempted and have succeeded in being assimilated more than the other nationalities.

The Albanians' assimilation degree, as well as their contribution in the USA, is closely linked to their period of immigration as well as their reasons. Therefore, the first wave of Albanian immigration mainly brought people who immigrated because of political reasons. As a result, the contribution for Albania was more on the political side. Since the beginnings of Albanian immigration there is a strong desire of the Albanian immigrants to create the associations and to contribute to the development of Albania, thus there is the creation of the associations as *Vatra* (The Ingle), *Dielli* (The Sun), *Miqtë Amerikanë të Shqipërisë* (Albania's American Friends) in order that the Albanians could be known everywhere in the world and in order that the Albanian people could get an education in the American environment.[23] The main contribution of these associations was based on the political aspect and thus these Albanians tried to help Albania from distance. As far as the assimilation of these people it is to be considered that they tried to make a mixture of the two cultures but their contribution was always more for Albania rather than for America.

Another group of people who have immigrated in America is composed by the Albanians of Kosovo. They have settled in America being pushed by war and persecution and as such their contribution was on the war and on the development of Kosovo also on supporting financially the war and the Kosovars who could not escape war. Even

[22] Ian A. Nielsen, ***op. cit***., p. 30-40, 50-57, 169-173.
[23] Valentina Duka, ***op. cit***., p. 23-47.

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these Albanians of Kosovo have created their groups known as the Diaspora. „*It has always been a dilemma if immigration is always a mean phenomenon or it has its own pros and cons.*"[24] As far as the Albanian Diaspora is concerned, they have always tried to give their best in order that they can contribute to the development of Albania and to Kosovo's question. Not only this but immigrants remain a source of the incomes of their relatives in Albania. As far as the incomes in Albania in the period when immigrants come, there is a rise of the value of the Albanian currency of money and of the well being of the Albanians. As the years have passed and the Albanian regime has changed and even the lives of the Albanians have changed. Now, the Albanians are freer from the previous regime and now they can communicate with their relatives in USA that are part of the Diaspora. This means that now the Albanians living in USA can send more incomes or goods to their relatives without fearing the persecution from the communist regime.[25]

The other group of immigrants who headed for America was pushed by economic reasons and this group is the biggest compared to the others. What is important to be stressed is that the desire of these immigrants in the USA to return to Albania is lower than compared to the number of Albanians who return from the other countries, as Italy, where they have been immigrating from 1991. This because of the fact that they feel themselves better in the USA.[26] The matter is that the majority of the Albanians who headed for America were the men of the family and there they decided to settle together on a specific area and they even shared the same house or the same room, which were really in poor conditions that they were lightened with only one lamp in the living room and the other rooms were dark and moreover wet, that created them some health problems. At the beginning, it was really difficult for the Albanians to adapt to the American lifestyle and thus they decided to share the same house and, moreover, they had the same way of organizing their life in the target country. They started to live in a big number in a house and the older of all was the one who managed their lives there.

[24] Hivzi Islami, ***Rrjedha Demokratike Shqiptare*** (The Albanian Democratic Onflow), Dukagjini, Pejë, 1994, p. 209-212.

[25] ***Ibidem***.

[26] Elez Biberaj, ***op. cit.***, p. 105-108.

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Some people claimed at the beginning „*This is not our home and we do not want to adapt to their lifestyle*"[27] and the way they started to live, a big number of immigrants in one house, was to remind them about Albania and they used to claim that „*mentally they were in Albania and physically in America*."[28] This meant that they were not so apt to be assimilated in the American society. But the latest Albanian immigrants who enter the USA through Green Card Lottery are more apt to be assimilated.

This phenomenon was more evident in the last years when the US government applied the Green Card Lottery aiming at Creating Diversity, meaning countries that had less immigrants in the USA have been given priority through the Green Card Lottery. Consequently, more people have been accepted in the USA from these countries. One of these countries has been even Albania. Only in 2003 have been naturalized 2284 Albanians and in 2004 have been naturalized in the USA 3324 Albanians, all these in different states of America, which means that the number of Albanian immigrants naturalized in USA is growing day by day. Not only this but also they have been favoured more than the other groups of immigrants and in 2003 have become Legal Residents 3362 Albanians, in 2004, 3834 Albanian immigrants have become Legal Residents in USA, thus the number grows with the passing of the years.[29] Immediately landing in the USA they embarked on the way to assimilate to the US culture, forgeting the Albanian language as well, not mentioning the customs.

Needs to be stressed the huge economic profit the Americans did from the Albanians' work. They were paid only 3-10 dollars per week so nearly 30 dollars per month in the majority of the cases and they had to work 10-12 hours a day to get this amount of money, still this was not a problem for the Albanians as they were used to work really hard in their country. The matter is that they were not treated fairly and they worked for poor salaries, which created them a problem with the natives, as they did not agree to work with so low salaries.[30] The US economy profited a lot from the taxation of the companies and the other taxes that the

[27] Valentina Duka, ***op. cit.***, p. 23.
[28] ***Ibidem***.
[29]Barjaba Kosta, ***op. cit***.
[30] Valentina Duka, ***op. cit.***, p. 16.

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Albanians used to pay. This brought an increase in the American economy, which would still go higher as the Albanians started to create their businesses in America, which would mean more taxes to be paid for the government. The Albanians started to collect their money and tried to open their businesses there. In a short period of time - of 6-7 - years some wise Albanians understood the secret of a great economy that would offer them more opportunities. So they started to get engaged with trading of the fruit and then by opening their restaurants. According to ***Kombi*** (The Nation) newspaper, until November 1907, the Albanians of Boston, who were 700 people had in their property 8-10 fruit shops. The same thing happened even with the Albanians of Worchester and Jamestown. Again according to ***Kombi*** (The Nation) newspaper in the end of 1907 there were Albanians in 12 states and they owned 6 restaurants, and lots of other fruit shops. What is typical of these Albanians is the names of these restaurants. They were mainly Albanian names as „Scanderbeg", „Ballkan" (The Balkans), „Tomorri" (Tomorr), „Ylli i Shqipërisë" (The Star of Albania), and these entire restaurants were advertised in different magazines and newspapers and were mainly situated in Massachusetts, Jamestown and Boston.[31]

Despite that huge assimilation, there are particular zones in the USA where the Albanians have remained a Salad Bowl theory. The Albanian immigrants in these American zones are organized in communities and they are also organized in clubs, societies, and associations without caring about the religion and the region they come from. All these Albanians part of these clubs are interested in Kosovo's question and in the democratisation of Albania.[32] Therefore, we cannot fully claim that Albanians have become part of the ***Melting Pot*** because still there do exist some Albanians who try to preserve some Albanian cultural features. So there is a small town in the South-West of Fredonia, it is called Jamestown and there it still exists the second Albanian Orthodox Church, founded by F. Noli in 1911, after the church of Boston. F. Noli held his first mess in Albanian language. The messes in this church had turned to be held in English but also they incorporated Albanian words. What was unusual is the tradition that is being preserved

[31] ***Ibidem***, p. 19.
[32] ***Ibidem***, p. 23-45.

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in this town, where the lunch in the church' environment once in two weeks was organized with Albanian dishes, when all the Korça women, immigrated in USA, used to bring different dishes they cooked in their houses, as pies or whatever Albanian traditional food.[33]

Nowdays as well, there are Albanians who still are not completely assimilated and thus in Jamestown, in the South-West of Fredonia, the Albanians we can meet there have a clear Albanian and their appearance is similar to the image of Albanian women, they had saved the Albanian language, customs, but they did not wear in black as in Albania, even though they were mourning. Not far from the centre of the town there is the Albanian market, and also there exists a boulevard called „Albanians' Boulevard" where there were many Albanians that practised the walk which has been and is still traditional in some towns of Albania, and Albanian language is used in every moment. The older Albanian immigrants feared that they could be assimilated because the other communities were becoming stronger, while the young had moved toward New York, which shows that the Albanians always look for the best in every country they live in.[34] The matter is that Albanians in some specific areas are trying to show that they exist in USA and they are even organizing a parade. Mayor Michael Bloomber has admitted that the Albanian-American community activists say they are stepping forward Preparations to start a New York National Albanian Parade tradition in 2006. The issue no longer is if, but when the Albanian Day Parade takes place.[35]

A part from the USA having profitted by the Albanians and of heir homecountry as well, profit. This is made possible by the remittances sent to their families. According to a study done by the EU, „*the contribution given by the immigrants in the development of Albania is seen in the incomes they send to their families, which is considered to be twice higher than the incomes given to the developing countries by the EU or other organizations*."[36]

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[33]Vilma Tafani, ***Shqipëria dhe Elbasani në Syrin e Udhëtarëve të Huaj*** (Albania and Elbasan in the Sight of the Foreigners), Sejko, Elbasan, 2003, p. 10-12.

[34] ***Ibidem***, p. 12.

[35] Anna Kohen, ***New York: Albanian Day Parade***, June 19, 2005.

[36] http://www.europa.admin.ch/eu/expl/uebersicht/e/

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So, it is important to be considered that not only do the immigrants' families profit from the remittances of these immigrants, but also the Albanian economy does profit. In a press conference, the ex-Minister of Economics, Mr. Arben Malaj, stated clearly that the Albanian currency is continuing to be stable because of the great important contribution of immigrants in incomes that tents to be quite $ 700 millions per year.[37]

Immigration is considered to be one of the main incomes for the Albanian economy and according to a survey: *„Almost 82 per cent of the immigrants send their remittances to support their households of relatives at home. During 2002 they have sent an average of 2705 euro to Albania. The majority or 71.3 per cent of them send their remittances to parents, 27.1 per cent send them to wives and children and 13.3 per cent send them to brothers and sisters. When immigrants take their relatives with them in the host country, remittances sent home highly decrease. According to the survey, immigrants who have their wives and children in their own country send an average of 3792 euro a year. Whereas immigrants who have only their parents in the country send 2174 euro per year. Immigrants who have their wives and children left in their own country send more remittances than those who have only their parents. In this way, the tendency of taking wives and children with them in the foreign country would decrease the quantity of remittances they send home. Consequently, the graph of remittances will begin to go down."*[38] This justifies the tendency of the Albanian immigrants to have their families in the host country, which is an advantage for them but a disadvantage for the Albanian economy and businesses as the majority of these remittances go to buy food, furnitures and other stuff to make their livings, which is considered a growth in nussiness and, as a result, it brings even the increase of the GDP. A percentage of these remittances goes even to fill the deficit of the GDP. It is to be stressed that the majority of the remittances that come to Albania from immigration is mainly from the immigrants who live in USA.

[37] http://www.minfin.gov.al, April 15, 2006.

[38] Research Report commissioned by UNDP and SOROS Foundation „The Encouragement of Social-Economic Development in Relation to the Growth of the Role of the Remittances," by dr. Ilir Gedeshi (CESS), prof. Hekuran Mara (CESS), M. Sc. Xhilda Preni (CESS), August 2003.

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Not only do businesses profit from the immigrants' remittances but also tourism. This is because the international migration contributes to the development of tourism in Albania. The majority of the immigrants spend their summer vacations or New Year's Holidays in their birth country, together with their families or relatives. According to the survey, *„during 2002, 76.2 percent of them, returned for vacations. During their stay in their country for vacations, they have spent on average 931 euro."*[39] This expenditure makes up one of the pushing factors for the progressive increase of the touristic revenues in Albania.[40] The progressive role of migration in the development of this sector in the long run shall be conditioned by the quality of touristic supply and the maintenance of the links with the country of birth.

Conclusions

To sum up, though the Albanians were one of the last waves of immigrants in the USA because they had previously headed towards countries that border Albania, still the Albanians in the USA have been and still are in high quotas, which are always lower than the immigrants of other nationalities and for this reason they are favoured by one of the laws of the US constitution that aims in creating diversity. The reasons for Albanians to immigrate in USA have developed with the course of time. Not only this but the Albanians have been are still more apt to be part of the ***Melting Pot*** of Cultures, but they remain part of the ***Salad Bowl*** whent they are at their home. Though immigrants are trying to be assimilated and at the same time try to maintain some of the national features, still there is an increase in the number of people who head for America to join their families and relatives. Immigration is a profit for individuals, who try to reach better standards of living, but at the same time it is a profit even for their families in their country and moreover it becomes an important component for the economy of their country, precisely for the Albanian economy as it influences businesses, tourism and the system of banks. The tendency of the immigrants to have all their family members in the host country will become a problem for the Albanian economy as it is always losing people's potential.

[39] ***Ibidem***.

[40] Report of the Bank of Albania, 2003.

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