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PARENTS' SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THEIR CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING -
THE CASE OF ALBANIAN NON-EMIGRANTS, EMIGRANTS AND RETURNED EMIGRANTS

A thesis submitted in part of fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN PSYCHOLOGY

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of socio-cultural change on Albanian parents' social representations of their children's schooling. Psychological research on the ways that parents mediate their children's learning and development in situations of societal change is still scarce, yet understanding parents' social representations is of crucial importance as they play a key role in their children's education. Drawing on cultural psychological approaches of Bronfenbrenner, Vygotsky and Moscovici, individual learning and development involves the consideration of mutual relationships between micro and macro socio-cultural settings, which co-constructs psychological development. Previous research examining parents' representations of their children's schooling in situations of educational change revealed the influence of past experiences to make sense of the current schooling of their children (O'Toole & Abreu, 2005). The current study will go a step further as the educational changes experienced by Albanian parents involved both a radical change on schooling practices, but also a radical macro-political change.

To gain in-depth insight into these relationships three macro-settings that expose Albanian parents to changes in educational practices were investigated. The first setting involved the impact of changes due to political and social change in the Albanian education system. The second setting involved changes due to migration to foreign country, and the third involved changes due to returning to the home country (i.e. Albania). Data was collected using narrative-episodic interviews (Flick, 2006). The empirical work with emigrants was conducted in the United Kingdom and with the non-emigrants and returned emigrants in Albania. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was utilized to examine the transcribed data from the individual interviews.

The key findings of this study shed light on three key aspects of parents' social representations: First, the means parents used to talk about education differed based on their cultural experiences. Due to their scope of experiences, parents' social representations were partially similar and different. Their previous experience with education was compared to present situation to make sense of their views. Non-emigrant parents compared *Now*, the transition after the fall and the time they were in school (during Communism). Emigrant parents compared *Now Abroad*, to the present Albanian education system by observing at distance, prior to migration and their schooling during communism. Returned emigrant parents gave meaning to their situation *Now in Albania* by comparing their experience with education abroad, prior to migration and during communism.

Second, the analysis showed that these comparisons were expressed in parents´ accounts of school practices and behaviours revealing underlying constructions of their children and children as learners. Parents' comparisons focused on the school systems, teachers, roles, relationships and children's projected future, revealing constructions of children as learners that changed over time. At time, their constructions overlapped with parents' own constructions and at other times constructions were different.

Third, this study contributes to a better understanding of how social representations act as mediators in parents' understanding of children's schooling showing that they evolve according to specific experiences. As parents evolve and change so do their views of what is good schooling.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to socio-cultural change- An Albanian story

> *"For anyone interested in development, by which I mean the process of changing economic, political and social conditions, the former communist countries from Europe to Central Asia provide fertile ground for research"*
>
> (De Waal, 2005, p.5)

1.1. Exploring socio-cultural changes after the fall of Communist Regime

The radical political and socio-economic changes that occurred in the Eastern European Bloc during 1989 spread to all countries in the region. Albania, a small Balkan nation, was released from the communist dictatorship regime about two decades ago. Its story during and after the collapse of the Communist Regime found its way on various international scholars' writings (Vickers, 1995, 2006; Fischer, 1999; Schwandner-Sievers & Fischer, 2002; King, 2003, 2005). For over 45 years Albania was ruled by *Enver Hoxha*, the dictator who led the country from 1944 to the 1990s and during his dictatorship, the country was isolated from the outside world and the people faced one of the most severe regimes ever known in Europe. As one author notes,

> "Enver Hoxha's dictatorship was the most consistently Stalinist of the socialist regimes in Europe and, together with that of Romania's, the most brutal. Centralisation was maximal, politically and economically. Isolation from the outside world [and] ignorance by the populace of internal affairs was achieved by a combination of draconian restrictions on movement and a government stranglehold on the dissemination of information"
>
> (De Waal, 2005, p. 5)

Hoxha's totalitarian regime isolated and restricted the people's movement. Albanians lacked information that was held secret by the government. Living in isolation and unable to travel abroad, Albanians were made to believe that life within borders was good. At the end of 1990, the Albanian people put an end to the regime and were open to new political and economic reforms towards pluralism and a more democratic system. Upon its fall, about one third of the population migrated abroad to various countries in Europe, most notably to Greece and Italy (Bajraba, 2003; INSTAT, 2004; Labour Market Review of Albania, 2006).

In the intervening years (post 1990's), transformation throughout the country has occurred in the political, economic and social development areas. King (2005) explained that "chains of transformation take place when countries face transition, starting from a political transformation from Communism to democracy, an economic transformation from a centralized economy to an open market, and many other social and cultural changes" (p. 32). Especially relevant to the current research, the education system has undergone radical changes in policies, structure, liberalization of the system and regulation, as elaborated in the Annual Statistical Report of Education for 2002-2003, produced by the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES). Although research on individuals' experiences within the Albanian education system at a time of radical change is still scarce, it is believed that citizens experienced the changes differently, depending on their decision to leave or remain in the country, or leave and return.

Albanian nationals who remained in the country- *the non-emigrants*- have continuously faced the changes due to reforms at a time of political and economic instability. Their lives were directly affected as the changes were taking place. On the other hand, the people who migrated- *the emigrants*- felt unsure of what to except abroad and observed the changes in Albania from a distance. Their left behind families were facing the changes daily, which meant they were the emigrants' first source of information. During their migration experiences, the emigrants experienced new education systems in receiving

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countries (i.e. through personal engagement in trainings or courses and/or their children's schooling). As their destinations were European developed countries, their experiences with education systems abroad must have been different to the one they had experienced before.

In recent years, many emigrant families have returned to Albania- *the returned emigrants*. Although there is no specific research on reasons for their return, the issues concerning legalization of their migratory status as well as the economic crisis that has hit the European countries could be significant components to explore for future research. Similar to emigrants, returned emigrants also observed the changes in Albania from a distance. They too experienced foreign education system whilst living abroad. Upon their return, they were faced changes and current reforms. Considering these three groups' diverse experiences with education system, the socio-cultural changes that would have an impact on individuals' social representations of their children's schooling will be examined separately.

This introductory chapter provides an overview of the socio-cultural changes during post-communist Albania. Specifically the focus will be to identify the changes due to *political and socio-economic* transformations in the post-communist Albania, due to *migration* and due to *returning to the homeland*. Respectively to the socio-cultural changes, this study investigates Albanian non-emigrant, emigrant and returned emigrant parents' social representations of their children's schooling on the basis that, as their social and cultural experiences with education systems differ, so will their understanding and approach of constructing their children as learners. Further, the chapter will justify the use of the socio-cultural approach in this attempt to explore parents' representations under the influence of socio-cultural change. It will conclude by presenting the structure of the thesis.

1.2. Identifying socio-cultural changes

Similar to Eastern European countries, the end of Communism in Albania caused political, social and economic changes (INSTAT, 2010). With the end of the previous regime, not only did Albanians find themselves free to move within Albania's twelve counties, but also to migrate abroad. Over the last twenty years, the country has experienced remarkable development in its transition. The radical changes happening in the early 1990s brought changes in the political sphere, going from totalitarian to a multi-party political system. It also brought changes in the economy, from a closed and centralised system towards a more open market. It pushed the rural society to move from being completely isolated to one more in contact with new norms and values. Whilst a great amount of the population remained in the country and experienced the changes directly, approximately one third of the population migrated abroad lacking information and other sources (GVG/EC report, 2012).

Research on Albanian parents' representations of the education system under the influence of socio-cultural changes is still scarce. However, understanding the influence of macro changes on the way parents in different cultural context approach their children's schooling is of great interest to social research. For this reason, the following section will present and discuss the changes occurring in Albania due to political and socio-economic transformations and the effect it had on the education system. It will then present and discuss the story of migration and of returning to homeland as a process of socio-cultural change. The study presupposes that as individuals' experiences with education systems are influenced by societal change, it will also affect their views, how they understand the education system, and how they approach their children's learning process.

1.2.1. The impact of political and socio-economic changes on the education system in Albania

Politics

The Communist regime governed Albania for over 45 years. The new movement of liberalisation that started in Eastern Europe in 1986 encouraged many Albanian intellectuals and students to protest against the former government. By the end of 1990s, the people's movement collapsed the rigid and powerful regime. During the national elections in March 1992, the Communists lost against the Democrats; however, the change from dictatorship to democracy had many challenges to face in political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. This section will elaborate few of the changes in the Albanian politics and economy, and the undergoing changes to the education system.

In 1990, Albania entered a new decade that brought fundamental changes in politics, economy and social structure. Albania was the last country in the Eastern Europe bloc to "bring down" the communist walls. According to Kok (1999), countries in this region had different starting point. The transition period in Albania is considered to have been the most problematic and difficult period than the rest of communist countries, which according to Çaro and Wissen (2007), was a consequence of "isolation and self-reliance policies applied by the regime" (p. 89). Not only was Albania isolated from the Western world, it was also distant from the communist bloc. In this matter, Albania is known to have had the most rigid, self-isolated and preserved case. The collapse of such a regime meant that Albania inevitably faced not just simple changes but rather transformations in its way to consolidate its democracy.

Soon after the end of the former regime, independent political parties were formed (year 1990). Between 1990 and 1991, about 25 per cent of Albanians migrated either illegally or via Western embassies after a long isolation and

lack of information about the outside world. In 1991, during the first multiparty elections, the Communist Party together with its allies won 169 of the 250 seats, whereas the newly formed Democratic Party took 75 seats. Persistent protests and demonstrations where many remained killed, forced the party's Prime Minister, former ex-communist, Fatos Nano to resign. Soon after, the Democratic Party led by Sali Berisha, won the 1992 elections. Coming from a totalitarian political scheme and aiming towards a more democratic and open political structure, the fragile new government body who had just come into power (March 1992), had to face radical challenges in its steps towards consolidation.

The international organizations have also played an important part towards political stability. The process of joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Albania (NATO) started in 1992 when Albania joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). In 1999, it received the Membership Action Plan and at the Bucharest Summit in 2008, the country was invited to join NATO, who accepted Albania as a member in April, 2009. Joining the European Union (EU) is yet another goal Albania has aimed at since 2003 when it started negotiating on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, which was successfully signed in 2006. Even though Albania has not yet been accepted to join the EU, it is considered a potential candidate country. A fair and democratic management of 2013 Elections are considered an important step in its way to join the European family.

Economy

Little research has been conducted on Albania due to its self-isolation, but the country was considered the poorest in Europe. Positioned in the Balkan Peninsula, Albania did not see itself as part of Central and East European communist countries. Its economic model was based on the rigid Marxist ideology and Stalinist economic practice (Schnytzer, 1982, 1992), slightly oriented towards a more orthodox model (Sjoberg, 1991a). The collapse of the

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Communist regime brought inevitable transformations that led the economy towards transition.

For over 45 years, Albania was ruled under a rigorous planned and centralized economy, which had replaced all forms of market mechanism (Muço, 1997). By planned and centralized economy, the government made economic decisions on production, pricing, wages, investment and external trade every five years. The information was kept secret between central authorities, such as the Council of Ministers to state enterprises. The end of the regime meant that the economy sector in Albania had to go through reforms starting from the first democratic elections in 1991.

Muço (1997) identified at least three main issues that concerned the economy after the fall of the regime. The first issue was concerned with the need to change the productive and institutional structure as a way to replace the former command economy into a market economy. Secondly, due to the changes in the political system, the required cost to move from the command economy to a market economy could bring instability. Thirdly, finding an original economic model that would fit the Albanian system was a challenge, although models from other countries were offered and adapted, but remained a matter of experimenting.

The end of the regime encouraged people to move both within and out of the country, something that had been forbidden previously. Soon after the fall, about 40 per cent of the population migrated from villages to urban areas, which increased the population in the cities tremendously. Due to the unplanned and rapidly growing internal migration, people moved to areas in the cities that did not yet have the required infrastructure and public utilities (i.e. running water and electricity). Considering the growth of Tirana city, for example, it is estimated that 225,000 people were living in the capital in 1990. This number doubled by the end of 1998 (see Table 1). Internal migration, from villages to cities and from smaller towns to big cities, brought changes in

quantities, but it also stimulated the need to evaluate the structure and urban planning of cities emerged at a time when the country was financially incompetent to face the challenges.

Table 1.1: Tirana city population, 1990-1998

Growth of population	Millions
Population in 1990 (under central planning)	225,000
Population in 1994 (estimate)	325,000
Population of total metropolitan area in 1995 (estimate)	425,000
Population of total metropolitan area in 1998 (estimate)	550,000
Rate of population growth of metropolitan area, 1995–1998 (approx.)	9% per year
Sources: Adapted from District of Tirana; PADCO Preliminary Structure Plan for Greater Tirana, March 1995; subsequent citations from Kavaja Road Project Feasibility Study and press reports.	

According to the USAID Albania report (2005), the structure of Albanian economy has undergone tremendous changes after the fall of Communism. As presented in Table 1.2, changes have occurred in areas of agriculture, manufacturing and services. In 1990, agriculture accounted for 36 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) manufacturing 48 per cent and services 16 per cent. By 2003, agriculture and manufacturing dropped to 25 per cent and 27 per cent, while services rose to 56 per cent.

Table 1.2: Key economic factors

Economy			
	1990	**2000**	**2003**
GDP per capita (US$)	842	1116	1278
GDP growth rate (year on year)	-9.6	7.8	4.7
Value added in agriculture (% of GDP)	36	29	25
Value added in manufacturing (% of GDP)	48	19	27
Value added in services (% of GDP)	16	52	56
Current Account Balance (millions of US$)	-118	-156	-408
People			
Total fertility rate	3.6	2.1	2.2
Under 5 mortality rate	66	26	24
Male adult literacy rate	87	92	--
Female adult literacy rate	67	77	--
Poverty rate (headcount)	20	--	25
Population (millions)	2.7	3.1	3.2
Source: Adapted from International Financial Statistics Yearbook; World Development Indicators.			

The economy experienced high growth rate in its GDP between 1993 and 1996; however, the collapse of the Pyramid scheme[1] in 1997 caused a decline in growth rate for few years (negative rate of 8.4 per cent). In 2000, GDP growth

[1] *Pyramid Scheme* were companies that, by claiming to be engaged in profitable investments, attracted large and increasing volumes of funds from private depositors with promises of dramatically high returns. In reality, however, depositors' funds were largely not used for solid investments, but served either to pay interest on existing deposits or were transferred by the schemes' owners to bank accounts abroad. For a detailed analysis of pyramid scheme crisis see Chris Jarvis (2000).

went to 7.8, and in 2003, it was stabilized to 4.7. This report acknowledges a few factors for the decline in growth rate.

First, one reason is linked to the Kosovo War which resulted in 375, 000 people moving to Albania in 1999. Secondly, the on-going energy crisis had an impact on the domestic production. In addition, grants and aids destined for Albania towards the end of that first decade after the fall were reduced.

Another important factor that influenced the dropdown rate in the Albanian economy was unemployment. Although male unemployment was linked to migrations abroad (Muço, 1997), this had not brought an increase in female labour substitution. It is estimated that between 1989 and 2001, the number of females unemployed increased by 110 per cent. One reason to explain the decline of female labour is linked to the growth rate in remittances. Other explanations suggest that due to social and cultural sanctions women occupy themselves to "household activities, mobility restrictions which limit their access to markets and the predominance of male intensive activities (trade and construction)", (USAID Albania, 2005).

As the country has been experiencing international flows of migration, one aspect that supported the economy was through the reception of remittances send by migrant family members living abroad. However, remittances to Albania and some other Balkan countries (i.e. Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina) began to drop in 2009. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), remittances in the World Economy for 2008 have decreased in 2009 about -5.5 per cent. For the Western Balkan Countries, the decrease is much higher in 2009, particularly for Bosnia Herzegovina with about -20 per cent and Albania -12 per cent (Pere & Hashorva, 2011). King and Vullnetari (2003) argued that social reasons could have influenced the drop in remittances. As the children of the migrating families live and settle abroad, they get married and start thinking of own family, "which can predict a decrease if not a complete loss of remittances" (p. 30).

A study on the poverty of Albania conducted by De Soto and colleagues (2002) claimed that Albanians had a "multi-dimensional view of poverty, encompassing aspects such as lack of hope; feeling excluded from social and commercial life; inability to feed, clothe and house the family; and the difficulty of continuing traditions which are seen as vital, such as baptisms, marriages and funerals" (p. 7). During the last two decades, there are at least three stages under which the Albanian economy was affected: The collapse of the Communist regime in 1990, the failure of Pyramid Scheme in 1997, and the Kosovo War in 1999. These key historical events caused financial loss to Albanian economy leading to political and social crisis (Albanian EFA/FTI Donor, 2006). Especially relevant to this research is the effect of the political instability and the financial crisis on the education sector, which also faced serious challenges.

The Education System

The education system in Albania has experienced continuous changes and reforms for the past two decades. Changes in the education system have had an effect on all the socio-cultural groups. Non-emigrants have experienced the changes directly and continuously. Emigrants experienced some of the changes prior to migration followed by their families being influenced, which in some way has affected them indirectly. Like emigrants, returned emigrants too experienced changes before migrating abroad; their families were also influenced, and upon their return, they began to experience the changes in the education system directly.

Various issues became evident in the first five years after the fall. With the rise of internal migration, the number of the population increased in cities; however, that did not show an increase in the number of pupils in public schools because the education sector did not have an efficient infrastructure to cope with the growth rate. In fact, secondary enrolment dropped by 50 per cent between 1989

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and 1995 (Hazans & Trapeznikova, 2006). International migration is yet another factor that is associated with school dropouts. According to Giannelli and Mangiacacchi (2010), 21.7 per cent of children under 18, were left behind by their parents, who migrated between 1990 and 2005. The average period for the absence of their parents was approximately 9.5 months. Their analysis showed that parental migration had a negative effect on school attendance and it encouraged the children left behind to be school dropouts.

In their National Education Strategy (2004-2015), the Ministry of Education and Science show evidence that the poverty level of families can be a significant factor in achieving successful completion of basic education. The enrolment rates in basic education for the non-poor are 101.1 per cent (gross) and 94.1 per cent (net). The rates for the poor are 97.15 per cent (gross) and 91.6 per cent (net). The extremely poor have a rate of 90.9 per cent (gross) and 88.6 per cent (net). The gross enrolment rate of children living in households not able to meet even basic food requirements is 5 per cent lower than that of children living in non-poor households. Although the Albanians have traditional high regard for education, the on-going poverty period seems to discourage their interest in education.

At the time of collapse of the Pyramid Schemes in 1997, many schools were destroyed and some school buildings were razed (Picard & Wolff, 2008). Due to political instability, public order was broken down resulting in physical insecurity in the schools, which was yet another problem parents and children had to face. Unplanned urbanization brought issues for the infrastructure that could not provide enough electricity and running water, making it difficult for educators at schools and families at home to have their basic needs met. As the country is slowly moving from a transition period to a time of development, construction of new buildings with efficient infrastructure for obligatory schools began.

Albania's education system also experienced changes in curricula, which eliminated political and ideological ideas and replaced them with other subjects,

such as health education, human rights, informatics, and foreign languages. Much attention is paid to the implementation of professional trainings for teachers, modernization of teaching methodologies and qualification of teachers with new concepts (Whitehead, 2000), focusing on pupil and development of individual creative thinking (Pango, 1996).

Most schools are public which means the government finances school through budget or through international organizations that provide grants for projects (i.e. EFA/FTI- Education for All/ Fast-track Initiative). However, starting from the 1995 several private schools of various levels, starting from the pre-school level right up to university, have opened. Although the governmental budget for public schools education has increased, the number of private education in the country has also increased with more possibilities for students, better infrastructure, providing food, transportation, and well-paid teachers.

Alongside the political and economic challenges, the Albanian education system has faced serious concerns with corruption. As a phenomenon in the education system corruption can be defined as "the systematic use of public office for private benefit, whose impact is significant on the availability and quality of educational goods and services, and, as a consequence on access, quality and equity in education" (Hallak & Poisson, 2007, p. 26). For the first time, the World Bank studied corruption in Albania in 2006, by applying a method of Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS). In recent years, more projects and reforms are applied to try to prevent this phenomenon.

Starting from the beginning of the academic year 2004-2005 the structure of compulsory education also changed. The duration of Level 1 increased from four to five years, which also changed the duration of compulsory education from eight to nine years. In 2003, universities underwent a process of structural

reform where it adopted the Bologna Declaration[2]. According to Falkingham and Gjonça (2001), the public education system has attempted to adapt itself to the Bologna reform since 1990. This system is now adapted by private education too.

The latest UNICEF Country Report (2012) identifies a set of education priorities in Albania. The report reveals the need to develop school autonomy and accountability; to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes with an emphasis on acquisition of necessary skills for the labour market; to develop human resources; to apply right-based policies that prevent and reduce marginalization for all excluded groups (i.e. Roma, Egyptian and special needs children); to promote child-centred pedagogies and curricula for all children. Taking into account that the number of returned emigrants is increasing in the last years, the new education strategy has in focus in the integration of these children in Albanian community schools (MOES, 2012).

Overall, after the fall of the Communist regime, Albania experienced a rapid political, economic and social transition accompanied by tremendous transformations and radical changes. It was inevitable that the changes would affect the education system, which has undergone continuous reforms and has remained a priority in all governing bodies for the past two decades. It was not until the beginning of the new century that political and social development started to rise in Albania. For over two decades of change, one important phenomenon that has affected the country's economy and its demography is the international migration, which will be discussed in the following section.

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[2]"The Bologna Declaration initiated the process which is designed to introduce a system of academic degrees that are easily recognisable and comparable, promote the mobility of students, teachers and researchers, ensure high quality teaching and incorporate the European dimension into higher education".
See http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11088

1.2.2. The impact of migration- Albanian Emigrants

Some authors identify Albanian migration as an "exception within the former communist bloc, experiencing one of the greatest migration flows of the last two decades in Europe" (Carletto, Davis, Stampini, Trento & Zezza, 2004; King, 2005). According to King (2005), "migration is the phenomenon that is at the heart of economic, social, and cultural change in Albania over the last decades" (p. 133). Although estimating the precise number of migrants living outside Albania has not been straightforward due to their documented or undocumented status in the recipient countries, it is believed that one third of the population migrated during the first decade after the fall. Bajraba (2004) identified at least three phases of migration after the fall of Communism. The first phase commenced between 1991 and 1992 when 300, 000 Albanians left the country due to political and economic transformations happing in Eastern and Central Europe. At this stage, migration was uncontrolled and illegal.

The second stream occurred between 1992-1996, with a similar number of individuals migrating to two preferred destinations, Greece and Italy (see Figure 1.1), as well the US and Canada. Due to the Pyramid scheme crisis when hundreds of thousands became bankrupt, another stream of migration was encouraged between 1996 and 1997. It is believed that during that year about 70,000 Albanians left the country due to economic despair and political instability. Though not identified in some historical scales presented in previous studies, another flow of migration was experienced at the beginning of the 21st century (Arrehag, Sjöberg & Sjöblom, 2006). By the end of the first decade (1990-2000) it is believed that about 800,000 have migrated abroad, about half of whom were professionals (Bajraba, 2000). Legal migration did not start until 1998, when the country had just begun to improve its political and economic condition.
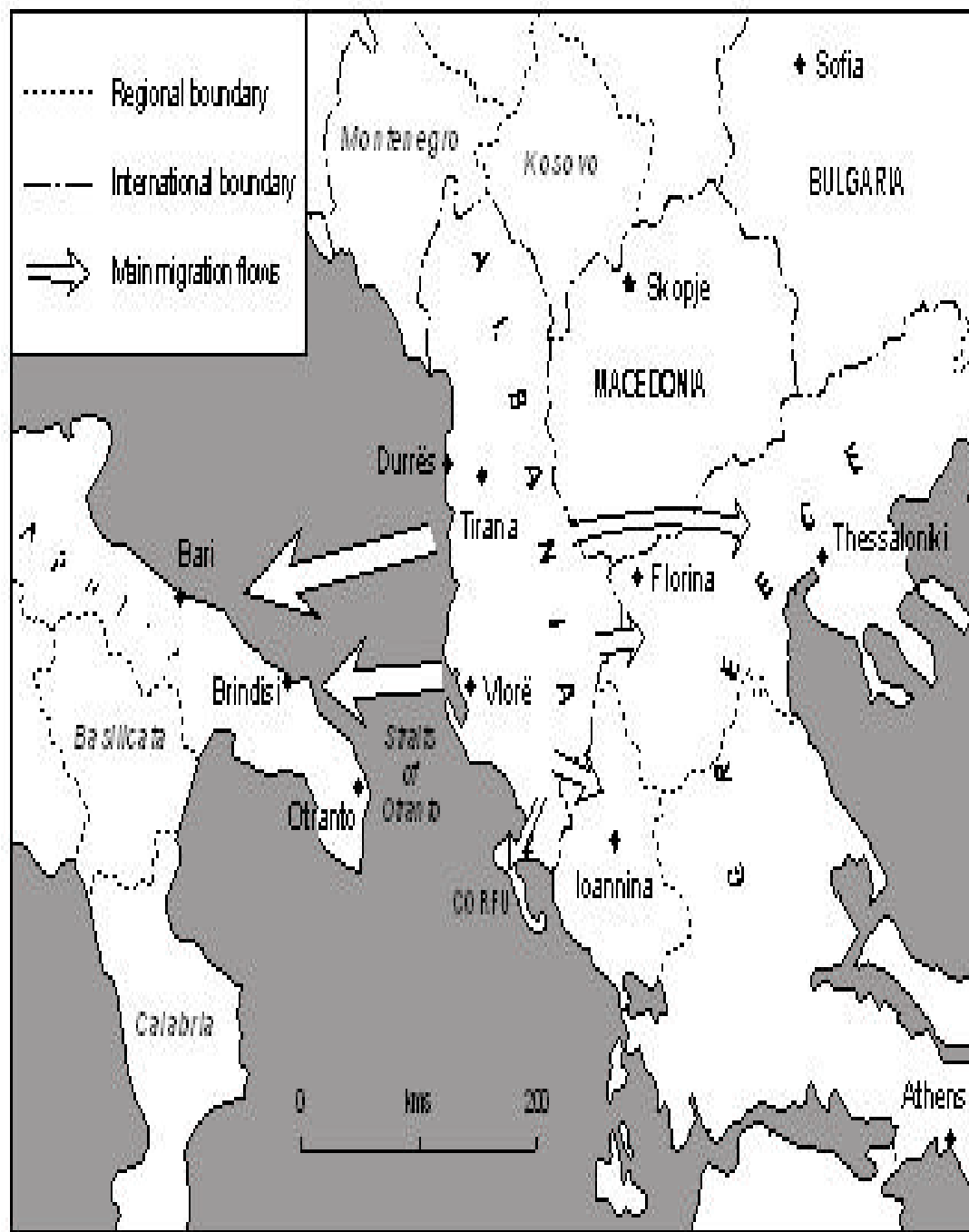
Figure 1.1:   Albanian's main destination route.
            (Source: Adapted by King and Vullnetari, 2003).

Characteristics of Albanian migration of the late 20th century show that the major destinations of Albanian migrants were Greece (estimated number between 400,000 and 500,000) and Italy (150,000-200,000). In the year 2000, the Albanian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs estimated there were 800,000 emigrants, with 90 per cent in Greece (500,000) and Italy (200,000). Other countries where Albanians have migrated are Germany (12,000), the United States (12,000), the United Kingdom (5,000), Canada (5,000), Belgium (2,500), France (2,000), Turkey (2,000), Australia (1,460), Austria (1,000) and Switzerland (1,000) (Bajraba, 2000).

The International Organization of Migration (IOM) in Albania revealed the latest migration profile in 2007. In their report, they estimated that 860, 485 Albanian emigrants live abroad, of which 75 percent were male and 25 percent female. Table 1.3 shows the latest estimation for the number of Albanian residents living in the presented destinations.

Table 1.3: Number of Albanian residents by country and year

Country	Number	Year	Source
Greece	434,810	2003	European Commission Annual Report on Statistics on Migration, Asylum and Return
Italy	348,813	2006	ISTAT- Italian Statistics Office
USA	113,661	2000	US Census
UK	50,000	2005	Ministry of Labour, Social affairs and Employment and Equal Opportunities Albania
Canada	14,935	2001	Canadian Consensus
Germany	11,630	2002	Federal Statistics Office
Source: Adapted from IOM Migration Profile, 2007			

The last migration flow (year 2001) showed interest in the United Kingdom (King & Vullnetari, 2003). The number of Albanian emigrants in London shows controversies in different sources. While the Institute for Public Policy

Research (IPPR) estimated that the Albanian community in London would reach 23, 000 by 2001, in 2005 the Albanian Government reported that the Albanian community in London was the third largest in Europe after Greece and Italy, about 50, 000 (Vathi, 2010). More so, it is believed that Albanian emigrants in the UK originated from the northern part of Albania, with some of them previously living in Greece and Italy.

The common features of the typical migrant are identified as young, married males aged between 20-30 or 15-39 years (Bonifazi & Sabatino, 2003). Later on, the number of female migrants was increasing. In their study, Gëdeshi and colleagues showed that migrants leaving were *well educated* with 12.1 per cent holding university diplomas, 56.1 per cent of them had completed secondary school and 20.4 per cent had finished the obligatory eight years of education (Gëdeshi, Mara & Preni, 2003, p. 28). Following on this, throughout the last decade the government has presented new policies through *brain gain* programs aiming "to win back" the lost intellectual human resources of migrants (*brain drain*). Despite their acquired academic skills and knowledge, there is evidence from 22 countries in Eastern and Western Europe that qualifications during Communist period are relatively penalized in the economies of the late 2000s due to the "outdated technologies adopted by state industries" (Brunello, Crivellaro & Rocco, 2010, p. 3). Thus, it would be interesting to examine individuals' history of education during and post totalitarian regime.

Various reasons that may have pushed migrants to leave their homeland have been presented in previous research. The reasons most commonly cited are economic reasons, which include "unemployment, poverty, lack of opportunities and insufficient income" (Gëdeshi et al., 2003, p. 43). Due to the emergence of family unification schemes, most female migrants showed traditional patterns as to why they left the country claiming that they moved "to follow their husbands" (Arrehag et al. 2006, p. 380). In addition, the 2002 UNICEF report features young people's reasons for leaving the country to study abroad.

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The process of settlement abroad has been an on-going journey for Albanian migrants in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Between legalizing their status, integrating in a new society, finding jobs and houses, enrolling in trainings and courses, and engaging their children in community and mainstream schools, their journey has not been an easy one. Evidence on how Albanian migrants in this country have engaged with the education system abroad is under researched, although attempts to understand Albanian migrants ethnic identity (Vathi, 2011), and Albanian students' cultural identity in the United Kingdom and Italy (Canollari-Baze, 2011), showed that this community's engagement in the education system has overcome the challenges of facing different education systems.

At times when the process of legalizing their status has not been successful along with the rise of the global crisis, there is evidence that few Albanian families, voluntary or forcibly, return to their home country. Whether returning is a temporary or permanent matter, time will tell; however, migration as a phenomenon is not a no-return process.

1.2.3. The impact of returning to homeland- Returned emigrant

Recent facts suggest that Albanian nationals return to Albania for two main reasons: either *forced* (by the authorities of the destination country due to incorrect documentation or with expired permits), or *voluntarily* (due to failure in integration in the labour market, family reasons, or discrimination). According to the IOM Migration Profile, 39,663 Albanian nationals were forcibly removed from the EU territory in 2003 (IOM, 2007). Later on, in 2006 the Albanian Ministry of Interior (MOI), Directorate for Border Police and Migration registered 42, 254 cases as being removed forcibly with agreement on readmission or return with the sending country, and some other 15, 879 without an agreement. Especially relevant to this case were the returned

emigrants from Greece due to the periodic repatriation by the Greek police operations (Fakiolas, 2003).

An estimated number of the voluntarily returned emigrants between 2002 and 2006, reached 3, 079, with the largest group returning to the UK (2, 138), Bosnia Herzegovina (328) and Belgium (306). Considering that studies with the Albanian emigrants abroad (i.e. Italy and the UK) have previously shown a low tendency for returning voluntarily (King, Mai & Dalipaj, 2003), the IOM report showed differently. A pilot study conducted by the European Training Foundation showed some evidence that, having experienced the changes when back to Albania; some migrants consider re-migrating, to their country of first migration (ETF, 2006).

The phenomenon of returning migrants in Albania is a recent one; therefore, information on this group is under researched. There is some evidence on the number and patterns of migrants returning to Albania during the last years. A report produced by the World Bank (2008) estimated that the number of migrants returning to Albania in 2005 reached 83,000. There is also evidence that most of them were returning from Greece and that returning was conditioned by the availability of jobs which secured their financial status (IOM, 2007). In this report, approximately 60 per cent of the respondents found the process of reintegration as difficult, partly because the economy is not stable (King & Mai, 2008). However, information on their process of re-integration in own country, and particularly in their attempt to engage (self or their children) in the actual education system is still at the level of media opinions and discussions. In this attempt to explore returned emigrant parents' social representations on their children's schooling, the findings of the current research will fill in this gap.

1.3. Justifying the aims of the study- The three 'Whys'

The elaborated socio-cultural changes experienced by the Albanian nationals after the fall of the Communist regime give a general overview of the key historical issues that lay down the background for this study. This exploratory study draws on a *socio-cultural approach* to investigate the way *parents* construct *social representations* of their children's schooling under the influence of radical change. It is by far crucial to justify reasons as to *why* parents are the target group when exploring children's education, *why* the focus is on their social representations, and *why* make use of such psychological approach.

1.3.1. Why investigate parents?

At a time of global transformations, when societies go through political and socio-economic changes, through migration and other social phenomena, parents often find themselves unprepared to make sense of the on-going reforms, particularly in the education sector. Choosing to focus on parents was based on three major reasons. *At first*, Albania is a unique case in that it has experienced the most rigid Communist regime followed by the most rapid and radical socio-political transformations for over two decades. The participants in this study are Albanian nationals who have experienced changes in the education system in dynamic socio-cultural settings, such as during Communism, during political and socio-economic transition, during migration and returning to their home country. *Secondly*, when conducting research that concerns children's schooling, parents would be considered a main source to give meaning to this everyday activity, and this is the case for any society. Parents' childrearing values and beliefs have been acknowledged to play a significant role in children's development (Goodnow, 1988). *Thirdly,* understanding the way parents construct representations of their children's schooling, could offer a great contribution to improve school-home

communication, develop cooperative relation with teachers, and ultimately, would uplift children's performance at school. Parents play a crucial role in supporting their children' school learning and on the way children develop in changing society. This is a global matter and of great interest to many researchers in the field of socio-cultural phenomena.

1.3.2. Why study social representations?

Prior to justify the reasons behind studying social representations, it is crucial to explain the notion and how it relates to the objectives of this study. Throughout this introductory chapter, many terms have been used to refer to the way socio-cultural changes may influence parents' meanings and experiences of their children's education, such as views, approaches, constructions, offering a common-sense perspective of social representations. In this section, the notion is introduced to set the use of these terminologies within a theoretical framework, which will be elaborated in more details in the following Chapter (2).

Considering that the social and cultural context has an impact on human psychological functioning and development, the current study adapted Moscovici's (1963) concept of a social representation, which he understood as an elaboration of "a social object by the community for the purpose of behaving and communicating" (p. 251). A presentation of a particular object is re-presented to fit our understanding. Later on, he defined social representations as a "system of values, ideas and practices" that are communicated through a code of understanding between individuals' group histories (Moscovici, 1973, p. xi). Moscovici's theory of social representations holds the idea that psychological processes are embedded in the macro cultural-historical context and aims to show how the everyday interaction of individuals and their communication result in the emergence of collectively shared pattern of beliefs, values and practices, over time and space. Moscovici concluded that "social representations are located in the minds but they can also be found in the world, and therefore examined separately" (1988, p. 214).

Central for this concept is the idea that psychological functioning is produced socially in relation to others and that it is our representations that produce actions. As Carigan, Pourdavod and King (2004) put it, a social representation is related to "*what*" are the most important things (i.e. acceptable attitudes, opinions and behaviours). It is also related to "*how*" an individual or group is able to decode, think and comprehend what happens in the daily life in a specific social and cultural context, and "*why*" actions can be justified.

The theory of social representations has developed in multiple dimensions by various scholars. The focus has articulated the individual in his or her attempt to construct own reality in relation with the collective (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990). For example, Wagner (1996) emphasised the role of action and social interaction in the construction of social representations. In Jovchelovitch's views, social representations take place in that space of crossroads between the individual and the collective where objects, subjects and activities meet (1996). Furthermore, in their model of knowledge construction, Bauer and Gaskell (1999) viewed social representations as elements that have a history and that change over time. This suggests that social representations can be best understood by investigating individuals' history and they take into account change, which views social representations as processes in the making rather than "templates that relate to cognitive schemas" (Sammut & Howarth, 2013). On the one hand, social representations offer a framework of the way individuals make sense, interpret, act and interact with the society, bringing out meaning of one's reality in relation to an object, subject or activity. On the other hand, they are elements that have history, develop over time and take into account social change.

The concept of social representation is adapted to investigate parents' social representations of their children's schooling under the influence of societal change. The study aims at exploring their meaning and experiences with education, which are embedded in the macro cultural and historical context

experienced by Albanian nationals. In her research on social representations, Howarth (2001; 2006) suggests that by exploring experiences we can understand the underlying processes that inform social representations. Drawing on the perspective of contextualist theorists, *experience* as a notion is not viewed as "an attribute that is purely of the individual, but involved the individual and the interpersonal and broader cultural and historical context in which that individual is situated" (Tudge & Hogan, 2005, p. 104). In the current study, parents' experience with education is explored at various levels of analysis. It is used to refer to what parents recounted as their own story of education, precisely about their memories as learners at school during Communism and throughout the experienced socio-cultural changes. It also refers to their everyday lives, the things they did in the past and things they do about the education of their children. Furthermore, by experience the research will also explore what others did or do to parents, events that happened and happen in the context they live in.

Investigating everyday experience is an approach that socio-cultural theorists value as captive of unique experiences of the world. Despite of being part of similar event each person or group will give meaning or make sense of them in their own ways depending of their histories. This study explores *meaning* that parents will give to their past and everyday experiences. The focus is on how parents understand and interpret, negotiate and feel about their experiences and daily lives in relation to education and education of their children. As Kagan (1984) put it, when individuals make an attempt to interpret an experience, that is a significant product of an encounter.

Valsiner (2012) views humans living "within an irreversible stream of experience, a stream where the concept of "sameness does not apply" (p. 990). It is what we experience that emerges *meaning*. In other words, meaning is embedded in our social interactions and culturally organized activities occurring at an irreversible time. Within irreversibility, Valsiner argues that as humans, we make meaning to relate to our immediate environment, but also to

what happen next, or to "pre-adapt to uncertainty" of the future. Because humans are on the move, their environment is also not static, but dynamic.

As elaborated, social representations are in the minds as values, ideas, but also in the world as practices. They are in our experiences and in our attempt to make sense of those experiences. What is experienced is in the past but also in the present embedded in our daily practices. The meaning is embedded in our values, ideas, views, in relation to a particular object, subject and activity in a particular cultural context at the irreversibility of time. Representations are elements that have history, change over time and allow us to pre-adapt for the future. This research proposes to explore parents' meanings and experiences as underlying components in the construction of social representations.   Based on their socio-cultural status, these parents' meanings and experiences under the influence of change will differ. Exploring each group's code of understanding on the impact of changes on their social representations of their children's schooling will give a significant contribution to the psychological theory of human cultural development.

1.3.3. Why use a socio-cultural approach?

The socio-cultural approach to psychological development originated by L.S. Vygotsky in the 1920s and 30s. It was then extended to activity theory (Leontiev, 1981) and cultural-historical activity theory (Cole, 1996; Cole & Engestrom, 1994). The perspective suggests that society and culture shape the human cognition, which implies that there is interrelatedness between the external socio-cultural context and the internal psychological functioning. Social representations could not be studied without a historical perspective (Wagner et al., 1999). Therefore, as humans participate in social interactions and cultural organized activities, these activities can be best understood in the cultural context and in their historical development under which they take place.

This study is an attempt to investigate parents' social representations of their children's schooling (*human psychological and cultural activity)* under the effect of socio-cultural changes, due to political and socio-economic transformations, due to migration and due to returning to home country (*cultural context and its historical development*). The approach predicts that Albanian nationals as non-emigrants, emigrants and returned emigrants will be influenced by the changes happening at the macro level resulting in them having different experiences of the education system.

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

This empirical study aims to explore the impact of socio-cultural change on parents' social representations of their children's schooling. The theoretical framework will be presented and described in Chapter (2). The study draws on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979), the Vygotskian (1978) notion of social and cultural mediation and Moscovici's (1973) notion of social representations. It will be informed by the cultural psychological approaches that view individual learning and development as involving mutual relationships between micro and macro socio-cultural settings. Parents' social representations will be investigated on the basis that the wider socio-cultural context plays a crucial role in understanding psychological phenomena.

The methodological Chapter (3) will expose the methodological approach and techniques used for the purpose of the study. The study made use of semi-structured interviews to explore the impact of socio-cultural changes on parents' social representations of their children's schooling. The interview schedules were identical for all groups. However, the last section differed according to their socio-cultural experiences. The schedule initiated by asking parents to tell their story of education and their meaning of education, following their views on the education of their children, and it also focused on

the way they approached and supported their children with schooling. For emigrant and returned emigrants, the schedule was finalized by asking parents to elaborate on their meaning of education abroad or when returned. The interviewing process was conducted in two stages. However, the three analytical chapters will incorporate the qualitative data from both stages. A snapshot of the analysis structure will also be presented.

The results from the field research will be presented and analysed in three empirical chapters through the use of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Chapter (4) will present results of the thematic analysis of parents' accounts of their own education. Chapter (5) will present results of parents' accounts of the socio-cultural changes referring to their experiences during political and socio-economic changes, migration and returning to homeland. The last empirical Chapter (6) will present parents' accounts of their children's schooling in three different socio-cultural settings. Each empirical chapter involves the presentation of main themes, an illustration of each theme by parents' extracts and a discussion of the main findings for each section.

The final Chapter (7) will discuss the empirical data presented in the analysis chapters with the intention of offering a deeper understanding as how Albanian parents' social representations of their children's education are being constructed under the influence of socio-cultural changes due to political and socio-economic transformations, due to migration and due to returning to home country. The chapter will also examine the theoretical and methodological implications and discuss recommendations for practice.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Background- Utilizing cultural developmental theories to understand the impact of change on parents' social representations of their children's schooling

"The central fact about our psychology is the fact of mediation"

(Vygotsky, 1982, p. 166)

2.1. Introduction: The relationship between macro socio-cultural and micro personal processes

Understanding the relationship between culture and the individual under the milieu of globalization is an issue, which has challenged cultural psychologists. The psychology of culture has its roots in the work of great theorists like Wundt (1871), Tylor (1871). However, the recognized contribution which shed light on the role of culture in human psychological functioning has recently become significant through the contribution of Moscovici (1973), Vygotsky (1978) and Bronfenbrenner, (1979), followed by more recent theoretical and empirical developments by scholars like Wertsch (1991), Cole, (1996), Valsiner (2000), Rogoff (2003), Howarth (2004) and Duveen (2007). Although there is evidence that culture as a macro-level of analysis influences the individual at a micro-level, there is limited psychological research that elaborates the way that changes at a macro-cultural level affect an individual's social representations of education through time of societal change.

The research reported in this thesis was informed by the cultural psychological approaches, which view individual learning and development as involving mutual relationships between micro and macro socio-cultural settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978; Moscovici, 1973). To gain in-depth insight into these relationships, three macro-settings that expose Albanian *non-*

emigrant, emigrant and *returned emigrant* parents to changes in educational practices were investigated. Respectively, the impact of changes due to political and social change after the fall of Communism in the Albanian education system, changes due to migration to a foreign country (i.e. United Kingdom), and changes due to returning to the home country (i.e. Albania) present the focus of this research study.

This chapter will initiate by clarifying few concepts used in this study. It will also discuss the key notions of these cultural psychological theories on the impact of changes at the macro socio-cultural level on micro personal processes. It will then elaborate the notion of social representation and its contribution when discussing the way psychological processes are influenced by those changes. Due to the dynamic nature of socio-cultural change, the significance of *time* will be discussed based on the assumption that "changes at the level of macro-time do not filter down to all microsystems at the same rate or with the same effect" (Elliot & Tudge, 2007, p. 98). Finally, the chapter will conclude with a discussion of the latest empirical evidence and indicate how that will inform the present study.

2.1.1. Clarifying key concepts

This research project aims at investigating parents' social representations situated in the socio-cultural context they live in. To understand the way parents construct social representations in different cultural contexts, the focus is to explore their meanings and experiences viewed as contextually driven components. Apart from clarifying how the study views each of the components, it becomes necessary that interrelated concepts such as *culture* and *context* are defined in coherence with the study's aim. Culture and context account for the theoretical foundation of the topic under research.

Drawing on a socio-cultural approach, the individual's mental functioning is related to cultural, institutional and historical context. This suggests that

psychological development is influenced by social interactions and culturally organized activities that the individual participates (Vygotsky, 1931, 1997). *Culture* can be understood as collective knowledge, experiences, beliefs and meaning (Marshall & Woollett, 2000). However, in the previous Chapter (1) concepts like experiences and meaning were attributed to social representations. Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand culture in the light of social representations as the two terms can be mistaken as synonymous.

Duveen (2007) discusses the conceptual challenge between culture and social representations. He views the relationship between the two concepts as referring to different levels of analysis. While social representations refer to how we as humans relate to a particular object, culture refers to wider network of social representations held together by one community in distinction from another community. For Duveen (2007), "social representations can be seen as particular cultural forms", suggesting that an analysis of social representations will take researchers to "the cultural context in which they take shape" (p. 545).

Following on Dewey's (1938) relational theory of cognition, whereby he defines situation as *context,* Cole went a step further and viewed context as both situation and environment that surrounds the activity in focus. He suggested that in the middle of the context is the human activity, which is being shaped by the levels of context that make up for the surroundings. Later on in this chapter, the ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that provides a clear view of the layers of context, will be presented and adapted for this study.

The social activity under investigation is Albanian parents' social representations of their children's schooling in different cultural contexts. Due to their diverse contexts, the study draws assumptions that their meanings and experiences would at some level differ or be similar. They might differ as their experiences take place in diverse socio-cultural contexts; however, they might be similar due to the overlapping experiences and due to the shared system of culture. Because meaning is embedded in their experiences influenced by

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change in different socio-cultural contexts, participants' social representations of their children's schooling will present a complex case. Later in this chapter, the notion of social representation will be discussed in the light of latest conceptual development.

2.2.   *Relevant theoretical notions*

In today's societies, on-going rapid macro changes inevitably affect individuals in their everyday activities. Research in the field of human development has shown an increasing interest in the interdependent relationship between social context and an individual's psychological processes, what is referred as person-context interrelatedness (Tudge, Gray & Hogan, 1997). Although there is a substantial body of research which explores this interdependent relationship at various cultural and cross-cultural levels of analysis, investigations revealing the impact of socio-cultural changes on the psychological processes of individuals from same cultural background going through political and socio-economic change and migratory experiences are still relatively sparse.

Considering the focus of this study, this section aims to set the theoretical framework by elaborating traditional notions in the field of human development from a cultural-historical perspective. The contribution of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory and Moscovici's notion on social representations will be presented and discussed.

2.2.1. Bronfenbrenner: Human development through ecological' lenses

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model presents a multi-level layer of analysis of human development and it is used to conceptualize interactions between macro-settings and micro-settings. The ecological nature of human

development involves the consideration of "mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives…" (p. 21). His theory reflects a two-directional relationship between the person and the context. The individual's immediate ecological environment is influenced by broader structures, in which the individual is not directly involved, but is influenced. In other words, the person is viewed as an active developing human being who interacts with his immediate environment.

According to Elliot and Tudge (2007), Bronfenbrenner's theory explains precisely:

> "What occurs at the level of everyday interactions is influenced both by what the individuals concerned bring to the situation and by the context, where context includes both the nature of the particular school classroom (microsystem), the specific macrosystem in which the school is situated (depending on social class, ethnicity, or religion), and what is occurring in the society at large (overarching macrosystem)"
> (Elliot & Tudge, 2007, p. 107)

This definition suggests that different societies share different macro systems, and that different groups within that society share different values and beliefs. Thus, different groups are located on the macro system they live/d in and the micro systems in which they choose to participate (school, friends, home, family, everyday interactions).

To explain his ecological model, Bronfenbrenner positions the individual at the micro level surrounded by other interacting structures, respectively *meso, exo* and *macro* levels (see Figure, 2.1).
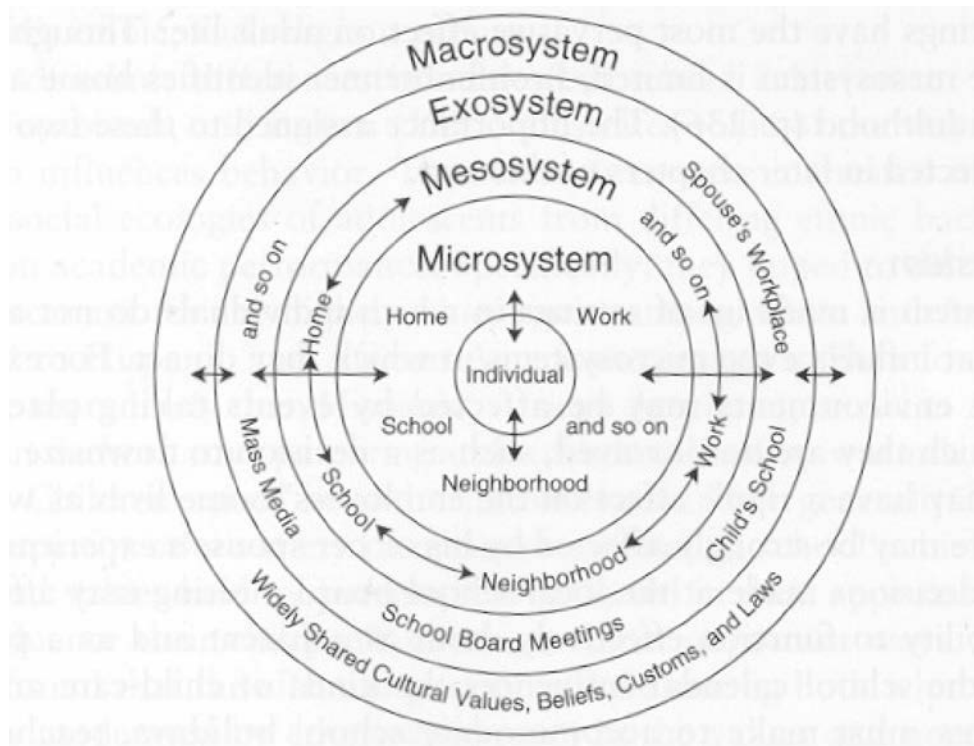
Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of his ecological system's theory, (*Source:* Adapted from Matlin, 2008).

The *microsystem* is at the centre of the model where the individual is situated. For Bronfenbrenner (1979), "the microsystem is a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics" (p. 22). This structure is where the individual is situated engaging in the everyday *activities* (i.e. at home, at work or other social context), *roles* (i.e. as a child, a parent, a wife) and in *interpersonal relations* (i.e. child-parent, parent-neighbour).

The immediate environment next to where the individual is situated is the *mesosystem*. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines "a mesosystem as the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates…and it is formed or extended whenever the developing person moves into a new setting" (p. 25). In other words, the mesosystem represents the link between microsystems, such as for a parent, the relation between home

and work, or between family and other social agents, and so on. The ability to interrelate the micro environment that one actively participates is important for the developing person.

The next ecological environment that does not influence the individual directly, but nevertheless affects him/her, is the *exosystem*. It refers to "one or more settings that do not involve the person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person" (p. 25). As Swick and Williams (2006) put it "we live in systems psychologically not physically; these are exosystems" (p. 372). For example, an individual could be physically at a social event, but psychologically could be thinking or concerned about the partner's day at work or the child's day at school.

The system that entails what occurs in the exosystem and that affects the individual through the mesosystem is the larger ecological *macrosystem*, which "from a sociological point of view is the most important layer of context" (Tudge & Hogan, 2005, p. 105). The macrosystem refers to "consistencies, in the form and content of lower-order systems (micro-, meso-, and exo-) that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.26). More so, Bronfenbrenner (2005) believed that the macrosystem where individuals live in influences what, how, when and where they carry out their relations. He explains that the influence includes "any group- culture, subculture, or other extended social structure, whose members share values or belief systems- resources, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options and patterns of social interchange" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25). For instance, political and economic changes from a totalitarian communist regime to pluralism in the former Soviet Union (end of 1990s) meant that countries in the Central and Eastern Europe went through radical macro changes. Due to the changes at the political and economic spheres, societies were socially and culturally transformed.

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Bronfenbrenner's (1989) perspective stressed the consideration of the historical context as it occurs in different systems aiming to frame the dynamics of families (chronosystem) and that put an emphasis on the significance of time. As Ford and Lerner (1992) state, "the history of relationships in families may explain more about parent-child relations than is evident in existing dynamics" (cited in Swick & Williams, 2006, p. 373). This suggests that the effect of historical influences on the macro-systems will impact family functioning.

Greenfield (2009) criticizes Bronfenbrenner ecological theory for being descriptive and suggests the theory of social change and human development, which "leads to specific predictions about behavioural adaptations to environmental conditions" (p. 413). Although, Greenfield's perspective allows the researcher to take into account shifts in socio-demographic changes when examining human psychological functioning, it provides a framework to "predict behavioural adaptations to environmental conditions" (p. 413). The focus of our study is not to predict parents' behaviours, but rather, to explore the dynamic of constructing social representations of their children as learners under the impact of socio-cultural changes.

The theory of human development and the macro, meso and micro systems proposed by Bronfenbrenner are incorporated in the present study. When the communist regime fell in Albania (1990s), the country underwent transformations at various political and socioeconomic (macro system) spheres in the society. After the fall, from an isolated country where people could not travel abroad or were allowed to be visited from abroad, Albania experienced great flows of internal and external migration. The country's governing bodies at the macrosystem changed their policies (i.e. from totalitarian into pluralism) which resulted in institutions (mesosystem) changing their practices (i.e. due to reforms the education system changed). Thus, individuals situated in their microsystem were also influenced. In similar ways, people who migrated also faced changes in the process of settling in the host countries, which were run by

different governmental policies. The migrating individual is constantly under the pressures of the new macro system which eventually filters down to the everyday activities (micro system), through the existence of significant agents in the exosystem and mesosytem (i.e. workplace, schools).

As previously stated, the targeted active individuals in this study are the parents in the status of *non-emigrants* (i.e. Albanian parents living in Albania during the transition), as *emigrants* (i.e. Albanian parents migrated and living in the United Kingdom), and as *returned emigrants* (i.e. parents returned in Albania after having migrated abroad). Situated in their diverse micro social context, these parents' meanings and experiences with education are the focus of this investigation. Because these parents have experienced different macro changes due to their socio-cultural status, it is expected that their social representations would be constructed differently. Relevant for this research are the changes in the education system influenced by the macro socio-cultural changes. As parents experience changing education systems, we can predict that the changes will eventually filter down to the way they approach their children's education.

For instance, parents' past experiences with their own pre-university education may reveal similar patterns as they all lived under the same macro political and socio-economic system (i.e. dictatorship, fall of the Communist regime, start of political and economic instability after the fall). After the fall of the regime, it was by their choice that they experienced different micro-contexts. During the communist regime in Albania, very few families were allowed to receive higher education, with many more encouraged to have a minimum level of education, and with some people never been offered the chance to continue higher education, like in the case of persecuted families[3]. Nevertheless, upon the fall of the regime, the system changed allowing many individuals who were eager to be involved in education to enrol and embrace an opportunity that was not available for them before. An analysis of the historical context (chronosystem)

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[3] *Persecuted families:* Families who have had at least one member who suffered all or part of the pronounced sentence of an unjust criminal punishment, and whose members were also sent to internment camps between 1944 and 1991.

of the individuals' past whilst investigating psychological phenomena offers great understanding of the meaning of their experiences.

During post-communist era, non-emigrants remained in the country directly facing the political and economic instability, which influenced the country's development in various angles, especially the education system. The individuals who migrated abroad, did not experience the actual changes; however whilst settling in various European countries abroad they faced changes due to a different macro system in the receiving countries, which filter through the in-between systems and influenced their everyday activities. Similarly, returned emigrants also chose to migrate abroad, but with time, they returned to their homeland embracing the changed everyday activities due to the changes, which had occurred in the Albanian macro system during their time abroad. For instance, prior to the fall of the former regime, the education system was known to be public funded by the state. After the collapse of the regime, the new political governing bodies (macrosystem) allowed the emergence of private education (schools, individual courses, etc.), giving parents other alternatives in the process of enrolling their children in education.

This study takes into account the macro political and socio-economic changes, changes due to migration and due to returning to home country on the parent-individual and their representations of children's schooling process. It would be naive not to consider that the effects of changes at the macro context on the micro personal level would not influence parents' meanings and experiences, their ideas, views and actions- their social-representations- in relations to their children's schooling, which can ultimately contribute to a better understanding of their children's development and learning. Their approach is expected to vary according to their experiences in the micro level which account for how they represent the changes at the macro socio-cultural context.

Taking under consideration Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development, the picture below represents a visualised version of the model for the purpose of this study (see Figure, 2.2.).
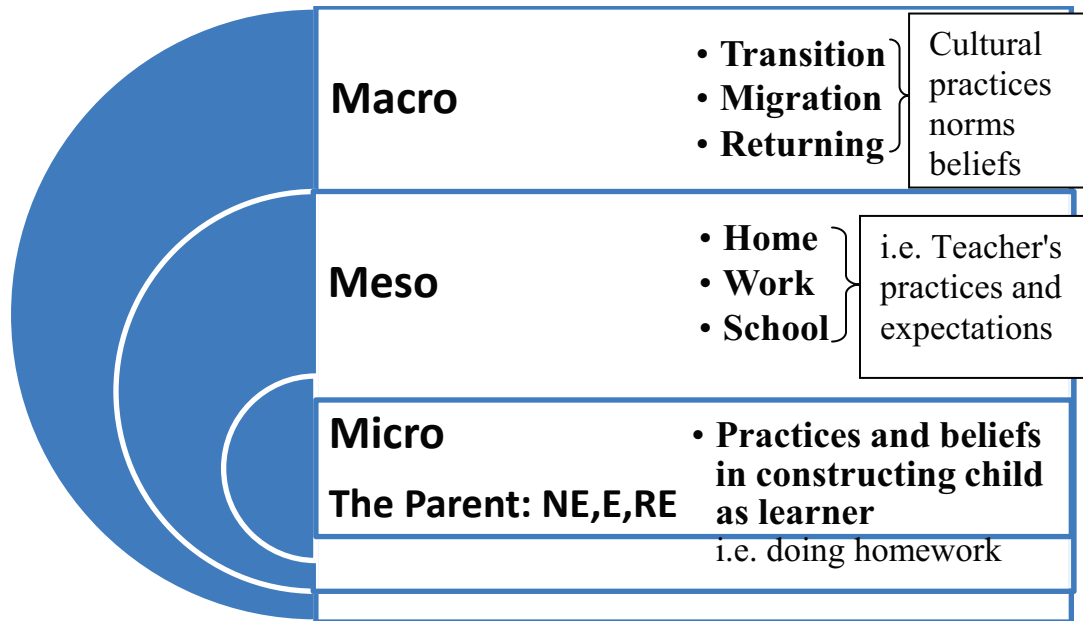
Figure 2.2: A visualised diagram of *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model* showing the Macro system, the Meso system and the Micro system where the parent-individual is situated as Non-emigrant, Emigrant and Returned emigrant.

As designed in Figure 2.2, the microsystem represents the individual and the socio-cultural status (i.e. non-emigrant, emigrant or returned emigrant parent in relation to their children's schooling). The parents' engagement between the microsystems (i.e. home, work, child's school) is what makes the mesosystem (i.e. in their effort as a parent helping their child with homework, teacher's expectations are taken into account). The larger system, macrosystem, will differ for each socio-cultural group (i.e. Albanian non-emigrants will be under the effects of changes due to political and economic instability in Albania; emigrant parents will be following the British education system and practices and so on).

Bronfenbrenner's perspective does not present the influence of the macro system as more superior than the micro. His focus is on the person, the

surrounding environment, and the continuous interaction of the two, which develops both components. It is also crucial to clarify that this relationship is not direct, but other layers, levels of analysis are in between. In his work, Bronfenbrenner does not clarify the process under which the social context influences the individual, but gives a "descriptive level of theory" (Greenfield, 2009, p. 413). For this purpose, Vygotsky's notion of social and cultural mediation was adapted.

2.2.2. Vygotsky´s notion of social and cultural mediation

Human development through levels of history

In his work, Vygotsky did not focus on the *product* of development, but rather on the *process* by which development takes place. He elaborated that development should be viewed in two parallel lines- at first, development as an organic and maturation process, and secondly, development as a process of the cultural growth of behaviour (Wertsch, 1985). Vygotsky explained that "human activities take place in cultural contexts, are mediated by language and other symbol systems, and can be investigated in their historical development" (cited in John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 192). In his approach, social and cultural mediation propose that individual behaviour cannot be understood away from the socially driven context in which it is occurring. Thus, psychological functioning, including social representations, should always be studied in a cultural-historical context.

Vygotsky (1985) inspected human developmental activity in a context of cultural setting as being specifically located within the temporal dimension with different time scale. He believed that to understand psychological functioning one must investigate other levels of development. He defined *phylogenetic* development as the development of human species over evolutionary time; *ontogenetic* development as the development of an individual over his or her

lifetime; *microgenesis* development as changes that occur much more quickly than changes in the ontogeny; and historical or *socio-historical* development as changes that have occurred in one's culture (see Wertsch, 1985b).

Vygotsky's work was carried out by Scribner (1985, 1997) who viewed his work as an effort to bring together three layers of history- general history, child's history and the history of mental functions. Scribner (1985) criticized Vygotsky for not including the full range of how the phenomenon moves on the level of either general history or individual history. Instead, Vygotsky's general history appears "as a single unidirectional course of socio-cultural change" (Scribner, 1985, p. 259). Scribner suggested that general history can be viewed as a process that "informs us of the genesis of specifically human forms of behaviour and their changing structures and functions in the past" (p. 250).

Furthermore, Scribner argued that Vygotskian framework needs to take into consideration the fact that societies and cultural groups engage in world history at different times and in different ways. Therefore, she proposed an expanded version of the framework, which incorporated a fourth level of history- the history of individual societies. She also replaced the child's history with life history, which aimed at expanding to a life span perspective (see Figure 2.3).
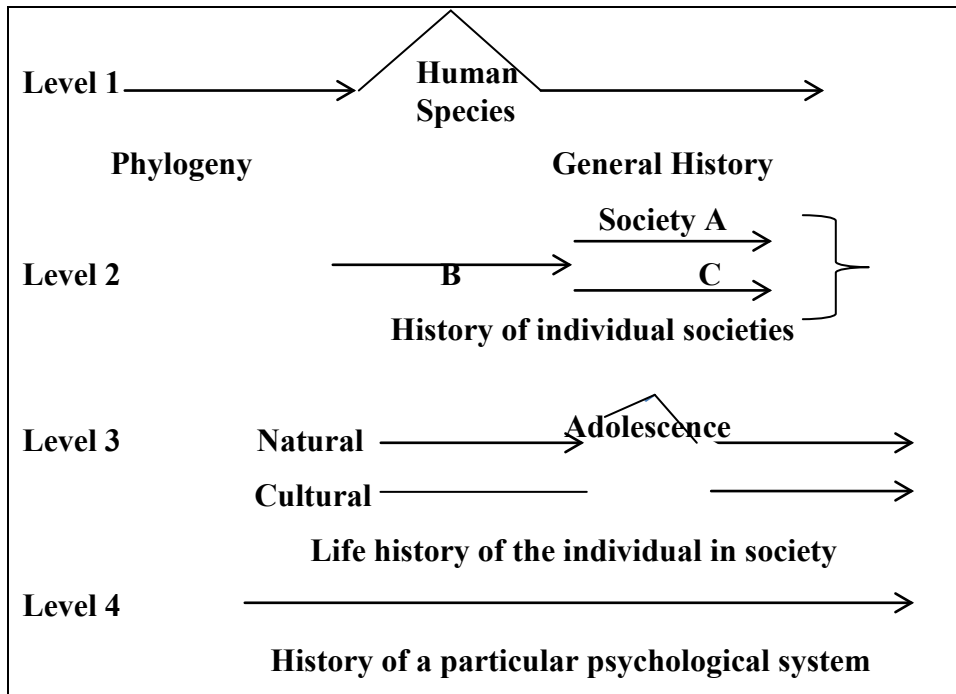
Figure 2.3: Vygotsky's levels of history - A modified version
(Source: Adapted from Scribner, 1985, p. 261).

Scribner reviewed Vygotsky's three levels model into four levels of history, which she conceptualised not as static, but rather moving and changing: (1) the general history of humanity, (2) the history of individual societies, (3) the life history of the individual in society, and (4) the history of a particular psychological system (see Dien, 2000).

Viewing individuals' psychological processes from Vygotsky/Scribner's framework of history's levels, the proposed layers are adapted to portray the historical root of Albanian history, Albanian societies under the influence of changes, the history of the socio-cultural groups and the psychological phenomena under study. The general history of human species is viewed as level one of the framework. The history of Albanian people from Albania (i.e. not Albanians from Kosovo, Macedonia or Montenegro) living in the Balkan Peninsula and going through radical political and socio-economic changes, could be seen as level 2 of the phenomenon. During these changes some

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remained in the country (non-emigrants), some migrated to host socio-cultural contexts (emigrants), and some others migrated and returned to home culture (returned emigrants), which can be seen as the history of the individuals in the society, level 3. This study aims at exploring the impact of socio-cultural change (level 2 and 3) on individuals' psychological processes, such as social representations (level 4).

Now that the history layers that chronologically, allow us to identify the route between the macro cultural context and the micro psychological self, the question with which Vygotsky was occupied arises: "*how*" this process is mediated.

Mediation

The Vygotskian notion that processes of social and cultural mediation are central to understanding psychological functioning is adapted for this study. He viewed development as the process which transforms the socially shared activities into internalized processes, referring to it *internalization*. His ideas shed light on the process of enculturation which suggested that "ideas and practices that are located outside a person become internalized into the person's mind and body through his or her participation in meaningful (i.e. authentic) cultural activities using psychological tools (i.e. language)" (see Kashima & Gelfand, 2011).

Semiotic mediation (see Figure 2.4) emphasized the idea that knowledge is not internalized directly, but that it is co-constructed through the use of psychological tools. He viewed cultural development in two respects: first in the social, later in the psychological. As a mechanism, "semiotic means mediates social and individual functioning, and connects the external and the internal, the social and the individual" (see Wertsch & Stone, 1985).

Mediational Means

Tools & Signs

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Subject (s)   **Object/Motive-> Outcome (s)**
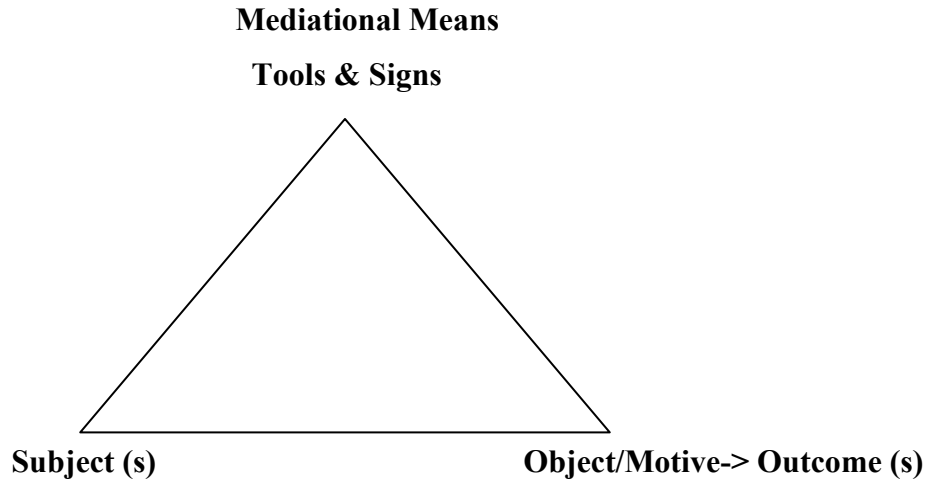
Figure 2.4: Semiotic mediation **(**Source: Adapted from Cole, 1996, p. 119).

By semiotic means Vygotsky (1981) included "language; various systems of counting; mnemonic techniques; algebraic symbol systems; works of art; writing; schemes, diagrams, maps and mechanical drawings; all sorts of conventional signs and so on" (p.137). Moreover, "tools recognized in socio-cultural discourse (the paintbrush, the computer, calendars, and symbol systems) are central to the appropriation of knowledge through representational activity by the developing individual" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 193).

Vygotsky did not view the individual as an isolated being, but as progressively evolving by means of cultural mediation. In other words, this process does not position the individual as isolated, but as an agent who produces psychological tools, due to the individual's participation in socio-cultural activities in his community. Wertsch describes mediation as:

> "The key in his approach to understanding how human mental functioning is tied to cultural, institutional, and historical settings since these settings shape and provide the cultural tools that are mastered by individuals to form this functioning. In this approach, the mediational means are what might be termed the "carriers" of sociocultural patterns   and knowledge"
>
> (Wertsch, 1994, p. 204)

Vygotsky's notion of mediation was developed by Michael Cole (1996), who also believed that cultural psychology is context driven. Human context made of both individual's cultural-historical past and capacity to foresee the future is the core in Cole's perspective to cultural psychology. In this perspective, context consists of cultural artefacts, viewed as elements of culture.. Cole expands Vygotskian idea of cultural tools to a larger concept (artefacts). Similar to Dewey, Cole (1996) defined artefacts as "an aspect of the material world that has been modified over the history of its incorporation into goal-directed human action" (p. 117). Artefacts are produced by humans and their activities that have occurred in the past. They include language as materialized in speech and writing, technological tools that carry the information about the makers' intended use. Artefacts also shape people's interpersonal activities, which, when internalized, become intrapersonal psychological processes. They are used by people or groups for various purposes and they shape the way individuals interact and understand the world (Säljö, 2000). Furthermore, Cole viewed cultural artefacts as mediating devices, which enable humans to develop skills and abilities, but perhaps to also constrain their development, as they are responsible for channelling their activities in certain directions rather than others. The relationship between subject and object is not directional because culture mediates future, as projected in Figure 2.4.

Following on Bronfennbrener's concept on the impact of macro context on individual's processes occurring on the micro context, Vygotsky's notion of socio-cultural mediation was adapted to help us understand the process by which individuals evolve in their social and cultural context. Through the use of semiotic means, changes occurring at the external or the social context (macro level) will filter to the internal or the individual (micro level) and his/her understanding about the changes. In this study, changes occurring to the macro level (i.e. political and socio-economic transition after the fall of Communism) will filter to parents' construction of representations (i.e. in relation to their children's schooling) through the use of the semiotic means (i.e. tools and signs), which are meaningful according to their experiences.

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Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky showed particular interest in the ontogeny of enculturation, especially the notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), suggesting that a child can learn with the assistance of an adult within a certain zone of activity, which helps the child to learn the required skills. In his book[4], Vygotsky (1978) argued that ZPD "presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (p. 88). Even though the notion of ZPD is often discussed within the context of child development and education, Kashima and Gelfand (2011) suggest that it can also be applied to adult learning. Furthermore, Vygotsky's contribution on the Zone of Proximal Development suggests that children's development is dependent on that social process which is mediated by culture and is guided by the parents.

Parents participating in this study have experienced the communist regime and have similar educational backgrounds. However, after the fall of the regime, their macro context changed. Some parents remained in Albania and experienced the transformations due to the political and socio-economic instability; some others migrated abroad, whereas other parents returned to Albania after experiencing migration. This reflection suggests that, although these parents come from similar national and cultural backgrounds, their socio-cultural experiences are different depending on the changes at the macro context, which further suggests that they will guide their children's learning process differently depending on the context.

Various authors (Lantof, 2002; Wertsch, 1984, 1985; Shayer, 2002) have attempted to expand Vygotsky's notion of ZPD. They claimed that the notion offers an understanding of the actual level of development but it does not measure the potential of the child. In this work, Wertsch (1984) introduced the

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[4] L.S. Vygotsky, (1978). Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes

'explanatory concepts' for ZPD, being *definition of situation*, *negotiation*, *intersubjectivity* and *semiotic mediation*. By situation, he refers to the way individuals represent (themselves) the activity or setting in which they are engaged. The situation is not a stable entity, but rather a process, which is constructed continuously by the individuals involved. At times, the individuals involved may not understand the task the same way, which leads to the need for negotiation. In their interaction, when a child and an adult define the task differently, they need to negotiate the meaning of what they are actually doing. Whilst negotiating, individuals come up with an agreement on task definition, what Wertsch defined as intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity is the process when the child and adult rename objects and redefine their goals. This interaction is made possible through semiotic mediation, language and gestures. Adults are invited to adjust the way they present their task in variance to child's behaviour.

The Zone of Proximal Development is helpful to understand parent-child interaction, especially in everyday mathematics (Guberman, 1995). Even though this thesis will not present data of this dynamic social and cultural interaction, ZPD offers an understanding of the underlying processes of parents' participation in their children's schooling and study hour.

2.2.3. Moscovici: Social representations as mediators

Social representation theory was first formulated by Serge Moscovici, inspired by Durkheim's theory of collective representations. It holds the idea that psychological processes are embedded in the macro cultural-historical context. Similar to Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner, social representation as a theory aims to show how the everyday interaction of individuals (micro) and their communicative dynamics result in the emergence of shared patterns of beliefs, values and practices (macro), among members of the same community, over time and space. He described social representations as:

"Systems of values, ideas and practices with a two-fold function; first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orientate themselves in their material and social world and to master it; secondly, to enable communication to take place amongst members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history"

(Moscovici, 1973, p. xiii)

In this definition, social representations are viewed as a shared knowledge between individuals in a society, which is communicated between its members through a code of understanding. The purpose of social representations is making what is unfamiliar familiar (Moscovici, 1984). According to Jodelet (1991), social representations are "images that condense manifold meanings that allow people to interpret what is happening; categories which serve to classify circumstances, phenomena and individuals with whom we deal, theories which permit us to establish facts about them". This perspective of social representations can be applied in this study as parents elaborate their meanings and experiences in relation to their children's schooling. For example, parents will interpret how they approach their children as learners based on their image of what counts as a learner, or they will interpret who is a good teacher for their child based on their image of what counts as a good teacher.

In addition, Moscovici believed that social representations are concerned with our everyday experiences and views and claimed that social representations deal with:

"[…] the contents of everyday thinking and the stock of ideas that give coherence to our religious beliefs, political ideas and the connections we create as spontaneously as we breathe. They make it possible for us to classify persons and objects, to compare and explain behaviours and to objectify them as part of our social setting"

(Moscovici, 1988, p. 214)

In his views, Moscovici evaluated social representations as mediators by which the unfamiliar objects, subjects or events could become familiar, through two main processes: *Anchoring* and *Objectification*. By anchoring the individual is able to give meaning to a new phenomenon - objects, relations, experiences, practices, etc. - by relating that phenomenon to a more familiar concept. "For the group to come to a basic understanding of the unfamiliar phenomenon, it is essential to name it and to attribute characteristics, which will allow the phenomenon to be communicated and talked about" (Wagner et al., 1999, p. 97). In the process of objectification, an abstract concept is given a more concrete meaning, turning the abstract into what is real. This second process can be viewed as an attempt to develop own interpretation of the unfamiliar and give it a specific form. On one hand, social representations can serve as mediators that bring out meaning, and on the other hand, they can influence our actions and behaviours in relation to others in a specific cultural context. What is noted in these processes is that the meaning is not a fixed and defined entity, but as created through a system of social negotiation.

Drawing on the recent development of Moscovici's theory, research on social representations has focused on the consequential nature and the effect of representations on identity construction. In her continuous effort to study social representations, Howarth (2002) argues that different representations relate, defend or challenge different social identities suggesting, "they have social effects, support (unequal) social relations and maintain ideological discourses" (Sammut & Howarth, 2013). Therefore, social representations are consequential.

Other scholars have shown concern with the relationship between knowledge and practice or action (Markova, 2000). As Jodelet (1991) elaborated, representations are socially transmitted, shared and built through experiences, knowledge, and ways of thinking that can be "out there" or learned and they can be "used for acting in the world and on others" (p. 44), but also for re-acting, rejecting and reforming a presentation of the world that conflicts with one's stake, position and identity. Despite the fact that they are shared, that does not

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mean that all members agree with everyone's reality. Because social interaction has fragmentation and contradiction (Chryssides, Dashtipour, Keshet, Righi, Sammut & Sartawi, 2009), social representations are not consensual (Rose, Efraim, Gervais, Joffe, Jovchelovitch & Morant, 1995). They allow individuals to maintain agency and resistance because "representations become a potential space for meanings to be contested, negated and transformed" (Howarth, 2006, p. 23). This idea suggests that as changes at macro level will filter down to the individual level via institutions it does not predict that everyone will embrace change. Representations allow individuals to resist despite their ability to understand other's standpoint. Even the ones that will embrace change, they might not do so at the same time. In any case, their action and practice will constitute this embracement.

The current study examined parents' social representations of their children's schooling on the assumption that social representations work to code the reality by "carrying traces and echoes of our individual and collective histories" (Howarth, 2006). At the same time they work to allow the individual to make sense of the unfamiliar and have an effect on our actions. Social representations allow the connection between the macro-cultural settings and the individual's micro-setting, which includes their expectations for the future. In this attempt to investigate social representations, Albanian parents' meanings and experiences influenced by change due to different socio-cultural macro contexts will be explored.

2.3. Significance of time: Thinking over past, present and future to mediate social representations

Consistent with the elaborated theories which emphasized the cultural-historical perspective of human development, this section focuses on the significance of *time* as an important unit to deepen our understanding on the psychological

processes that individuals experience under the influences of macro changes. As previously presented, this study takes under consideration time based on Elliot and Tudge's (2007) suggestion that macro changes do not filter down to microsystems at the same rate. Authors like Bronfenbrenner and Cole have drawn their attention on the interrelatedness between external social context and the individual; however, it is yet not clear how time is related to the process under which individuals are being influenced by changes occurring in the systems beyond their reaching.

2.3.1. Bronfenbrenner: PPCT model

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model was further revised stressing his concern with processes of human development (1995, 1998, 1999, 2001, and 2005). The revised version of his theory introduced the new *PPCT model*, which stands for Process-Person-Context-Time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p. 996). Of these, the processes- *proximal processes*- take place in the microsystem, where the individual is situated. As Elliot and Tudge (2007) put it, "the proximal processes are the core of his theory" (p. 95).

Bronfenbrenner (1995) described the processes as "engines of development" (p. 620) because interactions between "an active evolving bio psychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate environment take place" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 6). In his views, the individuals develop whilst engaged in these everyday interactions and activities, which then allow them to make sense of their world, understand their place in it, and change their world. In addition, "to be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time..." (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p. 994). However, he explains that proximal processes are dependent on the person and the context- both spatial and temporal:

"The form, power, content, and direction of proximal processes effecting the development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the *developing person*; of the *environment*- both immediate and more remote- in which the processes are taking place; the nature of the *developmental outcomes* under consideration; and the social continuities and changes occurring over *time* through the life course and the historical period during which the person has lived"

(Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p. 996, italics in original)

In this definition, the nature of proximal processes further defines the interrelatedness between the person and its context; more so, it stresses the significance of time in social continuities and the changes happening during the life of an individual.

Person. Although Bronfenbrenner (1993; 1995) emphasized the "biological and genetic aspects of the person" his attention was drawn to the characteristics that the person brings with them in a social situation (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The personal characteristics of the person were divided into *demand* (i.e. age, gender, skin colour and physical appearance); *mental and emotional resources* (i.e. past experiences, skills and intelligence), and *material resources* (i.e. access to good food, housing, caring parents, educational opportunities); *force* (i.e. temperament, motivation, persistence, and so on). He clarified that although two individuals could have equal resources, if the forces are different, (i.e. when one is motivated less or more than the other is) the outcome would be different.

Context. Bronfenbrenner's idea of what constitute the context is illustrated in his ecological model of human development, as previously discussed in this chapter (Section 2.2). In the previous section, the way by which the external systems (macro-, exo-, meso-) could have an impact on the individual (micro-) was elaborate. The PPCT model is an updated version of Bronfenbrenner's theory in which the interrelated systems make up for the context in the PPCT

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model. As Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield and Karnik (2009) put it, "a particular cultural group may share a set of values, but for any particular value system to have any influence on a developing person it has to be experienced within one or more of the microsystems in which that person is situated" (p. 201). In relation to processes, the context has the ability to influence proximal processes, which happen between different micro systems (mesosystem; i.e. home and work) and to influence the exosystem (i.e. home and children's school).

Time. Time is an important aspect of the PPCT model. Similar to the division of context into systems, time is also subdivided into factors. According to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998), they divided time into micro-time, meso-time and macro-time. As previously elaborated, the macro-time what Bronfenbrenner refers to as the chronosystem, which stresses the idea that processes will depend on the historical events that are happening as the individual develops in the course of age. For instance, all parents participating in the project had experienced being educated under communist regime; however, some parents had experienced primary school and some others had experienced primary and secondary education, and so on. Their understanding of the impact of the previous regime was developed in, what Elder (1974, 1996) called, two different "cohorts". The second, subdivision of time is the meso-time, "the extent to which activities and interactions occur with some consistency in the developing person's environment" (cited in Tudge et al., 2009, p. 201). The changes occurring at the macro-level, can affect institutions that the developing individual is engaged or in activity with. For instance, when the communist regime fell in Albania, the political changes were followed by changes in the education system. Whilst during Communism children could only attend public education, after the fall private schools emerged. Finally, the micro-time is the time under which activities are occurring (i.e. the time when parents help their children with homework).

Drawing on the PPCT model, depending on their socio-cultural context and status (non-emigrant, emigrant or returned emigrant) parents in this study will

experience different proximal processes in various time scales. Based on this assumption, the diverse nature of the macro context and the changes occurring at the macro level of analysis will affect parents' educational practises with their children.

2.3.2. Michael Cole: Prolepsis

In addition to Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, Michael Cole's (1996) contribution (inspired by Vygotsky) on the significance of time in socio-cultural settings is explained in the concept of *prolepsis.* In his book, *Cultural Psycholopy: A once and future discipline*, Michael Cole (1996) describes prolepsis as that cultural mechanism that brings "the end into the beginning" or "the co-existence of the past and a perceived future in the present" (p. 183). According to the Webster dictionary, prolepsis is "the representation of a future act or development as being presently existing and accomplished". Cole argue that, "when individuals use information deriving from their cultural past and assuming cultural continuity, parents project a probable future for the child" (p. 184).

In his model, he explains how adults are able to perform such culturally driven tasks (see Figure 2.4). He clarifies that the horizontal lines starting from the top represent time scales which correspond to the history of universe, then the history of life on earth (phylogeny), further down the history of human beings on earth (cultural-historical time), the life of the individual (ontogeny), and the history of each lived experience (microgenesis). On the other hand, the vertical one represents the event of a child's birth. Cole further explains that through arrow *1* (one) the mother reflects on her remembered cultural past, then to *2* (two) the imagined cultural future of the child, and back to *3* (three) the present adult behaviour and treatment of the child. This cultural reflection structures the child's experience, which Cole believed would be consistent with what they (i.e. parents, key adults) imagine to be the identity of the child in the future.
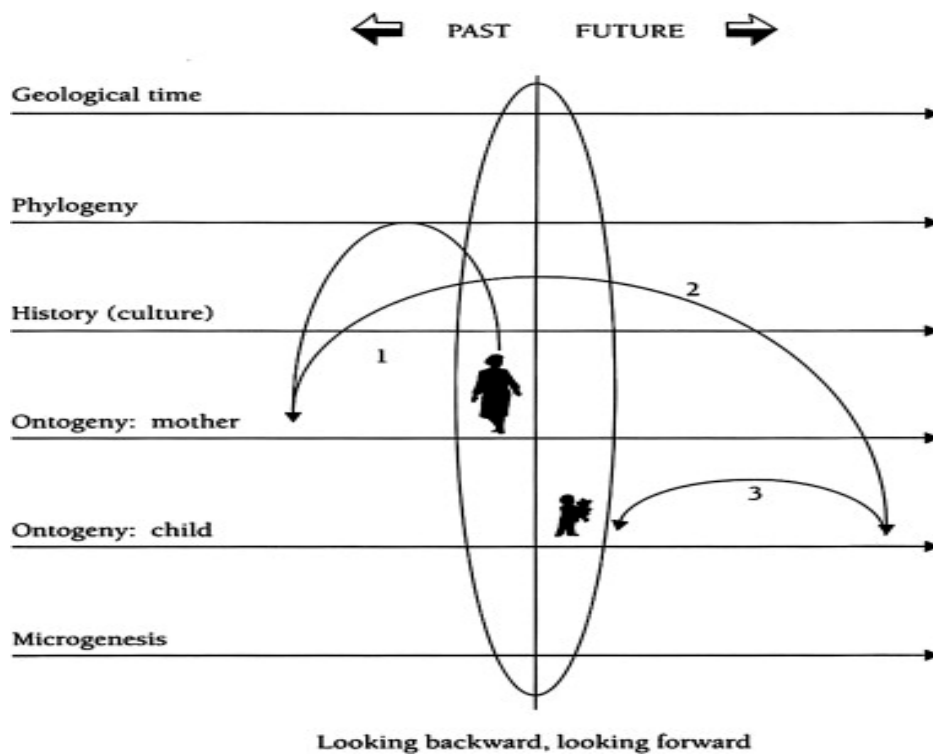
Figure 2.5: Visualizing Prolepsis. (Source: Adapted from Cole, 1996, p. 185)

Cole's concept of prolepsis is adapted to explore parents' social representations of their children's schooling. Based on this model, it is expected that parents will approach their children's schooling (constructing social representations) by reflecting on their past cultural experiences with education (i.e. own education, their own parents' involvement, school system during Communism, etc.) and by projecting the imagined future for their children (i.e. hopes and goals for future academic identity).

2.4. Empirical evidence

This section of the theoretical background will present a review of a small number of studies that examined the impact of socio-cultural changes on individuals. In particular, studies that looked at individuals' collective memories during Communist regime, at the effect of societal change on education

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institutions and on parents' views, experiences and practices in relation to their children's development and learning will be presented. Psychological research on the ways that parents mediate their children's learning and development in situations of societal change is still scarce (Howarth, 2004). Yet understanding parents' social representations is of crucial importance as they play a key role in their children's education. Drawing on the contribution of the core theorists for this study, Bronfenbrenner, Vygotsky and Moscovici, various authors in the field of cultural human development have shown great interest to adapt these author's notions in their attempts to conduct empirical research.

The influence of past recollections on everyday activities has been elaborated by various authors (Halbwachs, 1980; Wertsch 1998, 2002, 2008; Murakami, 2001; Murakami & Middleton, 2006). Drawing on Halbwachs' notion of collective memory, Wertsch examined the way individuals make use of cultural tools that mediate the act of remembering. His focus was on the interaction of social actors and cultural tools in a particular social context. In specific, Wertsch (2000, 2008) analysed narrative templates about the Russian Civil War (1918-1920) and World War II, and the way narratives were produced by different generations of Russians. The findings deriving from a content analysis of the collected narratives suggest that *specific narrative* (i.e. information about dates, places, actors, and so forth) and *schematic narrative* templates (i.e. abstract forms of narrative representations that shape specific narratives) shape collective memory and serve as tools used to organize and reconstruct an account of the past in practices of collective remembering. By collective remembering Wertsch refers to a mediated action, which implies an interaction between social actors and cultural tools. This study began by inviting parents to recount their story of education. It would be interesting to explore the way they gave meaning to their experiences.

Research conducted in countries led by a communist regime and moving to a different political and socio-economic system reflects on the impact of

historical and cultural change on psychological concepts linked to education. In their paper, Elliot and Tudge (2007) elaborate Bronfenbrenner's ecological model specifying the impact of western influences (macro system) upon the Russian education system (micro) and how the educational institutions deal with effects and deficits. In particular, they illustrate Bronfenbrenner's idea (1995) that an individual's development is "embedded in and powerfully shaped by conditions and events occurring during the historical period through which the person lives" (p. 641). In their elaboration, two conclusions are offered. First, changes occurring at macro context do not filter down the micro processes at a speedy rate due to the influence of old cultural patterns of activities. Secondly, although individuals (i.e. teachers) are influenced by the changes, there is evidence that suggests that, "teachers who have participated in particular proximal processes for many years, should be expected to be more resistant to the change than are their students" (p.107). As the authors explained, certain practices and ideas about education, which are developed in countries with different practices, cannot be easily imported. The conclusions suggest that people's ideas and beliefs about education developed in cultures can be imported; however, the ideas and beliefs held by an older generation will remain more resistant than for people from a younger generation under the influence of socio-cultural changes. Even though their study focused on teachers, it is expected that under the influence of the socio-cultural changes (i.e. due to political and socio-economic changes, due to migration and due to returning), ideas and beliefs about education will not filter down quickly to everyday micro processes of the parents. The study predicts that some parents could remain more resistant to the perceived changes than some others could. For example, parents with migratory experiences could show resistance to foreign educational practices, returned emigrants could embrace changes occurring in the Albanian education system if those are congruent with practices they have experienced abroad, and so on.

In addition, Popova (2003) in her study discusses the ways the concepts and practices of preparation for employment in Russian schools have been influenced by cultural and historical change. Popova discusses the views of

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teachers and students to reflect on the "ideological changes in teaching and learning that lead to problems of career development" (p.325). Through an investigation of 30 teachers who belonged to three different pedagogical generations but worked in the same institution, it focused on ideological changes in teaching and learning in the post-Soviet transitional stage in Russia, whilst preparing their students for employment in schools. The analysis examined that teachers' pedagogical identities constructed before and after the collapse of the regime (i.e. teachers who started their career in three different decades, in 1970s, 1980s and 1990s), were mixed within the same school. As Popova argues, "despite numerous attempts to change policies in post-Soviet Russia institutional transformations happen very slowly" (p. 341). The findings raise questions about changes in the way teachers prepare students for employment at schools. Although this study excludes the role of parents in the education process of children, it shows the way socio-cultural change influences educators (i.e. teachers, parents) in the process of educating the young generation. Two interesting findings can be used for the current study: First, societal changes do not filer down quickly to the institutional level, as it is a process that takes time. Secondly, educators' approach to development is driven from their past experiences. These conclusions inform and contribute in the current study.

Parents' childrearing values and beliefs have also been acknowledged to play a significant role in children's development. Goodnow (1988) drew on a developmental and social psychology approach to examine parents' ideas, actions and feelings and their role on the impact of the development of the next generation. The theoretical paper focused on the likelihood of change and perseverance of ideas; the source of ideas, mainly construction from individual experiences or cultural scripts; and it elaborated on the link between ideas and actions, ideas and feelings. The author concluded that ideas parents hold do relate to their children's behaviours. As parents are constantly faced with

changes, ideas are not static and develop over time (Goodnow, Cashmore, Cotton & Knight, 1984).

Following on Goodnow's note, migratory experiences can be taken into account to give an understanding of the *sojourners'* proximal processes under the effect of changes due to moving to other countries. De Haan and Pels (2007) compared socialization practices of Moroccan families in Netherland prior to and after migration by which they aimed at examining the process of reconstruction of social organization in general, social organization of family, values and goals related to upbringing. The authors concluded that Moroccan parents do not always reproduce their old practices in the new contexts; however the old practices become an input for a complex process in their attempt to resist the changes or to adapt, and these dilemmas constantly interact. These findings are believed to inform the current study on behalf of Albanian migratory parents and the use of their old practices in their children's schooling.

Drawing on the Vygotskian proposition that economic changes influence the social process of ontogeny (Scriber, 1985), Greenfield (1999) explored the impact of historical and economic changes on cognitive changes. More specifically, the study investigated for two decades two generations of mothers and children living in their society in Maya, Mexico, a community that had faced changes in their economy, from agriculture to a more capitalist cash economy. Greenfield suggests that parents do not have the tendency "to recreate the socializing process that they underwent as children", but rather they show capacity to "develop new methods of cultural apprenticeship as societal conditions" (p. 107), such as change in the economic conditions. By cultural apprenticeship, she refers to human relations and cultural artefacts. The current study emphasizes parents' capacity to adapt to societal changes when that brings a positive impact in children development (i.e. in this case cognitive development).

Combining ideas from Vygotsky and social representations theory, O'Toole and Abreu (2005) examined parents' representations of their children's schooling in two situations of educational change. The first situation included being an immigrant in England, thus educated in another country. The second situation included parents educated before the introduction of the national curriculum in England. They found that parents could both intentionally and unintentionally draw on their past experiences to make sense of the current schooling of their children. In particular, they argue that when parents' representations of their own education are dissonant with what they desire for their child's future, parents use their past to promote change. This however, is quite a complex task as the desire to promote change in one dimension (i.e. emotional support), may simultaneously reproduce practices that conflict with their children's schooling. For instance, parents who experienced harsh and negative support when they were children, attempted to be positive and praise their own children. However, they may have not realized changes in the age children are expected to learn to read. The current study will go a step further as the educational changes experienced by Albanian parents involved both a radical change on schooling practices, but also a radical macro-political change. Parents' own school experiences and reflections influence the way they perceive children's schooling functions. In specific, a study conducted by Raty (2007) examined 391 parents' recollections of their own school and the way it could predict the level of satisfaction of the functioning of their children's school. Children were involved in first, third and fifth grade. It was found that parents' recollections of their own experiences did influence how satisfied they were with the schooling of their child; parents with negative recollections showed less degree of satisfaction compared to parents with positive recollection. The study concluded that parents' past experiences are reproduced when recollections are positive and are not reproduced if recollections are negative. Although this study is limited in that it did not take into account parents' educational level, it suggests that parents' recollections (i.e. parents'

story of own education) can be predictive in their general attitude towards their children's schooling.

Moreover, Tudge, Hogan, Snezhkova, Kulakova and Etz (2000) in their comparative study discuss the impact of culture and social class on American and Russian parents' child-rearing values and beliefs. The paper explores the values and beliefs of 71 parents from two cities in respective countries. Families involved were from middle and working class, as determined from their education and profession background. The results reveal significant social class differences that relate to child-rearing values and beliefs. The study concluded that middle class parents in both countries valued self-direction, which meant that they believed that children should have freedom in and around the home. On the other hand, working class parents in both countries were more likely to believe that children should be expected to conform to rules. It is evident from literature that the values and beliefs of parents concerning child-rearing manners contribute on their children's development.

Parents' involvement has been recognized to have a positive impact on children's schooling. Research examining parents' understanding of being involved in own children's schooling practices has also revealed interesting finding which shed light on the way they construct their children as learners. Crozier (1999) conducted a study on working class and middle class parents' views on parent-teacher roles and relationships in secondary schools. Various components in understanding the nature of being involved were examined such as, social class, gender relations, ethnicity and power relationships. The orientation of working-class parents showed that they were more likely to commit to their children's educational success, they see their role as supportive; however, they viewed their position in relation to schools as separate from their everyday social and cultural world. That meant that the parent-teacher roles were viewed as two separated jobs. Similarly, teachers promoted similar involvement strategies for the parents and they did not take into account differences based on class, needs and so on. This way they reinforced parents' perceptions of teachers being the ones who knew best, allowing parents to view

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themselves as passive. Even so, this study does not take into consideration parents' social class; it gives an indication on the significance parent-teacher role and relationship. It also invites schools to reflect on their strategies when facing parental heterogeneity in the process of involvement.

Serra, Barr and Packard (2001) investigated the relationship between school inputs and education output in Albanian primary schools. The survey was distributed to 180 school representatives. Interestingly, the data showed a strong negative correlation between measures of top-down accountability and student's rates of grade repetition and failure of final exams and a strong positive one between measures of top-down accountability and students' excellence in math. Then, the study ran an in-depth analysis of participatory accountability within schools, which focused on parent's willingness to hold teachers responsible. The survey data were combined with data from experiments conducted earlier with parents and teachers in schools. The study identified problems of limited parental involvement and lack of information about participatory accountability structures. Due to the lack of parental participation, parent class representatives get appointed by teachers rather than by the parents. The present study does not focus on issues concerning accountability in schools; however, the findings inform the study on home-school communication and parental involvement in primary schools in Albania.

An ethnographic study conducted by Michail (2008) addresses the issue of identity construction and performative belonging of Albanian immigrant children in a provincial town in Greece. The study focused on Albanian parents' perceptions of the host country's social and institutional environment and its effect on the way they encounter matters with education, culture, ethnicity and identity formation. Parents revealed issues connected to education, language and religion with an emphasis on the way they negotiated self-belonging according to the political, social and economic environment of the host country. Albanian immigrants showed that they had developed practices (i.e. taking

children to learn Greek) and strategies for construction of 'otherness' (i.e. orthodox baptism, name changing) to achieve social inclusion that were suitable to the host environment, in order to enhance their children's future for social upward mobility within Greece. The findings offer an interesting insight on Albanian emigrant parents and their adaptation strategies in coherence with their children's future.

The elaborated studies on the impact of societal change and the way change influences educators' approach with the younger generation's development and learning offer further understanding on the proposed study. The above studies raise some issues relevant for the current study.

Following on Elliot and Tudge (2007) and Popova (2003) idea that changes at macro-cultural level do not impact processes at the micro level at a speedy rate, suggest that, as parents face political and socio-economic changes or changes due to migration experiences, this does not mean that the way they approach their children's schooling will be affected directly. On the contrary, the influence should be viewed as a process, which will take time according to individual representation of change. Due to their old cultural patterns, some parents might embrace change in societal and institutional level; whereas some others might show resistance to the perceived changes as they approach their children's development and learning with new education system, inside or outside the country.

Secondly, as elaborated from a few of the above authors, educators' (i.e. teachers and parents) approach to education of the new generation is driven from their past experiences (Goodnow, 1988; Popova, 2003; O' Toole & Abreu, 2005; Raty, 2007). In some cases, as individuals experience societal changes, their ideas, views and practices either change or show perseverance to older cultural patterns. With relevance to the current study, it is expected that, as parents engage with children's learning process, their past experiences and practices with education will intervene and can be predictive in their general attitudes in this matter. Even in the case of migrating parents, their

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representations of their children's schooling might be influenced by change or show resistance to old cultural manners (De Haan & Pels, 2007; Michail, 2008). More so, parents' child rearing values and beliefs contribute on their children's development (Tudge et al., 2000), and their involvement in children's education has an effect on students' performance (Serra et al., 2001).

Thirdly, whilst attempting to explore children's development and learning under the effect of societal change, one has to take into consideration teachers' perspective in relation to pupils and their parents' cultural background. Crozier (1999) gives indication on the significance of parent-teacher role and relationships, and invites schools to reflect on their strategies when facing parental heterogeneity in the process of involvement.

2.5. *Filtering theory into the study's aims*

Drawing on the theoretical and empirical background outlined in this chapter, the present study investigates the impact of socio-cultural changes on Albanian parents' social representations of their children's schooling under the consideration of these assumptions: First, individual learning and development involves the consideration of mutual relationships between micro and macro socio-cultural settings. Secondly, the macro socio-cultural change will have an impact on the individuals' social representations. Thirdly, the way individuals translate the meanings of changes into their everyday experiences is enabled by socio-cultural mediation, the process by which individuals evolve in their social and cultural context. Human psychological functioning including social representations is closely linked to cultural, institutional and historical settings. Fourthly, social representations act as mediators by which they allow the unfamiliar to become familiar and they have an effect on individuals'

actions/practices. Fifthly, parents' ideas, beliefs, values and practices will be affects by their cultural experiences, whereby at times they will embrace change or resist to it depending on their past recollections. Changes will take time to reach individual level as they initially affect and are filtered by the institutions. Therefore, parents' will take into account institutional practices when evaluating their practices. In the current study, parents will consider school system and teachers' practices to elaborate their meanings and experiences with their children's schooling. When parents show lack of involvement and information with children's schooling, this will affect their children's school performance.

Considering these theoretical reflections, it would be of great interest to explore how Albanian parents construct social representations of their children's schooling under the influence of radical macro socio-cultural changes. Changes due to political and socio-economic transition in Albania after the fall of the Communist regime, changes due to migration and changes due to returning to homeland are examined. Albanian parents as non-emigrants, emigrants and returned emigrants will be investigated. All parents' past social and cultural experiences with schooling was under the Communist regime. After the fall, being under the influence of different socio-cultural contexts, it is expected that they will construct social representations of this matter differently. However, because the process of filtering the societal changes to the individual level takes time, it is assumed that these participants' trajectories will overlap.

The following chapter will discuss the research approach in investigating three different socio-cultural groups. The combined methodologies aim to shed light on the processes underlying the impact of the macro changes on parents' representations of their children's development and learning.

Chapter 3: Methodology – Examining the impact of socio-cultural change on parents' social representations of their children's schooling

> *"All research is a practical activity requiring the exercise of judgement in context; it is not a matter of simply following methodological rules"*
> *(*Hammersley & Atkinson, 1994, p.23)

3.1. Main Objectives and Research Questions

The overall aim of this study was to explore Albanian parents' social representations of their children's schooling in three different socio-cultural settings. In particular, the primary focus of the project was to examine the impact of socio-cultural change on Albanian *non-emigrant, emigrant* and *returned emigrant* parents' social representations of their children's schooling. Due to the diverse dynamics of the lived experiences of these groups, the research questions were developed based on the proposition that the socio-cultural changes would impact the groups differently. On this note, the basic objectives of this study are:

1. What are the parents' past memories of their own education?

2. How are parents' meanings and their experiences of their children's education influenced by the political and socio-economic changes?

3. How are parents' meanings and their experiences of their children's education influenced by changes due to migration?

4. How are parents' meanings and their experiences of their children's education influenced by changes due to returning to their home country?

5. How do parents' perspectives fit with the perspectives of their children and their children's teachers?[5]

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[5] Due to the length of this research project, the final aim was omitted from the analysis, please see section 3.8.

The study draws on a developmental approach rooted in the historical and socio-cultural perspectives adapted to explore these interconnected aims; however, the primary focus aimed at examining the impact of socio-cultural change on parents' social representations with reference to their own children's schooling.

3.2.   The Research Approach and initial methodological process

This study was theoretically informed by the socio-cultural psychological approaches of Vygotsky (1978), Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Moscovici (1973). In these approaches understanding individual learning and development involves the consideration of mutual relationships between micro and macro socio-cultural settings, which co-constructs psychological development. To gain in-depth insight into these relationships three macro-settings that expose Albanian parents to changes in educational practices were investigated. The first setting involved investigating the impact of changes due to political and social change in the Albanian education system. The second involved investigating changes due to migration to a foreign country (living in the United Kingdom), and the third involved investigating changes due to returning to the home country (having returned from various countries in Europe and living in Albania during time of research).

An attempt to explore the topic of social representations is not a simple task due to its complex nature. Moscovici (1988) defined a social representation as "a form of social knowledge". This knowledge is shared by members of the same social groups, and members from other social groups share different knowledge. Abreu and Elbers's (2005) defined social representations as a specific type of mediator that connects the wider social context (macro level) with the micro context (individual level). In addition, drawing on recent developments of Moscovici's theory, the study looked at the Albanian parents' social representations of their children's schooling based on the assumption that "social representations work to code the reality by carrying traces and echoes of

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our individual and collective histories" (Howarth, 2006, p. 28). At the same time they work to allow the individual to make sense of the unfamiliar. Social representations allow the connection between the macro-cultural settings and the individual's micro-setting, which includes their expectations for the future.

For this purpose, adapting qualitative methods of research was appropriate. A multi-method qualitative design-narrative style, episodic interviews, and drawings were applied to examine parents' social representations of their own children's schooling in three socio-cultural settings based on their lived experiences and given meanings. Non-emigrant (NE), emigrant (EM) and returned emigrant (RE) parents' representations of own education, and on children's education were triangulated (Denzin, 1970, 1978) with the representations of their children and their children's teachers.

An overview of the methodological process is depicted in the following table:

Table 3.1: Research Process

Methodology tool	Objective	Primary Focus
Parents episodic individual interview (60-90 minutes approximately)	To explore the impact of socio-cultural change on parents' representations of their own and children's education.	The focus was on the parents' meaning and experiences with education and education of their children in three different cultural settings (as NE, EM, and RE).
Children's Drawing Task (15 minutes approximately) and episodic individual interview (30 minutes approximately)	To explore children's self-concept as learners and representations of how their parents view them.	The focus was on the mediating role of their parents' representations of their children as learners in three different cultural settings.
Teachers episodic individual interview (45-60 minutes approximately)	To explore teachers' representations of the parents' role on their children's schooling.	The focus was on the mediating role of the parents' representations of their children as learners in different cultural settings.

3.3. *Getting access to parents: Selection of Schools[6]*

Schools were approached with the aim of recruiting Albanian parents, their children and a few teachers belonging to three different socio-cultural groups: *non-emigrants* (Albanian citizens living in Albania), *emigrants* (Albanians who had migrated to the United Kingdom), and *returned emigrants* (Albanians who had lived abroad in various European countries and returned back to their homeland). Access to the schools in large cities in Albania was permitted by the head-teachers, and in the case of the schools in London the access was granted by the Executive Directors.

Few community schools were contacted in London and one school was contacted in Oxford. Two out of three contacted schools agreed to participate in the study[7], one school in London and one in Oxford. Both schools fitted the set criteria (see below). However, the Albanian emigrants who took part in the study and successfully finished the interviewing process were parents whose chidren were enrolled in the London school, which happen to be one of the largest Albanian community schools in the United Kingdom. This school operated in different areas of the city, engaging more children than any Albanian community school in the country, resulting in participants which were representative (Kvale, 1996), not simply informants.

The selection of schools was based on the following general criteria:

a) Schools in Albania- These were well-established primary or secondary schools and had been acknowledged by the Ministry of Education and Science.

b) Schools in the United Kingdom- These were well-established community organizations and running for a minimum of three years which focus their work on Albanian community emigrant children

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[6] For an account of recruitment letter for school, please refer to Appendix A, page II.
[7] For a copy of the electronic version of the confirmation letter from Ardhmëria School in London please see Appendix K, p. XXX.

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living in the United Kingdom. Schools listed under supplementary education organizations were included.

c) They had a sufficient number of teachers and staff supporting the institutions and the organizations' aims. Private schools in Albania and schools listed under supplementary education organizations in the United Kingdom which had been recently opened were excluded due to the low number of children and/or staff.

d) They agreed with and were open to research. Schools to allow their staff members (teachers) to participate and agreed to allow contact with parents and then their children.

e) In the absence of parents, teachers were requested and agreed to remain within short distance from where the interview with each child was taking place.

The school in Albania focused on mainstream formal school education, whereas the one in London provided supplementary education. Both schools aimed at promoting the mother-tongue language, but the Albanian school in Greater London focussed on organizing supplementary classes for Albanian pupils in order to improve their attainments. The schools in Albania aimed at helping children to improve quality and achievements in mainstream classes. The following sections give a more detailed account of the case study schools.

3.3.1. Albanian School in the United Kingdom

The school in London was non-profitable organization whose fundamental work is based mainly on the education and training of the Albanian-speaking people living in Greater London. It was established in 2005 and its focus is to save Albanian cultural and national identity for people living in the United Kingdom and for generations to come. It provides them with services, which empower their social roles, orientate them and increase their confidence. To raise the awareness of relevant U.K. authorities on Albanian community issues is yet another of its objectives.

The teachers working for this organization came from Albania and Kosovo and there were classes starting from primary school all way up to GCSE level in: Albanian language and literature, English language and Mathematics, as well as other cultural and sports activities. The involved teachers were also Albanian emigrants living in London who had graduated in Albania and were teachers by profession. In addition, a considerable number of the teachers had completed or were in the process of completing further qualifications in the field. Approximately more than half of them were volunteers. Teachers as participants coming from Kosovo were excluded from taking part due to their different historical and cultural background.

The school ran every Saturday and Sunday from 11:00-14:00 or 16:00 and classes were held inside mainstream schools located in six different areas in London[8]. This school is a registered charitable institution under Lewisham Supplementary Schools and is sponsored by various charitable organizations such as Trust for London, Greenwich Council, the City of Westminster, Lloyds TSB Foundation and Capital Community Foundation.

3.3.2. Albanian Schools in Albania

The case study schools in Albania were located in major cities like Tirana, Durrës, Kavaja and Vlora. Recruited schools were public or private mainstream schools and work with 6 to 18 years old students. Public schools are funded by the educational authorities and parents are not required to pay fees, except for books and school materials. Private schools are owned by individuals/ group(s) or organizations and parents are obliged to pay a considerable amount towards fees, transportation (i.e. children are being picked up from their house in the morning and dropped in the afternoon), food (i.e. breakfast and/or lunch), teacher-guided study hour and other educational activities. The public schools run from Monday to Friday 08:00 to 14:00 and private ones run between 08:00-16:00, due to their organized study hour at the end of the day. All participating schools in Albania were registered and acknowledged by the Ministry of

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[8] Classes were being held in schools nearby Queen's Park, Hammersmith, Peckham, Lewisham, Golders Green and Woolwich. See http://www.ardhmeria.co.uk

Education and Science. Schools were run by governing bodies, which were elected each year by the parents, a director and members of staff who were employed.

Schools offered all the required classes based on the programmes complied by the directorate of education sector of each major region in the country. They offered compulsory subjects such as Mathematics, Literature, Chemistry, Physics, History, and others, along with elective subjects like foreign languages (most preferably English, Italian or French), IT, arts, and so on.

3.4. *Participant Recruitment*[9]

Parent participants were the focus in this research project. Gaining access to parents required the permission of head teachers or directors to contact them when they came to school meetings or pick-ups. Head teachers or directors in most cases allocated one of the members of staff to accompany me while approaching parents on their visits. Following their verbal approval, parents were introduced to the information sheet, which explained the study and its procedure. In some cases, information sheets were posted and parents willing to take part informed me directly via email or through a member of staff. Parents were informed that their children and teachers would also be part of the project; however, in cases when some of the children or teachers did not take part for various reasons, interviews with parents were still applicable for analysis. At the end of the interview, parents were asked whether they would recommend other parents for the study. On these occasions a snowballing technique (Lindlof, 1995) was employed.

In total *67 participants* from which *32 parents* (9 non-emigrants, 11 emigrants and 12 returned emigrants), *25 children* (7 non-emigrants, 10 emigrants and 8

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[9] For full accounts of participants' information letter, please refer to Appendix B, pages IV-XII.

returned emigrants), and *10 teachers* (3 non-emigrants, 4 emigrants and 3 returned emigrants) were interviewed during phase 1 and 2 of the research process. As an annual attendee of the National Seminar for Supplementary Education of Albanian Language in Diaspora (July 2009 and 2010), I also conducted interviews with authorities working in the field of education in Albania and Kosovo, such as the Vice Minister of Education in charge of primary education in Albania and coordinators of Albanian community schools in Austria, England and Italy. The authorities were not recruited as subjects *per se*, however, the information received served for the background of the study.

The basic criteria on which parents were invited to take part in this study were as follows:

a) They were Albanian citizens. If married their partners were Albanian nationals too.
b) They had their primary education in Albania during the communist regime.
c) They had children between 9-11 years of age. Inviting children within this age limit to participate
d) They were a) Albanian citizens living in Albania, b) Albanian emigrants living in the United Kingdom, or c) Albanian returned emigrants living in Albania having left their host country/ies.
e) They were willing to take part.

The decision to stop collecting data was made based on the concept of *data saturation* which is the term applied to the point at which no new data is emerged (Holloway, 1997). Repetitions of findings were evident in the analysis when saturation was applied.

Why triangulate parents with their children and teachers?

In today's society, it is increasingly becoming evident that the role of parents as a primary source on their children's schooling is inevitable. Studies exploring the mediating role of parents' past to understand the present are still scarce;

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however the need to understand how parents' experiences of education impacts their views and as a result the way they approach their children's learning is of great need. An attempt to explore Albanian parents' experiences of education during the communist regime, as migrants living abroad and as returners, offers a triangulated perspective to understand how they build representations of their children's schooling.

The following graph represents the three groups and their socio-cultural status:
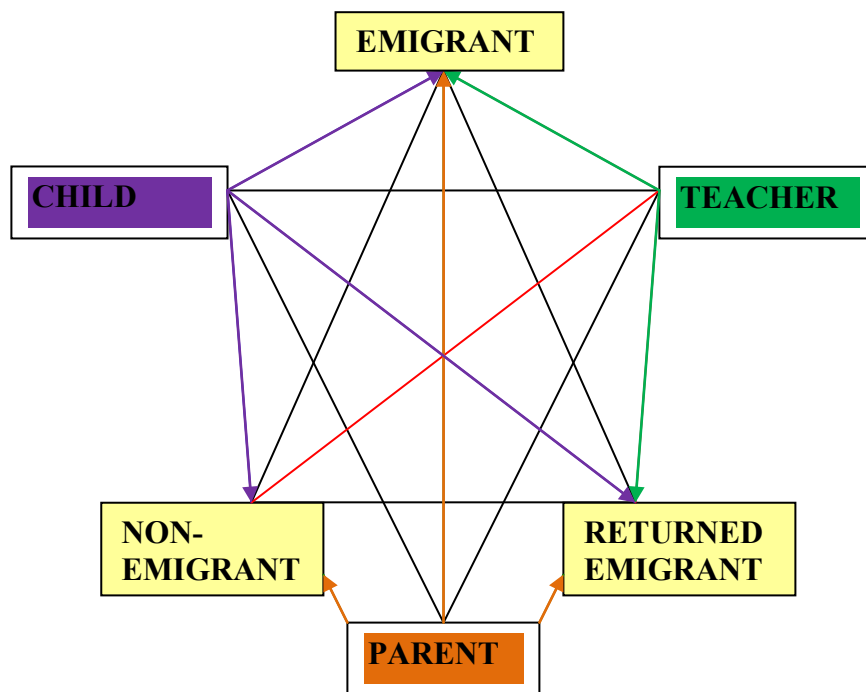
Figure 3.1: Participants and their relation to the cultural groups

I decided to include children and their teachers based on the assumption that their perspectives would provide further detailed information on parents, which would further deepen my understanding of their representations. However, whilst evaluating the process of data collection, transcription and translation of the material from Albanian into English of the three socio-cultural groups, the decision to triangulate perspectives was revised due to large quantity of material that it provided. Because of the word limit of this research project, it

was decided to remove data with teachers and children from the empirical analysis. The data collected with children consisted of individual interviews and drawings; whereas with teachers individual interviews only. This material was omitted from the analysis with the intention that it will be used for future publication. The data collected with parents was evaluated as rich to accomplish the required criteria for this academic level. The analysis will only focus on parents since they are the main target.

3.4.1. Introducing the parents

Non-Emigrant Parents

Nine non-emigrant parents successfully completed the interview process. As presented in Table 3.2, of the nine parents, eight were mothers and only one father agreed to participate. Five parents were professionals working in various fields and four of them were not employed at the time of the interview. Their ages varied between 33 and 41 years (mean age = 36.8 years). Of the nine parents, only two children did not participate in the study.

Table 3.2: Non-Emigrant Albanian Parents' Demographic Information[10]

No.	Non Emigrant Parents	Age in (Yrs)	Gender	Profession	Education level
1	Matilda	33	F	Journalist	Post university degree
2	Pranvera	40	F	Accountant	University degree
3	Vera	36	F	Office Manager	University degree
4	Enerieta	33	F	Unemployed	High school
5	Rita	41	F	Unemployed	High school
6	Erma	35	F	Unemployed	High school
7	Bledi	40	M	Lawyer/Lecturer	Post university degree
8	Valdete	42	F	Nurse	University degree
9	Eda	39	F	Unemployed	High school

Emigrant Parents

The following table provides a descriptive account of emigrant parents living in the UK. Out of eleven interviewed participants, ten of them were mothers except one male parent. Of the eleven parents, nine of them were working in various professions and two of them were unemployed. All parents had been living in the United Kingdom for over eight years (mean average years abroad

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[10] The participants' names used are non real names.

10.9). Of the eleven parents, only two of their children did not participate in the study.

Table 3.3: Emigrant Albanian Parents Demographic Information

No.	Emigrant parents in UK	Age (Yrs)	Gender	Abroad (Yrs)	Profession	Education level
1	Tomi	50	M	12	Mechanic	High school
2	Elvana	34	F	9	Assistant Teacher	Post university degree
3	Ina	31	F	11	Accountant	University degree
4	Bruna	30	F	11	Teacher Suppl. Education	University degree
5	Lule	39	F	8	Unemployed	High school
6	Erilda	40	F	11	Accountant	Post university degree
7	Arlinda	40	F	11	Finance Officer	Post university degree
8	Flora	45	F	13	Teacher	University degree
9	Maria	30	F	12	Nursery Nurse	University degree
10	Lumturie	40	F	10	Foster Care	High school
11	Prena	37	F	12	Unemployed	High school

Returned Emigrant Parents

The following table provides the demographic account of returned emigrant parents who had returned to Albania from various countries in Europe. Out of *twelve* parents, seven of them had returned from Italy, three from Greece, one from Germany and one from the United Kingdom. The average number of years living abroad is approximately nine and average of years returned back is

approximately three. Out of the twelve, eight of their children were interviewed. Of this group, parents willing to take part were all mothers.

Table 3.4: Returned Emigrant Albanian Parents Demographic Information

No.	Returned Emigrant Parents	Age (Yrs)	Gender	Years Abroad and country	Years back	Profession	Education level
1	Migena	38	F	10 Italy	2	Student	High school
2	Mona	46	F	5 Germany	3	Engineer	University degree
3	Vjollca	38	F	7 UK	3	Teacher	University degree
4	Tana	33	F	10 Italy	4	Unemployed	High school
5	Anita	34	F	14 Italy	2	Secretary	High school
6	Kalia	37	F	15 Greece	<1	Unemployed	High school
7	Ira	37	F	12 Greece	2	Lawyer	University degree
8	Meri	36	F	15 Italy	6	Business	High school
9	Enila	34	F	11 Italy	1	Lecturer	Post university degree
10	Tefta	43	F	15 Greece	4	Teacher	University degree
11	Besiana	37	F	16 Italy	1	Lecturer	Post university degree
12	Miranda	36	F	4 Italy	3	Unemployed	High school

In the process of recruiting participants, as a researcher I invited parents, both mothers and fathers, to participate. In total, only two fathers agreed to take part with the rest of participants being mothers. At this point, fathers were excluded from the analysis, as their number was not representative.

3.5.   *Data collection methods*

Drawing a cultural-historical approach, data were collected using narrative-episodic interviews (Flick, 2006). Narratives act as discourse that can draw together diverse events, happenings and actions of human lives" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 5). The interviews made use of an initial *narrative question* inviting parents to recount the story of their education going back to the time they first went to school in Albania. An initial narrative question followed by individual episodic interviews was used to investigate parents' meanings and experiences to understand their underlying mechanism, which account for their representations of their children's schooling, in three socio-cultural settings.

A generative narrative question (Riemann & Schutze, 1987, p.353) was adopted to invite the interviewees to present their story of education. '*Narrative*' refers to the emphasis that is placed upon the stories of people's lives. As an approach, the narrative involves ways of understanding the stories. In order to elicit narratives, parents were asked to tell their story of education starting from when they were at school up to the moment speaking. As Flick (2009) argues the aim of the generative question "serves not only to stimulate the production of a narrative, but also to focus the narrative on the topical area…" (p. 183). Bruner (1986) viewed narratives as a way of speaking and a way of thinking. When we tell stories about our lives, as Bruner notes, we construct two psychological landscapes: that of action and of consciousness. Whilst the former presents the argument of action (i.e. agent, intention or goal, situation, instrument, and so on), the latter presents what those involved in action do/do not know, think or feel. This perspective suggests that narratives

do not simply present accounts of what happen, but also the underlying psychological phenomenon that make those happenings.

Three in-depth, *episodic interviews* with open-ended questions were used to interview parents as non-emigrants, emigrants and returned emigrants. When making use of this tool, the expectation is to encourage participants to share their views based on the assumption that the experiences of participants are "stored and remembered in forms of narrative-episodic knowledge" (Flick, 1998, p.106). The episodic technique was designed as a method that collects and analyses narrative-episodic knowledge in narratives, and semantic knowledge in concrete and focused questions and answers (Flick, 2000b). On one side, the episodic knowledge holds the organized experiences and concrete situations and circumstances. The main unit around which knowledge is organized is the course of the situation in its context. On the other side, the semantic knowledge counts as assumptions and perceptions, which are abstracted and generalized. The central unit for the semantic knowledge is concepts and their relations to each other.

Episodic technique is characterized as a method of many advantages. One of the advantages is that, since episodic interviewing is a method for exploring knowledge, it assumes that everyday knowledge can be accessed by the researcher. Accordingly, parents were invited, for example, to describe a day when their child brings homework home (i.e. Could you describe for me what happens when your child brings homework home? Such as, when they do it and who with?). In this project, parents of all three groups had their children in different community schools and they were expected to produce different accounts (i.e. Parents in England claimed that their children had homework once a week whereas parents in Albania faced children doing homework almost every day). Moreover, when parents were invited to talk about who helped their children with homework and in what way they helped, parents were expected to

express some common understanding due to their similar past schooling experiences.

A second advantage that is valid for this research is that episodic interviewing facilitates comparisons between different social groups (Flick, 1997, 2000). Parents were expected to express similar experiences, understanding, meanings and expectations about education under the communist regime. In their story of education, emigrant and returned emigrants had other similar and different experiences with education abroad. In addition, returned emigrants had different experiences to the non-emigrants who had never experienced education outside the country.

Thirdly, another advantage of the episodic interviews is that it combines narrative interview and semi-structured interview (Flick, 1998). In-depth open-ended questions were semi-structured in various sections in the interview guide. Episodic technique also facilitates participants to recall concrete situations, give opinions on them and define concepts through subjective account, by giving concrete examples of relevant experiences they had had in the past (i.e. In your view have the political and socio-economic changes of the last decade impacted on education? Could you give me some examples?)

Taking into consideration the advantages that episodic interview offers, it is expected that it is a sufficient tool to explore on the topic of social representations. The interview schedule was developed with the support of previous studies and research objectives. The following sections give a detailed description of the process of development of each interview schedule.

3.5.1. Construction of the Interview Schedule-Parents

The parent individual interview[11] was divided into five main parts in relation to their own education and the education of their children. In the first part, questions related to their general demographics were asked such as name, age,

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[11] For a full account of the final interview schedule please refer to Appendix C, page XIII.

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migrant status, parental role, profession, number of members in the family, country of birth, information about their history of migration and information regarding children (i.e. their age, school year, etc). An initial narrative question followed asking them to tell their story of education (i.e. I would like to ask you to tell me your story of education. The best way to do this is for you to start from when you started school, and then tell your memories of being at school until you completed your education). In parts two to six, questions were designed to explore general themes:

(i) Parents' meanings of school education and the impact of economic and political change

In this part of the interview questions about parents' understanding of the meaning of education and school education, as well as their reflection on the socio-economic changes and how that has affected education system in Albania were asked (i.e. What does the word education mean to you? Or In your view have the political and socio-economic changes of the last decade impacted on education? Could you give me some examples?)

(ii) Parents' accounts of own education

The second theme in the parents' interview schedule aimed at encouraging parents to reflect on their own education, such as memories from school, how far they had gone with formal education, whether they had any favourite subjects, or whether they used to have parental support and whether their school system was the same or different to their children's one (i.e. Did your parents support your school education? Would you give me some examples?).

(iii) Parents' accounts of their children's education

This part focused on parents' general views on their children's education. Parents were asked to reflect on the role of school on their children's lives and their hopes for their children, whether school meant the same or not as it did to

their children, whether their past experiences with schooling affected the way they approached their children's schooling, when they recommend for parents to start educational activities with their children, their views on the teacher's role and the relationship with the teacher (i.e. In your opinion, how important is the role of the teacher in your child's schooling? What is your relationship with your child's teacher/s?). Moreover, parents were also asked to reflect on their ideal education system.

(iv) *Parents' hands-on participation in their child's school learning*

This section of the interview schedule focused on parents' concrete involvement in their child's school learning. Parents were asked to reflect on their role in their children's schooling process, how exactly their children were supported them during homework, whether they felt confident whilst helping their children with homework and how their support has changed from the time children first went to school (i.e. How confident do you feel when helping them with their homework now they are getting older? Can you tell me about a situation about that?)

(v) Parents' support on a specific school subject (mathematics)

This part invited parents to reflect on their supporting role with reference to a specific subject, in this case mathematics. In part four, when asking parents about the way they support children during homework, most of them gave examples of helping their children in maths. Thus, choosing mathematics as a subject to further elaborate their support came as a result of them voluntarily giving meaning to their process of hands-on help by mentioning their engagement during maths homework. In this part, parents were specifically asked questions concerning the subject of mathematics and its importance in everyday life, such as whether maths had been a positive subject when parents were at school, whether their children enjoyed maths homework, games involving maths or other situations where maths came in (i.e. Would you say that on the whole your child enjoys their maths homework? Describe to me a

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situation when that was the case). This section was the final part for the non-emigrant parents' interview process.

(vi) Parents' meaning of education abroad (for emigrants and returned emigrant parents)

This last part designed for emigrant and returned emigrant parents aimed to explore parents' meaning of education abroad. There were specific questions concerning their experience with education abroad and how that had affected their views and their children's views on education (i.e. Did the experience abroad influence the way you/your child approaches education? how?). More so, returned emigrant parents were also invited to reflect on how they viewed the Albanian system upon their return (i.e. What are some of the main differences between the education system abroad and here?).

3.5.2. Procedure

The empirical work with emigrant parents was conducted in the United Kingdom in the Greater London area and with the non- emigrants and returned emigrants it was conducted in various cities in Albania (mainly in Tirana, the capital). The returned emigrant group was mixed in their cultural experiences as it involved parents returned from various European countries such as Italy, Greece, Germany and the United Kingdom. Prior to migration, emigrant and returned parents had been living in various cities in Albania, and most of returned emigrant parents had not gone back to their home city, showing preference to live in the capital upon their return.

The interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes approximately. Interviews were conducted on school premises, at the parents' workplace and in their homes. In whatever place, as a researcher I made sure that the privacy was assured. Interviews were tape recorded with the participants' consent in all cases. Their consent was also recorded.

In the case of the emigrant group, participants were asked to choose the language they wanted to speak during interview. Most participants agreed to speak in Albanian; however, a few parents swapped to English during the interview, and in such cases, the interview continued accordingly. There were also cases when returned emigrants from Italy also swapped to Italian language. Due to the familiarity with this language, I allowed parents to continue. However, only two parents used Italian to emphasize certain accounts.

I started the interviews by introducing the participants to the study's aim (i.e. This interview is about parents and what they think about their child's education at school). Information about the interview procedure such as duration, ethics, confidentiality and the possibility of stopping the interview at any time without giving an explanation were clarified from the beginning.

3.6. *Ethical Considerations*

Prior to implementation, the University Research Ethics Committee and the British Psychological Society initially approved this study and their code of ethics was followed throughout the research process. Access to schools was granted by the permission of the head teachers and directors to access parents and children. Information sheets were distributed to each participant and informed consents were granted prior to interview. All adult participants gave their permission individually. As for the children who participated, their parents and teachers' consent was requested. Participants of all groups were informed that they were free to stop the interview at any moment and that their audio data would be destroyed, and interviews anonymous by changing their names. Some of the parents who took part in the study were in the status of asylum seekers. I clarified with them that I had no connection to any governing bodies, which in any way would sabotage their application process. Participants were granted confidentiality and assured that the recorded information would be kept anonymous throughout the process. The given names are pseudonyms

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originating from their country of residence, Albania. This research has been partly funded by the Albanian Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Oxford Brookes University and Kristal University, Albania. A brief report will be prepared to send to these authority bodies.

3.7. *Pilot Study*

The investigation was conducted in two stages. The first stage took place between May 2008 and April 2009. At the beginning of the first stage, a small pilot interview of ten parents, four children and three of the teachers was carried out to test the interview schedules and refine the overall proposed design. The pilot work contributed to a) *a revision of the interview schedules*; b) a *selection of the children's drawings tasks;* c) *the translation of the interview schedule (*from being produced in English the interview scheduled were translated into Albanian).

a) Revision of the interview schedules: The preliminary interview schedule initially required the parents to start their interview talking about the meanings of education. This was changed to incorporate a narrative style-opening question asking parents to tell the story of their education. The narrative interview technique aims to collect personal stories and presupposes that people are storytellers that lead storied lives. The narrative meaning is viewed as "that cognitive process which organizes human experiences into meaningful episodes" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 1). Using this method, our experiences are constructed in a narrative structure. According to Denzin (1989), personal event narratives do operate powerfully in people's talk as a revisiting of certain key moments. It was evident that narrative interviews encouraged the participants towards a natural conversation, focussing on the key moments of their story of education and the interview did flow better.

The teachers' interview schedule also incorporated some changes. Because parents were the main target group in this research, questions, which were not linked to the focus group, were left out. The revised interview schedule focussed on the *meanings of education, teachers' views of the parents*, and the *meanings of education in a bicultural setting* (for the emigrants and returned emigrants groups).

b) *Selection of the children's drawings:* The pilot stage invited children to produce five drawings of how they viewed themselves a) as a pupil at school; b) as a pupil at home; c) as parents viewed them; d) as teachers viewed them; and e) how they viewed themselves when 25 years old. The drawing task was reduced from five to three drawings, which allowed children to express their views only on parents, which was the main focus of the study. The last two drawings were eliminated from the design, as they did not contribute to this aim. Taking into consideration that the preliminary aim of the study was to triangulate parents' views with those of their children and their children's teachers, the last two drawings were eliminated from the design, as they did not contribute to this aim. Similarly, the interview schedule used for children was also reduced focussing on the themes, which would contribute to the triangulation process.

c) *Translation process from Albanian into English*: The fieldwork from the pilot data was recorded. All data in Albanian was translated into English and was transcribed verbatim for analysis. This process was fulfilled by the researcher to ensure transcription accuracy. In cases when I, as a researcher, dealt with uncertainties (i.e. when an extract did not make sense to an English speaking supervisor), I went back to listen to the recording. When the recorded data showed discrepancies with the written form, a more literary style of the conversation was adapted to facilitate the meanings of the participant's stories (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Moreover, the systematic use of conventions plays an important part in the transcription process. Although transcription conventions are mainly used in conversation analysis (Heritage, 1984; Have

1999), whilst transcribing the recorded interviews, a set of conventions[12] were developed.

Due to the nature of the research, the transcription process also dealt with the issue of translation from a foreign language, Albanian, into English. Initially I had to transcribe all the data in the original language, and then translate it into English. My expertise in studying at different academic levels (from high school to postgraduate level of study) in both languages for over 16 years facilitated the process. However, during supervision sessions, when supervisors found it difficult to comprehend the coded transcribed data as translated verbatim, I had to rewrite the content in a way that brought out the essential meanings. At certain times, I had to re-listen to the recording to reassure myself that what was written reflected the participants' intended meaning. For an illustration of the transcription and translation process from Albanian into English, please refer to Table 3.1.1, Appendix page XXII.

3.8. *Researchers Reflexivity and Impact during process*

Collecting data is neither a neutral nor a linear process. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) argue that data from qualitative inquiry is most often people's words and actions, and thus requires methods that allow the researcher to capture language and behaviour (p. 46). Due to my personal experiences as a researcher who was born and educated in Albania throughout my adolescence, having lived abroad in English-speaking countries for over 16 years and having returned to Albania whilst working on this report, I felt comfortable approaching Albanian participants in all three socio-cultural groups. I also found it easy to have

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[12] A set of conventions were developed which are listed in Appendix F, page XXI.

conversations with them and understand their gestures and actions in various situations (i.e. towards the end of the interview one participant in England was frequently looking at her watch and then looking out of the window. From her actions, I understood that someone was waiting for her and asked whether she wanted to pause the interview. She explained that her husband was outside and that she was expected to provide dinner for the family, inferring that she had to leave. It was about six o'clock, which is not the usual hour for Albanian families to have dinner. Coming from a culture where women are expected to serve food for their family members but also being aware that living in England where dinners run earlier than in Albania, I was able to comprehend the importance of rushing the process for her).

Reflexivity is a widely discussed methodological issue in today's qualitative research sphere. When we engage in research, the aim is to guarantee the audience that what we have done, the data we are interpreting is, *de facto,* what has truthfully been claimed by the participants. The focus is to accept and acknowledge, "*How* knowledge is acquired, organized, and interpreted is relevant to *what* the claims are" (Altheide & Johnson, 1998). Yet, as researchers, we address research questions that can be inevitably influenced by our personal life paths. I grew interest to explore this topic and conduct research with my nationals during the time I was living abroad. Nevertheless, one could argue that this topic somehow could present my personal biographic trajectory, which could implicate the data collection process. However, during the many years of living abroad (i.e. USA, UK), I was at no time under the status of an asylum seeker or an emigrant. For over 12 years, I was a self-funded, full-time international student, studying and working part-time, travelling back and forth to my home country to visit my family as many times as I could. At same time, I was frequently engaged with the Albanian emigrant community in Cincinnati, USA and in Oxford or London, U.K, participating in various Albanian cultural events. None the less, this does not convey that a life of a student abroad is anything alike with the life of an emigrant, even from same cultural background.

On the other hand, reflexivity can be considered as an instrument, a skill or a method, which guarantees accountability in research, and therefore, must be practiced and justified. The questions that I continuously faced throughout the research process was, "How can I justify that the story I tell brings forward this target group's life story?", "How the extracts I depict from the interviews will reflect the participants' true meanings and experiences?", "How I can be objective without involving myself in the process?", "How can I posses reflexivity?". For me, the process of data collection was an ongoing self-awareness process, which repeatedly required that I check and recheck every decision I made and every evaluation I summarized. As Callaway (1992) views it, for a researcher reflexivity "becomes a continuing mode of self-analysis and political awareness" (p. 33). During the entire process, I became aware that the research product I was developing had to be accurate, valid, and accountable, in order for me to finalize a better, less distorted research accounts (Hertz, 1997). More so, being reflective requires to listen and write with reflexivity, which helps to situate oneself and be cognizant of the ways your personal history can influence the research process resulting in more "accurate", more "valid" research (Altheide & Johnson, 1998; Ball,1990). Throughout the process, I listened carefully and made frequent notes, transcribed the interviews word-by-word, checking the outcome against my notes, reassuring that the participants' voice "was given". There were times that my beliefs or thoughts on a particular subject were challenged by participants' stories. For example, I had a disturbing image of schools under communism, particularly teachers being very authoritative. The participants' stories varied, with some having experienced very positive and close relationships with their teachers whilst at school. Their views, not mine, were coded and eventually placed under a theme in the analysis).

In addition, being fluent in Albanian and English helped me to understand the emigrant participants better; even when they felt the need to express themselves in the language they were more comfortable with. This could be illustrated by the following example: When an emigrant parent was asked, "Do you feel

confident in helping your child with homework? Could you give me an example?", parents did not hesitate to share a particular maths exercise, words of which were expressed in English, the most common language when helping their children with homework in England (i.e. "They were doing, you know, what do you call them in Albanian? Fractions and I …"). Immediately, I smiled and confirmed that there was no need for them to explain what fractions were or translate, in order for them to follow their ideas without interference. Being fluent in both languages also was crucial to translating the data verbatim from Albanian to English for the purpose of analysis.

Operating in two languages is not a simple task as it could lead to misunderstandings. The process of approaching Albanian nationals and then translating the interviews into English is a complex task. However, as a researcher, fluent both in Albanian and English, I managed to handle the interview process and data processing competently. According to Kvale (1996), the researcher should make clear and be able to extend the meaning of the interviewee's statement to avoid misinterpretations throughout the process. He suggests that researchers may use questions like "Is it correct that you feel that…?"; "Does the expression "…" cover what you have just expressed?" to allow the interviewees to confirm or disconfirm what has been interpreted by the researchers (p.135). More so, because I was using episodic interviews, the discoursed followed questions like "Could you give me an example of...?", "Could you explain what "..." means?" This way I was able to certify that the participants' claims were followed by an example, so that the valid meaning came across. During the interviews, each participant chose to communicate in Albanian language; however, even at rare situations when they swapped to English or Italian (especially returned emigrants), I was able to comprehend due to my comprehension in both foreign languages.

Constructing meaning in qualitative research, especially when dealing with interpreted interactions, brings out the issue of shared intersubjectivity. Linel (1995) views the intersubjective relationship between speakers as a process that is "continuous and collective, where interactors mutually check understanding",

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and "what is said and understood gets continually updated on a turn-by-turn basis; each contribution to a dialogues displays (or can display) some understanding or reaction to the prior contribution" (p. 193). Suswein and Racine (2008) believe that humans possess a code understanding that they attend to others and have some intentions in their interactions. This system of understanding is by nature intersubjective (Janzen & Chaffer, 2008), given that the interactors persuade and convey points of views, leading to "an ongoing negotiation of meaning" (p. 334). Because meaning is "pervasive, spontaneous, interactional and contextualized" (De Bois, 2003, p. 52), this suggests that the meaning is co-constructed by both interactors.

As a researcher, I was constantly checking that I understood the interviewee's point of view and attempted to depict the meaning during the interview process. Not at once, I felt that the conversation was unclear. Even more, translating all the conversations word-by-word, going back to the recordings and personal notes, I believe the analyzed data is valid, accountable and reflexive.

Another crucial skill for the interviewing process, which I felt I had to develop, was to establish rapport with the participants. Kvale (1996) suggests that 'a good contact is established by attentive listening, with the interviewer showing interest, understanding, and respect for what the subjects say (p. 128).' He continues, "[a good interview] allows subjects to finish what they are saying, lets them proceed at their own rate of thinking and speaking" (Kvale, 1996, p.148). I felt confident in the rapport built with all of them prior to each interview. This led to respondents taking part and finishing the interviews successfully, and in some cases, they would refer me to potential participants whom they knew. I felt they were open and honest about their responses. However, being an insider also poses limitations, as I had to learn to distance from the data, and from the participants to enable a thorough and in-depth analysis.

Learning to probe (Patton, 1987) was yet another skill I had to master in doing this research project. Asking participants to "further elaborate" or "to give me an example" or repeat significant words of an answer can lead to further elaboration (Kvale, 1996, p. 133). As a researcher, I avoided asking sensitive questions at all times.

One personal issue that I encountered had to do with my position as a PhD researcher who was travelling in a city like Oxford. I felt that this position would alienate me from participants due to the view they had of young, female, Albanian, researchers studying in Oxford. My research position was potentially placing me higher on the ladder, someone to be viewed with respect and appreciation. This became evident as they would often comment on my achievements (i.e. "Lucky you, your parents must have done everything to bring you here [England]. This is what we want for our children, to study here and to become someone"; "I feel proud to hear that an Albanian girl like you is accepted to do PhD here"; "I wish that one day my son would return back to Italy and continue his study there"). I made sure they understood that I was a research student and that my aim was to understand their views on education and that their honest answers as participants were a great contribution to the field.

Finally, another issue that I faced was over-familiarization. Once I had established a good rapport, I encountered an unemployed participant who viewed me as a possible gateway to finding a job, because of my position at the institution where I work in Albania. For example, one returned emigrant who had recently returned from Italy claimed at the end of the interview that she would appreciate it if I would refer her to any free vacancy within my workplace. In this case, I felt I had to make sure that the participant was thanked for the time and answers provided, and that job vacancies were frequently listed on the company's webpage.

3.9. *Analytical Framework*

The nature of qualitative research is complex and dynamic, which allows the researcher to be inductive. I developed the analysis of this project following a bottom up approach. This means that the retrieved themes were grounded in the data. However, this does not mean that I was not influenced by theoretical considerations. As the data was being collected, it was coded as an ongoing process. During the whole data collection process, as codes were developing, that supported to identify emerging themes. With the intention to review the first hand coding, the data was re-coded when the data collection was completed. This way of analysing data is referred to as grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

At first, the preliminary data was hand analyzed. This was a personal choice as I was able to use colours and put various notes around the raw material. I then uploaded the conducted interviews into a computer programme (NVIVO 8.0). This process served me to review my primary and secondary codes, which then lead to adapting a methodological approach in retrieving the main themes.

At this stage, I was able to identify the main themes by revisiting the following research questions as guides. What are the parents' past memories of their own education? How are parents' meanings and their experiences of their children's education influenced by the political and socio-economic changes? How are parents' meanings and their experiences of their children's education influenced by changes due to migration? How are parents' meanings and their experiences of their children's education influenced by changes due to returning to their home country? As presented in the following analysis chapters, this research questions guide the thematic analysis.

In details, the development of analytical framework overlapped with different stages of data collection. During the first stage of data collection, *34 interviews*

were conducted including three socio-cultural groups (parents 14; children 15; teachers 6). Ten out of fourteen parents (3 non-emigrants, 3 emigrants and 4 returned emigrants) were analysed for the preliminary results. The preliminary thematic analysis of the parents' interview data was conducted with the support of the NVIVO 8.0. This analysis illustrated the key themes in the impact of socio-cultural changes on the three groups of parents.

Three preliminary reports on the emerging themes were produced: 1) The impact of socio-cultural changes due to political and socio-economic transition, due to migration and due to returning to their homeland; 2) Parents' participation in their child's school learning: representations and hands on during schoolwork; and 3) Parents' representations of the teacher's role. The reports based on the preliminary data contributed to my role as a researcher because the emerging themes reflected the impact of the changes on parents' meanings, experiences and views on their children's education. Having been informed about the views that parents accounted as most meaningful, my intention was to ask more in depth questions on the above issues and focus my analysis towards the most significant findings.

The second stage of data collection was conducted between September 2009 and January 2011. During the second stage, *33 interviews* were conducted (parents 18; children 12; teachers 4). So far, from this stage, only interviews conducted with parents had been analyzed. When elaborating the analysis, two important decisions were made:

> 1) First, taking into consideration the quality of the conducted interviews and the constrains regarding the word-limit regulations of a PhD, the decision to focus only on parents' interviews was made, omitting data on children and teachers. The findings resulting from interviews with children and their teachers will be used for future publications.

2) Secondly, due to the replication of the findings of the first stage and the quality of the interviews with parents, the overall analysis takes into consideration the data involving interviews with 24 parents from both stages (non- emigrants 8; emigrants 8; returned 9 emigrants). As previously mentioned, the interviews with fathers were excluded from the analysis as their number was not representative (2 out of 32 interviews agreed to take part).

As previously stated, or the analysis, the qualitative computer software package NVIVO 8.0 was employed. A thematic analysis (Flick, 2006) was utilized to examine the transcribed data from the individual interviews. This analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). From the transcriptions, patterns were explored and main themes were identified. As Braun and Clarke (2006) argue, "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (p. 82). Related patterns were combined and catalogued into sub-themes. This has enabled me to identify the prevalent representations and compare these across the three groups. More specifically, the thematic analysis was processed in six stages (see Figure 3.2). The following outline is a step-by-step systematic analysis related to this study:
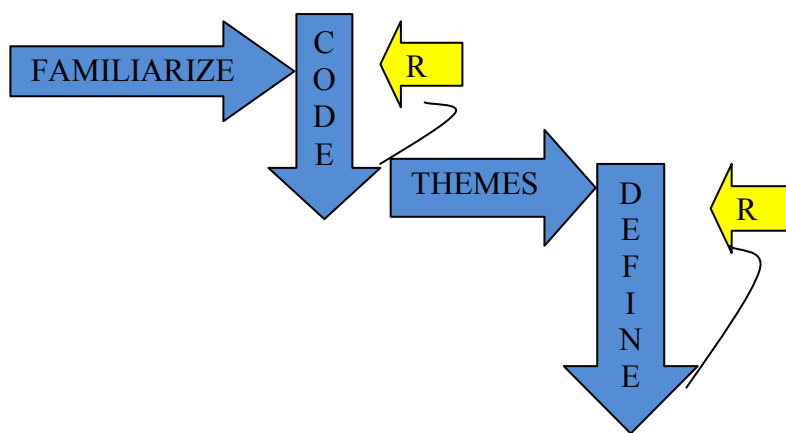
Figure 3.2: A visualised version of the six steps of thematic coding
(Source: Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Phase one: *Familiarizing yourself with your data*- The process of transcribing interviews and then translating into English deepened my knowledge and understanding of the data. At this phase, I was able to tell the story of each participant and I had some interesting emerging ideas from the material I was reading and rereading.

Phase two: *General initial coding*: During this phase, whilst reading and re-reading the interviews I had a long list of initial codes; however, they were not specifically linked to particular themes. At this stage, I was still not capable of identifying the links between the content, codes and my initial aims, nor could I identify potential themes. Whilst exploring the list of codes, I started grouping codes into sub-themes.

Phase three: *Searching for themes*: At this stage, in order to manage and group the sub-themes, I started refining them into themes. Here is an example I followed:

Phase 1   *Phase 2*   *Phase 3*
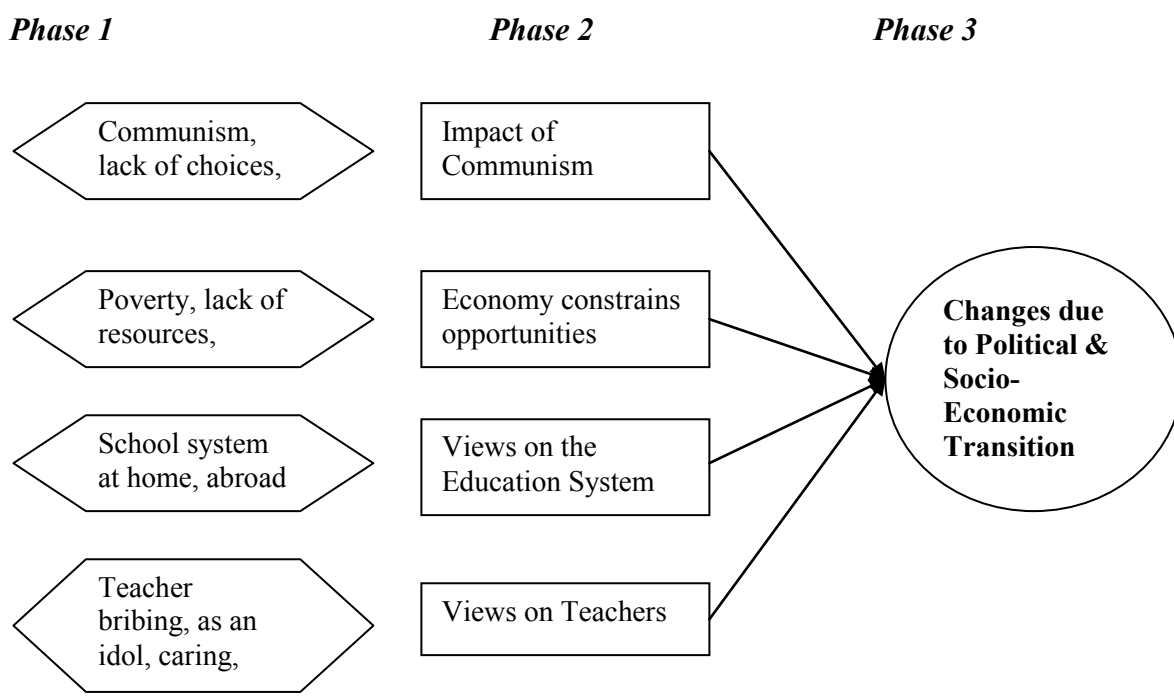
Figure 3.3: An illustration of moving from *codes* to *sub-themes* to *themes*

Phase four: *Reviewing themes*: Interviews which set up the basic themes of the analysis came from *Stage one* of the data collection. Similar emerging themes came from the analysis of the interviews conducted in *Stage two* of the study. This stage of analysis required that I go back to my initial themes and occasionally to restate my themes (i.e. change from *The impact of Communism* to *Constrained by the system*, or from *Teacher bribing* to *Image of the teacher*, and so on).

Phase five: *Defining and naming themes*: Prior to producing the report, certain decisions had to be made concerning the main themes which were relevant to the study. At this stage I felt I had to organize the themes in a certain way which would set up a "told story" or an outline that related to the initial aims of this project. Themes reviewed in *Phase three* became sub-themes for the latest outline since the main themes which viewed the topic at a macro level were pulled out in order to have a clear picture of the whole meaning.
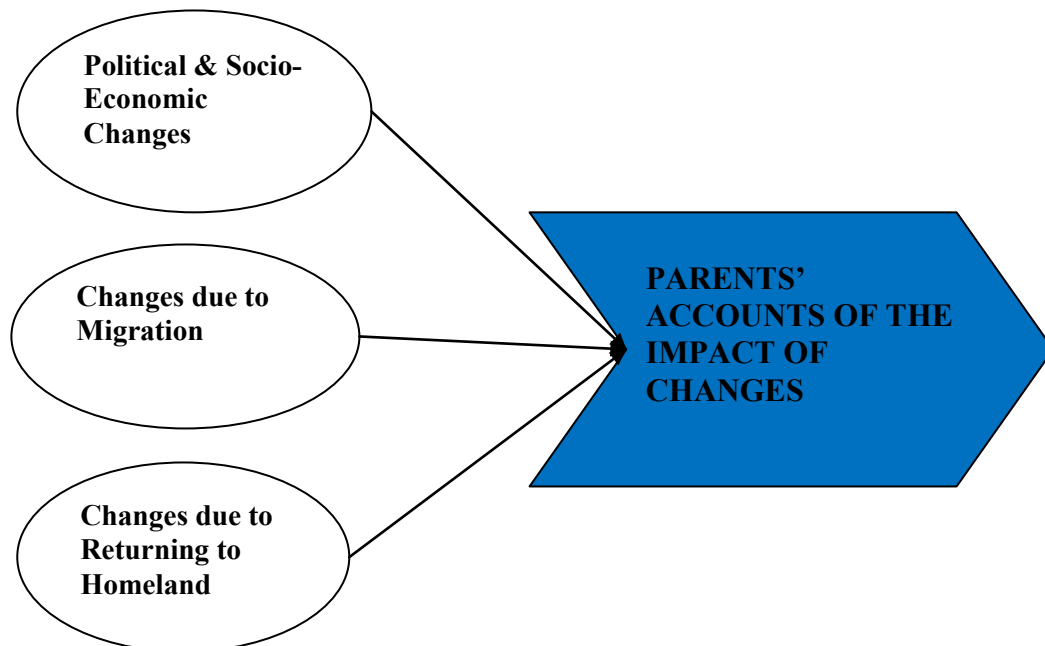
Figure 3.4: An Illustration of moving from *themes* to *main themes*

<u>Phase six</u>: *Producing the report*: This last stage partly resembles my current position. My report will be developed in a similar way to the outlined themes presented in Figure 3.5 presenting the main themes form the analysis chapters of this research project.
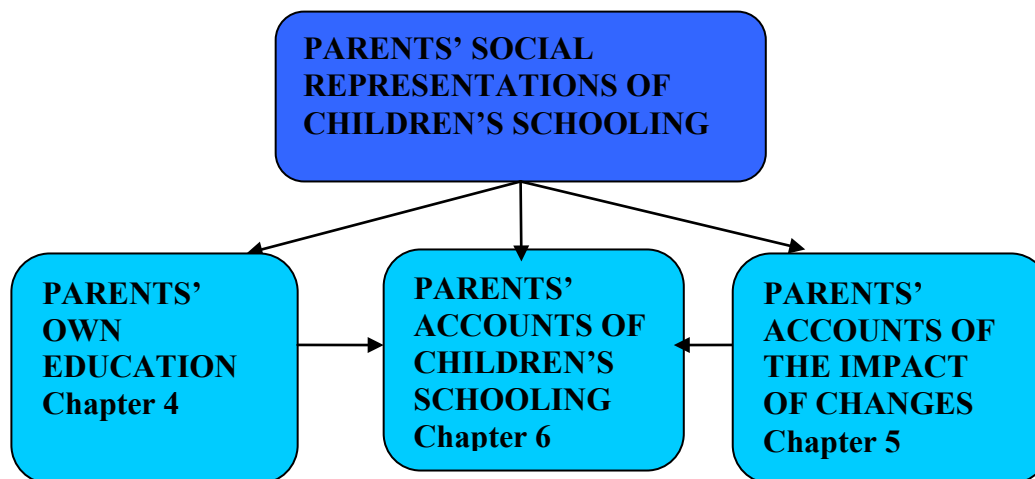
Figure 3.5: The main themes of parents' accounts of their children's schooling

It is evident from the above illustrations that identifying themes is a process that requires the researcher to continuously reflect on themes because "the identified or emerged themes can be grouped, systematically checked and reviewed in an iterative process of going backwards and forwards between data, research questions, and theories" (Gorgoriò & Abreu, 2009).

3.9.1 The use of verbatim quotations

Whose voice counts?

Various authors in the field of social research emphasize the role of including quotations from transcripts, suggesting that they help to clarify links between data interpretation and conclusions, discussed as validity, reliability, credibility and auditability (see for example, Beck, 1993; Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997; Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis & Dillon, 2003; Long & Godfrey, 2004). Whilst the role of the researcher is identified as an instrument in qualitative researcher

(Starks &Trinidad, 2007), the fundamental goal is to "give voice" to the participants' meanings and experiences on the topic under investigation. However, in the process of thematic analysis, my voice as a researcher was not represented in the extracts in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. This decision was based on the study's aim, which did not have in focus the social interaction, but rather to classify patterns deriving from the qualitative data on how parents elaborate knowledge from our experience. The quotes that are presented in the analysis chapter not always are answers to my questions. Often parents expressed their views and came back to it at a later stage. For example, in response to question, "*Did your parents support your school education?"* my intention was to provoke parents to talk about their past experiences with education. Parents responded to this question differently. Some claimed that their parents were busy working due to poverty; some others revealed that their siblings supported instead, and others admitted that their parents were always present during home work. At a later stage, when I posed questions like, "How exactly do you help your child with homework?" their answers were linked to the previous answer stating, "I liked when my mother did "...", and this is what I try to do with my daughter". They came back to their previous answers. In this context, the emerging theme took into account both answers since they both could tell more about parents' past and how that affected their present practice.

Similarly, when I was not certain what the claim had been and wanted to deepen my understanding on their questions, I went back to my question (i.e. Previously, when I asked you about "...", you were saying that "...", I was wondering if you could tell me a bit more about "..."). Throughout the interview process, I was actively listening, had frequent eye contact, body language and facial expressions with them. When they were not clear, they asked for clarification.

Omitting the questions posed by me, as a researcher, does not mean that I had no role in the process. Parents' interview started by inviting them to share their

story and I felt that the interview flew as their own personal story, with me guiding the process, giving verbal feedbacks, but at the same time allowing them to chose the position they wanted to take. The questions of the interview schedule were clearly stated. When further qualifications were needed, I used probing questions. However, the focus in the analysis was on what participants actually said, following my clearly stated questions.

At the end of the interview, when questioned, "*Is there something else you want to add*", "*Do you have any question*?" participants claimed that they felt good and comfortable to have gone through the process. For some, it had brought nostalgia from their past, for some others it helped to evaluate their role as parents in their children's education, and so on. The whole process became an interaction, which was comfortable and fitted our, as interactors, expectations for the process. When I explained that the information provided would be used for analysis under the supervision of university professors, all participants showed understanding, but also confidence in that, what they shared was their personal and true story. Participants were directing their answers at me, and I was guiding their speech as I had asked the questions, but the representations were about things, rather than just to me. I would argue that those answers were not simply directed to me, but that they would share the same meanings and experiences, had they been under the same context.

Coding

To develop an accountable and systematic thematic analysis requires using quotes from the transcribed data. The quotes presented in the following analysis Chapters (4, 5, and 6) present main themes and subthemes, followed by extracts, which show illustrative examples of parents' accounts, representing participants' positions. In other words, the extracts illustrate the analytic claims on the topic under investigation and enable the reader to judge the validity of the analysis against what has been said. The quotes are selected from long passages of the transcribed material to demonstrate participants' "voice", which accounts for their representation. Quotes provide evidence and they provide data that demonstrate the prevalence of the theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The

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aim to use quotations in the analysis chapter is not simply to provide evidence, but rather to present extracts that are "embedded within an analytic narrative that compelling illustrates the story" that is being told about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 23). Therefore, social representations are examined in two stages: descriptive and interpretative. First, the analysis chapter initially describes the representative quotes and then gives argumentations in relation to the study's aim and theoretical background.

As mentioned in the theoretical Chapter (2), the procedure used for the analysis of parents' interviews follows the study's theoretical framework. The analysis of parents' experiences commences with an overview of their own education (Chapter 4), followed by their accounts[13] on the impact of socio-cultural changes (Chapter 5). Parents' accounts of their children's schooling, the main focus of the current research, will be explored in Chapter (6).

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[13] In this study, the term *account* is used to reveal what people actually said, their statement in relation to the posed questions by the researcher. As Murakami (2007) claimed, "accounts are not definite facts about people's lives and past events; they are related to the present context of telling and address current concerns of the participants who are engaged in the interview" (p. 436).

CHAPTER 4: PARENTS' ACCOUNTS OF OWN EDUCATION-
Educated through trajectories of change

"Home background plays a significant role in young child's orientation to education...
(To be continued)
(William Teale, 1986, p. 193)

4.1. Parents' Own education: analysis and discussion of the findings

This analytical chapter examines parents' accounts of their own education. This was investigated with the aim of providing a framework to understand how the parents make sense of their children's schooling. The Albanian parents had experienced educational changes between their own schooling and the schooling of their children, including a radical change of schooling practices, and a major macro-political change, as discussed in Chapter 1. The study presupposes that parents draw on their past experiences to make sense of their children's schooling (O'Toole & Abreu, 2005; Raty, 2007) and these experiences play a vital role in how social representations of their children's schooling are constructed. Investigating their experiences with own education throughout the years was therefore understood to be crucial in understanding the representations of their children's schooling. With the use of thematic analysis, parents' accounts of their own education will be analysed and discussed in this chapter. An overview of the three analysis chapters and the main themes of the current chapter are presented in Figure 4.0.
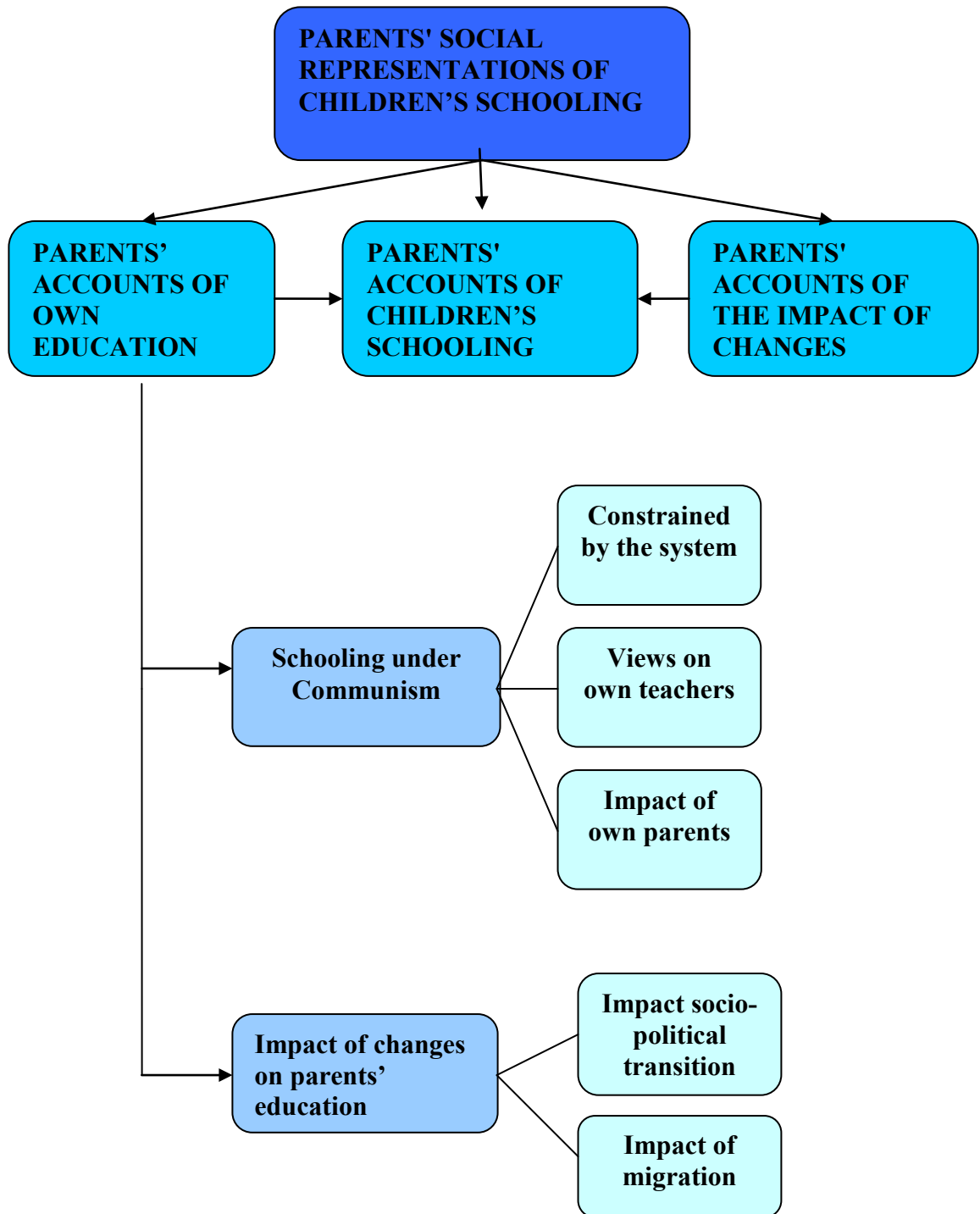
Figure 4.0: Parents' representations of own children's schooling: Parents' own education

4.2. *Thematic Analysis- Parents' accounts of their own education*

When parents were invited to talk about their own education, essentially revealing their story of education throughout years, they reflected on two main themes: their experience with *schooling under Communism* (before 1990) and *the impact of changes on their own education* (1990 onwards). Parents' accounts on the impact of changes included two subthemes: the impact of socio-political changes after the fall of the regime and the impact of migration (on emigrant and returned emigrant parents only). The findings will be analysed in the following sequences:

4.2.1 Schooling under Communism

4.2.2 Impact of changes on parents' own education

4.3   Discussion

4.2.1.   Schooling under Communism

This section describes the thematic units originating from parents' views on their schooling during communist regime. As discussed in Chapter 1, when parents were experiencing school education, Albania was under the communist regime (1944-1990). The analysis of the *schooling under communism* showed many subthemes. The subthemes that were more common across the groups, indicating how parents viewed the impact of the system during their school years, related to the ways in which the system constrained their schooling, the way they viewed their teachers, and the role their own parents played. The importance of these subthemes was evident because they were expressed by all participants, as shown in Table 4.1.1 in Appendices[14].

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[14] Please refer to Appendix H, page XXIII.

In the subsequent sections, each of the emerging subthemes will be defined accompanied by coded extracts from the analysis, followed by a general summary for each section.

4.2.1.1   **Constrained by the system**

Although the participants experienced the impact of the system at an early age, they reflected on particular issues to give examples of the way the political system had constrained their schooling. In these examples, parents focused on issues concerning how they perceived the system to have impacted upon their choices, the opportunities given to them, and the availability of physical resources (see Figure 4.1).
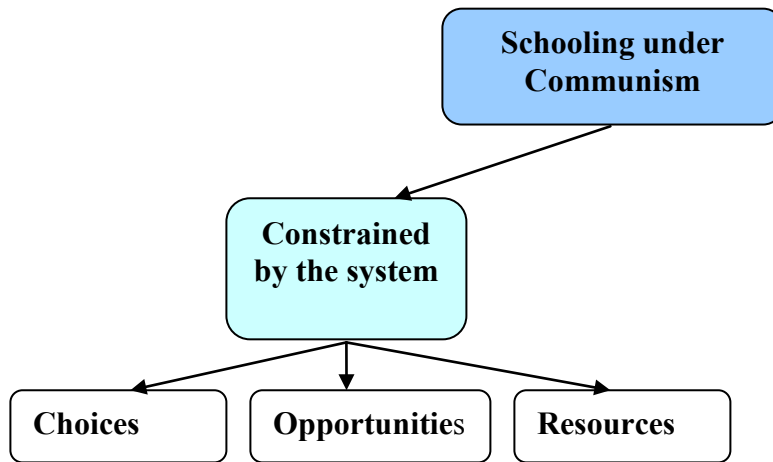
Figure 4.1: Constrained by the system

Table 4.1 presents selected extracts from parents' interviews illustrating how the system constrained choices, opportunities and resources.

Table 4.1: Constrained by the system

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
	Choices
Non Emigrant Pranvera	For me, it [school system] has changed a lot. Teacher-student relationship has changed. Also, from being a pupil into a student, now they have more opportunities from what we had because we didn't choose our field [of study], it was allocated to us, not always what we wanted...
Emigrant Lumturia	If [some] one wanted to study, the time was different in that we were not allowed to study foreign languages…
Emigrant parent Elvana	I studied Russian in high school. I was obliged to study Russian better say. Well, this is another memory from school. When I entered high school for pedagogy, I was chosen to be in the Russian language group. My will was to go for English, I did not learn any English but the national TV, the only one [we had] at the time it used to show programmes on learning English twice a week, and during the programme I would sit and concentrate. To be honest, people at my age in that [geographic] area would dream to have a TV let alone be able to learn English; whereas I had this passion from then.
Returned Emigrant Parent Kalia	The first thing is that we used to study about Communism; we had history, I mean the history of communist party and things like this... We had monism, Communism, Mr. E.H. [Initials of dictator], we would sing a song for him since year one. The A-B-C had this stuff in it. Something that there [in Greece], it is out of question (...)When I was in high school, I mean even back then you didn't understand why everyone was wearing a *red scarf*, because you don't know, but when you go to year 5 or 6 you see, but still we couldn't choose, the country we were living in then, you know…When I was little, I was wearing red scarf, pioneer scarf and I had a wonderful feeling; it was unique something that others knew what it meant, but I didn't at the time.
Returned Emigrant Enila	Hmm, speaking about the students [now] I think they have more freedom to choose, for what they want to choose to study. Then, you were allocated what one had to study, where one had to go; some had scholarship and one had to obey and get the scholarship, what field that was for or the competition one had to go through showed one what they could study. Now there is more choice. Although I must say that we should not overcome freedom. We need to keep the discipline, and not for education to be free without limits.

	Opportunities
Emigrant Parent Lumturie	I say that today if a child is talented here [UK], he is capable to reach higher what he wants. <u>Whereas us we did not have these opportunities</u>. Even if I was the best students, all grades 10[15], at the time there was only one scholarship for the whole village. The child who would get was the son or daughter of the poorest family…Perhaps he/she wasn't the best student or the average of his grades was not good, still the scholarship would go to that family, because their parents did not have jobs, or no wages, <u>the poorest would get it. Not the one who deserved</u>.
Non emigrant parent Vera	The system that we grew up, Communism I mean, we had a very difficult childhood…Hmm, I guess the people in power would use the persecuted families, mistreat them to do the difficult jobs at night. I am not sure. But, they were horrible times (...). Children are more, hmm, free; back then we faced a lot of stress, and politics was influencing a lot; whereas today if one wants to come out on the surface, there is opportunity. We were from the persecuted family, it was impossible, though parents attempted many times, then transition came, politics, etc…
Returned Emigrant Parent Mona	Well, it wasn't my choice; the system chose it [field of study] for me. That was negative for the system then, which did not allow us to fulfil dreams; whereas today our children do wherever they want to do- no problem at all. Another thing I want to say, I was lucky that I was not *persecuted* or anything like that, because if I had some political problems, I would not have gone to university at all. I did not have this problem then, but still it was a problem that they [representative of system] signed you off where they wanted. And I had finished the professional gymnasium for electrical, and then had me go for geology, which had no link to what I had done in high school.
	Resources
Non Emigrant Erma	Well, I finished school before '90s; so most of my time, before '90s, like most families in Albania <u>we didn't have much, many choices, we didn't have enough</u>, you know? We have more school books now<u>; we didn't have much access to school book, or school materials. I think that was difficult for me.</u> I guess for most of my friends who were going to school in that time…There was a shortage then.
Non Emigrant Pranvera	It's different to our time; <u>we had the book and one simple notebook where we would practice many things, problem solving,</u>

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[15] In the Albanian education system, pupils and students are graded from 4 (Fail) to 10 (Excellent).

	etc. Now, there is one notebook for class, one for home, one extra for best students. I think we managed better even though we did have information, but there is no value having so much home work.
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	Children today are much wiser I think than us, but…Hmm, <u>I mean politics influenced us more. All we had was books, nothing else, for us to expand our knowledge.</u> Now their imagination is endless, they see more, we didn't.
Emigrant Flora	<u>As far as activities, they were poor because that was the system then, we didn't have</u>…We would be happy to visit cities like Tirana at the time, and that was it (...) For education system, I have a lot to say about it. <u>Classes were very simple in my time; we had benches, blackboard; that was the wealth of the class, and the teacher's table.</u> Perhaps there was a map on the wall. No paintings, just a map, or perhaps there was a lab class for physics or chemistry, biology. Those were ok in my time, but classes were simple.
Returned Emigrant Anita	In our time, <u>we used to go to school every Sunday to clean our school, classroom, so that everything was perfect for Monday morning. Also, every September we used to go to the farms and collect corn during ripe time.</u> This time was a great time for us as children to get together. It was a lovely time to leave the house and go on a field trip. Also, during class we had many games, we laughed a lot. We had less things than children today; we did not have computers, phones, but we were happier; we had enthusiasm to go to school.

Choices

As noted in the above extracts, participants from each socio-cultural group spoke about the way that the previous regime had affected their schooling. It was evident that the parents perceived the education system under the Communist regime as constraining their choices, opportunities and resources available to them. Participants mentioned issues around the system determining their school curriculum, including school subjects they had studied and their socio-political education. This is illustrated by Lumturie who claimed, "*The time was different in that we were not allowed to study foreign languages*". Elvana stated that she "*was obliged to study Russian*". The system determined the participants' school curriculum and they felt they did not have choices, such as studying a foreign language of their preference.

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The system determined curriculum at personal level, but also at a collective level. Pupils studied political ideology through taught subjects such as the History of Communism. Kalia explains, "*The first thing is that we used to study about Communism; we had history, I mean history of communist party*". She also illustrated that the content of the *Abetare* (equivalent to *A-B-Cs)* contained stories linked to Communism. In addition, children would sing songs for the communist leader and wore a "red scarf", the symbol of pioneers. Kalia expressed that she was not aware of the symbolic meanings of some of the school practices until in later years: *"Back then, you didn't understand why everyone was wearing a red scarf, because you don't know, but when you are in year five or six you see"*.

The system imposed choices in subjects and extra curriculum activities during primary and secondary education and in higher education. Tefta highlighted that the system also aimed at extending the notions of Communism up to university level, "*Even in faculty, one of the first questions students were asked had to do with E.H.* [name of dictator]".

Following their accounts on the system constraining choices at university level, the extracts demonstrate that as students, parents perceived and experienced the system as constraining their opportunities for further studies. The Communist Regime was responsible for allocating who could enter university and in what subject field. This is explained by Vjollca who stated, "*We had no choice then; we had no right to decide for our future; we had to go for what they would orient us*". In addition, Ira mentioned that she attended university after being chosen by the party in power, "*I did not compete to enter; I was chosen by the party committee, which was at that time*". Pranvera had a similar experience, "*We didn't choose our field; it was allocated to us, not always what we wanted*".

Opportunities

Parents described ways that the system constrained their choices and opportunities suggesting that these constraints were the norm. A small group of the parents also noted that the system constrained choices and opportunities of parents who belonged to what the socialist system identified as "*familje të persekutuara*" [persecuted families]. For example, Vjollca claimed that because her father's uncle had escaped the country 60 years previously, she was not given a scholarship. Despite this fact, she was able to attend university because of her high achievements. Participants who were not part of these families indirectly also talked about this issue, demonstrating the drastic lack of opportunity. Mona explained, "*It wasn't my choice; the system chose it [the field of study] for me. I was lucky that I was not persecuted or anything like that, because if I had some political problems, I would have not gone to university at all*".

Resources

A third issue of how the system constrained the parents' schooling was in relation to resources. Parents perceived that the system had constrained their school activities and supplies. Explaining her concern about school activities, Flora explained, "*As far as activities, they were poor because that was the system then; we didn't have. We would be happy to visit cities like Tirana but that was it*". Although activities were poor, parents said that they enjoyed them simply because it counted as social time with their peers. The system had allocated the nature of school activities that parents had engaged in, for example, Anita described, "*In our time, we used to go to school every Sunday to clean our school, our classroom, so that everything was perfect for Monday morning. Also, every September, we used to go to the farms and collect corn during ripe time. This time was a great time for us as children to get together. It was a lovely time to leave the house and go on a field trip.*"

Parents also reflected on the way that the system had constrained their school supplies, such as Erma's experience, "*We did not have much access to school books, or materials. It was difficult for me. There was a shortage then*". Pranvera also blamed the system for lacking books at school, "*Politics influenced us more. All we had was books, nothing else, for us to expand our knowledge*". Flora stated, "*Classes were simple; we had desks, blackboard; that was the wealth of the class, and the teacher's table*".

As highlighted in the table of extracts, the parents' own education had been affected by the system in power at the time they had their schooling experiences. Many of the parents educated under communist regime revealed how the system had constrained their schooling at an individual and collective level. Even though they were able to identify how the system affected their schooling at an early age, these experiences and meanings became clearer to them in the following years. When parents were talking about schooling under the previous regime, they accounted for the system constraining their curriculum in subjects taught, in introducing ideology through singing and in their dress code. Parents also accounted for how the system had constrained their opportunities and choices in higher education in allocating scholarships and positioning them in particular field of study. They also revealed how the choices and opportunities were even more restricted had they been part of "persecuted families".

In addition, there is evidence that the system had also constrained physical resources, particularly parents' school activities and supplies. In the above extracts parents reflected on the system constraining parents' school activities and by keeping a shortage in their school supplies, which resulted in poor activities and simple classes. Nevertheless, as students, parents' valued the time with their peers during activities, felt happy and appreciated the supplies, which accounted for "the wealth of the class".

The authoritarian system that was present in Albania during the parents' schooling was perceived to have constrained their choices, opportunities and school resources, resulting in them being restricted at individual and collective level. As previously reported, taking into considerate parents' views on education deepens our understanding on their views on children's schooling, and the evidence that these parents perceived that their education was limited under the system would suggest that these views will be present in giving meaning to their children's educational practices.

4.2.1.2   Views on own Teachers

In line with the parents' accounts on their schooling under Communism, this section will present and discuss the parents' views on their own teachers. It will provide an insight of how parents perceived their own teachers and their role. As noted in the coding presence Table 4.1.1, when the parents were reflecting on their memories of school, they all expressed views on their teachers. More specifically, the parents emphasized the importance of the image of teachers and their relationship with them, respectively coded as image of the teachers and relationship with teachers, as displayed in Figure 4.2.
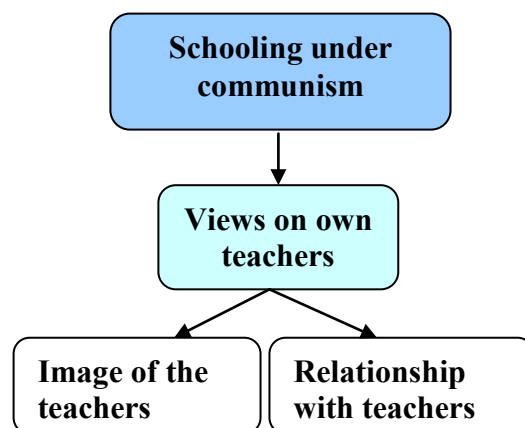
Figure 4.2: Views on own teachers

The following table provides an outline of how the parents talked about their teachers with respect their image and relationships.

Table 4.2: Views on own teachers

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
	Image of the teachers
Emigrant Maria	In Albania, [….] we had that <u>authority.</u> Someone would see the teacher coming and would say "Run, physics' teacher is coming" and we would run. <u>We were afraid</u> that she [teacher] would see us walking around in halls; whereas here [UK], if your teacher sees you she is coming over to talk to you.
Emigrant Flora	At my daughter's age I remember having a <u>tough teacher, tough meaning strict, requesting a lot from us</u>…Teachers, who were <u>the most important thing</u> at school, <u>the main figure</u>. I always had <u>good teachers, capable teachers</u>, which <u>I found pleasure listening to their teaching,</u> and because of that feeling I had during class, I started wanting to become a teacher myself, and I would always say, "I want to be a teacher".
Emigrant Elvana	Hmm, it is not important as it used to be. Before, <u>the teacher had a much higher position</u>, figure I mean. However, <u>the teacher plays an important role</u>, but I want to say that today the teacher is more like a facilitator [said in English], which means it offers children the opportunity it is not that model as used to be then, ok? Now, it is one who <u>offers children opportunity to learn</u>, not from things in his mind, but what's around him/her, with materials, knowing what the child needs.
Returned Emigrant Kalia	The way we perceived the image of the teacher, it was something like, I am not sure, but as <u>she was an icon who did not eat, or drink...because she was perfect, wearing wheels and make up</u>, and this is not the case for my children when [we were] in Greece. Communication between teacher and pupils was just very nice and you cannot compare to back then.
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	<u>I remember my teacher was a genius then</u>; <u>she was a reference I used for most of my actions.</u> I wanted to become like her. For example, my English teacher in 8th grade I liked her, I also liked my literacy teacher in high school, <u>she had a shining image of goodness,</u> you know, so I loved her.
Non Emigrant Enerieta	In our time we [as pupils] were much more organized, focused, strict. <u>The word of our teachers was a law that could not be questioned</u>.

Returned emigrant Mona	In some way, the <u>teacher understood child's psychology</u> and the child who was not paying attention she would try to get his attention and if someone had a problem like a family problem, the teacher would say to them to go outside and that she would work more especially with them tomorrow so they understood better. Hmm, also the most important thing was that <u>teacher's word was a law</u>. <u>Teachers were well prepared and had passion for teaching.</u>
Returned Emigrant Anita	When I see her [son's teacher], it's like 5 minutes meeting because she has other parents to see. Whereas then, we would sit by her desk, the teacher would show the marks, give examples, before <u>teachers would try and understand children more, like psychologist</u>…What I mean is that at the time I feel like teachers were interested to understand the child more…
Emigrant Lumturie	Everything…hmm, <u>her [teacher's] appearance, the way she dressed, the order; she was smiley, lovely with children, her smile,</u> if a child was timid at the time to talk to her she would invite him or her, she <u>would cuddle us</u>, she would help for everything. She was good at drawing, her hands drawing…all memories.
Non Emigrant Erma	There are a lot of improvements in the environment, but talking about school probably <u>the teachers are not so much focused like the teachers at my time</u> were, so I guess this is another difference between then and now. I guess they [teachers] <u>were more committed, or they were made</u>, you know? They were…because I went to school; most of my time at school was under the Communism, <u>so the teachers were under this pressure</u>…
	Relationship with the teachers: Respect
Non Emigrant Matilda	<u>We had a certain respect for our teachers,</u> more than today. If the teacher then would yell at us, we were able to understand that it was for our best because as children we were not working as much as we should…Although <u>we had dictatorship system in teaching</u>, I do think it was nice. I remember when in first grade I had this teacher who had this ring on her hand, and I do not remember what I had done, but <u>she hit me with the ring on my head</u>. Many years after I met her and told her about the ring even [smiles]. <u>We were different, we used to play a lot, and we perceive the system as good. The teacher, as I said, was an idol</u>. I was a very good student so <u>I felt privileged around the teachers.</u> I want to mention another detail which I think it's different to now. My mother was a nurse and because of her good profession, teachers treated me in a more positive way. <u>Someone else whose mother was a cleaner was treated in a less positive way.</u> Now these things do not exist anymore.
Emigrant Lumturie	<u>We used to have much more respect. We respected more. My parents would warn us that "teacher comes right after us".</u> Whatever the parents and teachers would say it is education…how

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	can I say? Their [teachers'] ideas and personality would prepare us for life. Here [UK] the teachers have problems with English children. If you go to their [children's] table and ask them to do something, which is connected to the lesson, some can say, "I do not want to do it…" you know?
Emigrant Lule	She [my daughter] thinks her teacher is like a second parent to her, because most of the time she spends at school, I mean here in English schools. For me I think it was the same, the difference it's that I had much more respect for the teacher. Many times, after school, we would sit with the teacher and have a discussion, because during class she was focused on lesson, 45 min after she would spend 5 minutes talking to us and that was a great feeling.
Returned Emigrant Enila	Surely, my first teacher, I could not forget. I still meet my first teacher, when I see her I feel respect, perhaps because she was the first figure as teacher that I met, as an educator, because I did not go to kinder garden before I went to school...
	Relationship with the teachers: Close
Emigrant Lule	Hmm, can't say much about things in Albania, but they [our teachers] are open to us and very nice. In Albania, I think it's not like it used to be in my time; we were close to the teacher.
Returned Emigrant Tana	We used to be very close to the teacher, and with each other, as friends. I remember on my 3rd grade I had this old teacher, she adored us, and then on the 4th grade, a new teacher came. Sadly enough our first teacher died during democracy, even now when I think of it, it makes me cry.
Returned Emigrant Tefta	I remember during high school we were more free, being in an arts high school, we were not so controlled as other schools, and we felt closer to teachers as well compared to other schools, teachers were friendly and they would keep us more to themselves, they would advice us. Classes were classes, but they would also find time to advice us, because lyceum at the time did not have a good reputation; people thought we did not do real study, because we were doing music. And, this is why teachers always would talk to us. Hmm, I once had this teacher in year 7 or 8 and he was very nice. He would always find time to talk to my friend and me like he was an older brother and not a teacher.
Emigrant Lumturie	I also think that today teachers and children go over boundaries in their relationship; whereas then we knew where to stop and we built good relationships with our teachers. We had much respect for the teacher, we had great relationships, and at times they

	treated us like friends, but when class started they were not like friends anymore, the lesson was more important. Whereas today this doesn't exist, if you want to have good relationship with the students they think that this is an advantage for them, like for example "the teacher is not going to ask me difficult task now that I am friends with her, or that she won't give me a bad mark".
	Relationships with the teachers: Conflict
Emigrant Maria	I have a bad memory from school; the teacher would hit children, or yell, or call them to leave the class, things that never occur here [UK].
Returned Emigrant Ira	For example, even though I have worked hard at school, during secondary school and during my adolescence, I remember conflicts with teachers because their communication, not good. I believe it was from 8th grade up to 3rd year in high school, for me, what I experienced, it was problematic (...) I have to say I had some [teachers] who I admired and I enjoyed the class. I was superb, my grades I mean, but there were subjects I did not want to touch [read] precisely because the teacher of those subjects made me feel negative about them.
Emigrant Parent Vjollca	Later on, I do remember a non-pleasant time. My father was a chief of security at the time and he lost his job, something happened then, I am not going into that now, but he lost his job, At the time I was in high school and I notice that my history teacher, who thought of me as genius in his class, found out that my father was not an important someone anymore, and he totally changed, I mean 360 degrees, showing his other side, by not looking at me as the best student, but as the daughter of the chief who was fired. That was very difficult on me but it did make me strong.
Returned Emigrant Mona	It was maths' hour and we had a great teacher, he taught with passion, and his class was like theatre, so that information stayed with us. But when we did not pay attention he would throw a chalk at one of them and would say "Why are you not being attentive"? And he child would suddenly wake up and then be listening. This is what I remember. Perhaps this doesn't sound good but it did make children pay attention, I mean, pupils would start listening.

Image of the teachers

As illustrated in the selection of extracts Table 4.2, when the parents were invited to recall memories from school, they varied in the way they perceived their own teachers. On one hand, teachers were viewed as an "authority",

"genius", "reference", "icon" and the "main figure", resulting in them feeling afraid at times. This is illustrated by Maria, "*In Albania… we had authority. Someone would see the teacher coming and would say 'Run, physics' teacher is coming', and we would run. We were afraid that she would see us walking around in halls…*" Elvana viewed her teacher as having a "*Higher position*" while Kalia identified her teacher as "*An icon who did not eat, or drink, because she was perfect*".

The parents drew a profile of teachers being "*Strict*" and that "*Their word was a law*" for them. For example, Flora explained that her teacher was *"Tough, meaning strict, requesting a lot from us*", and Enerieta that, "*The word of our teachers was a law that could not be questioned*". Like Enerieta, Mona also claimed that the "*Teacher's word was a law*".

On the other hand, the parents also reflected on the way teachers approached them as children, revealing the teachers' profile as a psychologist. Mona talked about her teacher "U*nderstanding child's psychology*", and similarly, Anita felt "*Teachers would try and understand children more, like psychologist*". In addition, parents described their teachers as being well informed, motivated, and concentrated on them as children. More so, Flora viewed her teachers as being "good and capable"; whereas Lumturie considered that her teacher "*Was smiley, lovely with children….she would cuddle us; she would help for everything*". Mona believed her teachers were "*Well prepared"* and "*Had passion for teaching*".

Relationship with the teachers

When the parents were reflecting on their teachers, their views were extended to their accounts of relationships with their teachers. Although few of the parents remembered having problematic relationships with their teachers, most of the parents perceived their relation with their teachers as being one of respect

and friendly. As a result, it was expected that the parents would reveal feelings of respect when talking about their teachers. For example, Matilda explained, "*We had certain respect for our teachers*". Similarly, Lumturie described, "*We used to have much more respect* [for our teachers]". Lumturie added that her parents guided her to show respect for the teacher by telling her that the "*Teacher comes right after us*". In comparison with her child's relationship with the teacher, Lule differentiated relationships, "*I had much more respect for the teacher*". Although a great amount of time had passed for Enila, she still felt respect for the teacher, "*When I see her, I feel respect, because she was the first figure as teacher that I met*". According to her, this respect was due to the position teachers had at the time.

The parents also perceived their relationship with the teachers as being close and friendly. Tana explained, "*We used to be very close to the teacher…she adored us*". Tefta extended her view of being close, "*Teachers were friendly and they would keep us more to themselves, they would advice us*". Tefta also explained that one of her male teachers was "*Like an older brother and not a teacher*" to her and her classmates. Lumturie also talked about teachers being friendly, however, she clarified that relationship was different during class, "*But when class started they [teachers] were not like friends anymore, the lesson was more important*".

A minority of the parents emphasized cases of the teacher-child relationship as being problematic. This can be depicted from extracts of Maria in which she revealed unpleasant memories from being at school, "*The teacher would hit children, or yell, or call them to leave the class.*" Ira also commented on her experience as a teenager when she experienced conflict with some of her teachers due to "*Their communication not being good*" leading her "*To feel negative"* about her school subjects. Despite this, Ira mentioned having other teachers whom "*She admired and enjoyed their class*". Mona recalled a situation when teachers would throw chalk at pupils who were not being attentive. In her views, this action did make children pay more attention.

However, Mona also viewed her teacher being great in that "*He taught with passion and his class was like a theatre, so that information stayed with us*".

Parents from each of the socio-cultural groups perceived their teachers as icons and often as the most important figure in their lives. In tandem, they considered them as being authoritarians whose words could not be questioned. The parents also viewed their teachers as taking the role of a psychologist in the way they approached children and as well informed, self-motivated, and as possessing passion for teaching. When reflecting on their relationships, the parents revealed feelings of respect and being close to their teachers, with few parents recalling any abusive approaches towards them.

Overall, although parents viewed the school system under communist regime as constraining their choices, opportunities and resources, they valued the role of their teachers. The teachers' position was perceived as a respected figure, an authority and an idol; however, parents valued the fact that their teachers developed good relationships with them resulting in feelings of respect and closeness with some recalling times of conflict with their teacher. Overall, the parents thought highly of their teachers.

4.2.1.3   Parents of the Parents

This last section of parents' views on their own education with reference to schooling under Communism focuses on the participants' accounts on the role of their own parents during school education. When the participants were invited to reflect on their parents' support during schooling, they all spoke about their parents being involved (see Table 4.1.1). The participants emphasized their parents' involvement and hands-on with schoolwork. In the absence of their parents, participants also reflected on the support of their older siblings supporting them, see Figure 4.3.

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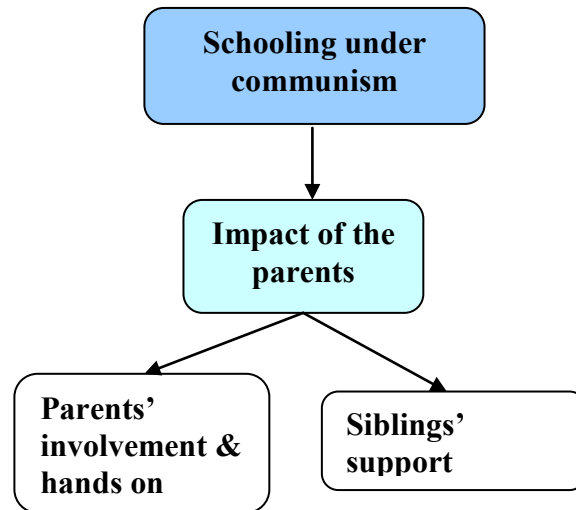
Figure 4.3: Parents of the parents

The participants' accounts of their parents' involvement and as the support from their siblings are illustrated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: The impact of own parents

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
Non emigrant Vera	*Parents' involvement and hands on* Hmm, us, girls studied on our own, my brother, the only brother, it was not easy to sit him down, a bit like my son. <u>My father would look at our homework, he was strict in fact. I guess the regime made him strict.</u> He used to work for the hydroelectric power plan; they fired him because we were a persecuted family. Now when I think of the time, it was terrifying. T<u>hey would wake him up at night to dig grounds, in the mountain and to plant trees</u>…We were very obedient, <u>we would finish studying, go to him [father] to repeat the lesson. Even though very tired, he had time to listen to us</u>, I think of it many times, we used to play with him as well. Mom was always making clothes, working and working.
Non emigrant Enerieta	<u>Of course, totally, during that time both my parents were engaged in my schooling.</u> My mom was a teacher herself, a teacher of Moral Education, that was the subject, also she was teaching history and geography. <u>My mom has helped me a lot, I can say that she was the one who taught me how to study and do well in school.</u> After school, we were different then, we did not have our parents waiting on us, we hang our keys on the neck, came back, open the house door because parents were working. When mom would come back from school, around 4 or 5 in the afternoon because of her job position at the school, <u>I remember her sitting by</u>

	me during homework and would check if there was something I had not understood, especially in maths. Because for me it did not come naturally, you know algebra, geometry, and so on. During these subjects my mom has helped me a lot. (…) Well, at first she asked me, "what do you understand from this" or she would take, like, fruits or cups and would show a similar example to the homework by using real things, i.e. we have this much, we need to take off this, how much is left? This was her way of explaining to me.
Emigrant Elvana	At the beginning, I mean when I was in first grade or the second year, they [parents] helped, they worked with me. Later on, I started to walk on my own. Well, you see, it's not like they always had the time to be with me. I always would start my home works, would go outside in the garden and do it, I would do it on my own, I was confident in what I was doing. Support was not something I missed.
Emigrant Maria	To be honest my father more, but he was working, they were both working a lot, they were busy every day at work, and even my dad was on duty most days, so. It was difficult for them to be involved, but they thought highly of education and encouraged me. (…) He would say, "let's pretend we go to a shop, you would buy five apples, how much money is there in your hand? How much is there for the person at the shop? And how much to bring home?" So, it was more like thinking about it as a situation which happens in real life. So we would go from one exercise to the other, we did it all, addition, subtraction, etc. We also did puzzles…
Returned Emigrant Tefta	For her [mother], children's education was the main thing, she was…I mean, we as children would lack many things, but we never missed things which were for school, never, buying books, clothes we needed for school, all of it, she provided those. Education was the main thing.
Emigrant Flora	Not by supporting...I mean I remember in primary school, something that I still think about, because my parents were working. My mom was an accountant, she was at work the whole day until four [pm]; my father was an activist in politics, inspector in the party committee, inspector for professional schools, so they could not come to my school during the day, and rarely during parents' meeting, but not really, they did not have time for that.
Returned Emigrant Anita	Parents would work from morning to the evening, but I remember my mom as soon as she got home she would ask how we got on, and she wanted to check out mathematics homework, she would ask "did you finish your homework, show me your homework". She would check them, first she would see the date at the top, then

	the whole writing, and she wanted for the handwriting to be good. It was enough for her to just see that we had finished. They were both preoccupied with our studies, especially my mom. We did not want to disappoint them [parents]; we used to say, "Ok we better finish it before they come home". My mom was a great woman. Hmm, my father he had a difficult job so he couldn't help much, but we were good children; we all completed high school.
Returned emigrant Vjollca	They did help, in fact my father has done an extraordinary thing for me to get a scholarship to go at high school specialized for pedagogy, which, now that I think about it, it makes me feel good, though I must say for that time, what he did it was a big thing. People in Albania then had many stereotypical attitudes-he [father] had an uncle who did escape the country 40 years ago that time, now 60 years ago, and that meant that I had to suffer the consequences, I could not get a scholarship to go to school for education, and with much determination, none has done it then, it was 1988, that's what people would say. He faced them all, he faced them in meetings, all the people at the council I think that's where they were, I don't recall their names, I just know that with a lot of sacrifice he tried. At the end, in one side my good results, coz this was his anger, the fact that I was a good student and I deserved to be there, I had sacrificed to be good, and why not me, I had earned it. Finally, it happened and I owe him a lot.

Siblings' support |
| **Emigrant Lumturie** | Hmm, mainly my sisters and brothers. My parents, not. They were busy, they had a lot of work, we were six children, I was the sixth child. My older sister had finished university for pharmacy, I had a brother, and another sister who finished for economics, and all of them would check and control my homework. One of my brothers was quite strict and if I had slightly written something not nicely he would say "Why did you go away from the line, what about this letter, what comes after this?" He would say that if I didn't put letter in order, they would fight with one another [smiles]. They [siblings] would all check on my writing and for everything, you know? |
| **Emigrant Flora** | When I would go back home after school, my brothers and sisters were older than me, because I was the ninth, the youngest. They would ask a lot from me, to do homework…asking "Did you finish homework for tomorrow?". I must say I liked going to school because my results were good too…I had my mother's support, how could I say…she bought me the things I needed, teaching tools, but she did not have time for me because she was working, she used to work a lot, she was a chef and would start work at 5 in the morning until 11 at night, but also my sisters cared for me a lot…older sisters. They helped me; they clothed me, changed my clothes and would make me ready for school. (…) Maths was, for me, it depends I think from the family, also my |

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	brothers and sisters liked maths and <u>when I did not understand something my older sister would explain to me, I mean she knew how to explain to me, and I understood her</u>, and the next day I would go to school and felt proud, so I would lift my hand saying "Teacher, can I do this exercise?" and there were also times that I wanted to do one after the other. That has helped me a lot, I mean, to have older brothers and sisters helping you, it's good.
Returned Emigrant Tefta	<u>Yeah, I had problems with maths in fact, but parents and my brother and sister were all supporting me to learn, especially my brother.</u> Either my brother or sister, or my mom, but it was a time that I did not want to burden her and I would also go to a neighbour which was near and she was older than me and I trusted her because with my brother even though he was good at maths, I was afraid he would make fun of me saying, - "Oh, you don't know how to solve it!" (…) My desire was the violin and of course <u>they [parents] would come to school to check on me</u>, would meet the violin teacher.

Parents' support and hands on

The parents' involvement was considered very important and gave much meaning to the participants' schooling experiences. When participants were invited to reflect on their parents' support during school education, despite the regime or any lack of opportunity due to work, the participants concluded that their parents were preoccupied with their schooling. As discussed in the previous section, persecuted families were restricted in their educational choices and opportunities. In addition to the system constraining their education for the few of the participants, the previous regime sometimes constrained their parents' employment opportunities. However, as evident from the participants' experiences, when their parents were at home, they were involved in their children's homework. For example, Vera remembered, *"My father would look at homework; he was strict in fact. I guess the regime made him strict (…). We would finish homework; go to him [father] to repeat the lesson. Even though very tired, he had time to listen to us"*. Parents in persecuted families argued against the authorities in power in order to provide opportunity for their children (i.e. a scholarship for further education). Elvana commented on the fact

that, although her parents were not always with her during homework, her father had accomplished "*An extraordinary thing*" for her to get a scholarship. She was a good student and because her father "*With much determination*" did everything he could, she was able to secure further education.

It is also evident that due to work commitments, not all parents were able to support their children with their schoolwork. Flora explained, "*They could not come to my school during the day, and rarely during school meeting*". Some participants perceived their parents supporting them by giving encouragements and providing clothing and school supply for them. Maria explained that because her parents were working making it difficult for them to be involved, "*They thought highly of education and encouraged me*". On the other side, Tefta talked about her mother providing school supply and clothing as a sign of appreciation towards education, which she viewed as priority.

The above extracts also showed evidence of the participants' parents' hands on approach during school visits or homework. Although it is not a focus of this research, some parents reflected on their parents' hands on work during their maths homework. Enerieta recalled her mother sitting next to her during maths homework. Similarly, Maria explained that her father practiced role-play situations, such as going to a shop. She described, "*He [father] would say: Let's pretend we go to a shop, you would buy five apples, how much money is there in your hand? How much is there for the person at the shop? And how much will you bring home?*" Anita also recalled a situation with her mother coming back from home and showing interest in her maths homework and looking at handwriting by asking Anita: "*Did you finish your homework? Show me your homework!*" When her parents were at home, Tefta expressed that asking for support she found it as "*A burden*" on her parents. Nevertheless, she recalled her parents being there to meet the teacher.

Siblings' support

It is evident that although their parents were working, they were interested to know about the participants' schoolwork. In their absence, some participants

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recalled the role of their older siblings covering for their parents. Lumturie, who was brought up in a family of six children, had very busy parents but because her older siblings had finished further education, they would check on her homework with reference to writing tasks, "*They [siblings] would all check on my writing and for everything*". Similarly, Flora also had been brought up in an extended family being the ninth child. She also revealed that her parents were there to equip her with teaching tools; however, due to jobs, her mother did not have the time to provide hands on help with schoolwork. Instead, her sisters helped her with maths homework, "*When I did not understand something my older sister would explain to me, I mean she knew how to explain to me, and I understood her*". Her sisters also took the mother's role in providing clothing and getting Flora ready for school.

Overall, the Albanian parents' story of education is dynamic in meaning and contexts. The participants of the current research had experienced their schooling (primary and secondary education) under the Communist regime. At the time, their experiences were influenced by the system in power, which constrained their choices and opportunities at personal and collective level, as well physical resources necessary for school activities. Parents' also reflected on the important role their teachers played during their schooling. Participants represented their teachers as being authoritarian, however passionate about their jobs and teachers who approached them in friendly manner and were supportive towards them. Furthermore, participants reflected on the role of their own parents during their schooling. The regime was demanding in having parents work excessively, which meant for them not always having the opportunity to support them with schoolwork due to work commitments. Nevertheless, they valued their parents' contribution. These participants' parents valued education and were occupied with their schooling, especially with the study hour and completion of homework. In the absence of parents, older siblings were there to support, a phenomenon, which is common in collectivist societies.

4.2.2.   Impact of changes on parents' own education

The second part of this chapter aims at analyzing the impact of changes on the parents' own education. After the fall of Communism, the parents' education was impacted by the changes due to transition period and, for some parents, by changes due to migration and returning. At the time of the socio-political transition, these parents were enrolled between intermediate and higher level of their education. In addition, because more than three quarters of the recruited participants migrated to foreign countries during this transition, the impact of migration on their education must be considered. There is no evidence to show that their decision to return to Albania had affected their own education. Therefore, this section will present data for two meaningful stages: the parents' own education as impacted by (i) the socio-political transition, and (ii) migration (see Figure 4.0).

At this stage of the analysis, it is necessary to clarify that this section will focus on the impact of changes with reference to its effects on the parents' own education. The parents' accounts of the impact of socio-cultural changes on their views on the education system will be analyzed and discussed in the following Chapter 5.

Depending on the socio-cultural group that the parents belong to, they perceived changes in different ways. It is understandable that the non-emigrant parents who remained in the country after the fall of Communism and during the transition years witnessed the changes in the education system without a breaking point. Likewise, emigrant and returned emigrant parents also reflected on the impact of changes due to the transition while they were still living in Albania. However, unlike non-emigrant parents, their time in Albania was limited due to migration. Therefore, they also reflected on the impact of their experiences abroad on their own education. Therefore, when analysing the impact of migration on the parents' own education, non-emigrant parents will be excluded.

In coherence with the first part of this chapter, it was believed that, an analysis of the impact of transition and migration on parents' own education, would offer a better understanding of their perceptions of their children's schooling. When the parents were reflecting on the impact of changes occurring after the fall of the previous regime, they commented on the impact of socio-political transition and the impact of migration. The distribution Table 4.1.2 in Appendices[16] shows that these subthemes were significant for most of the parents since the rest of them either had completed higher education prior to transition, continued it during migration or simply had not aimed at continuing further education.

4.2.2.1   Impact of socio-political transition

When the parents reflected on the impact of socio-political transition, they focused on issues concerned with the changes in the system and feelings about the perceived changes, as illustrated in the following Figure 4.4.
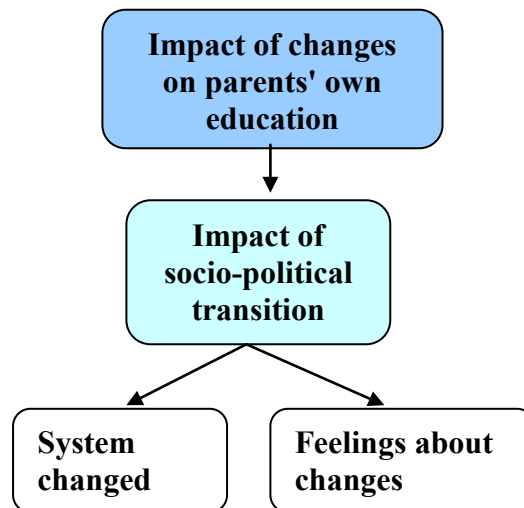
Figure 4.4: Impact of socio-political transition

Table 4.4 will present selected quotes illustrating the impact of the socio-political transition upon the parents.

Table 4.4: The impact of socio-political transition

Status and Name	Coded extracts from the interviews
Non emigrant Matilda	*System changed* Yes indeed, <u>it has influenced because we had a severe change, from a system which we were made to believe in, where we had fitted in, we felt good, and were involved, suddenly we were called to believe that all we had done was not the right thing. It was like a broken image,</u> especially the propaganda which was connected with the education at the time…Hmm, we understood that most things we had accomplished are not useful anymore which means we need to update ourselves and everything around us. We had the foundation, that was our reality, and, <u>because the system changes, this does not mean we automatically change.</u> As a wall falls, the wall inside us doesn't so soon fall to create a new one. This process needs time. I think, perhaps <u>we have faced confusion whilst searching for something new.</u>
Returned Emigrant Anita	<u>There are changes, because then, at the time, when democracy came, and during '91 and '92, that we had the civil war and people wanting to put an end to our regime. I have no idea what happened and how it progressed because I left</u> and did not come back for many years. It was the very beginning that borders were open for people to leave, and I remember parents and everyone were feeling better in their economy.
Returned Emigrant Ira	Then at university, (...) I went for industrial chemistry, for 5 years until 1996. It was a difficult situation in Albania, I mean, it's understood, <u>the system changing, the way we experienced the change at the students dormitory.</u> During that time, I also had to pass exams. <u>A lot of noise, I remember noise. I remember it was a dark period, especially the first two years at university,</u> I don't even want to think about it…never mind. Then in 1996, this year I graduated. Between '94 and '95, Tirana was much quieter. At the time I was getting to know my ex husband, who was a student in Arts. <u>The time, I mean there were also economical difficulties at the time, terrible,</u> what I would do is during the summer I would try to get a visa for Corfu, I would work during summer and save money for the whole year…
Returned Emigrant Kalia	School years have been very beautiful but tiring (…) <u>It was tiring because I was studying during 91-95, which was transition time for Albania; it was a period of clutter.</u> My first year in high school,

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Returned Emigrant Tana	'91-'92 it was a difficult time. <u>It was difficult because there were no books. I was taking notes for three or more hours. It was crisis.</u> At least, what I remember when I was at college, between '90 - '98, I<u> guess during this time it was instability and there was no rules and regulations for us to obey. Students would come and go as they wished.</u> Perhaps now it is changing for good again, but during my high school things were not going well…. I must be honest when I finished high school, it was '94 and a time when <u>the teacher would not even teach anything, so we lost interest</u>... For the first 3 years of high school my average was 9.5. Then my last year, I dropped into 7 and that was dramatic. When I went into competition for social care, that was the second year that it was opened, I did not win. I did well in the exam but that year the average of four years was important and that made it impossible for me to get in, I think you needed an average of 9 to get into university. <u>That year I was very down, because I lost my opportunity due to that 4th year as a result of political instability</u>.
Returned Emigrant Tefta	Ok, when changes were happening then in '91 I was in my last year of university and was defending my thesis and I <u>remember seeing people all confused, not sure about things. Then I remember feeling that things were about to change, something new was coming, and in fact I did notice a step behind because people were showing their true selves</u>…Many were behaving out of morals and values, and you got to see their true being. In fact, before that, people whom you thought were nice, they turned to be aggressive. <u>That's what I remember, then I went away from Albania</u>. It was a time I did not experience, I mean the transition inside Albania, and then I returned.
Non Emigrant Enerieta	*Feelings about changes* Well, it was different for the ones coming from cities like V, D …hmm, I went through a lot in halls, because I was in T [name of city] during that year, '90s, which was the time of change, <u>transition between the two systems and it was horrible for us. Well, I remember that we were not protected at all.</u> When we would go to have lunch for example, I remember guys who would come to see us, guys from the street, and nobody had the courage to keep them out of the halls which was not allowed because they looked scary. Also, food, I think it was horrible, and dinner we had bread and sugar on a paper…That was food.
Returned Emigrant Kalia	It was '91, we had a competition to go to university, and it was in Gj [name of town] where you had to go to courses, physics and biochemistry courses, before going to competition. Because my

	brothers migrated to Greece, I had no one to take me there. <u>It was difficult time; it was transition, years 90-91</u>. In '91 I entered the university. <u>I was afraid to go on the bus to go to Gj [name of town] to sit for the exam</u>, that's what stopped me. I had none to accompany me, my father was old, and my mom was a pensioner, brothers in Greece. That was my last chance; since then they stopped doing a competition for medicine.
Returned emigrant Enila	When the changes occurred, at the beginning of 90s I was on the first year in high school. <u>Changes, perhaps I was not able to understand it all, I was 16, and we did not know what was happening</u>. We could only see people walking, moving, leaving Albania, coming to X [name of town] to get on the ship, to go away as emigrants, people saying in the streets 'How is it going to be". <u>We were fearful; they had fear. What was going to happen?</u>

System changed

As noted in the above extracts, the period of transition was accompanied with changes in the education system that led to personal disorientation, confusion and for some desire to leave the country. According to Tana, she identified the changes with the sense of "*Instability*", where "*There was no rules and regulations for us to obey, student would come and go as they wished*". She elaborated further claiming that the teachers were not doing their job, leading to students losing interest. Due to the political instability, her average grades dropped, resulting in her losing the opportunity for further education.

In Ira's case, she was facing the transition as middle school students living in accommodation away from her hometown. She had perceived the transition as a "*Difficult, noisy and a dark period*". Due to political and economical instability, in order to support herself and her sister in their studies, she had made further efforts by working abroad during the summer. Kalia recalled that during the changes, *"It was difficult because there were no books: it was crisis"*. She identified the transition (from 1991-95) as "*A period of clutter*". More so, Tefta also perceived the change coming during her last year at university. She recalled seeing people "*confused, [and] not sure*". Furthermore, Matilda perceived the changes as "*Severe*" and "*As a broken image*". According

to her, putting an end to a regime in which "*People believed in, fitted in and felt good*", led to confusion, *"Whilst searching for something new*".

Feelings about changes

Living under a period of severe changes in the system not only effected participants as students but also as human beings. When talking about the transition, a few parents revealed their feelings of insecurity and fear. For example, Enerieta identified the transition between the systems as "*Horrible*". At the time, she was living in the halls of residence and recalled feeling unprotected. In her account, it was evident that the economic condition in the country had affected students' accommodation. She said that food in the halls of residence was simply bread and sugar. More so, Kalia also revealed feeling fearful right after the fall, which happened to be the time of the higher education entrance competition. Kalia and her family were living in the country, south of Albania. She explained that because her brothers had migrated and her parents were retired, no one could have travelled with her to the city in order to sit for the exam. Further, Enila also recalled that she experienced changes during her first year in high school. At the age of 16, she was not fully aware of what was happening. However, because at the time she was living near the sea, she was able to see people leave the country feeling uncertain and not knowing what they were going to face: "*We were fearful, they [people migrating] had fear*".

Overall, the end of Communism was accompanied by changes in political and economical spheres that led the country into transition and instability. The changes inevitably affected the education system, which were associated with education losing values, educators neglecting their role and in lacking school and domestic supplies. These changes affected the parents in relation to their status as students by losing interest in schooling, facing issues in the dormitories, all of which ended up in feeling discouraged about their education. The parents represented that period as a time of personal disorientation and

confusion due to the impact of transition on the education system. In addition, the lack of instability under which country was going through led them in feeling insecure and fearful. Their sense of self as discouraged students and as insecure people was reinforced by the climate of a community feeling confused and for some with the will to migrate. As the country was undergoing the radical changes, leaving the country to migrate appeared to be thousands of individuals' desire.

4.2.2.2   Impact of Migration

The second part of the analysis of the impact of changes on the parents' own education will focus on the impact of migration. As noted earlier, the following analysis will consider parents who experienced migration, namely emigrant and returned emigrant parents. When the data was thematically analysed, subthemes came across the two migrating groups, indicating how parents viewed the impact of migration on their education. More specifically, the parents reflected on the chances and challenges faced in relation to further education (see Figure 4.5).
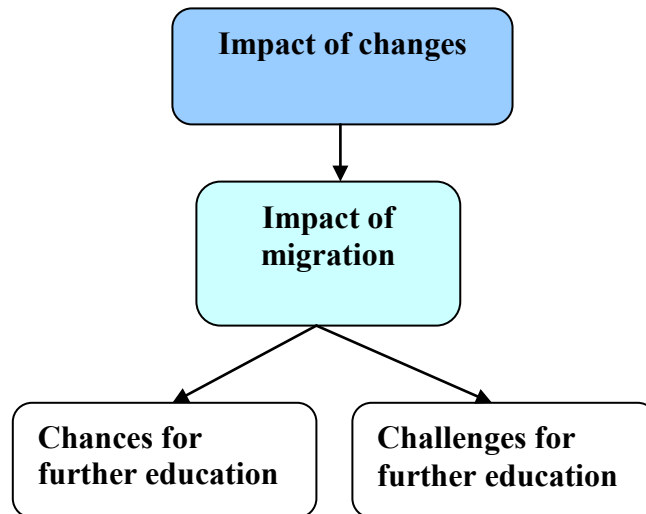
Figure 4.5: Impact of migration

Table 4.5 illustrates the parents' accounts of the chances and challenges for further education as emigrants in various foreign countries.

Table 4.5: Impact of Migration

Status and Name	Coded extracts from the interviews
	Chances for further education
Emigrant Flora	Well, I like my profession, teaching and I never wanted to swap it, because here in London we have chances to change profession, career, to get involved in education, (...) because there are people who do that, but I have always been persistent when it comes to this. I have done many courses here for body language in teaching system, and that's what I do now, in my job where I work.
Emigrant Maria	After that, I went to high school, I was not able to finish because during final year I had to come to England. I came here [UK] and went to college, so at college I studied English, which helped me a lot. Hmm, I did study English in Albania, also Spanish, but teaching was different in Albania, and normally I could practice it better with English people. I did English for one year, then I did Access course, which helped go to university. I did English, I did European studies, computers also, and what happened is that after that I filled my application to go to university and I was accepted to go to [name] University, and I did one year there but then things changed, life changed, I got pregnant…so...
Returned Emigrant Besiana	Yes, I finished that year and then entered Catolica in M [city in Italy], which was a private university and I was near it, so we could commute, it was ok. Then they did not have a diploma per se in social work but they had half [Laura] diploma, short courses. And they said finish university first and then come here and do masters in psychology or sociology, in fields, which I felt good in. So I finished that
Returned Emigrant Enila	Then, I moved to Italy where I tried to validate my diploma, but to be honest only a few of the courses were acknowledged in Italy. So I had to start over some more exams, not from the start, but I had exams to do. Then, to be honest I got pregnant with my son, and then, I postponed them (…). Then, I started thinking that it would be best for me to follow a master's degree in Italy rather than to validate my diploma because I always wanted to return to Albania, so that's what I did. I got into masters program in English and was seriously thinking of coming to Albania, which I did. I did a Masters in Business English Communication in Italy and after I finish my masters it was time because we wanted to return before our son would start school…Perhaps it has to do with the fact that I always search the best for myself. I seek to go ahead. I am not satisfied with what I have. I say to myself "the possibility is there, why not".

	Challenges for further education
Emigrant Flora	I don't speak perfect English and to be a teacher in *secondary school* [said in English] and this is my goal, to finish university here [UK], and to work in secondary school and to teach literature. <u>My English now, I am not saying that I don't speak English, I speak well, but there are terms in my profession which I lack, so I need a refill of my knowledge,</u> and concepts and that's what made me to continue university.
Emigrant Lule	I think children today are capable. <u>If I was to consider studying here [UK] it would be very difficult because I would not be able to</u>, children today are different generation, they like to explore, they like languages...
Return Emigrant Vjollca	<u>I had no idea what it meant to write an essay, how you build an essay</u>, and consider that I was a teacher when I left Albania, think about the rest of the people who emigrated with no education or part time [education]. I think we do lack a lot of knowledge in this, still I mean.
Returned Emigrant Ira	The first thing was my families "do it well, do it at your maximum". Secondly, <u>being an emigrant often I faced issues, problems sometimes acceptable and sometimes not, sometimes there was solution, at times no</u>…and at one moment you feel that there is this potential inside you, intellectual in this case, and for me I could not leave education on the side. As an emigrant, knowing my potentials, I could not have allowed to do any kind of job. Even during my first two or three years abroad I was doing jobs like babysitting, even though <u>I was a foreigner, an outsiders in the midst of the rest.</u> It helped me, I mean the job<u>, it helped me to learn the language, I was integrated in the culture, it helped me understand the mentality of the families</u>. I mean, this is how I see the time and what I gained from babysitting children. <u>At same time, you know, I did my masters, my doctorate, so…I never thought I would become an academic</u>.
Returned Emigrant Tana	In my opinion, there are two different things because in Italy one finishes school, has a profession, you work somewhere and you are appreciated for that profession, and higher education is not always that important. Whereas here [Albania] in order to have a job, you must have a university degree. When we were there even if I would have done further education, <u>there was no place to go as we were emigrants, where could we position ourselves with no legal papers</u>?
Returned Emigrant Tefta	Ah, but even in Greece I continued, I was learning Greek. I started learning about the history and Greek language since I was in university, at the faculty of history; it was like a special course then. I was doing archaeology and ancient Greek at the time, since then…and then I went to Greece <u>I couldn't continue with ancient Greek because it was difficult, so I did computer courses, for one</u>

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	year. I decided to do this because computers were becoming important at the time and of course, the language I needed to start a job, because I started as a violin tutor there and the language was required in papers.

I moved to Italy where I tried to validate my diploma, but to be honest only a few of the courses were validated there. So I had to start over some more exams. So, not from the start, but I had exams to do. |
| **Returned Emigrant Enila** | |

Chances for further education

As noted from the above extracts, when migrating parents reflected on their own education, they brought forward their experiences with education abroad. They reflected on the opportunities offered by the system to engage in different educational levels at college or university. For example, Flora claimed that the system abroad allowed her to get involved in education linked with her profession or to change career. She had completed "*Many courses for body language in teaching system*", which had then turned to be her actual job. Furthermore, Lumturie also made use of the system and followed short courses in childcare during her pregnancy.

One reason that had encouraged parents to consider education abroad was the lack of opportunity to finish their education in Albania due instability in Albania and their decision to migrate. In her account, Maria revealed that because she had to leave the country, she had not been able to finish her secondary education; therefore, when arrived in England she was enrolled in a college where she studied English followed by Access course, European studies and computers. Later on, although she applied and was admitted to the university, due to pregnancy she suspended her degree. Likewise, Besiana also enrolled in a university in Italy with the aim of finishing the degree she had started in Albania. The system in Italy allowed her to finish her diploma through the short courses the system provided, and then she had continued and

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completed postgraduate diploma. Enila, who had finished her degree in Albania and aimed to validate her degree in Italy, was able to sit a number of exams to complete the validation and the system acknowledged her classes. Later on, she enrolled to do masters course in Business English Communication. Although her pregnancy postponed her plans, she still achieved her aim.

Challenges for further education

As shown in the above extracts, it was evident that the parents valued the education abroad and made use of the possibilities and opportunities by engaging in further education abroad. However, as emigrants, the parents also faced challenges trying to engage in higher education abroad. In cases where difficulties overtook the parents' opportunities to achieve in foreign systems, starting or completing a course of any kind was not always simple. For example Tefta revealed that prior to migration, she had studied history of ancient Greece in Albania; however, when she went to Greece she found it very difficult to continue studying the subject. She instead enrolled in computer courses and learning Greek which was needed as a document to keep her job. In Tana's case, it was evident that her illegal status in Italy made it impossible for her to study further. Her concerns were, "*There was no place to go as we were emigrants. Where could we position ourselves with no legal papers?*"

Despite the challenges faced when living abroad, a few parents overcame the difficulties and managed to achieve in higher education. When reflecting on their reasons for continuing further education, Flora stated that, in order for her to practice her profession as a literature teacher, she had to improve her language skills, "*My English now, I am not saying that I don't speak English; I speak well, but there are terms in my profession, which I lack, so I need a refill of my knowledge*". More so, Vjollca, who was also a teacher in Albania, indicated that she lacked knowledge in writing essays. In her account, she also showed concern for those emigrants who had gone abroad without completing any full or part time education before arriving in the host countries, implying that for them the experience with education abroad would have been even more

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difficult.

Ira was a unique case amongst recruited participants: as an emigrant in Greece, she was able to overcome challenges within the system and achieve both a master's and doctorate level degree. When invited to reflect on the reasons that had motivated her to go that far with her education, she first spoke about the encouraging role of her family which allowed her to feel intellectually capable to go further. Secondly, as an emigrant she did various jobs (i.e. babysitting) which helped her *"To integrate in the culture"* and *"To understand [the] mentality of the families"*. However, she implied that she could not have continued to do these jobs, and therefore continued her successful education.

To sum up, during the first decade after the fall, the country faced some of the greatest migration flows in Europe. That influenced individuals not to continue with their education in their home country, either temporally or permanently. Migration in itself is a process of transition and instability. Despite various challenges that emigrant parents experienced in their attempts to engage in further education in the process of settlement in a host country, many of them made use of the education system abroad by engaging into various levels in the academic ladder (i.e. from short courses, to university degrees with one case revealing achievement at PhD level). Overall, it is clear that the Albanian parents valued education and embraced the opportunities offered by the education systems abroad.

4.3. *Discussion*

This thematic analysis chapter explored participants' memories of own education which counts for the first objective of this research study. Participants recounted their story of education starting from primary school

education up to their level of achievement. Their story of education reveals experiences of being educated through trajectories of macro changes, precisely during Communism to political and socio-economical changes and for some others, education continued during migration. To make sense of their own story, their accounts were divided into two main temporal spaces: during Communism and during socio-cultural changes.

Following ideas from Wertsch (2000, 2008), collective remembering is organized into specific and schematic narratives. By specific narrative, he refers to information about dates, places and actors, and schematic narratives referring to cultural tools used to organized and reconstruct an account of the past of collective remembering. The findings deriving from the thematic analysis reveal parents organizing their story of education into specific and schematic narrative templates. They revealed information about Communism, the former leaders, politics, migration, about the school system, teachers and curriculum, but also information about practices, roles, relationships and images of others and of the self. The way they organized their narrative served as a tool to structure their story into levels, from macro societal level (i.e. Politics, Economy and Culture), to exo system (i.e. schools, universities) to micro processes (i.e. relationships, roles). The findings support the theoretical framework in that an examination of social representations requires the understanding of mutual relationship between macro and micro levels of analysis (Moscovici, 1973).

In addition Moscovici (1988) argued that social representations of history include elements that are shared within members of a group. Their stories overlapped because their experiences during Communism were similar. However, at times their stories contradicted their views because they were speaking from diverse cultural context, confirming the person-context interrelatedness (Tudge et al., 1997).

Jodelet (1991) suggested that an investigation of social representations could bring about images that condense meanings. Images allow individuals to

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interpret their intended goals. To give meaning to their experiences with own education, parents focused on the impact of macro changes on education practices and the effect it had on their self and on others. Parents made use of various cultural tools (i.e. notebooks, bench, blackboard, uniform) (Vygotsky, 1981; Cole, 1996) to make sense of the image of their self being constrained by the system when talking about lacking choices, opportunities, resources. The sudden political and socio-economic change was so radical that participants perceived it as "*a broken image*". It went from a restricted, authoritarian education system to an undisciplined one, with "*no rules and regulations*", from a constrained image of self to an image of the self being confused and fearful. In addition, teachers' image was represented as an idol, an authority, meaning distant, but also friendly with their pupils and passionate about their job, which allowed parents feeling good around the teacher. After the fall of Communism, the image of teachers changed representing them as losing passion for their job, and for pupils losing interest in education.

On the other hands, the supportive role of their family members also played a crucial role in their schooling experience. Although the socio-economic status of the country at the time was deprived, which required for parents to work long hours, there is evidence that these participants' parents engaged in their schooling. In their absence, the older siblings supported the process especially with mathematics homework. Despite the constraining nature of the school system, social actors played a favourable role in these participants' experiences with schooling. Understanding the image of the self and the role of the significant others (i.e. teachers, parents), has great importance for this study since parents' past experiences act as mediators for understanding children's learning process (O'Toole & Abreu, 2005). As Ricoeur (1980) put it, when individuals are invited to share their stories, they are given an opportunity to understand their self, which they may develop and live out. Thus, it is in this study's focus to investigate how the past mediates their present practices with their children's schooling.

Later on, the post Communist changes were followed by various flows of migration, leading individuals to new transitions. When people encounter new social representations, they negotiate their position towards different cultures (Hale & De Abreu, 2010). Their educational experiences abroad introduced participants to new education systems, different choices, opportunities and resources. Despite the challenges of settling in host countries, some had embraced the opportunity to continue further education. The process of resettlement abroad coincided with them becoming parents. Given that the participants who took part were mothers, some had not enrolled in further education due to engagement with child upbringing. They elaborated feelings of regret for not being able to embrace the opportunities offered by the host society. Some others had not enrolled in education abroad due to faced difficulties with the foreign languages. Nevertheless, parents with migratory experiences spoke highly of education, with some elaborating feelings of regret for not being able to engage in education and with others achieving various levels of study. Based on this evaluation, it is expected that the views on their children's education will favour their schooling and learning process.

This analysis chapter provides a framework of parents' meanings and experiences with own education. By acknowledging their accounts on the school system, the social actors, their image of the self at a time of rapid change, offer a contribution towards the study's aims because their past is expected to serve as a mediator in the process of constructing representations of their children. Parents will reflect on the impact of societal changes constructing new re-presentations of the school system, the teachers, and their image of the learner to give meaning to their experiences with own children's education. Prior to presenting and discussing parents' accounts on their children's schooling (Chapter 6), the following Chapter (5) will analyse their accounts on the impact of changes on the education system in three socio-cultural contexts.

CHAPTER 5:   Parents' accounts of the impact of changes due to political and economical transformations, due to migration and due returning home

"...but home background is complex of economic, social, cultural and even personal factors"
(William Teale, 1886, p. 193)

5.1. Parents' accounts of the impact of socio-cultural changes: analysis and discussion of the findings

This analytical chapter explores Albanian parents' accounts of the education system and how their meanings and experiences are influenced specifically due to changes on political and socio-economic sphere in Albania, due to migrating experiences and due to the impact of returning to homeland. The aim of this chapter is to investigate how parents' experiences of the three socio-cultural groups have been influenced similarly or differently due to the identified changes. The analysis draws on the assumption that the parents will give meaning to their present practices by taking into account their experiences with education in Albania, with education abroad, and when returned in Albania.

More specifically, parents from all socio-cultural groups will reflect on changes due to political and socio-economic transformations in Albania, with non-emigrants experiencing those changes directly and continuously; emigrant and returned emigrant parents will too reflect on changes in Albania for the time prior to migration and the observed changes in distance. They will also reflect on changes due to migration. Unlike non-emigrants and emigrants, returned emigrant parents will reflect on changes due to returning home. Although their experiences during post Communist Albania overlap, their individuals' histories are dynamic in context. When data was thematically analysed, many themes came across indicating the great impact of three socio-cultural changes on the

education system and how those changes had influenced parents' meanings and experiences, their representations on the school system.

The analysis of parents' experiences commences with an overview of the participants accounts' of the impact of political and socio-economic transition on the education system, followed by emigrants and returned emigrants accounts on the impact of migration, and it is finalized by returned emigrants' accounts of the impact of returning to their homeland on their views on education system. An overview of this chapter and main themes is presented in Figure 5.0.
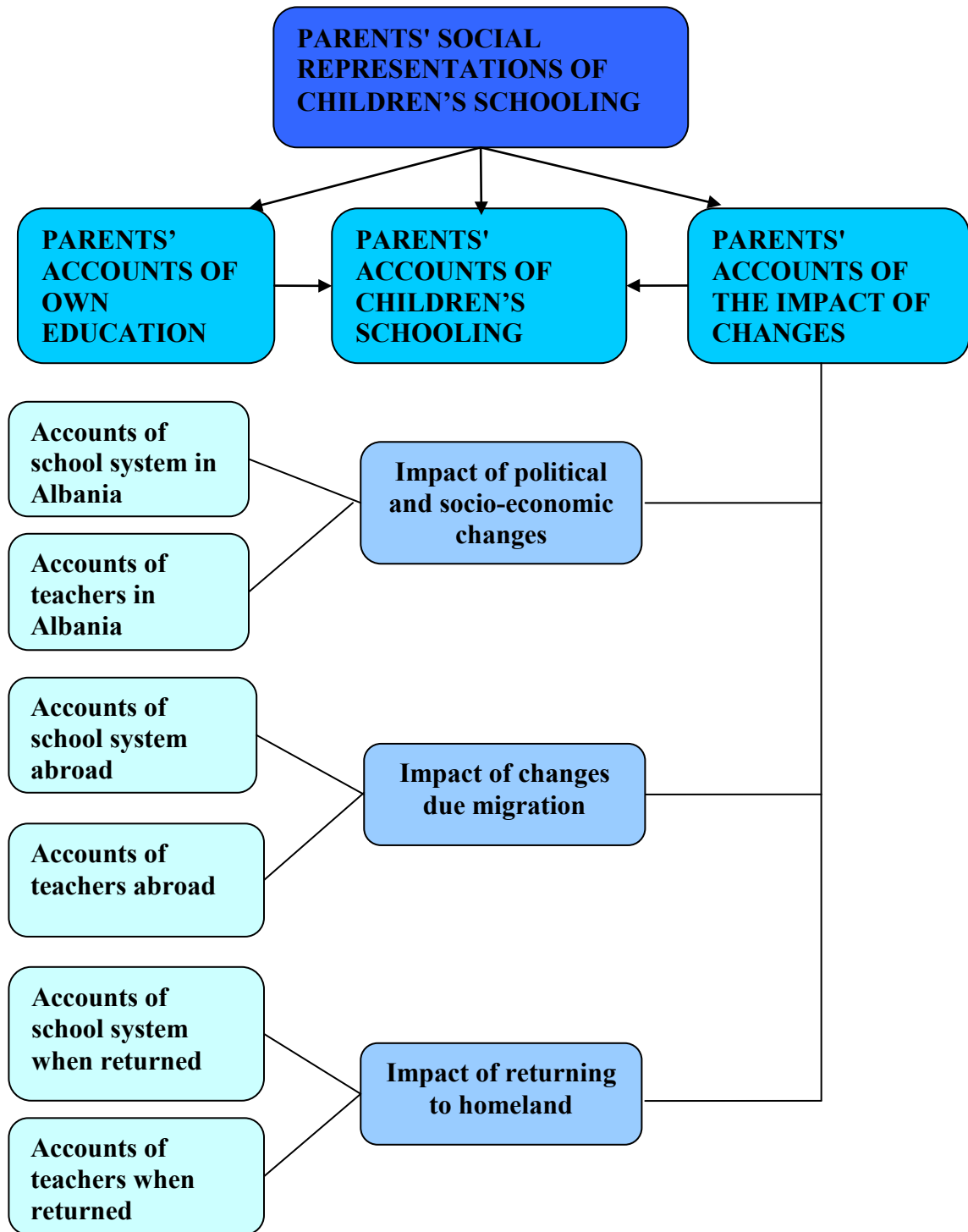
Figure 5.0: Parents' accounts of the impact of changes on education system

5.2.   *Thematic Analysis- Parents' accounts of the impact of changes*

When parents were invited to talk about the impact of socio-cultural changes on education system, they all reflected on the *impact of political and economic changes, with emigrants and returned emigrants reflecting on the impact of changes due to migration*, ending with returned emigrants' views on *impact of changes due to returning home*. The findings will be analysed in the following sequences:

5.2.1 Impact of political and socio-economic changes

5.2.2 Impact of changes due to migration

5.2.3 Impact of changes due to returning home

5.3   Discussion

5.2.1.   Thematic Analysis- Parents' accounts of the impact political and socio-economic changes

This section explores parents' accounts on the impact of changes on the education system due to political and socio-economic transitions for the past two decades in Albania. The transformation of the political system from a communist regime to democracy was inevitably followed by changes on the social and economic status impacting the education system. Participants of the three socio-cultural groups had witnessed these changes at different levels. As a result, it was expected that non-emigrant parents, who had continuously faced and evaluated the changes, would deliver more detailed accounts than the other two groups. Emigrant parents had experienced the changes in Albania before migrating and followed the changes via media, through contacts with their families and friends, as well as had observed the changes during their home visits. Like emigrants returned emigrant parents also left the country at different stages after the fall of the regime migrating to different countries in Europe, so they had experienced some of the changes in Albania before migration. Both

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emigrants and returned emigrants were exposed to different education systems whilst living abroad. Like emigrants, returned emigrants had been observing the changes in Albania whilst abroad. Upon their return, they started to experience the changes in the Albanian education system.

The previous Chapter (4) examined how the political and socio-economic changes had affected parents' own experiences with education at different stages and contexts. This section of the current chapter goes a step further. Its aim is at exploring their re-presentations of the changes in the education system in general, their general ideas on the education systems they had come across, setting a background for following Chapter (6), which will explore how the parents approach their children's schooling. Understanding the way parents give meaning to the impact of changes in the education system has great significance on the way they construct representations of their children's schooling. Through the use of thematic analysis the impact of changes on parents' views on education is analysed and discussed.

When reflecting on the actual system, non-emigrant, emigrant and returned emigrant parents focused on *the school system* and on *the teachers*. Their accounts on the school system emphasized themes revolving around how parents *made sense of the changes* and how the perceived changes had and/or could possibly influence parents' *image of the learner*. Parents' accounts of the impact of changes on teachers disclosed their viewpoints on the *image of the teachers* and the way the teachers *constructed relationships* with the learner. The importance of these subthemes was evident as they were expressed by all participants, as shown in Table 5.1.1 in Appendices[17].

In the subsequent sections, each of the emerging subthemes will be defined accompanied by coded extracts from the analysis, followed by a general summary for each section.

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[17] Please refer to Appendix I, page XXVI.

5.2.1.1 Accounts of the school system in Albania

The participants reflected on particular issues to give meaning of the impact of political and socio-economic changes on the education system in Albania. In these examples, parents focused on issues concerning how they *made sense of the changes* in the education system. In particular, these examples illustrated the way they accounted for changes in the self and the others, and how they accounted for *the image of the new learner* (see Figure 5.1). Understanding the meaning of the changes and the way they could impact the learner is important as the study aims to explore the way these parents approach their children's schooling and learning process, in three different socio-cultural settings.
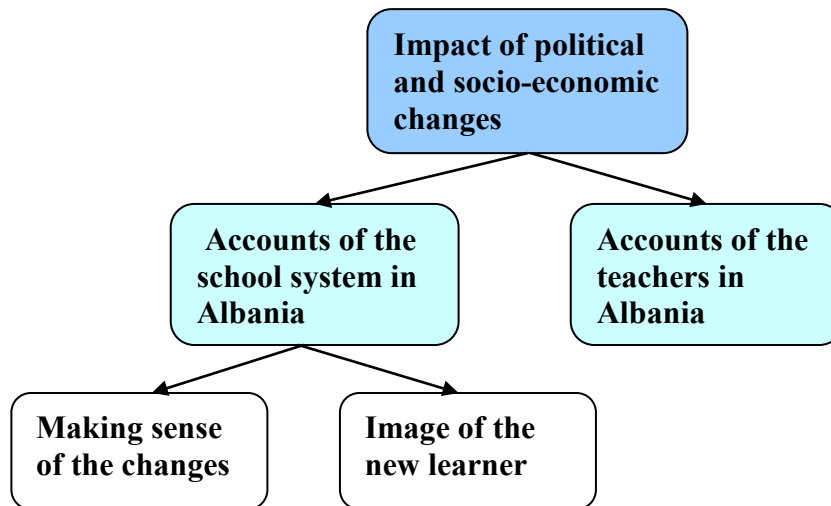
Figure 5.1: Accounts of the school system in Albania

Table 5.1 presents selected extracts from parents' interviews illustrating how parents made sense of the changes in the education system and how the changes had impacted their image of the learner (pupil).

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Table 5.1: Accounts of the school system in Albania

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
	Making sense of the changes
Non Emigrant Matilda	Yes indeed, <u>it [political and socio-economic change] has influenced; when we had a severe change, from a system which we were made to believe in, where we had fitted in, we felt good, and were involved. Suddenly we were called to believe that all we had done was not the right thing. It was like a broken image</u>, especially the propaganda, which was connected with the education at the time. And, we understood that most things we had accomplished are not useful anymore which means we need to update ourselves and everything around us. We had the foundation, that was our reality, and, <u>because the system changes, this does not mean we automatically change.</u> Hmm, as a wall falls, the wall inside us doesn't fall so quickly to create a new one. This process needs time. I think, perhaps <u>we have faced confusion whilst searching for something new.</u>
Non Emigrant Vera	For example<u>, private colleges and schools are around now. I must say there is advantages and disadvantages to private schools</u>. I can say that there are more advantages. For example, public[18] schools can have up to 43 children in one small classroom. In private, in my son's school, there are 16 of them, can you imagine? Children must be tested every day but with 43 children, what can you do?
Emgrant Lumturie	The only thing that I would say is that Albania now is more open; <u>there is freedom, liberalization in all. There is more choice</u>; If one is not good in one subject, that child can continue working on the area he/she is good at. I mean one could continue with the talent and <u>become someone one day</u>...
Emigrant Flora	Of course, due to economy this is why we have private universities now. It means that we also have students who can pay for education nowadays. This shows that economy is better now, otherwise we couldn't afford private. From the two systems, I choose the public system and not the private one because <u>I find that [public school] more independent rather than in private school where they spoil children</u>. What I would change? I would change the conditions that children have in public schools, and I would change books as well. Infrastructure perhaps but not much with the education system, which is more into books and how to organize

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[18] The Albanian legislation on education acknowledges public education (funded by public funds) and private education (funded by organizations or individuals).

	classes, etc.... Hmm, if one wanted to study, the time was different in that we were not allowed to study foreign languages, even the radio or TV we couldn't dare to turn on channels which we were not allowed to watch. <u>Whereas today people are free, the one who has a will and passion for education they can go higher and achieve</u>…<u>Another thing, there [Albania] if the child is not good at school, they fail, so they don't go to second year.</u> Here [England] no one fails. <u>There I think the programme is quite loaded,</u> so that child who fails once, he is going to be behind in all years to come. It is difficult to reach the others.
Emigrant Ina	Hmm, I am not saying that the Greek system is the best, the most achieved, the most, but at least for what we experience it was different and likeable democratic. In fact I must mention that the transition found us, you know, with some basic things, such as 40 pupils in the class. There are 35-40 individuals in all public schools. And T [name of city] is <u>overloaded</u> 5 times [more], I mean the population...I think they are going on the right direction, because comparing with years before, <u>more opportunities are there, I mean, private schools are opening. This gives parents and children, pupils, more choices for better [education]</u>, together with things like teachers getting further qualifications, building new infrastructure, I have also heard about new methods, which are western methods, all these will help to improve teaching.
Returned Emigrant Enila	Today they <u>have different system</u> when students finish high school, I mean, the state exam, which we didn't have; this is new now. Then we had a competition to go to university, if one didn't pass, they couldn't go. Whereas now, they have some exams from which <u>they can choose</u> and some that are compulsory. The chosen subjects are probably the ones students feel they can do best. Then they calculate the points that show which field they can go for….
Returned Emigrant Mona	And books have same things for year 7 and for year 9, in maths I mean. I noticed this in my daughter's books. We had it completely different then. And the method was different then. I mean the way the book is constructed it's different. That is the methodology is different. <u>I think books are more difficult and they are overloaded with material.</u> There is a lot to be done within one day.
Non Emigrant Erma	*Image of the new learner* That's my complain all the time, <u>they have a lot of homework after school</u>, so I would do something, maybe to cut shorter the annual program for this age group, or <u>make it easier for them</u>, so they would deal with most of that stuff during school time....<u>Now there's a lot of pressure on the children</u> because when I was a child I was free to go from home to school and from school back home, on my own, or with my schoolmates or my neighbour friends. So, <u>it's not so much to do with the school system, but also with the outside and safety; however, it does affect the school; it does</u>

Non Emigrant Enerieta	affect the child. I guess this is one thing that is different and being under this pressure; they don't feel so free now. (...) Ok, if it was up to me I would improve the Albanian language which is written in the books or in general. There are a lot of concepts that are foreign and difficult to understand. There is a loss. ..There are some other words, especially maths' concepts that are just difficult to understand. Maths is difficult in general but, some words are not so easy to understand the Albanian word for it.

I think, schools are overloaded, totally, starting from Albanian Language, maths, I mean things my daughter does now, I used to do them in my 8th grade and she did them in 2nd year. For me this is anti-pedagogical, because children are treated like a sponge, they take in a lot, but then it can explode, you know? Why do we tend to overload them with information, with heavy materials at such an early stage? I am not for this. I am for information which is valid and that they can find it easy to take in and this makes children feel good at school. Also, I am for discipline as well. |
Emigrant Bruna	Economic aspect is, that is something difficult for me because I don't live there. But schools now have internet, this is great, very good. Pupils have a lot of information now, their horizon is bigger now. Whereas the bad thing is that now there is a decline in what they can demand from children. So I mean, it's not the same discipline as it used to be before when the pupil would feel much more responsibility for going to school
Emigrant Flora	I think education is not the same today. There are things, which have progressed a lot, but some others, the level has gone down from what it was. I say that things have progressed because children are free now, they say what they think. For something that is not right, they have the courage to speak up, they are not like we were then, even if something not right was done, we did not speak about it. I like that fact that when students do not like something they manifest, they even go on strikes, when something unfair is happening. I was watching the news I saw students going on hunger strike because they did not agree with this reform in education, not sure what the problem was exactly, but it had to do with the amount of years that were compulsory for something and it was about Italian language and some did not agree. Bologna carte, it's not that I understand it a lot because I have been away, but what I mean is that it's good to know students have the courage, they are not afraid. Back then we used to be…when I was in the institute, university, we were afraid to stand up against lecturers; even though we used to think that they were being unfair with us; we were afraid.
Returned Emigrant Ira	It worries me, corruption in Albania. Perhaps they have good teachers, good schools, but because of economic conditions, hmm,

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	things are not where they should. Perhaps better in private education, I don't know and I can't say because I haven't seen them. But I think it's not fair, the chance to go further is not given to the person who deserves it and who studies hard, but to someone who gives some money, so corruption. This is why I would have not preferred for my child to be there [Albania]....I am sure that there are children who can do really well in Albania but because of corruption they don't have the opportunity, whereas children here they have the chances because universities are fair, it's not whoever can pay because the world doesn't acknowledge that and this is not good for the children who study there [Albania].
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	I don't find myself in any of the children today. Children today misuse time by focusing on one particular writing style and the teacher thinks it's so important so they spend time writing and rewriting until it looks pretty. You know, '*bukurshkrim*' [pretty handwriting]..... It is unacceptable for me, and it is too much, this was not in our time. I think there is too much volume and it does not need to be this way; we need to focus on what is needed....Well I believe they had done a good thing by changing into 9 years system and I think it's much better. I have seen the textbook, well I can only speak for physics, they have reduced it and made a pleasant book so that children can easily study...However, I still think we are stuck in a certain mentality that we want children to get as much information as possible and we forget values. We need to make school a pleasant environment so when they come, they come with pleasure, and not "Oh no, I haven't done this homework, shall I go in, shall I not?" I think it's not needed all these themes for one subject. And, I think they need to allow some space for field trips and fun, as well as drawing, music, so they [children] can play after all.

Making sense of the changes

As presented in the above extracts, it was evident that changes in the political and socio-economic sphere had inevitably impacted the school system. Participants focused on making sense of the changes in the system. They made use of comparing past and present strategy to give meaning to their accounts.

While evaluating the perceived changes, parents perceived the new education system as different. As noted in the extracts, there is evidence that the changes had influenced their views on the self and on others. This is illustrated by Matilda, who claimed, "*It was like a broken image; when the system changes,*

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this does not mean we automatically change. As a wall falls, the wall inside us doesn't fall so quickly to create a new one.....we have faced confusion whilst searching for something new". Further, parents focused on the effects of changes on safety. Erma explained that the new system put pressure on children because they did not feel secure to go outside on their own (i.e. going home alone after school). She stated, *"It's not so much to do with the school system, but with the outside and safety, however, it does affect the school; it does affect the child...They [children] don't feel so free now"*. The changes had created a new dimension of how participants felt about their physical and environmental safety.

Parents also reflected on the impact of changes on the rising of more opportunities and choices, especially with the emerging of private education. According to Ina, public schools in Albania were "*Overloaded*" teaching 35-40 pupils. Similarly, Vera also reflected on the number of students in public education, being "*Up to 43*" children, unlike the number in private sector, which goes down to 16 in one classroom. Whilst reflecting on school programme being overloaded, the parents revealed the issue of failing pupils in Albanian schools and the content of schools containing written errors. On the contrary, Lumturie spoke about more freedom in choosing their preferred field of study, which would encourage children in "*Becoming someone one day*". Enila also identified the new system as "*Different"* with students having the right to choose their preferred discipline.

Image of the new learner

Parents also reflected on the impact of changes in the system on the learner resulting in a new image of the leaner. With reference to the schooling system, parents focused on school curriculum portraying it as being overloaded which resulted in children challenged with a lot of information and homework. This is illustrated by Enerieta who claimed that, *"Schools are overloaded...For me,*

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this is anti-pedagogical, because children are treated like sponge…I am for information which is valid and that they (children) can find it easy and this makes children feel good at school". Erma also reflected on the impact of the great amount of homework on child. She suggested the need to reduce the annual programme and "*Make it easier for them*". According to Flora, the amount of information, coming from sources like internet that was offered to pupils helps them have "*A bigger horizon*". However, she stressed her concern about "*A decline in what they [teachers] can demand from children*", referring to a fall in discipline. Unlike her time, pupils did not feel as responsible for going to school.

Nevertheless, Lumturie illustrated that children were more informed due to school programs constructed in various different language, which had resulted in learners being free to choose for further education. Whilst emphasizing the school program as being overloaded, Lumturie also showed concern about the way the school system in Albania constructed children as learners comparing it with the system abroad. She claimed that, *"If the child is not good at school, they fail, so they don't go to second year. Here [UK] no one fails".* With reference to choices, Enila also evaluated the new school system as offering more choices to students for further education. Further, whilst comparing their experience at school with the present system, they focused on the "*Freedom of speech*" and "*Choice*" that children nowadays have. This can be traced in Flora's quotes where she claimed, *"I say that things have progressed because children are free now; they say what they think…It's good to know students have the courage; they were not afraid. Back then..., we were afraid to stand against the lecturer, even though they were being unfair with us".*

Following on parents' views on school programs presented as excessive in material and information, Mona in her quotes showed further concern about the impact of the overloaded programs in the children's learning process. Whilst comparing the actual system to her schooling and to the school system in Germany, Mona also reflected on cases when children used the same book in two different levels of schooling, i.e. year seven and nine. She explained that in

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Albania "*Books are more difficult and they are overloaded with material*". Vjollca illustrated her view by claiming that in the subject of physics, the material in the book had been reduced. This resulted in children finding it easier to study. She viewed the excessive information as a certain "*Mentality*" in Albanian school system in which, "*We want children to get as much information as possible and we forget values*". In addition, she concluded that, "*We need to make school a pleasant environment so when they [children] come, they come with pleasure*", and not have them worry about not completing their homework.

In this section of the analysis, parents also showed concern on corruption in the education system. They spoke of a system, which is not fair and did not favour the children who deserved. When reflecting on where she would prefer her child to study, Bruna claimed that, "*I think it's not fair. The right to go further is not given to the person who deserves it and who studies hard, but to someone who gives some money, so corruption*". Similarly, Ina also revealed that due to corruption, children who did well not always had the opportunity to go further. Unlike the system in the United Kingdom, which, according to Ina "*Are fair*" and "*It's not who can pay*", corruption in Albania affects children when enrolled in the system.

The political and socio-economic changes in Albania inevitably had influenced parents' representations on the education system. Parents made sense of the impact of the changes on the system and the image of the new learner. They were able to do that by comparing past and present experiences with education. The new system emerged because of a sudden and severe change in the political sphere bringing confusion to them. As a result, parents expressed contradictory views. With regards to their concerns, they portrayed issues linked to their physical and environmental safety, corruption and unfairness in the school system, the excess number of children per classroom and overloaded school programs which had put pressure to children in their learning process, making it

difficult and not enjoyable for them. Their positive standpoint mainly focused on the emerging of private education enabling children to have more choices and opportunities in the learning process and for further education, the freedom of speech, and the extend of information offered to them through different sources.

5.2.1.2 Accounts of the teachers

This section will present and discuss parents' views on the impact of changes on teachers. As displayed in Figure 5.2, it will provide an insight of how parents perceived the image of the teachers and the way teachers constructed relationships, as a result of political and socio-economic changes. Subsequently, parents' views on the teachers of their children will be presented in the following Chapter (6).

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                    │ and economical     │
                    │ changes            │
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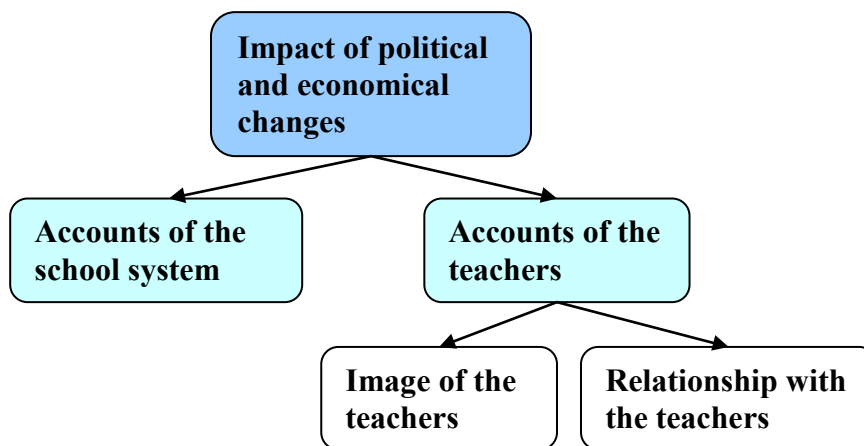
Figure 5.2: Accounts of the teachers in Albania

The following table provides an outline of how the parents talked about the teachers in the school system in Albania.

Table 5.2: Accounts of the teachers

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
Non Emigrant Enerieta	*Image of the teacher* I think fundamentally, <u>the basics to all things is the teachers, the qualifications, a good teacher is good for the child.</u> Hmm, school education, when I think of it, I compare it when I was at school, it has changed; things are very different now, I don't mean to offend anyone, but we as children, our generation was more into school compare to children today. And, perhaps this is a transition time, as most post-communist countries, there is a lot more to be done in the system. <u>Teachers must be qualified.</u>
Non Emigrant Matilda	I think, speaking of human resources, I mean teachers, <u>they lack a lot of professionalism</u>. Even though we have beautiful schools, nice buildings, where they provide good service, computers, but people are still the same. More specifically, lately we had the new law on liberalization of entering the university. Everyone can have a degree if he wishes to enter and compete for the course they wish. The ones, who do not get a place, <u>are somehow forced to enter pedagogy to become teachers</u>, which means that all students who fail to earn the degree, they become teachers. There is a stigma that if you become a teacher it is because you could not become an economist, a lawyer, etc. <u>Because they are not good students, they pass exams by paying money '*under the table*'. These are the future teachers of our children. On one side we have these people, and on the other side we face the old teachers with a different mentality to what our children need and can understand.</u> Not many people want to become teachers; they choose it so they are not left without a degree...It is difficult because in this situation that our country is in, it is not that people do not want to choose this profession, but it is because the wage this profession gives is very unsatisfactory, there is not a future in becoming a teacher. This is why they choose other fields.
Non Emigrant Vera	I also think that <u>teacher in private schools are much more dedicated</u>, perhaps they strive to keep their job…When you go and see them <u>they are welcoming; whereas in public schools they hardly talk to you, I guess because of low wages. Simply, we all find that private school is much more organized</u>…, <u>teachers are there to talk to you</u>. This makes it easier on us [parents]. Everything has changed; Hmm, <u>teachers today are more informed and prepared</u>, to be honest. You could not find many people doing masters or doctorates then. Now there is freedom, more opportunities.

Non Emigrant Pranvera	I would like to see some changes of course. Like, <u>I would like to see that teachers have a pay rise for their job, because what I see is that most teachers aim at receiving gifts from parents, you know? Perhaps if they had better wages they would not be thinking about that</u>. I also notice a lot of chatting amongst parents and what we <u>as parents see as a problem, and I think most of us think that it has to do with their earnings…</u>
Emigrant Lumturie	They [schools] have programmes; They have the environment and infrastructure, which I think are better [than in our time] and one more thing, I am not sure though, but I feel that, <u>they [students] have lost respect on teachers or professors</u> or even for parents....
Emigrant Ina	Here [UK] you are certain that your child is not going to progress or pass the class because <u>mom is giving money to the teacher</u>. This is important for me. When my child moves from this school, I want her to have learnt good things and honest things. <u>There [Albania], these things do happen. They did happen when I was living there</u>. And I feel bad to know this. If the teacher is doing that to simply have the child pass the class<u>, this is dangerous for the children especially when a child is not really getting it, but I also think this is an offense for the teacher who practise such things, you know, gaining money out of this.</u> Here these things don't happen. Well, here it's not that they fail children like in Albania. Here, children have the information they need. If one wants to go further, I mean, go to university then they study more. In Albania is that mentality, "Well, let me finish this class and the other and then let's see where to go". I would like to see that <u>they put charges for these teachers who do such things, or for the system to get rid of the idea of failing children because if we fail on child, society will penalize him more, psychologically as well.</u> If a child fails two years in a row, then what are the changes he will get it the third time? Unfortunately, it will be more difficult for him. <u>Teachers shouldn't be telling children "I will fail you if you don't do this and that".</u>
Returned Emigrant Ira	I like to see the cup half full not empty after all these years. Hmm, it is much better because it has separated state monopoly, <u>and the figure of the teacher was scary and very much totalitarian</u>, I think in some ways we still are because we feel that that totalitarian state still exists….you know? But now there are more alternatives, to do something different. To me this is positive. (...) Also, it is out of question that <u>teachers must be updated because things change and here in England teachers have training and teachers are sent to have trainings.</u> <u>This is good for the teachers, but also for the pupils who go to that school,</u> because children should get a certificate of study which is valid for everywhere they go, even abroad.

Returned Emigrant Anita	I think it [teacher's role] is very important. I <u>think in private schools teachers are more dedicated, perhaps because there are few children</u>; whereas in public school there are more. Often they say, one must find his best friend better than self. Even teachers we consider them as a second parent, despite the fact that they don't live with the child, but <u>it's about the way they educate children which then they use when they leave school</u>. What they get in school, they will use later in life. Let's say if the teacher says this child cannot stay still, he is always moving. If the teacher chooses to deal with it and help the child, then good, but if not, then the teacher will not be capable to understand the child, so the child will go on and on having that issue.
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	The first year I taught in this school I would hear <u>teachers shouting in the class, offensive comments, things that I find embarrassing as we all got used to a different way when in England</u>…So yeah, this means that <u>teachers do teach youngsters this model. I do find it very strange how teachers have lost their values from my previous teachers.</u>
Returned Emigrant Mona	Children are noisy during class, in <u>fact they are rude to teachers, I know many cases, like one teacher leaving the class crying</u>. It is democracy now, but more than enough. I think there should be some certain dictatorship with the child otherwise children during class cannot be managed by democratic way, this is my opinion. Perhaps it's negative, but I think during class there must be some strong dictatorship <u>so they [children] do feel a bit of fear.</u> I am not saying to be violent, perhaps this is bad, but <u>they need to know teacher's authority and dignity. Children must know that.</u>
Non Emigrant Enerieta	*Relationship with the teachers* <u>In our time, hmm, the word of our teachers was a law that could not be questioned. Today, they [children] have a different relationship with their teachers, it is like friends</u>, or in some cases, teachers overtake this relation into something deeper <u>by treating them like their own children</u>. There are also <u>cases when teachers yell at pupils, or even hit them</u>, I have heard cases like this. On the other hand, there are cases when <u>they [teachers] are open, calm, and children can express their thoughts, wishes</u>….
Non Emigrant Pranvera	I would like to see children being engaged at all times, so they are checked upon, so that they have competition amongst them, meaning they should be in contact with teacher the whole time. Also teacher with parent, teacher with student and the student with the teacher, you know. Contact! <u>I think teachers should be active the whole time</u>, <u>receiving all children's ideas, bad or good, because children have their own world</u>, and they might want to hear different things, but teacher should be attentive. I mean,

	hmm, not to have a kind of class where one kid is called to the board, then sit and then another one up and so on. I would like to see more activities during class
Emigrant Lule	I have noticed, as children in Albania say, they say their teachers are, some of them do a good job and some don't. Some say that when teacher speaks and <u>children don't listen to her, she would get angry</u>.
Emigrant Lumturie	I am not sure, but I feel that <u>they [students] have lost respect on teachers</u> or professors or even for parents.
Returned Emigrant Besiana	My children are at a private school and I don't see the communication I want to see in schools today. I mean, some of them, they [teachers] <u>still hit the children</u>.
Returned Emigrant Anita	What I am saying is that at the time I felt that teachers were interested to understand the child more; whereas today if they think a child makes noise, <u>they just give him a name as someone who does not behave well</u>. This is the common word they use<u>; they don't work with the child</u>. Hmm, things like "He moves a lot; this age is like this; because he got a good mark, [I] don't think he will be like this the whole year". That's how it can get here [Albania]. If teachers somehow see you involved in a particular bad act then <u>they think you are like that for the rest of the year, which is not fair. But also, if they think you are a good pupil, they think you are so in all subjects, still not good. Children are involved in these decisions teachers make. I think it is sort of stereotypical act towards children</u>.

Image of the teachers

As noted in the above extracts, the changes due to political and socio-cultural transition had impacted parents' image of the teachers and how the teachers constructed relationships within the school. Whilst reflected on the image of the teachers, parents focused on the importance for teachers to have the appropriate qualifications for the job. Enerieta stated that, "*The basics to all things are the teachers...*" She also commented on the positive impact of qualified teachers on the learner claiming that, "A *good teacher is good for the child…Teachers must be qualified"*. Similarly, whilst comparing the image of teachers with her own teachers being "*scary and totalitarian*" with teachers abroad (i.e. UK), Ina emphasized the need for qualified teachers, stating "*It is out of questions that*

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teachers must be updated because things change…This is good for the teachers, but also for the pupils who go to that school". According to Ina, good teachers would influence the learner achieving valid qualifications.

Furthermore, parents made sense of the image of teachers by presenting differences of teachers working in private versus public education. They portrayed a better image of teachers in private education sector. This is illustrated in Vera's quotes, who revealed that, due to the excess number of children in public schools (over 40 pupils per classroom), teachers in public education would find it "*Impossible*" to interact with each child. More so, parents perceived teachers in public schools as "*Difficult to talk to*". On the other hand, teachers on private education were perceived as more "*Dedicated, welcoming and there to talk to the parents*". Overall, because of more "*Freedom and opportunity*", Vera claimed that, "*Teachers today are more informed and prepared*". Similarly, Anita stated that, "*In private schools teachers are more dedicated, perhaps because they deal with fewer children"*. She elaborated on the importance of teachers' role in children's schooling stating, "*It's about the way they [teachers] educate children which then they use when they leave school*".

When parents were reflecting on the differences between teachers in private and public education, they also emphasized the fact that teachers in public education were earning low salary. Some parents viewed this fact as a downfall, which was probing teachers to bribe pupils and parents. In her quotes, Pranvera claimed that, *"Most teachers aim at receiving gifts from parents…If they had better wages they would not be thinking about that*". An evidence of bribing was also mentioned by Kloda in her comparison between education system in Albania and the one abroad. She stated, "*Here [U.K.], your child is not going to progress or pass the class because mom is giving some money to the teacher. There [Albania] these things happen*". She spelled out that not only that was "*Dangerous for the child*" but also "*Offensive for the teacher*" being involved

in such act. Kloda also revealed that an issue that contributed towards such an intolerant act was the system, which allowed teachers to fail pupils who had not progressed well. In her views, she also explained that teachers used this fact to push pupils in completing tasks.

Due to changes in the political system, the public education system had undergone liberalization, which allowed students to choose their subject of field had they passed all required points in the entrance exam. In Matilda's quotes, she explained that students, who did not do well, were offered the chance to enrol in the university, particularly in educational departments. Matilda claimed that, "*Because they are not good students they pass exams by paying money under the table. These are the future teachers of our children*". Nevertheless, she claimed that, "*[These] teachers lack a lot of professionalism*". More so, Matilda showed concern about the ongoing presence of teachers educated under Communism who operate with a different mentality. She claimed, "*One side we have these people and on the other side we face old teachers with a different mentality to what our children need and can understand*". The present quote revealed the impact of the liberalization process in the education system on preparing teachers, which is crucial in building an image for the teachers of their children.

The above extracts also revealed parents' concern about the changing values, respect and authority of teachers. Parents were able to define their concern about operating teachers whilst comparing their personal experiences with teachers when at school. Vjollca claimed that during her experience as a returned emigrant teacher in Albania, she claimed that, "*I would hear teachers shouting in the class, offensive comments, things that I find embarrassing…Teachers do teach youngsters this model….Teachers have lost values from my previous teachers*". Similarly, Lumturie stated in her quotes that, "*I feel that they [students] have lost respect on teachers…*" In addition, Lule viewed some teachers doing a good job and some other not, however, from what she had been told, "*When a teacher is speaking and children are not listening, she [teacher] would get angry*". More so, in her quote, Mona

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extended this concern to teachers being challenged from the way children approach them. She claimed, "*Children are noisy during class, in fact they are rude to teachers. I know many cases, like one teacher leaving the class crying*". She also explained that schools should maintain the previous authoritarian approach with children, so "C*hildren feel a bit of fear*". Although her position was against violence, Mona claimed, *"They [children] need to know teacher's authority and dignity"*.

Relationships with the teachers

Parents' accounts on the image of the teachers were followed by their reflection on the way teachers constructed relationships with the children. Parents perceived pupil-teacher relationship as different from their time at school. Whilst trying to make sense of the differences, Enerieta claimed, "*They [children] have a different relationship with their teachers; it's like friends*". According to her, there were cases that teachers treated their pupils as their own children and at times them being "O*pen, calm and children can express their thoughts, wishes...*" At times, she recalled cases when teachers approached children in an abusive manner stating, "*Teachers yell at pupils, or even hit them*". Even more, Besiana claimed that, *"I don't see the communication I want to see in schools today...They [teacher] still hit the children*".

In the above extracts, parents also revealed preference in the way teachers should approach pupils. Pranvera explained that she would like teachers to be more "*in contact*" and "*active"* engaging all children in the classroom despite their ideas. She spelled out that teachers should "R*eceive all children's ideas, bad or good, because children have their own world"*.

Parents also brought forward their concern about teachers' approach being stereotypical towards children who might challenge their role with their actions or performance. This can be illustrated in the quote of Anita when she shares

about teachers calling children disfavour names when they made noise or had been involved in what teachers defined as "*bad*" act. Alternatively, they would have treated children's differently had they been good pupils. According to Anita, children were faced with such manners, which she viewed "*Unfair*". She claimed, *"If teachers see you involved in a particular bad act, then they think you are like that for the rest of the year, which is not fair. If they think you are a good pupil, they think you are in all subjects. Still not good. Children are involved in these decisions teachers make. I think it is a sort of stereotypical act towards children"*.

Overall, Albanian parents perceived the political and socio-economic changes as having an impact not only on the school system but also on teachers. Due to their different socio-cultural experiences, parents' meanings came across as significantly diverse. Whilst making comparisons between present teachers and their teachers and/or with teachers abroad, parents' reflected on the changing image of teachers in Albania and the way they constructed relationships with the learner. Although parents viewed teachers as being more exposed to information, they commented on the need of teachers to be qualified and updated. More so, parents distinguished teachers working in private and public education concluding that, because of better wages and with less children in the classroom, teachers in private school were more dedicated, welcoming and approachable to talk to parents; whereas the ones in public school having low wages and more children to teach, as more probe to bribe parents and children. More so, teachers' professionalism was also questioned as parents showed concerned regarding teachers' enrolment in higher education being an unfair process. In addition, it was noted that parents viewed teachers as having lost values, respect and authority in their approach with pupils. They also perceived teachers' relationships with the pupils as different to own previous experiences, with some cases when teachers were open and friendly, and with some other being abusive. At last, parents' expressed their concern on the way teachers construct children as learners by portraying a stereotypical attitude towards the children who did or did not perform at their expectations.

5.2.2. **Impact of changes due to migration**

The second part of this chapter aims at analysing the impact of socio-cultural changes due to migration on the parents' accounts of the education. More specifically, this section explores emigrant and returned emigrant parents' accounts of education impacted by their experiences as migrants abroad. The analysis draws on the assumption that the parents will give meaning to their representations by taking into account their experience with education as emigrants abroad. Understanding the way parents represent the education system impacted by the changes due to migration has great significance on the way they will approach their children's schooling in foreign systems. Through the use of thematic analysis the impact of migration on parents' representations of education system is analysed and discussed.

When reflecting on the impact of migration, emigrant and returned emigrant parents focused on *the school system abroad* and on *the teachers abroad*. Their accounts of the school system emphasized themes revolving how parents *made sense of the changes* as emigrants and how the perceived changes shaped the *image of the learner abroad.* Parents' accounts of the impact of changes on teachers disclosed their viewpoints on the *image of teachers* and the way the teachers *constructed relationship* with the learners. The importance of these subthemes was evident as they were expressed by all participants (with the exception of two participants), as shown in Table 5.1.2 in Appendices[19].

5.2.2.1 **Accounts of the school system abroad**

Emigrant and returned emigrant parents reflected on particular issues to give examples of the impact of migration on the education system. In these examples, parents of migratory experiences focused on issues concerning how they *made sense of the system abroad* comparing it to their experience with

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[19] Please refer to Appendix I, page XXVI.

education in Albania and how those changes shaped *the image of the learner abroad* (see Figure 5.3).
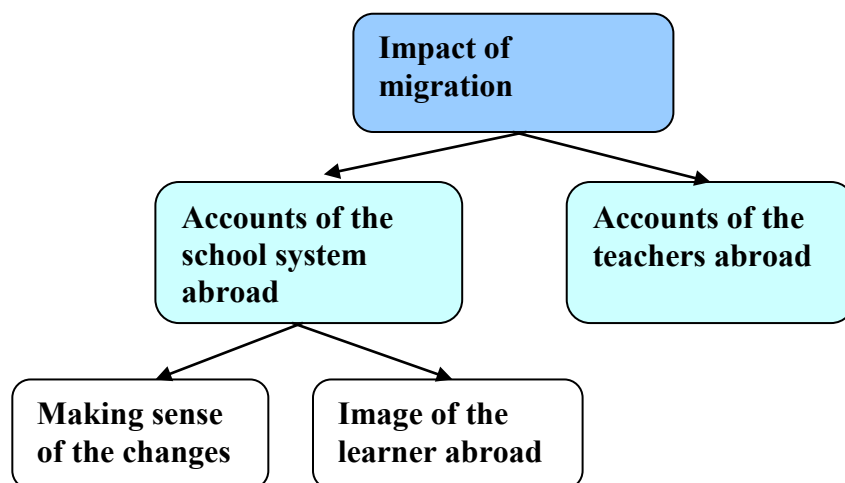
Figure 5.3: Accounts of the school system abroad

Table 5.3 presents selected extracts from emigrant and returned emigrant parents' interviews illustrating how they made sense of changes in the education system abroad and how the changes shaped the image of the learner in the hosting countries.

Table 5.3: Accounts of the school system abroad

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
	Making sense of changes abroad
Bruna Emigrant	To tell the truth, here [UK] it is a different experience. What I had there [Albania] has nothing to do with the one here. I think it's more advanced here because I see that my daughter who is in year four she is doing things that I did when I was in year 8 in Albania, in maths and the other four most important subjects that they have here; it's different to what we had then.
Flora Emigrant	[It is] different from here [London]. We would go to school on our own, we did not need for parents to walk us to school, and they did not worry during the time we were in the playground at school. Here it's different. As a parent I am obliged here to take my child to school, and if my son who goes to college comes a bit late, I would worry, I would call him. This is one different, it's not that here life is not safe, but this is how it is here, that parents should take child to school and should collect children from school...I feel quite good about my children getting an education here, because

	here (...) <u>they have various teaching tools, the parents do not need to go and buy books, pencils, notebooks, or other things, school has it all for you.</u>.....From the moment a child puts his feet at school, that <u>child is the most important thing in the school and the child is safe in all ways</u>, food is checked, the way doors open to not hurt children, these things have left impression on me. We did not use to have these...
Emigrant Maria	<u>Things have changed. Before, our system then, was different. I mean our system then was different to what G [son's name] is having.</u> I mean, English level is so high from the one in Albania. In fact<u>, the one I had was under Communism, which was even more different than what is today there</u> [Albania]. When I say level, I mean teachers and children because it's a different generation and things change, so <u>teaching methods change</u>."
Returned Emigrant Enila	As I said, I was <u>introduced to a different education system</u>, at least based on my experience, and then, I was trying to find the differences and to find the positive side of it and perhaps negative sides that might have had. I think positive thing was the fact <u>that there was freedom, at least for the children, they could work, create things.</u> Hmm, I was also thinking the negative side of it, <u>school had longer hours</u>.
Returned Emigrant Ira	And I am not saying that the Greek system is the best, the most achieved, the most…but at least for what we <u>experience it was different and likeable, and democratic</u>.
Returned Emigrant Tefta	When they have debates, for example, <u>between teachers and parents, they end up debating politics</u>, like, this system is like this and the other like that, even the teachers are involved in it. There [Greece], I learnt to be away from this, because <u>school did not encourage politics, because it can influence students</u>. School teaches you things you need to know for your life. This was one thing I noticed which was different<u>. In Greece they did not include politics, but they had religion in school, I mean they had particular classes for religion, orthodox education;</u> they had it every year. However, because during the last years they had migrants living there, what they did is have this class as elective, you know whoever did not want; <u>they were not obliged to take it</u>. It was an obligation until year 6, not after.
Kloda Emigrant	*Image of learner abroad* Well, <u>they [teachers and system] work a lot with the child here</u> [UK], I mean the <u>psychological side</u> of it; <u>they don't override and pressurize children here</u>. As I said <u>before they let the child in peace</u>; They have a comfortable method for both sides and I would like this. I remember when my daughter went in year one, she was

	five and I was asking myself "How do they pass children to higher levels here?" I mean, because schools did not have any child capable to pass the year, I couldn't get that. Because I remember schools in Albania that if we didn't study we would fail and repeat classes and because of that we studied a lot more difficult than here.
Lumturie Emigrant	I notice that English children use phones to calculate things…what's the word in Albanian, calculate? They use calculators. I feel they haven't got a clue to do addition or subtraction by head, especially when a lot of numbers are involved. The system here is not my ideal. I would want it to be…for example, here [UK] there is a lot to choose. When a child enters the classroom he could choose the group he likes to be, one is doing painting, one is playing, one geography. So I think I would prefer that when it is geography, all children should be doing that subject. This is what I think. This would help children to understand that for that day they will all have geography, maps, draw maps...
Returned Emigrant Mona	When I compare to the ones in Germany, hmm, I remember my son used to say "Oh that's good, it's easy to do homework; there is only a few things". I mean in one day the child had few things to do, so the child did not get tired but enjoyed. Children were able to learn things which were easier than in Albania, I mean education there was easier. For example, in maths they had the same lesson for one or two days till children understood the concepts and then a new lesson, not like here. And, they had more fun time, and they had other subjects, like music, literature, swimming, and every day they had to go to one of these activities. This way, children had fun and when class started children were happy to go to. They had a lot of labs, so things they learnt in theory and then saw them in practice, which I think schools here lack. Children here [Albania] don't have that opportunity. There [in Germany] there was a link between theory and practice. Abroad, I have seen that they gave children different tests and depending on how well child did on test that's the level, so children separated in levels, categories!
Returned Emigrant Tefta	In Greece, they don't pay much attention during first 6 years. Perhaps they did focus on lessons, but they had many parties, they engaged children in singing and they paid attention to child's free time, I mean sports, field trips and only a little teaching. I cannot say about high school, because we returned but I know it got more difficult. Year 8 and 9 they had exams in all subjects so it did make students work more during those years. Then the last three years, they had one year together and then would split into fields; some would go for technical, some for philosophy, medicine; they had to choose some fields.

Returned Emigrant Vjollca	Well, you see, the child was able to take information in and I think what they did is that <u>they would prepare children better for life</u>. Until they enter college school it's not difficult; they look at the basics of each field, <u>not so much information from an early age like here in Albania</u>. I think there [UK] <u>they emphasize more how to build relationships, general politeness, I mean how to be a good citizen</u>, which here, I think does not exist. The focus is on chemistry, maths, physics; we forget that they need to be humans before they are anything else.

Making sense of changes abroad

When emigrant and returned emigrant parents were invited to reflect on their experiences with education as emigrants abroad (i.e. United Kingdom and other countries in Europe), they focused on the host countries' education. Their individual past experiences helped them to make sense of the perceived changes by making use of comparison strategy. They drew their attention on the differences between education system in hosting countries and the system in Albania.

As noted in the above extracts, migration had affected these emigrants and returned emigrants' representations on the education system. Parents represented the system abroad as different compared to experiences with education they had prior to migration. In her quotes, Maria viewed her child's school system as different not only to her schooling, but different to the system that could be in the actual system in Albania. Bruna claimed that her experience abroad was "*Different*" and she had found the system there "*More advanced*". She explained that the content of knowledge, which her child was learning in year four, she had experienced during eighth year as a pupil in Albania. When drawing on the differences between systems, Enila viewed the system abroad as having "*Freedom for children*". She explained that children were free to work and create things. Furthermore, Ira claimed that she founded the system abroad as "*Different and likeable, and democratic*".

Parents also identified differences in the everyday practices at schools abroad. Flora pointed out that one difference from her time at school was parents feeling "*Obliged to take and collect her child from school*". Whilst claiming how content she was to have her child getting an education abroad, she reflected on the school providing all the tools and materials pupils need whilst at school. She stated, "*They have various teaching tools; the parents do not need to go and buy books, pencils, notebooks, or other things, school has it all for you*". She continued revealing her impressions by reflecting on the fact that for the system abroad, once the child would enter the school, *"That child was the most important thing and the child was safe in all ways"*.

As explained earlier, emigrant and returned emigrants in this section of analysis, experienced schools in various different countries in Europe. Therefore, their experiences also differed. One parent reflected on the impact of religion in the school curriculum in Greece. Whilst comparing it to the education system in Albania when schools were affected by politics, Tefta expressed that school system in Greece was influenced by religion; however, that was not an obligation, but an elective subject.

Image of learner abroad

Whilst making sense of the changes abroad, parents also focused on the image of the learner abroad, revealing a new image of the learner compared to their previous representation of what a learner was. Parents' experiences differed, so did their meanings. Kloda viewed the school system abroad as caring towards pupil's psychological wellbeing. She claimed that, "*They [system] don't override and pressurize children here [UK]"*. Kloda also emphasized another difference on the way school constructed children as learners. She focused on the fact that schools there did not fail pupils. This fact to her was different to what she knew from the system in Albania, which she evaluated as more "*More difficult*", and that it would fail pupils making them "*Repeat [failed] classes"*. Mona also reflected on how the system she experienced in Germany aimed at making school enjoyable and not tiring for the children, by giving less homework for pupils. She claimed that, "C*hildren had fun and when class*

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started children were happy to go". More so, Tefta reflected on the system in Greece focusing on pupils' free time by engaging them in sports and activities. Furthermore, in her comparison with the system back home, Vjollca claimed that the system in the United Kingdom "*Would prepare children better for life*". She explained that, from an early age, children were exposed into "*How to build relationships, general politeness, I mean how to be a good citizen*", which differed from the way schools in Albania construct children. According to Vjollca, system in Albania focused on subjects considered as more difficult, such as chemistry, mathematics or physics.

Alongside their positive standpoint on schools abroad, one parent identified a different standpoint. In her comparison to the system in Albania, Lumturie revealed that school system in the United Kingdom allowed children to use calculators to solve problems with reference to mathematics. According to her, this could have influenced pupils not to perform calculations "*By head*". She also showed concern about pupils choosing their classes, allowing for some doing different subjects at same time.

To summarize, parents valued the education system abroad and the way it influenced the learner. In their comparison with the school system in Albania (an evaluation which revealed their time at school and what they knew of the actual education system), the system abroad was perceived as different in that it was democratic, enjoyable and more advanced. Schools abroad were equipped with all necessary materials and tools needed for the learning process, and children were free to choose their classes aiming at making it fun for the leaner. On their views, they portrayed schools abroad as caring towards pupil's psychological and physical needs by engaging them in sports, making their time at school fun and not pressuring children with excessive homework. The system also focused on teaching children informal education (i.e. politeness and building relationships).

5.2.2.2 Accounts of teachers abroad

This section of emigrant and returned emigrant parents' views on the impact of migration focuses on views on teachers in the schools abroad. Parents' views on their children's teachers will be elaborated in the following Chapter (6); however, this section will focus on parents' general views on teachers abroad. As presented in Figure 5.4, when parents were invited to reflect on teachers, they all spoke about the image of the teachers and the way they constructed relationships, (see Table 5.4).
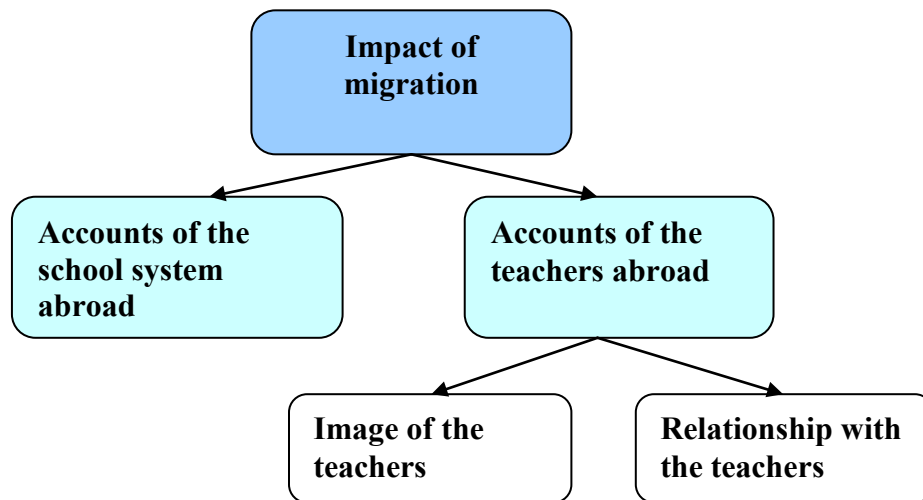
Figure 5.4: Accounts of teachers abroad

The participants' accounts of the image of teachers and relationships with teachers abroad are illustrated in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Accounts of the teachers abroad

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
Emigrant Bruna	*Image of the teachers abroad* I mean conditions then were not like today, you have choice here [UK]. We didn't have choice. Also, infrastructure is different, it's better here. A teacher here works with much more dedication than teachers in Albania. In Albania teachers didn't help us. If you had a question for the teacher then, it's not that the teacher would explain to you clearly like the teachers here. I noticed in my daughter's school that when you ask the teacher, the teacher comes

	to sit with you if you are unclear about something. This was not something I had in Albania, for example, I had problems in maths, and it's not that I had that teacher who would come to talk to me or to explain to me in details. Whereas here I see teachers being dedicated to the children, like a tutor.
Emigrant Elvana	It [role of teacher] is not important as it used to be. Before, the teacher had a much higher position, figure I mean. However, teacher plays an important role, but I want to say that today the teacher is more like a facilitator, which means it offers children the opportunity, it is not that model as used to be, ok? Now, it is one who it offers children opportunity to learn, not from things in his mind, but what is around him, with materials, knowing what the child needs. That's it.
Emigrant Flora	Hmm, the role of the teacher is at school, because teachers are only at school, because when you finish being at school, you are not just a teacher, you are a parent, a friend, etc. It is very important, like parent is at home, a model for his family, that's how teacher is at school, a model for children. A good teacher, who knows to teach the lesson well, who knows to communicate with all types of pupils, that is…and... that teacher does a good job, and it is a role model, that is a system, model for pupils.
Returned Emigrant Besiana	It's [role of teacher] very important. We were grown up with this spirit, so this is how we will continue. When we went to Italy, the first time we took our daughter in kindergarten we brought flowers with us 'coz you know, first time that our daughter was going to socialize and she was growing up, and almost all of them were shocked and said "Flowers, why flowers, whose birthday is it" And I explained that for us this is what we do. I mean even though my children got used to a much more liberal relation with the teacher, they still think the teacher is an important figure, an idol. I mean I taught them that feeling of teacher being the main figure and when there was a problem I would tell them "Ok, the teacher is right", but without hurting them.
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	The infrastructure for example, I do like that in England; they have assistant teachers to help with children with problems. This new mentality, I found it fascinating. This helps the main teacher a lot to accomplish more, especially when children are very young.
	Relationship with the teachers abroad
Emigrant Elvana	When I compare with the system in Albania, children here [UK] are more free, they feel better around the teacher, I think, and I see that teachers try to give the best, they prepare children for the future. For example, when it comes to writing, we used to focus

	only on one style of writing, very rarely they [teachers] used to show us how to write a letter, rarely how to write emails. Well, it's not that we had emails then, I mean only formal or informal or long writings, but not so much about paragraphs, changes throughout, headings and others, summarizing; whereas here [UK] they prepare them well.
Emigrant Kloda	A big difference, but I say that our schooling was more strict, because schooling here or the way it is organized here in the UK...for example when I was in primary education, if the teacher was convinced that the child could not reach the level, that child would fail. This can be good or bad, because it's not good for children to fail class, psychologically it makes children feel bad and I am not for it because at times it has to do with courage and will to learn. <u>Whereas here [UK] if the teacher sees something like that, the teacher would work a lot with that child to go further, or gives more work so they don't fail.</u>
Emigrant Lule	<u>Except that they [teachers] are polite, it's also the discipline</u>, I like the uniform. <u>The way the teachers talk to the children, they understand children better.</u> Something else…our relationship and child's relationship with the teacher, again, a very good one<u>, we feel that the teacher is close to our child</u>. Cannot say much about things in Albania, <u>but here they are open to us and very nice</u>.
Returned Emigrant Kalia	What I like first is the way teachers give lessons, how they teach children, starting from year one, teaching them to write, to count, to…in every way. They use visual things a lot which before it was strange here in Albania. <u>They use colours and pictures</u>. <u>Also, they take care of the psychological side of children.</u>
Returned Emigrant Mona	<u>The relationship with teachers and people, communication with them was very good</u> also because once a month they organized a trip to the forest where they all went to sleep over. There, although it wasn't easy, <u>it helped them [children] to learn to stay in group, how to behave and also the teachers was like a parent</u> because teachers were all day and night with them, for about one month, eating, cleaning, things that we still don't have here. So, <u>they had direct relationship with the teachers, very friendly,</u> and we don't have it here [Albania].
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	<u>Hmm, we were more educated in how to be a good citizen</u>, I mean they [her teachers] used to check our hands and nails, and now this is like an offensive thing to do. I remember when in London we were living in an Indian neighbourhood and my daughter got lice so I went to the teacher and asked her whether she could look at the heads of children and she said."<u>No way, that is a matter of human rights</u>". I was surprised but she did something else, she wrote to the parents saying that they are aware that children might have been infected for parents to look.

Image of the teachers abroad

When emigrant and returned emigrant parents reflected on the image of teachers abroad, they portrayed positive features of the teachers. Again, they gave meaning to the image of teachers by using the comparison strategy. Whilst comparing teachers abroad with teachers in Albania, Bruna viewed them as being like *"A tutor", "More dedicated than teachers in Albania",* and *"Teachers sitting with you if you are unclear about something"*. Similarly, Elvana also viewed teachers back then to have a much higher position, and that teachers today being more like "*A facilitator",* in that *"It offers children opportunity to learn"* and *"Knows what the child needs"*. Furthermore, Flora viewed the teacher abroad as *"A role model for the children",* comparing the teacher at school as the parent at home is. Besiana also viewed teacher as a model and explained that, although children had a much more liberal relation with the teacher, she would teach her children to view their teacher as "*An important figure and an idol*". At last, Vjollca revealed that, unlike the system in Albania, the system abroad allowed the main teacher to have assistant teachers to assist children during learning process.

Relationship with the teachers abroad

Parents also reflected on the way teachers abroad constructed relationships with the learner. Elvana claimed that children [in the UK] are "*More free and feel better around the teacher*". She also claimed that teachers prepared children for their future. Similarly, Kloda viewed teachers as working a lot towards child's needs, especially about children not failing school. Further, Lule viewed teachers as "*polite*" and available to talk to the children. She then explained that this way "*They understand children better*". Lule also claimed that teachers in England were open and nice even to her as a parent.

In addition to teachers' aiming to assist the learner with their tasks, Kalia viewed teachers as carers towards "*The psychological side of children*". Mona claimed about schools organizing field trips, which allowed teachers to build direct and friendly relationships with the children. In Vjollca's quotes, she revealed about a situation at school when a pupil had caught parasites. In her

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communication with the teacher, she found out that the system there had different strategy to what she suggested (i.e. checking all pupils' heads during class, similarly to her experience in Albania), emphasizing human rights.

Overall, parents' accounts on the image of teachers abroad and the way they constructed relationships were portrayed as positively different. Parents used the comparison strategy to give meaning to their accounts on teachers' abroad. Teachers' image abroad was perceived as being like a tutor, a facilitator and as a role model. Under the assistance of their assistants, the teachers were perceived as dedicated, offered children opportunities to learn and understood children's needs. Drawing on their past experiences, one parent also revealed the way she had influenced her daughter to view the image of her teacher, as an important figure and an idol, similarly to the way she viewed her own teachers back then. More so, parents viewed teachers abroad as polite, friendly and caring towards children's psychological wellbeing. They too believed that children felt good around the teachers and they engaged in direct communication with their teachers during school field trips. At last, parents revealed that teachers focused on human rights when dealing with sensitive matters.

5.2.3.   Impact of changes due to returning to homeland

The last section of this analysis chapter aims at analysing the impact of socio-cultural changes due to returning to homeland on parents' accounts on education system. More specifically, it focuses on returned emigrant parents' representations on the education system in Albania, upon their return. In the first section of this chapter (Section 5.2), when parents reflected on the impact of political and socio-economic changes, returned emigrants expressed some views on the actual education system. In addition, they were invited to specifically focus on how returning to Albania had affected their views on education. In this sense, this part of the analysis chapter serves as complimentary to better understand the impact of returning for this group.

These participants too made use of comparison strategy to make sense of their representations on the education system, which are influenced interchangeably by political and socio-economic changes, by changes due to migration and by changes due to returning to homeland, suggesting that returned emigrants offer a circular perspective on the impact of these diverse changes. Similarly to the previous sections, understanding the way parents view the education system impacted by changes due to returning to homeland has great significance on the way they approach their children's schooling. Through the use of thematic analysis the impact of returning on parents' representations on education is analysed and discussed.

When reflecting on the impact of migration on education returned emigrant parents focused on *the school system* and on *the teachers*. Their accounts on the school system emphasized themes revolving how parents *made sense of the changes* as returned emigrants and how the perceived changes shaped the *image of the learner*. Parents' accounts on the impact of changes on teachers disclosed their viewpoints on the *image of teachers* and how the teachers *constructed relationship* with the learner. The importance of these subthemes was evident because they were expressed by all participants, as shown in Table 5.1.3 in Appendices[20].

5.2.3.1   Accounts of the school system when returned

Returned emigrant parents reflected on particular issues to give examples of the impact returning to Albania on education. In these examples, parents focused on issues concerning how they *made sense of the system* in Albania when returned and how those changes shaped *the image of the learner* (see Figure 5.5).

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[20] Please refer to Appendix I, page XXVI.
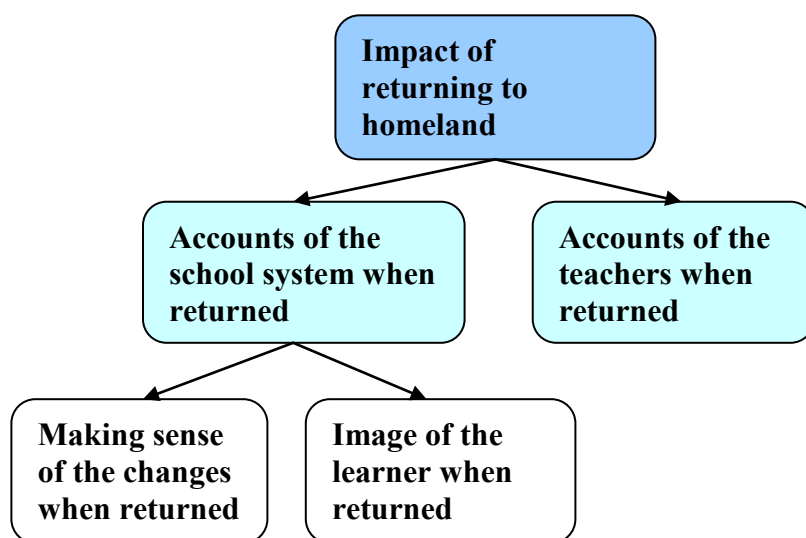
Figure 5.5: Accounts of the school system when returned

Table 5.5 presents selected extracts from returned emigrant parents' interviews illustrating how they made sense of changes in the education system and how the changes shaped the image of the learner in Albania.

Table 5.5: Accounts of the school system when returned

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
Returned Emigrant Ira	*Making sense of the system when returned* Some schools run in the afternoon, from 1 to 7 [pm] and as we know high school students need to study about four hours, so when do they study? <u>I think the programme is overloaded.</u> I mean when one has to go to school at 1 [pm], when do you wake up? When do you study, when do you read? <u>I can't imagine how my child would adapt to this schedule</u>. So, she is back, then would sleep at 9 [pm] and will have to get up very early because at 12 [noon] she would need to leave the house to be at school at 12.
Returned Emigrant Tana	In my opinion <u>there are two different things</u> because in Italy one finishes school, has a profession, you work somewhere and you are appreciated for that profession, and higher education is not always that important<u>. Whereas here [Albania] to have a job, you must have a university degree</u>.

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Returned Emigrant Enila	I think it was different in the way it was organized, in everything. Today they have different system when students finish high school, the state exam, which we didn't have, these are new now. Hmm, then we had a competition to go to university, if one didn't pass, they couldn't go. Whereas now, they have some exams from which they can choose and some that are compulsory. The chosen subjects are probably the ones students feel they can do best. Then they calculate the points which show which field they can go for. I think this has brought some confusion because I see it with my students, at the English department, they come to do a degree in English because they got low points [in the state exam], but these students never did English before, but they cannot go and study for anything else due to the points they got. This isn't right. I think students should go for what they want to study.
Returned Emigrant Tefta	Well, when they have debates for example between teachers and parents, they end up debating politics, like, this system is like this and the other like that, even the teachers are involved in it. There [Greece], I learnt to be away from this, because school did not encourage politics, because it can influence students.
	Image of learner when returned
Returned Emigrant Mona	We [as in the Albanian system] should not give children the entire difficult subjects in one day. They [as in system in Germany] had difficult subjects in different days, for example the day they had maths, they did not do physics or chemistry, you know? And, I like this because it's not good to have all difficult subjects in one day. The third one [issue] it's labs, I mean there is no connection between theory and practice and my daughter finds this a problem here [Albania]...Also, speaking about education in general there is a lot of problems like children should be treated the same...I think that good students should be given more difficult tests and exercises than a pupil who is less prepared, so that pupils learn more. I have seen abroad they gave children different tests and depending on how well child did on test that's the level, so children separated in levels, categories!
Returned Emigrant Ira	There [Athens], they had one tree and at the beginning of each year, every school year, we were requested a photo, and in this paper tree all the children had their picture up with their names on it. This is good because I don't think that there is any child who is not good at least on something. My daughter, she finds it difficult, because in her class there are only three pictures up. What does it mean that only three are the best? Well one could be good at maths and others in language. I mean, this difference, at least for her who comes from schools from there [Greece], she feels it...In Albania you must be the best pupil to wipe the board and be in charge, which automatically makes "the chosen" child be arrogant,

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	because he is chosen.
Returned Emigrant Tefta	I mean that <u>their knowledge is not full enough</u>. If we take one pupil from that time when I was going to school who has finished high school and if we take one who has finished in this time, there is a difference. Hmm, <u>the student of this time is not as capable as the other one.</u> I am not saying this to protect one system or the other, because the systems are different, but I see that school has denigrated for worst. <u>Children are overloaded with more materials than they can handle</u>, more than they need for their age.

Making sense of the changes when returned

As noted from the above extracts, parents expressed a critical view on the school system as returned emigrants. Ira showed concern about school curriculum as being "O*verloaded*" and that school ran in the afternoon. In her quotes, Tefta reflected on school being influenced by politics, which then could influence relationships with the teachers. On her comparison with education system abroad, Tana revealed that the systems were different in that education system in Albania was necessary for finding a job, which was not the case of finding a job abroad.

Parents also reflected on changes, which had occurred in the schooling system compared to the time they were pupils. In Enila's quote, although she appreciated that pupils were exposed to more choices in continuing further education, unless they gained enough points for the chosen field, they still had to have their field of study allocated from the system. According to Enila, that was not right and had brought confusion.

Image of the learner when returned

Whilst reflecting on the system, they focused on the image of the learner when returned to Albania by comparing it with the system abroad and to the system they remembered from being at school. In her quotes, Mona expressed her concern on various issues. She particularly focused on school curriculum, which contained the most difficult subjects on one day, unlike the system she

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had experienced in Germany. She also showed concerned about lap hours, during which she felt that "*There is no connection between theory and practise*". Interestingly, she found it worrying that children were treated the same not divided into categories when it came to their level of performance. By categories she explained that good students should sit for more difficult exams than the pupils who did not perform as well.

Ira revealed issues with the way the system constructed children. She founded it different to the system abroad when talked about the pictures of "*The chosen*" ones up on the wall. She found it unfair that children, who were evaluated by the school system "*Best*", were not on the wall of merits. Ira believed that all children can be good at something and claimed that this way could have a negative effect on the chosen pupil in being "*Arrogant*". Furthermore, in her comparison between the pupils back in her time, Tefta showed concern with regards to the knowledge pupils nowadays gain and revealed that pupils back then were more "*Capable*" than pupils today.

Overall, returned emigrant parents showed concern about the education system in Albania which they represented as different to what they experienced abroad or even previously as pupils. They focused on school curriculum in Albania being overloaded with materials, being influenced by political system in power. Nevertheless, the education was represented necessary to be completed in order to find jobs. Returned emigrant parents also reflected on the impact of the education system on the learner. They showed concern on the way the system constructed pupils through school curriculum, which was overloaded and lacked connection between theory and practise. Furthermore, parents revealed issues on the way schools treated or not treated children in a fair way. This includes examples of considering few children as best pupils and placing them in their "merit all" revealing an absence in recognizing that every child has their own strength on a particular subject or area. At last, parents compared the image of the present learner to the learner when they were at school, portraying

a more capable image of pupils during their time and re-emphasized that children nowadays were overloaded with unnecessary material.

5.2.3.2 Accounts of the teachers

In line with returned emigrant parents' accounts on the school system when returned, this part of the section will analyse their accounts on the teachers. As noted in the coding presence Table 5.1.3, they all expressed views on the teachers. More specifically, the parents emphasized the importance of the image of teachers and the way they constructed relationships, as displayed in Figure 5.6.
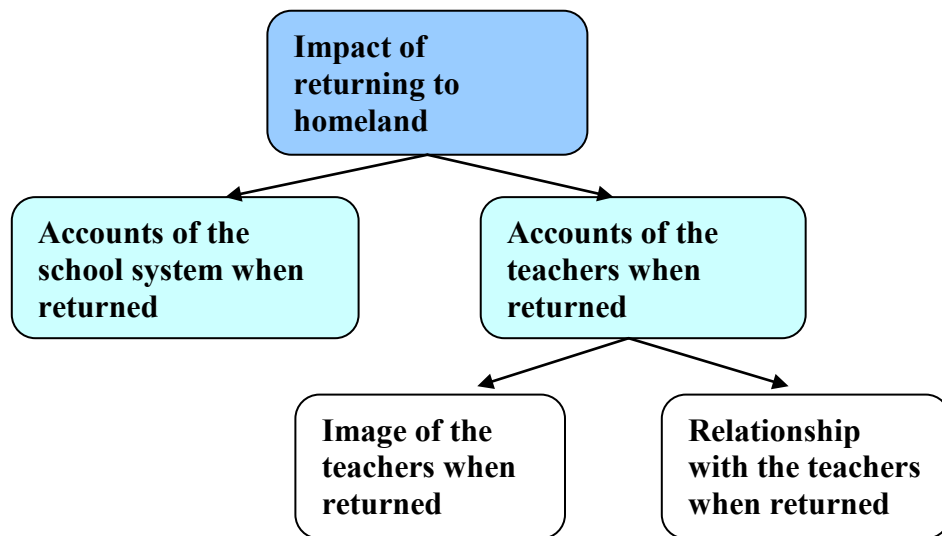
Figure 5.6: Parents' accounts of the teachers when returned

The following table provides an outline of how the parents talked about teachers with respect to their image and the way they constructed relationships.

Table 5.6: Accounts of the teachers when returned

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
	Image of the teachers when returned
Returned Emigrant Ira	I like to see the cup half full not empty after all these years. <u>It is much better because it has separated state monopoly, and the figure of the teacher was scary and very much totalitarian,</u> I think

	in some ways we still are because we feel that that totalitarian state still exists....you know? But now <u>there are more alternatives, to do something different.</u> To me this is positive.
Returned Emigrant Besiana	<u>Today [the teacher] is an educator</u>, <u>is a knowledge-</u>giver, hmm, someone who can create good relations and not be tense, like [it was] back then.
Returned Emigrant Anita	<u>Teachers, we consider them as a second parent,</u> despite the fact that they don't live with the child, but <u>it's about the way they educate which children use when they leave school..</u>.Let's say if the teacher says "This child cannot stay still; he is always moving". <u>If the teacher chooses to deal with it and help the child, then good, but if not, then he [teacher] is not capable to understand the child, so the child will go on and on having this issue.</u>
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	Well, you see, some children are not good at it [maths], and they get, say a low grade, but they are good in history or other<u>. The teachers would not give her/him the grade s/he deserves because how can one have 10 in History and 6 in Maths?! If 6 in Maths, then s/he is a 6 pupil. I think it's quite negative thing for our time and still exists</u>...And, it's a sort of mentality; I would say 70 percent of teachers do that, just out of curtsey. I must say that yes Maths does help you to be good in other subjects if good at it, but still...
	Relationship with the teachers when returned
Returned Emigrant Besiana	<u>More respective</u> [relationship with teacher]. I have met them in parents' meetings when other parents are there as well, nothing more, because here [Albania] you have teacher's cell numbers so you <u>can contact them directly for specific things or problems</u>. This is good because it's not like you go to the teacher at any time, or in the streets, or during class. And one day I told the teacher "It's not that I am not interested in my daughter but I don't want to disturb you by coming often"...I like the teacher because <u>she is communicative, and when I asked for about the programme she is happy to tell me.</u>
Returned Emigrant Tana	<u>As I said discipline has gone down; there is not that respect that it was before, students don't show a great amount of respect for their teachers,</u> and they have lost interest in schooling.
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	I see it happening at my school<u>...One of the teachers still can offend a student and because s/he fears s/he does not complain so</u>

	we keep making the same mistakes. It worries me that there is no freedom to do that and there is no respect.
Returned Emigrant Anita	In Albania I think people follow their interest. If you have money, or know the right people, you reach higher, if not, then you know? I don't understand teachers who accept presents from children, perfumes, *regali* [Italian word for presents], shirts of 100 €, I know parents who do that. I think it's wrong; it's the biggest mistake. It's like if your child is good at maths, but you don't have money to please teachers, then they don't invest in your child. It's scary… This is more in public education. Hmm, I don't have anything to say for the system there [Italy]. For here [Albania], relationship parent-teacher, they must change a bit in this. Today we have all we need, computers, secretaries, photocopies, like there, it's important we get in touch for all things that go wrong. School must notify us. I can't believe I find out that my son is going [on a field trip] to another city the next day, and he tells me this and I have no number to call to confirm. Teacher does not notify me, or write a letter, one letter and then copy it for all parents to sign, so teacher becomes closer with the parents.
Returned Emigrant Ira	What Albanian schools don't do is social education. Teach children to be aware about the environment, society, that one child can be different to the one in front of him, and that it's not always about who the best pupil is, but also how does the pupil who gets 4 [lowest grade] feel, or is discriminated against? I mean, from the time that the teacher discriminates against, of course that children will become confused in his mind.

Image of the teachers when returned

As noted from the extracts above, parents reflected on the changing image of teachers. In Ira's quotes, she revealed a positive change on the image of teachers compared to teachers in her time who were authoritarian. Besiana viewed the teacher's role being as "*An educator, a knowledge giver*" and "*Not tense as back then*". Anita revealed that teachers were considered as "*Second parent*" because "*It's about the way they educate that children use when they leave school*". When reflecting on the way teachers constructed children as learners, Vjollca showed concern about the mentality of few teachers who graded children's overall performance based on their mathematics class.

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Relationship with the teachers when returned

Returned emigrant parents also reflected on teachers' relations with them as parents. With regards to parent-teachers relationship, Besiana viewed the relationship as "*Respective*" and explained that as parents they could contact teachers directly on their cell phone number. She also viewed teachers as communicative. Unlike Besiana, Anita showed concerned about parent- teacher communication. She explained that teachers did not always notify parents when school organized field trips and did not like the fact that her son was sent to a field trip without her permission.

Returned emigrant parents also reflected on teacher-pupil relationships. Tana showed concern about the discipline going down, on pupils losing respect for their teachers and interest in schooling. Likewise, Vjollca revealed that teachers could offend students and for students lacking *"Freedom of speech"* to complain. Furthermore, parents showed concern about teachers' bribing and the way the bribing affected children's performance. Anita revealed that some teachers "*Accept presents from children, perfumes...shirts of 100 Euros"*. She also revealed that money and gifts influenced teachers on how they approached children's learning and graded their performance favouring children of parents who bribed more. Another concern brought forward by Ira revealed Albanian school as not teaching children "*Social education*", such as about environment and society. Ira also claimed that the attention should not always be paid to best pupils, but also to the pupils who perform less well. She claimed that, "*The teacher discriminates against*" children, which could confuse them.

To conclude, upon their return parents viewed the image of teachers as different to their own teachers, from being authoritarian and tense to becoming educators and knowledge-givers. In addition, these parents showed concern regarding teachers evaluating pupils' performance based on the subject of maths, disregarding pupils' individual performance on other subjects. Further, parents

viewed their relationship with the teacher as respective and communicative, with a few others showing concern with teachers' disregarding notifying parents when school organized field trips. Regarding teacher-pupil relationship, returned emigrant parents showed concern of teachers' attempt to bribe pupils and cases when teachers discriminated against children who did not engage in bribing.

5.3.   *Discussions*

This analysis chapter examined parents' accounts of the impact of socio-cultural changes on the education system. Going back to the research questions whereby the purpose was to examine how parents' meanings and experiences of their children's education are influenced by socio-cultural changes, this chapter focused on how parents make sense of the changes by reflecting on the school system and on the teachers. The way parents anchor (Moscovici, 1988) the impact of changes offers a useful insight which will inform how representations of their children's schooling are being constructed.

The impact of socio-cultural changes were evaluated based on two assumptions: a) participants will give meaning to changes in the education system by taking into account their experiences with education in Albania, with education abroad and with education when returned back to homeland; b) parents' experiences with education system impacted by change will reflect on the way they construct representations of their children's schooling (Chapter 6).

Following ideas from Moscovici, the way parents talked about education system in Albania impacted by political and socio-economic changes was guided by their socio-cultural experiences situated in different contexts. He argued that social representations allow us to give meaning to what is unfamiliar and they make it possible for us to compare and explain social phenomena (Moscovici, 1988). Parents made sense of changes by using a

comparison strategy in that their previous experiences with education (*Then*) were compared to present situation (*Now*). Approaches varied for all groups, though time overlapped between them.

More specifically, non-emigrant parents made sense of present situation with education system by drawing comparisons to the time they were at school (during Communist regime) and to the transition period after the fall. Emigrant parents reflected on Albanian education system as observed from a distance by compared the time they were at school with situation prior to migration. Returned emigrant parents gave meaning to the present situation of the education system in Albania by comparing their experiences with education during Communism, with prior to migration and with experiences when living abroad, (see Figure 5.7). Taking into account the complexity of the overlapping experiences, this suggests that understanding each group's representations is a dynamic process that has history and develops over time (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999).
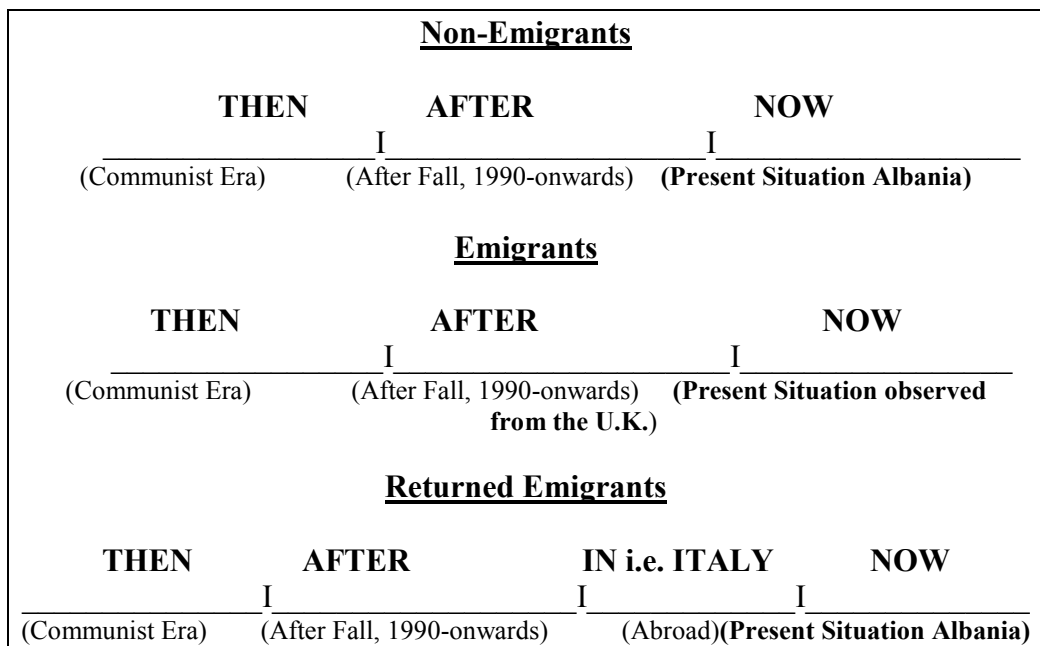
Figure 5.7: Parents' reflections on the impact of changes through time

Parents anchored their understanding of change by reflecting on its effect on the self and on others claiming "w*e faced confusion*". As it is previously discussed (Popova, 2003; Elliot & Tudge, 2007) changes at societal level do not always filter down to institutional level at a rapid pace. Thus, one can argue that the impact of change is a process that will take even more time to bring clarity to individual level. For example, one parent represent change as an act of "*a broken image",* but argued that when systems change that does not mean that individuals automatically change. This parent also revealed the need to re-present the change, "*As a wall falls, the wall inside us doesn't fall so quickly to create a new one...we faced confusion whilst searching for something new".* Parents represented change in education system situated in their new cultural context, different to what they had during schooling.

In their attempt to make sense of change in the education system, participants focused on the changes in the school system and on the teachers, in respective contexts. As two influencing components which play a vital role in their children's school education, understanding parents' perspective on the system and the teachers leads the way to the better comprehend parents approach with their children's learning process. Their accounts revealed contradictory views. At times they valued the impact of changes on the education system, and other times they did not. O'Toole and Abreu (2005) argue that when parents' representations of own education are dissonant with what they desire for their child's future parents use past to promote change. Following in this note, on one hand parents disregard changes when change to them meant lack of physical safety, corruption, unfairness, excess number of pupils, attributes which they valued during their time at school. On the other hand, they valued change when change brought about more choices, opportunities, freedom of speech and resources, attributes what they lacked during own schooling. In other words, parents use the past to promote change when that had a positive effect to the image of the new learner (i.e. when schools value freedom of speech). When change brings dissonance, they use past to under estimate change (i.e. a need to establish home-school communication in Albania, an attribute of schools abroad).

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Parents made use of the same strategy when reflecting on the changing image of teachers and how the teachers approached the learner. Whilst emigrant parents revealed a good image of teachers abroad because they valued child's individuality, returned emigrant parents were critical towards teachers in Albania, who identified few best pupils and displayed only their pictures on the wall of merits. Although the education system in Albania has shown interest in training teachers to perform a child-centred approach (MOES, 2012), the new methodology has not yet been embraced by all teachers.

To conclude, Albanian parents' past experiences gave meaning of their evaluation on the impact of socio-cultural changes on education system. Due to their distinct migratory experiences, it can be assumed that the way they will make sense of their children's schooling will also vary. Secondly, although in different socio-cultural settings, parents gave meanings to the impact of changes by focusing on two main entities: a) views on the school system, and b) views on the teachers. As for the school system, their accounts focused on making sense of the changes and how the changes in the school system had affected the learner. As for the teachers, they focused on their image and how the teachers approached the learner. At last, parents gave meaning to the changes in how they had influenced *the self* (i.e. broken image, brought confusion, etc), and impact *on the other* (i.e. unfairness, more choice, opportunities, etc). As previously discussed, we can make sense of the past by adjusting it to the present conditions, thus creating a link with desired future project (Cole, 1996; Stone & Wertsch, 1984). It will be interesting to examine how parents' meanings of the impact of changes on the education sector will filter in their everyday practices with their children's schooling. Taking into account these evaluations, the arising issues have implications for parents engaging in their children's learning process. This will be explored and discussed in more detail in the following Chapter (6).

CHAPTER 6: PARENTS´ACCOUNTS OF OWN CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING

> "*Children see in their parents the past, their parents see in them the future (...). Our duty is to preserve what the past has had to say for itself, and to say for ourselves what shall be true for the future*"
>
> (John Ruskin, 1819-1900)

6.1. Parents' accounts of own children's schooling- analysis and discussions

This chapter explores Albanian parents' accounts on their child's school education in three different socio-cultural settings. The previous analytical Chapter (4) examined parents' experiences with own education. Chapter (5) examined parents' accounts of the impact of political and socio-economic changes, of migration and of returning to homeland on the education system. While the first analysis chapter offered an understanding of '*Who'* the parents are in relation to education, the second chapter showed '*What'* they represented as changes in the education system. Both previous chapters set a background towards a better understanding of parents' social representations of their children's education. The thematic analysis of this chapter draws on the assumption that the parents will give meaning to '*How'* they construct their children as learners by taking into account their past experiences with education (own education and education as impacted by changes). They will also take into account their children's desired future (Cole, 1996; Valsiner, 2012) to make sense of the process that constructs their children as learners (by their self and by others) in a changing society.

Initially all parents were invited to reflect on their meaning of education. In particular, they reflected on the broad meaning of education and the meaning of school education. In their accounts, parents also reflected on the way their children were being constructed as learners by the school system and by the

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teachers. At last, they also reflected on their understanding of their role as parents, their hands on whilst helping their child with schoolwork and by projecting their child's future. Their accounts underline their construction of their own child development.

The findings will be analysed in the following sequence:

6.2. Meanings of education

6.3. Construction of the child as a learner

6.4. Construction of own child's development

6.5. Discussions

When data was thematically analysed, many representative subthemes of the coded extracts came across indicating parents' accounts of their children's schooling in three socio-cultural settings. A diagrammatic overview of the represented subthemes and main themes for this chapter are presented in Figure 6.0.
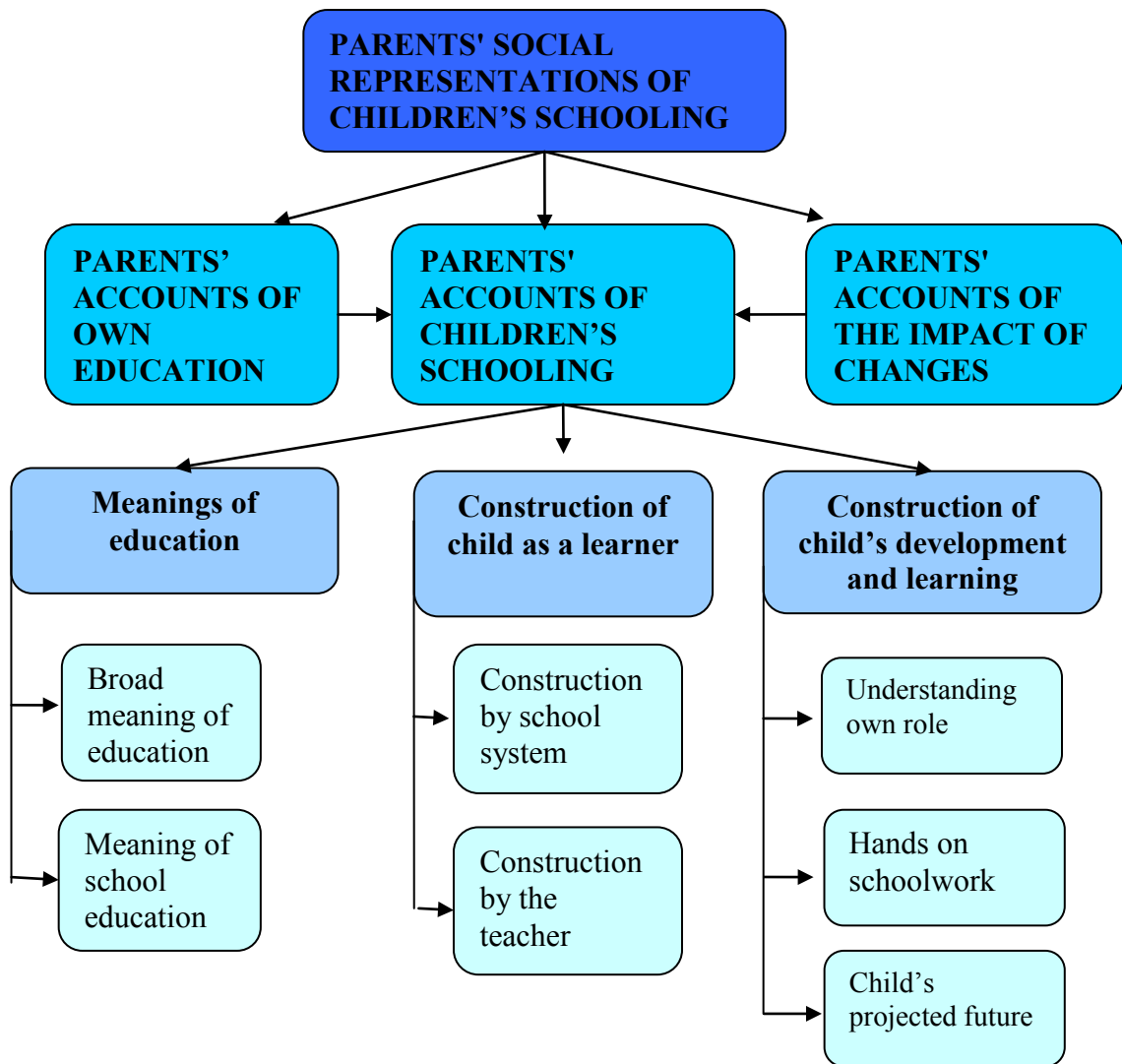
Figure 6.0: Parents' accounts on children's schooling

6.2.   *Thematic Analysis- Parents' Meanings of Education*

This section explores parents' meanings of education. Specifically, participants were invited to reflect on their broad meaning of education and their meaning of school education. Parents' experiences with own education (Chapter 4) and their understanding of impact of socio-cultural changes on education system (Chapter 5) have produced the framework which will allow better understanding of their child's schooling. On their attempt to define the meanings of education and on school education, repeatedly parents are expected to give meaning to their accounts based on their past experiences with

education. Due to parents' different socio-cultural experiences, their accounts were expected to show various viewpoints on the way they define education in general and school education in specific. In the following sections, each of the emerging subthemes will be defined accompanied by coded extracts from the analysis, followed by a general summary for each section. The importance of these subthemes was evident as they were expressed by all, as shown in Table 6.1.1 in Appendices[21].

6.2.1. Broad meaning of education

Parents of all three socio-cultural groups defined their broad meaning of education by linking education as a concept to other concepts such education as a way of *understanding life* and *acquiring knowledge*. In addition, parents with migratory experiences also defined education as a way of *embracing culture,* (see Figure 6.1). Parents' broad meaning of education includes concepts like life, knowledge and culture, implying that their accounts will reveal positive views.
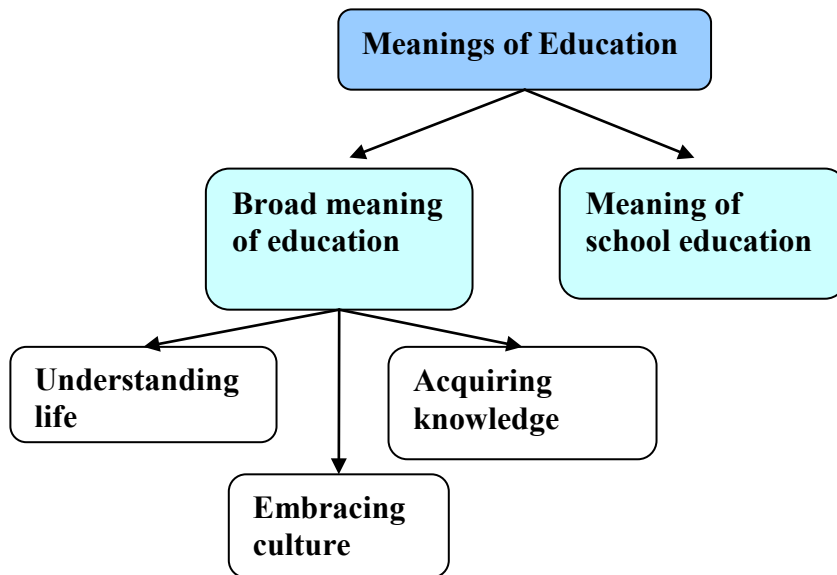
Figure 6.1: Broad meaning of education

Table 6.1 presents selected extracts from parents' interviews illustrating how they evaluated the broad meaning of education.

Table 6.1: Broad meaning of education

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
Non Emigrant Enerieta	*Understanding life* I think, in my opinion education, it means <u>a way of directing or a way of understanding life,</u> for families, partners; it's the way you have a direction, to have a good education. Education can be negative or positive, because I weigh education in both directions. With the concept, normally, education must be, I mean, <u>we need to follow the right education or to take the best out of life</u>, of community, of people that surround us. For me this is the most important. In this aspect, it is positive that my children have a good education, a positive education, based on <u>the opportunities that society gives us</u>, of course.
Emigrant Flora	<u>The word education for me is very important, it has been, it is and will be.</u> <u>Without education I am not able to understand life</u>. Not just me but my mother as well. For her, children's education was the main thing...Well <u>education has to do with life</u>, meaning if one is educated well, will have a better life, a better friendship, because your friendship is linked to what education you will complete, how much "baggage" you will fill. Hmm, education means filling your baggage at all times, every year, every second, so you have an open friendship, to know how to communicate with people.
Returned Emigrant Kalia	Education, as concept<u>, hmm, It is difficult because the word education includes many things. Education is not only when a person behaves well. Education is to be polite, to be smart, there is more to it</u>. It is a big sphere, education for a child, for a young person or <u>it includes ways of living</u>, the way of dressing, mode of expression, the way we speak, many things. The way one is developed, the way is cultivated.
Non Emigrant Matilda	*Acquiring knowledge* Education is about how one tries <u>to teach oneself, to grow</u>, to give yourself things you need in order to face situations which require development, and this development starts from the very beginning. Education does not start at this stage we are now, but it starts when we are children, in fact, when we are babies. <u>Education is a value, formation of self. It's development</u>.

Emigrant Lule	It [school education] means; It is a pleasure for us [as parents], because we try our best that our child has knowledge, to create a way towards respect.
Returned Emigrant Ina	Education is very important because, hmm it's knowing more about everything, I mean improving your knowledge....Education is giving something back to the country where you are living in and to the community.
Returned Emigrant Besiana	Education, transmitting information to educate, not only in theory, but educated should be the person who transmits it first, with politeness, the way it is taught.
	Embracing culture
Emigrant Bruna	Education is culture, even though my child is growing in a different place and she is getting a different culture, I am trying to merge this culture here [UK] to with my culture there [Albania], so it is best for my child....With education as a concept I link it all, my family culture, culture outside family, friendship, good friends, I mean, culture.
Emigrant Lumturie	With education I mean, starting with health, personal culture, appearance, how we speak, the way we sit or how we talk to people in the street.
Returned Emigrant Tana	Education in my opinion is something that is not just done in schools; family is a very important thing for children's education. Not simply from studying, from knowing a language and to be called educated or finishing school with great results. It's important to also have normal behaviour or as it's called a citizen culture, which I think we have lost a lot of the good ways of behaving, I mean many family values have been lost from the society.
Returned Emigrant Tefta	Hmm, education has a wide meaning for me. In fact, it is education when we talk about how we should communicate with friends, children or partner, but also with education I also mean culture, lessons we gain from life, from when we are very little until the age we can get to, which means we learn all our life, we learn how to behave, how to communicate with others, etc. It is wide because culture is in it as well. The culture helps you to be polite, how to educate yourself, for good not for bad. For example, hmm, we read books and that's how we create a concept for life or about the way we should behave with others.

Understanding life

As illustrated in the above quotes, parents of all three groups perceived education as a medium for understanding life. This can be illustrated by Enerieta who defined the importance of education as a "*Way of directing and understanding life*". She also viewed education as an opportunity that society gives to people implying that the opportunity to be engaged in education is linked to your macro system. Similarly, Flora claimed, *"Education has to do with life and without education I am not able to understand life*". Furthermore, Kalia reflected on the broad meaning of education by claiming that education includes many things such as a way of living, referring to behaviour, dressing, expression, communication, etc.

Acquiring knowledge

In addition to viewing education as a concept linked to life or as a way of living, parents in all three groups also viewed education as a way of acquiring knowledge. In her quotes, Matilda defined education as a way of "*Teaching oneself to grow*" and education as *"Formation of the self*". Besiana too referred to education as a way of *"Transmitting information*". Similarly, Lule viewed education as an effort to give her child knowledge. Further, Ina suggested that education is "*Knowing more of everything...improving your knowledge*". Ina viewed education as a process of acquiring knowledge, which one gives back to community and country.

Embracing culture

Emigrant and returned emigrant parents viewed education as a concept linked to culture referring to personal, family and citizen culture. By culture, they also referred to behaviour. In her quotes, Bruna defined education as linked to "*Family culture, culture outside family, friendship*". Similarly, Lumturie viewed education as a personal culture, meaning "*The way we sit or how we talk to people...*" Tana viewed education as a "*Citizen culture*", referring to acceptable

shared norms and behaviour. She also commented on family culture, which she viewed as having lost values. In addition, Tefta also linked education with culture and behaviour referring to it as "*Lessons we gain from life*".

To summarize, non-emigrant, emigrant and returned emigrant parents reflected on the broad meaning of education as a medium in understanding life and acquiring knowledge through transmitting information, learning and sharing knowledge with own community. In addition, due to their migratory experience, emigrant and returned emigrant parents gave meaning to education by linking it to culture as in personal, family and citizen culture, and by culture they referred to the way individuals communicate, behave, dress, as well as culture as lessons gained from life. Despite their dynamic and diverse experiences with education, parents' associated education with life, knowledge and culture, implying that they valued education.

6.2.2. Meaning of school education

The analysis of the meaning of school education showed a set of subthemes, which were common across the three groups. Parents were invited to reflect on their meaning of school education and their child's meaning of school education. When invited to reflect on their meaning of school education parents linked school education as a process of *learning from the teacher*. When elaborating on their child's meaning of school education, they made use of a comparing strategy to draw similarities and differences between their and their child's views. Their views are presented under the subtheme *comparing meanings of school education*, (see Figure 6.2).
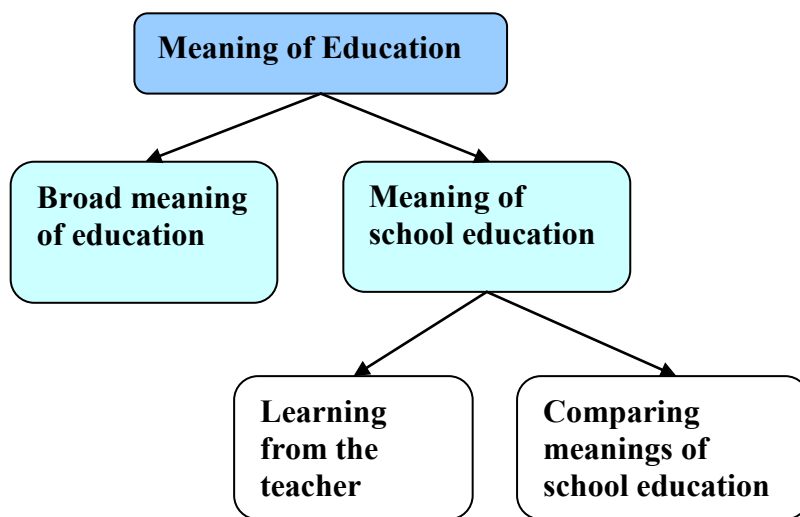
Figure 6.2: Meaning of school education

Table 6.2 presents selected extracts from parents' interviews illustrating how they reflected the meaning of school education.

Table 6.2: Meaning of school education

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
Non Emigrant Enerieta	*Learning from the teacher* School education, I think this comes next, this is the second stage because education they get from parents is from birth until when they are 6 or 8 [years old] it depends when we as parents take our child and 'hand him to the teacher'.... Even then, as a parent I pay attention to which school I must take my child to, because their education will be fed from there [the school]. School education is that part that the teacher takes on to teach my children, to develop their knowledge. If there is a good collaboration of parents and teachers then I can say that we can reach a complete education. I think this is very important.
Emigrant Kloda	It is about learning things from another person, things that you still don't know, learning from a teacher or a lecturer who is specialized in an area, teaches you information, which they know, that you don't know. It's something they know better than you and they give you that information. And this is a good thing.
Returned Emigrant Tefta	School education deals mainly with teaching and learning, I mean what child takes in at school. It starts from year one, it grows

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	continuously, the knowledge that child should take in. As a parent I start before that, then kindergarten also has its role, which yet does not involve much reading, but still we can read to children and they learn by using their senses, by singing or when by poems read to them. I understand that she [her daughter] should be taught by a working method which she should follow all her life and of course school education and then the education which she should use to educate other people, friends and…
Non emigrant Vera	*Comparing meaning of school education: Similar meaning* Well, I think even for him [my child] it [schooling] has the same weight, because everyone wants to study, to be educated, because it [schooling] is a must nowadays.
Emigrant Flora	It's difficult because the meaning is the same, we go to school to be educated, because it doesn't matter how much parents try they can only teach their children the *A, B, C* but they cannot give children the knowledge they need, and this is the most important like it was in my time it is also now…Child goes to school to be educated, to learn new things, how the world was made, how that is and this is and everything.
Returned Emigrant Mona	Yes I think the core is the same. For my child is the same, she likes the idea of aiming for university, like I did when I was little, wanting to go to university one day. And I think this is most important, so that you go ahead of things and become someone in life. There are other children who think you know, no problem for school, it's enough to have a business, but my children no.
	Comparing meaning of school education: Different meaning
Non Emigrant Matilda	The way it functions now could not have similar meaning to previous system. For example, as a child at school, I used to finish school and we [peers and I] would play altogether outside in the neighbourhood. It was safer then. We had same friends to the ones we went to school with. We were not depended on parents as far as games and playground is concerned. Now, there is a different concept, and socialization is different. Relationships are individualized and time at school has a very important meaning. Not only children go to school to learn, they go to play as well, because there are not enough playgrounds or parks in the city anymore for them to play safely. Now people are more isolated, this is a problem for my friend and I who have children.
Emigrant Flora	Another thing which I think is that we used to go to school, because school for us was also enjoyment, because we did not have other things to enjoy, you know? That's why for us we could

	not wait to get to school, the economic condition was not…I mean that's what made children, <u>school made children go out of their house, I mean away from that box of home.</u> So, children spent time with friends and to listen to the new things teacher had to say. <u>Now children have all kinds of things to do and enjoy, it's not that school is not important, but now they have theatres, cinemas, games like play station,</u> and so they get away from school stuff. If a child doesn't find interesting one thing, he can choose to play, to watch TV, many DVDs, etc. These things were not in my time. <u>School was for us the only fun place.</u>
Returned emigrant Besiana	No, I hope not, because in our time, <u>I mean the highest level you could reach was to finish a degree, have a diploma in your pocket and your life was guaranteed.</u> So, a degree was enough. I was brought up with this, although when I was growing older this was fading out a bit. Back then it was a victory to be allocated a scholarship to go to university, because not everyone could have it, not everyone had the possibility…So it was a great fortune that I got a scholarship, even though in times when you were going to study something different from what you choose<u>….Not for her [daughter] because she is not, because opportunities are there, world is open now</u>. The world has confirmed that not always the one who has 10 absolute [best grade] has gone far in life, not just luck but other things too….

Learning from the teacher

As illustrated in the above extracts, parents made sense of their meaning of school education by linking it to a process of gaining knowledge and learning from the teacher. This can be illustrated by Enerieta, who viewed school education as a process that started with the time when "*We as parents take our child and hand him to the teacher*" so that children could "*Develop their knowledge*". Kloda also described school education as "L*earning from another person...from a teacher... specialized in an area and teaches you information you don't know*". Similarly, Tefta claimed, "*School education deals with teaching and learning*". She also viewed it as a process that starts from parents and grows continuously up to when children are being taught, "*By working method*". She also expressed that the method that was used at school was what children use in their life with other people and friends.

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Comparing meaning of school education: Similar versus different

Parents made sense of their meaning of school education by comparing it to the meaning of their children. Posed by the question that invited parents to reflect whether school had similar or different meaning to them as it did for their child, parents expressed contradictory views in this matter. Some parents perceived school education to have the same meaning for them and their children. This can be illustrated by Vera. She claimed that school had the same "*Weight*" for her and her son, followed by her conviction that "*Everyone wants to study, to be educated*". Her view revealed the importance of being educated which she perceived as "*A must*". Furthermore, Flora viewed the meaning as similar to her child's explaining that people go to school "*To be educated, to learn new things...*" Mona too reflected education having similar meaning and claimed, "*The core is the same*" and elaborated the meaning of similarity by comparing her desire with her daughter's desire to be going to university.

Some other parents claimed that what school meant for them when they were young, could not have the same meaning for their children. Matilda viewed the present school system functioning differently to the one she had experienced. She evaluated her point by reflecting on the fact that when she was at school she was independent free to go to school and back with her peers, with whom she would socialize, which was not the case for her, who depended on her as a parent to go to school, to play outside and this due to environmental insecurity. Because "*Relationships are individualized"*, Matilda claimed that the time children spend at school had a different and a much more important meaning, because *"Not only children go to school to learn, they also go to play"*. Similarly, Flora explained the difference by claiming that school back then was the only time of enjoyment for her. She claimed that back then, "*School made children go out of their house...away from that box of home*". Her reality as a child was not the same as the reality of children today, who unlike her past, "*Have all kinds of things to do and enjoy, theatres, cinemas, games to play*".

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Further, Besiana reflected on the different meaning and elaborated that as a child the future she imagined back then was not as the imagined future that her child had. As a child, she could only hope to finish a university degree "*Because not everyone could have it*". This was not the case for her child because "*The world is open now*", which meant that children were offered more opportunities compared to her.

Overall, parents' accounts of the meaning of school education were attributed to the time when children learn from the teachers. In other words, they viewed school education as a continuous process, which had to do with teaching and learning new specialized knowledge. Whilst comparing their meaning of school education to their child's meaning, parents focused on similarities, which revealed accounts on everyone desire to study, to learn new things and to achieve higher in their education. Some other parents focused on the different meaning of school education compared to their children's meaning. In their comparisons, parents evaluated the difference by focusing on their time at school as being the only place of enjoyment and that back then they experienced limited opportunities to continue higher education. Unlike parents' meaning of school education, their children had more opportunities to engage in various activities and continue higher education anywhere in the world. Whilst in parents' reality socializing with friends and peers was an activity that they enjoyed freely, socialization for their children depended on them due to environmental and physical insecurity.

In their accounts of children's education, parents represented the school education as a segment of education in general, as a continuous process and as a place to gain specialized knowledge. It was evident from their accounts that school education had in some ways similar and in other ways different meanings compared to their children's meanings of school education. Some of the differences between the two systems can be attributed to the fact that parents' schooling was under a different political and social system. However, some other differences can be attributed to the process of change for all education systems over time. Therefore, understanding the differences and

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similarities between systems over time can be complex, especially when examining different socio-cultural groups.

6.3. *Construction of the child as a learner*

The thematic analysis of parents' accounts of their comparisons between own and their child's school system revealed underlying constructions of their child as a learner. Again, they made use of a comparing strategy to give meaning to the way the schools constructed their child as a learner. The parents reflected on particular practices and experiences illustrate differences and similarities between the school system during the time they were at school compared to their child's experiences with schooling, as well as between the school system at home after the fall and the one abroad. Two main subthemes emerged in this analysis: the way different school systems constructed their child as a learner and the way teachers constructed their child as a learner, (see Figure 6.3). The importance of these subthemes was evident as they were expressed by all participants, as shown in Table 6.1.2 in Appendices[22].

When reflecting on their children's experiences as learners in different school systems, parents from all socio-cultural groups made sense to their present views by evaluating their past experiences with education. They made use of a comparing strategy to examine the way different school systems had constructed their child as a learner. In their accounts, non-emigrant parents compared the way their own school system had constructed them as learners *(Then in Albania)* to the system which was constructing their child *(Now in Albania)*. Emigrant parents compared the way their own school system constructed them as learners (*Then in Albania*) and the way school system constructed children today *(There in Albania)* to the system constructing their

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[22] Please refer to Appendix J, page XXVIII.

child in the United Kingdom *(Here abroad)*. The way school system constructed children as learners in Albania was based on their observations and the information offered to them in distance and during visits. Returned emigrant parents compared the way their own school system constructed them as learners (*Then in Albania*) and the way system abroad constructed own child (*There abroad*) to the way school system constructed their children *(Here and Now in Albania)*.

Parents' accounts on comparing constructions by different school systems is grouped in the subthemes: Being constructed as a learner by o*wn versus child's school system,* constructed as learner by *home versus abroad school system,* and an evaluation for t*he ideal school system for their child*. In addition, parents' representations of child's construction as a learner by the teacher are grouped in these subthemes: *Image of the teacher, Relationship with the teacher* and *Understanding the teacher's role*. In this section, the focus is on the child's teacher, unlike the general accounts on teachers as presented in the previous Chapter (5).

6.3.1. Construction by the school system

The analysis of the construction of the child as a learner by the school system showed a set of key subthemes that were common across the groups. In particular, parents compared ways of being constructed as a learner by *own school system versus child's school system*. In addition, emigrant and returned emigrant parents compared ways of being constructed as a learner by *school system abroad versus back home*. In their accounts, parents also focused on what could be *an ideal school system* for their child, (see Figure 6.3).
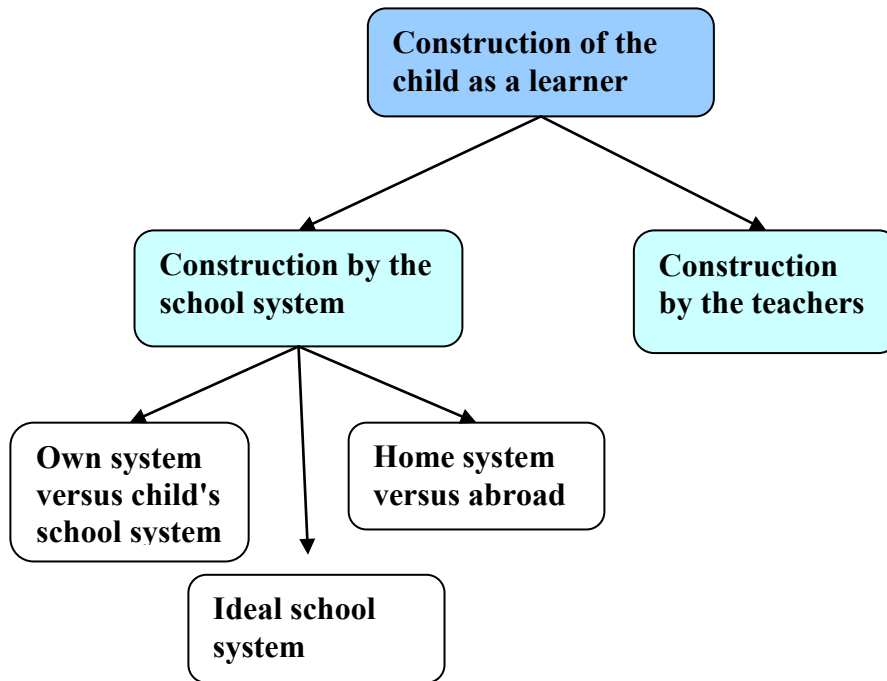
Figure 6.3: Construction by the school system

Table 6.3 presents selected extracts from parents' interviews illustrating how parents viewed their child being constructed by different school systems.

Table 6.3: Construction of child by school systems

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
Non Emigrant Rita	*Own system versus child's* But when I compare I see that unlike my daughter when I finished homework I did have time to play outside. Today, it is more overloaded, she doesn't go out to play at all, but also the way parents orient their children is more inside their home, because now children don't have proper playgrounds in front of the flats. There are some similarities, but now children have a lot more work than us, the level is more difficult. We didn't have this much homework, now they have more. Perhaps we ask more from children than from what we had. When I was young, I would look at my book, did my homework and that was it. Now I tell my children, after finishing your homework, you have more problem-solving to do in this extra notebook which I got for them. I give them more work. Also, teachers encourage us to motivate children to do more independent work at home.

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Emigrant Elvana	I think school here gives them the opportunity to search things in the computer for them to reach results. My son does his home works after he rests a bit after school, then sits and does his homework. Usually there is writing in the computer, and drawings…I remember for example, the basics, the multiplication table; we learnt that in year 8, whereas my daughter is in year four and I am surprised she knows it well up to number 12, she knows multiplication, division. At times I don't even know how to do that, so I am surprised with the level. They are more advanced here compared to my time in Albania
Vjollca Returned Emigrant	I don't find myself in any of the children today. Children today misuse time on one particular writing style and the teacher thinks it's so important so they spend time writing and rewriting until it looks pretty. You know, *bukurshkrim* [pretty writing]? My children, still because they are young, they do not use that much time, but I see students in high school; a good student spends 6 hrs a day of reading, until 12 at night to get good grades. It is unacceptable for me, and it is too much, this was not in our time….For example, literacy, I think it's very academic…I always have my girls come to me occupied with literacy. It's different to our time; we had the book and one simple notebook where we would practice many things, problem solving, etc. Now, there is one notebook for class, one for home, one extra for best students. I think we managed better even though we did have information, but there is no value having so much home-work.
Returned Emigrant Ira	We came from a system where the class would divide in 3 groups or in 3 rows and every week each group was in charge to organize, or was responsible for the class, I mean one group would wipe the board, one would collect notebooks, close the door when we would go out for breaks, and so on. This did not differentiate children, because we are talking about young children and then they were all equal. [Now] In Albania you must be the best pupil to wipe the board and be in charge, which automatically makes "the chosen" child be arrogant, because he is chosen… This way the child learns to not understand that the peer is not excellent in one thing but he can be in another one. Why should this differentiation exist? So, another thing that is a problem for E [daughter's name] is this idea of using a child as a chair for the classroom, in that when teacher goes out, she appoints one student to look after the class. Teacher goes out for coffee or to chat to her colleagues, and leaves the children inside to stay calm. She says: "I am going to the director, so keep quiet, no talking"…This is different.
	Home system versus abroad
Emigrant Bruna	Here [UK] it is a different experience. What I had there [Albania] has nothing to do with the one here. I think it's more advanced

Emigrant Ina	here because I see that my daughter who is in year four she is doing things that I did when I was in year 8 in Albania, in maths and other 4 most important subjects that they have here, it's different to what we had then. Perhaps it's because I had my education in Albanian and my daughter has it all in English, it's difficult for me to understand. Here [United Kingdom] it doesn't always go by the book, it's not systematic here. In England they [system] don't work with books, they have notebooks, children don't have books at home for us [parents] to follow. In Albania, we had books, I mean parents knew how to help because they had the theory part in the book for them to read, because they could see the explanation and they could help us; whereas here, I don't know what it has been taught, I don't know what the child is going to learn tomorrow. For example, in their notebook, there is no order like today we do 1, 2 and 3, and tomorrow is 4 and 5. They can do 4 and then 1 and then 3, you know? And, there is no book to read through, so it's difficult to tell.
Returned Emigrant Anita	There [Italy] I find many useful things, which I think we need to adopt in Albania. When children start school, well they have 9 years school as it is here, every child who goes to school has computers, everything. They have school secretaries to help. If a child is missing school and perhaps you [as a parent] don't know that, soon after the secretary calls to check whether the parent knows or not. Every end of month, they invite parents and update them, or they post information to the house that in this date, say 22nd of this month your child was not here one hour, one day, etc. That letter must be signed by the parent that he is aware and then it is send back to school for the director to know about the situation, why the child was absent. Schools usually note down all bad behaviour of the child and they notify parents. Even when there is an activity, parents must sign that child is allowed to attend. Teachers do not allow children if parents have not agreed. Usually meetings are about once in two weeks with the parents, it's not 5 minutes meetings like here [Albania], it's half an hour....I mean, there are differences between the two systems. Every child who makes a mistake, they notify you with a letter. Here, I have given my number to the school and they never called for any purpose or that your child did a mistake, big or small, never.
Returned Emigrant Ira	There [Athens], they had one tree and at the beginning of each year, every school year, we were requested a photo, and in this paper tree all the children had their picture up with their names on it. This is good because I don't think that there is any child who is not good at least on something. My daughter, she finds it difficult because in her class there are only three pictures up. What does it

	mean that only three are the best? Well one could be good at maths and others in language. I mean, this difference, at least for her who comes from schools from there [Greece], she feels it… well, in Greece all their photos were up, one is good at sawing, or something else. <u>The system here in Albania and the system I grew up then, I don't think there is much difference,</u> besides the whole problem that is now with the textbooks and how they are different in different schools.
Non emigrant Enerieta	*Evaluating the ideal system* <u>I would combine my past with today, to have a better system.</u> If I would have create a school, it would be a private school, that, well, pupils going to this school, must have respect for the institution, for the teacher, for teachers I mean, it's very important to have respect for teacher. There are some cases that children speak all the time and teacher only sits to listen. <u>I would focus on the relationship between pupils and teachers and teachers with parents.</u> Say for example a pupil going on the first year, leaves his house where he is used with his parents, with love and care, one way of doing things, and goes to a new place, his classroom. I think he should find a welcoming place at school with his teacher. For me, I think it's important that pupils feel good at school, that their voices is heard, their problems and issues, and not be stressed, but to come with joy at school, how can I put it?...<u>What I know is that their learning process is through a game you know? Children must not feel like "oh no, what is the teacher going to say, is she going to fail me" and other issues like this. They [children] must feel good at school.</u>
Emigrant Kloda	<u>A bit from both [like] my schooling, I mean compare to schooling there [Albania] and here [UK].</u> There are things we learnt at an early age...<u>I mean we did maths when we were five, I mean from kindergarten and here they start after year one; whereas we were more prepared for school, I mean back then</u>, I don't know that much about today.
Returned Emigrant Mona	I also liked the system we had then, when I was in school. I liked it a lot. There <u>was discipline from when it started, from the time we would go to school, we did some sort of physic activity [physic culture], thirty minutes before starting class, and then we spoke out the vows [promising] that we would study and we would become good students. We did this every morning; we had uniforms, which was a good thing. We entered school in rows by two to the class and during the day there was absolute quietness, and that we were paying attention to the teacher.</u> Even that child who was not paying attention, that one was quiet as well. <u>In some way the teacher understood child's psychology</u> and for the child who was not paying attention she would try to get his attention and if someone had a problem like a family problem, the teacher would say to them to go outside and that she would spend more

	time with them the next day, so they understood [the lesson] better...The good thing now is that children have more field trips and activities.

Own (school) system versus child's

When parents reflected on the way their school system constructed pupils during Communism in Albania to the way the actual school system constructed their children as learners in three socio-cultural settings, they viewed the systems as different. Non- emigrant parent Rita illustrated the difference by focusing on the extent of information that pupils faced at school. Unlike her child who was overloaded with schoolwork, she recalled that in her time all they did was their homework allowing time to play. She expressed that the teachers expected parents to "*Motivate their children to do more independent work at home",* and explained that she anticipated her child to do more after homework. Similarly, returned emigrant parent Vjollca also reflected on the overloaded material and homework that her child faced with schooling. In particular, she focused on her child's concern about the time spent on reading literacy and practising writing neatly, which she found "U*nacceptable*" when compared to the time spend on such tasks. In her accounts, she viewed the two systems as different and spelled out, "*I don't find myself in any of the children today*", implying the difficulties parents face whilst approaching their children's with schooling.

Emigrant parent Elvana brought forward a different perspective to her comparison. She identified the system abroad as more advanced and claimed that, "*We learnt multiplication table in year eight; whereas my daughter is in year four and...she knows multiplications, division".* What she also viewed as different was the fact that her child was exposed to use technology whilst engaging with schoolwork, which she had not experienced during her time at school. Her views reveal that system abroad introduces children a more

advanced level of education implying that they viewed children as more as more capable.

Returned emigrant Ira revealed another comparison to illustrate the difference between how school constructed her compared to the way school constructed her daughter as a learner. As a pupil she recalled that children were being seated in three rows and it was by rows that pupils took turn whilst engaging in class routines, such as wiping the board, collecting each-others' homework, closing the door and so on. At the time, all children had the chance to participate, which brought a sense of equality, *"They were all equal"*. Unlike her time, the present school system engaged only "*The best pupil*" who was in charge of such routines. Ira showed concern that this practice could lead to "*The chosen child to be arrogant*". Her child had found this difficult as a returned emigrant, especially when faced with her teacher appointing one pupil as chair to assist the class whilst she was not there.

Home system versus abroad

Parents with migratory experiences also compared the way schools abroad constructed their child as a learner to their own experience with school education. In their comparisons, emigrant parents made sense of the differences by viewing schools in the United Kingdom as more advanced to the schools they experienced when pupils. This can be illustrated by Bruna who claimed that, "*My daughter who is in year four is doing things that I did when I was in year eight in Albania*". Despite this fact, emigrant parents showed their standpoint concerning their children not being guided by a book to do homework at home, a practice different to the method parents followed. This can be illustrated by Ina, who found it difficult to help her child with homework because she was not able to read the theory part of the taught lesson. She explained that this method is not as systematic as in Albania.

Upon their return, parents compared the school system in Albania to the system they had experienced abroad. They viewed the system abroad as a positive

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experience reflecting the way the system constructed their child as learner. In particular, they focused on home-school and teacher-child communication. This can be illustrated by Anita who explained in details the way schools abroad were always in contact with her as a parent through meetings, letters and telephone. Upon her return, she faced a different reality where meeting at the child's school lasted few minutes and no other contact made to parents. More so, Ira also reflected on how schools abroad motivated children by identifying each child with their personal picture on the wall. According to her, this was not the case for schools in Albania, which encouraged three best pupils by putting and keeping their picture on the wall the whole year. This way of motivating pupils, which was similar to what Ira had experienced when at school, had brought concern to her child who was facing a different approach to the one experienced abroad.

Evaluating the ideal system

Whilst drawing comparisons between school systems, parents from all socio-cultural groups were also invited to evaluate their ideal school system. In their quotes, parents identified their ideal system as a combination of what they experienced back then as pupils to what their children were experiencing. This can be illustrated by Enerieta who claimed, "*I would combine my past with today to have a better system"*. In her quotes, she emphasized the importance of parent and child's relationship with the teachers, and for the teachers to create a fun environment for children, as well as not to fail children at school. Similarly, Kloda revealed that she would combine both experiences meaning the school system back then to one abroad. However, in her accounts she identified differences between system claiming that, unlike the system in Albania which introduced children to maths from an early age (i.e. preschool), the system abroad engaged pupils in maths after year one. Mona also showed preference to the system she experienced back then due to the order and discipline schools had when she was at school, starting from the physical activity in the morning,

uniforms, entering school in rows, pupils paying attention to the teachers and teachers understanding child's psychology. Alike in her time, she showed preference for her child's school to organize more field trips and activities.

Overall, when parents were posed to questions such as, "Do you think that school has the same meaning to your child as it did for you when you were a pupil?"; "Could you tell me how this experience with education abroad has affected your views on education in general?"; What are some of the main differences between education system here and in Albania?", in their answers the parents elaborated ideas about their experiences and talked about school practices.

In answer to questions such as the above, the parents elaborated ideas about their experiences and talked school practices. Through the analysis practices a construction of the child as a learner is emerged. Due to the complexity of the cultural settings, their views showed differences and similarities. Nevertheless, their past experiences with schooling acted as a mediator to make sense of their child's schooling.

In particular, non-emigrant parents portrayed the actual school curriculum as overloaded with unnecessary material, which shortened children's time to play, which was not the case during their time at school. Emigrant and returned emigrant parents viewed the system abroad as more advanced to what they had experienced as learners, but also as more advanced than what their children were experiencing when returned. However, whilst evaluating the system abroad, emigrant parents they showed concern regarding schools not using books, which could guide them to support children whilst doing homework.

Returned emigrant parents' views came across as more critical towards the actual school system in Albania. They revealed various issues concerning practice and the way schools constructed children as learners. In particular, they showed concern with the way the actual system differentiated children based upon their performance. Whilst in her time schools constructed them as equal

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by allowing all children to take turns (i.e. in class routines) to a system, which encouraged few best pupils (i.e. best pupil to manage). Even more, the practice allowed teachers to identify only few best pupils' picture to be in the merit's wall stressing levels of achievement between learners. The practice had brought confusion to their children who had experienced different system abroad, which according to the parents, motivated all pupils by putting everyone's picture on the wall. Furthermore, having been faced with the reality of school system in Albania returned emigrant parents focused on the absence of home-school communication, which they appreciated from school practice abroad. Informing parents is a practice that constructs the learner in relationships with the key adults in their lives.

In their evaluation for the ideal system, all parents revealed that they would combine their past experience with school system with their children's experience. Overall, they showed preference for a combination of previous and actual practices. From the system in their time, they showed preference towards the discipline, teachers treating children as equal and remaining close to children. From foreign school system, they showed preference towards home-school communication, the advanced level of study and for teachers appreciating all children's performance and making school an enjoyable place for children. Teachers' construction of children as learners in three socio-cultural settings will be elaborated in the next section.

6.3.2. Construction by the teachers

The analysis of the construction of the learner by the teachers showed a set of subthemes that were common across the groups. Parents reflected on three key elements, which construct children as learners, focusing on *the image of their child's teacher, child's relationship with the teacher* and evaluated their *understanding of teacher's role*, (see Figure 6.4). In particular, parents focused on the image of teachers, the way they approached children as learners and

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identified the role of teachers. In their accounts, non-emigrant and returned emigrant parents reflected on the children's teachers in Albania, and emigrant parents on the views of the children's teachers in the United Kingdom.
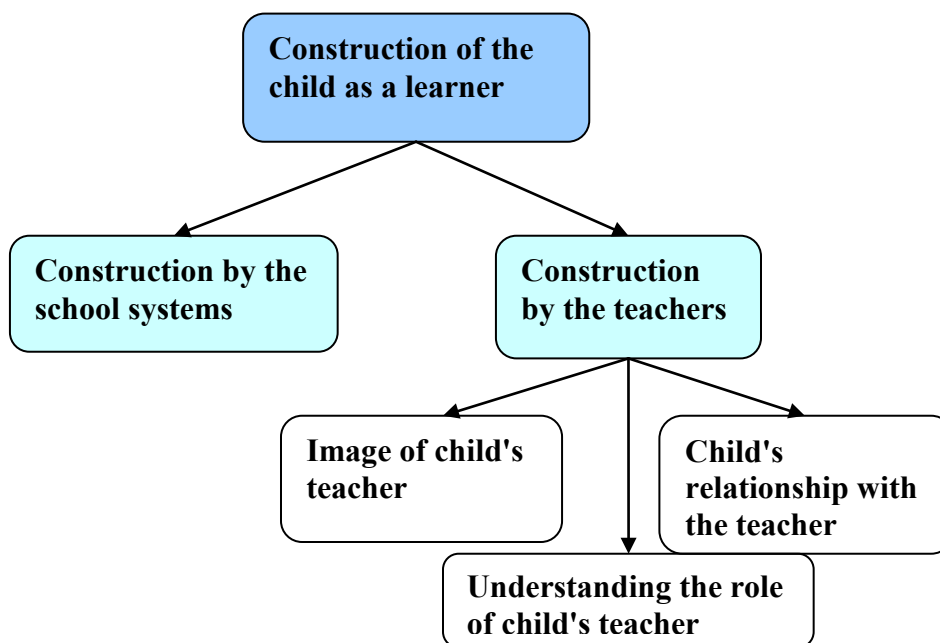
Figure 6.4: Construction by the teachers

Table 6.4 presents selected extracts from parents' interviews illustrating how parents viewed the way teacher constructed child as a learner.

Table 6.4: Construction of child by the teachers

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
Non Emigrant Enerieta	*Image of child's teacher* Once it happened with my daughter, I took her to this school for 3 weeks. She is good in maths anyways, but she was tested there and had a problem because she had just moved to the new school and was made to take part in this test; however, she got a 7, which is not good. I was not upset about the grade, because it was her second day at school, and I thought for a child who has just moved in the school it's not fair for her to go through the test. <u>Then I found out that the director of school was the wife of this person we know and in the end, instead of putting down 7, she [director] had changed it to 10. She was very subjective because we knew each other.</u> I told her, "You must put 7, that is what my child got that

	day" because for me it's important my daughter gets what she deserves...This is what happened and it's not good for her future.
Emigrant Lule	I feel great that my child is learning good things, good manners and comes home tells me about her day, I feel good…They [teachers] give them courage. I usually go to the school to ask about my child, and the teacher she is very kind, encourages my daughter…What else? People are welcoming, nice to you, I mean teachers. Not only are they polite, there is discipline also… She [daughter] thinks her teacher is like a second parent to her, because most of the time, she spends at school, I mean here in English schools. For me I think it was the same, the difference it's that I had much more respect for the teacher. Many times, after school, we would sit with the teacher and have a discussion, because during class she was focused on lesson, 45 min and then after she would spend 5 minutes talking to us, and that was a great feeling.
Returned Emigrant Ira	The teacher then was like an important figure. Now for the teacher to be a figure you need to be getting her some presents for the 7th of March [teacher's day] and the present must be expensive; whereas in our time we used to get some flowers from the trees and take it to the teacher. That was enough.
Non Emigrant Rita	*Child's relationship with the teacher* She [the teacher] works with my daughter, motivates her even after class, which is really good. We are happy with that. Also, my daughter is concentrated. Say there are other classmates talking or playing during class; whereas M [name of child] is always doing work. In fact, at times she likes to play the role of the teacher. She calls her best friend in the evening and asks her "Did you finish all the homework for tomorrow, did you learn the poem".
Emigrant Ina	Here [United Kingdom] school is more pleasant, more enjoyable for children, because in Albania teachers are stricter. I am not sure for now, but when I was there, that's how it was. You need to make it more pleasant for children so they are attracted by it, I mean here, my daughter adores her teachers.
Returned Emigrant Besiana	When we went to Italy, the first time we took out daughter in kindergarten we brought flowers with us because, you know, it was the first time that our daughter was going to socialize and she was growing up, and almost all of them [teachers] looking surprised said "Flowers, why flowers, whose birthday is it?" And I explained that for us this is what we do. I mean even though my children got used to a much more liberal relation with the teacher,

	they still think the teacher is an important figure, an idol. I mean I taught them that feeling of teacher being the main figure and when there was a problem I would tell them "Ok, teacher is right", but without hurting them. Sometimes I would even say "well, teacher is also a mom so she won't be absolute in her ability". This way I was trying to soften that figure a bit. But I always define my relationship with the teacher as respectful. And when my children came back here [Albania] it's not like they were like most other children who come from abroad who don't know this about teachers. When we were there teachers would tell me that they [daughters] were systematic and respectful towards them.
Non Emigrant Pranvera	*Understanding the role of child's teacher* Very important, for me it [the role] is important. A good teacher...studies the problems of the children like a parent, would take time to teach and explain in a good way, my children would be able to understand it all in class, so as a parent I would not face difficulties whilst helping them with homework, you know, so, for me it is very important....For the children, the word of the teacher should be a law. I mean, children can replicate with the parent, but not with the teacher, it's like a law. It doesn't matter if the teacher is right or wrong and so on; Children must have that point of view that when teacher says so, it must not be different or to be discussed.
Emigrant Flora	The role of the teacher is at school, because teachers are only at school. It is very important, like parent is at home, a model for his family, that's how teacher is at school, a model for children. Hmm, a good teacher, who knows to teach the lesson well, who knows to communicate with all kinds of pupils, that teacher does a good job, and she is a role model.
Returned Emigrant Kalia	It's very important for me. Here in Albania they say that teacher is like second parent and they say the same thing in Greece, meaning perhaps that teacher is like a second parent for the scientific side of children, especially the first years at school, 8 years, when the child is also developing his psychology. Hmm, I think. I cannot say that the role of the teacher is as important for high school or for university as for children in kindergarten or when in year one, when they look at the teacher as a mother, even mistake the teacher and call her mom. It has happened with my children.

Image of child's teacher

When the data was examined, the parents reflected on the image of the teachers as a key element for constructing their child as a learner. Parents gave meaning to the image of their child's teacher by comparing it to the image of their teachers back then. In particular, they viewed the image of their children's

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teachers as subjective towards child's performance based on the close relationship with the child's parents. In other words, teachers showed preference towards children whose parents they knew. This can be illustrated by Enerieta who explained that teachers were being subjective in their judgement. In her example, she revealed the fact that some teachers evaluate their grading system based on personal relationship with the parents. Furthermore, Ira portrayed the image of the teacher as less important than teachers back in their time at school and that her child's teachers were prone to demand expensive presents from the pupils, especially on occasions such as Teacher's Day. During her time at school, this day was celebrated by taking teachers symbolic gifts, such as flowers from the trees.

Emigrant parents' reflection on the image of child's teacher abroad revealed a different perspective. They viewed teachers as kind and encouraging with the child. This can be shown in Lule's quotes, in which she claimed that she was content with her daughter's teacher who was kind, welcoming, and practised discipline. Due to such approach, her child felt good around the teacher whom the child viewed as a second parent. Lule identified this feeling and relationship as similar to the one she experienced with her own teachers at school.

Child's relationship with the teacher

In addition to the image of teachers, parents also reflected on teacher's relationship with their child as another component, which plays a key role in constructing their child as a learner. Coming from different perspectives their views differed. Overall, when elaborating the relationship with the teachers, parents compared their meanings to their previous experiences. In their accounts, parents viewed the way teachers built relations with the children as positive, with one non-emigrant parent who showed abuse behaviour from the teacher towards her child. Rita reflected on her child's teachers as motivated to work with her child, which resulted in her as parents feeling happy. She also revealed that her daughter often likes to "*Play the role of the teacher*", by

calling friends to check if they had done homework for the next day. Ina too claimed that her child's teachers made school a pleasant place for the child and that her child "*Adored her teachers*". In her quotes, Besiana revealed that the relationship her child had with teachers abroad was similar to her relationship with her teachers back then. Even though she acknowledged that, her child's relationship with the teacher was more liberal than her relationship with own teacher, it still remained a respectful one. Besiana talked about her child's the first day at school when they took flowers to the teacher, a well-known practice in Albania; however this was found uncommon from the teacher abroad. She claimed that she taught her child to respect the teacher as she had done when at school, something that helped her child to fit in easily with her teacher upon her return.

Understanding the role of child's teacher

Teacher's role was brought up as the final key element, which parents reflected on when discussing the way teachers' construct their children as learners. In her quotes, Pranvera claimed, *"A good teacher studies the problems of the children like a parent and would take time to teach and explain". I*f teachers would take time to teach and explain, she explained, that would make Pranvera's job as a parent much easier at home. Pranvera also taught her child to respect the teacher and that teacher's words were as "laws" and that teacher was always right. Similarly, Flora also viewed the role of the teacher as important and claimed that the teachers' role at school was similar to parents' role at home. For Flora, a good teacher was someone who "*Teaches the lesson well, knows to communicate with all pupils and is a role model*". Kalia also viewed the role of the teacher as important as the role of a parent. She viewed the role of the teacher as a parent even when living abroad. In her quotes, she claimed that the teacher was like a parent *"For the scientific side of children*"; however, that role fades out, as children grow older.

To summarize, parents' reflections on the image, the relationship and the role of the teachers revealed different meanings as to how their child was being

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constructed by their teachers. The image of teachers in Albania was viewed as less important as it was back then, with teachers judging children's performance based on personal relationships and prone to demand expensive presents from the children. This was not the case for teachers abroad, who were viewed as kind, welcoming and similar to the teachers that parents had whilst at school. Parents also viewed child's relationship with the teacher in Albania as positive, with one case who reported an abusive behaviour from the teacher. Teacher-child relationship abroad was viewed as positive with teachers making school a fun and pleasant environment for the children. At last, parents also reflected on their understanding of the role of the teachers. This role was considered as important as a second parent. Parents' belief as what made a good teacher was for teachers to teach and communicate well, and to become a role model for the child. The good teacher for the child was viewed as a good for the parent too. This implies an image of a pupil that learns by being exposed to role models. Understanding child's construction as a learner by their teachers plays an important role in parents' construction of their child's own development (see section 6.4).

6.4. Thematic Analysis - Construction of Own child's development and learning

This final section of the chapter examines parents' construction of their child's development and learning. When discussing child's development and learning, parents from all socio-cultural groups reflected on *understanding their own role*, on *hands on child's schoolwork* and on *child's projected future*. In specific, this section will elaborate parents' understanding of their own role, the way they engage with child's schoolwork, and what they make of the child's future in the process of their child development and learning. The importance of

these subthemes was evident as they were expressed by all participants (with the exception of two participants), as shown in Table 6.1.3 in Appendices[23].

6.4.1. Understanding of own role

The thematic analysis of parents' understanding of their own role showed as main subthemes parents as "*engaging their child in educational activities*", reflecting on *their relationship with child's teacher* and for the migrating groups, their *awareness of biculturalism* was also evaluated, (see Figure 6.5).
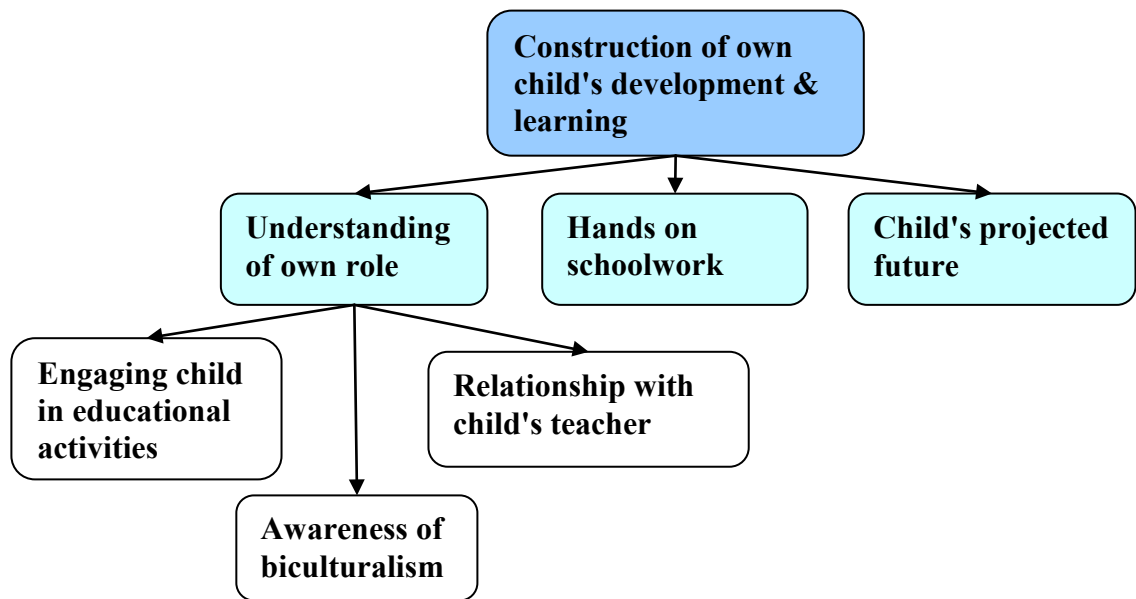
Figure 6.5: Understanding of own role

Table 6.5 presents selected extracts from parents' interviews illustrating when parents engaged their child in educational activities.

Table 6.5: Understanding their own role

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
Non Emigrant Enerieta	*Engaging child in educational activities* I think, [engaging] children in education, since they are born. If parents communicate with the baby, the way parents handle the baby, I always believed that children are able to feel and understand things even when they are not even born, I mean, after three months, I think they can hear us. I know with my children, I was inexperienced with my first child so I did not know much, but with the second, I was more calm, I would talk to my son more, I was more confident… I can see how important it is for the mother to be calm, so the child is calm, from the time the child is born, we must be careful.
Emigrant Bruna	I think from the beginning. Children here start school at five, which is year one, and at first I thought it was absurd because I would think it's too young to go to school and now my daughter is nine and my son is younger and is in reception, now I think as earlier as possible, it's best for children. Parents with the child from when they are two or three years old because that's when children are able to comprehend. I did this with my son, not with my daughter. I bought many computer games for my son from which you can learn a lot from when you are three.
Returned Emigrant Ira	With my child, I started since she was inside, I would read stories, would listen to music and I mean, I would listen to Bocceli [Italian singer] and I have felt her moving, I felt her moves…
Non Emigrant Erma	*Relationship with child's teacher* Moving from D [name of town] to the capital was very difficult for my son to get involve with his classmates, to get used to the new environment. He also changed the teacher. He had one teacher and then in year five the system changes to five teachers. If I hadn't gone to see the teacher, or if I hadn't tried to...say, "offer" her a coffee, she would have ignored me about the situation regarding my son. I invited her for coffee just because I believe that was ok just to sit with here, or discuss with her, I wanted some time with her, and… after that, the things got better, I mean all I did is offer her a coffee. I just think people bribing the teachers, I haven't been part of that, but I have seen it... Many parents think that they [teachers] want something, a gift and if you don't bribe them, they won't look after them [children]...
Emigrant Lule	Our relationship and child's relationship with the teacher, again, a very good one; we feel teacher is close to our child. Can't say

Returned Emigrant Ira	much about things in Albania, but they [teachers] are open to us and very nice...Here the child is capable to go on his own; whereas there, parents tend to go and check on the child very often, interfering, so the child is being looked at by the teacher. <u>We usually go [to visit the teacher], but mainly during parents' evenings when teachers notify us to go there [school], but also when we take her [daughter] to school, we do stop by but not often.</u> We are interested, we ask the teacher, time to time. <u>There are times that teacher sees me as I drop her to school and she comes out to talk to me.</u> <u>My daughter says "Why don't you come to school?" I said "It is easy for me to come to your teacher often, but I prefer not to become friends with her".</u> In Athens I had a very good relationship with them, it was comfortable and it was not about becoming friends. Here [Albania], as soon as you go, I mean perhaps it's our mentality, I don't know. <u>I must say I feel respected, but still, there is something which I can't explain exactly; I feel I need to be closer to them [teachers], for them to be more open.</u>
Emigrant Lumturie **Returned Emigrant Anita** **Returned Emigrant Mona**	*Awareness of biculturalism* <u>It is difficult because children are integrated in this life in England, in their social life, and it is difficult for us to implement our culture and tradition here. I am a bit fanatic, well not that, but I am strict a bit because I don't want them to lose our language, my language, I mean I am Albanian and I repeat I am Albanian,</u> and I say it with my heart, with my soul. I try with my children, but it's difficult. <u>We try often, we want their best, but at time we enforce them instead of</u>…I think it's best to let children free to understand reality and then they will choose, they should know both cultures. <u>That [living abroad] was a very rich experience for me. I can see differences between my son there who started his school and finished it in Italy and this son who came back with me here, as a person, the way they behave it's different, he is much more polite, whereas my youngest he is picking up behaviour from here [Albania].</u> Even though he was born there [Italy], even though he got used to that order there, to be kind, to not (...). <u>I mean, since we came back to Albania he has changed totally, sometimes I feel he is not my child anymore. I guess it is about the place we live as well, the environment here.</u> <u>The experience abroad was more liberal than mine. What I realized there is that children need to have fun and I have changed in this a lot. What I know is that when we got back from Germany my children were very different to the other children.</u> For example, <u>the teacher used to tell me always "I am surprised, your son keeps telling me *danke schon* [Thank you in German]" or even *please*. She was surprised because children don't always say these nice words. Children forget these words. But when you come back you</u>

	go to your own self and become like here.

Engaging child in educational activities

As noted from the above extracts when parents were invited to reflect on the time from when they recommended engaging children in educational activities, in unison parents suggested as early as possible. This can be illustrated by the presented extracts in which parents claimed, "*Since inside the belly*", *"Since they are born*" and "*From the beginning*". However, parents differed in what they meant by 'starting from the beginning'. Enerieta claimed that it was important for mothers to be calm since babies can "*Feel and understand things even when they are not born*". Bruna in her quote suggested age two or three for parents to engage children in education activities. Ira suggested that from the time the baby was inside her, she would read stories and listen to music. As presented, it is evident that participants recommended early days for parents to engage their children in activities that will promote their learning and development.

Relationship with child's teacher

One key element that parents viewed important as part of understanding their own role parents reflected on their relationship, which they evaluated as supportive in their children's learning and development. Their views differed according to their socio-cultural setting. Non-emigrant parents viewed their relationship with the teachers as close; however, they justified this relationship as prone to be close so teachers showed particular interest towards their child. This is illustrated by Erma, who showed her concern regarding the transfer of her child to a different school. Although she was aware of other parents bribing the teacher, a practice she did not appreciated, she admitted that when her son moved to a new school, she invited the teacher for coffee, so that the teacher did not "*Ignore the situation about her son*". Similarly, Ira also revealed her

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views about her relationship with child's teacher upon her return in Albania. When discussing with her child about visiting the school, she claimed that, "*I feel I need to be closer to them for them to be more open*". She would appreciate having a respectful relationship with them, rather than friendly. Unlike the non-emigrant and returned emigrant group, emigrant parents portrayed a different relationship with their child's teacher. Lule illustrated that her relationship with the teacher was good, that teachers were there to approach her as a parent during the time she dropped her child at school as well as teachers notifying her for meetings. The above samples imply that often parents construct their child's learning and development based on the relationship they build with their teachers, whose approach varies across cultures and practices.

Awareness of biculturalism

Whilst reflecting on their own role in constructing their child's learning and development, parents with migratory experiences revealed their awareness of the impact of biculturalism. In her quote, Lumturie reflected on the impact of living abroad on their child's cultural development. Although her intention to encourage her children to cherish home culture, traditions and language, she found it difficult since her children were integrated in their life abroad. Nevertheless, Lumturie revealed that her role was not to enforce her culture, but to let children choose.

Returned emigrant parents also reflected on the impact of experience abroad on their child's development. In particular, Anita reflected on the impact of returning to homeland on her child's behaviour which radically changed conform the new environment. Whilst comparing her son who remained abroad to the one who returned with her, she claimed that, "*The way they behave is different*", portraying the one who remained abroad as more polite and the one who returned as "*Picking up behaviour from here*". More so, she revealed that her returning son had completely changed and often made her feel that, "*He is not my child anymore*". Returned emigrant Mona presented a slightly different

view to the impact of biculturalism on her children. Although teachers at school had acknowledged her son being polite in his communication, Mona revealed, "*When you come back you go to our own self and become like here*". These quotes imply that child's development and learning is a process that is socially and culturally embedded.

To sum up, parents showed understanding of their own role on their child´s development and learning by engaging children in educational activities from an early stage, starting from when children are still unborn, and by building good relationships with their child's teacher. Relationships with child's teacher varied across settings. Emigrant and returned emigrant parents also revealed the impact of biculturalism whilst reflecting on their own role, implying that cultural experiences have a crucial role in the process of development and learning. Parents living in Albania showed concern about feeling prone to bribe the teachers or become friends with the teachers in order for them to look after their child, implying a conditional rapport with them. This was not the case for emigrant parents whose relationship was good and clearly professional. Lastly, emigrant and return emigrant parents also showed awareness of the impact of biculturalism on their role of understanding their child's development. Whilst emigrant parents viewed biculturalism as a threat to losing home culture and traditions, returned emigrants appreciated the impact of culture abroad. Returned emigrants also they showed concern regarding the impact of changes due to returning on their children's behaviour in order to fit to home culture and environment.

6.4.2.   Hands on schoolwork

This section describes the thematic units originating from parents' engaging in doing homework with their child. The analysis of hands on schoolwork showed parents' intentions of replicating or not replicating their past practices whilst doing homework and it revealed their challenges whilst engaging with

homework. In their accounts, parents, both spontaneously and guided, reflected on helping children with maths' homework as a subject which parents viewed as different to their experience with this subject when at school, (see Figure 6.6).
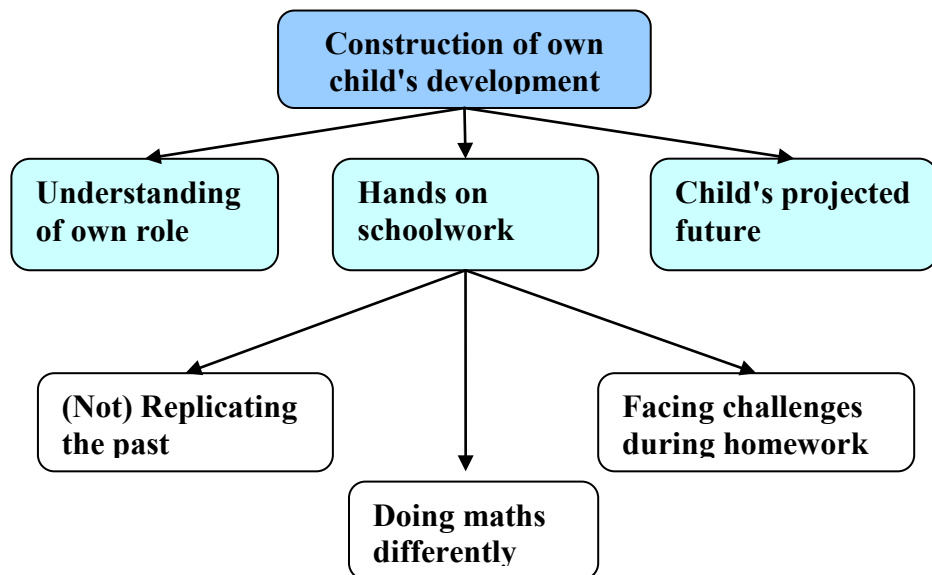
Figure 6.6: Hands on schoolwork

Table 6.6 presents selected extracts from parents' interviews illustrating parents' hands on with schoolwork.

Table 6.6: Hands on schoolwork

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
Non Emigrant Enerieta	*(Not) Replicating the past* That time educated me with work, which is primary to me, and my mother she taught me that I had to study every day, every subjects, and that, say today I got a good grade, that did not mean that I had to stop studying about the subject for some days knowing that the teacher was not going to ask me anymore that week. It was important to be systematic. These things I feel I must teach my daughter, how to be systematic in school; every day that she comes back from school she must write down a plan of how she

	will study and what she needs to work on that day.
Emigrant Lule	We like to check on them, we talk to them, check upon them, I think we got this from our time, from my experience before. I always try to give more, to talk to them more about education so they study more...When I tell her at times, "listen, you must reach this level, higher and higher, because we did not have this opportunity before, and now you have more options and better conditions, therefore you can do more for yourself". She looks at me, I also tell my son about it. I also explain to them how my parents were not there to follow what we were doing, and that they are lucky because we are always here to work with us. Of course, my parents, it's not that they did not want to be there, they were just busy working and providing for us.
Returned Emigrant Enila	Well, one of the advices I give, for example, to read and give the meaning of a piece of literature, usually in Albanian language and Literature. My son would say to me "You read the story and tell me the meaning", I would say "No, it's not right if I read first, you read it once and again and write down the most important points so you get what it says". You know, read paragraph to paragraph and take out the important points and in the end he will be able to have a conclusion. I used to do this when I was studying, I would study in a logical way, not by heart, but…even today when I study I do the same. I write down key points and I focus on those so I remind them. This way I try to help my son, I guide him.
Non Emigrant Enerita	*Facing challenges during homework* With A [child's name], yes, many times, in problem solving especially, because exercises are ok. I don't remember specifically now but there were cases that I did not even know how to start off, so I would call my husband and he would say wait until he would get home, or I would call my sister L [name of sister] and I would say "Please help me". I used to ask her on the phone because she is also very good at maths, and she would explain how to solve it. I have had some times like this.
Emigrant Flora	At the very beginning I had difficulties with English and when it came to the language, it was not easy, but with mathematics and physics I was ok to help them. So with my two older ones I would help them when they needed help during maths of physics. This is how I try to help my youngest daughter too coz I still have some difficulties with English, so there are times my children help me with that now, it's very interesting but there are times I write my

Returned Emigrant Ira	essays and I ask my children for a difficult word, you know. I know perhaps how to translate it but not in the context. But I help my children a lot. Yes, there was an exercise with deduction. The problem she [daughter] had, it had to do with the language, so I was trying to explain to her with other words in Greek. I read the lesson and then explained to her in Greek and Albanian so she would learn. What was subtraction, addition, and so on. The issue was understanding terminology. She also had problems with Chemistry. Well, there were many problems. First, it was her mentality and also Albanian language because she never spoke it when we were abroad and to help her, I would use Greek to explain myself. I have noticed now that for the last 3-4 months she does not use Greek anymore. She is much better with Albanian. I mean, whoever speaks two languages and speaks them well, they know which logic to use for languages. I mean it is like some maths problems, some are easy and in some I need to think myself…Well, then I took the book, I looked at it. It was a concept which I thought was difficult and was not explained well. So I said "Look, it says when we rub two elements together, electricity occurs". It is false. If we rub two wooden pieces all night and day, it won't, because they are not accompanying elements. So I explained to her. I mean, these are mistakes in books.
Non Emigrant Pranvera	*Doing Maths differently* It's [Maths] not difficult but they [schools] have introduced concepts which are new for the children and at times I step back because she says "Mom, teacher did not explain it like this", so it happens this contradiction between parents and teachers, so I have not spent much in explaining them the lesson; only at times when they really face difficulties and do not understand anything. So I try and explain to them step by step and still I hear "Teacher did not say this, you said it differently", and so...
Emigrant Ina	I think most children have issues with maths and because I have knowledge in this area I try to help... What I am trying to say is that we solved equations in much more easier way, because here [UK] it is a longer route to solving an equation, so I try to teach her my way. At first she was upset of this, but then when she learnt how to solve in a quicker way, she started liking it. She knows that when she comes to me I will help her and up to now I feel good. Because here [England] they start learning things in a longer route. For example, the division, it takes longer in their way, and also multiplication is longer. Here they take much longer, I can't explain how, but it starts from a different direction, add here, bring it here, and so on...But she [daughter] must learn step by step and then continues.

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| Returned Emigrant Tefta | Hmm, for example, in maths, there is this exercise, in algebra, which I liked a lot, and it is also in geometry. I usually ask her [daughter] to do exercises often, and I would follow how she would go about solving them. <u>We were taught to do things in order, for example, to list in one side all the X's and the other side Y's, or the minus and the plus, we would separate them, solving bits by bits, just like steps. Hmm, today, perhaps because of new methods, they solve one equation all in one row, not going down and down.</u> If I can solve one exercise lined in 5 or 10 rows, children today can do it in less. |

(Not) Replicating the past

As noted from the extracts above, when parents reflected on their involvement in child's homework, they focused on different techniques, which at times replicated the past and in others it did not. They also revealed some of the challenges faced whilst helping their child in the process and reflected on the changing methods to solve maths problems at home. In their reflection about the influence of past experiences, parents presented practices which they had adopted from their parents, their teachers, or rejected practices from their past experiences. Enerieta reflected on teaching her child to be systematic in studying and doing homework, which was linked to the way her mother had encouraged her when she was at school. Lule also reflected on the frequency of her engaging during children's homework by always checking on them, a model that she got from back then. Unlike her parents who were "*Busy working and providing*", she was always occupied to talk to her child about education. Furthermore, parents also reflected on their technique of supporting whilst doing homework. Enila emphasized the importance of teaching her son to study in a "*Logical*" way, to retrieve meaning and not memorize parts "*By heart*", a known method used in schools during Communism.

Facing challenges during homework

When invited to talk about whether they felt confident whilst helping children with homework, parents showed that at times, they faced challenges and the challenges were linked to different subjects. Enerieta showed concern whilst helping her daughter with problem solving, which at times she found it difficult to start and some other times she invited her family members for assistance. As an emigrant, Flora lacked confidence in helping her daughter in English language, however found it easier to help with mathematics and physics. Returned emigrants faced difficulties concerning their children lacking understanding of home culture language, which influenced their comprehension in doing homework. This can be illustrated by Ira who was challenged when support her daughter with maths and chemistry exercises as her daughter spoke Greek better than Albanian. Ira's support consisted in her reading the exercise in Albania and then translating it to her child in Greek, for the child to understand what had been requested. Another issue brought forward from Ira was connected to books in Albanian schools containing logical errors, which made it even more confusing for her child. In her attempt, she also had to explain to her daughter that books could contain errors.

Doing maths differently

When invited to share particular cases of facing challenges during homework, parents expressed their concern about the way their child was taught to solve maths problems which was different compared to the way they were taught. In their accounts they emphasized that the route to solve maths problems was different to the one they used as pupils. This can be illustrated by Pranvera who focused on her child being confused by the way teacher explained the method and supported her at school to the way she as a parent supported her child at home. Similarly, even though in different cultural contexts, Ina also claimed that her child was taught to solve maths problems through a different and longer route compared to what she knew. Even more, upon her return, Tefta also

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evaluated the method her child was taught being different to the way she was used.

To recap, when invited to discuss the way they supported their child in doing homework, parents made sense of their given support by comparing it with their past experiences. In their accounts, parents reflected on what they replicated or not from the past, evaluated their faced challenges, and identified the issue of solving maths problem. As noted above, it was evident that at times parents replicated past practices and in other times, they rejected those practices. Parents faced challenges in whilst supporting their children to study various subjects. They also reflected on helping children with the subject of mathematics. Their main concern had to do with the way this subject presented a different route to solve problems than the route they had followed when they were at school. The children's route towards the solution of a problem was identified as taking longer to the one they had been taught at school. Returned emigrant parents also revealed the issue of helping children to do homework in Albania, which was not always easy for the children who knew foreign languages better than own cultural language. These differences had brought confusion to their children who evaluated their parents' support different to the support they had from teachers at school.

6.4.3.   Child's projected future

This last section of parents' construction of child's development and learning describes the thematic units originating from parents' accounts of their child's projected future. The analysis showed parents' accounts on the way their children constructed own future, which presents child's wishes for their future profession, and parents' hopes for the future of their child. Both subthemes are analysed and discussed, (see Figure 6.7).

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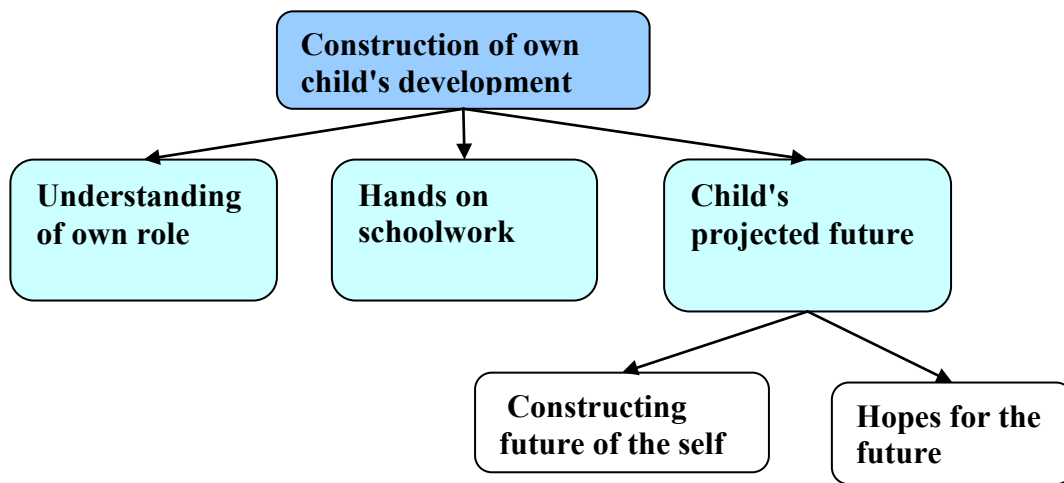
Figure 6.7: Child's projected future

Table 6.7 presents selected extracts from parents' interviews illustrating how they evaluated their child's projected future.

Table 6.7: Child's projected future

Status and Name	Coded extracts from interviews
Non Emigrant Rita	*Constructing future of the self* It's different because when I was at school, all I knew was that I would do my best and hopefully I would make it to have a degree; whereas Morina says it openly "I am going to study in England". She knows what she wants; whereas us, we would not dream about going abroad. We would be happy even if we finished secondary education. But I never dreamed anything in her age. I guess now they have more information. In her age I didn't comprehend what computer was. She knows computer really well and if she wants to find out something she finds it out. We hardly had television in that time.
Emigrant Elvana	My son (...) I see him have a vision already, a vision for the future....Although his age does not allow him to fully understand how important education is, but still, he has a vision; this makes me feel good, and I encourage him, "In order for you to get there, you must read a lot".
Returned Emigrant Kalia	Hmm, if you ask children they say I want to become like mom or dad. If you ask my daughter she says "I want to become a biology teacher". Things like that. As a mother, I do influence, to a certain extend. But, what I notice today is that, for example, I wanted to

	become a doctor and I couldn't. But, I don't want to influence my children because I couldn't become a doctor, and have they become...
Non Emigrant Erma	*Hopes for the future* Looking at the situation in Albania at the moment, I don't see much hope, but I guess when my child turns 25 [years old], there might be a better environment in this country, so I guess, I should be hopeful for his future, and knowing that my children are children who like school, specially my son, there is a great hope for the future.
Emigrant Lule	I just hope that my child completes a good education but also remains a good person as well. I hope she does what she likes to do in life.
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	I want for them to choose their own fields in life. Often I tell E [name of daughter] because she is the first child and also an excellent student, I tell her "You should become a doctor" because society needs good doctors. And she says "No mom, I don't want that". I know she will probably want to change her opinion later on as she grows up, because she will evolve in many directions, but my wish is that she does what she will enjoy. Hmm, financial side of it does not matter compare to the pleasure you get from a job.

Child's projected future

As presented in the quotes above, when projecting on their child's future parents revealed child's imagined future. In their accounts, parents made sense of a comparing strategy to reveal how their child is talking about the future. In particular, they compared their own concept of the future when young to their child's concept of the future, with the latter "*Already having a vision*" of the future. This can be illustrated by Rita who revealed differences between her vision of the future which was linked to their dream to continue university education within the country to their child's projecting the self as student abroad (i.e. United Kingdom). Similarly, Elvana also revealed that her child already had "*A vision for the future*". Kalia claimed that, when her child was asked to discuss what she wanted to become in the future, she had stated, "*I want to become a biology teacher*". Kalia also explained that her role was not to

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influence her child to choose a profession in the future, especially a profession that as a parent she had not fulfilled herself. These samples illustrate that whilst parents' future was projected in much more broader sense (i.e. going to university), their children projected their future with more specific aims (i.e. going to United Kingdom, become a biology teacher, etc).

Hopes for the future

Following parents' accounts of child's projected future of the self, parents were invited to reflect on their hopes for the child's future. In their accounts, parents' accounts presented different meanings of hope, due to their different cultural perspectives. Non-emigrant parent Erma showed concern about her child's future in their consideration of the situation in the country, which she found not hopeful; however, she claimed that, due to the fact that her child enjoyed school, she claimed that, "*There is a great hope for the future*". Emigrant parent Lule claimed that her hope was for her child to not only "*Complete education, but to also remain a good person*". Returned emigrant parent Vjollca was hopeful about her child's future and emphasized the importance of her child choosing a profession that she would enjoy without taking under consideration the financial benefit that would come with it.

Overall, parents' accounts revealed their understanding on child's projected future which differed to the way they had projected own future back then. Whilst parents' hope for the future showed their aims to make it to university, according to these parents, their children had a clear idea of what they wanted to become and where they wanted to be, starting from an early stage. When invited to reflect on hopes for their children's future, overall parents were positive about their future, with non-emigrants showing some concern which was linked to the present situation in Albania, with emigrants wishing for their children to finish higher education as well as remaining good people, and with returned emigrants emphasizing the importance for their children making their own decision for their future.

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6.5.   Discussions

This final analysis chapter presented and analysed parents' accounts on constructing their own child's education. This chapter examined parents' meanings and experiences with children's schooling as a way to further explore the process of how their social representations are being constructed. In their accounts, parents focused on their broad meaning of education and school education, on their child's construction as a learner by the school system and by the teachers, and their construction of own child's development and learning.

Similar to previous accounts parents from all cultural groups made use of a comparison strategy by using their past experiences with education to give meaning to their own children's schooling process. So far, parents used their past as a tool to make sense of experiences with own education and to mediate the impact of changes on education system. This chapter too reveals the use of a comparing strategy as a tool to bring about meaning (i.e. meaning of school education). In this chapter, parents also used the past as a mediator to give meaning to the processes by which educators construct their children as learners (i.e. teachers identifying three best pupils). Even more, they used the past to understand their role in the process of constructing their children's development and learning, implying that the past functions to shape practice (i.e. requesting from children to respect their teachers as they did when at school). In addition, parents made use of past cultural practices when the recollection as positive (Raty, 2007) (i.e. checking on their children's homework and using same strategy with them as their parents did to them). Overall, parents' accounts throughout the thesis show consistency in that the past is used to inform parents' representations and practices (O'Toole & Abreu, 2005).

Drawing on Vygotskian notion of internalization, it is evident that parents' representations of change were transformed into internalized processes. Their ideas on what counts for a good education and practice in relation to the

education of their children are internalized through their participation in children's schooling, an activity embedded in the macro system they live in. Investigating these practices is not a simple task. As Bauer and Gaskell (1999) argue social representations are elements that have history, but they are constantly under the influence of change. Whilst parents' representations of own schooling carried similar meanings, their representations of the education system under the influence of social and cultural changes presented diverse and unique cases, suggesting that their representations of their children's schooling will also vary. As Valsiner (2012) argues meaning is embedded in the cultural activities, which are being called out from different perspectives. Following on this note, as much as it is in this study's interest to elaborate findings that were generally common across groups, it is crucial to identify the meanings and experiences of each cultural group in relation to their children's schooling.

Taking into account the complexity of every socio-cultural group, their overlapping, yet unique experiences, the main findings will be discussed separately.

Meaning of education

Parents' representations of their children's schooling as non-emigrants, emigrants and returned emigrants in unison valued education. When discussing education, they focused on their broad meaning of education and their meaning of school education. Parents understood the meaning of education as a "medium" to understand life, acquire knowledge and sharing that knowledge with the community. However, unlike the non-emigrants, parents with migratory experiences identified education as culture, meaning personal, family and citizen culture that people manifest in how they communicate, behave, dress and as culture, which is linked to the knowledge you gain from life. In addition, their accounts showed preference towards a system that would combine practices from both own and children's school systems. This elaboration shows consistency with previous analysis whereby they resisted or embraced attributes of change depending on past experiences with education. It is evident from the analysis that, at times, parents represented their children's

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schooling as similar and in other times as different to what they had experienced at school. Nevertheless, all parents valued education which explains the reason behind them approaching their children's schooling process with preference.

Parents elaborated the meaning of school education as a mechanism for children to learn new and specialized knowledge from a professional, from a teacher. This perspective has implications on the way parents elaborate the role of teachers and their own because they view schooling as a process delegated to teachers rather than a combination of home-school responsibility. One could argue that, as parents account teachers for their children's learning process, it could be that this is why teachers did not always inform parents (i.e. when field trips were organized). This findings support a study conducted on behalf of the World Bank which revealed that Albanian (non-emigrant) parents were holding teachers and the system account for their children's educational outcome (Serra et al., 2011). Furthermore, the findings draw attention to how parents understand their role in the process because their involvement is a powerful tool for their learning process (William Report, 2008).

In addition, parents were invited to compare whether their meaning of school education was similar or different to their children's meaning of school education. Their responses varied with some parents elaborating the meaning as similar and focused on the fact the in all societies individuals strive to get an education and learn new knowledge. Parents' accounts also revealed differences in that opportunities (i.e. activities outside school, continuing higher education, etc) offered to children nowadays were not available to them when they were at school. On the other hand, whilst the parents as children were free to socialize with their peers (i.e. at school, outside the neighbourhood), children in present communities depend on parents due to lack of physical and environmental insecurity. This analysis suggest that although the desire to gain knowledge and get an education has shifted from one generation to the other, meanings

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between generations change from system to the next, as societies evolve and children are exposed to more opportunities. As Howarth (2006) argues, meanings are relational, contextual and historical because they are co-constructed.

Construction of the child as a learner

Following parents' meaning of education and school education, parents also expressed their views on the way school system and teachers constructed their child as learner. Due to the complexity of the cultural background and the dynamic of their own past experience with education systems, their views differed. Non-emigrant and returned emigrants' views focused on issues concerning the school curriculum in Albania as being overloaded. Return emigrants' views focused on the way children were being differentiated based on their performance (i.e. three best pictures in the wall), unlike school abroad which viewed children as equal. These parents also showed concerned about their children feeling confused in the process of resettlement in the new Albanian system. Another issue brought forward from this group, was the absence of school-home communication in the Albanian school system, replicating some findings elaborated by Serra and colleagues (2011). Whilst evaluating the system abroad, emigrant and returned emigrant parents identified the system as more advanced to the Albanian present system and more advanced to the system back then. They also viewed the system abroad as a fun place for children. However, one practical issue that parents revealed about schools abroad was the fact that children's homework was not always accompanied by an exercise book, a practice that was common in their time a school. This fact concerned parents who found the book helpful whilst supporting their children with homework, suggesting practical issue for them. In coherence with findings deriving from O'Toole and Abreu (2005), at times parents used past to mediate internalisation and in other times they used past to promote externalisation.

Parents' understanding of how the teachers constructed their children as learners focused on the image of the teachers, relationship with children's teachers and

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understanding the role of the teachers. Parents represented teachers in Albania differed from some parents' representations of teachers abroad. Whilst in Albania non-emigrant and returned emigrant parents evaluated the image of teachers as different to own teachers back then (i.e. some teachers encouraged bribing from parents and children), emigrant parents thought highly of teachers abroad, who were perceived as kind, welcoming and similar to the teachers parents had when at school.

Generally speaking, the relationship between teachers and their children were viewed as positive and that parents encouraged their children towards showing respect for their teachers. However emigrant parents emphasized that the teachers abroad made school an enjoyable place for children, which was not an attribute of teachers in Albania. In addition, parents also reflected on the role of the teachers, which they evaluated as important as the role of the parents implying that teachers' role at school is similarly important as parents' role at home. As Crozier (1999) explained, that meant that the parent-teacher roles were viewed as two separated jobs. The role of teachers being as important as the role of parents implies that children are exposed to these role models. Taking into consideration these parents' accounts, it is evident that, as individuals move and systems change, it can lead to parents and children feeling confused and not always prepared to face the challenges.

Construction of own child's development and learning

The final section presented and analysed parents' accounts on how they understand their own role, the way they participate in doing homework with their children and the way child's future is being projected. These subthemes underlined parents' construction of their child's development and learning. Parents emphasised the importance of their involvement in their child's development and learning process starting from a very early age by engaging them in educational activities. Further, building a good relationship with the child's teacher was also valued as part of their acting role; however because

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parents in this study engage with teachers in various settings, their accounts on what makes for a good rapport differed. Parents living in Albania viewed their relationship as good. However, they also revealed that the rapport showed tendency for teachers being prone to bribe parents for gifts and money. This fact concerned parents, especially at times when they felt that teachers would be paying more attention to their child had they become 'friendly' with them. On the other hand, parents with migratory experiences appreciated their relationship with child's teachers and described them as professional. These parents also showed awareness of being affected by biculturalism in the process of construction their child's development and learning. Emigrant parents revealed that they would encourage their children to embrace home culture when living abroad, whereas returned emigrant parents showed concern about their children facing challenges with the home language when returned. Returned emigrant parents showed further concern about the impact of changing environment and school on their child's behaviour.

Drawing on research from Crozier (1999), the orientation of working-class parents showed that they were more likely to commit to their children's educational success; they see their role as supportive; however, they viewed their position in relation to schools as separate from their everyday social and cultural world. Parents constructed their child's development and learning process through their support during study hour and homework. In their approach, it was evident from the quotes that at times parents replicated or did not replicate the practices they had experiences from their past. Their practices did not always show consistency with child's school practices, which implies that children were placed between two different methods of dealing with schoolwork. The way parents supported them with homework was not congruent with the teachers' method used at school. For example, parents often faced challenges, especially in helping their children with mathematics, due to the change of methods used in this subject. There is no evidence of parents striving to change their old practices whilst doing maths. One could argue that because parents belong to an older generation, it could be that resistance to change is more of an issue for them rather than the younger generation

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(Popova, 2003; Elliot & Tudge, 2007). According to Wertsch and Stone (1985), children who collaborate with their mothers in a problem-solving task, eventually internalize their dialogue and make use of it to regulate their own activity. Although this study did not focus parent-child interaction during homework, it would be interesting to explore children's perspective in this matter.

As previously discussed, to make sense of present practices with children's education, parents will draw on their past experiences with education and their desired future for their children (Cole, 2000; Wertsch, 2002). In their accounts, not only did parents consider their desired future, but they took into account children's own wishes for the future. It became clear from the analysis that their child's projection of the future revealed their clear ideas on what they wanted to do in the future, (i.e. become a biology teacher, go to the United Kingdom, etc). Whilst comparing their vision of the future when young with that of children's, all they could wish for was the opportunity to enrol at the university. The subject of field did not matter, or rather, could not be part of their imagined wish for the future due to the system constraining that choice. In addition, parents also reflected on their hopes for their children. Due to the instability in Albania, parents were puzzled for their future, although they were confident in their children's ability to reach higher. Despite their cultural experiences, parents hoped for and encouraged their children to continue and finish higher education, to choose a subject of their own preference and to remain good people.

The diagram projects parents' social representation in the scope of prolepsis (Cole, 2000), visualising the route of how their representations are being constructed.
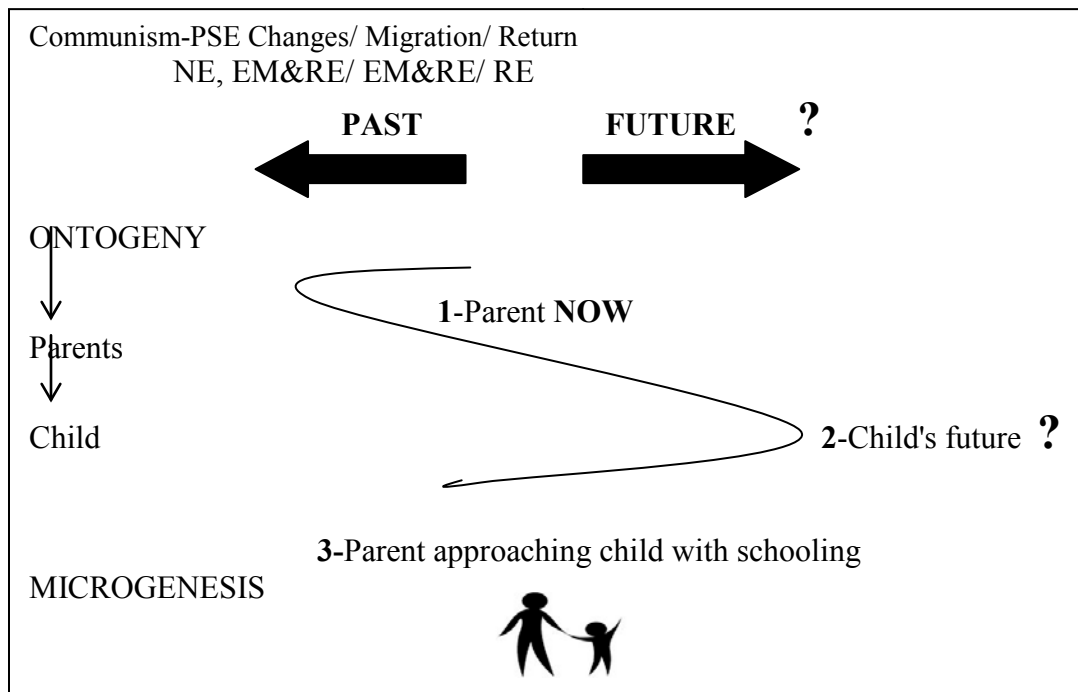
Figure 6.8: Visualizing Albanian parents' prolepsis

Parents' accounts on their children's schooling reflected a) what they meant by education and school education; b) how school system and teachers constructed them as learners; and c) how they constructed their child's development and learning. Albanian parents participating in this study valued education and stressed the crucial role that school system and teachers play in this process. Their views underlined issues concerning different practices in three socio-cultural settings, which have implications for them as parents and for their children, who often are positioned between parents' past experiences and teachers' present practices. This was even more evident for parents and children from migratory groups, who experienced radical change between system in Albania and abroad.

The overall evaluations and findings deriving from analysis Chapter (4), Chapter (5) and Chapter (6) find their way on the theoretical perspective. A detailed discussion and conclusions will be finalized in the following Chapter (7).

Chapter 7: Conceptualizing Parents' Social Representations of Their Children's Schooling and Conclusions

> *"Education is a societal practice, children's development is a consequence of their participation in societal practices, and therefore education has a significant role in children's development"*
>
> (Chaiklin & Hedegaard, 2009, p.15)

7.1. Returning to the Main Questions

The overall aim of this empirical study was to explore the impact of socio-cultural changes on Albanian parents' social representations of their children's schooling. Chapter (1) introduced the cultural and historical background of Albania, a country undergoing radical political and socio-economic changes for over two decades (1991 onwards), moving from a rigid Communist regime to pluralism. The political and socio-economic changes were followed by flows of internal and external migration, which influenced the country's social development. Three socio-cultural groups were investigated to give insight into the study aims: Albanian parents as non-emigrants, emigrants and returned emigrants. The impact of changes in the education system and how that had an effect on individuals' lives were also presented in the first chapter. Chapter (2) outlined the theoretical contributions of Bronfenbrenner, Vygotsky and Moscovici followed by the relevance of their work to the present study. At first, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development was presented. His model reflects the interrelatedness between the individual and the socio-cultural context where he or she is situated. Moscovici's notion of social representations was also adapted on the basis that as a system of values, ideas and practices, social representations can orientate individuals with a code of understanding, by

which the unknown becomes known, as the members communicate with one another in their community. From a Vygotskian perspective, social representations can be seen as special type of psychological tools that mediates the interaction between the social and the individual. Social and cultural mediation offers a mechanism which transforms the social and cultural activities of the external context into internalized processes, as the individual participates in events which are meaningful. This chapter also introduced a few empirical studies examining issues underlying social representations. Chapter (3) exposed the methodological techniques used for the study. The current chapter will discuss the summarized findings of the analysis Chapters (4, 5 and 6) in the light of the theoretical notions (Chapter 2). Then it will return to the research questions and conceptualize the contributions made by the study.

Drawing on the theoretical notions outlined in Chapter (2), the current study predicted that a) individuals' past experiences with education will have an impact on the way they give meaning to their children's schooling; b) changes at the societal level (macro) will influence the individuals' social representations (micro) through the process of cultural mediation. The research was oriented by four research questions. First, the parents' past memories of their own education was examined. Second, the impact of political and socio-economic changes on non-emigrant, emigrant and returned emigrant parents' meanings and experiences of their children's schooling was examined. Third, the impact of changes due to migration on emigrant and returned emigrant parents' meanings and experiences of their children's schooling was also examined. Fourth, the study also examined the impact of returning to Albania on returned emigrant parents' meanings and experiences of their children's schooling. The focus accordingly was on the aspects of story representations of parents' diverse educational meanings and experiences that are central to understanding how they construct their children's development and learning.

The four research questions were presented and analysed in Chapter 4 (Parents' own education), Chapter 5 (Parents' accounts of the impact of socio-cultural changes), and Chapter 6 (Parents' accounts of own children's schooling). This

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chapter will summarize findings of respective chapters in the light of research questions, as follows:

7.1.1. Parents' own education under trajectories of changes

7.1.2. Parents' meanings and their experiences of education influenced by socio-cultural changes

7.1.3. Parents' meanings and experiences of their children's development and learning influenced by socio-cultural changes:

The chapter will be concluded by considering its theoretical and methodological contribution and limitations, followed by proposed recommendations for future research.

7.1.1. Parents' own education through trajectories of change[24]- Reconceptualising the past

The first analysis Chapter (4) has provided an insight of Albanian parents' stories of their own education under the most rigid Communist regime in Europe, followed by the impact of political and socio-economic changes in Albanian and, for some parents, the impact of migration in various European countries. Their meanings and experiences of own education will be discussed in the light of theoretical notions.

An overall view of their story of education can be visualized in Diagram 7.1 and 7.2.

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[24] The preliminary findings of this section were presented at the international conference of the Albanian Institute of Sociology (November, 2009).
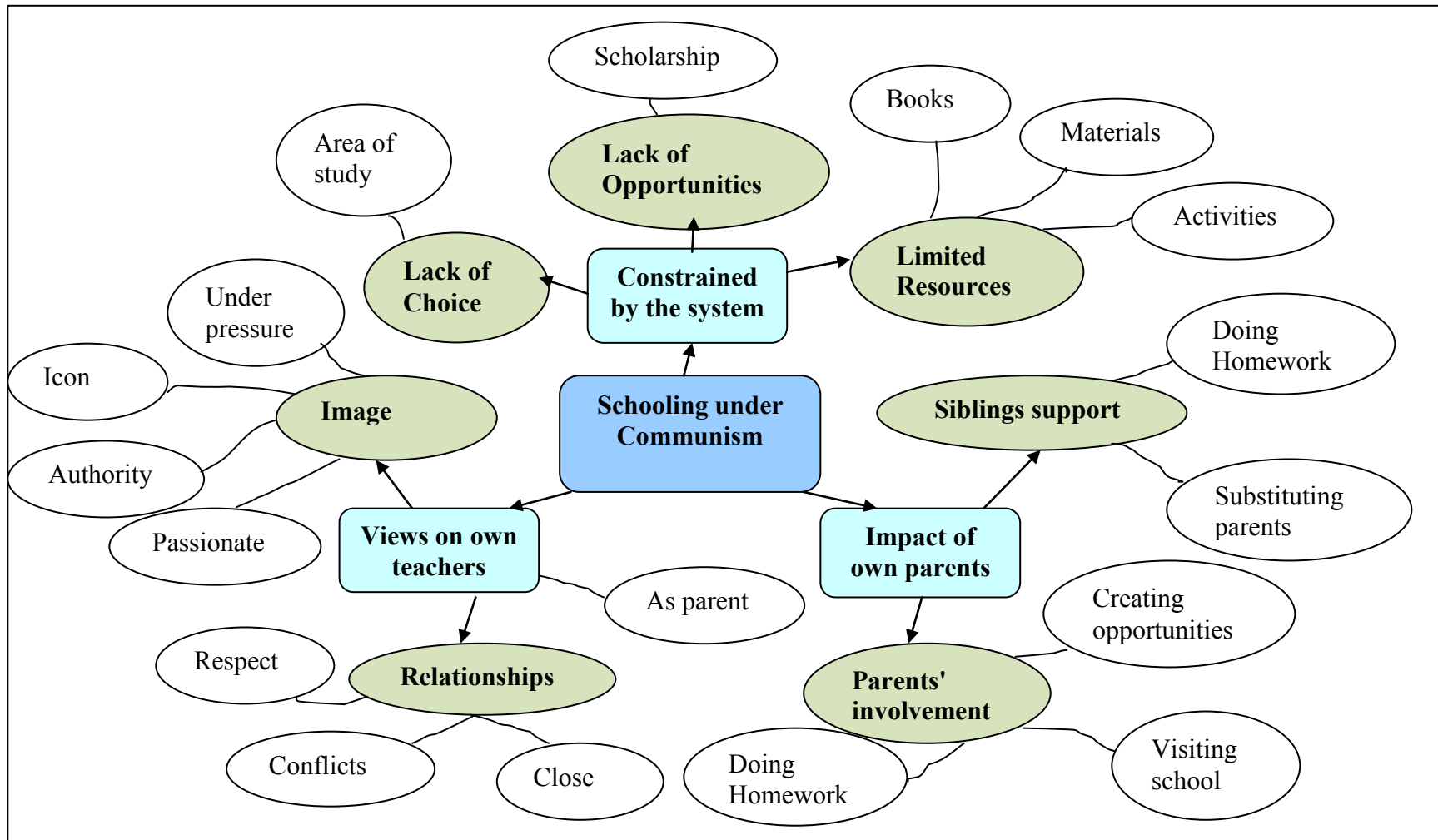
Diagram 7.1: Representing schooling under Communism
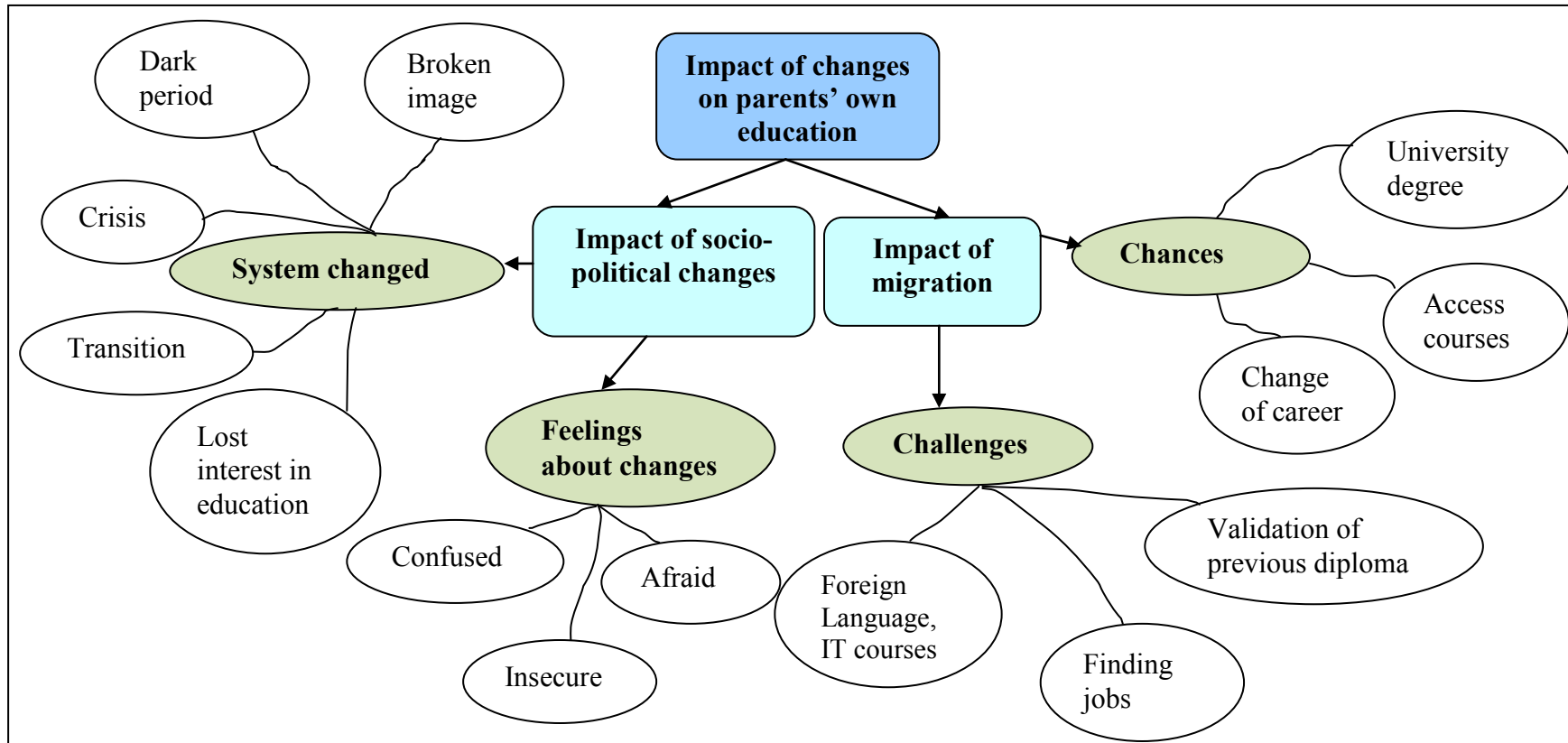
Diagram 7.2: Representing the impact of changes on own education: political and socio-economic changes and migration

The above diagrams provide a visualized summary of the main findings revealing Albanian non-emigrants, emigrants and returned emigrants story of education initiating with their overlapping school experiences during Communism. An examination of parents' own education has offered interesting findings which fit into the theoretical background of this study.

In this study, parents' experiences with their own education can be viewed as a journey through trajectories of change. Their experiences encompass schooling under Communism and during political and socio-economic changes. For some parents, it is also includes educational experiences as emigrants abroad. Parents reflected on three significant components that played a crucial role on their schooling during Communism. They talked about the constraining nature of the previous school system, expressed views on their own teachers and on their parents' role. As Moscovici argues (1973), the findings confirm the idea that an examination of social representations requires for a mutual understanding of both macro and micro level of analysis.

It is evident from their accounts that their meaning of own education was anchored from the impact of the regime and the Communist ideology. As Howarth (2011) explains, ideology is a system of representations and it can be used to examine the ways practices operate through the manipulation of knowledge in the service of power and encouraged unequal social relations. In their accounts, parents revealed facts that school curriculum was influenced by Communism (i.e. praising the former Communist leader by singing songs or wearing red scarves representing pioneers). Their everyday school activities (micro processes) was impacted by the schools system (exosystem) under the influence of Communism (macrosystem), which as previously claimed, the country underwent the most rigid form of the regime (De Waal, 2005). The findings support ideas from Bronfenbrenner (1979) in that the individual's ecological environment (micro) is influenced by broader structures (macro).

When invited to reflect on their story of education under the impact of change, all parents expressed their views on socio-political changes after the fall of

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Communism. That moment of change and political instability that is recounted in the form of a collective past (Wertsch, 2000, 2008), whereby the effect led to severely different systems, different teachers, different image of the learner, and that all they were meant to believe as true, had collapsed. The changes in the political system were account for changes on education system, for changing image of others (i.e. teachers) and in the image of the self. As the post-Communism transition hit the society, in their views the school system and the role of teachers regretfully changed, leading parents to feelings of fear, confusion and insecurity. Many others decided to migrate to various countries in Europe and around the world relocating their self in diverse education contexts. Combined with other obstacles in their foreign land, emigrants' will to continue education was evident. In their attempts, they faced challenges but also embraced the given chances and opportunities towards gaining further qualifications offered by the educational systems abroad.

Parents' story of education emphasized the image of their teachers and the relationship they hold with them, confirming Jodelet's (1991) argument that social representations can be interpreted through images that condense manifold meanings. They represented own teachers' image as being a respectful authority and their role as crucial in their schooling. Overall, they represented their teachers as passionate about their job which was evident in their relationship with the pupils. Reflecting on the image and relationship with teachers was repeatedly evident throughout parents' accounts in the analysis, suggesting that social representations of schooling could not be understood without the presence of educators.

Finally, parents reflected on their image as learners at home, with their parents and siblings being supportive towards their education. This implies that an evaluation of the image of the self as learner takes into account the self as a learner in home setting.

An examination of parents' own education served the study's aims because their past acted as a mediating mechanism to make sense of the impact of changes and to better a better understanding of children's schooling, replicating findings from O'Toole and Abreu (2005). Their past consists of their ideas, beliefs, feelings, images and practices in relation to schooling and education, offering insight in the process of constructing social representations. Their past accompanies parents in their attempt to extract meaning and experiences of children's schooling.

7.1.2. Parents' meanings and their experiences of education influenced by socio- cultural changes

Political and Socio-economic changes on education system

Parents' meanings and their experiences of education was influenced by political and socio-economic changes in post Communist Albania. For some the influence was extended by the effect of migration and by returning to home country. In their accounts, parents talked about the effect of changes on the school system and on teachers, in each respective setting. In coherence with Hale & Abreu (2010), the findings show that as parents face changes due to migration, they negotiate their position. Thus, re-present their meanings and experiences of education in relation to their cultural status. It is their past experiences with education and the re-presentation of education under the influence of change that will underlie the processes by which they approach their children' schooling in each setting. The findings are visually presented in Diagrams 7.3.

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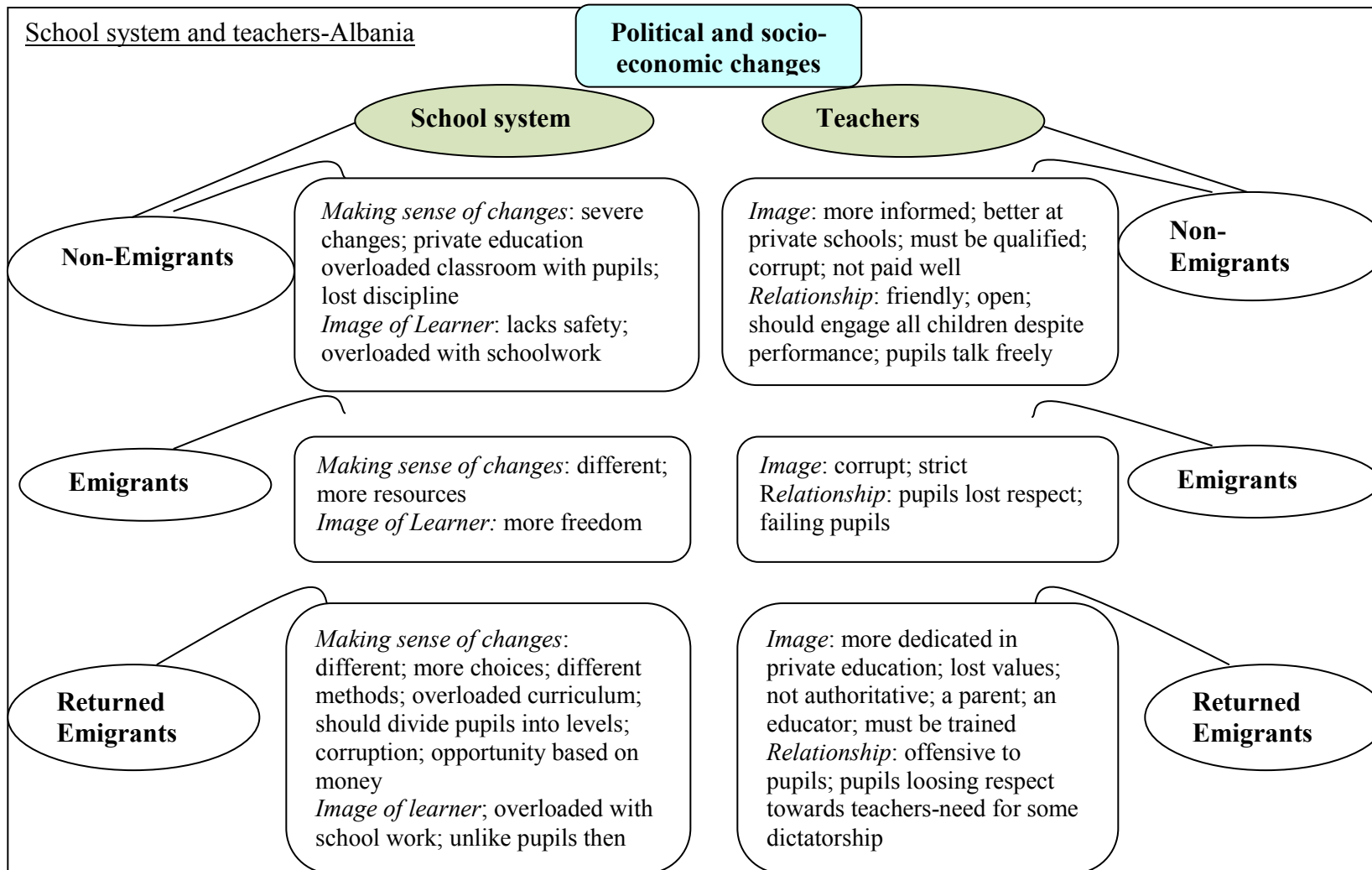
Diagram 7.3: Representing the impact of political and socio-economic changes on education

As shown in the above diagram (7.3), parents' representations of the education system influenced by changes in political, social and economic spheres reveal mixed accounts on the school system and on teachers. One reason could be that the impact of change is different for each group due to their decision to leave or remain (i.e. non-emigrants had an ongoing lived experiences with the change). In addition, the fact that they are speaking from diverse cultural context, it shows that their representations of change differs, confirming that meaning is embedded in our social interactions and culturally organized activities occurring at time that is irreversible (Valsiner, 2012).

The findings support O'Toole and Abreu (2005) confirming that parents' representations of own education act as mediators to internalize changes. When change brought feelings of unease, they demoted change. When invited to express their views on the political and socio-economic changes, parents focused on the impact of changes on the school system and on teachers. Parents attempted to make sense of the changes and reflected on how the changes had influenced the image of the new learner. By new learner, parents portrayed the image of the present pupils who were perceived as different to the image of the learner they knew (or were) at school. Non emigrant parents perceived the changes as "*severe*", acknowledged the emergence of private education, viewed the system as losing discipline and talked about the overloaded number of pupils in classrooms. Their image of the new learner described the pupil who lacks physical safety and who is overloaded with schoolwork. Emigrant parents expressed a different view of the changes in the Albanian school system. They viewed the system as different and having more resources than in their time. They perceived the new learner as having more freedom. Returned emigrants' views revealed a mixture of the two previous groups' views. They viewed the school system as different, having more choices, using different methods, the curriculum being overloaded with material, suggested that pupils should be divided into categories of performance, showed concerned about corruption and that opportunity at times comes to individuals who bribe. As for the image of the new learner, similar to non-emigrants they also viewed them as overloaded

with schoolwork, and that the pupils in present school system were different to pupils back in their time.

Parents also reflected on the impact of changes on the teachers. Specifically, they focused on their image and the way they constructed relationships with the learners. Non-emigrant parents viewed the teachers in Albania as more informed than teachers back then, viewed the teachers in private schools as more dedicated; however, they suggested the need for teachers to be qualified. Parents also showed concern about teachers in public school being prone to bribes and justified this act by revealing that the teachers were not paid well. As for the way they construct relationships, non-emigrant parents described teachers as friendly, open, with pupils finding them approachable, and suggested that teachers should engage all pupils during class despite their performance. The issue of corruption in Albania was also perceived by emigrant parents, who also represented the teachers in Albania as prone to bribing, and they showed concern about teachers failing pupils and that pupils were losing respect for them. Upon their return, returned emigrant parents also viewed the teachers in private education as dedicated, not as authoritative as under previous regime, represented their image as of equal importance as parents; however, they also suggested the need for teachers to be trained, and showed concern about teachers losing values. In relation to the pupils, teachers were perceived as offensive towards them and for pupils losing respect towards teachers, and suggested a need of a certain rigid approach with pupils also offending teachers.

Non-emigrant and returned emigrant parents revealed a much more critical perspective of their views on the impact of socio-political changes on the education system than did emigrant parents. This can suggest that the more distant from the issue individuals are situated, the less concrete information they possess, and the chances for them to generalize their views is higher. As discussed in Chapter (5), parents made use of comparing strategy (Figure 5.7., page, 165).

Parents with migratory experiences represented school system and teachers abroad as different to what they had previously experienced in Albania. In their attempt to make sense of the changes, they represented system abroad as different, having more resources and that more freedom was articulated. Returned emigrants viewed the system abroad as more democratic, enjoyable, with school curriculum having practice and theory in unison, that it taught pupils social education, and that it could be influenced by religion, but only if parents would choose it to. With regards to the image of the learner abroad, emigrant parents perceived the learner as having more choice, being safe at school, and that their school hours were long, (see Diagram 7.4).

Following their views on the changes in the school system, these parents also focused on the image of teachers and their relationship with the learner. The image of teachers was perceived by emigrants as caring towards child's psychological needs, dedicated, someone who offered opportunity, a facilitator, a model and polite. Returned emigrants viewed the teachers abroad as prone to make school fun for the pupils, that they acknowledged them equally, as being liberal and friendly, that they established good communication, and that assistant teachers accompanied them.

Parents with migratory experiences perceived the school system and teachers abroad as positively different to the system in Albania. Whilst emigrant parents could only draw comparisons between the system during Communism, the system during changes and the system abroad, the returned emigrant parents' views drew upon a broader base of experiences. As a result, they were specifically invited to focus on the impact of returning to Albania on their views on the school system.

Following ideas from O'Toole and Abreu (2005), parents' representations of change due to migration reveal parents promoting changes evident in the school system abroad when the changes were in dissonance with own schooling. In

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their story of education they represented a school system constraining resources and choice. Their views on the school system abroad show preference because it brings to parents what they lacked as pupils- *freedom, more resources* and *a lot to choice*. They also favoured teachers abroad in that they do not fail pupils like during their experience at school.

Changes due to returning to homeland

Whilst reflecting on the changes in the school system and on teachers in Albania returned emigrants' views disclosed a critical standpoint. Partly, this can be explained from the fact that they valued their experience with school system abroad. Even though the present system offered more resources, they represented the system losing discipline, needing to establish a more stable bridge of home-school communication, lacking social education, influenced by politics and that practice and theory taught at school as not being in unison. With regards to learners, they showed concern that often pupils were being discriminated against by their teachers based on their performance. They perceived their image as being an educator, knowledge-giver, a parent, but also as showing positive discrimination against pupils based on their performance on the subject of maths. Concerning parent-teacher relationships, parents viewed their relationship as respective with teachers being communicative upon parents' request; however, they viewed teachers as being prone to bribery. Returned emigrants' critical views on the impact of returning to Albania portrayed an unfavourable picture of the school system and the teachers, (see Diagram, 7.5.).

School system and teachers abroad

Changes due to migration

School system abroad

Teachers abroad

Emigrants

Making sense of changes: different; more resources; freedom
Image of Learner: longer hours at school; a lot to choose; safe at school

Image: care about pupil's psychological need; dedicated; offers opportunity; facilitator; a model; polite
Relationship: doesn't fail; pupils feel good with teacher

Emigrants

Returned Emigrants

Making sense of changes: more democratic; enjoyable; practice & theory in unison; social education; influenced but not conditioned by religion
Image of Learner: more free; happy; separated into levels

Image: made school fun for pupils
Relationship: acknowledged pupils equally; liberal; friendly; good communication; being assisted

Returned Emigrants

Changes due to Returning

School system and teachers-Albania

Returned Emigrants

Making sense of changes: discipline faded; ore resources; need for home school communication; no social education; overloaded curriculum; conditioned choices; influenced by politics; practice & theory not in unison; *Image of Learner*: discriminated against based on performance

Image: an educator; a knowledge-giver; as a parent; discriminate against pupils based on performance in maths
Relationship: respective relation; communicative when requested; prone to bribe

Returned Emigrants

Diagram 7.4: Representing the impact of migration and of returning on the education system

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The societal changes presented in this section have not simply affected educational institutions and their practices, but it has impacted the self and the others. An investigation of parents' meanings and experiences of the impact of change on the education system, specifically the school system, teachers, and image of the learner, offers an interesting and important insight which has contributed to a better understanding of the constructions of social representations of their children's schooling. In the following section 7.1.3, the aim is to elaborate findings on parents' meanings and experiences, their social representations, of their children's schooling under the influence of macro changes.

7.1.3. Parents' meanings and experiences of their children's development and learning influenced by socio-cultural changes

When discussing the meaning of education, parents elaborated their meanings of education in general and specifically of school education. They used comparison strategies to make sense of the concepts. They also expressed their views on the way the school system and teachers constructed their children as learners. In addition, their accounts revealed their understanding of their own role, their hands-on schoolwork and evaluated their own child's projected future. These themes accounted for parents' constructions of their own children's development and learning; however, parents' social representations of their children's schooling must be understood in the light of all findings revealed in this chapter. The following diagrams in figures 7.6, 7.7 & 7.8 represent parents' accounts on their own children's schooling.

Meanings of education

Broad meaning of education

Meaning of school education

Non Emigrants

Understanding life: directing life; offered by the society
Acquiring knowledge: education as value; formation of self; development

Learning from the teacher: teacher's role to develop knowledge
Comparing meaning of school education: Similar meaning-all want to study
Different- system functions differently now

Non Emigrants

Emigrant ~

Understanding life: education to understand life
Acquiring knowledge: try for children to have knowledge
Embracing culture: education is culture; personal culture; manners; appearance

Learning from the teacher: learning things you don't know from a specialized person; It's teaching
Comparing meaning of school education: Same meaning-we go to school to be educated
Different-school as place to socialize

Emigrants

Returned Emigrants

Understanding life: ways of living; behaving
Acquiring knowledge: knowing everything; transmitting information
Embracing culture: citizen culture; communication, wide as culture; culture as behaviour

Learning from the teacher: being taught by working methods at school
Comparing meaning of school education: Same meaning; the core is the same, aim to go to university; *Different*- the expectations were lower due to constrains of system

Returned Emigrants

Diagram 7.5: Representing parents' meanings of education and school education

Constructing child as learner

Construction by school system

Construction by the teacher

Non Emigrants

Own system vs. Child's: different; more schoolwork now; less time to play
Ideal system: combination of own vs. child's; schools to be more fun; improve relationships, child-teacher-parent

Image: child influenced by personal relationship with teacher
Relationship: child motivated by the teacher
Role: important; child to understand the teaching from the teacher which would make it easier for parents

Non Emigrants

Emigrants

Own vs. Child's: abroad child can learn more advanced knowledge at early stage
Ideal: combine own with abroad
Home vs. Abroad: two different systems; more advanced abroad but no exercise books

Image: child encouraged by teacher, similar to parents' time at school
Relationship: child adores teacher; teacher makes school as a fun place; like a parent
Role: teacher's role is at school; a model

Emigrants

Returned Emigrants

Own vs. Child's: not very different;
Ideal: combine own with abroad
Home vs. Abroad: two different systems; abroad all children acknowledged; more home-school communication

Image: child in pressure from teacher's attempts to bribe them or parents for presents
Relationship: like a second parent for scientific side
Role: very important

Returned Emigrants

Diagram 7.6: Representing construction of child as a learner by school system and teachers

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| Construction of child's development and learning | Understanding own role | Hands on school work | Child's projected future |

Non Emigrants

Engaging child: from the time they are born; even before children can understand
Relationship with child's teacher: subject to teacher's bribing

Replicating past: teach child to be systematic like then
Challenges with HW: new method, conflict between teacher & parent' way
Maths different: problem solving an issue

Future of the self: going abroad
Hopes for the future: hope depending on situation in the country

Emigrants

Engaging child: from the beginning, when two or three years old
Relationship with child's teacher: very good, communicates well, approachable
Awareness of biculturalism: aware of own culture, but not to force it on child

Replicating past: check on child
N (replicating): closer than parents then
Challenges with HW: difficulty with English, child helps parent with difficulties
Maths different: Longer route to solve equations

Future of the self: already a vision for future
Hopes for the future: child to complete good education and remains good a person

Returned Emigrants

Engaging child: from when inside children listen
Relationship with child's teacher: respective, concerned about teacher's subjective treatment
Awareness of biculturalism: aware of impact of environment on child's behaviour

Replicating past: to learn logically
Challenges with HW: issue with deduction; explaining concept in foreign language
Maths different: different order of solving problems; different method

Future of the self: to become a teacher
Hopes for the future: to choose their own field of study; to enjoy her future job

Diagram 7.7: Representing parents' construction of child's development and learning

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As portrayed in the above diagrams (7.5, 7.6 and 7.7) parents focused on their meanings of education, their child's construction as a learner by the school system and by the teachers, and their construction of their own child's development and learning. In their accounts, parents made use of a comparison strategy to give meaning to their child's schooling.

Meanings of education

When reflecting on their broad meaning of education, non-emigrant parents viewed education as a way of understanding life and acquiring knowledge. These parents' identified the meaning of school education as a process by which children learn from a teacher. In their accounts, they also compared their meaning of school education with their child's meaning. Their meanings were similar in that parents believed that everyone would like to accomplish education and they were different in that socialization at school for the two generations had different meaning. Whilst parents were able to go to school and play freely outside school, their children go to school to learn and play, due to physical insecurity. On the other hand, emigrant and returned emigrant parents also identified education with life and knowledge; however, their meaning of education was closely linked to culture, which they perceived as playing a main role in the way people act and do things. Parents with migratory experience identified their meaning of school education as similar and different to their children's experience. By similar they referred to the fact that individuals go to school to be educated. When meanings differed, emigrant parents linked the difference with the fact that school for them was everything they had when young, with children today having more sources of entertainment. Returned emigrants presented the meanings as different in that back then when one was able to finish university, which offered an opportunity for life; however, that opportunity was not for everyone, unlike children today who are faced with different choices. Despite the constraining nature of the system under Communism, followed by instability or the impact of migration, these parents

value education, explaining why their approach favoured their children's education.

Construction of child as learner: school system and teachers

Diagram 7.7 visualises parents' understanding of how schools and teachers constructed their children as learners. Parents emphasized the role of the school system and the teachers, when elaborating their understanding of their child as a learner. In their accounts, parents compared their own past experiences with the school system and teachers to their child's (in the Albanian system or abroad). In addition, they expressed their views on what they thought would be the ideal school system, which showed preference for a combination of systems depending on their preferred systems.

In their comparison, parents' meanings of the way the school system constructed their child, despite their location, revealed differences to the way the school system had constructed them. Non-emigrants focused on learners in the present system being overloaded with schoolwork and not having the time to play, which was different to their time. Emigrant parents viewed the system abroad as different in that their child was offered more advanced knowledge at an early stage compared to the time they were at school, implying that the system abroad viewed the learner as more capable. From their time, they valued the exercise books, which accompanied their study hours, a practice, which parents did not find present in the school system abroad. This revealed a different construction of the learner leaving the parents questioning the practices they were used to when at school or perhaps unprepared to help their child during homework. Similarly, to non-emigrant parents, returned emigrants also viewed the present system in Albania as different to then, with the learner being overloaded with schoolwork. They also reflected on the notion of equity to explain that pupils in their time were all acknowledged despite their performance; whereas the present system showed tendency to acknowledge few best pupils. These parents emphasized the importance of building home-school communication, implying that the present school system in Albania did not

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always notify parents for certain school activities. This practice is what they valued in the system abroad.

Parents were also invited to reflect on what could make their ideal school system. Non-emigrants showed a preference for a combination of both systems (own versus child's); emigrants also preferred a system which would combine their own with the school system abroad; whereas few returned emigrant showed preference towards the school system they had when at school disfavouring the decline of discipline for pupils in the present school system. The ideal system for these parents would deal with the gap between the parents' construction of the child as learner and the way the school system and the teachers constructed them.

Parents' understanding of the way teachers construct their child as a learner were expressed on the way they talked about the image of the child's teachers, their child's relationships with their own teachers and the way they understand the role of the teachers. Non- emigrant parents portrayed the image of teachers as subjective in showing preference based on previous personal relationships implying that the child was being constructed unequally. They also reflected on teachers motivating and working with the child. Teachers' role was viewed as important. Parents revealed that the teachers' role was to teach in ways that children understand the lesson at school, which would make it easier for them whilst supporting children with homework. Emigrant parents viewed the teachers abroad as kind and encouraging with their child, revealing an image of the learner being content at school. They associated their children's teachers with their own teachers. They also revealed that their child valued the teachers because teachers made school a pleasant environment. Parents also reflected on the role of the teachers abroad, identifying them as a parent and a model, and that their role was linked to school. Returned emigrant parents revealed a different image, or rather, a changing image of their child's teachers. They showed concern about teachers being prone to bribe them or the children, implying an image of the learner being under pressure in relation to their

teachers. Parents valued the role of the teachers as important. Similar to emigrants, they viewed teachers as a parent for the scientific side of child' development.

The above findings reveal diverse meanings of how their child is being constructed as a learner. Meanings are driven from their (distant) past experiences, but also from their everyday schooling practices that they have encounter and continue to engage in. Their children are being constructed through parents understanding of what counts as a good school system and what counts for a good teacher. The way they view images and interpret relationships and roles of teachers comes across as crucial in understanding the process. This is evident even in the previous section, whereby an attribute of what school education meant to them was linked to gaining knowledge from teachers. Learning is viewed as process that is more linked to school rather than home-school collaboration, which could have implications for their children's performance.

Construction of own child's development and learning

The final section presents a framework of parents' meanings and experiences of their construction of own child's development and learning. In their accounts, they reflected on their understanding of their own role (self-reflection), elaborated their hands-on experiences whilst supporting their child with homework (practices) and shared their views on their child's imagined future and the desired future for their child, (see Diagram 7.8).

Understanding own role

Whilst elaborating the way they understand their own role in the process of constructing their child's development and learning, parents reflected on the importance of engaging children in educational activities from an early age. They also expressed their views on the relationship with the child's teacher. Whilst emigrant parents viewed the relationship with teachers abroad as good

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and approachable, non-emigrant and returned emigrant parents showed some concern. These parents repeatedly complained about the possibility of teachers having the tendency to bribe parents, which led parents to feel uncertain as to how close of a relationship they could have with them.

Parents with migratory experiences also showed awareness of biculturalism. Emigrant parents expressed their preference in encouraging own children to be in contact with own culture whilst living abroad. Returned emigrants elaborated on the impact of biculturalism when returned to Albania. They focused on the impact of the new environment on children's behaviour, resulting in parents constructing a different image of their children.

Hands-on schoolwork

In their accounts, parents also reflected on their engagement in doing homework with their child. Parents focused on their intentions of replicating or not replicating their past practices, expressed their challenges whilst doing homework with their children, especially in the subject of mathematics, which underlined different approaches compared to what they had learnt at school. With regards to how their practices were similar to the past, these participants reflected on strategies which their parents in approaching them, as children, whilst doing homework. Specifically they referred to the way they check on their child, the way they teach their child to be systematic and to learn things logically. In addition, emigrant parents also reflected on practices, which they did differently to their own parents' approach. Unlike the participants' parents who worked long hours to provide for them as children, they showed more presence with their own children whilst doing homework.

Parents also faced difficulties whilst doing homework. Whilst emigrant parents faced challenges with English language as a non-native speaker, non-emigrants and returned emigrants showed concern with helping their children going maths homework. They revealed that solving maths problems required a different

route to what they used back then. This had created tension with their children who faced different practices from teachers at school and different ones with the parent at home. Returned emigrants also revealed that their children faced difficulties with doing homework in the Albanian language. Whilst supporting their children, parents used the host countries' language to ease the process for their children who had been used with the system abroad.

Child's projected future

As previously discussed, we can make sense of the past by adjusting it to the present conditions, thus creating a link with desired future project (Cole, 1996; Stone & Wertsch, 1984). Parents' final accounts present their views on children projecting themselves in the future and their hopes for the future of their children. Following on Cole's notion on prolepsis, parents elaborate their past, the imagined future of the child to give meaning to the present treatment and behaviour with their children. Parents' views on the way their children construct their own future showed that their children project a clear vision for their future. Parents expressed that their children use specific language when elaborating their future (i.e. Want to go abroad; want to become a teacher, etc.). When reflecting on their hopes for their children, non-emigrant parents projected their future as conditioned on the country's situation, emigrant parents wished for children to complete a good education but also remain good as a person, and returned emigrant parents wished for their children to choose their own field of study. In their accounts, parents show that they valued education and in all possible ways would hope for their children to receive higher education. Receiving higher education in times of more opportunities and choices reveals a different reality for their children compared to their limited opportunities and choices due to Communism.

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7.2. How do Albanian parents construct social representations of their children's schooling? - An overview of main findings

This exploratory study examined Albanian parents' social representations of their children's schooling on the basis that individual learning and development involve the consideration of mutual relationships between micro and macro socio-cultural settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978; Moscovici, 1973). The findings in this study elaborate Bronfenbrenner's model of human development, which suggested that changes at the macro level of analysis would eventually influence micro psychological process. The socio-cultural changes due to the transformation of Albanian political and socio-economic perspective after the fall of Communism, due to migration and due to returning to homeland have shown to have great impact on parents' social representations of their children school because their meanings and experiences take shape in the cultural position they were situated in.

Social representations are explored on the basis that they uphold a system of values, ideas and practices that are shared and communicated between members of the similar cultural group (Moscovici, 1973). In their accounts when talking about their meanings and experiences with their children's education, parents expressed their values, ideas and practices, but also meanings, experiences, images, relationships, roles and practices, an evaluation of the past and future to make sense of the present. These key concepts undermine the structure of social representations examined in this study. Thus, the complexity and dynamism of what account for social representations limits the potential of this research. Due to their socio-cultural status and their scope of experiences, parents' social representations were partially similar and different.

In addition, parents made use of a comparison strategy to give meaning to the way they constructed their children's development and learning. Due to their overlapping histories, they revealed similar patterns, although their views and

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practices differed due to their diverse experiences with education. Albanian parents made use of their past experiences and the imagined future of their own child to give meaning to their present actions. The following Figure 7.9 attempts to visualize parents' social representations in the scope of prolepsis, a model that is flexibly influenced by socio-cultural experiences.
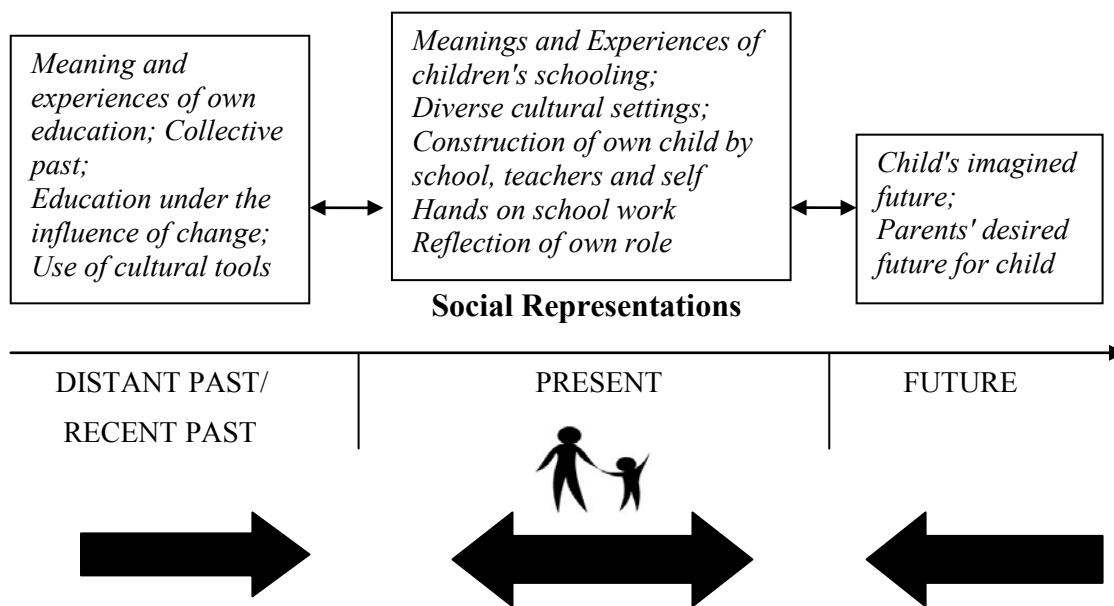
Figure 7.1: Albanian parents' social representations in the scope of prolepsis

From a Vygotskian perspective, social representations can be considered as special type of psychological tools that mediates the interaction between the social and the individual, and between the individual and the social. From this perspective social representations can be viewed as a medium in the process of social and cultural mediation, which suggests that social representations can be viewed as an accumulation of psychological tools. This study offered an identification of components that make up social representations evolving in societal changes. Thus, social representations are to be viewed as changing psychological functioning that evolves with human beings.

The process of human construction in this study is viewed as dynamic and complex. Social representations are by far stable cognitive schemes (Sammut &

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Howarth, 2013); they have history and change over time (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999), but also are responsible for our actions in the word (Jodelet, 1991). Therefore, they must not be seen in vacuum but as evolving in cultural context.

7.3.   Contribution to the field

The present empirical and qualitative research inspects issues of human development from a socio-cultural perspective. The contribution is considered to be theoretical, methodological and practical. The study was inspired by cultural psychological theories of Bronfenbrenner, Vygotsky and Moscovici; therefore, it combined various theoretical notions to examine the proposed aims. In their contribution, these authors emphasize the importance of a mutual understanding of the macro setting and micro psychological processes. Previous psychological studies have shown great interest to examine the impact of macro setting whilst investigating psychological phenomena, in different spheres, including education. However, this study went a step further as it looked at the impact of radical political, social and economic changes and the radical changes in education institutional practices, which inevitably had impacted on individuals' meanings and experiences with education. Specifically, the findings contribute to new knowledge on how changes in cultural context (macro system) account for parents' social representations of their children's schooling (micro system) with special focus on a population which has experienced a rigid form of Communism, instable post Communist period, followed by great flows of migration and recently returning to their home country, forming a culturally circular perspective. Examining social representations of cultural groups undergoing unique history and perspectives is new to psychological research.

The current study reproduced similar findings to previously elaborated research concerning parents' approach to education being driven from their past

experiences (Goodnow, 1988; Popova, 2003; O' Toole & Abreu, 2005; Raty, 2007) and by the desired future for their child (Valsiner, 2012; Cole, 2000). The findings contribute to the impact of past experiences and the overlapping histories of parents whose education experiences underwent trajectories of change. Examining social and cultural histories that overlap offers a psychological space to make sense of the present. When revealing histories, parents used a comparison strategy to make use of their present views and practices. In some cases, parents educational practices with their children were affected by the societal changes; whereas in some other cases parents showed perseverance to older cultural patterns (i.e. replicating older practices when doing homework with own children). The findings further support the idea that changes at the macro level do not filter down to the micro level at a speedy rate (Elliot and Tudge, 2007; Popova, 2003). This implies that the impact of socio-cultural on parents' practices with their children's schooling is a process that will take time.

The study examines social representations under the influence of radical change. In this attempt, it examines parents' meanings and experiences as the key components that make up for social representations. Social representations are examined based on the assumption that they act as social and cultural mediators, which connect the macro changes with the individual. Specifically, it contributes to a better understanding of how social representations act as mediators in parents' understanding of children's schooling showing that they evolve according to specific experiences. As parents evolve and change so do their views of what is good schooling. For instance, a returned emigrant will elaborate a critical point of view on the matter, as his or her positive experience with education abroad will contradict with present experience with child's schooling upon their return.

This study has offered a methodological contribution in using qualitative research to explore social representations' of three different socio-cultural groups. It combines narrative questions with semi structured episodic interviews. Three socio-cultural groups, from same national background, were

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invited to participate in this study, offering a combination of similar and different experiences. The socio-cultural groups involved interviews with Albanian nationals who are an under researched group, yet an important group due to their distribution in various countries in the Balkans. Thus, by varying the conditions it was possible to examine how social representations vary according to participants' specific experiences. The proposed research will promote understanding of Albanian families in relation to children's schooling in three different settings (macro systems): as non-emigrants living in Albania, in host country (possibly their new home) and in Albania as returned emigrants from various foreign countries.

Another contribution is that the methodology stresses the complexity of researching certain groups and topics in a foreign language. The role of the researcher becomes crucial both in terms of knowledge of the groups' history, but also in terms of the languages to access the participants.

Finally, it is expected that the study will also contribute to educational policy and practices in Albania and in the education of Albanian children abroad. The study has the potential to point out key issues on the relationships between parents' and institutional representations of their children's schooling. For example, as the number of returned emigrants is increasing, it would be crucial for schools to take into account their accounts on what makes good schooling. Support in the context of returned emigrant children will promote successful performance and positive development. The study will give orientation to the higher education governmental institutions for intervention whilst classrooms are becoming diverse in Albania. The school population is enriching due to cultural variability (i.e. children of returned emigrants embrace a second cultural identity).

7.4.   Limitations and Recommendations for further research

Due to the time and word limitation of this project, further developing work can be suggested for the future. First, with regards to theoretical matters, the present study did not fulfil its initial aim to triangulate parents' views with the views of their children and their teachers due to the word limit of this thesis. Having analysed the other two groups' perspectives would have contributed to a better understanding of parents' meanings and experiences on the matter. It also gathered limited information about the imagined future of the children, although the gathered qualitative data with the children offers an understanding of children's self-projected future. Analysing teachers and children's perspective remains an objective, which will evolve in the near future.

Second, although this study investigated Albanian nationals as an under researched group, it would be naive to generalize the findings for ethnic minority Albanians living in Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, etc., because Albanians living in the rest of the region would have experience different historical and cultural experiences with education.

Third, in the process of recruiting participants from different socio-cultural experiences, individuals' time abroad or returning to Albania was not taken into account. For instance, few of the participants had recently returned in Albania, others had returned some more years before. Returned emigrants who have returned one year before the interview was conducted might share different views to the ones who might have returned over 3-5 years. Perhaps, suggesting a criteria regarding years of returning to home country could produce more mutual responses.

Fourth, further studies that explore alternatives, such as children studying in public versus private education, or in rural versus urban areas, could offer a much in-depth understanding of parents' experiences. As it is mentioned, parents found the experiences in private schools different to public ones. In

addition, parents' educational background, economic status, or social class, are yet other factors, which could be considered in the future.

Finally, due to limitations in the field of psychological research dealing with the impact of radical macro changes and radical educational practices changes on parents' social representations of their children's schooling, this research conducted an exploratory study. Exploratory research is believed to offer a descriptive account of the phenomenon under research. Whilst the findings offer a broad scope on the matters that occupy the three researched socio-cultural groups, conducting studies that could consider each group separately but rather in much more details, would offer a deeper understanding of parents' social representations on their children's schooling. This topic has great significance for educating children at a time of political, social, economic and cultural change.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:
RECRUITMENT LETTER (Head teachers of schools)

Department of Psychology
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UK
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Direct line: +44 (0) 1865 48 3771

Email: acanollari@brookes.ac.uk
www.brookes.ac.uk

Re: Research Project: Albanian Parents' Social Representations of their Children's Schooling

Dear_____

I am conducting research as part of the MPhil/PhD programme at Oxford Brookes University, Department of Psychology. My research topic is investigating Albanian parents' social representations of the schooling of their children whilst they are emigrants in the United Kingdom, returned emigrants and non-emigrants in Albania.

I would be very grateful if you could allow me access to your school in May 2008 to recruit two teachers and four Albanian parents for my study. Participation in the study will require about one hour with the teacher and approximately one hour with the parents. Parents will be also asked to give consent for approaching their children for an interview. All the work will be spread across three weeks period. By taking part in the study, they will be contributing to my academic research and informing psychological theory with respect to migration experiences and parents' views on children's schooling.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. If the participants decide to take part they are still free to withdraw from the project at any time. All information will be anonymous and kept strictly confidential. The data will be stored in accordance with the University's policy on Academic Integrity securely in electronic form.

The research has been reviewed and approved the University Research Ethics Committee ethics@brookes.ac.uk and is being supervised by Dr. Guida de Abreu gabreu@brookes.ac.uk and Dr. Mark Burgess mark.burgess@brookes.ac.uk in the Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences and Law, Oxford Brookes University and Professor Bardhyl Musai bmusai@cde-ct.org at Centre for Democratic Education in Tirana, Albania. The project is being funded by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Prime Minister's office in Tirana, Albania.

If it is possible for your school to support my research, please let me know in writing and please do not hesitate to contact me or the supervisory team if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Albana Canollari

Appendix B:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION (Parents)

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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
For Parents

Re: Research Project: Albanian Parents' Social Representations of their Children's Schooling

You are being invited to take part in a research study. It is important for you to understand the reasons and aims of this research before you decide whether to take part. This information sheet will also clarify you with what is involved in this study, so please take some time to read the following information carefully. The study is voluntary and you must not feel obliged to take part. You may also withdraw at any time without giving a reason if you were to agree to take part. In that case, all the data will be eliminated.

My name is Albana Canollari and I am a researcher at Oxford Brookes University, Department of Psychology. I am interested in exploring the experiences of Albanian *parents who have travelled to United Kingdom as emigrants/ who had returned to Albania after experiencing migration/ who have not experience migration* and their children. There are two phases of the study: The first phase will run over the course of 3 months with 30 participants. The second stage, which is the main study will run over the course of 6 months, with 75

participants and will require approximately 1 hour of your time. The study is divided into three sections: the first section being an individual interview with the teacher of your child. The second stage will require an interview with you. The third stage will require for your child to do some drawings followed by an interview. The interviews will be tape recorded, transcribed and translated into English for analysis.

All information collected will be kept confidential. The data will be protected by giving you a false identification for publication i.e. names will be a removed and recoded into a fictious name. All data will be kept in accordance with the University's policy on Academic integrity and will be kept securely in electronic form for a period of five years after completion of the research project.

By agreeing to take part in this project, you will be giving an exceptional help in my academic research and contributing to knowledge through the recording of experiences, promoting the understanding of the issues involved, and engaging in a process whereby you will be able to display your world and inform psychological theory.

The results of the study will form the basis of my PhD research project, and may be used for publications and conferences presentations, as a student in the Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences and Law, at Oxford Brookes University.

The research is supervised by Dr. Guida de Abreu gabreu@brookes.ac.uk, Dr. Mark Burgess mark.burgess@brookes.ac.uk and Prof. Bardhyl Musai bmusai@cde-ct.org, at the Centre for Democratic Education in Albania, and and it is

being funded by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Prime Minister's office in Tirana, Albania.

The research has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee at Oxford Brookes University and if you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted you should contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me, Albana Canollari at acanollari@brookes.ac.uk, or the supervisory team.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Albana Canollari   Date:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION (Children)

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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
For Children

Parents's views of their children's schooling

You are being invited to take part in a research study. It is important for you to understand the reasons and aims of this research before you decide whether to take part. This information sheet will also clarify you with what is involved in this study, so please take some time to read the following information carefully. The study is voluntary and you must not feel obliged to take part. You may also withdraw at any time without giving a reason if you were to agree to take part. In that case, all the data will be eliminated.

My name is Albana Canollari and I am a researcher at Oxford Brookes University, Department of Psychology. I am interested in exploring the experiences and perceptions of Albanian children as pupils at schools in England and in Albania. The first stage of the study will run over the course of 3 months, with 30 participants. The main study will run over the course of 6 months with 75 participants. Both stages will include teachers and parents and will require approximately one hour of your time.

The study is divided into three sections; the first section being individual interviews with the teachers. The second stage will interview parents. Finally the third stage will involve for you to complete three drawings followed by short interviews explaining your drawings. The interviews will be tape recorded, transcribed and translated from Albanian into English for analysis.

All information collected will be kept confidential. Your name will be removed and a different name will be attached to it. All data will be kept in accordance with the University's policy on Academic integrity and will be kept securely in electronic form for a period of five years after completion of the research project.

By agreeing to take part in this project, you will be giving an exceptional help in my academic research and contributing to knowledge through the recording of experiences, promoting the understanding of the issues children might face whilst at school and you will be able to display your world and inform psychological theory.

The results of the study will form the basis of my PhD research project, and may be used for publications and conferences presentations, as a student in the Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences and Law, at Oxford Brookes University.

The research is supervised by Dr. Guida de Abreu gabreu@brookes.ac.uk, Dr. Mark Burgess mark.burgess@brookes.ac.uk and Prof. Bardhyl Musai bmusai@cde-ct.org. The research has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee at Oxford Brookes University and if you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted you should contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me, Albana Canollari at acanollari@brookes.ac.uk, or the supervisory team.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Albana Canollari   Date:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION (Teachers)

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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
For Teachers

Re: Research Project: Albanian Parents' Social Representations of their Children's Schooling

You are being invited to take part in a research study. It is important for you to understand the reasons and aims of this research before you decide whether to take part. This information sheet will also clarify you with what is involved in this study, so please take some time to read the following information carefully. The study is voluntary and you must not feel obliged to take part. You may also withdraw at any time without giving a reason if you were to agree to take part. In that case, all the data will be eliminated.

My name is Albana Canollari and I am a researcher at Oxford Brookes University, Department of Psychology. I am interested in exploring the experiences and perceptions of Albanian teachers teaching in Albanian schools in the United Kingdom and Albania. The study will run over the course of two months, and will require approximately one hour of your time. The study is divided into three sections: The first section being an individual interview with you. The second stage will interview some parents of the children whom you teach. The third stage will require for the child to do some drawings followed by semi-structured interview explaining the drawing task. The interviews will

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be tape recorded, transcribed and translated from Albanian into English for analysis.

All information collected will be kept confidential. The data will be protected by giving you a pseudonym. All data will be kept in accordance with the University's policy on Academic integrity and will be kept securely in electronic form for a period of five years after completion of the research project.

By agreeing to take part in this project, you will be giving an exceptional help in my academic research and contributing to knowledge through the recording of experiences, promoting the understanding of the issues involved, and engaging in a process whereby you will be able to display your world and inform psychological theory.

The results of the study will form the basis of my PhD research project, and may be used for publications and conferences presentations, as a student in the Department of Psychology, School of Social Sciences and Law, at Oxford Brookes University. The research is supervised by Dr. Guida de Abreu gabreu@brookes.ac.uk, Dr. Mark Burgess mark.burgess@brookes.ac.uk and Prof. Bardhyl Musai bmusai@cde-ct.org, and it is being funded by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Prime Minister's office in Tirana, Albania.

The research has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee at Oxford Brookes University and if you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted you should contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me, Albana Canollari at acanollari@brookes.ac.uk, or the supervisory team.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Albana Canollari   Date:

Appendix C:

Albanian Parents' Social Representations of their Children's Schooling

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

No. Participant: ___
Status: (i.e. Emigrant)
Age:
Male/Female:
Profession:
No. of family members:
Child's Age:
Gender of Child:
Years abroad (For Emigrant & Returned Emigrant)

This interview is about parents' experiences of their schooling in Albania and what they think about their child's education at school. It involves Albanian parents as emigrants, who live abroad, as returned emigrants in Albania and as citizens in Albania.

Part 1: Narrative Question

I would like to ask you to tell me your story of education. The best way to do this is for you to start from when you started school, and then tell your memories of being at school till you completed your education. You can take your time and give details because for me everything is of interest that is important for you.

Part 2: Episodic Interview Questions

<u>1. Meanings of School Education and Impact of Economic and Political Change</u>

1.1 What does the word education mean to you? What do you associate with the word education?

1.2 What does the word school education mean to you? Explain to me what you think school education is about.

1.3 In your view have the political and socio-economic changes of the last decade impact on education? (Could you give me some examples?)

2. Parents Own Education

(Note: Establish first whether the following two questions have already been covered in the narrative question)

2.1 What are your memories of being at school? Can you describe some of them for me?

2.2 How far have you gone with your formal education? Would you describe for me what made you make the decisions you made?

2.3 Was there any particular subject you enjoyed at school? Can you tell me about that?

2.4 Did your parents support your school education? Would you give me some examples?

2.5 Looking back at when you were at school comparing it with what your son, how is it different or the same?

3. Parents' Views on Education of their Children

3.1 How important is your child's education to you? What are your hopes for him/her?

3.2 Do you think that school has the same meaning to your child as it did for you when you were a pupil?

3.3 Has your school experience affected the way you approach learning with your own child? Could you give me some examples?

3.4 When would you recommend parents start doing educational activities with their children?

3.5 In your opinion, how important is the role of the teacher in your child's schooling? What is your relationship with your child's teacher/s? [Not sure if I need this?

3.6 How would you prefer the education system to be?

4. Parents Hands on Participation in their Child's school learning

4.1 Could you describe for me what happens when your child brings homework home? Such as, when they do it and who with?

4.2. How exactly do you help your child with homework?

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4.3 How confident do you feel when helping them with their homework now they are getting older? Can you tell me about a situation about that? [Not sure if I need this]

4.4 Is the way you help with their homework different now from when they were younger? Can you tell me about that?

5. Parents' Support on a Specific School Subject (Mathematics)

5.1 Thinking about maths, was it at school a positive or negative thing for you? Please tell me a situation that was typical of that.

5.2 Was it useful for your life? What role does maths play for you in your everyday life? Can you give me some examples of how you use maths in everyday life?

5.3 Would you say that on the whole your child enjoys their maths homework? Describe to me a situation when that was the case.

5.4 Does your child play with any games that involve maths? Can you tell me about them?

5.5 Does your child get involved with counting money or doing the shopping, everyday activities that might involve maths? Could you describe some of those situations?

6. Meaning of Education abroad –Emigrants & Returned Emigrants

6.1 What is your experience with education abroad? Can you give me an example?

6.2 Did the experience abroad influence your views on education? How?

6.3 What are some of the main differences between education system in Albania and the one here? EMIGRANTS

6.4 Did the experience abroad influence the way your child approaches education? How? RETURNED EMIGRANTS, perhaps EMIGRANTS

6.5 What are some of the main differences between education system abroad and here? RETURNED EMIGRANTS

Is there anything else you would like to say regarding school education?

Appendix D:

Albanian Parents' Social Representations of their Children's Schooling

DRAWING TASK AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN

<u>TASK INSTRUCTIONS</u>

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. As you know, I am trying to better understand how school children come to terms with their education by looking at their school life as well as their time at home during study hour. Essentially my aim is to compare the views, understandings and experiences of Albanian children who have lived in Albania and abroad.

Child's Age: _____
Place of Birth: _____
School Year: _____
Private/Non-Private school: _____
Status: (i.e. Non-emigrant):_____
Years Abroad:
Years Back:

<u>Child's perception of schooling</u>   <u>Date:</u>
_____

On the white papers using the pencils provided please draw yourself:

  a) As a pupil at school – <u>Now can you explain what you have drawn here?</u>

      a. How would you describe yourself?

      b. And in relation to other children in your class?

      c. Do you have many friends?

      d. What do you like the most about being a pupil?

      e. What don't you like about being a pupil?

      f. Do you like your school?

      g. What would your teacher say about you?

      Emigrant/Returned Emigrant children

      h. What is unique about you (do you have something that other children don't; what makes you special?)

      i. If someone asks you where you from are, what would you say?

j. If someone from another country asked you, what would you say?

k. Where were you born?

l. Is there a difference for you between where you are from and where you are born?

b) As a pupil at home and how your parents view you- <u>Now can you explain what you have drawn here?</u>

a. Do you find any particular subject more/less favourable?

b. Do your parents help you with your home work?

c. Who helps you the most, your mother or father? How exactly?

d. What do your parents expect from you?

e. What do they think about you going to school?

Emigrant/Returned Emigrant children

f. What language do you speak at home with your parents/siblings?

g. How are they different from you?

h. Where do most of your relatives live?

i. How do you relatives differ from you?

j. What do you recall from your nursery/school abroad? RE

k. Which school do you like best, the one abroad or the one here? RE

Is there anything else you would like to say?

Thank you for the drawings and the explanations you provided

Appendix E:

Albanian Parents' Social Representations of their Children's Schooling

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

As you know, I am conducting a study to better understand the impact of socio-historical changes in parents' representations of their children's schooling. I am interviewing Albanian parents in three socio-historical settings: emigrants living in the United Kingdom, returned emigrants and non-emigrants. I am also interviewing their school-children. To complement this information I am interviewing some teachers. Essentially my aim is to compare the views, understandings and experiences of the parents with those of the teachers

Nr. Participant: ___
Status: (i.e. Teacher in London)
Age:
Male/Female:
Years in Education:

1. Meanings of school education

1.1 What does the word education mean to you? What do you associate with the word education?

1.2 What does the word school education mean to you? How important is it?

1.3 What are you views on education system?

1.4 How would you prefer the education system to be?

1.5 In your opinion, how important is the role of the teacher in school education?

1.6 In your view, have the political and economic changes of the last decade in Albania impact on education? (Could you give me some examples?)

2. Teacher's views on Parents

2.1 When would you recommend parents start doing educational activities with their children?

2.2 How important do you think a parent's role is in child's education?

2.3 What would be a good description of a typical parent for a child in this school?

2.4 How would you describe a parent that is highly involved in their child's school education?

2.5 And the opposite? How would you describe a parent that is not involved in the child's school education?

2.6 How does the parents' previous education influence the way they get involved in child's schooling? Can u give me an example?

2.7 Do the parents support children with their school education? Would you give me some examples?

2.8 Could you describe for me what happens when parents come to meetings? Such as how often, for how long and what for do you discuss?

2.9 In your opinion, what are some of the challenges parents face in supporting their children's school education?

3. Meaning of Education in a bicultural setting (for Emigrants)

3.1 What the key challenges Albanian children face in English schools? (Do you have any examples?)

3.2 How do children in this school come to terms with the presence of other peers with different backgrounds?

3.3 What are the key challenges for their parents? (Do you have any examples?)

3.4 In your opinion, how do parents come to understand the effect of emigration on their child's schooling?

3.5 How does parents' previous with education influence the way they approach learning? Can you give examples?

3.6 How would you describe your relationship with the parents?

3.7 What are the key challenges for you as a teacher? (Do you have any examples?)

3.8 What is your experience with teaching to children who have migrated? Can you give me an example?

3.9 How aware of biculturalism are you?

3. Meaning of Education in bicultural setting (for Returned Emigrants)

3.1 What key challenges emigrant children who return to Albanian face in their schools (Do you have any examples?)

3.2 How do children in this school come to terms with the presence of other peers with different backgrounds?

3.3 What are the key challenges for their parents? (Do you have any examples*?)*

3.4   In your opinion, how do parents come to understand the effect of emigration on their child's schooling?

3.5   In your opinion, how do parents come to understand the effect of returning to homeland on their child's schooling?

3.6 Did the experience abroad influence the way parents approach school education?

3.7 How does parents' previous with education influence the way they approach learning? Can you give examples?

3.8 How would you describe your relationship with the parents?

3.9 What are the key challenges for their teachers? (Do you have any examples?)

4.0 What is your experience with teaching to children who have migrated? Can you give me an example?

4.1 Does this experience influence your views on education? How?

4.2 Do you have any incidents of when a child expressed a positive/negative comparison between education abroad and education in Albania? Can you tell me what happened?

4.3   How aware of biculturalism are you?

Is there anything else you would like to say regarding school education?

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APPENDIX F:

List of conventions during transcription

These symbols were used to represent characteristics of talk besides the words themselves, such as silences, overlapping talk, and laughter. In data segments taken from published sources, transcription notation that does not follow these conventions has been modified to conform to them, where possible.

Symbol	Meaning
...	Indicates that talk was irrelevant
(...)	Indicates that talk was omitted due to repetition, noise interference, or when the process was stopped due to interviewee's mobile ringing.
[ ]	Square brackets between lines indicate explanation of what is meant by previous word or group of words.
Word in italic	Interviewee expresses words in foreign languages
Hmm	The hmm preceded by a period represents an audible in breath which was understood as a moment of thought.
" "	Quotation marks show when interviewee has posed a question or comment to someone else
Word	When word/s or sentence is underlined it indicates relevance to the present code or subtheme

APPENDIX G:

Table 3.1.1: An illustration of the data transcription process

Extract in original - Albanian	Translated verbatim	Rewritten to extract meaning
I: Intervistuesi **F**: Flora -Prind emigrant _____ _____ *I: Me thuaj dicka me shume rreth kujtimeve qe ke gjate shkollimit tend, kur ke qene ne moshen e vajzes tende?* F: Po, kujtimet jane, hmm, shume, shume. Ngaqe eshte kohe shume e larget kujtohen gjerat qe me kane bere shume kenaqesi dhe gjerat qe me kane merzit shume, gjerat normale nuk kujtohen. Por mesueset, qe jane gjeja me kryesore ne shkolle, figura me kryesore, gjithmone i kam pasur mesues te mire, mesues qe kane qene shume te zot, qe kishe qejf t'i degjoje kur shpjegonin mesimin, edhe qe nga ajo kenaqesia qe kisha ne oren e mesimit, kisha qejf te behesha mesuese edhe vet (...)	**I:** Interviewer **F:** Flora- Emigrant parent _____ _____ *I: I was wondering if you would tell me a bit more about your time at school, when you were at your daughter's age, what do you remember from school?* F: Yes, memories are, hmm, many, many. Because it is a long time so only memories that brought me pleasure or that upset me, I can remember; the normal things [I] do not. But teachers, who are the most important thing at school, the most important figure, always I had good teachers, teachers who were capable, whom you had pleasure to listen to whilst teaching the lesson, and because of that pleasure I had during the lesson, I wanted to become a teacher myself.(...)	**I:** Interviewer **F:** Flora- Emigrant parent _____ _____ *I: I was wondering if you would tell me a bit more about your time at school, when you were at your daughter's age, what do you remember from school?* F: There are a lot of memories. Because it has been a long time, I remember things that gave me pleasure and things that upset me; normal things I don't quite remember. However, teachers who are the most important thing at school, the main figure, I always had good teachers, capable teachers, to whose teaching I found pleasure listening, and because of that feeling which I had during the teaching, I wanted to become a teacher myself. (...)

APPENDIX H:

Table 4.1.1: Coding Presence of subthemes for Schooling under communism by participant

Participants / Unit	Constrained by the system	Views of Own Teachers	Impact of the parents
Non Emigrant Enerieta	✓	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Erma	✓	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Matilda	✓	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Pranvera	✓	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Roklada	X	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Vera	✓	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Eda	✓	✓	✓
Emigrant Bruna	X	✓	✓
Emigrant Elvana	✓	✓	✓
Emigrant Flora	✓	✓	✓
Emigrant Ina	✓	✓	✓
Emigrant Kloda	X	✓	✓
Emigrant Lule	✓	✓	✓
Emigrant Lumturie	✓	✓	x
Emigrant Maria	X	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Anita	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Besiana	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Enila	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Ira	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Kalia	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Mona	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Tana	X	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Tefta	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	✓	✓	✓

Table 4.1.2: Coding presence: Impact of changes on the parents' own education

Participants/Unit of analysis	Impact of socio-political transition	Reasons why not impacted by transition	Impact of migration EM & RE	Reasons why not impacted by migration
Non Emigrant Enerieta	✓		*N/a*	
Non Emigrant Erma	✓		*N/a*	
Non Emigrant Matilda	✓		*N/a*	
Non Emigrant Pranvera	x	*Did not elaborate on this topic*	*N/a*	
Non Emigrant Roklada	✓		*N/a*	
Non Emigrant Vera	✓		*N/a*	
Non Emigrant Eda	✓		*N/a*	
Emigrant Bruna		*Higher Edu. completed before transitions*		
Emigrant Elvana	x	*Higher Edu. completed before transitions*	✓	
Emigrant Flora	×	*Higher Edu. completed before transitions*	✓	
Emigrant Ina	?		✓	
Emigrant Kloda	?		✓	
Emigrant Lule	✓		✓	
Emigrant Lumturie	✓		✓	
Emigrant Maria	x	*At young age during transition*	✓	
Returned Emigrant Besiana	✓		✓	
Returned Emigrant Anita	✓		X	*Did not consider*
Returned Emigrant Besiana	✓		X	
Returned Emigrant Enila	✓		✓	
Returned Emigrant Ira	✓		✓	
Returned Emigrant	✓		×	*Did not*

Kalia				*consider*
Returned Emigrant Mona	×	*Higher Edu. completed before transitions*	✓	
Returned Emigrant Tana	✓		✓	
Returned Emigrant Tefta	✓		✓	
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	×	*Higher Edu. completed before transitions*	✓	

APPENDIX I:

Table 5.1.1: Coding Presence of subthemes for Impact of political and socio-economic changes on parents' views on the education system by participant

Participants/Unit	Views on School System	Views on Teachers
Non Emigrant Enerieta	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Erma	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Matilda	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Pranvera	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Roklada	✓	x
Non Emigrant Eda	X	✓
Non Emigrant Vera	✓	✓
Emigrant Bruna	✓	✓
Emigrant Elvana	✓	✓
Emigrant Flora	✓	✓
Emigrant Ina	✓	✓
Emigrant Kloda	✓	x
Emigrant Lule	✓	✓
Emigrant Lumturie	✓	✓
Emigrant Maria	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Anita	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Besiana	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Enila	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Ira	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Kalia	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Mona	✓	x
Returned Emigrant Tana	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Tefta	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	✓	✓

Table 5.1.2: Coding Presence of subthemes for impact of migration by participant

Participants/Unit	Views on School System abroad	Views on Teachers abroad
Emigrant Bruna	✓	✓
Emigrant Elvana	✓	✓
Emigrant Flora	✓	✓
Emigrant Ina	x	✓
Emigrant Kloda	✓	✓
Emigrant Lule	✓	✓
Emigrant Lumturie	✓	✓
Emigrant Maria	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Anita	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Besiana	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Enila	✓	x
Returned Emigrant Ira	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Kalia	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Mona	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Tana	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Tefta	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	✓	✓

Table 5.1.3: Coding Presence of subthemes for Impact of changes due to returning to homeland by participant

Participants/Unit	Views on School System when returned	Views on Teachers when returned
Returned Emigrant Anita	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Besiana	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Enila	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Ira	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Kalia	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Mona	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Tana	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Tefta	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	✓	✓

APPENDIX J:

Table 6.1.1: Coding Presence of subthemes for Parents' accounts of children's schooling- Meanings of education

Participants/Unit	Broad meaning of education	Meaning of school education
Non Emigrant Enerieta	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Erma	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Matilda	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Pranvera	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Roklada	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Eda	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Vera	✓	✓
Emigrant Bruna	✓	✓
Emigrant Elvana	✓	✓
Emigrant Flora	✓	✓
Emigrant Ina	✓	✓
Emigrant Kloda	✓	✓
Emigrant Lule	✓	✓
Emigrant Lumturie	✓	✓
Emigrant Maria	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Anita	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Besiana	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Enila	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Ira	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Kalia	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Mona	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Tana	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Tefta	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	✓	✓

Table 6.1.2: Coding Presence of subthemes for Parents' accounts of children's schooling- Construction of child as a learner

Participants/Unit	Construction by school system	Construction by the teacher
Non Emigrant Enerieta	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Erma	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Matilda	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Pranvera	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Roklada	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Eda	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Vera	✓	✓
Emigrant Bruna	✓	✓
Emigrant Elvana	✓	✓
Emigrant Flora	✓	✓
Emigrant Ina	✓	✓
Emigrant Kloda	✓	✓
Emigrant Lule	✓	✓
Emigrant Lumturie	✓	✓
Emigrant Maria	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Anita	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Besiana	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Enila	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Ira	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Kalia	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Mona	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Tana	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Tefta	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	✓	✓

Table 6.1.3: Coding Presence of subthemes for Parents' accounts of children's schooling- Construction of child as a learner

Participants/Unit	Understanding of own role	Hands on schoolwork	Child's projected future
Non Emigrant Enerieta	✓	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Erma	✓	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Matilda	X	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Pranvera	✓	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Roklada	✓	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Eda	✓	✓	✓
Non Emigrant Vera	✓	✓	✓
Emigrant Bruna	✓	✓	✓
Emigrant Elvana	✓	✓	✓
Emigrant Flora	✓	✓	✓
Emigrant Ina	✓	✓	✓
Emigrant Kloda	✓	✓	✓
Emigrant Lule	✓	✓	✓
Emigrant Lumturie	✓	✓	x
Emigrant Maria	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Anita	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Besiana	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Enila	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Ira	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Kalia	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Mona	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Tana	✓	✓	X
Returned Emigrant Tefta	✓	✓	✓
Returned Emigrant Vjollca	✓	✓	✓

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APPENDIX K:

Confirmation letter (electronic version) - Ardhmëria School in London

Ardhmëria,
Unit 205, Camberwell Business Centre 99-103
Lomond Grove,
London SE5 7HN
Tel: 020 7252 7471
Email: lutvata@yahoo.co.uk
Website: www.ardhmeria.co.uk
Registered charity in England and Wales No 1118989

May 10, 2008

Dear Miss Canollari

Thank you for your letter requesting if you could involve this school in your PhD research project. I am pleased to inform you that you have my permission to carry out your research by taking interviews with teachers who teach Albanian children enrolled at Ardhmëria. I also give you permission to distribute information sheet in order to inform parents and their children about the study.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further queries.

Best wishes,

Lutfi VATA

Director