Western Thracian Muslims in the Greek Capital: Origins of and Explanations for the migration movement to Athens

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Abstract

From the beginning of the 1970s onwards many Muslims – namely ethnic Turks, Pomaks and Roma – members of the Muslim minority of Western Thrace started to settle in the Greek capital. Greek discriminatory policies against this minority, socio-economic exclusion of the Roma population as well as the poverty and the underdevelopment that characterized the mountainous areas of Rhodope should be considered as the main reasons behind this migration movement to Athens, which continues up to this day. The exact number of Muslims of Western Thracian origin that resides in the greater metropolitan area of Athens still remains unknown. Different sources cite the number of migrants from 10,000 to 15,000. Until the present, little research has been carried out with regard to the history of this migration movement, the migrants' ethnic distribution, areas of settlement, employment, interaction with Christian Greeks and Muslim immigrants.

This paper will address most of the above issues. The analysis will be divided into three parts. First, a description of the Muslim minority of Western Thrace will be given, emphasizing the efforts by the Greek state to construct an identity for the Pomaks. Second, a detailed account of the settlement of many ethnic Turks and Roma in Athens in the 1970s and 1980s will be presented, as well as a discussion of the Greek law on the deprivation of citizenship. Finally, the last part will focus on Pomak migration to Athens,

which commenced in the mid-1990's, and the activities of "Filotita", a Pomak organization recently established in Athens.

Ivi Daskalaki

"Greek-Gypsy identity and the relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the state."

The aim of this paper is to explore from an anthropological perspective the idiosyncratic relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the state as this is expressed in a complex process of negotiating a double identity, Greek and Gypsy. In order to do so, this paper will first illuminate the problematic of analysing and theorising the Gypsy experience in the nation-state context. Through the exploration of ethnographic data, this work aims to look at the specific ways in which this relationship has been shaped within the framework of a politics of power, identity, and culture within wider Greek society. Central, here, is a 'morality' that informs Greek-Gypsy practices and a shared sense of self that is seen to distinguish Greek-Gypsies from non Greek-Gypsy 'others'. Drawing on Herzfeld's (1997) concept of *cultural intimacy* the relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the state will be examined through the lens of this 'morality'.

This is by no means a socio-historical review of particular political decisions and state policies that directly or indirectly have resulted in the process of marginalisation of Gypsies within modern Greek society. Neither is this an attempt to present a structural analysis of the specific politico-historical and economic processes that have framed the marginal position of Gypsy communities in Greece. Instead, this study seeks to throw light on the hidden aspects of the relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the state from the Gypsies' point of view, defining simultaneously its constitutive parameters.

Theoretical Framework

Since the 18th century, and more intensively in the 19th century, the disciplines of comparative linguistics, popular and folklorist studies and later on historians and

anthropologists have tried to give answers to the obscurity of Gypsies' origins. A puzzle of all the existing resources on the history of Gypsies leads most of Gypsy analysts[1] to the assumption that Gypsies left India many centuries ago and passed through the Middle East to the Byzantine Empire and then Europe. Fraser (1992) gives a detailed account of the written texts that refer to the presence of Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire as early as the 11th century. Gradually, in the beginning of the 15th century, as Liegois (1994) describes, different Gypsy groups appear in central Europe and in the 16th century in northern Europe. Both Fraser (1992) and Liegois (1994) agree that Gypsies' break-up into smaller groups within Europe was very much the outcome of their continuous persecution and attempts to enforce their assimilation.

Although folklore and popular literature often reflect the "ideological and symbolic disorder" (Okely, 1983: 2) that Gypsies seem to cause to the dominant system and have drawn attention to Gypsies' marginal position within European societies, they have also contributed to the creation of a stereotyped, exotisized and often homogenous Gypsy image across Europe. By contrast, historians and most importantly anthropologists, criticising folklore and popular literature on Gypsies, have challenged this traditional view of a homogenous Gypsy community.

Ethnographic studies on Gypsies across Europe point to the need to look at different Gypsy groups within different national boundaries. Acton (1974), Liegois (1994), Okely (1983, 1996), Stewart (1993, 1997), Gay Y Blasco (1999) have demonstrated that important differences and variations[2] among Gypsy groups - including the specific ways in which they perceive and construct their difference from the dominant non-Gypsy population and express their identity - have been the result of different politico-historical and economic processes within different nation-states. Gypsy groups within national boundaries acquire national characteristics under the cultural influences of the countries they live in. However, these characteristics are not static. They change in response to the changing socio-economic and political context of wider society.

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[1] Okely (1983) is indeed the only theorist who has debated the Indian origins of Gypsies.
[2] Important aspects of social life such as housing, language, religion, pollution taboos, political organisation, working patterns, marriage and kinship structures may vary significantly. For example, Okely's (1983) English Travellers lead a nomadic life, speak one of the Romani dialects and have rigid pollution taboos, while Gay Y Blasco's Gypsies of Madrid have long been sedentary, speak the language of the dominant majority and do not have rigid pollution taboos.

As far as the relationship between Gypsies and the state is concerned, Okely (1983) reveals in her study on the Travellers and Gypsies in England that the tension between them lies in the specificity of Gypsy culture. According to her, for the dominant society and the state, Gypsies represent a threat to the prevailing order by demonstrating alternative ways of economic activity, thinking and living. Similarly, Calvo Buezas (1990, 1997) makes clear that the Gypsies of Spain embody all that is evil, polluting and threatening for the premises on which the whole state apparatus is founded. Hawes and Perez (1996) give extensive accounts of specific state practices in Britain that result in explicit or implicit multilevel exclusionary actions against Gypsy communities. They analyse the way and degree that public prejudice against Gypsy cultural diversity fuels institutional reactions in the form of public policy or, in other words, the way public prejudice transforms into institutional prejudice and becomes part of the structure and response of the dominant society. Hawes and Perez (1997) also emphasize the way state policies contribute to the reproduction of the traditional image of 'Gypsyness' as the 'other' and 'different'. However, according to Stewart (1997, 1999) different state practices dictate different resistive tactics by Gypsies. Stewart's (1997, 1999) study of the Hungarian Rom unravels the ways Gypsies in Eastern Europe cultivated distinctive practices and skills - such as a sense of cohesiveness sustained in the notion of brotherhood and an anti-authoritarian organisation of the family - as forms of resistive strategies towards state oppression. For Stewart, these practices were the result of their particular relationship with the state that was very much influenced by communist ideologies.

So far, the existing studies on Gypsies suggest that the Gypsy experience as a cultural phenomenon has been widely influenced by historical, economic and socio-political factors. Therefore, it should be examined within the context of the nation-state in which state practices and policies are developed and implemented. Under this perspective, the exploration of Gypsies' marginal position within wider society, their specific relationship with the state and the analysis of state practices that are associated with their marginal position need to be studied within the theoretical framework of ethnicity and nationalism, as well as state policies and systems of governance.

However, as Hawes and Perez (1997: xii) note, in the vast majority of the academic literature on ethnicity and nationalism "the Gypsy experience is never more

than peripheral to the mainstream argument". It is true that concepts of ethnicity and ethnic identity, as well as the very notion of 'Gypsyness', constitute complex and often ambiguous aspects of the politics of difference. As Banton (1983) and many other theorists have stressed, the case of Gypsies hardly fits any existing theory and therefore its analysis needs to overcome considerable theoretical gaps. In fact, the relationship between Gypsies and the non-Gypsy society does not actually fit well into any theoretical and analytical tool that refers to intra-group relations. For Eriksen (1993) there is not an actual competition between Gypsies and other groups. The fact that Gypsies have different goals and aspirations from the dominant majority, never posing an economic or territorial threat, as well as the fact that Gypsies themselves stereotype non-Gypsies in strongly negative forms, indicate that the Gypsy experience cannot only be understood in the framework of theories of competition and domination. In Eriksen's (1993) view, Gypsy identity should be seen as "a cultural and symbolic phenomenon" (1993: 74) and Gypsies' relationship with the non-Gypsy society may be analysed as the interplay between different cultures.

The symbolic and cultural approach itself is not strong enough to explain the marginal position of Gypsies within different socio-economic and political frameworks. For Hawes and Perez (1997), although there are significant differences between Gypsies and other minority groups, the analysis of Gypsies should constitute part of the study of minorities within the wider theoretical framework of ethnicity:

> "If the concept of ethnic minority is defined by its subordinate status within a wider society, by the low esteem in which its characteristics are perceived, and if its distinctive cementing features are to do with feelings of shared history, culture and tradition, then there is no doubt that Gypsies and Travellers constitute such a minority" (Hawes and Perez, 1997: 149).

Both Stewart (1997) and Gay Y Blasco (1999) argued that Gypsies do not ground their perception of distinctiveness from non-Gypsies in a primordial, superimposed identity, or something forged in the past. By contrast, they build their shared sense of belonging in the present. Stewart (1997: 92) sees Gypsy identity "as something that could be acquired *and could therefore also be lost*" and Gay Y Blasco (1999: 15) as something that "is more performative than reproductive". For them, the

Hungarian Rom and Gypsies of Madrid cannot be seen as having an ethnic identity and therefore the study of Gypsies should shift its focus from those elements that illustrate Gypsy distinctiveness to those particular processes in which this distinctiveness persists, is reproduced and sustained.

The problem with the theoretical analysis of Gypsies does not end here. Although the cases of different Gypsy groups cannot be examined outside of the framework of their relationship with the state, this relationship, however, is not enough to explain intra-group differences and diverse Gypsy identities within the boundaries of a nation-state. This is particularly obvious in the case of Greece, where there are different and often competing Gypsy communities with a great variety of cultural characteristics (such as language, religion, customs, working patterns, etc.). What is more, the paradigm of Greek-Gypsies, who consider 'Greekness' along with 'Gypsyness' an intrinsic aspect of their identity, makes this theoretical perplexity even more striking.

Taking under consideration the above-mentioned theoretical difficulties in the analysis of the relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the state, this paper attempts to look at those constitutive parameters and ascribing elements that make this relationship idiosyncratic. This presupposes a shift from those theoretical models that view the Gypsy experience in different nation-states either as a resistance by a marginalised population towards the state's intolerance of distinctiveness, or as the result of an unproblematic conflation of Gypsy and national characteristics.

Additionally, in order to illuminate the particularity of this relationship we have to place our analysis within the framework of a specific 'morality' that constitutes the basis of Gypsy social and political organisation and the most important expression of Greek-Gypsy identity. This explains why the relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the state should be seen and examined in the framework of identity politics and politics of culture rather than strictly theories of ethnicity and nationalism, state policies and systems of governance. However, the fact that 'Greekness' constitutes an element enmeshed in Gypsy identity suggests that this specific analysis cannot ignore theories of ethnicity and nationalism.

The case of Gypsies in Greece

As far as the case of Greece is concerned, Herzfeld (1987), as well as Papataxiarchis and Paradellis (1993) have indicated that the foundation of the independent Greek nation-state was accompanied by the elaboration of an academic discourse that served both as a means of forging a national consciousness and as a reaction to various studies produced by foreign scholars that questioned the 'purity' of Greek *ethnos*. For Danforth (1995) and Cowan (2000), the disciplines of history and folklore played an important role in shaping a feeling of ethnic continuity and commonality, grounded in a mythology of a glorious ancient past. In fact, folklorist studies not only fed the nationalist discourse in Greece but also prompted a strong nationalist orientation in academic research that contradicted the traditional anthropological thinking (Herzfeld: 1987). Consequently, the disciplines of history and folklore in Greece have largely neglected the contribution of minorities to Greek tradition. It is also true that folklorist and historical studies have, to a large degree, ignored the contribution of Gypsy legacy to modern Greek history, partly because Gypsies, along with other minorities, have not inspired the vision of a 'homogenous' Hellenic *ethnos*.

Although recent anthropological studies of minorities in Greece have shed light into the relationship between the Greek state and particular minorities[3] (Campell, 1964; Danforth, 1984; Karakasidou, 1997; Cowan, 2000), the absence of broad ethnographic accounts on Gypsy population has practically left Gypsies outside of this academic discussion. The marginal position of Gypsies in Greek academic literature has consequently reinforced an exotisized image of Gypsies clearly distanced from the wider socio-political and historical context of Greek society. Gypsies, in this sense, have been depicted as a distant, bounded, unchanging, and homogenous community 'frozen' in time and space. Consequently, Gypsies in Greece have been absent from the discourse on the politics of identity, power, and culture.

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[3] It is true that the majority of ethnographic studies on minorities in Greece and their relationship with the state focus on Northern Greece, since the Macedonian conflict has recently constituted an issue with regional, national and international implications.

Lately, historians and Gypsiologists in Greece (Dousas, 1997; Giannakopoulos, 1981; Georgiou, Dimitriou and Politis, 2001) increasingly emphasize the contribution of Gypsies to the history[4] of the recently formed nation-state, depicting them, for the first time, as an intrinsic part of modern Greek society. As such, they have both shaped and been shaped by the wider Greek socio-economic and historical circumstances. Additionally, the historian Thomas Gallant (2001) acknowledges the importance of ethnographic accounts in the study of modern Greece - especially those focused on rural Greece and on marginal populations - in overcoming historical inconsistencies.

In contrast to the ahistorical and exotisized image of Gypsies in Greece that has been created by popular and academic literature and sometimes sustained in the rhetoric of minority groups rights' organisations and political parties that victimise, oversimplify and generalise Gypsy identity for the shake of an effective political negotiation, Greek-Gypsies constitute a group that not only participates in the politics of culture and identity but also takes part in the nationalist discourse and clearly reproduces it. This is particularly visible in the tension that characterises the relationship between Greek-Gypsies and other Gypsy groups or marginal populations that live within Greek society. For example, during my fieldwork in a Greek-Gypsy settlement of Athens, a group of Greek-Gypsy children between six and twelve years old argued with a ten year-old Albanian-Gypsy girl about her 'Greekness'. One of the boys' words reflect that not only adults but also children participate and reproduce the nationalist discourse:

> "Living here doesn't make you Greek. You were not born here, your parents don't
> speak Greek and you don't wear a cross".

In order to look at the relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the state, I suggest we take under consideration what Sutton (2000: 205) calls "the shifting boundaries of insiderhood and outsiderhood" which have predominated the modern anthropological theory. These shifting boundaries indicate that the use of the word 'community' should be perceived and examined "as a term best understood in action"

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[4] For example, Gypsies took part in the Greek War of Independence in 1821 Dousas, 1997; Giannakopoulos, 1981), in many social fights (Doussas, 1997) and the Ethnic Resistance Movement during World War II (Georgiou, Dimitriou and Politis, 2001).

(Alleyene: 608) and not treated as a " 'black box' concept" that encompasses ahistorical, fixed, and 'frozen' in time and space totalities of people.

Additionally, a great number of post-war studies have demonstrated that small-scale communities that exist in large-scale environments are consolidated and sustained by networks of social relations or what Carsten (2000: 1) calls *cultures of relatedness*. Therefore, Alleyne (2002) suggests a more reflexive use of the concept of 'community' in the study of ethnicity. Indeed, the study of ethnicity should focus on the particular ways the negotiation of networks of relatedness results in various expressions of identity. Gay Y Blasco (1999: 41) indicates that the term 'community' for the Gypsies of Madrid does not refer to "a cohesive or harmonious whole, but to the Gitanos' awareness of each other as moral beings". In the case of Greek-Gypsies, this very same awareness constitutes the ground, on which Greek-Gypsy relatedness is organised, performed within the members of the group and projected as an expression of 'Greek-Gypsyness' into the wider non Greek-Gypsy society.

This process of organisation of relatedness, interestingly, cultivates the moral basis on which the state's nationalist project and Greek-Gypsies' expression of identity intersect. At the same time, however, this very same point of reference may easily transform into a source of ideological or moral disorder. This happens because Greek-Gypsies' networks of relatedness operate at many different levels, surpassing official state mechanisms and institutional processes, challenging simultaneously the effectiveness of the state's apparatuses by demonstrating alternative ways of living within the boundaries of the nation-state. Sutton (2000: 174) maintains that anthropology should move its focus away from top-down approaches in the study of nationalism, inspired by Gellner and Hobsbawm, to processes through which "local-level kinship ideologies and practices feed into feelings of nationalism." Herzfeld's (1997) concept of *cultural intimacy* provides us with a useful analytical tool in unravelling the ways these local-level ideologies and practices fuel nationalist emotions and shape the relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the state in the framework of identity politics.

Herzfeld (1997) argues for the centrality of the concept of *cultural intimacy* in the study of minorities and nationalism. *Cultural intimacy* encompasses "those aspects of cultural identity that are considered to be a source of external embarrassment but nevertheless provide insiders with the assurance of common

sociality" (Herzfeld, 1997: 3). Based on ethnographic data, the concept of *cultural intimacy*, can contribute to the anthropological analysis of nationalism and minorities through the exploration of semiotic practices - "day to day subversions of norms" (Herzfeld, 1997: 21) or "those aspects of cultural identity that are considered as source of external embarrassment but nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality" (1997: 3) - of marginal populations as well as to investigate "the elite values whereby that embarrassment and that marginality are constituted" (1997: 4). At the same time, Herzfeld argues that the nationalist project has been largely successful because "its formal ideology encapsulates, or, incorporates, all the inward flaws and imperfections to which it is officially and ostensibly opposed" (1997: 172).

The confusion that reflects the wider problematic of conceptualising the Gypsy experience in theory, posed in the beginning of this paper, is exemplified by a great variety of factors in the case of Greek-Gypsies. In the official political discourse, the Greek state does not acknowledge the status of minority to any ethnic, linguistic, religious or cultural group that lives in its territory with the exception of the Muslim minority, whose status as a minority was officially acknowledged in the Lausanne treaty of 1924. On the other token, under the pressure of different organisations and institutional bodies, different Gypsy groups across Europe have been acknowledged as a cultural minority under the unified term *Roma*. In practice though, and in everyday Greek-Gypsy discourse, such a definition seems to be highly problematic. This confusion is especially reflected on Greek-Gypsies' ambiguous stance towards the use of the term. As an old man characteristically described:

> "One day, somebody passed by the settlement and told us we are called
> Roma…and I told him that all my life I've been a Greek, I'm a Greek-Gypsy, but
> if he wants us to be called Roma in order to get houses, then there is no problem,
> let him call me whatever he likes. I know who I am."

Definitions of Greek-Gypsyness

General Framework

In general, Gypsies in Greece, working and living in a mainly agricultural economy over the last two centuries that due to specific socio-political circumstances skipped the characteristic phases of the industrialisation process, became part of the pathologies of modern Greek society. Gypsies felt the impact of rapid urbanisation, economic restructuring and recession and followed the internal[5] and external[6] migrant flows of the beginning and middle of the 20th century. In the highly competitive urban environment Gypsy groups had to shift their economic activities towards more flexible, labour intense and opportunistic working patterns. However, in big cities and for a variety of reasons, some migrant Gypsy groups didn't manage to follow the pace of the processes that the rest of the population followed and soon got marginalized (Dousas, 1997).

Since the restoration of Democracy (1974), the country's increasing levels of economic prosperity, in association with a number of other significant political processes such as EU membership and the fall of Eastern European borders, has transformed Greece into a country that imports rather than exports immigrants (Gallant, 2001). Under these circumstances, both urban and rural Gypsies, in the last decades, have experienced the major impact of migrant economic activity within Greek society.

The Community

In the absence of concrete and linear historical evidence that could illuminate both the route of Greek-Gypsies within Greek society in general and the particular processes that defined their relationship with the state, this analysis inevitably concentrates on the exploration of ethnographic data produced in fieldwork. Constrained by the historical limitations, the use of ethnographic material contributes

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[5] Internal migration, which was very much the result of agricultural recession, affected rural Gypsies who migrated into towns and big cities.
[6] Gypsies, who came to Greece during the 20s either as migrants from Asia Minor in 1922, or through the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey as part of the Lausanne treaty of 1924 (Dousas, 1997).

to a more informed theoretical analysis that exemplifies particularity and avoids generalisations and reductionism. In fact, fieldwork, in tandem with limited historical data, reveal that there are some important descriptive features that characterise Greek-Gypsies, making this group simultaneously particular and different from other Gypsy groups in Greece. It is important, though, to stress at this point that the Greek-Gypsy community of Athens is wider than the group I conducted fieldwork with and, in fact, it is dispersed in settlements and houses in different suburbs and outskirts of the capital[7]. Greek-Gypsies also live in other parts of southern Greece such as Khalkida, Aitoliko, Khios and Creete.

The community, in which I conducted my fieldwork[8], is an urban, sedentary, exclusively Greek-speaking, Christian Orthodox Gypsy community. The members of this community settled more than 30 years ago - and lived until the time of my fieldwork - in a settlement[9] in a large suburb of Athens, to which I give the pseudonym *Geitonia*[10]. They claim that they belong to the wider Greek-Gypsy community of *Khalkidaioi* or *Ellinogyftoi*, as they call themselves. In fact, the elder members of the settlement come from the capital of the island of Evia, Khalkida. There, as they describe, they used to be sedentary or semi-sedentary, living and working in the periphery of this capital. However, when economic recession struck them, they moved to the city of Athens to chase a better future. The fact that in contrast to the vast majority of other Gypsy communities in Greece, Greek-Gypsies do not speak the romani language but they exclusively speak Greek, as well as their strong religious faith to Orthodox Christianity, allows them ample space in negotiating their 'Greekness'.

The most common occupation of the members of the settlement is vendors at open markets, the *laikes agores*[11]. Apart from this occupation that grants the settlement's population a more secure daily income, their most important and lucrative economic activity, as they confess, is seasonal trading[12]. This urban house-dwelling population has learnt to benefit both from the opportunities that the urban

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[7] There are also Greek-Gypsies living in Agia Paraskevi, Khalandri, Menidi, Spata, Gerakas, etc.
[8] Fieldwork took place from June 2001 until September 2002
[9] They lived in dwellings made of wooden parts, cartons and plastic covers.
[10] The members of this community commonly used this term in order to describe the settlement and its surrounding houses.
[11] However, they rarely possess a vendor's permit. Most of the time they try to sell their goods illegally at the fringes of these markets.
[12] Such as Christmas trees during Christmas, kites during carnival and religious items during Easter, etc.

environment offers, as well as from the flexible characteristics of their nature of economic activity. In that sense, they make a multi-level use of the urban environment, both in terms of space and time, by using the maximum of their human resources. More specifically, they use the overcrowded urban space in order to get the advantages - while at the same time minimize the risks - of the informal sector of the economy.

However, it is getting increasingly hard to keep these activities up. Greek law has become stricter with vendors who don't possess both a vendor's permit and a legal proof of purchase for their products. But most importantly, during the last decade this economic sector, which used to belong almost exclusively to the Gypsy population, has shrunk considerably due to the overwhelming migrant flows into the country. The new highly competitive economic environment has had a tremendous impact on the 'traditional' Greek Gypsy occupations, while at the same time has led to a more rigid legal framework that minimises the state's tolerance towards illegal working and economic activity.

Greek-Gypsy Morality

Various ethnographers (Sutherland, 1975, 1977; Okely, 1983; Williams, 1993; Stewart, 1997; Gay Y Blasco, 1999) lay emphasis on the preoccupation of Gypsies with the demarcation of the boundary between themselves and non-Gypsy society, predominantly expressed in moral terms. They emphasize the ways in which Gypsies constantly stress the 'superiority' of Gypsy morality as a quality that becomes the vehicle through which they perceive their distinctiveness in relation to the non-Gypsy majority.

According to Gay Y Blasco (1999), 'Gypsyness' for the Gypsies of Madrid is intimately intertwined with ideas of an aged and sexed personhood that should be constantly enacted, manifested, and evaluated by the members of the Gypsy community in order to affirm a collective identity. In this sense, ideas of personhood and perceptions of collective identity seem to be inextricably connected. Through *the performance of Gypsyness* that is consolidated in this distinctive morality, Gypsies create a rigid hierarchical system among themselves that is based on relationships of

'honour', 'knowledge' and 'respect' creating this way a particular form of social and political organisation different from the non-Gypsy one.

Interestingly, in the case of Greek-Gypsies, its members premise their shared sense of self and their distinctiveness and superiority on a moral framework that is not exclusively 'Gypsy' but rather, I would call it 'Greek-Gypsy'. Similarly to Gay Y Blasco's (1999) morality, the Greek-Gypsy one is premised on the ongoing performance of gender and age specific roles, duties and obligations that are based on sets of relationships of honour, knowledge and respect. Relatedness constitutes the ground on which performative roles are being enacted and simultaneously reaffirmed. Central here is the need for constant reaffirmation of relatedness that precludes ideas of permanence in such relationships. This, in its turn, indicates a Greek-Gypsy perception of personhood and collective self that is consolidated through performance in the present.

However, there are two significant elements that distinguish the morality of this particular group from Gay Y Blasco's morality of Gypsies of Madrid. Firstly, Greek-Gypsies' morality draws its distinctiveness from the content of its performative roles, through which Greek-Gypsies view themselves as the carriers of an 'authentic' tradition that interestingly entails claims not only to Gypsy but also to Greek 'authenticity'. Simultaneously, while Greek-Gypsies consolidate their collective identity through performance in the present, the content of this performance, or in other words, the ascribing features of performative roles claim the authenticity of the '*old* Greek tradition' that according to them tends to extinct.

The view of identity as the result of a performantive expression (Butler, 1990; Bell, 1999) enables us to conceptualise the ways in which performance is embodied and enacted through specific practices. In this sense, Greek-Gypsy morality operates as the vehicle through which Greek-Gypsies differentiate themselves from non-Gypsy 'others'. Greek-Gypsy morality and identity is an amalgam of diverse cultural characteristics that are negotiated differently within the Greek-Gypsy community itself, between Greek-Gypsies and non-Greek Gypsies or non-Gypsy Greeks, as well as between themselves and the state. In fact, the emphasis on performance aims to serve a multiple cause: a) to consolidate relationships of support within the Greek-Gypsy community b) to differentiate and affirm the 'superiority' of this group towards other Gypsy and non-Gypsy or non-Greek marginal groups through the performance

of a distinct 'Gypsyness' entangled in 'Greekness' c) to express a 'moral superiority' over the dominant non-Gypsy Greek population through the performance of the 'old' Greek tradition that tends to be lost, and d) to reify a sense of collective self through inverting those state's ideals that serve them this particular cause.

The exploration of the most important aspects of Greek-Gypsy social organisation, such as marriage, kinship structures and interpersonal networks of relatedness, as well as domestic activities and working patterns, through which *Greek-Gypsyness* is performed, provides an insight into the way Greek-Gypsies perceive, manifest and transmit a gender and age oriented enactment of roles that transforms performative practices into multi-level processes of objectification of Greek-Gypsy identity. The following example demonstrates how the methods and outcome of performing *nikokirosini* or domestic tasks by Greek-Gypsy women constitute the means, through which the personal and group identity is affirmed, reinforced and transmitted to the younger generation, contrasted with other group identities and projected into wider society.

Nikokirosini represents a specific set of practices and methods in undertaking and performing the household chores. Being praised as a *kali nikokira* connotes a responsible, organised, efficient and competent housewife and - along with a number of performative bodily manifestations[13] - constitutes the most important credentials, on which female personalities and reputations are established within the Greek-Gypsy community.

Therefore, within the settlement, Greek-Gypsy *nikokires* like to compete with each other in terms of housework method, outcome, and improvisation of household activities. This is why they prefer to undertake their domestic chores in the public eye. Tasks, such as cooking and washing of clothes, bedlinen, blankets and carpets take place almost exclusively outside the house, in the yard. Apart from establishing female personalities and reputations, this highly competitive performance serves another cause: to display to non-Gypsy Greek society the best proof of being clean and tidy, transferring simultaneously the competition onto the concept of *nikokirosini* between themselves and the groups they interact with. In this sense, Greek-Gypsy women and men would support the overall image of the Greek-Gypsy *nikokira* and

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[13] Different ways of managing the female body such as virginity, hair and dressing code, bodily movements etc.

her superiority in performing household activities over the Albanian or Turkish-Gypsy or the non-Gypsy Greek *nikokira*.

During fieldwork, Greek-Gypsy women repeatedly stressed the distance that separated themselves from the Albanian-Gypsy ones, both at the level of household activities, domestic practices, and methods, as well as at the level of personal hygiene. Indeed, they constantly blamed their recently settled Albanian-Gypsy neighbours for the *katantima*[14] of the neighbourhood. As one of the women of the settlement said: "We've managed to keep this place clean and tidy for so many years until they [the Albanian-Gypsies] came and messed it up".

However, when discussion permitted, women brought up issues of cleanliness in a comparative way between Greek-Gypsies and non-Gypsy Greek *nikokires*. It was common for them to talk proudly of the fact that they do not use a washing machine but rather wash their clothes by hand, or the fact that they change their bedsheets every day and wash carpets and blankets weekly. Washing everything by hand and cooking on gas instead of electricity were issues that connoted the performance of the 'old Greek tradition'. As one of the informants described:

> "Nobody here uses a washing machine, because if you don't wash by hand, dirt does not go away, I'm sure your grandmother, like all elder women, would agree with that."

On another occasion, an elder woman explained to me that:

> "The gas and charcoal oven add real taste to food. Today you can't really find an authentic Greek taste because you all cook in the electric cooker. I can't imagine a *pitta* in an electric cooker. I've tried it and it's disgusting."

The Idiosyncratic Relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the State

Their View of the State

Before we look at the relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the state, it would be useful to examine how Greek-Gypsies, a predominantly illiterate group,

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[14] Here, they imply the dirty appearance of the settlement.

perceives the state. Fieldwork revealed that although this illiterate community finds it difficult to objectify the notion of state and its operating mechanisms, it nevertheless acknowledges the fact that these apparatuses keep the nation-state construct functioning effectively through time and space. As a middle-aged man characteristically said: "if the state does not exist, then Greece does not exist either". It would also be interesting to see how Greek-Gypsies interpret the different forms of institutionalised racism, which they undoubtedly face in their everyday lives and activities (such as for example threats of eviction from their settlement, insecurity in their working environment, police violence etc.). As the following examples prove, the interpretation of their reflections on these issues should be seen through the spectrum of the Greek-Gypsy 'morality' described above.

The informants' general views on state mechanisms, as expressed both in informal discussions and semi-formal interviews, as well as in everyday language, demonstrated a mixture of sentiments of fury about the state's negligence towards their problems and gratitude for the state's tolerance towards their 'Gypsy' way of life. The words of an old woman, one of the first inhabitants of the settlement, seemed to echo this contradiction exactly:

"I don't believe in them [meaning the state's representatives in general] because they've never held their promises, they simply don't care about us…But I have to admit that the state has been good to us. For example, we are lucky that the state hasn't kicked us out for so long. The land is not ours, the state has every right to kick us out."

Interestingly, their views reflect an important ideological distinction between the morality and ethics of the state and its mechanisms and the actual acts of its agents. On one hand they seem to show confidence in the state's proclaimed ethics and aims while on the other they attribute to its agents the failure of the realisation of these aims. For example, when I asked the man who represented the settlement in the long lasting negotiations for their resettlement, to give me his opinion on the process of negotiations, he gave me the following answer:

"The state wants to spend money and build houses for us but the problem is that all these *atimoi* [immoral] politicians will rip the state off and nothing will be done for us again."

What is more, during fieldwork, it wasn't rare that Gypsies even praised the very same institutions that seemed to be the source of their continuous oppression such as the police and the courts.

> "The police and the courts should do their jobs. They shouldn't do favours to anybody. The problem is that we are poor and illiterate and whatever happens the police blame us and the courts convict us. If you have money, you can easily escape jail. Policemen and judges are sometimes *atimoi* [immoral] and *theloun ladwma* [get bribed] to set you free. If you don't have money, they lock you up".

From their words it becomes obvious that they see the state's representatives as people, who are prone to corruption, but most importantly as people who have betrayed the ideals and ethics of the nation-state. The phrases *aftoi den ehoun timi kai mpesa*[15] or *aftoi den sevontai tipota*[16] were commonly employed characterisations by the members of the community for the representatives of the state institutions and mechanisms.

This probably explains why the army seems to be the institution that more than any other institution along with the church, in spite of its rigid curriculum, seems to be highly respected by the Greek-Gypsies. This is presumably so, because the army exemplifies ideals such as solidarity, brotherhood, and hierarchal relationships that lie at the very core of Gypsy morality, while at the same time, its highly mandatory character leaves little space for corruption.

One of the most important domains, where the ambiguity of Greek-Gypsies perception of the state institutions is expressed, is the school[17]. It is true that the vast majority of Gypsy parents and children acknowledge illiteracy as one of the main sources of their marginalisation and they would at least like to have a minimum degree of education. However, the overwhelming illiteracy rates among the members of this community and the high drop out percentages among the community's children indicate that schooling constitutes a process with a highly contradictory meaning for the Greek-Gypsies.

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[15] These people do not have value and do not keep their word of honour
[16] These people do not respect anything
[17] The examination of Greek-Gypsy children and parents' views and aspirations of schooling in relation to Greek-Gypsy processes of becoming and belonging constitutes the main theme of my thesis.

In fact, schooling seems to be one of the institutional processes, which children find difficult to get incorporated into, since its lengthy and demanding curriculum seems to be incompatible with some of their most important everyday practices and long-term aspirations, threatening, simultaneously, the basic aspects of Greek-Gypsy identity (family, marriage, domestic and working patterns). This is presumably why, as the statistical data prove, Greek-Gypsy children mostly decide to drop out of school at the time when their duties and obligations in the family environment become the first priority in their lives.

What is more, Greek-Gypsies are better incorporated into institutions such as the church and the army, which do not threaten but reinforce the basic aspects of Greek-Gypsy identity. In this sense, it becomes obvious that Greek-Gypsies use state institutions and mechanisms in a multiplicity of ways - and they are not exclusive recipients of repressive policies – in order to consolidate their identity.

This is especially obvious in children's stance towards schooling and the way and extent children participate or decide not to participate in the schooling process. Childhood constitutes a conceptual category, which grants children considerable space and freedom in playing with contested identities[18] (James, Jenks, and Prout, 1998). This seems to be particularly the case for Greek-Gypsy children, who as carriers of a twofold cultural identity - Greek and Gypsy - show a remarkable ability[19] to play with and negotiate this identity in different frameworks. Children make use of their inclusion/exclusion in/from the schooling process depending on the extent they sense this process is compatible or contradictory to processes of becoming and belonging.

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[18] Children are to be understood as social actors (Jenks, 1992, 1996; James, 1993) and active participants in the process of making culture (Stephens, 1995), constituting at the same time childhood an *agency* (James and Prout, 1990). Children participate in the politics of culture and identity through processes of becoming and belonging (James, Jenks, and Prout, 1998). Schooling constitutes one of these processes.

[19] This ability provides us with an interesting insight into the way Greek-Gypsies experience their present, visualise their future, and perceive their sense of belonging in general.

The Peculiarity of the Relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the State

The use of Herzfeld's term of *cultural intimacy* in the case of the Greek-Gypsies enables us to understand this peculiar relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the state. As already described, *cultural intimacy* refers to those aspects of everyday life and subversions of norms that the nationalist project uses in order to become largely successful. Herzfeld sees the essentialism of the state and people's everyday practices as premised on a rigid rhetoric that exemplifies notions of community, family, solidarity and interdependence, all drawing on metaphors of patrilineal relationships of blood, or "the very features of localism that the state most abhors" (Herzfeld, 1997: 75). Additionally, Herzfeld (1997) sees in these attributes of the state's rhetoric, - the family, the community and the individual - "a commonality that encapsulates plural possibilities" (1997:171) In this sense, the nation-state "shows that its apparent fixities are the products of the very things they deny: *action, agency, and use*" (1997:165). These features, however, seem to be the very issues that define the problematic relationship between the state and its people.

The case of Greek-Gypsies, who strongly premise their identity on these aspects seems to be particularly interesting. Greek-Gypsy identity is based on family and extended kinship networks that exemplify brotherly relations and relations of interdependence and solidarity, the most important issues the nationalist project draws upon. At the same time, they seem to use networks of relatedness and its associated processes in order to realise short and long term projects mainly outside of the boundaries of state institutions. These networks of relatedness simultaneously substitute for those social institutions and state processes from which Gypsies are largely excluded (such as pension schemes, social insurance, etc.).

For example, Gypsy marriage produces and reinforces a complex dynamic process through which a number of diverse and important socio-economic and cultural features of Gypsy life intersect and are sustained. In this sense, the wedding process constitutes an affirmation and consolidation of wider community relations of support. Through marriage, long-term projects are realised outside the boundaries of the state and the formal economy, through ideologies of gender, sexuality and kinship. What is more, marriage and its associated ideologies of gender and sexuality, the practice of endogamy and concerns of honour lie at the centre of a socio-

economic process through which the Greek-Gypsy community is not only 'imagined' but also realised.

Marriage, or a prospective marriage, engages community members in a cyclical investment process that signifies a long-term commitment to economic and social support. In other words, it triggers a whole set of economic and social strategies and alliances based on sets of reciprocal relationships. This socio-economic activity[20] actually takes the form of money recycling and forms of investment that simultaneously indicate the existence of a strong socio-economic bond among different Gypsy families. This set of relationships that is fortified by reciprocal exchange through the money 'loaning' process, constitutes an effective support system, substituting for those social institutions and services in the wider society to which Gypsies are denied access because of their marginal position.

But exactly here lies the problematic relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the state. Gypsies not only perceive and realise their long-term projects beyond the boundaries of state institutions through alternative mechanisms and processes but also, in order to achieve their goal, operate at the fringes of Greek society posing a threat to the prevailing order and creating a sense of non-conformity with the state's ideals. Simultaneously, the emphasis on these networks of relatedness seems to be the reason for their problematic participation of Greek-Gypsies in some state institutional processes such as schooling.

Interestingly, Greek-Gypsies themselves adopt the very same aspects of nationalist speech in order to consolidate their identity vis á vis non Gypsy-Greek others. For Herzfeld (1997: 43) "the language of national or ethnic identity is indeed a language of morality". However, the paradox with nationalism is that:

"The state is caught on the horns of its own reification. To achieve at least an illusion

of stability it must command the active involvement of ordinary people; and ordinary

people reify, all the time, everywhere. They too invoke, involve solidified histories,

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[20] It is common practice for parents to organise their economic activities in such a way that enables them primarily to support their families on a daily basis, while at the same time they can intensify their work in order to cover their children's wedding expenses or the gift for an upcoming relative's wedding ceremony. Indeed, parents not only have to plan their work and savings for their children's wedding preparations but also they have to put down money for the weddings of relatives and family members in the process of intra-community money recycling. This socio-economic mobilisation presupposes the existence of a flexible economic activity and labour intense working patterns.

rediscovering in the official mythology some aspects that will serve their own cause." (Herzfeld, 1997: 24)

Concluding Remarks

To conclude, this paper offered an insight into the ways the idiosyncratic relationship between Greek-Gypsies and the state have largely informed the process of negotiating a Greek-Gypsy collective identity. The examination of the ascribing features of this peculiar relationship through the analysis of ethnographic data, informed by Herzfeld's notion of *cultural intimacy,* suggests that Gypsy experience within the context of nation-state cannot be merely reduced to a strategy of resistance and passive adaptation. The use of the concept of *cultural intimacy* in this analysis enables us to unravel the particular ways through which Greek-Gypsies have negotiated their identity, by infiltrating those aspects of the state's essentialist rhetoric that intersect with a specific Gypsy morality, while simultaneously informing practices that differentiate them from non Greek-Gypsy 'others'. In this sense, Greek-Gypsies have elaborated an ambiguous concept of the state, in which its representatives, lacking Greek-Gypsy morality, have failed to sustain the state's proclaimed *ethics* by slipping into an immoral path. On a more mundane level, Greek-Gypsies seem to be more successfully incorporated into those state institutions which promote ideologies and practices compatible with Greek-Gypsy moral values. For example, their successful incorporation into institutions such as the army and the church but not the school, as already shown, can be attributed to the fact that these institutions rather than threatening the basic tenets of Greek-Gypsy morality instead support and exemplify them. The concept of *cultural intimacy* helps us view Greek-Gypsies as a group that constitutes an intrinsic part of Greek society and, therefore, removes it from the margins of theoretical analysis.

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Migration, tradition and transition
among the Pomaks in Xanthi (Western Thrace)

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Abstract

During the second half of the last century the Greek countryside entered the world of industry and commerce, which was followed by important economic and social changes. For several political and historical reasons the Pomaks in Western Thrace did not follow these changes. The traditional world-view of rural Greece was deeply affected by the passing from subsistence to consumer economy thus changing the way of interpreting traditional value systems. In the Community of Thermes in the Pomak area of Xanthi, the traditional mechanisms of community integration and identity have survived and the viability of the community as a discrete entity with its own identity has remained more unbroken. During the last decade, however, following the abolition of several restrictions of an economic and political character, which the Thermiots as members of the Muslim minority suffered for decades, the community has been facing the challenge of adapting to new economic and cultural patterns brought about mainly through migration.

This paper examines how the Thermiots have responded to the recent abolition of the socioeconomic restrictions, which have been partly responsible for their being maintained on the edge of social and economic change. Based on research

material from the fieldwork I conducted in the area in 2000-2002, I focus on the way migration has affected approval of certain new values, especially in relation to education. I look on how people experience the duality between old practices, which started losing their meaning, surviving as 'forms' only, and how these 'forms' are being challenged by the new rationale that the need for participating in the modern world brought together.

Part-time and long-term Thermiot migrants usually do not culturally integrate with the societies they work in. Their hearts remain focused on their home villages and their main ambition is to supplement family income. Nevertheless, they act as carriers of modernization back to the village by introducing modern conveniences into their houses. And into the community they bring new ideas and aspirations for catching-up with the rest of the Greek society by taking advantage of the educational opportunities offered in their area.

Increasing modernization and urban contact may in some cases lead to a decline of ceremonial and ritual life and the diffusion of secular ideas among peasants. Migration often intensifies processes of secularization and modernization since it brings people closer to urban life. Besides the material benefits it may bring into the community, it has been observed, that migration contributes to the change of traditional and spiritual values of the people. Among the Thermiots, there has been a considerable change of attitude towards the way the community viewed education as well as some criticism of several traditional practices affecting women. This has mainly been the result of intense contact of young people with city people during a period of steady social change that the community has been undergoing.

Introduction

The argument presented here is based on data collected during fieldwork, which I conducted from January 2000 to July 2002 in the highlands of Xanthi *(Ξάνθη)*, the so called Pomak area, located in Western Thrace *(Δυτική Θράκη)*. The Pomak

area of Xanthi[1] or the 'mountain', as both Christians and Muslims commonly call it, includes 59 villages[2] and *'mahalas'*[3]. With a population[4] of 15,824 people[5], till the early '90s it was socially and economically marginalized from the rest of the Prefecture of Xanthi. The area can still be regarded as a discrete unit with visible boundaries, which could serve to designate it as separate.

The Community of Thermes in the Pomak area of Xanthi (*Κοινότητα Θερμών*), which includes seven villages (Ano, Meses and Kato Thermes, Medousa, Kidari, Diasparto and Kotani) as well as a small Spa resort, Loutra, has been my fieldwork location. The distance of the first village (Ano Thermes) from the town of Xanthi is 46 km and of the last one (Medousa) 54 km. The population of the Community was 1,396 people according to the census of 1991. The estimated permanent residents though, were less than 1,200 people, and gradually decreasing year by year.

The Pomaks[6] constitute the second most numerous Muslim group in Greece after the ethnic Turks and remained rather cut off from the rest of the population of the

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[1] This area includes villages with exclusively Pomak population. There are also other villages in the Prefecture of Xanthi, not on the mountainous zone, with considerable Pomak population.

[2] See also Theoharidis 1995.

[3] *'Mahala'* coming from theTurkish word of Arabic origin *mahalle* meaning small village quarters or neighbourhood. The word is extensively used in Thrace as well as in many parts in Western Macedonia. In Xanthi, the word is used to describe a group of houses smaller than a village. My informants used either Pomak, Turkish or Greek words to express an idea. In the text I use the words they used providing a translation in English. Shifting language code is a very common phenomenon among multilingual people such as Pomaks.

[4] National Statistical Service of Greece: 2001 Census.

[5] See Greek Government's project *"'Ioannis Kapodistrias' for the reconstruction of Local Authorities"*. Local Association of Municipalities and Communities of the Prefecture of Xanthi. Office for Development and Programming. May 1998.

[6] For several Greek scholars they are indigenous Thracians who were assimilated by the Turkish populations due to their proximity. About the Greek theories on the history of the Pomaks see Hidiroglou 1989; Milonas 1990; Varvounis 1997; Magriotis 1990; Theoharidis 1995; Troumbeta 2001; Brunnbauer 2001. For the Turks the Pomaks are descendants of a Turkish tribe, the Kumans, who moved to the Balkan area in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D. The Bulgarian theories maintain that the Pomaks are Bulgarians who had been islamized between the 16th and the 19th centuries. A number of Bulgarian scholars have dealt with this issue (see Krasteva-Blagoeva 2001) some holding the theory that the Pomaks were forcefully islamized and some others that they voluntarily converted to Islam for economic reasons (see Zhelyzkova 1990 referred by Krasteva-Blagoeva 2001). Their convertion to Islam attributed negative connotations to the name 'Pomak', which according to Bulgarian Christians derives from the *'povlyakal se'* (dragging), because they dragged after another faith. The Pomaks themselves though claim that 'Pomak' is someone who has been *'pomachen'* (tortured) to change his faith. For an extended literature review on the Bulgarian, Greek and Turkish theories on the origins of the Pomaks and their name see Troumbeta 2001; Brunnbauer 2001.

country until the early '90s. Their practice of endogamy and lack of opportunities in trading and traveling contributed significantly to the creation of a bounded, isolated community. The creation of the Modern Greek nation-state did not mean the opening of a new era for the Pomaks. On the contrary, their location in one of the most strategically important areas of the country (near the borders with Bulgaria and close to Turkey), their Islamic religion, which in the administrators' minds identified them with the ethnic Turks and their language[7], a Bulgarian idiom of the South Slav group of languages, contributed to a deterioration of their situation. Being generally unable to deal with the bureaucratic machinery of the state, they have used middlemen for their social and economic deals. This of course is not an unusual phenomenon in Greek society, although within the minority it might have some further significance, stressing even more the "we/they" dichotomy, which apparently exists anyway.

Education and Social Change in Thermes

During the second half of the last century the Greek countryside entered the world of industry and commerce, which was followed by important economic and social changes. The Community of Thermes, as well as the whole Pomak area, did not follow these changes. The traditional world-view of rural Greece was deeply affected by the passing from subsistence to consumer economy thus

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[7] The Pomak does not constitute a 'language' but an 'dialect' and thus, in the text the word 'language' is not used in the linguistic meaning of it to designate a separate language but rather in the sense of a 'language code' used by this particular group of people. There have been two major efforts to record the Pomak language. One was made by the 4th Army Corps *(Δ΄ Σώμα Στρατού)*, based in Xanthi. With the support of the Commander of the Corps, three Pomak soldiers, graduates of the Special Academy of Thessaloniki *(ΕΠΑΘ)*, together with a small team of Christian Philologists (graduates of Greek Studies), also soldiers in the same Corps, undertook this task which included two dictionaries (Pomak-Greek and Greek-Pomak), edited in 1996 as well as a grammar book, edited one year later (Karahoca 1996). They used the Greek alphabet. Soon after this first publication, a Greek entrepreneur called Emfietjoglou, president of a large construction company which employed many Pomaks, especially during the construction of the big dam of Thisavros in the Prefecture of Xanthi, funded the edition of another dictionary and grammar by using the same team of Pomak teachers. Another effort to record the Pomak language was made by a Christian teacher, Theoharidis (1996a,b,c), who spent twelve years as a teacher at minority primary schools in the Pomak area of Xanthi (1964-1975). He has been criticized by educated Pomaks for not having acquired sufficient language competence for such an enterprise and also for having registered 26,000 words in his dictionary including also those taken from Greek and having been slightly altered. At the time that these lines are written, Ritvan Karahoca, one of the Pomak teachers who worked for the dictionary published by the 4th Army Corps in Xanthi, is working on an electronic Pomak dictionary which includes about 11.500 words (see http://www.PomLex.com).

changing the way of interpreting traditional value systems (Du Boulay 1974:233). In Thermes the traditional mechanisms of community integration and identity, deeply rooted in the Muslim religion, have survived and the viability of the community as a discrete entity with its own identity has remained rather unbroken. During the last decade, however, following the abolition of several restrictions of an economic and political character, which the Thermiots as members of the Muslim minority suffered for decades, the community has been facing the challenge of adapting to new economic and cultural patterns brought about mainly through migration. The traditional cultivation of tobacco has become costly and non profitable and the terrain in the mountainous Pomak villages has restricted the introduction of many other kinds of cultivation.

This paper examines how the Thermiots responded to the abolition of the socioeconomic restrictions, which affected them for decades and have been partly responsible for their being maintained on the edge of social and economic change. I focus on the way migration has affected approval of certain new values, especially in relation to education. I look on how people experience the duality between old practices, which started losing their meaning, surviving as 'forms' only (du Boulay 1974:257), and how these 'forms' are being challenged by the new rationale that the need for participating in the modern world brought together. Finally, I attempt to explain whether the rather slow pace of the community in accepting the state Gymnasium in the area is a form of cultural persistence, or resistance[8] to modern ideas, which are feared to threaten local traditional values, and to the dominant state, which is seen as perpetuating its ideology within school.

Migration, tradition, and transition

During the last decade, temporary seasonal and long-term migration have helped to supplement scarce resources and contributed to the family income. In Weber's words: "Going away from home [has been] the only way to keep home going" (1976:278). Temporary migrants time their departures with the seasons according

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to the nature of the work they do. Construction workers usually have better job prospects during spring and summer months, while those working as dock workers or sailors depend on their contractors. Young men who can migrate to the cities or to foreign countries have been doing so in growing numbers. Those migrating abroad are often not accompanied by their wives who stay behind at the villages taking care of the children, the fields, the animals, the houses and the elderly people. However several among those migrating within the Greek territory choose to take their families with them. The latter are long-term migrants who have stopped any kind of productive activity in the villages and if some day they come back to the village permanently they choose other occupations than that of cultivating tobacco. Still though, their occupational options in the village are very restricted because Thermiot migrants, like the Etyolo's migrants[9] described by Nolan "do not learn trades which will be useful to them in the village, and so they are unable to offer skills which would compete with or alter established village activities in any way" (1975:578). On the other hand, with time, economic dependency for cash on outside wage-labour increases and villages lose their self-sufficiency. Besides, migration creates the need for more consumption goods, which cannot be fulfilled with local capital.

Part-time and long-term Thermiot migrants usually do not culturally integrate with the societies they work in. Their hearts remain focused on their home villages and their main ambition is to supplement family income. Nevertheless, they act as carriers of modernization back to the village by introducing modern conveniences into their houses: modern kitchens and toilets, as well as sattelite TV and other equipment. And into the community they bring new ideas and aspirations for catching-up with the rest of the Greek society by taking advantage of the educational opportunities offered in their area. Du Boulay described the pattern of modernization in the less remote towns and villages of Greece after the 1970s as steadily increasing "whereby the world moves in before the inhabitants move out" (1974:236). In the case of Thermes, it seems that traditional patterns

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[8] The notion of resistance has become popular when talking about relationships between subordinate cultural groups and dominant cultures (see Reed-Danahay 1996).
[9] The village of Etyolo, is a community of Bassari subsistence farmers in eastern Senegal.

are still persistent and it is the people that have moved out who bring 'the world' in.

Migration expresses the inability of the local economy to satisfy people's changing needs and aspirations and often signifies dissatisfaction with village life (Brandes 1975:56). In the case of the Thermiots, it contributes to the local economy while at the same time expands the horizons beyond the traditional village culture, especially in relation to education and social mobility, leaving however other traditional cultural areas rather untouched. The response of the community towards modernity has been developed in a dual centrifugal/centripetal way, quite similar to that described by Brandes for the village of Becedas in Spain, on one hand, "thrusting villagers into ever-increasing integration with larger surroundings [while on the other hand retaining village activities]" (1975:56-57). Among the Thermiots these two forces are clearly observed especially among the male individuals. Men, through migration, various economic activities and military service, come into contact with the world outside their familiar community framework. Nevertheless, when they return to the villages they enjoy a sense of belonging and the security that this feeling brings along. They move forth and back in two different cultural realms, thus becoming carriers of new ideas, which eventually affect their traditional value system.

The motives that led to migration have been various but primarily of an economic nature especially for those who are currently in their forties. Nevertheless, for younger men who are now in their late teens the bleak economic prospects and the narrowness of the village also in terms of lack of opportunities for having fun and enjoying modern conveniences, make them resolute in their determination to get away forever. Most of the male students of the Gymnasium in Thermes were happy living in their villages as students but for the future they dreamed a life in the town of Xanthi or elsewhere away from the villages. Several among the male school leavers rode motorbikes without a permit[10] and escaped to Xanthi to find jobs as waiters or shop assistants. Parents

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[10] The age limit for acquiring a driving license in Greece is eighteen years old.

often do not agree with their boys' leaving home in their early teens. They would prefer to keep them in the village to help the family with tobacco production. But on the other hand, they know that the village does not offer employment opportunities and tolerate their decision to leave home early, encouraging them to become skilled workers. After completion of their eighteenth year of age young men join the army and several among them never come back to live in the village. Priorities for girls yet are different and the village offers them the security they need to prepare their dowries and find their future husbands. They look forward to the religious festivities *(Bayramlar)* when young men return temporarily thus, increasing their choice possibilities. They do not dream of leaving the village on their own since this is still unthinkable of women, but of getting married to somebody who could offer them a good living (see also du Boulay 1994). Parents, as it has also been observed in other peasant communities (Brandes 1975; Reed-Danahay 1996), encourage their daughters to get married with someone who has a good occupation and is not a tobacco cultivator. A girl's mother, who was made to stop her studies after the Gymnasium to help her family with tobacco production, said once in the presence of her daughter:

> "I told her that they[11] should have their eyes open to find someone who has a good job and not someone like us working with tobacco. Otherwise, she will spend her life like me and her grandmothers labouring over tobacco leaves. If they are clever they will consider this. If not, they will suffer for the rest of their lives. It is not enough for a woman to be good -looking. She should also be clever as to whom she 'loves'"[12].

Men, who migrate soon after their military service as bachelors, return to the village to get married as soon as they find a job. Those among them who were already involved in a relationship get married before military service usually under pressure from the girls who do not trust them enough to let them go away without a commitment. During the first years of migration most of them leave their young brides behind. This often leads these young women to depression since married life for Pomak women is very restrictive and demanding and not as romantic as they expected it to be. Men come back periodically usually during the religious festivities to see their families and their parents as well as have a

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[11] She talks about the girls in general.

holiday. Most of them express their happiness to return to the villages and describe their life away as being tough *(σκληρή)* and lonely *(μοναχική)*. They often state that if they had had better occupational opportunities in the village or the area they would not have left. They blame the state for not having invested in the area and having left people "at the mercy of God" *(στο έλεος του Θεού)*. As a middle-aged migrant describes the situation:

> "There is nothing in the area to keep its people there besides their love for it. The state could have built a factory and create some opportunities for us. Nobody comes here. There is no trade, tourism, nothing. Only during the summer there are some old people visiting the 'Loutra' (Spa) but they hardly contribute anything to the local economy because they stay there and they do not visit the villages. The traditional cultivation of tobacco is declining since it is not profitable any longer. Young people do not like working in the fields. They have no patience for working the land. They prefer migrating as labourers and working hard often under very unhealthy conditions to staying in the village. As labourers they earn more money and can support themselves and their families *(να ζήσουν τους εαυτούς τους και τις οικογένειές τους)*. It is bad to be away from your own people but it is worse not to have enough to live on."

Those Thermiots who migrate together with their families do not only hope to improve their economic prospects but also to provide their children with the opportunity for education and advancement. In terms of their future and most importantly in terms of their children's lives, several among them cast doubt on the validity of maintaining their traditional way of life in the villages. Greek language learning for their children is among their priorities and they recognize that in an environment away from the village they will make better progress. Even if they intend to return to the village some years later, they know that their children will learn the Greek language well enough to pursue studies at the Gymnasium and the Lyceum. During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to get to know well three children who were brought up away from the village, two of them, a boy and a girl, in Athens and one girl in a very touristic Greek island. As well as their good knowledge of Greek these children shared some modern ideas about education and job prospects for girls and expressed their wish that their small community might accept that the girls should also be able to work and live

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[12] Meaning to whom she decides to consider as a prospective husband.

a more interesting life than the one imposed by tradition. These children have had the opportunity to compare life in their villages with life in cities and although they felt more secure within the environment of their own culture, they have often stated that life outside the village offers a whole range of ideas and opportunities more attractive to young people. It seemed to me that confidence in their own inherited way of life, which still maintained its validity, was not threatened but rather certain aspects of it were being criticized.

The Thermiots who migrated and later returned to the village permanently or those who visit their villages periodically often disputed with those who have lived permanently in the area and remained close to village life and traditions. Conflict is often focused on 'schooling', in relation to whether the Greek state schools should be trusted not to affect students' religious and cultural identity. The difference of attitude between those having lived and those not having lived away from the community is often quite obvious. Some of the former take the initiative to persuade the latter that the world outside the community is changing and if their children 'remain illiterate' *(μείνουν αγράμματα)* their future prospects will be poor. Nevertheless, the increasing involvement of the community in the national economy reduces self-sufficiency of the local economy and enhances dependence on outside economic agents. People realize that in the future their children will need to compete in the open job market, which for unskilled workers becomes increasingly competitive, due to numerous immigrants flowing into the country mainly from Balkan and Asian countries.

Education and job specialization of their children becomes a priority for those Thermiots who seem more prepared to accept socioeconomic changes. Du Boulay has suggested, that "the ambitions of parents for their children, and the way in which they accept their children's ambitions, is a sure index of the values they hold with regard to the modern world". For the people of Ambeli she has studied, she observed that, "every villager has an explicit ambition for his children to live better than he did, and this better life is seen exclusively in terms of a more urbanized and literate existence" (1994:254). Most parents generally share the same ambition for their children to live better than they have. Most of

them view education as the vehicle for their children to achieve a better future and encourage them to pursue Gymnasium studies.

Thermiots have been very hesitant in expressing openly within the community their wish their children to study at a Greek state school, such as the local Gymnasium. School preference for the locals declared ethnic preference, thus for years, under this kind of pressure people have been depriving their children of the opportunity to study at the local Gymnasium. By the time this attitude has started changing and at the time of my fieldwork the local school admitted a considerable number of students from the majority of the villages of the Community.

The way the locals responded to the existence of the state Gymnasium in the area has affected inter-community relations since some people gave priority to adapting to the newly formulated conditions of life, whether others seemed rather unwilling to abandon traditional cultural models and escape the politicization of public education in the area. Ties among these two categories of people have been loosening because the former often hesitated to express openly within the community their wish that their children, both male and female, integrate into Greek society, get an education and have enhanced occupational opportunities, since the latter would accuse them that by getting their children educated in the Greek state schools with Christian teachers, they jeopardized their traditional values primarily related to Muslim religion.

Despite evident depopulation, their villages still remain the focus of the social existence of the Thermiot migrants. Even for their brief or intermittent periods of village residence, they seem to adapt well and become incorporated within the existing community structure. People living permanently in the villages reproduce local culture, continue the village's productive activities and assist each other on several occasions. The migrants, by participating in the community's social and religious activities or life cycle occasions, reaffirm their relationships and define their status vis-à-vis the others. Thus, mutual bonds are strengthened among kinsmen, friends and neighbors.

The desire of the majority among the Thermiots to feel 'European' involved them in a duality which they seemed unable to resolve. People still could not decide whether breaking-away from traditional forms of life would be dangerous for the integrity of the community, and which aspects of modernity and Europeanization could be beneficial but not threatening to traditional beliefs. Du Boulay suggests that, realization that the preservation of certain beliefs and customs deriving, "from the dicta of a theocratic society which now no longer exists, has over the generations steadily been losing contact with the cosmology, or cosmologies, that first gave it birth, [surviving only as 'forms' from which] the intellectual content has largely been lost"(1994:257).

Young Thermiots have started questioning the value of certain traditional standards expressed in religious terms and which no longer seemed significant. For example, the traditional belief that girls should not pursue any further education after primary school has been strongly challenged by younger people within the community, often taking the form of a struggle against religious authorities and older people who viewed such a thing as a threat to the Pomak Muslim tradition. The first parents to send their daughters to the local Gymnasium in school year 1998-99 faced negative criticism from the majority of the community. These girls were no more than ten by school year 2001-02, but this was already a considerable shift of attitude from the traditional one, which considers that girls should only be educated. They told me that it has not been an easy decision for them to take because, although they considered the exclusion of girls from education anachronistic, on the other hand, they feared the community's and mainly the elders' reaction to their decision. They explained that the girls themselves kept coming to them with strong arguments, which could not be responded to persuasively. Claiming that Muslim tradition did not encourage the education of the girls was not a satisfactory argument, since children watch satellite Turkish channels, which present a rather more European type of a Muslim society, where girls as well as boys both enjoy rights to education, work and life opportunities.

With time, these girls graduated from the Gymnasium and demanded that they continue their studies at the Lyceum. Parents had to take another difficult

decision then because the Lyceum was quite far away from the Community. Another traditional custom suggesting that the girls should not travel any distance from the village without being accompanied by a parent or a close relative had to be broken with. For the parents of one of the girls, who were returned-urban migrants, this has been a rather easy decision, since they were both very positive about their daughter's wish to go to the Lyceum. For the parents of the other two girls though, the decision was not an easy one to take. In one case the parents, especially the mother, were absolutely negative and the girl did not go to the Lyceum. In the other case, parents could not agree with each other, since the mother was against whereas the father, a teacher himself, was quite positive. Their daughter went to the Lyceum for few days then she stopped going for about three weeks and in the end she returned back to school to complete only two of the three years of studies. Then she dropped out to get engaged.

Since one change brings another, the two girls who finally went to the Lyceum started gradually abandoning the traditional Pomak skirts and kerchiefs that all girls wore within the community, at least when they were at school. This did not pass without criticism and one day the girls were warned not to come back to the village if they left for the school 'uncovered'[*adbulena* (P.) *ακάλυπτες* (G.)][13], meaning without wearing their kerchiefs. The girls did not yield to threats and criticism but avoided non-traditional dressing practices within the community. During the summer months, married women who suffered working in the fields under extremely high temperatures wearing their black complete suit *kapama* (T.) or *ferace* (T.)]*,* also challenged the use of wearing such a heavy dress during both winter and summer. Taking it off would mean breaking traditional standards of feminine honour. Some women told me that certain practices are there only to make them suffer, since they are not 'rational'. Besides, tradition did not want married women to frequent public places such as coffee shops [*καφενεία* (G.)] and taverns, or participate in festivities and celebrations, which usually took place in the village square during the *Bayram* (T.) or weddings. Women sat at the sides of the square, observing from a distance the men (married and unmarried)

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[13] For the Pomak words (P.), for the Turkish (T.), for the Greek (G.).

and the unmarried girls dancing, eating and drinking. Only on one occasion in a wedding celebration did I see a married woman dancing in a group with other men and girls next to her husband. This woman had lived in an urban center for almost twelve years with her husband who was a labour worker and both of them were often critical of certain traditional village practices, which were restrictive for women. Contact with the outer world often intensified the need for picking up a modern system of thought and questioning those practices that involved unnecessary suffering or deprivation. Unlike the Anaphiot migrants described by Kenna (2001), who seem to be more committed to 'tradition' than those who do not migrate, Thermiot migrants are more ready to accept modern practices.

It has been suggested, that increasing modernization and urban contact may in some cases lead to a decline of ceremonial and ritual life and the diffusion of secular ideas among peasants (Brandes 1975, Redfield 1943). Migration often intensifies processes of secularization and modernization since it brings people closer to urban life. Besides the material benefits it may bring into the community, it has been observed, that migration contributes to the change of traditional and spiritual values of the people. Among the Thermiots, there has been a considerable change of attitude towards the way the community viewed education as well as some criticism of several traditional practices affecting women. This has mainly been the result of intense contact of young people with city people during a period of steady social change that the community has been undergoing. Weber, observes that quite often personal experience is needed "to persuade people of the usefulness of education. Certain migrants had learnt this, and we have seen how they and their children recognized at an early date the value of instruction and the profit one can derive from it in the great centers" (1976:327).

In Thermes, the community does not yet seem quite ready to approve of new values and break away from its traditional ones. Young people have argued that certain practices are anachronistic and incompatible with being citizens of a European country, but yet very important in people's lives. Several young informants claimed that, "until the elders have gone things will not change" *(αν δεν φύγουν οι παλιοί τα πράγματα δεν αλλάζουν)*. Young Thermiots are often

critical of the elders. They say that they have 'old minds' *(παλιά μυαλά)* and they cannot accept new things. They tolerate their attitude though and they hardly ever become openly oppositional. The elders are those who, by living permanently in the villages, are very little affected by social and economic changes while at the same time reserve positions of control and authority over village matters and individuals. Young people pay respect to the older people and are very reluctant to openly criticize them. A young female student told me:

> "The old people want to have control over us, and decide about what we should do in our lives. We respect them but they have 'old minds' and they have lived their life. Now they should let us live ours. They know little about what is happening away from the Community. If my father listened to them, now I would not be at the Gymnasium. Our parents some times are found in between. They know what is right for us but they respect the elders' wish."

Most of the male parents I interviewed seemed to distinguish the matter of paying respect to the elders and the fact that they wished to be able to decide about what was best for their children in relation to educational matters. They agreed that sometimes the old people cannot understand that the children will have to live in a more competitive world and education is very important for both boys and girls. As a father put it:

> "We travel away from the village and see that there is no future here. Our children sooner or later will go away. Many have already gone. We must help them to have a better future. Old people have some ideas which are backward and we cannot always listen to them".

Married women seemed to care more about the elders' opinion and avoided provoking their criticism. A woman would be very easily criticized about her manners, clothes, character, diligence and industry. Any departure from customary traditional rules would be quickly noticed. "There are things we don't like but we do because we do not want the old people to 'talk' about us. It is not good when they talk about you", a woman said.

Community resistance to social change is often expressed as cultural persistence. The educational strategies of families in Thermes often reflect resistance to schooling, encouraging at the same time local cultural identity among the children. In general, family education strategies in Thermes seem to have started encouraging schooling since they gradually become concerned, in parallel to the reproduction of local culture, also about their adaptation to the changing circumstances and opportunities outside the community and within the majority culture. The process of adaptation has not been easy, neither for the parents nor for the children, since the new family strategies of education eventually lead to the physical detachment of the young people and the depopulation of the area. What is important for the Thermiots is to manage to control the pace of changes by resisting certain aspects of modernity introduced by schooling and migration. Their resistance, which is often seen as 'backwardness' by members of the majority culture, is rather a form of cultural opposition, continuously informed by their local identity and cultural values although these are also subjects to change. The elders suggest, "that people should do things the way they found them", this appeal though, cannot always find legitimacy among those young people who similarly to the Kalymnians described by Sutton, claim: "We must change in order to be part of Europe" (1994:225).

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Cultural Identity and Cultural Policy:
Manipulating Expectations in Contemporary Greece

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"One could say, without exaggerating that the crisis of identity constitutes the central problem of modern Greek society the constitutive element of contemporary Hellenism and the axis around which our modern history revolves" (Tsaoussis 1982:17).

Abstract

This paper starts with a short critic of rigidly separating 'the civic' from 'the ethnic' in nationalism theories as well as mapping them broadly as 'good' and 'bad' respectively. It further doubts the potential of such theories to provide explanations for the case of Greece. On the background of attitudes towards 'co-ethnics' during recent years where Greece has been transformed from a sender to a receiver society, the paper suggests that things might be subtler than that. It then turns to one widely accepted 'ethnic' theme of 'Greekness', namely the link between Modern Greece and Ancient Greece and, after presenting schematically its development, the paper investigates its possible persistence in Greek 'public culture' through a discussion of data in cultural policy. It further explores how people might use what is 'ethnically' expected of them both in conventional and in 'unexpected' ways, as well as the conceptual and pragmatic implications of such uses. It, thus, investigates how cultural identity-expectations are used in everyday life and the active influence they might have on the possibility of action. The paper considers turning to the use of metaphors in conception in search of a subtler understanding of cultural identity construction and use. It suggests a more nuanced approach to understanding how identity is constructed and wishes to imply that an investigation of the case of Greece could provide novel tools for both theorising and understanding areas with similar itineraries but also other 'unexpected' ones.

1. Introduction

Within nationalism theories a broad division could be identified between those who claim that nations are modern conceptual constructions or 'imagined communities' – among whom Ernest Gellner[1] is prominent – and those – for instance, Anthony Smith[2]– who see pre-modern ethnicities or 'real communities' behind the formation of nations. A third group of theorists has been arguing that both tendencies can co-exist. Such is the position of Brown, Hearn, Nielsen, Yack etc.[3] Whatever their position on the relative modernity of 'nations', though, nationalism theories usually accept the inevitability of a relation between political and cultural dimensions in specific societies. However, more often than not one could observe that in the spectrum of theories with 'citizenship' on one end and 'ethnicity' on the other, or 'civic' and 'ethnic' identity respectively, and even in frameworks that do acknowledge the co-existence and potential overlapping of both ends in real-life situations, there may still be a tendency to map broadly 'civic' as 'good' and 'ethnic' as 'bad' or 'civic' as 'inclusive' and 'ethnic' as 'exclusive'.

Within such a framework Greek national identity is often considered as primarily 'ethnic'. Thus Triandafyllidou writes: "National identity in Greece is predominantly 'ethnic', based on the belief in a common genealogical descent" (2001: 40). Furthermore, since, *inter alia*, "the western institutions that were transplanted into the newborn Greek state, although alien to the traditional, rural and deeply religious Greek society of the early 19th century, could be said to mark the continuity between classical and modern Greece" (Triandafyllidou & Veikou 2002: 194), such a 'civic' element never really merged with its 'ethnic' predecessor. Such lack of merging is often seen as being carried on to the present and blamed for the mulfunctioning of Greek institutions.

Proponents of such views could be seen as being justified when in the late 1980s and all through the 1990s up to today, both the Greek state and the 'Greek people' seemed highly unsuccessful in their dealings with an increasing number of immigrants. For

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[1] Cf. Gellner 1964, 1983, 1997.
[2] Cf. Smith 1994, 1998.
[3] Cf. Brown 1999, Hearn 2000, Nielsen 1996-97, Yack 1996.

the first time in its history Greece became a host country and 'she' (as one would refer to the country in Greek) seemed totally unable to deal with the facts. On a first level one could regard such inability as a straightforward xenophobic reaction of an 'ethnically' rooted identity to 'others' disrupting its homogeneity; a reaction whose results were multiplied by a perception of citizenship based on ethnicity and what is often perceived as a mulfunctioning democracy. However, I would argue that things might be somewhat more complicated.

In what follows I shall first attempt to briefly justify why an opposition of 'civic' and 'ethnic' as 'good' and 'bad' does not provide a satisfactory framework in which to discuss 'Greekness'. I would like to argue that even theories which see those elements as dynamically interacting with each other are still often based on a premise that those elements are distinct and can be treated in isolation from each other. Instead, I would like to propose a framework which rather sets out to explore the manifestations of those elements in the public domain, or, as I shall name it, the domain of 'public culture'.

A 'public culture' is a contextual concept. It is a domain which is space and time relative. As such, it is a concept which allows for both openness and closure in a specific society. It testifies to tensions between pursuing both cohesiveness and distinctiveness in the same context and often with the same means. It attempts to define slippery concepts such as culture and identity by focusing on contextual processes, as influenced by policy-implementation, rather than on abstract definitions.

A way of approaching such a domain is by looking at the language of practices in it. This is not to say that culture is easily reducible to some set of practices or some group of cultural products. It is just to attempt to designate loci of analysis in which such a culture's characteristics can be discerned. The hypothesis is that this language has permeated and continues to be used in public policy, mainly in policy about culture. The relationship of course is dialectical. Public policy reverberates what the agreement of the 'public sphere' is and at the same time sustains and nourishes such a 'public culture' through, *inter alia*, the perpetuation of the understanding of what that culture is to be. The state draws on 'public culture' for its policy but at the same time such policy affects the domain of the public concretely – in terms of the measures

being initiated – but most importantly discursively – in perpetuating assumptions which sustain society in an apparent cohesiveness.

It is in this domain that 'Greekness' is actively debated and it is to such 'conversations' that I shall then turn. I focus on cultural policy for two reasons: first, cultural policy has been less investigated in comparison for instance to immigration, labour or education policy[4] as to its potential to provide clues in an investigation of 'Greekness'. Second, and most important, cultural policy is very often conceptualised as carrying the potential for changing existing 'cultural identity' conceptions, thus, how 'Greekness' is debated within it is important.

One could observe many constituent elements of 'Greekness' as developed through, *inter alia*, the country's establishment and consolidation. In this paper I shall focus on one theme, mainly the perception of Ancient Greece as Modern Greece's ancestor, a constitutive feature of 'Greekness' that has been heavily debated. I shall test whether it is still manifest by focusing on its characteristic uses in the data, deciphering how much expected or not they are, in view of their 'ethnic' provenance, and by attempting to map such uses on a system based on the use of metaphors in conception.

An initial clarification should be made. In this paper I use the term 'Greekness' in an unqualified manner in order to refer to Greek 'cultural identity'. 'Culture' and 'identity', two highly debated and controversial terms, are used in combination, because they are not treated here as purely 'theoretical terms'. If they were, I would maybe agree with a critique on their abuse and possible dispensing potential.[5] However, I would rather like to consider those terms as uses by people in their everyday interaction and as being considered important by them to them. It is in this latter sense that we cannot dispense with 'culture' and 'identity' as readily as some would like us to.

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[4] See, for instance, Baldwin-Edwards and Fakiolas 1998, King *et al.* 1998, Mikrakis & Triandafyllidou 1994, Triandafyllidou 2001, Triandafyllidou & Veikou 2002 etc.
[5] See, for instance, Brubaker & Cooper 2000.

2. A New Reality – An Old Theme

2.1. 'Co-ethnics'

Massive immigration towards Greece occurred mainly as a result of the collapse of communism in Europe during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The larger group of newcomers arrived from Albania and according to King *et al.*, "the scale of… figures makes [this] emigration unique amongst recent migratory movements in Europe" (1998: 161).[6] The newcomers were in fact Albanian *citizens*, but a large percentage would identify themselves – and would actually be identified by the Albanian government – as 'ethnic Greeks', sharing with their co-ethnics a language and a religion. In addition to Albanian immigrants, "another category of 'ethnic Greeks' emerged in late 1980s as significant: Pontian or Pontic Greeks from the USSR began to arrive in large numbers in 1989.[7]

The overall inability of the Greek state to deal in a consistent and comprehensive way with these migratory waves is notorious and the literature quite extensive. In an article published in 2002 Triandafyllidou and Veikou state that "the continuing lack of a comprehensive policy framework even after 10 years, and the political and public debate on the issue suggest that there is a relationship between this reluctance and the ethnocultural definition of the Greek nationality and citizenship". They further accept that "things became more complicated by the presence of some immigrant groups that claimed a right to Greek citizenship on the basis of their ethnic and cultural origins" (2002: 191). In the same article, Triandafyllidou and Veikou set out to demonstrate the redefinition of the boundaries of the ingroup in view of the presence of new 'others' within it as well as in view of "present needs and pragmatic considerations" (*ibid.*: 203).

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[6] The same authors note that even by "a conservative estimate of 300.000 [in 1998], this amounts to nearly one-tenth of the Albanian population and to around seven per cent of the labour force in Greece" (King *et al.*1998: 61).
[7] "…peaking at 14.000 in 1990-91" (Baldwin-Edwards & Fakiolas 1998: 186). "Pontian Greeks come mainly from the ex-Soviet Republics of Georgia, Armenia and Kazakhstan. They are ethnic Greeks who either emigrated from areas of the Ottoman Empire to the ex-Soviet Union in the beginning of the twentieth century, or who left Greece in the 1930s and the 1940s for political reasons. Pontian Greeks are defined by the Greek state as members of the diaspora community who return to their homeland and are, therefore, given full citizen status and benefits aimed at facilitating their (re)integration into Greek society. Vorioepirotes are Albanian citizens, mainly from southern Albania, of Greek ethnic origin and Christian Orthodox religion". (Triandafyllidou 2001: 125).

However, what is key, I believe, to a subtler understanding is the mere fact that many of the new arrivals had the credentials of 'co-ethnics' which did not, though, make their inclusion an easier undertaking. Even if an inflexible or even 'mulfunctioning' legislation did make progressive – even though inconclusive – steps towards these groups' recognition and inclusion,[8] things in everyday life did not seem to develop accordingly; i.e. towards a gradually broader acceptance of those groups as fully blown citizens. If one starts from an assumption that 'ethnic' is drawn to 'ethnic', though, that should have been easier. Paradoxically it would seem that the category of the 'ethnic' was in this case used in order to exclude co-ethnics from potential active participation. I would like to argue that such reluctance, inability even, may be linked with how Greeks conceptualise their 'Greekness' or at least with the dominant ways in which they are socialised to conceptualise it.

Could it be otherwise, i.e. could the category of the 'ethnic' have been used in a concretely inclusive manner? In order to answer one should first try to deconstruct the features of such an 'ethnic' identity and consider them separately. In what follows I turn to such a feature, namely the perception of Ancient Greece as Modern Greece's ancestor. This theme incorporates a view of Greek history as a continuum of three main phases (Ancient Greece – Byzantium – Modern Greece) and maps onto a culture ancient, continuous and universal in the sense that it is a culture which incorporates Ancient Greece, the 'cradle' of European civilisation. Let us first present briefly how such a conception has come to be formed.[9]

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[8] Pragmatic reasons for such delays include, *inter alia*, the Greek government's effort to discourage such migratory movement from Albania for instance, as maintaining the minority there was seen as being in 'Greece's interest'. Or that, despite the fact that "according to the Greek constitution, people from the Greek diaspora are entitled to a favourable legal status in Greece […] law does not provide a conceptual definition of who qualifies as a co-ethnic. According to the decision of the State Council [Supreme Administrative Court of Justice in Greece] (no. 2756/1983), the legitimate criterion for one to be characterised as a co-ethnic is 'to belong to the Greek Ethnos'. That is, 'to have Greek national consciousness', which is 'deduced from characteristics of personality which refer to common descent, language, religion, national traditions and extensive knowledge of the historical events of the nation'". However, 'Greekness' is not easily identified through such criteria. For instance, "language could not be a valid criterion because some of them [the new arrivals] spoke very poor Greek while others have learnt fluent Greek during their undocumented stay in the country" (See Triandafyllidou & Veikou 2002: 198-199).

[9] Taking into consideration the scope and purpose of this paper such an account cannot but be extremely sketchy and even simplistic.

2.2. Ancient Greece and Greece

The conceptual link between Greece and Ancient Greece dates back to the years before and during liberation from the Ottoman Empire – the first signs of uprising having been manifested in 1821 – and was behind much philhellenic action during that period. Its 'recapture' was also among the motives of some of the members of the Greek liberation movement itself. On the other hand, the powerful presence of the Orthodox Church and the need to accommodate it found its expression in a vision for the rehabilitation of Byzantium. The catalyst part for the construction of a tripartite historical continuum would be played by the philologist Jacob Falmerayer who in 1830 claimed that the Greeks of that day did not have any continuity with their namesakes, the Greeks of antiquity, and that they were, in fact, Slavs.

However, as any such entity of that time, 'Modern Greece' needed to prove its roots. The chronological gap would be finally and firmly bridged by Paparigopoulos whose multi-volume history started to appear in the 1850s. *Contra* Falmerayer, Paparigopoulos "managed to provide a new conceptualisation of Greek identity, based on a threefold continuum of Greek history which incorporated the heritage of pagan hellenism, the tradition of Orthodox Byzantium and the modern status of Greece as a secular European state. The effectiveness of this intellectual achievement as a focus of collective self-definition and the profound cultural and psychological needs to which it responded may explain its tenacity and resilience in Greek political thought to this date, more than a century after its original inception". As Kitromilides further remarks, it can be explained by "… the psychological comfort it offers to the Greek mind" (1995: 11). Furthermore, the link to Ancient Greece provided and has been providing ever since, a point of entry for Greece in 'the West', the country being considered as "the idealised spiritual and intellectual ancestor of Europe" (Herzfeld 1987: 1). As such, the link with Ancient Greece served Greece well at a time when the country was struggling to enter the Western political arena. Finally, as noted earlier, the western institutions that were transplanted into the newborn Greek state during the early 19th century could also be seen as testifying in favour of the continuity between classical and modern Greece.

The internalisation of such a link becomes nowadays even more manifest when contemporary writers, who, are in every other sense, critical of 'Greekness' and its constitutive elements, use such a link somehow inadvertently or 'naturally'. Triandafyllidou *et al.*, for instance, in an article entitled 'New Greek Nationalism' write: "Thus, the classic Greek dichotomy between 'us' (Greeks) and 'them' (non-Greeks) is currently used within a new context. *In antiquity it had served to* distinguish between the Greek civilization and the 'barbarian' populations (those not enlightened by Greek thought)…" (1998: 8; emphasis added). And Kokosalakis and Psimenos open their report on 'Modern Greece: A Profile of Identity and Nationalism' with the words: "The long history of Greece, *from pre-classical antiquity to the present*, …" (2002: 2; emphasis added). To some extent it would seem that such a link has become ubiquitous, that it has become a common feature of Greek 'public culture'. In fact data from cultural policy suggest that a conception of 'Greekness' as founded on a link with Ancient Greece, as well as Greek history being perceived as a tripartite continuum, is still being widely used – not, though, always as one would have maybe expected.

3. 'Greekness' in practice

3.1. The 'setting'

The focus of the empirical work has been a cultural institution founded and supervised by the Greek Ministry of Culture and intended in its original 'manifesto' to be "a custodian of the ideals of peace, fair play, creativity, and the universality of man".[10] Its events would span all artistic fields (music, theatre, dance, cinema, visual arts etc.). In one of its first proclamations it would be maintained that "what is all-important is the worldwide aspect of the message … It is a message of peace and social cohesion; a message that links tradition to modernism and modernism to postmodernism" [sic]. In such a framework, 'people of the arts' were invited to submit proposals with 'a Greek theme' for projects in all relevant fields. Thus, on the one hand the institution set out to achieve some kind of universality and

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[10] Quote from brochure and website.

transcendence, a movement that would locate its activities beyond 'Greekness' and on the other to portray the 'new Greece' and even redefine it.

During fieldwork and after, it became progressively apparent that imperatives were being gradually transformed from 'more international' to 'more Greece-focused' events. In some sense, due to such a development, the institution under study became a 'typical' cultural institution with atypical characteristics in terms of initial aspirations as well as pragmatic potential. However, for the purposes of this paper the important question is not whether the institution *has* met its aspirations. The question is rather the extent to which it *could* succeed taking into consideration not only pragmatic hindrances[11] but also and mostly the availability of discourses in the domain of public culture and their scope. Thus, conceptual and interpretational matters were at stake.

Within such an institutional framework the specific material studied consists of theatre projects discussed in relation to the possibility of their realisation. Usually a project would either be proposed to the institution by a multitude of different organisations and/or individuals – Greek or 'foreign' – or initiated by one of its 'higher' employees. Also, projects might be original or already performed and in need of financial assistance in order to be reproduced. It would then be given for consultation to the relevant consultant who might ask for additional information in order to make a recommendation to the managing director who would then submit it to the board of directors for rejection or initial approval. Ultimate realisation would depend, though, on the gradual smooth development of the practical aspects of the project (participants, locations, budget, etc.).

The selection of projects to look at has been based on them providing some 'Greekness'- referential material and not on their relevant success – which besides 'Greekness' criteria would take into considerations parameters such as 'quality', trustworthiness, exportability as well as equilibria to be kept on different levels. The choice of the theatre-field can be justified mainly through its supposed special link to 'Greekness' and Greek culture, as will also become obvious shortly. Most of the

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[11] Such parameters include, for instance, expectations and equilibria within the organisation as well as expectations and equilibria related to Greek internal politics and world politics.

theatre projects studied do evolve around some form of ancient drama-related performance either 'conventional' or mixed/hybrid. Such proposals are closely followed in number by projects centring around what is perceived as being a 'Greek theme', i.e. a mythology or antiquity referential theme.

Such uses constitute expressions by both those proposing projects and those considering them – thus revealing that there is a shared understanding on which communication is based. However, the reader can follow a project's provenance and relative success through the coding system.[12] Also, in the next section terms 'sender/receiver' refer to senders and receivers of proposals whereas 'insider/outsider' relate to geographical location in relation to Greece. Furthermore many of the issues discussed are not either uniquely or quintessentially Greek – although their constellation as well as their specific expressions may be. Still, either separately or in different variations or combinations, they may remain relevant for a series of other places.

In the following section the theme of the link between Greece and Ancient Greece is examined under two perspectives: a- in it being present through expected, common-sense assumptions about 'Greekness' as a 'restrictive and exclusive ethnic identity' and b- in the unexpected uses it may be subjected to. I shall demonstrate that depending on which characteristics of such an all-encompassing link one chooses to highlight, its potential can be exclusive or rather inclusive. Furthermore, within the two sets of such potentially exclusive or inclusive characteristics, further subsets can be identified with a more or less exclusive or inclusive potential. Such an approach resonates with an influential theory by Lakoff and Johnson which extrapolates from the use of metaphors in language to a theory of the metaphorical structuring of conception (1980). The main merit of their theory to me has been their passionate support for what has become so ubiquitous that we hardly notice anymore, i.e. that "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action" (1980: 3). Lakoff and Johnson set out to demonstrate how all three of these domains are superimposedly defined and delineated by metaphors. In doing so, even if not exhaustively, they point to a simple fact which, though, can be easily

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[12] See Appendix.

overlooked; that "in allowing us to focus on one aspect of a concept […] a metaphorical concept can keep us from focusing on other aspects of the concept that are inconsistent with that metaphor" (1980: 10).

In the light of these observations we could see the material discussed below as falling under the general theme or 'metaphor' 'Modern Greece is Ancient Greece' and the latter being considered as a constituting element of 'Greekness'. Now this could readily be characterised as an 'ethnic' characteristic of identity being related as it is to 'the past, roots and ancestors'. However, the uses of such a characteristic may vary extensively and this may be linked precisely to it being a metaphor.

In the first set of uses 'Greekness' is portrayed mostly as a restrictive and exclusive identity, thus predominantly supporting an equation of the type 'ethnic equals exclusive'. However the second set of characteristics offers a possible opening potential to such an 'ethnic Greekness'. Those characteristics are also based on the basic metaphoric structure 'Modern Greece is Ancient Greece', but in those instances other aspects of the metaphor are highlighted; aspects which shed light to its potential for a differential treatment.

3.2. The 'script'

3.2.1. 'Greekness' restrictive and exclusive

a. Theatre originated in ancient Greece

Such a characteristic seems to support the main metaphor of the link between Ancient Greece and Modern Greece in an exclusive way. According to one of the main contributors to the original design of the theatre-projects the predominance of ancient drama amongst both foreign and indigenous choices was justified mainly, he suggested in a short and informal interview, by ancient drama being perceived as the locus of theatre's birth.

Furthermore, because of Greece being perceived as the birthplace of theatre, an entire vocabulary commonly used in ancient drama plots/structure is available and easily reproducible in everyday life thus sustaining the assumption of a hereditary link. In one project, for instance, we read: "A 'choral' for the 21st century" or "the cantors' parts" etc.[13] Such vocabulary is often used in an un-qualified manner, based probably on an assumption of its recognisability as well as the right of the Greek user to use it. Apparently, antiquity/mythology references can be both easily made and easily understood, thus, supporting this perception of ancient drama being 'owned' by contemporary Greeks.

Additionally, such a hereditary link is accepted not only by insiders but by outsiders also who may, though, consider it as part of "the cultural heritage of the world theatre".[14] A premium of world-theatre having its ancestor in Ancient Greece complicates the rights of ownership on ancient drama (and Ancient Greece) for Modern Greece but also provides, as we shall see, a point of entry for Greece to the 'world cultural arena'.

b. Greek culture is old/ancient

Such a characteristic also seems to support the main metaphor of the link between Ancient Greece and Modern Greece in an exclusive way and it seems again accepted by both insiders and outsiders.

In some instances a characteristic of antiquity or even mythology suffices so as to describe a project as sufficiently Greek, as a project "with a specific Greek angle". Thus projects about *Icarus*, *the Trojans*, *Orpheus*, or *the Argonauts* are held to be primarily of Greek interest. The ancient deeds and creations are 'ours' too. Thus, a sender can claim that "the vision of the great tragic [writer] was for the triumph of Greece against barbarism to stay unabated through the centuries through his immortal play *The Persians*",[15] referring to Aeschylus' famous tragedy.

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[13] UP-PC-gr/S
[14] SP-R/R
[15] UP-No-gr/S.

The alleged antiquity of Greek culture is also recognised by outsiders. Thus, the ancient Greek mythological universe is conceptualised as both the link to Greece and the unquestionable core around which to construct an international event with "a theme derived from the mythological universe of ancient Greek drama".[16] Another project is proposed under the general title "the Greeks" when all its contents refer to ancient tragedy plots and heroes.[17] Thus, the understanding of such a link is capitalised upon by contributors to the discussion, although not uncomplicatedly since it can be taken to mean that Greek culture is *just* old/ancient, thus ascribing to Greek modernity or actuality a rather obscure status.

This characteristic is also supported by a usage which seems more straightforward but not, though, without, complicating implications. A way of considering Greek culture as old/ancient can also be observed in treating mythology as history. This usage may take a number of forms. For instance accounts of myths by ancient Greek writers may be taken to the word as if they describe something that actually happened. One finds mentions such as: "and it matches the descriptions of Ikarus' shrine, given to us by Pausanias and Apollodorus".[18] In another instance one reads: "it is known to all that Ikarus together with his father Daedalus in their effort to escape from Crete constructed wings from wax"[19] or it is maintained that "the footprints of the giant Hercules"[20] can be seen at some location. However, if mythology is treated as history, it can then be seen as belonging to the specific 'people' to which the relevant history belongs. Thus, it cannot be easily shared with 'others'.

c. Greek history is continuous

For most of the projects 'our' historical continuity seems to constitute 'accepted wisdom'. Thus protesters against one specific project can claim that they are "resisting the efforts of depreciation and distortion of the historical continuity of our tradition".[21] In relation to this characteristic we can observe the function of both language and visual means in order to collapse time and draw attention away from the

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[16] UP-PC-gr/S
[17] SP-IP-en/S
[18] AB-gr/P
[19] AB-gr/P
[20] AB-gr/P
[21] AB-gr/P

temporal distance between different periods of the past and close to their essential 'Greekness'.

In one instance the collapse of time is achieved through the person of the narrator: "At the beginning he is the 'singer' [aoidos] of the Homeric years who is developing into rapsodist-singer-narrator".[22] Thus, the narrator's function is portrayed in a unified way. Visual exemplifications of continuity may be offered, for instance, by a distinctive use of costumes. The production manager of a performance of Medea remarks: "The chorus is dressed with traditional very Greek post-Byzantine costumes… and resembles a chorus of black-dressed Caryatids".[23] Such a merging is perceived as absolutely legitimate; it is "a sample of an honest effort to offer a performance exactly as its own creator would have wanted it".[24]

In another project language is perceived as continuous as well as a further proof of historical continuity. Independently of the linguistic validity of such claims, Ionic language is perceived as becoming Pontic dialect or idiom or language, the latter constituting a link between ancient and modern Greece, and, thus, exemplifying, as a reviewer remarks, "the richness, the continuity and the span of our language".[25]

d. Greek culture is a whole

Possible inner contradictions are obscured through the submission to the general concept of the Greek Cosmos ('Ellinismos' – Hellenism). The term 'Ellinismos' - Hellenism has wider encompassing potential than saying 'the Greek nation' which is also commonly used. It's the Greek 'cosmos', referring to both the physical presence of Greeks in places different than Greece and to commonality of history and conception. The latter, then, could be seen as the essential metaphoric structure in this instance which provides coherence to a series of what could be otherwise incoherent patterns.

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[22] UP-NC-gr/S
[23] SP-R/Int-S
[24] UP-SE-gr/Int-S
[25] UP-SE-gr/Int-S

A unitary approach to 'Greekness' is supported by a series of expressions and means. There is talk of "the diachronic values of Greek culture".[26] Even a 'different' kind of company, a Street Theatre one, not only proposes mounting ancient comedy but also maintains that through its project "the catholicity and universality of both the myth and Greek Culture are highlighted".[27] Furthermore Greek culture is seen as a whole not only in its diachrony but also in its relative synchrony. Thus, a project initiated within the institution is promoted because "with this action will be attempted the rehabilitation of the continuity and the unity of contemporary Greek culture"[28]

e. Greece as the matrix vs Greece as Greek

Such a use surrenders only part of the 'Greekness' of Greek past and only to the extent that the ultimate control of its definition continues to remain in Greek hands. The balance seems hard to maintain though not unimportant as exemplified, *inter alia*, by its potential to become political.

The Greek myths are taken as being universal and 'the cradle of civilisation'. Thus, the Ministry of Culture supports actions by which "the Greek myths, which influenced global civilisation, return to the places where the artefacts they generated were inspired".[29] It would then seem that even if 'universal', the myths' essential 'Greekness' (which is proven inter allia by the linguistic and visual relics of a mythical past) should not be negated. Such an expression could be seen as an effort (a paradoxical one?) to combine universality with 'Greekness' in a way that takes advantage of 'outsiders'' assumption about what is Greek but also keeps the Greeks alert to what is theirs. However, it seems that as we descend levels of 'political sophistication' such nuanced combinations may become hard or even impossible. What matters is recognition of property both of mythology/history and its definition/version.

In a letter of protest for the somehow 'subversive' use of an ancient myth by a foreign director, we read: "The myth is Greek, its leading characters are Greek, it takes place

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[26] UP-YP-gr/S
[27] UP-YP-gr/S
[28] SP-IP-gr/S-R
[29] AB-gr/R

in the Greek space and it is not allowed for its international and humanistic character to erase its 'Greekness' and to insult myths of millennia and actually with money by the Greek public sector".[30] Notice here the repetition of the 'Greek' adjective in an effort to re-claim rights of property that have partly been lost through time. Notice how ironically if 'an outsider' accepts a Greek myth's universality, she strips it somehow from its 'Greekness' and how the 'insider' resists the completion of such a move. Unconventional interpretations are described elsewhere as "rape of sanctities".[31]

Thus, the Greek past's universality and its possible function as a symbol for non-Greeks may be ultimately incompatible with a perception of such a past as literally Greek. There is pride in its international recognisability. However, there is also fear in its unconditional surrender to some kind of international interpretation.

3.2.2. 'Ethnic opening'

a. Ancient drama and contemporary creation

Such a use does not consider traditional performances of ancient drama as sacrosanct. Instead, ancient drama is only used as the beginning of an otherwise innovative approach to theatre as well as well-known convention around which to experiment with new means. Thus, ancient drama may be used somehow subversively in terms of form. It may be fragmented or mixed with other texts; a usage characterised, as one sender remarks, by "an attitude of un-discipline and insubordination".[32] Ancient myth ('Medea', for instance) may function as 'raw material' for diverse "transformations and reproductions".[33] Ancient tragedy is providing a core well-enough known so that it has potential for reworking and 'renewing' other aspects of a performance; thus, it can "be put in the epicentre of a new discussion aiming to the theatre's renewal".[34]

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[30] AB-gr/P
[31] AB-gr/P
[32] UP-PC-gr/S
[33] UP-PC-gr
[34] SP-R/S

Additionally, and most importantly as far as contemporary Greece is concerned, ancient drama can be used subversively as a de-linker of Modern Greece from Ancient Greece. It can do so by providing a context through which to demonstrate that Greece has not only an ancient culture but also and mostly a contemporary one as well, something that may be difficult to do with contemporary means. The promotion of Greek contemporary creation through ancient drama may take different forms. The ambassadorial potential of ancient drama is not lost either on the sender's or on the receiver's end. The former remarks that a certain project will familiarise "the international public with […] the diachrony of the Greek cultural heritage through our country's contemporary artistic creation"[35] while the latter observes that "the proposal offers a unique possibility for showcasing contemporary Greek dramatic production".[36]

b. Regional over national – Regional as national

This use builds on the basic metaphor in order to cater, though, for a specific Greek region. Besides demonstrating the penetration of the metaphor from national to local consciousness, such use also shows its potential for differentiated treatment when other issues are at stake.

A section of "Greek past" can be appropriated by specific regions in order to advance regional claims. In one case the myth of Ikarus is claimed by the island of Ikaria (which owes its name to the myth) and through it by the group of the Dodecanese islands to which Ikaria belongs. It is also claimed by Crete where one part of the myth is supposed to unfold. These areas are "claiming the traditional relationship of the mythical heroes with these regions".[37] Such uses demonstrate, *inter alia*, the penetration of 'national discourses' on a regional level.

In fact different regions claim that they protest both in the name of their region and in the name of Greece. Thus, in a letter of protest we read that a project "will not only provocatively distort the Aegean's historical and cultural continuity. Furthermore it will exclude unallowably the national Aegean and Greek space from a cultural

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[35] UP-YP-gr/S
[36] SP-R/R

activity of international reach".[38] The space is Cretan, Ikarian, Aegean and thus Greek and national.

In a similar move of regional appropriation, Salamis, for instance, is advancing claims of having the right to host ancient tragedy events since it constitutes both the location of Aeschylus' *Persians* and Euripides' 'birthplace'.[39] Also, through the alleged link of their idiom to the "age-old Ionic dialect", Pontic Greeks can ask prioritisation when decisions have to be made.[40]

c. Mythology/Ancient Past as an allegory for present times

This is probably the theme with the bigger inclusive potential in terms of the issues we are mainly concerned with. Furthermore, such potential is captured by both insiders and outsiders. Such allegoric use can vary from a very general one (world-wide concerns) to a country (Greece or other) or even region or theme specific. For instance, the past/the myths may be used in order to 'converse' with danger zones as well as about ambiguous relationships with other countries. Such treatment seems to be favoured by 'others' in similar positions; for instance, neighbours in the wider South-eastern area. Whereas representatives of 'the West' seem more concerned with 'existential issues'. Such use is not new or specific to recent times. Rather the issues and situations it is activated for may be of more or less contemporary concern.

In one the initiator of a project aims to associating "the ambitions of classical mythological characters with the ambitions of today's people"[41] and to "creating tableaux of the seven sicknesses of mankind (narcissism, depression, schizophrenia, desire to stay young, self-hatred, desire to fly, desire to be loved)".[42] "Universal" issues can be tackled, for instance, through the myth of Oedipus. A sender remarks: "Through the myth, Oedipus the human being is revealed as the incarnation of the universal [ecumenical] man", since he brings with him all past, present and future since his message reverberates still open questions underpinning contemporary

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[37] AB-gr/R
[38] AB-gr/P
[39] UP-No-gr/S
[40] UP-SE-gr/S
[41] AB-gr/R
[42] AB-gr/S

Western thought … [It is about the] kinds of frontiers [that] must be overcome within the human and amongst humans and in what ways … The performance aims in revealing contemporary man's difficult itinerary towards common understanding".[43]

Thus, the myths have the potential of 'blending' different times: "The time is now and not now, but of ancient realms, which cannot be forgotten and which still inspire and haunt the day-to-day reality of the characters".[44] Furthermore, the myths have the potential of bringing different cultures together "with respect to Greek culture but also with contemporary universal references".[45]

Elsewhere, we read that "ancient themes" can be used in order to talk about the Balkans.[46] As already mentioned, the myths' universality and also them being sufficiently temporarily distanced also provide potential for their use as a medium to approach 'difficult' geographical zones. In such instances often the ancient/mythological reference is one that incorporates other regions in the project's development. Such potential is captured by both insiders and outsiders.

From an insider's point of view, for instance, a revival of an ancient ritual across both Greece and Turkey is proposed because it is assumed that it "can contribute in smoothening the relationships between the two states, with unknown (positive) [sic!] implications for now and the future".[47] For an 'outsider' but yet one located in the wider South-eastern area, turning to the "ancient past" is seen as a way for the region to cope in the present with new imperatives, with globalisation. In this instance the project is based on the myth of the Argonauts. We read: "The argonautic expedition constitutes a fact of global [ecumenical] significance which transcends the limits of Hellenocentrism… [It is about] the ancient cultures of the countries through which the Argonauts passed. ... [It constitutes] a way of salvaging the cultural identity of every nation".[48]

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[43] UP-NC-gr/S
[44] UP-NC-en/S
[45] UP-NC-gr/S
[46] UP-NC-gr/S
[47] UP-NC-gr/S. Interestingly enough, in this case, the revival of the ancient tradition as proposed would actually be upsetting the core of the myth since the tradition is based on an announcement of siege of a city now located in Turkey (Troy).

Whether such a treatment provides any assistance in removing a fixation with the past and dealing with the present remains in this paper an open question. As a sender puts it, "the dimensions, the limits and the possibilities of a meeting between ancient and contemporary world" should be further investigated.[49] This meeting, though, could be further extended. The subtleties as well as the potential of such a conversation are intriguing. The question of them being upheld and supported during the projects' development and actual performances remains open. Is 'Greekness' expanded through its conversation with other cultures and issues? Or is it rather that through the myth's essential 'Greekness', Greek culture can be seen as universal enough to encompass different cultures? And how much room is left for the other's genuine inclusion? The hope may be weak but such a differentiated treatment of the past/myths could possibly also be used in order to approach those puzzling 'others within'.

4. Concluding Remarks

In this paper I investigated the uses of one of the main characteristics of 'Greekness', namely Greece's link to Ancient Greece against the background of a conceptualisation of nationhood as either 'civic' or 'ethnic' as well as recent population changes in Greece and their implications. I then turned to cultural policy and the uses of such a theme in this context focusing on how much 'ethnic/exclusive' or not they are. Finally I tried to map those categories on a system of metaphors.

Real-life situations, testify in favour of the unpredictable ways in which people use what is expected of them. Alleged common ethnic routs do no necessarily work towards integration, a lot depending on which part of commonness one chooses to focus on. However, this is not an argument either in favour or against 'the ethnic'. Instead of trying to eradicate anything 'ethnic' or even surrendering any hope of change to the 'evil' ethnic characteristics of the nation, it could be that we could focus instead on those 'ethnic', or any for that matter, characteristics of which one could make inclusive use. Actually it would seem that, to some extent, people already do so.

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[48] UP-PC-gr/S
[49] UP-NC-gr/S

Thus, if changing 'Greekness' – however 'ethnically' or 'civicly' the latter may be defined – is difficult, using it differently may not be impossible.

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Appendix

Coding system:

UP:	Unsuccessful Proposal
SP:	Successful Proposal
PC:	Positive Consultation
NC:	Negative Consultation
No:	No Consultation
YP:	'Yes, provided that…'; positive consultation if specific criteria are met
SE:	'Somebody else's job…'; positive consultation but not suitable for the institution
AB:	Aborted project
IP:	In process of realisation
R:	Already realised
/R:	Receiver's End
/S:	Sender's End
/P	Protest
/Int-S:	Intermediary for Sender
gr-en:	Language markers; Greek – English

Such markers pertain to the moment of material collection.

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Abstract

Exploring processes of conversion and diversion:
The case of constructing a linguistically and culturally mixed peer group identity in an Athenian primary school

Emergent educational discourses in Greece seek to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and pluralism, while combating more traditional educational discourses advocating linguistic and cultural homogeneity (see, for instance, relevant articles in Fragkoudaki & Dragona 1997 as well as in Vafea 1996). The emergence of these discourses has been the outcome of large-scale migration from abroad and the continual movement of people belonging to linguistic minority groups from the periphery to urban centres. As a result, since the early 90s, Greek urban state-run schools have become one of the most significant sites where extensive linguistic and cultural contact among pupils from diverse backgrounds takes place (Katsikas & Politou 1999; Mitilis 1998). In this presentation, I present and discuss contact encounters between members of a linguistically and culturally mixed peer group (comprised of Greek-speaking monolingual and Greek-Turkish bilingual 4th graders) at a state-run primary school, in the centre of Athens.

Taking as a point of departure the use of Turkish words and phrases in contact encounters, I explore how the peer group members in question engage in the construction of a mixed peer group identity that draws its resources mainly from the majority (Greek) and to a lesser extent the minority (Turkish) languages and cultures. In this presentation, I take a social constructive approach to identity, which views identity construction as an on-going process (Ochs 1993). This conceptualisation of identity as a process is based on the premise that identities are discursively constructed and foregrounds the role of language as 'constitutive of' and 'constituted by' the participants' identities (Norton 2000: 5). The examination of these contact encounters reveals that the use of Turkish words and phrases triggers competing, yet parallel, processes of conversion to and diversion from constructing a mixed peer group identity. Drawing on insights from interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982) and ethnography (Hymes 1974, 1996), I argue that it is necessary to probe into both global contexts (e.g. national and local discourses regarding the self and the 'other' etc.) and local contexts (e.g. participant configurations, setting etc.) in order to interpret the aforementioned processes of conversion and diversion.

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Introduction

Aim of this paper is to present the intercultural and multicultural education policy in Greece, that is the education of the children who come from different cultural and ethnical groups (immigrants, Greek people who have emigrated abroad and have repatriated, ethnic, cultural etc minorities, generally children that have different ethnic, lingual and cultural capital). I believe that this theme is of great significance, as the political, economic and social situation in the Balkans is changing rapidly and that has as a result the immigration of great masses of people in Greece. This phenomenon makes the development of the intercultural education in Greece necessary and inevitable. In this essay we will deal with the education of foreign students in Greece as a public problem, which should be solved with the use of scientific means and methods. Specifically, we will try to find the most suitable solution using the systemic method, the systems' theory for making decisions, and we will compare the possible solutions and choose the best of them. In addition, the Greek laws that concern the intercultural education are being criticized, that is whether and at what extent they are sufficient for the stabilization of the intercultural education in Greece. Finally, we will suggest ways for the improvement of the situation.

The traditional theory of management describes management as the art of getting things done. The government with its main mechanism, public administration, manages, handles public problems, that is problems that harass a great number of people. The state is obliged to make decisions of vital importance for these problems. Public Policy is a system of valid decisions aiming at the solution and working out of public problems. It copes with problems of increasing complexity, of low predictability und great uncertainty. These features characterize public problems, which are complicated, have many dimensions and parameters, which often reflect opposite values and interests. Therefore they are extremely difficult to handle and deal with; that's why the use of systemic methodology in dealing with public problems is of vital importance.

Systemic theory and methodology aims at the best solution (the so-called "*optimum*") and it follows a complicated, step-by-step procedure, in order to make the right decision (let us remember the motto of Ross Ashby: "We can fight complexity with complexity"). The procedure of decision-making in systemic theory has the following stages:

- ✔ Structuring the problem using its main parameters. The right structure of the problem plays an essential role, for a false decision often derives from a false articulation of the problem. Structuring the problem entails defining the participants, that is the people who are directly or indirectly involved in it and undergo its consequences. It also entails defining the participants' demands, values and interdependences.
- ✔ Seeking, testing the alternative solutions.
- ✔ Choosing the value and the most suitable and sustainable solution using various criteria and standards, such as value analysis, cost-benefit analysis etc.
- ✔ Implementation of the chosen solution, feedback of information, monitoring by a system of controls and intervening in order to correct deviations.

The problem of educating children of immigrants and Greeks who have repatriated is a public problem, according to the criteria we have mentioned above. We will try to find all, if possible, alternative solutions and choose the most sustainable one using the systemic model of decision-making.

There is no doubt that in our days the vision of Mcluan about the 'universal village' is becoming reality. In our century deep and radical transformations and changes have taken place, which have impact on all fields of human activity, social,

economic, cultural etc. The phenomenon of the so-called globalization has invaded our lives.

Globalization affects the cultural 'face' of the societies in two ways. Firstly, the international exchange and transfer of ideas, ways of living and cultural goods accelerates and encourages international cultural interaction and the dialogue of the civilizations. Secondly, the internationalization of economic activities has brought to surface new social and economical needs and has obliged great masses of people to leave their countries and emigrate. The emigration leads to the mixing of different cultures and therefore it weakens their cultural uniformity. Globalization has made societies more open and extroverted, but on the other hand, it has presented numerous threats to the maintenance of cultural diversity. As a result, the importance of cultural diversity and identity is growing more and more in an increasingly globalized world.

Educational patterns for the education of minority groups

Regarding the education of children of cultural, ethnic minorities, different approaches and philosophies–often opposite to each other-have emerged.

➤ **Assimilation approach:** According to this approach the children of different cultural environment must comply with the prevailing culture and forget their particularities, which distinguish and differentiate them from the culture of the majority. Regardless of their ethnic origin, these children must learn the language and the culture of the country where they live, in order to be able to take part in the dominant culture. They are treated by the state as a problem, which hinder the evolution of the other children, as well as the procedure of the education. The teaching of their native language and culture is deliberately ignored, at least by public institutions, such as the school. Assimilation approach supports, in other words, the homogeneity of the society and acts like a melting pot of civilizations. Its objective is the acculturation of the minority groups and the total lack of different cultural and ethnic features. The assimilation approach was enforced in the 1960's and it is a purely ethnocentric model, for it demands from the immigrant to deny its roots at any cost and overcome the problems all by himself. It is a policy that has or must be abandoned in our days, because it is against the

ideal of democracy and the fundamental human rights, against the free will of the individual.

➤ **Integration approach:** This model accepts and approves those cultural characteristics and differences, which do not "insult" and have contradictions with the dominant culture of a society. The term "integration" presupposes that the immigrant group is recognized as cultural factor, which affects and is affected by the local population. The tradition of a minority group is integrated in the dominant culture, in the new ethnical identity. Integration approach is far better than the assimilation one, because it allows the minority groups to have and preserve their own culture, which is though overshadowed by the dominant culture. Even when the program of the school contains components of their culture, these are evaluated with the standards and the criteria of the dominant culture.

➤ **Antiracist approach:** This model accuses the legal framework and the social structures, which breed, reproduce and perpetuate the not equal treatment of the immigrant groups. That's why it speaks for the change of structures of the educational system, which favor racial discriminations. What is positive about this approach is that it sees the problem of teaching the foreign children as a whole, putting an emphasis on the reasons for the inequalities of the educational system. However, it is possible that politicians take advantage of the education, in order to satisfy their own interests.

➤ **Multicultural model:** In the 70's the multicultural model emerged, as the authorities realized that the assimilation as well as the integration model did not have positive results. On the contrary, inspite of the attempts of the assimilation and integration policy, the problems insisted and were inherited from generation to generation. Therefore, the interest of educational policy was concentrated on the cultural pluralism and polyphony, the so-called multicultural education. This kind of education recognizes the cultural particularities and claims that a social structure should be formulated, where all civilizations will exist together and this will not pose a threat to the unity and cohesion of the society. This model is very similar to the intercultural approach, but it ignores the change of the social structures institutions, so that less the privileged pupils, such as foreign pupils, will be benefited.

➤ **Intercultural Model:** That is the most democratic approach of those illustrated above, because it promotes the dialectical communication between people of different cultural groups. International Organizations, such the Council of Europe, Unesco and the European Union, use this term to declare not only the spirit that must inspire the school program but also to undertake actions for the equal opportunities in education for everybody. Intercultural model in education was presented in the 80's in Europe. Its principles are the equality of all civilizations, mutual understanding, empathy, tolerance, respect for the differences of the other, solidarity and discharge of ethnic and racial stereotypes and prejudices. In comparison to the other educational models, Intercultural Education is the most complete approach, because it stresses the importance of the communication, cooperation and understanding between the different cultural groups. Intercultural education is consistent with the demands of democracy. It stresses the cultural diversity and gives people the opportunity to express themselves through their particularities. The cultural identity of every group with particular cultural characteristics is a dynamic factor for the culture of the country, such as for the global culture.

Greek educational policy for the children of minority groups

As far as the education of foreign children in Greece is concerned, I believe that this theme is of great significance, as the political, economic and social situation in the Balkans is changing rapidly and that has as a result the immigration of great masses of people in Greece. This phenomenon makes the development of the intercultural education in Greece necessary and inevitable. The invasion of great masses of immigrants in Greece in the last few years has turned the Greek society into a multi-lingual, multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. This fact has brought about some problems as far as training children of different civilization, culture, race and language is concerned. How can these children adapt to a different environment and become familiar with a way of living, which differs from their own, from what they have been accustomed to or taught by their parents?

Apart from that, the accumulation of many foreigners has caused phenomena of xenophobia and racist behavior from the Greek people. A survey conducted by Unicef amongst schools in Athens and Thessaloniki showed clearly that children of immigrants in Greek schools suffer from suspicious and racist behaviour.

The Greek education policy for the foreign children has undergone lots of changes during the last decades. At first, the Greek state showed interest for the education of Greek people, who had repatriated to Greece, mainly from Australia, America and South Europe. As years passed by, it began to show interest in the children of foreign immigrants.

In the 70's small progress was made on behalf of the Greek state for the education of children of cultural, linguistic and ethnic minorities and of Greeks who have repatriated. At that time Greek educational policy was based on the "hypothesis of deficit". In other words, it was thought that these children had gaps and deficits in their education and so the Greek Ministry of Education had to take drastic measures, to make up and complete their knowledge. The Greek state treated these children with "charity" at the exams, especially in the linguistic lessons.

The second period includes the decade of 1980 until 1976, when a great number of Albanians and people from the states of the former Soviet Union have immigrated our country. The principle of the approval and acceptance of cultural diversity replaced that of cultural homogeneity. A new type of classes was established, which "embraced" foreign pupils. The primary aim of these classes was to help the foreign pupils understand and learn the Greek language, overcome the obstacles and difficulties and be integrated in the school system.

Although there have been laws which allowed the teaching of their mother language, that was ignored and was never taken into effect. Unfortunately, the education of foreign pupils' mother language was neglected by the Greek authorities.

In the 90's the Greek state has tried to come to terms with this problem. Thus, it has introduced a law with the following title: "The education of Greek people abroad and the intercultural education" (2413/1996). It is the first time that the Greek policy sets aside the assimilation approach and establishes the intercultural approach. Later in our paper, we intend to criticize this law. But firstly, we will try to solve the problem of education of foreign pupils using the systemic methodology.

Structuring the problem of foreign pupils' education

Public Policy's aim is to cope with problems of increasing complexity, of low predictability und great uncertainty. Public problems are extremely difficult to handle and deal with; therefore the use of systemic methodology is of vital importance.

The problem of educating foreign children is a difficult public problem, which should be solved by public policy and therefore systemic methodology should deal with it, so that the best solution can be found and implemented. What is characteristic about this problem is that plenty of people are involved in it. These people have different beliefs, principles and interests, sometimes opposite to each other.

The first step in the systemic theory and method it to structure the problem, that is to find and write down the participants, in other words the people involved in the problem and to check their decision systems and, mainly, their identity, their demands, their beliefs and the values, which their demands indicate.

First of all, the children of immigrants are directly involved in the problem illustrated above. They are forced to forget their native country and to live in a brand new country with different way of living. Everything for them is totally new. New neighbourhood, new –sometimes hostile- surroundings, new customs, new habits, new school etc. They are trying really hard to find their balance and stability between the new cultural paradigm and the tradition of their native country, which makes them, what professor Tsaousis describes it as 'the marginal man'. These children live an inner conflict, as they carry two controversial cultural capitals. On the one hand, they must learn Greek language, in order to communicate with the others and understand the lessons at school and at the same time they speak their native language at home. They want to de accepted by both communities. They want their classmates and their teachers to respect their particularity and diversity. The values, which they have, are: understanding, solidarity, equal treatment and the right to develop und unfold their personality.

The parents of these children require that their children have access to the education on an equal basis and are taught and "equipped" with τhe necessary knowledge, capacities and skillnesses, in order to be able to work and prosper in the Greek society. On the other hand, however, they encourage their children to maintain

and preserve their national identity, religion, culture, and language. The parents embody the values of social justice, equal educational opportunities and protection of cultural heritage.

On the other hand, Greek parents, sometimes influenced and affected by racial prejudices and xenophobic attitudes, do not like the presence of foreign children at school, because they think that these children are responsible for delay in progress and, to a large extent, for violations and phenomena of violence at school. For these reasons they demand that these children go to separate classes or, better, to separate, segregated schools. The values that they adopt and express are social harmony and high quality in education. The Greek nation is sometimes very or too sensitive, as far as matters of social cohesion and national identity are concerned, for it has undergone much harassment, until it has shaped its national identity.

Teachers are involved also in this problem, as they teach Greek pupils as well as foreign pupils. They want to be better and further trained, in order to be able to handle the cultural heterogeneity of their class and help foreign pupils with their difficulties. They want to communicate with the foreign pupils of their class and to have contact with their parents. They believe in the principles of equal treatment and education.

The school, as a broader system, which includes the above living systems, desires its right and harmonious function, the peaceful coexistence and cooperation of the pupils, their progress in class and in the examinations. It aims at social cohesion and harmony.

The Greek society, in which all children, including these of ethnic and cultural minorities, will be incorporated and integrated, is also involved in the problem. It believes in social cohesion, peaceful coexistence and equality.

Value Analysis

After having found the participants in the problem, we move on to the next step, which is the value analysis of the demands of the systems involved. This is a crucial procedure, because it discovers the values of the participants and puts them in a hierarchic structure. Considering the fact that each participant or person involved in

the problem sees things from his/her point of view, the decision maker is not able to decide objectively, unless he/she uncovers their values.

As we all know, Greek Ministry of Education is responsible for the education of all children and young people in our country. That's why it makes the decision in the case examined here. It must unveil the values, which are hidden in the demands of the participants and check whether these values are legal and compatible with the supreme law, which is the Greek Constitution. The recently revised Greek Constitution recognizes explicitly the right for everyone to develop freely and without obstacles his or her personality (article 5, par. 1). This means that this right is the supreme value, which should be taken into account in our value analysis.

At its decision the Ministry of Education will also take into account the relevant international Conventions. The right in education is protected on bilateral, multilateral and international level. According to the international law, minority groups have private and collective rights. They can have their own education, civilization and religion. It is also worth mentioning that the European Convention of the individual rights in 1950 recognizes the freedom of thought and religion (article 9) and the Convention of Unesco against discriminations in education forbids any kind of discrimination in education due to race, color, sex, ethnicity and social origin and binds the states to promote equality of opportunities in education (articles 1 & 4). The Convention of the children's rights of 1989 acknowledges the obligation of the states to take measures, as far as they have sufficient funds, to protect children's social and cultural rights. The binding states respect children's freedom of thought, beliefs and religion (article 14).

Above we attempted to associate the demands of people involved in the problem of education with the values, which they implied. After having found these values, we can put them in a hierarchic system based on the criteria of legitimacy in the international and national legal system. The individual right to develop freely the personality rises as the first and supreme value and it is recognized as a fundamental, unquestionable right by the international Conventions as well as by the Greek Constitution. Then it comes the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunities, justice and so on.

Finding alternative solutions and choosing one of them

After we have finished with the value analysis, we are making hypotheses and we are searching for the various alternative scenarios, in order to wipe out the problem. The main proposed forms of education of foreign children are: placing them in normal classes, isolating them in separate classes in the same school or in separate, special schools.

One alternative solution is to establish separate, segregated schools for children from different cultural background. This solution has been put into practice in Greece with the so-called "inter-cultural" schools. This solution is far from an ideal one, because it leads to marginalization, social exclusion and isolation of these children. Despite the fact that separate, segregated schools are called "inter-cultural", they do not promote intercultural education at all. The intercultural education encourages the communication and coexistence of people with different cultural traditions, whereas separate schools prevent and discourage this communication. Separate schools do not encourage cultural interaction, a key element, which contributes to mutual understanding, exchange of habits, cultural experiences etc. The idea of a society separated in cultural zones, which do not have contact to each other, has been abandoned, although the Greek law for the intercultural education mentions it. It is easy to realize that something like that is not intercultural education, but it leads to cultural alienation. Separate schools are against the principle of equal treatment and nurture discriminations. Besides, as far as the quality of the education is concerned, segregated schools have many disadvantages and deficits, as soon as the Greek state is not interested in the creation of appropriate educational books, audio-visual instruments and software for the "different" pupils.

Another solution would be separate classes in all or in some lessons at the same school. Separate classes could be in the sector of teaching children's native language. Separate classes could also lead to isolation, if they do not function properly or not in the school hours. It is also possible, that pupils with learning difficulties will go to these classes and as a result, these classes will deviate from their original purpose. This type of classes already exists at Greek schools without the desirable results.

The survey conducted by Unicef showed that the coexistence of Greek and foreign children at school distinguishes gradually or discourages xenophobic and racist attitudes. For the reasons clarified above we propose the function of schools with flexible educational programs as the most feasible, sustainable and suitable solution. In these schools there should be separate classes, where foreign pupils will learn their native language and culture. Greek pupils can participate in these classes, if they wish. These classes can be bilingual.

On the other hand, there is a considerable number of people, who claim that a proper education for these children costs too much for the Greek state and the Public Budget is poor in resources, especially when it comes to people who have immigrated –often illegally-in our country and maybe they live temporarily in Greece. This aspect not only simplifies things but is also rejected with regards to ethics. After all, the theory of human capital claims-correctly, in our opinion- that education is the best investment for each individual and consequently for the society as a whole. Provided that children will be taught the principles of justice, solidarity, equality and cooperation, they will become useful and decent citizens, which will benefit Greek society a lot.

In the systemic methodology of decision- making, choosing a solution means choosing a value. After having placed values in a hierarchic structure, we have chosen those, which are on the top of the hierarchic pyramid, which are simultaneously fundamental human rights. Apart from that, we can use Rawls' criterion, according to which a policy is better than another one, when it improves the situation of those, who are in the worst situation. In this case, the children of immigrants are in the worst situation.

The law 2413/1996 about the intercultural education

As we have said before, the basic legal framework about the education of foreign children in Greece is 2413/1993 with the title: "The Education of Greek children abroad and the intercultural education". The composition that accompanies this law mentions: "Intercultural Education starts from the recognition of multiculturalism in societies and the special value of all civilizations".

In contrast with the above, the aim of the law 2413 is the promotion only of the Greek cultural identity, the advancement of the Greek language, Greek and orthodoxical tradition and not the advancement of multiculturalism.

This law has some contradictions. As indicated by its title, it consists of two parts. The first part is big and arranges the issues of Greek education abroad and the second part concerns intercultural education and it is very small in comparison with the first. According to the law, intercultural education does not concern all pupils but only the pupils "with educational, social and cultural particularities". This however is against the real meaning of intercultural education. A really intercultural education embraces all children and encourages their interaction. Furthermore, in article 34 schools for children with these particularities are established. These schools, as we have explained above, reproduce social exclusion.

Propositions

The orientation of the Greek educational system is obvious in lessons and the way of teaching them. For example, in the lesson of religion Christianism is projected as the biggest religion, whereas the others are rejected as dogmatic or primitive or of lower quality and consequently, they are ignored. Furthermore, the lesson of history focuses on west European civilization, whereas the African and Asian civilizations are ignored and, somewhat, rejected. In the lesson of geography too emphasis is given to the European countries.

According to what we have analyzed above, Greek and foreign pupils should acquire and develop an ecumenical notion through the educational procedure. Primary role of intercultural education is to make pupils realize their rights and obligations, to act democratically and to become active citizens in a pluralistic, multicultural society. The structure of the school should also reflect children's different cultures. It should encourage them to speak about their language, customs and so on. The importance of learning foreign languages is also vital. One of the goals of the program of the European Union titled COMENIUS are to encourage the learning of not so widespread languages in Europe, to improve the education of emigrants and gypsies and to combat racism. The communicative and cooperative method of teaching should also be promoted.

It is worth mentioning that the Greek Ministry of Education has organized a program called "Olympic Education". This program has the ambition to inspire and motivate all pupils without discrimination and generally all young people who live in Greece to develop the spirit of cooperation, understanding and peace. One of the priorities of the program is "Fighting against social exclusion and racial discriminations and the multiculturalism". This program could also serve the goals of intercultural education.

The Greek state must put into force educational programs, which will include features of the civilizations of all pupils. The implementation of such programs will stimulate the critical thought and the fantasy of the pupils and it will broaden its horizons and experiences. New lessons could be introduced in Greek schools, such as the history of civilizations etc. Such lessons strengthen cultural interaction and lead to abolishment of ethnic and racial stereotypes and prejudices.

Training of teachers is also crucial. Teachers need further training in intercultural matters, in order to respond effectively to the challenges of a multicultural class. That's why seminars of this kind should be organized all over Greece. The creation of appropriate educational material is also a necessary prerequisite for the implementation of intercultural paedagogy in the school classes. Such targets however, cannot be reached without sufficient sources and they call for long-term planning.

The Greek state should develop an action plan on national level, in order to transform intercultural educational policy into successful programmes. Therefore, there is a compelling need for the improvement and reform of the legal framework about the intercultural education. The law 2413/96,which was outlined above, does not serve the meaning and traits of intercultural education. It is up to the Greek state to re-establish it and to improve it, so as to preserve the cultural identity and diversity of these ethnic minority groups that live and work in the Greek territory. Consequently, it will promote social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, tolerance and prosperity of the Greek society, which are identified and acknowledged as urgent priorities. So, the clash of civilizations, which Huntington advocates, will be prevented.

Cultural minorities and cultural diversity should be recognized and the uniqueness of each civilization should not be overwhelmed by global trends. It is true that globalization poses a serious threat to cultural diversity and heterogeneity.

According to the system's theory, when a system is open to the challenges and influences of the surrounding environment, it is more sustainable. Therefore our society should adhere to cultural diversity and pluralism, in order to survive and flourish. After all, we ought to bear in mind that all the world's civilizations have emerged not out of isolated, self-sufficient models of development, but out of cross-connections, influences, out of the process that allowed everyone to contribute, which allowed synthesis and creative assimilation, and often out of contradictions. The major challenge of our civilization is to integrate cultural differences as organic elements of contemporary society.

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Public Services

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Asylum, Transit Migration and the Politics of Reception: the Case of Kurds in Greece

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the relation between irregular and asylum migration and the institutional and socio-economic structures of the host society. Based on empirical findings from a case study of Kurdish migrants in Greece, the paper follows the asylum cycle and focuses on the organisation of the journey, the period of temporary and permanent settlement in Greece. At the same time, the analysis addresses certain aspects of the migration process, such the question of whether Greece is a transit country in South-North movements, the role of relations between migrants and locals and the dynamic of intra-group divisions (particularly political) among Kurds affecting migration patterns and migrant relations.

i. Introduction

Irregular migration has been one of the most pressing challenges for Greek external and social policy in recent years, because of the size of population flows, the geography of porous borders and, mainly, the entanglement of irregular migration with asylum. Boats loaded with Kurdish, Iraqi, Afghani or Pakistani migrants reach the Greek shores on an almost routine basis. Few of them apply for asylum and most choose to remain undocumented, hoping to continue their journey and apply elsewhere in Western Europe. The dominant impression is that most forced migrants from the Middle East stay in Greece only temporarily. The present paper comes to challenge this impression and argue that transit migration is not a status, but a stage in the asylum cycle; depending on the circumstances, some migrants also settle permanently in Greece. The paper analyses the organisation of asylum migration in transit and permanent settlement and in political mobilisation, and highlights the importance of the context of the receiving country in shaping migration patterns.

The paper is divided in three parts: the first part provides the context of asylum migration and policy in Greece. The second describes the operation of smuggling and the role of networks in decision-making, in the journey and temporary stay in Greece. The third part describes the process of settlement and integration of Kurds in Greece, and the political mobilisation of the Kurdish migrant community.

ii. Asylum migration in Greece

a. Migration management and the asylum policy framework

Like most South European countries, Greece has experienced in the last decade a transformation from a country of emigration to one of immigration. The 1990s saw the arrival of large numbers of labour migrants mainly from the Balkans and Eastern Europe, but also labour migrants and asylum seekers from the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. The features of the 'Southern European' model of migration, as described by King (2000), all apply here: a heterogeneity of nationalities; a gender asymmetry between males from the Middle East and the Balkan countries, and females from Eastern Europe and the

Philippines; an increasing participation of urban educated migrants working as low-cost labour; and a high degree of illegality. Research on migration in Greece has mainly focused on labour migrants from the Balkans and the former Soviet Union who comprise the majority of foreigners in the country. The relatively small annual number of refugees and asylum seekers gives the impression that this issue in Greece is minor; in 2002 the country had a refugee population of 18,852, out of which two thirds were new applicants and people whose application was still pending.[1] These numbers do not, however, reflect the actual size of the refugee population, a large part of which remains undocumented, often reluctant to apply; and they also do not include the rejected asylum seekers, the majority of whom end up staying in the country. To state the obvious, no reliable data exists on illegal entries. Estimations are usually based on apprehensions at the moment of illegal border crossing. The number of migrants arrested for illegal entry in 2001 was 6,800 people.[2] This does not however include the cases of 'successful' entries; instead, the numbers of migrants arrested inside the country for the same year was 210,000.[3] Another 114,181 were arrested by mid-2002.[4] In total, the number of foreigners in Greece, including regular labour migrants, irregular migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and 'returnees' from the former Soviet Union is estimated to be close to one million (Cavounidis; 2000). Given the short history of migration flows, the transformation of Greece from a country of zero-immigration to one with a migrant population that comprises 10% of the country's total is an extraordinary phenomenon in Europe.

Having ratified the main international conventions regarding refugee protection, Greece is considered an asylum country.[5] In addition, with Law 1996/1991 Greece also ratified the 1990 Dublin Convention regarding the state responsible for the examination of an asylum application lodged in one of the EU countries. Refugee matters are regulated primarily by articles 24-25 of Law 1975/1991 on the Status of Aliens, as amended by Law 2452/1996. Presidential Decrees PD 189/1998 and PD 61/1999 regulate the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and people under humanitarian status, and the procedures and criteria for granting asylum in Greece.[6] Unlike many other EU countries, asylum seekers in Greece are refused a subsidy, but they have the right to temporary employment during the time their application is being examined. The asylum examination process is usually rather long, between 1,5 and 2 years including appeals, and the recognition rate very low: while in 2000/2001 it was ranging between 7 and 10%, in 2002 it dropped to 0.3%.[7] These factors discourage people's decision to apply in Greece. In general, in a country with no previous

experience of immigration, institutional provisions are still in the process of development and migrants mainly rely on NGO support and their individual efforts to find employment in the informal economy.

The issue of irregular migration has become one of internal and external security concerns for the country and for the European Union, because of its extent (Baldwin-Edwards; 2001), and because of the geopolitical role of Greece as a gatekeeper at Europe's southeastern border. Thus, migration management has focused on the one hand on the regularization of resident labour migrants, and on the other on the reinforcement of border protection, through the recruitment of additional border guards and the intensification of sea patrols.[8] With regards to smuggling, the amendment of article 55 of the law 2910/2001 on the illegal transportation of migrants into Greece aims to help fight smuggling through stricter punishment of smugglers (imprisonment, high penalties and vessel confiscation), and to protect migrants through granting temporary residence permits and protection from deportation. One of the most important aspects for Greece in the area of migration management is cooperation with Turkey, given Turkey's geographical position in the map of South-North migration movements. The two countries signed in November 2001 a Protocol for the readmission of illegal migrants.[9] Its implementation, however, has not been considered successful up to now – at least from the Greek side. In practice, only very few migrants have been readmitted to Turkey; out of 5,600 applications to Turkey in 2002, only 100 were accepted at first instance, and 34 after further negotiation.[10] The readmission protocol has been also criticized for not guaranteeing the protection of refugees and access to the asylum procedure.[11] As Sitaropoulos (2003) argues, this kind of inter-state cooperation is doomed to fail because it is based on a purely police control mentality and not on exchange of information and study of the needs of the migrants and the states. Outside the scope of readmission, Greece has informally undertaken deportations of migrants back to the transit or sending countries. Cases of deporting torture victims and other forced migrants have been repeatedly reported by international organisations.[12]

Nevertheless, several recent cases of mass arrivals have displayed the difficulty to control migration flows, and the ambivalent attitude of the state with regards to the nature of these flows: for example, the case of the ship 'Brenler' that arrived in Zakynthos in January 2002, loaded with almost 1,000 Kurds, or the case of 3,000 migrants who, having crossed the Greek-Turkish border of Evros, gathered in the border region of Thrace in the summer

of 2002. In both cases, the state reaction was an oxymoron of providing temporary reception facilities, but with the aim to deport the migrants soon as irregulars. State officials and the public generally share the impression that in many instances labour migrants are abusing the asylum system. The entanglement of irregular migration with asylum is indeed a very problematic issue in Greek and EU migration policy. The restrictive framework of asylum in Greece and the EU in general has not managed to control migration flows, but only divert the problem elsewhere – to illegality. In addition, in pragmatic terms it is a fact that, today, migration and asylum flows in one member state are common European issues *sui generis*: without a common EU policy framework, migrants will move between European member states according to the types of rights, the protection and the opportunities available. It is therefore that the Greek Presidency of the EU in 2002 has adopted the priority of comprehensive migration management to promote the integration of existing migrants, an enhanced protection of regional borders, and an effective and fair system of burden sharing.[13]

b. Kurdish Migrants in Athens

The number of asylum applications in Greece has been fluctuating during the last decade, with peak times the early 1990s, the years 1996-7, and from 2000 onwards (TABLE 1). Regarding nationality, roughly 50% of asylum seekers and refugees in Greece during the last decade have originated from Iraq, Turkey and Iran.[14] (TABLE 2). Among them, the majority are said to be Kurds, who came to Greece in three main waves: in 1991-1992, after the use of chemical weapons in Halabja, Iraq and the Gulf war, in 1994-5 after the escalation of violence in Southeastern Turkey, and in 1996-8 due to the ongoing conflict between Kurdish parties in Northern Iraq (TABLES 3,4,5). A small number of Kurdish refugees from Turkey had already arrived in Greece in the late 1970–early 1980s. Kurdish migration from Iraq has continued unabated up to the present, which reflects the social and political instability and economic deprivation in Northern Iraq. The total Kurdish population in Greece is difficult to estimate, because of the constant border crossings in and out of the country but also because of the absence of statistics for this particular group: applicants are recorded according to citizenship (Iraq, Iran, Turkey), while ethnicity ('Kurds') is mentioned in the hearing process only[15] (TABLE 6). In 1997-8 estimations ranged between 6-7,000 and 24,000, while in 2001 an estimation gave 10,000:[16] out of those roughly 1,600 are said to live in the refugee camps, 2,000 in Athens, in flats, sheds or

empty lots in downgraded inner city areas, some in other cities;[17] and about 2,000 in Patras.[18]

The present paper is based on field research conducted with Kurdish refugees and asylum seekers in Athens in 2001-2. Field research was based on qualitative research methods and involved in-depth interviews with 35 men and 15 women living in the refugee camps of Penteli and Lavrion, the reception hall of Medecins du Monde and houses in the Greater Athens Area. The research also involved interviews with policy makers, NGO officials, activists, and discourse analysis of secondary data, media information and parliamentary proceedings.

iii. The journey and temporary settlement in Greece

The analysis of the internal mechanism of asylum migration is inspired by Koser's (1997) idea of applying a social networks approach to the asylum cycle. Koser argues that the interaction between social networks and migration varies between individuals through the asylum cycle, and very much depends on the structures of the reception country. The present paper also argues that the organisation of asylum and irregular migration needs to be seen in relation to macro/micro factors, such as the structures of Greece as a receiving country (socio-economic, political, reception structures), ethnic group structures and individual dynamics. In other words, the decision to stay in Greece or leave for another country, and the type of integration witnessed is a result of the interplay of those factors.

a. Crossing the border

It is almost an established practice for migrants from the Middle East to use smugglers for the exit, passage through third countries and entry into Greece. The main points of entry are the Evros river at the Greek-Turkish border[19] and the islands of the Eastern Aegean (Samos, Kos, Rodos etc). According to interviews, Istanbul and the Turkish coast cities are meeting points for migrants and smugglers arranging the crossing into 'Europe'.[20] On the contrary, trying to cross the border without the help of a smuggler is not easy; a young Kurdish man I interviewed had to try seven times. About forty migrants are reported to have died in the border minefield in the last five years.[21] Migrants leaving Greece for Western Europe also use the smuggling service by plane, buying fake passports, by car (also hiding in trucks) through Albania, or by boat, crossing from Patras to Italy.

The smuggling business is organized by the *kaçakçi,* drivers in both sending and receiving countries. They are based in Iran, Iraq, Turkey and do the crossing of the Iran/Iraq, Iraq/Turkey and Turkey/Greece borders, similar to the *coyotes* at the Mexican/US border (Spencer; 2001). The smugglers used in these borders are not always in contact with smugglers in other countries; they may be casually engaged in the business, or be part of a small network of co-ethnics. According to the Ministry of Public Order (MPO), 190 such networks involving Greece have been identified in the last two years.[22] The case could be described more as small smuggling groups rather than mafia-type organisations that are active in the region (Icduygu and Toktas; 2002). In fact, using the smuggling service is mostly a short-term transaction between the individual offering the service and the migrant paying for it. According to interviews, contacting a *kaçakçi* in Iraq, Iran or Turkey is very easy, since they are numerous and well known in the local community. In Greece, *kaçakçi* are also known in the refugee camps, and are easily contacted through mobile phone. Among the Kurds interviewed, those who had paid a *kaçakçi* agreed with the practice, for being the only professional way to leave the country. '*They are doing their job. We would not be here otherwise'*, a young Kurd told me once.[23] Moreover, smugglers serve as one, and sometimes the only source of information about the policy framework and living conditions in the destination countries, and can affect migrant decisions for the choice of destination.

In a summary, the smuggling business has become a key part of the migrant journey, assisting with its organisation, as well as choice of destination. In the context of increasing restriction, crossing the border illegally has become not one, but almost the only option for forced migrants who want to immigrate to Europe; and paying a smuggler is unfortunately the standard means to achieve that.

a. Social networks in the migration process

The smuggling business would not operate but for the migrant networks that mobilize in the asylum cycle to finance the trip. Family, relatives and friends at home and other destination countries mobilize and send money for the travel fees. In turn, those in Greece take up part-time jobs to pay off their relatives/friends; the capital, instead of being invested in one country, is circulating between homeland, transit and destination country.

With regards to information about the countries of asylum, Kurdish migrants usually have to rely on smugglers, the media, and rumours. Some Kurds with friends/relatives in Greece had been well informed about reception facilities, the asylum application process, welfare provisions for refugees, or meeting points and social life. By the time they reached the shore, they knew where to go and whether to apply for asylum in Greece or elsewhere. Their relatives or friends followed the same route before them. Most Kurds, however, are completely unaware of the situation and have had no information from friends or relatives in Greece prior to emigration. Thus, transnational ties in Greece or other destination countries may affect migration selectivity (who leaves) and may give an orientation for the choice of destination; those with relatives/friends in countries other than Greece will most likely want to join them. Whether they do in the end of the day is another question related to structural and individual factors – the opportunities for asylum, survival and integration offered in Greece and the other countries.

c. Being 'in transit'

The impression, therefore, that all Kurds do not aim to stay in Greece but are 'in transit' on their way to Western Europe – an impression dominant in the public and media discourse, but also shared among the public and NGO officials I interviewed[24] - needs to be further examined. Indeed, some interviewees in the reception camps stated their intention to leave soon. 'Soon', in fact, can be somewhere between three months and five years; all this time, migrants stay in refugee camps, empty lots, or shared flats, work in the informal economy – in jobs like constructions, services, or agriculture – and save money for the second journey. Contrary to those permanently settled, Kurds who are temporarily staying in Athens are much more oriented towards their homeland and other destination countries, than towards the place they are staying. Many among those interviewed in the camps were not interested in socializing with other camp residents, and even less with locals and migrants outside the camp, and knew very little about the city and Greek society. They also had no interest in learning the language, even though they worked in the local market. Instead, they kept regular contacts with their friends in Germany, Sweden and England. Being 'in transit' proves to be a *process* rather than a *status,* a process of engaging/or not engaging socially and economically in the host country.

The existence of a large number of irregular migrants and asylum seekers living in a status of temporariness and semi-protection in Greece has consequences for the people, the state and the region. For the migrants, being 'in transit' is a period of vulnerability, insecurity and socio-economic marginalisation;[25] an invisible population, living on the margins, with no obligations and no rights. This prolonged irregular situation can be counterproductive in the process of smooth social and economic integration and poses a human security threat for migrants (Graham T. and Poku N.; 2001). For the state, the toleration of this phenomenon not only raises moral and ethical issues with regards to the regulation of migration flows, but it also poses a security threat, because the existence of an irregular migrant population may reinforce intolerance and xenophobic trends towards migrant populations in the country in general. For the region – the EU – the presence of irregular migrants living 'in transit' in one member state has the potential of further irregular or asylum migration flows to other countries. The existence of 'transit' migration in Greece is the result of the absence of an effective burden-sharing mechanism among member states that can prevent 'asylum shopping' and promote migrant integration in Europe.

iv. Settlement and Integration

Still, some of the undocumented migrants and asylum seekers are settling down in Greece. The decision to stay in Greece is not necessarily linked to the length of residence, but depends more on the stage of individual integration during this period, mainly in terms of proper accommodation, employment and development of relations with Greeks. From an institutional aspect, Greek reception structures, as described in the first part, do not seem to encourage permanent settlement at the moment, for they do not provide an infrastructure for integration from its initial phase. Migrant participation is left to depend on the knowledge of the language, social relations with Greeks, and invisible recruitment in a well-established informal economy (King et al.; 2000). The latter has to do with the fact that, from the host society's point of view, migrant participation in Greece is understood as participation in the labour market.[26] In relation to Soysal's (1994) models of migrant membership in a state (corporatist, statist, liberal, fragmented), Greece offers opportunities for 'liberal' membership in the informal economy for all types of migrants, regular and irregular labour migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Thus, all Kurds interviewed were working in construction or in the service sector. Only few of the Kurdish women in the sample worked, usually in manufacturing or in the service sector.

a. Social Relations with Greeks

Relations with the host society can sometimes become a promising source of social capital for Kurds. As argued by Korac (2001), these spontaneous relations can be a significant resource for accommodation, employment, socialisation and adaptability, in the light of the absence of well-established state policies for integration. Among the Kurds interviewed, it was those who had ties with Greeks who had more stable jobs and were feeling more integrated in Greece – even if migrant participation still fits into class boundaries between a Greek/dominant versus a migrant/marginal social stratum. In addition, judging from three interviewees' cases, Kurdish men married to Greek women managed to overcome even nationality-based class boundaries. Almost all Kurds interviewed, who had spent more than a year in Greece, stated that they feel a sense of affinity with the culture, the mentality, the strength of family ties and the character of socio-economic structures in Greece. A comparison with North European receiving countries reveals a striking contrast; in Finland, Middle Eastern migrants found social interaction with locals hard to attain (Valtonen; 1998); in England, Kurds found themselves withdrawing into a cultural enclave (Griffiths; 2002). The affinity that Kurds, and Middle Eastern migrants in general, feel with Greek society supports not only the socialization with locals, but also access to the labour market. This factor was also mentioned as a motivation to stay in Greece, despite bureaucratic difficulties and welfare deficiencies. Needless to stress, the ease migrants have with social and economic structures may be a truly positive asset for the success of integration programs, but cannot replace the need for institutional developments.

Another factor contributing to the good relations between Greeks and Kurds is the Greek experience of 'refugeeness' (Hirschon; 1998) in the 1920s, with the arrival of ethnic Greek refugees from Asia Minor, and their 'successful' integration in what resulted to be a remarkably ethnically homogeneous state (Kitromilides; 1989). In a country with a refugee past, collective memory has nurtured feelings of sympathy and solidarity towards displaced persons (Voutira; 2003). And what is more, like many of today's Kurdish refugees, it was Turkey that the Greek populations of Asia minor were forced to flee from some eighty years ago. It is remarkable how the people of Nea Smyrni, now second and third generation of the 1920s' refugees, have been very welcoming and supportive towards the undocumented, homeless Kurds in the area (N.Smyrni Municipality; 2002). Using the conception of 'migration systems' of Kritz, Lim and Zlotnik (1992), one could possibly

describe the two neighbouring countries, Greece and Turkey, as parts of a migration system of various linkages/exchanges, social, cultural, religious, economic – imprinted by the historical ties and cultural syncretism during the Ottoman Empire – part of which is the migration from Asia Minor after 1923 and the current migration flows.

b. Migrant ties and migrant communities

Beyond the role of institutional, socioeconomic and ideological structures of the host society, another factor shaping the migration process is the internal dynamic of the ethnic group, its character, the levels of relationships and identification. It will be shown, that the existing Kurdish population in Greece has not been able to support newcomers with social capital as a migrant community would. This is an additional explanation of why settling down in Greece has become for Kurds a question of individual efforts.

In his research on Kurds, Iraqis, Iranians, and Assyrian Christians in Greece in 1991, Black highlighted the role of family, locality and social networks as particularly important, in 'securing access to employment, housing, and resettlement overseas […], loans or mutual support in the event of unemployment, bereavement, or other unexpected event'.[27] He also identified a spatial concentration of Kurds in particular Athenian neighborhoods that followed the thread of family networks. That was at a time prior to the large migration flows that would follow throughout the 1990s. The geographical situation was not exactly the same at the time of my fieldwork. Most newcomers had found temporary – and often prolonged – shelter in refugee camps and NGO hostels, or they had randomly squatted abandoned houses in the city centre. There are only few cases of ethnic conglomeration, like the Kurds in the area of Nea Smyrni, Athens. This community consists almost exclusively of 250-300 undocumented young men, who live under very bad conditions in squatted houses and work in part-time construction jobs in the area. Most of them (79%) came to N. Smyrni because of their social ties with other migrants in the area (N.Smyrni Municipality Report; 2002). Another ethnic concentration is known to exist in the municipality of Aegaleo, this time of Iraqis, Assyrians and Chaldeans, but only few Kurds.

Apart from these two examples, where settlement is centred around social ties, in general, relations between Kurds are randomly formed, following the groups made during the journey and at the place of arrival (i.e. reception camps), and short-term, based on

solidarity to meet survival needs, on locality ties (town/area of origin), or political affiliations. In addition, migrant relations may offer psychological and material support, but they cannot generate employment, which is usually assisted more by NGOs or relations with Greeks. Kurdish newcomers may have a couple of friends or relatives in Greece, but no reference point to a settled migrant community. The reasons for the absence of a community are on the one hand, the short history of Kurdish migration in Greece and the high mobility of this population in and out of the country, and on the other, the maintenance of ethnic/political divisions among Kurds in the host society. Divisions are evident between Kurds from Turkey and the rest (from Iraq or Iran), and between Kurds from the same country affiliated with rival parties. Thus, Kurdish migrants form various sub-groups based on contingent ethnic/social/political ties: the refugee camp populations, the homeless, the Kurdish party affiliates, the integrated but non-politicised refugees/asylum seekers.

v. The political mobilization of Kurds in Greece

The distinction between politicized and non-politicised Kurds is not only one of ideology and socialization, but also one of different migration patterns: the 'organised' refugees on the one hand, the 'migrants' on the other – to use the terms that Kurds use for their self-ascription. The number of 'organised' i.e. party members, is rather small (according to interview information, a few hundred in total), compared to the masses of undocumented/ asylum migrants.

The 'organised' are members of Kurdish parties from Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria, that opened offices in Athens and other Greek cities during the last decade[28] in order to raise awareness and internationalize the parties' political projects. For 'organized' refugees, migration means that they may share accommodation and everyday life with comrades, and contribute to the party - financially, or by working in the party offices, distributing information material or by joining demonstrations, hunger strikes, etc. According to interviews, the party provides its members with protection in the host country, and often with the guarantee of a safe journey, by employing other party members to cross the border, or using good contacts with smugglers – this is where smuggling networks and political networks meet. Above all, 'organised' migrants distinguish themselves from the rest on the basis of their identity as political exiles - a *Diaspora* identity rather than a

migrant one. For them political action has been the reason and the pattern of migration, as participation in a transnational, but exclusive political community.

The Kurdish parties' agenda in Greece has been homeland-oriented and confrontational, aiming to attract the influence of foreign relations for a political change in their homelands. The parties mobilized more as *political* than as migrant movements, because this is the context of the 'political opportunity structure' (Ireland; 1994) they found; until the arrest of the leader of PKK Abdullah Ocalan in 1999, Kurds were tolerated in Greece as a *political* exile community, whose resistance movements were seen with solidarity in the context of Greek-Turkish relations (Papadopoulou; 2003). A reflection of this is that in the late 1990s the public rhetoric about Kurds in Greece was that they were 'refugees'. The parties rarely mobilized for migrant issues in the host society, and as a result, became dissociated from the rest of the Kurdish migrants - contrary to the case of Kurds/Turks in Germany, where, according to Ostergaard-Nielsen (2001), homeland/Diaspora politics and migrant politics are inseparable categories.

Nonetheless, not all Kurdish asylum seekers in Greece are fleeing persecution - many are migrants fleeing political instability and economic deprivation. For them, migration means rebuilding their lives and not mobilizing for a political cause, even if they have been politicised in their homelands in the past. On the other hand, ex-party members (who had been active in Greece for some years) stated that engagement in homeland politics made them feel insecure, dependent and excluded from the host society, because of the social control and the inter-party conflicts that spilled over to the new environment. Politically inactive migrants faced pressure from both sides, from the Kurdish parties who adopted a patronizing role towards Kurdish migrants, and from the host society, who perceived Kurds collectively as politicised. After the arrest of Ocalan, where the risk of associating political exiles with foreign relations became visible, engagement in homeland politics has come to be translated by asylum seekers as a stigma, rather than as a claim to refugee identity. Integration is understood as stepping out from the Kurdish political community. At the same time, the media rhetoric about Kurds arriving in Greece after 1999 shifted from being 'refugees' to being 'illegal migrants'.

In a nutshell, the type of political networks and the role of Diaspora politics for certain politicised Kurds have drawn lines of division with the others and weakened the potential

of ethnic community formation to support integration. As Wahlbeck (1998) also argues for Kurds in England, interpersonal relations are the continuation of the types of social and political relations the Kurds had in their countries of origin.[29] Moreover, the type and dynamic of political mobilization of Kurdish refugees has very much depended on the political opportunity structures and the foreign relations environment at a particular time.

vi. Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to analyse the organisation of refugee flows to Greece in relation to the country's reception structures. Irregular and asylum migration, temporary and permanent settlement need to be seen as different phases in the process of forced migration, where migrants negotiate their status according to the conditions for settlement. The fact that Greece is currently both a transit and a destination country has more to do with the absence of a common EU migration and asylum policy and with the poverty of domestic reception and integration mechanisms to help migrants rebuild their lives, rather than with the migrants' intentions and the operation of their networks. A particular point made here is the positive asset of informal, social relations between Kurdish migrants and Greeks, which is a good indicator for the integration prospects of this group and their offspring. With regards to the ethnic group's particularity, the mobilisation of Kurdish refugees in homeland politics that managed to create a set of distinct and self-sustained exile communities, quite dissociated from the rest of Kurdish forced migrants. In their case, the strength of ethnic/political affiliations overrides the experience of displacement. This division has also been sharpened by the host society's perception and collective ascription of Kurds as politicised. At the same time, the categorization of people as 'refugees' or 'labour migrants' is also a construction reflecting the political and foreign relations environment of the host society at any particular time.

Notes

[1] 7,000 Convention Refugees, 6,188 registered asylum seekers and 5,664 new applicants in 2002, UNHCR BO Athens, based on Ministry of Public Order (MPO) data, www.unhcr.gr/basics/o4.htm
[2] Migration News Sheet, February 2002, vol. 9, 2.
[3] 'Ta Nea' Newspaper, 25/10/2001.
[4] Between 01/06/2001 and 31/03/2002, 'Eleytheroypia' Newspaper 31/05/2002.
[5] In 1959 Greece ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention and in 1968 the 1967 New York Protocol.
[6] UNHCR, Handbook on Criteria and Procedures for Determining Refugee Status (2000).

[7] UNHCR data estimations and GCR Interview, 11/01/2002. ECRE Country Report Greece 2001 gives a rate of 9,5%. According to MPO data, the recognition rate in 2001 was 11.2%, in UNHCR, http://www.unhcr.gr/basics/04.htm The estimation of recognition rates in relation to asylum applications is rather problematic, because recognitions/rejections usually refer to past applications and not those of the same year (backlog).

[8] 1,000 border guards were recruited in 1998, and 2,500 more in permanent posts in 2002, 'Ta Nea' 05/01/1998 and 'Eleytherotypia' 30/05/2002, Land border control corpses were created with PD 310/1998, amended by PD 112/1999.

[9] 'Protocol for the Implementation of Article 8 of the Agreement between the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on Combating Crime, Especially Terrorism, Organized Crime, Trafficking and Illegal Migration' signed on the 07/11/2001, and voted on 20/06/2002 (Law 3030/2002).

[10] Interview with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey Office, 08/04/2003.

[11] UNHCR Comments on the Protocol, UNHCR BO Athens, November 2001, Amnesty International Press Conference, 26/11/2001, AI Greek Delegation, Athens and National Committee for Human Rights (NCHR) Annual Report 2002, pp. 91-92.

[12] For example, the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) accused Greece of deportation of 34 asylum seekers, including torture victims [press release, OMCT Geneva 07/12/2001]; the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) accused the authorities of granting deportation papers to migrants instead of asylum application forms [cited in 'Eleytherotypia' 06/01/2001]; the Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM) accused Greece for the threat of deportation of a 70 year old Kurd who was torture victim [GHM press release, 09/12/2001].

[13] Our Europe: We share the Future in a Community of Values; The Priorities of the Greek Presidency,' Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 2002.

[14] UNHCR, BO Athens (2000), 'Statistics, Greece 1990-2000', and UNHCR BO Athens (2002), 'Annual Statistical Report for 2001: Refugees and Others of concern to the UNHCR'.

[15] The first UNHCR data on Kurds are now released for January-June 2002, (UNHCR; 2002a).

[16] The first number mentioned in interviews and in 'Ta Nea' Newspaper 05/01/1998, the second in the Greek Parliament by the then Minister of Public Order, G.Romeos, Parliamentary Proceedings, Session 109 (04/04/1997), pp.5413-14. The third number in Triantafyllidou; 2001

[17] 'Ta Nea' Newspaper, 08/11/2000.

[18] Newspapers 'Ta Nea', 19/07/2001, 'Eleytherotypia' 16/01/2002.

[19] More than 5,000 are estimated to have crossed the border in the last three months (i.e. May – July 2002), 'Avgi' Newspaper, 10/08/2002.

[20] Also mentioned in 'Ta Nea' Newspaper, 07/09/2000.

[21] 'Ta Nea' Newspaper, 21/03/2002.

[22] 'Eleytherotypia' Newspaper, 05/01/2003.

[23] Interview, 17/10/2001.

[24] This impression was also shared among most public and NGO officials I interviewed.

[25] According to a survey on vocational training for refugees/ asylum seekers, 48% of the sample have had higher or technical education, but these skills are not used in Greece (Papadopoulou; 2001).

[26] The liberal perspective is also made clear in the latest regularization processes, (1998, 2001), that attached the migrants' right to stay (residence permit) to their work permit.

[27] Black; 1992, p.16.

[28] According to Turkish Daily News [TDN], the office of ERNK (the political wing of PKK) is said to have opened in Athens in 1994, together with two Kurdistan Committees, and a Kurdistan Cultural Centre. A second ERNK office opened in Thessaloniki in the same year, (TDN,23/02/1999). According to interviews, the KDP (Kurdish Democratic Party), the PUK (Patriotic Union Kurdistan) from Iraq and the KDP-Iran have also maintained offices in Athens, and Rizgari Party of Kurdistan (RPK) in Athens and other cities.

[29] Wahlbeck (1998), p.140-141.

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