Ivi Daskalaki

Ph.D.

Department of Social Anthropology

Goldsmiths College University of London

Negotiating Distinctiveness at the Margins of the School: The Centrality of Childhood for Definitions of *Greek-Gypsyness*

Negotiating Distinctiveness at the Margins of the School: The Centrality of Childhood for Definitions of *Greek-Gypsyness*

Introduction

This paper focuses on a sedentary Greek Gypsy population of a settlement in Athens. The arguments presented here are ethnographically informed and are structured through a discussion of what I call 'the schooling paradox'. This paradox indicates that the children's and adults' acknowledgement of the importance of the school co-exists with the recognition of the incompatibility between Greek Gypsy life and formal education. Specifically, although the inhabitants of this Athenian settlement acknowledge the importance of the school, they almost always choose to realise their individual aspirations and family-based projects at the margins of the school, either completely abstaining from the educational process or dropping out after the first grades of primary school.

In fact, the children's own choices reveal the primacy of the duties entailed in kinship relatedness over the duties of schooling. Whilst the clash between the requirements of these domains has an undeniable impact on children's lives, it nevertheless reinforces the children's perception of their distinctiveness, transforming this clash into a feature that is compatible with their sense of distinctive childhood, while also informing adults' perceptions of collective distinctiveness. Based on the premise that children are subjects with agency, their views reflect broader perceptions of Greek state and other institutions. Considering these perceptions, this paper examines Greek Gypsy projects of identification and explores children's and adults' degrees of participation within wider Greek society.

The contribution of this paper is mainly ethnographic and is theoretically informed from the point of view of anthropology. Taking inspiration from a growing body of studies on children (Toren, 2003; Fog Olwig and Gulløv, 2003) and distinguished ethnographies on Gypsies (Lemon, 2000; Gay Y Blasco, 1999; Stewart, 1997), this study argues that childhood offers important insights into the ways a shared experience of being a Greek Gypsy is constructed and reproduced. Specifically, this

approach follows Toren's (Toren, 2003; Toren, 19992003, 1999) argument that children's views and experiences broaden our scope for understanding social relationships at large, while offering a dynamic perspective on the study of cultures. Additionally, this study argues that children's movements, positions and relationships are not necessarily located within child-centred institutions and mainstream processes of learning within society (Olwig and Gulløv, 2003; Amit, 2003; Nieuwenhuys, 2003). In fact, abstention from or marginal incorporation into the school point to alternative processes of learning in which children, alongside the adults, learn through experience and constant practice.

The Greek Gypsies of *Gitonia*

This study is grounded in material obtained during a fifteen-month period of fieldwork (from July 2001 until October 2002) conducted in a Greek Gypsy settlement to which I give the pseudonym *Gitonia.* The settlement which numbered approximately 100 people was located close to the Olympic Stadium of Athens, in Marousi, the middle-class northern suburb of the Greek capital. Six primary schools were located close to *Gitonia*. Four of them were just across the main avenue on the south of the settlement. Two more primary schools were almost a kilometre away from *Gitonia,* on its north-western side.

The Greek Gypsy settlement was composed of 22 self-made separate *paraghes* [shacks], as their inhabitants called them, made of wood, card board, and plastic, which lacked basic infra-structure facilities such as sewage facilities, water and electricity. The 22 *paraghes* housed 24 nuclear families which belonged to six extended families. The Greek Gypsy extended family was founded on patrifocal links which joined the male siblings of the family and their children within a virilocal form of residence. The Gypsies of *Gitonia* claimed that they came from Khalkida, the capital of the island of Euboea, and belong to a larger group of Greek Gypsies known as *Khalkidei* [those who come from Khalkida], or *Ellinoyifti*, or *Ellines Tsiggani* [Greek Gypsies]. [1]

[1] NGO specialists on Roma issues, as well as established theorists on Gypsies in Greece agree with the Gypsies themselves on the terms *Khalkidei*, *Ellinoyifti*, or *Ellines Tsiggani* [Greek Gypsies] for those Gypsies who still live in or come from Khalkida and have the above-mentioned characteristics. However, the terms *Ellinoyifti,* or *Ellines Tsiggani* [Greek Gypsies], which associate Gypsies with the geographical area of Greece, are not used only for those Gypsies living or coming from Khalkida. Greek Gypsies with similar characteristics (language, religion, etc.) live in other parts of central and southern Greece, such as for example Khios and Crete. Other Gypsy groups in Greece with different

The inhabitants of the settlement, in their vast majority, were both legal and illegal street and market vendors of fruit and vegetables as well as kitchen items and clothes. However, the economy of *Gitonia's* Gypsies was also characterised by a considerable degree of flexibility in terms of time and space of work as well as the load and type of work (labour-intensive occupations). [2] Therefore, although vending was considered to be their main occupation, economic flexibility was achieved through following a wide range of diverse occupations (sale of fruits and vegetables, kitchen items, clothes, seasonal trade, repair and cleaning services, etc.).[3]

In close proximity of the Greek Gypsy settlement, lay the shacks and houses of a group of Albanian Gypsies who inhabited the area throughout the 1990s, following the migration flows of non-Gypsy Albanians into Greece after the fall of the Albanian Communist regime. A smaller Greek Gypsy settlement with 6 nuclear families—some of them related to the families of *Gitonia* through kinship bonds—was located 500 metres away from *Gitonia*.

Although the Greek Gypsy settlement was located in one of the less densely populated areas of the suburb, it stood relatively close to non-Gypsy Greek residences. Most of the inhabitants of *Gitonia*, maintained that the relationship between them and their non-Gypsy Greek neighbours had never been problematic. By contrast, as the majority of *Gitonia's* members stressed, their relationship with the Albanian Gypsy neighbours who recently inhabited the area surrounding the settlement was in constant tension. The mapping of the houses in *Gitonia* demonstrated that the Greek Gypsies did constitute a bounded group of people in relation to their Albanian Gypsy neighbours. However, two main roads and the

---

characteristics than the Gypsies of *Gitonia* also call themselves and are being called by theorists as *Ellines Tsiggani*, such as the Gypsies of Aghia Varvara in Athens (Vaxevanoglou, 2001). What is more, the Greek Gypsy community of Athens with similar characteristics as the Gypsies of *Gitonia* is wider than the group I conducted fieldwork with and, in fact, it is dispersed in settlements and houses in different suburbs and the outskirts of the capital, or the wider area of Attika, such as Aghia Paraskevi, Menidi, Gerakas, Khalandri, Spata, etc. In spite of the apparent confusion in the use of the term 'Greek Gypsies', I decided to use it exactly because it reflects my informants' preference for using it. For the purposes of this study, the term Greek Gypsies refers to the inhabitants of *Gitonia*, unless indicated otherwise.

[2] Flexibility in the Greek Gypsy work patters cannot be seen independently of the extended family and intra-family alliances as well as the arrangements and organisation of domestic activities.

[3] These can be undertaken in different places (markets, particular posts on the streets, the neighbourhood, the settlement, etc.) and at different times (on a daily basis, at specific seasons, during particular celebrations and festivals, etc.), easily shifting from legal to illegal vending, and which can potentially engage all family members, men and women, above five or six years old.

railway track also separated the Gypsy (both Greek and Albanian) inhabitants from the non Gypsy neighbourhood.

The Blackboard

It was mid January when nine-year-old Manolis came looking for me to tell me that he had spotted a used school blackboard, stashed away somewhere in the neighbourhood close to the Greek Gypsy settlement of *Gitonia*. He pointed out that if we had it, it would transform the teaching sessions I had been having with the children of *Gitonia* since the beginning of my fieldwork into a 'real' class:

> "I've seen this blackboard, somewhere close to the school. It's been there for quite a long time but I don't want to take it during the day. I need to go with my father at night and bring it here with the truck. I swear to you, Ivi, I'll bring you the blackboard for your teaching! And we can practice as I used to do at school!"

A few days later, a group of children from the settlement called me to show me "a big surprise", as they said, leading me to the storage room of Manolis' family. Six-year-old Stelios, Manolis' younger brother, took the key to the door of the storage room from his father, handed it over to his brother and Manolis opened the door revealing the big surprise: "I got the blackboard!" he said proudly.

First thing the next day, I bought chalk for the blackboard and our teaching sessions were suddenly transformed into a performance for the whole settlement. The blackboard even attracted the adults' attention to the reading and writing sessions. In Manolis' house the parents and relatives of the children were sitting around us, applauding proudly each time I praised the children for reading and writing words correctly on the blackboard. Manolis' parents admired not only their son's writing skills, but also emphasised the fact that it was he who had spotted the blackboard and carefully organised the process of bringing it to *Gitonia*. His younger brother, his cousins and peers also admired him for this little operation. But at the same time Manolis' father, Theofilos, warned me in front of the children not to get overexcited about the blackboard:

> "Don't get enthusiastic, this won't last long … these children are *different* [my emphasis], they can't concentrate, one influences the other …"

Unfortunately, as Theofilos had predicted, the teaching sessions with the blackboard didn't last long but for an altogether different reason. A few weeks later, Manolis came to me, devastated, to tell me that we had to continue our teaching sessions as before; without the blackboard:

> "Ivi, these thieves, the Albanians [meaning the Albanian Gypsy children from the neighbouring settlement] nicked the blackboard! {*Ivi, afti i kleftes I Alvani mas pirane ton pinaka*!}"

His mother, Katerina, who was washing clothes in her yard next to us, said something that made him angry:

> "I'm so happy that you lost the blackboard! You got what you deserved. You don't deserve having it, since you are not capable of keeping your things safe!"

The Children of *Gitonia* and the Schooling Paradox

Manolis, along with the rest of the Greek Gypsy boys and girls of schooling age of *Gitonia*, did not go to school. In the mornings, when the children in the neighbourhood were heading for school, they normally accompanied their parents or relatives to the markets, or stayed in the settlement with their close relatives, looking after their younger siblings and cousins, and played. In the afternoons, when the Albanian Gypsy girls from the neighbouring settlement, Anna and Eleni, passed by *Gitonia*'s yard proudly showing off their school bags, the Greek Gypsy children stopped their games and stared at them, loudly making fun of their country of origin and the fact that they were going to school.

Manolis and a few of his cousins had gone to school some time ago but after a few weeks of irregular attendance they dropped out. Nevertheless, most of these children acknowledged the importance of schooling for their future and they wished to go back to classes one day. This is why they asked me to organise a series of teaching sessions when I was conducting my fieldwork, in order to assist them with reading and writing, preparing them for their return to school.

Talking about a Gypsy settlement and children who follow their parents at work, simultaneously encountering difficulties with incorporating themselves into the schooling process, one might easily associate Manolis' case with one of the numerous examples of children from displaced groups or ethnic, linguistic and religious

minorities.[4] However, Manolis, Stelios, Pavlos, Kalliope, Haris, Dimitris, Fotis, Nikoleta, Paris and the rest of the children of *Gitonia* were Greek citizens, faithfully adhered to Orthodox Christianity, spoke Greek as their only language, as their parents did, and this settlement was where their parents and grandparents had lived for several decades.

What is more, although both the Greek Gypsies and the Albanian Gypsies lived in impoverished conditions in the same neighbourhood, Manolis did not face the same difficulties as Eleni and Anna from the neighbouring settlement, whose parents had recently come from Albania to Greece in search of a better future. The girls' parents did not possess any documents to prove their legal entry to Greece, they spoke Romani or Albanian at home and they had a very poor command of Greek. It was only recently that both the parents and the girls had been christened in the church, in order "to make a new start in their life", as Konstantinos, their father, explained to me. Nevertheless, in contrast to Manolis and the rest of the Greek Gypsy children, Anna and Eleni regularly, and successfully, attended classes in primary school along with a number of other Albanian Gypsy children.

Taking into account these contradictions, the incident with the blackboard mirrors the most important issues inherent in what I call the schooling paradox in relation to the Greek Gypsies of *Gitonia*. One of these issues is that the children's enthusiasm with the blackboard and the teaching sessions coexists with persistently high illiteracy rates in the settlement. Indeed, none of the inhabitants (children and adults) of *Gitonia* had graduated from primary school. More specifically, only one adult (Theofilos)[5] could read and write at a very basic level and the only five children (Pavlos, Haris, Dimitris, Manolis and Kalliope) who had enrolled in the first grade of primary school soon dropped out.

In other words, low rates of school attendance co-existed with the Greek Gypsies' acknowledgement of the importance of schooling. The vast majority of children between four and twelve years of age, as well as their parents, clearly expressed their wish to go to school and at least to develop reading and writing skills. Even children who had been to school for some time and then dropped out, talked proudly about this

[4] Here, I refer to official definitions of the term minority. Greek Gypsies, as also most of the Gypsies and Roma in Greece (with the exception of the Turkish or Muslim Gypsies) are not officially recognised as a minority by the Greek state.

[5] Although he had not been to school, Theofilos had learnt how to read and write with the assistance of a non-Gypsy Greek friend who was a teacher in Crete.

experience and said they wished to return to school at some future stage of their lives. For most of the Greek Gypsy adults and children, neither the prejudiced school environment nor the state, were to blame for their illiteracy.

Additionally, parents and adults' praise and their applause of the performance of their children in front of the blackboard during the teaching sessions goes hand in hand with the pessimistic belief that their children are 'different' and this is why they cannot be successfully incorporated into the schooling process. Theofilos' comment suggests there is a set of different qualities, priorities and aspirations among the children and probably among the adults, which to a greater or lesser extent are incompatible with the experience of schooling. Furthermore, the fact that Katerina's admiration for her son, for procuring the blackboard, quickly shifted to scorn at his inability to look after it, suggests that Greek Gypsy children are constantly evaluated on the basis of their performance of roles which involve important duties and obligations.

In fact, as the earlier vignette reveals, Manolis' achievement of finding the blackboard and bringing it to the settlement attracted the interest of the rest of the inhabitants of *Gitonia* and provoked the admiration of his parents and his brother far more than his actual performance during the teaching sessions. Most importantly, his act added credit to his status within his peer circle in the settlement. A further point of interest is that, in Manolis' mind, what was previously considered to be an achievement (the act of procuring the blackboard) became an immoral act of stealing, attributed to the Albanian Gypsy children who lived in the nearby settlement, when the blackboard was lost. This indicates that what it means to be Gypsy in diverse situations and circumstances cannot be explained in terms of Gypsies as bounded and static communities.

In short, the event with the blackboard points to significant incompatibilities between the formal educational process and the Greek Gypsy way of life. The analysis of these incompatibilities, as expressed from the point of view of the Greek Gypsy children and adults, constitutes a useful strategy for disentangling definitions of *Greek-Gypsyness*. More specifically, it opens the way for explorations of those processes that inform particular ideologies and practices which are seen to distinguish Greek Gypsies from non Greek Gypsy 'others'. Indeed, this paper is neither an ethnography of the school nor does it look at institutional policies and educational programmes. Rather, 'the schooling paradox' is seen here as symptomatic of

relationships and practices which the children of *Gitonia* actively engage with and which are central for Greek Gypsy projects of identification.

The priorities of the inhabitants of *Gitonia* are located within the family and the extended kin network as well as within marriage and work. Children are seen here as competent members of a kinship network who actively participate in the interdependencies of relatedness through their involvement in the family, work and the household. Therefore, the schooling paradox provides the framework for the analysis of the ways through which and extent to which this specific group of Greek Gypsies come to prioritise marriage, work and kin relatedness over the school within a context of wider processes and institutional workings.

Children at the Centre of the Study of Greek Gypsies

Based on the premise that children are subjects with agency, this study aims to place children at the centre of the study of Gypsies. In this sense, not only does the concept of *Greek-Gypsyness* inform a shared experience of a distinctive childhood among this group of Greek Gypsies but a collective sense of being a Greek Gypsy cannot be seen independently of children's experiences of becoming and belonging. Here, childhood and adulthood can only be viewed as two categories that sustain each other through reciprocal effect rather than two clearly demarcated conceptual groupings or distinctive areas of morality or experience.[6]

This task is facilitated by recent shifts in the scholarship on children which have promoted an approach to children as competent social actors and subjects with agency.[7] Increasingly, academic work on childhood is pointing to the fact that

[6] The case of the Greek Gypsies of *Gitonia* points to notions of childhood and adulthood as domains that are less clearly demarcated and distinct than those implied in 'Western' assumptions (Olwig and Gulløv, 2003; Lee, 2001), simultaneously challenging 'nostalgic' views of childhood (Jenks, 1996; Steedman, 1995) as 'innocent', 'immature', 'at risk of disappearing', and 'in the need for protection' (Jenkins, 1998; Stephens, 1995; Postman, 1983). Such conceptions have been associated with specific socio-historical processes, particularly the development of capitalism and its concomitant processes of industrialisation and urbanisation, through which children are no longer seen as economically active members (James, Jenks, and Prout, 1998; Connolly and Ennew, 1996; Ennew, 1994, 1986Ennew, 1986; Stephens, 1995; Zelizer, 1998; 1985Zelizer, 1985; Hockey, 1993). Rather children are seen as an investment in human capital that flourishes through the educational process (Qvortrup, 1985). In fact, since the early days of industrialisation, there has been a great concern for street children and urban street life associated with dangerous spaces (Valentine, 1996; Stephens, 1995; Boyden, 1990). Additionally, the restriction of children in specific places (homes, schools, playgrounds, clubs) has generated an idea that "to be a child outside adult supervision, visible on city centre streets, is simply to be out of place" (Connolly and Ennew, 1996: 133).

[7] Following the theoretical and methodological turn of the 1970s in sociology and anthropology with ethnographers increasingly pointing to the need to listen to the voices of the children and take into

children display a variety of behaviours in managing their encounters, ideas and aspirations that constitute elaborate social competencies.[8] Within this emerging theoretical framework children are seen as active participants in the process of making culture (Stephens, 1995),[9] whose actions have an impact on those they are related to (James and James, 2004; Toren, 2002), and who shape while simultaneously being shaped by their circumstances (Alanen, 1998; Hutchby and Moran-Ellis, 1998; James and Prout, 1990).

In exploring the ways through which these processes happen, we come to understand how children engage with the adults' worlds, participate in the interdependencies of social relationships and make sense of their diverse encounters (Toren, 2002, 1999 Toren, 1999). For instance, a growing body of studies on child labour (including household work) have stressed the association between the economic importance of children's work for children and their families (Mizen, Pole, and Bolton, 2001; Goddard and White, 1982) and the ways through which children's

---

account their experiences and views of the world (Jenks, 1982; Hardman, 1973), the study of childhood was no longer regarded merely as the study of socialisation or child development (Lee, 2001; Smart, Neale, and Wade, 2001; Schwartzman, 2001; James, Jenks, and Prout, 1998; James and Prout, 1990). The new or emergent paradigm that views children as social agents and inventive participants in social life has urged a new approach in the study of childhood, in which children are seen as having a conceptual autonomy (Corsaro, 1992) and therefore should be studied *in their own right* (Stephens, 1995; Corsaro and Eder, 1990; James and Prout, 1990; Willis, 1981; Hardman, 1973). What is more, a growing body of studies on children in their localities has shown that childhoods are socially and temporally constructed, while each culture defines childhood in terms of its own cultural meanings and institutional practices (Gupta, 2002; Jenks, 1996; Hall, 1995; Stephens, 1995; Qvortrup, 1994; Ennew, 1994; Hendrick, 1990; Ennew, 1986; Davies, 1982; Jenks, 1982; Opie I. and Opie, 1977; Ariés, 1962). The theoretical shift towards seeing age as an important cognitive or developmental variable culturally and temporally defined (Toren, 1999, 1993Toren, 1993; Christensen, 1998, 1993Christensen, 1993; Soldberg, 1990) has gone hand in hand with a growing attention to notions of childhood as fragmented and crosscut by factors such as gender, class, and ethnicity (Gilliam, 2003; Prendergast, 2000; Backett-Milburn, 2000; Stephens, 1997, 1995Stephens, 1995; Jenks, 1996; Wee, 1995; Qvortrup, 1994; James and Prout, 1990).

[8] For example, James and James (2004James and James, 2004), Olwig and Gulløv (2003Olwig and Gulløv, 2003), Mayall (2002Mayall, 2002), Foley, Roche and Tucker (2001Foley, Roche, and Tucker, 2001), Smart, Neale and Wade (2001Smart, Neale, and Wade, 2001), Lee (2001Lee, 2001), Alanen (1998Alanen, 1998), James, Jenks and Prout (1998James, Jenks, and Prout, 1998), Hutchby and Moran Ellis (1998Hutchby and Moran-Ellis, 1998), Jenks (1996Jenks, 1996), Stephens (1995Stephens, 1995), Qvortrup (1994Qvortrup, 1994), Ennew (1994Ennew, 1994), James and Prout, (1990James and Prout, 1990).

[9] As Ackroyd and Pilkington (1999Ackroyd and Pilkington, 1999) add, our understanding of childhood in social theory has been altered as a consequence of rapid global upheavals, which have resulted in the erosion of concepts of bounded and homogeneous childhood cultures. For Ackroyd and Pilkington (1999Ackroyd and Pilkington, 1999), the numerous examples of studies on British youth (Back, 1996; Hall, 1995, 1992Hall, 1992) echo Stephens' (1995Stephens, 1995) earlier observation that global changes enable children to pursue and negotiate new or multiple identities in the process of making culture.

work may be valued in diverse cultural settings (Helleiner, 2003; Punch, 2001; Nieuwenhuys, 1996; Boyden, 1990; Soldberg, 1990).

In this study, I argue that Greek Gypsy distinctiveness cannot be understood independently of children's lives and experiences. Nor can Greek Gypsy childhood be seen and examined in isolation from adult relations. Anthropologists have been clear about the fact that "the separation of children and adults […] is not a general characteristic of life everywhere in the world" (Olwig and Gulløv, 2003: 13). What is more, this approach follows Toren's (Toren, 2003; Toren, 19992003, 1999) argument that children's views and experiences broaden our scope for understanding social relationships at large, while offering a dynamic perspective on the study of cultures.

Additionally, recent work on children has demonstrated that in certain cultural settings children's priorities and aspirations are not necessarily located within child-centred institutions or mainstream institutional practices and processes (Olwig and Gulløv, 2003; Amit, 2003; Nieuwenhuys, 2003). Therefore, children's ways of prioritising relationships and following practices as well as their ways of managing their constrains in the course of their everyday lives, while also seeking connections and affiliations in society at large, inform us about the ways the micro-politics of everyday life relate to traces and effects of wider institutions, national identities and global processes.

Toren's emphasis on the prominent role of children in the analysis of social relationships seems to be especially relevant regarding the study of Gypsies. This is so because children can provide an important focus in examining the ways through which different expressions of *Gypsyness* are sustained and reproduced. With respect to this study, the extent to which Greek Gypsy children in *Gitonia* actively participate in the interdependencies of relatedness and the ways they do so, entail meaningful—for them—interpretations of adults' ideologies and practices. And vice versa, the particular ways through which children embody and perform Greek Gypsy distinctiveness inform adults' perceptions and experiences of collective self. In this sense, *Greek-Gypsyness* does not simply relate to adults' views of childhood but also to the particular ways through which children perceive and embody these views.

But ironically, at a time when the proliferation of childhood ethnographies fostered what is called the new or emergent paradigm in childhood studies, children have remained largely marginal in ethnographic explorations of diverse Gypsy groups—

with only a few exceptions (Jordan, 2001a,bJordan, 2001b; Helleiner, 1998a,bHelleiner, 1998b; Okely, 1997).[10]

In spite of the recent shift in theories of childhood, age, in contrast to gender, has remained a rather unexamined variable in traditional ethnographic accounts on Gypsies.[11] Especially intriguing is the fact that although most of these ethnographic accounts acknowledge some distinctive features which characterise diverse Gypsy childhoods, this acknowledgement has not been followed by an in-depth analysis of different conceptualisations of age among various Gypsy groups.[12] What differentiates this approach from other studies on Gypsies is the emphasis on the central role of children and the importance of conceptions of age in approaching this particular group of Greek Gypsies.

Approaches to Gypsies

Despite the wealth of information produced in studies on Gypsies and displayed in statistical data, [13] the clash between the school and different Gypsy groups can neither account for broader categorisations of *Gypsyness* nor for superficial assumptions that simply reduce the problem to one of prejudice, poverty and inadequate state policies.

---

[10] Most of these works have concentrated on the relationship between the Gypsy children's educational exclusion and specific state policies. Amongst these exceptions, the most consistent work on Gypsies and childhood has been produced by Helleiner in relation to the Irish Travellers. Helleiner (2003, 2000, 1998a,bHelleiner, 2003; Helleiner, 2000; Helleiner, 1998b; Helleiner, 1998a) in her studies on the politics of Traveller childhood in Ireland reveals the extent to which state intervening policies on children—based on a model of sedentary, domesticated home life and full time education—reproduce and reinforce discourses of social inequality, while also informing Travellers' projects of identification within a wider framework of a politics of culture. Jordan (Jordan, 2001b; Jordan, 2001a2001a,b) looks at the irreconcilable differences between the process of learning within the family and the process of learning at school for the Travellers' children in Scotland, as well as the processes of institutional exclusion of Traveller children from Scottish state schools. Okely (1997Okely, 1997) examines the ambiguity surrounding state educational policies in Britain geared towards Gypsy children's schooling

[11] Although the management of the Gypsy body (particularly the female one), as a means of expressing Gypsy distinctiveness, has been explored extensively by a number of ethnographers on Gypsies (Gay y Blasco, 1999, Gay y Blasco, 19971997; Stewart, 1997; Okely, 1983; Sutherland, 1977,Sutherland, 1975 1975; Miller, 1975), age has remained a much less examined variable in relation to explorations of the embodiment of *Gypsyness*. This happens in spite of the fact that both Sutherland (Sutherland, 19771977) and Miller (Miller, 19751975) recognised that the concept of defilement alters throughout the life circle among different age groups of Gypsies.

[12] For example, Okely (Okely, 19831983: 160) recognises that among the Gypsies and Travellers in Britain the family constitutes the locus where alternative forms of children's learning and education are being produced. What is more, Stewart (1997Stewart, 1997) acknowledges among the Hungarian Rom that children as young as seven or eight years old are bestowed a moral autonomy (1997: 56).

[13] See Jordan (2001a,bJordan, 2001b; Jordan, 2001a), Markou (1998a,bMarkou, 1998b; Markou, 1998a), Vasiliadou and Pavli-Korre (1998Vasiliadou and Pavli-Korre, 1998), Lidaki (1997Lidaki, 1997), Ntousas (1997Ntousas, 1997), Okely (1997Okely, 1997), Liégeois (1994Liégeois, 1994).

Undoubtedly, these issues frame Gypsy attitudes towards schooling. However, simplistic assertions which unreflectively associate the incompatibility between the Gypsies and the school with their conditions of marginality fail to tackle the intricacies underlying this incompatibility.

Oversimplifications and generalisations do not show the ways through which and the extent to which this "mismatch", in Jordan's (Jordan, 2001a2001a: 57) terms, is experienced and negotiated by different Gypsy groups, revealing the specificities of each case. In fact, recent ethnographic examples have drawn our attention to some of these specificities. For example, Okely (1997Okely, 1997) has acknowledged that Gypsy children in Britain have elaborated strategies of subverting educational policies aiming at their assimilation. With respect to the Traveller's children in Scotland, Jordan (Jordan, 2001a2001a) stressed the fact that the processes of learning at school clash with processes of learning taking place within the family. Furthermore, ethnographic studies on Gypsies in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe point to highly differentiated attitudes towards schooling among different Gypsy groups ranging from marginal incorporation to full participation even in the higher levels of education (Marushiakova and Popov, 2001a; Lemon, 2001, Lemon, 20002000).

Most importantly, an unreflective reading of quantitative data and generalisations stemming from simplistic interpretations of studies on Gypsies do not grasp the various ways through which different Gypsy attitudes towards the educational process inform us about the politics of everyday life. Nor can they reveal the extent to which 'this mismatch' is indicative of potentially alternative processes of learning or specific relationships and practices which may be prioritised and pursued by different Gypsy groups within specific socio-economic and political frameworks.

In this respect, this ethnographic work follows the turn in the study of Gypsies in Europe (Williams, 2003,Williams, 1993 1993; Marushiakova and Popov, 2001b; Lemon, 2000; Helleiner, 2000; Gay y Blasco, 1999; Stewart, 1997; Hawes and Perez, 1996; Okely, 1983; San Román, 1986, San Román, 19761976), the United States (Salo, 1981; Sutherland, 1975) and more recently in Greece (Vaxevanoglou, 2001; Lidaki, 1998, 1997Lidaki, 1997; Pavli and Sideri, 1990) away from generalisations towards the examination of those particular practices that exemplify the particularities of diverse Gypsy groups within specific nation-states.

More specifically, this study concentrates on the complex processes through which a particular group of Gypsies constructs and manifests its shared sense of

distinctiveness, while also perpetuating a sense of belonging with respect to the Greek nation-state. In addition, by using the schooling paradox as starting point to disentangle notions of *Greek-Gypsyness*, the approach followed here shows that the Greek Gypsies are part of Greek society dynamically and contextually related to the changes occurring within this society.

Negotiating Distinctiveness at the Margins of the School

Greek Gypsy Processes of Learning and Children's Views of the School

From the accounts of children in the settlement of *Gitonia* we learn that for the vast majority of them school represents both a space for acquiring useful knowledge (the ability to read and write) as well as a space of social interaction. Indeed, both for children between six and twelve years old with some schooling experience and for children between four and twelve years old with no prior schooling experience, the school represents a place where alternative processes of socialisation outside the extended family and the peers take place as well as a source of generating knowledge.

According to the children's own words, the school can also be a hostile environment, as it was in the case of Manolis, whose teacher was strict and had threatened to punish him on a number of occasions. Furthermore, the school may be the place where children experience prejudice, as when the classmates of Dimitris who was twelve years old made fun of him for being a Gypsy [*Yiftos*]. The school can also be a hostile environment as a result of its broader institutional form and, as such can become a mechanism that reproduces prejudice and inequality.

Despite the negative experiences of children who had been to school and encountered hostility, they sought to participate in the schooling process admitting that it offers the opportunity to mingle with other children as well as providing access to important skills.[14] Indeed, even Manolis and Dimitris who had themselves experienced hostility at school, aspired to return to classes one day.

However, the vast majority of the children of *Gitonia* admitted the knowledge that school offers is useful up to a certain extent; until they learn how to read and write. Manolis made that clear to me from the beginning: "Listen, Ivi, what I want from

[14] This view was not only expressed by children who hadn't had any schooling experience but was primarily expressed by children who had been to school.

school is just to learn how to read and write." Eleven-year-old Haris also made a similar statement:

> "We can use some of the things we learn at school in our life to make it easier. For example, I don't think I need all what school offers … although I like going to school,—I think it's fun—I just need to learn how to read and write. That's all I need. Because if I know how to read and write, then everything is going to be much easier in my life."

Undoubtedly, children's accounts in the field showed that neither does the school constitute the most important source of knowledge for them nor is it a prerequisite of what they consider as valuable knowledge. Children's words point to the different kinds of knowledge generated by different sources. For them, the most valuable knowledge is generated within the extended family and the peer group, and is inevitably associated with the Greek Gypsy socio-economic activity, processes of relatedness, hierarchies and affinities, as well as the moral framework that underpins these processes. Therefore, the children of *Gitonia* recognise in a member of their extended family and peers the persons from whom they acquire important knowledge in their lives.

Furthermore, Greek Gypsy processes of learning do not merely involve the transmission of knowledge from adults to children or older to younger persons but involve a more negotiated and participatory way of learning which involves meanings and feelings embedded in caring relationships and relationships of respect. It is primarily through this puzzle of relationships within the extended family unit and the peer group that knowledge is acquired, transmitted, negotiated, but most importantly performed among its members, including children.

Clearly, the acquisition of knowledge which takes place outside the Greek Gypsy socio-economic network, such as the school, contradicts processes of knowledge and relatedness taking place within the family. Even four-year-old Xanthi admitted that although she was attracted by the school she was unwilling to take classes for many years, because what she wanted the most was to get married. Fieldwork demonstrated that the aspirations of the Greek Gypsy children of *Gitonia* about their future are located within Greek Gypsy life: in the centrality of marriage, the importance of kin and household work. For six-year-old Stelios, what he aspired for the future was to have his own market stall in order to earn enough money and get married.

Despite the acknowledged contradiction between processes of knowledge taking place within the kin network and the knowledge generated within the formal educational process, Greek Gypsy children do not simply dismiss schooling in favour of their future within the extended kin network. This is primarily mirrored on the children's instrumental view of the school. In most cases, children are willing to participate in the schooling process if and to the extent that their participation does not seriously obstruct their place and sense of belonging within their extended family and the wider Greek Gypsy network of relationships. Twelve-year-old Nikoleta, for example, recognised that her devotion to her younger brother, Fotis, had kept her away from school and prevented her from fulfilling her dream, to become a policewoman:

> "(…) for me it has been impossible to leave Fotis [her little brother] alone. Fotis has been everything for me. How could I have left him alone [hugging and kissing her brother who was sitting on her laps]?"

Although all of the children between six and twelve years old had already started taking part in the economic life of their family occasionally or regularly, helping their parents with the seasonal trade, or working daily for a few hours in the markets, nevertheless they still expressed aspirations about participating to some extent in the schooling process. However, for youngsters above the age of thirteen, learning was a process exclusively associated with gender-based domestic and paid work activities which was considered to be generated through practical experience. Thirteen-year-old Pavlos, who had recently started working daily in the market along with his father and older brothers, points at them as the most important sources of knowledge in his life:

> "What I have to learn, I learn it basically from my dad and then my brothers who are more experienced at work than me."

For a young woman such as fourteen-year-old Penelope who was recently engaged, acquiring and performing an adequate standard of knowledge in undertaking domestic chores was what she was interested in: "*To nikokirio* [the household], this is what counts for me, now."

Childhood and Greek Gypsy Distinctiveness

Primarily, Greek Gypsy childhoods are lived and experienced within the extended family and *Gitonia*. As this paper demonstrates, the performance of *Greek-Gypsyness* is not only the responsibility of the adults. Children too are conscious of the responsibility of undertaking age and gender-specific roles in the areas of domestic life and paid work. In most cases, these are duties and obligations that children willingly undertake without feeling obliged to do so under the stressful instructions of the parents. For instance, children proudly undertake the responsibility of assisting their parents and close relatives at work or looking after their younger siblings, cousins, and peers. However, to be a Greek Gypsy child is not only associated with important duties and obligations. Children are also recipients of love and affection expressed by the older members of their family, while simultaneously they are bestowers of feelings of devotion to their younger siblings, their extended families and their peer group.

Greek Gypsy children are also conscious of the fact that they enjoy a great deal of independence and autonomy in decision-making, moving and acting out. At the same time children's independence should be respected, encouraged and protected by adults. This contrasts with the conventional image of childhood, which sees and wants children in need of protection, restricted at home, and under the moral and physical surveillance of parents. Here, children are exactly the opposite. They are praised and encouraged to swear, to be disobedient, cunning and aggressive.

In many different ways Greek Gypsies' childhoods are also childhoods of celebrating freedom, of enjoying playing and having fun. Additionally, for Greek Gypsies, childhood is about being excessive in playing, swearing, fighting, getting dirty, being cunning, laughing and making noise. For example, swearing and being cunning are considered to be important assets in children's experiences both by children and their parents. As Nikos, an adult relative described it:

> "Not only can these children cheat other children but also adults. And nobody can deceive them. These children are very clever! And, not only clever … Ha ha! They have dirty mouths. You are ashamed to listen to the words that come out of their mouths. But, there is no way to control them."

However, for the Greek Gypsy children and adults, being cunning and naughty does not equate with children lacking a sense of self-control and discipline. On the

contrary, children's cunning and naughtiness are qualities assumed both by adults and children to be handled with judgement and responsibility by children towards family members, friends, and relatives, even towards the non Greek Gypsy 'others'. Indeed, the children's accurate assessment of the circumstances and their responsibility in expressing disobedience, aggressiveness and guile requires discipline and self-control. Although it may sound like an oxymoron it is exactly through discipline and self-control that children ensure through their actions (cunning and naughtiness) an effective outcome with the least possible consequences for them. This is what is seen as differentiating Greek Gypsy children from others, making them "better" "cleverer", and "more cunning." As Evgenia explained for her two and a half-year-old granddaughter, Areti:

> "She just needs a few minutes to assess the situation. To judge if there is space for doing it [meaning to be cunning]. If she thinks there is space, she can buy you and sell you at the same time. If not, she will think twice and she will behave herself. [*Theli mono merika lepta na kopsi katastasi. Na di an tin perni. An ne, mpori na se aghorasi ke na se poulisi tin idia stigmi. An ochi, tha to skefti dipla ke tha katsi kala*]."

The attributes and qualities mentioned above entail some interesting contradictions. For example, Greek Gypsy childhood is expressed as a combination of freedom and responsibility, competence and cunning, disobedience and self-discipline. Within the context of extended kin networks, not only did Greek Gypsy children demonstrate that theirs is a childhood that enables the exploration of feelings, privileges and rights, but it also involves important duties and obligations towards the members of the extended family, particularly the younger ones, and the peer group. What is more, it has to do with experiencing a status which is lived and enjoyed through particular modes of expression, that is a mixture of freedom and responsibilities, breaking the rules and also complying with them, independence and interdependence, cleverness and cunning, all within a framework of gaining knowledge and creating identities.

However, *Greek-Gypsyness* is not only lived and experienced by children within the family, the peer group and the wider Greek Gypsy group. It is also experienced and negotiated through the encounter of Greek Gypsy children with significantly different experiences of childhood and adulthood as well as within and through institutional processes, such as schooling. In particular, the ability of children to sense, evaluate and negotiate differences and commonalities in and through

relationships, encounters and practices is especially valued by adults. For them, children's ways of experiencing their childhoods seem to encompass a number of important processes through which children effectively affirm difference. On many occasions, including the ways in which Greek Gypsies interact with non-Gypsy Greeks and non-Greek Gypsy 'others', parents trust their children's skills and intuition in encountering the 'other'.

Fieldwork unravels the particular ways through which Greek Gypsy children view their childhood as different from that of the *raklakia* [the non Greek Gypsy children] as well as different from that of the *Alvanakia* [Albanian Gypsy children]. On the one hand, Greek Gypsy children differentiate their own experience of childhood *vis à vis* the *raklakia*, drawing on the concepts of autonomy, bravery, solidarity, entrepreneurial skills and initiative. On the other, they also clearly contrast their childhood with the *Alvanakia,* drawing on concepts of *Greekness*, morality, and *timi* [honour]. For Greek Gypsy children and adults, the *raklakia* lack a capacity for cunning, making money, swearing, being aggressive, enjoying their play through becoming dirty, as well as defending themselves, their siblings and cousins, and their peer group. On the other hand, the *Alvanakia* lack a sense of moral limit as well as a proper consciousness of or the ability to achieve *Greekness*.

Ta raklakia [the Greek Gypsy children], according to twelve-year-old Kalliope, are boys and girls who can't do anything without the help of their parents. "They are *flori*, whose parents tell them all the time what to do, what to wear and when to shit." In addition, five-year-old Paris sees *ta Alvanakia* [the Albanian Gypsy children] as different in the sense that attributes that he values in his childhood are in this case taken to extremes:

> "Ivi, the *Alvanakia* all they care about is money … All day they hang out in the streets and beg. They become dirty but they don't wash. And, *Panayitsa mou* [my Virgin Mary], if you fight with one of them, then all the Albanians will come after you."

Greek Gypsy children's experience of their distinctive childhoods is also constructed and negotiated within and through institutions that are meaningful to them. Similarly to adults, although children acknowledge the constraints that institutional processes entail for their lives, they also recognise the possibilities they may offer to them. Through children's words and drawings it becomes obvious that Greek Gypsy children draw on and appropriate ideologies sustained in state

institutions in a multiplicity of ways in order to manifest and negotiate what is distinctive about their lives. This is especially obvious in the ways children selectively appropriate symbols, interpret ideologies and follow practices which are articulated in institutions, such as the church, the army and the police.

Fieldwork revealed that the children of *Gitonia* find meaning in notions of faith, as well as concepts of bravery, solidarity and discipline sustained in the army and police and they appropriate symbols and practices such as the cross, the flag, the uniform and the marching. Appropriations, nevertheless, are amplified or downplayed by children through interactive relationships with important 'others', as is the case with notions and symbols of *Greekness* and Orthodox Christianity *vis à vis* Albanian Gypsy childhoods. For example, Twelve-year-old Kalliopi was clear when she told me that:

> "The Albanian Gypsies christen their children in the church in order to get papers and stay in Greece but this does not mean they truly believe in God and that they are Greek since they come from Albania."

Whilst it is widely accepted that both national and religious consciousness constitute an inextricable part of the educational process, Greek Gypsy children's ways of achieving *Greekness* and Greek Orthodoxy take place almost exclusively outside mainstream educational institutions. Neither the children's ways of practising the Orthodox Christian faith, nor their modes of expressing their devotion to the Greek nation have been cultivated within the formal educational process.

In fact, the Greek Gypsy children are not institutionalised as national subjects through disciplinary techniques in the Foucauldian sense. Rather, children institutionalise themselves through processes which take place outside or at the margins of mainstream state institutions, selectively drawing on institutional processes and appropriating national symbols, ideologies and practices to the way and extent it serves the demarcation and consolidation of their distinctiveness *vis à vis* meaningful others. For example, children witness in the army and value in the police embodied performances of discipline, or draw on national symbols and ideologies, whilst this appropriation takes place almost exclusively within the family and outside the processes that these very institutions promote.

Reassessing the Schooling Paradox

The story of Manolis, who dropped out of school after a few months of attendance in the first grade, is instructive. The following sketches demonstrate the ways in which the contradictions between the family and the school are experienced and negotiated by Greek Gypsy children. Furthermore, it encapsulates some of the most important issues which in this study have been elicited through a consideration of the schooling paradox and which have been central to the attempt to demarcate a distinctive sense of being a Greek Gypsy.

In the first place, Manolis admitted that he dropped out of school because he was influenced by his cousins Pavlos and Dimitris, who had also decided to drop out. Later on, when he tried to return to classes, he realised that he couldn't easily follow the pace of learning of his class since he had been absent a lot. "I knew I had missed a lot of things, for example I hadn't learnt some letters" he confessed. Nevertheless, he said he couldn't understand why when he decided to return to school, the head teacher told his father that his son had to repeat the same grade because he had had many absences. To him (and his father), the fact that he had missed school for many days because he went to work along with his parents or relatives and because he overslept after attending wedding celebrations was absolutely justified. In addition, he insisted that he could catch up with the rest of the class by doing some extra work at home:

> Manolis: "Come on, Ivi, why this asshole says that I have to repeat the same grade?"
>
> Ivi: "I assume it is because you missed classes for many days. Were they many?"
>
> Manolis: "I don't know … Yes many, I guess. So, what? I'll study more for a few days. I'll do more homework. It's not a big deal!"
>
> Ivi: "There is some sort of regulation that says that if you don't go to class for more than a certain number of days, you have to repeat. And you must have exceeded this number …"
>
> Manolis: "But it wasn't that I didn't want to go to school. Either I was working with my dad or grandpa, or I couldn't wake up because I was going to bed late. Please, you have to go to the head teacher to explain that to him."

It is interesting that Manolis' decision to drop out of school in the first place and then to return to classes was exclusively his, although he sought his father support to confront the head teacher when decided to re-attend classes. The acknowledgement and respect of Manolis' autonomy by his father in making the decision whether to attend school or not verifies the blurred boundaries between Greek Gypsy childhood

and adulthood. What is more, both Manolis and his father admitted that the relatives' weddings and children's involvement in work were more central than the school for them, simultaneously pointing to the primacy of kinship relatedness and processes of learning through practice over the school.

Equally interesting is Manolis' persistence to negotiate his participation in the schooling process in spite of his first failed attempts. This is interesting because it reflects that children seek to participate into this particular institution, although they realise that their incorporation clashes with their responsibilities at home. Manolis swore that he would start practicing reading and writing with me in order to be ready for next year's schooling period along with his cousins, though not in the same school: "I won't go to the same school again, I'll register in another one, probably near the new houses [meaning those they would get after their resettlement][15]."

The above reveals the practical difficulties that children face at school because of the clash between the organisation of Greek Gypsy life and the demanding curriculum of the schooling process. For Manolis, the inflexible character of the school was incompatible with his responsibilities in undertaking duties and chores within the family and gave him no chance to catch up with what he missed due to absences. And from the example presented in this section and children's words above, we understand that the Greek Gypsy children are willing to comply with the school's rigid curriculum to the extent that this does not seriously affect their family commitments and values.

When it comes to the point where the school's curriculum and structure clashes with family values and needs, the children generally drop out of school. Again, it is through this incompatibility that children consolidate their perception of self *vis à vis* other children and negotiate their distinctive sense of childhood, of being Greek and being Gypsy. As Manolis confessed, it is their autonomy and ability to choose if and when to attend classes that makes them different from other children:

> "Do you know what makes the difference? That we can walk out of school any time without being afraid that our dad will smack us! [*Emis mporoume na figoume oti ora theloume apo to sholio horis na fovomaste oti o mpampas mas tha mas kani da da*!]"

[15] An eviction from the settlement of *Gitonia* was pending for its inhabitants due to the Athens Olympics of 2004.

Having acknowledged that *Greek-Gypsyness* is premised on the experience of becoming both Gypsy and Greek among the members of *Gitonia* and that the schooling paradox provides a useful focus to explain this, it is clear that the Greek Gypsy sense of difference cannot be seen independently of children's experiences of childhood and adults' views of these experiences. In particular, the extent to which Greek Gypsy children perceive schooling as compatible or in conflict with the main aspects, values and activities of Greek Gypsy life and the degree to which parents entrust in their children the decision on whether they will attend school reveals much about the blurred boundaries between childhood and adulthood as well as about children's agency and competence in engaging with adults' activities.

In this ethnography we saw the Greek Gypsy children transform the incompatibility between their lives within the family and the school into an asset in the process of manifesting and negotiating a sense of distinctive childhood. Children's autonomy in deciding whether and when to attend or drop out of school seems central to what it means to be a Greek Gypsy child. To some extent at least, it can be suggested that this freedom of choice and agency marks the process of Greek Gypsy identification.

Closing Remarks

From a closer examination of the contradictions inherent in attitudes towards schooling it becomes obvious that simplistic interpretations of the official figures regarding rates of literacy and school attendance fail to disclose the particularities and complexities of the case of the Greek Gypsies of *Gitonia*. For example, simply by mentioning that only one of the inhabitants of *Gitonia* can read and write at a very basic level does not actually reflect the paradoxes of the Greek Gypsies' stance towards the school.

This study has argued in the introduction that although both children and adults in *Gitonia* acknowledge the importance of the school, they almost always choose to realise their individual aspirations and family-based projects at the margins of the school, either abstaining from the educational process or dropping out after the first grades of primary school. In fact, children's own choices revealed the primacy of the duties entailed in kinship relatedness over the duties of schooling. Whilst the clash between the requirements of these domains has an undeniable impact on children's

lives, it nevertheless reinforces the children's perception of their distinctiveness, transforming this clash into a feature that is compatible with their sense of distinctive childhood, while also informing adults' perceptions of collective distinctiveness.

The analysis of children's ways of negotiating the incompatibilities and contradictions inherent in the schooling paradox revealed that conceptions of age, notions of childhood and adulthood and processes of becoming are fundamental to the examination of a shared sense and experience of being a Greek Gypsy. The grounds on which children position themselves and move between the realms of family and school denote a subtle and overlapping generational distinction between childhood and adulthood which is affirmative of a shared sense of Greek Gypsy distinctiveness and perceptions of 'otherness'.

Taking the schooling paradox as a starting point, ethnographic analysis brings to light the more subtle ways through which the Greek Gypsy children and adults of *Gitonia* choose to engage with or abstain from various state institutions. In many respects, Greek Gypsy children and adults construct and reconstruct distinctiveness *vis à vis* meaningful 'others' through subverting institutional processes (as with the schooling paradox), through seeking connections and creating affiliations even where they feel constrained and excluded, while also participating in the nationalist discourse. For example, children's embodiment of Orthodox Christianity and national consciousness informs perceptions of *Greek-Gypsyness* in relation to meaningful 'others' such as the Albanian-Gypsy neighbours and reproduces the nationalist rhetoric of the state.

The extent to which the Greek Gypsies engage with diverse institutions, such as the school, reflects the ways through which their experience of belonging in the Greek nation-state co-exists with a distinctive sense of collective Greek Gypsy self. Specifically, an exploration of the schooling paradox suggested that not only does Greek Gypsies' participation or non-participation in schooling constitute the acknowledged space of micro-politics of everyday interactions, but also the arena of a politics of culture within the Greek nation-state context.

In a broader sense, the schooling paradox is indicative of the wider paradox that characterises the Greek Gypsies' shared experience of belonging within Greek society. As this study revealed, on the one hand, the Greek Gypsies see themselves as citizens of the Greek nation state and seek participation within the wider society's

structures. On the other hand, they retain a marked sense of distinctiveness, largely through their marginal incorporation into mainstream state institutions.

Regarding school, we have seen that Greek Gypsy distinctiveness is constructed and negotiated at the margins of the schooling process. However, this marginal position in relation to formal education does not produce a 'marginal' Gypsy identity. On the contrary, rather than seeking to emphasise *Gypsyness* versus 'being' Greek, the Greek Gypsies deploy interesting ways of transforming their marginal incorporation in the school into an asset, manifesting and negotiating an entangled identity of *Greek-Greekness*, actively engaging themselves with the wider structures of Greek society. This strong emphasis on *Greekness*, appropriated and objectified at the margins of the schooling process, challenges traditional theories of nationalism and state that see formal education as the most central medium for the dissemination of nationalist ideologies (Hobsbawm, 1990; Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 1983; Foucault, 1977).

Indeed, the case of the Greek Gypsies has shown that *Gypsyness* may also be experienced and negotiated as a shifting category, occasionally occupying the spaces of the 'centre' and 'majority', as for instance, through affirmations of national or religious affiliations. In this sense, the process of affirmation of *Greek-Gypsyness* is neither exclusively a project of choosing the 'margins' as a form of resistive tactic towards repressive 'centres' or 'majorities', nor a mere conflation of Gypsy and non-Gypsy ideologies and practices.

Bibliography

Ackroyd, J. and A. Pilkington (1999) 'Childhood and the Construction of Ethnic Identities in a Global Age: A Dramatic Encounter', *Childhood* vol 6 (4): 443-54.

Alanen, L. (1998) 'Children and the Family Order', in I. Hutchby and J. Moran-Ellis (eds) *Children and Social Competence: Arenas of Action.* London: Falmer Press.

Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso.

Ariés, P. (1962) *Centuries of Childhood.* London: Jonathan Cape.

Back, L. (1996) *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture.* London: University College London.

Backett-Milburn, K. (2000) 'Children, Parents and the Construction of the 'Healthy Body' in Middle-Class Families', in A. Prout (ed.) *The Body, Childhood and Society.* London: Macmillan Press.

Boyden, J. (1990) 'Childhood and the Policy Makers: A Comparative Perspective on Globalisation of Childhood', in A. James and A. Prout (eds) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood.* London: Falmer Press.

Christensen, P. H. (1993) 'The Social Construction of Help Among Danish Children', *Sociology of Health and Illness* vol 15 (4).

Christensen, P. H. (1998) 'Difference and Similarity: How Children's Competence is Continued in Illness and its Treatment', in I. Hutchby and J. Moran-Ellis (eds) *Children and Social Competence: Arenas of Action.* London: Falmer Press.

Connolly, M. and J. Ennew (1996) 'Introduction: Children Out of Place ', *Childhood* vol 3: 131-45.

Corsaro, W. A. (1992) 'Interpretive Reproduction in Children's Peer Cultures', *Social Psychology Quarterly* vol 55 (2): 160-77.

Corsaro, W. A. and D. Eder (1990) 'Children's Peer Cultures', *Annual Review of Sociology* vol 16: 1997-220.

Davies, B. (1982) *Life in Classroom and Playground.* London: Fine Forge Press.

Ennew, J. (1986) *The Sexual Exploitation of Children.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Ennew, J. (1994) 'Time for Children or Time for Adults', in J. Qvortrup, M. Bardy, G. Sgritta, and H. Wintersberger (eds) *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Politics.* Aldershot: Avebury Press.

Foley, P., J. Roche, and S. Tucker (2001) 'Foreword: Children in Society: Contemporary theory, Policy and Practice', in P. Foley, J. Roche, and S. Tucker (eds) *Children in Society: Contemporary Theory, Policy and Practice.* New York: Palgrave, the Open University.

Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish.* London: Allen Lane.

Gay y Blasco, P. (1997) 'A 'Different' Body? Desire and Virginity Among Gitanos', *The Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* vol 3 (3): 517-35.

Gay y Blasco, P. (1999) *Gypsies in Madrid; Sex Gender and the Performance of Identity.* Oxford: Berg.

Gellner, E. (1983) *Nations and Nationalism* . New York: Cornell University Press.

Gilliam, L. (2003) 'Restricted Experiences in a Conflict Society: The Local Lives of Belfast Children', in K. F. Olwig and E. Gullov (eds) *Children's Places: Cross-Cultural Perspectives.* London: Routledge.

Goddard, V. and B. White (1982) 'Child Workers Today', *Development and Change* vol 13 (4 (Special Issue)): 465-78.

Gupta, A. (2002) 'Reliving Childhood? The Temporality of Childhood and Narratives of Reincarnation', *Ethnos* vol 67 (1): 33-56.

Hall, K. (1995) ' There s a Time to Act English and a Time to Act Indian: The Politics of Identity among the British-Sikh Teenagers', in S. Stephens (ed.) *Children and the Politics of Culture.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hall, S. (1992) 'The Question of Cultural Identity', in S. Hall, D. Held, and T. McGrew (eds) *Modernity and Its Features.* London : Polity Press, Open University.

Hardman, C. (1973) 'Can There Be an Anthropology of Children?', *Journal of the Anthropology Society of Oxford* vol 4 (1).

Hawes, D. and B. Perez (1996) *The Gypsy and the State: The Ethnic Cleansing of the British Society.* Oxford: Policy Press.

Helleiner, J. (1998a) 'For the Protection of the Children: The Politics of Minority Childhood in Ireland', *Anthropological Quarterly* vol 5 (3): 1-11.

Helleiner, J. (1998b) 'Contested Childhood: The Discourse and Politics of Traveller Childhood in Ireland', *Childhood* vol 5 (3): 303-24.

Helleiner, J. (2000) *Irish Travellers: Racism and the Politics of Culture.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Helleiner, J. (2003) 'The Politics of Traveller 'Child Begging' in Ireland', *Critique of Anthropology* vol 23 (1): 17-33.

Hendrick, H. (1990) 'Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretative Survey, 1800 to the Present', in A. James and A. Prout (eds) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood.* London: Routledge.

Hobsbawm, E. (1990) *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hockey, A. (1993) *Growing Up and Growing Old: Ageing and Dependency in the Life Course.* London: Sage.

Hutchby, U. and J. Moran-Ellis (1998) 'Situating Children's Social Competence', in U. Hutchby and J. Moran-Ellis (eds) *Children and Social Competence: Arenas of Action.* London: Falmer Press.

James, A. and A. L. James (2004) *Constructing Childhood: Theory, Policy and Social Practice.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

James, A., C. Jenks, and A. Prout (1998) *Theorising Childhood.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

James, A. and C. Prout (1990) 'A New Paradigm for the Sociology of Childhood? Provenance, Promise and Problems', in A. James and C. Prout (eds) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood.* London: Falmer Press.

Jenkins, H. (1998) 'Introduction: Childhood Innocence and Other Modern Myths', in H. Jenkins (ed.) *The Children's Culture Reader.* London: New York University Press.

Jenks, C. (1982) *The Sociology of Childhood.* London: Batsford.

Jenks, C. (1996) *Childhood.* London: Routledge.

Jordan, E. (2001a) 'From Interdependence, to Dependence and Independence: Home and School Learning for Traveller Children', *Childhood* vol 8 (1): 57-74.

Jordan, E. (2001b) 'Exclusion of Travellers in State Schools', *Educational Research* vol 43 (2): 117-32.

Lee, N. (2001) *Childhood and Society: Growing Up in an Age of Uncertainty.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Lemon, A. (2000) *Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romany Memory From Pushkin to Post Colonialism* . London: Duke University Press.

Lemon, A. (2001) 'Russia: Politics of Performance', in W. Guy (ed.) *Between Past and Future: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe.* Hertfordshire : University of Hertfordshire Press.

Lidaki, A. (1997) *Balame Ke Roma: I Tsiggani Ton Ano Liosion.* Athens: Kastaniotis.

Lidaki, A. (1998) *I Tsiggani Stin Poli: Megalonontas Stin Aghia Varvara.* Athens: Kastaniotis.

Liégeois, J. P. (1994) *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe Press.

Markou, G. (1998a) *Prosegiseis Tis Polipolitismikotitas Ke i Diapolitismiki Ekpedefsi-Epimorphosi Ton Ekpedeftikon.* Athens: Ipourgio Ethnikis Pedias ke Thriskevmaton, Geniki Grammatia Laikis Epimorphosis.

Markou, G. (1998b) *I Poliplokotita Tis Ellinikis Kinonias, I Diadikasia Diethnopiisis Ke i Anageotita Tis Diapolitismikis Ekpedefsis.* Athens: Ipourgio Ethnikis Pedias ke Thriskevmaton, Geniki Grammatia Laikis Epimorphosis.

Marushiakova, E. and V. Popov (2001a) 'Historical and Ethnographic Background: Gypsies, Roma, Sinti', in W. Guy (ed.) *Between Past and Future: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe.* Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Marushiakova, E. and V. Popov (2001b) 'Bulgaria: Ethnic Diversity-Common Struggle for Equality', in W. Guy (ed.) *Between Past and Future: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe.* Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Mayall, B. (2002) *Towards a Sociology for Childhood.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Miller, C. (1975) 'American Rom and the Ideology of Defilement ', in F. Rehfisch (ed.) *Gypsies, Tinkers, and Other Travellers.* London: Academic press.

Mizen, P., C. Pole, and A. Bolton (2001) 'Why Be a School Age Worker?', in P. Mizen, C. Pole, and A. Bolton (eds) *Hidden Hands: International Perspectives on Children's Work and Labour.* London: Falmer Press.

Nieuwenhuys, O. (1996) 'The Paradox of Child Labor and Anthropology', *Annual Review of Anthropology* vol 25: 237-51.

Nieuwenhuys, O. (2003) 'Growing Up between Places of Work and non-Places of Childhood: The Uneasy Relationship', in K. F. Olwig and E. Gullov (eds) *Children's Places: Cross-Cultural Perspectives.* London: Routledge.

Ntousas, D. (1997) *Rom Ke Filetikes Diakriseis: Stin Istoria, Tin Kinonia, Tin Koultoura, Tin Ekpedefsi Ke Ta Anthropina Dikeomata.* Athens: Gutenberg.

Okely, J. (1983) *Changing Cultures: The Traveller-Gypsies.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Okely, J. (1997) 'Non-Territorial Culture As the Rational for the Assimilation of Gypsy Children', *Childhood* vol 4 (1): 125-42.

Olwig, K. F. and E. Gullřv (2003) 'Towards an Anthropology of Children and Place', in K. F. Olwig and E. Gullřv (eds) *Children's Places: Cross-Cultural Perspectives.* London: Routledge.

Opie I. and P. Opie (1977) *The Lore and Language of School-Children.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pavli, M. and A. Sideri (1990) *I Tsiggani Tis Aghias Varvaras Ke Tis Kato Achaias.* Athens: Ipourgio Politismou: Geniki Grammatia Laikis Epimorphosis.

Postman, N. (1983) *The Disappearance of Childhood.* London: W. H. Allen.

Prendergast, S. (2000) ''To Become Dizzy in Our Turning': Girls, Body-Maps and Gender as Childhood Ends', in A. Prout (ed.) *The Body, Childhood and Society.* London: Macmillan Press.

Punch, S. (2001) 'Household Division of Labour: Generation, Gender, Age, Birth Order and Sibling Composition', *Work, Employment and Society* vol 15 (4): 803-23.

Qvortrup, J. (1985) 'Placing Children in the Division of Labour', in P. Close and R. Collins (eds) *Family and Economy in Modern Society.* London: Macmillan Press.

Qvortrup, J. (1994) 'Childhood Matters: An Introduction', in J. Qvortrup, M. Bardy, G. Sgritta, and H. Wintersberger (eds) *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Politics.* Aldershot: Avebury Press.

Salo, M. (1981) *The American Kalderas: Gypsies in the New World.* New York: Hachettstown.

San Román, T. (1976) *Vecinos Gitanos.* Madrid: Akal.

San Román, T. (1986) *Entre La Marginación y El Racismo: Reflexiones Sobre La Vida De Los Gitanos.* Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

Schwartzman, H. E. (2001) 'Introduction: Questions and Challenges for a 21st-Century Anthropology of Children', in H. E. Schwartzman (ed.) *Children and Anthropology.* London: Bergin & Garvey.

Smart, C., B. Neale, and A. Wade (2001) *The Changing Experience of Childhood.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Soldberg, A. (1990) 'Negotiating Childhood: Changing Constructions of Age for Norwegian Children', in A. James and A. Prout (eds) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood.* London: Falmer Press.

Steedman, C. (1995) *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority 1780-1930.* London: Virago.

Stephens, S. (1995) 'Introduction: Children and the Politics of Culture in "Late Capitalism"', in S. Stephens (ed.) *Children and the Politics of Culture: Rights, Risks and Reconstructions.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Stephens, S. (1997) 'Editorial Introduction: Children and Nationalism', *Childhood* vol 4 (1): 5-17.

Stewart, M. (1997) *The Time of The Gypsies.* U.K.: Westview Press.

Sutherland, A. (1975) *Gypsies: The Hidden Americans.* London: Tavistock.

Sutherland, A. (1977) 'The Body as a Social Symbol among the Rom', in J. Blacking (ed.) *The Anthropology of the Body.* London: Academic Press.

Toren, C. (1993) 'Making History: The Significance of Childhood Cognition for a Comparative Anthropology of Mind', *Man* vol 26: 461-78.

Toren, C. (1999) *Mind, Materiality, and History: Explorations in Fijian Ethnography.* London: Routledge.

Toren, C. (2002) 'Anthropology as the Whole Science of What It Is to Be Human', in R. G. Fox and B. J. King (eds) *Anthropology Beyond Culture.* Oxford: Berg.

Toren, C. (2003) 'Becoming a Christian in Fiji: An Ethnographic Study of Ontogeny', *Royal Anthropological Institute* vol 9: 709-27.

Valentine, G. (1996) 'Angels and Devils: Moral Landscapes of Childhood', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* vol 14: 581-99.

Vasiliadou, M. and M. Pavli-Korre (1998) *I Ekpedefsi Ton Tsigganon Stin Ellada.* Athens: Ipourgio Ethnikis Pedias ke Thriskevmaton, Geniki Grammatia Laikis Epimorphosis.

Vaxevanoglou, A. (2001) *Ellines Tsiggani: Perithoriaki Ke Ikogeniarches.* Athens: Ekdosis Alexandria.

Wee, V. (1995) 'Children, Population Policy, and the State in Singapore', in S. Stephens (ed.) *Children and the Politics of Culture.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Williams, P. (1993) 'Terre d 'Asile, Terre D' Exile: L' Europe Tsigane', *Special Issues of Ethnies* vol 8 (15).

Williams, P. (2003) *Gypsy World: The Silence of the Living and the Voices of the Dead.* London: University of Chicago Press.

Willis, P. (1981) *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Zelizer, V. (1985) *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children.* New York: Basic Books.

Zelizer, V. (1998) 'From Useful to Useless: Moral conflict Over Child Labor', in H. Jenkins (ed.) *The Children's Culture Reader.* New York: New York University Press.