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

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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, 1999, 2003, 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 patterns 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-Gypsiness*. 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-Gypsiness* 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, 1986; Ennew, 1986; Stephens, 1995; Zelizer, 1998; 1985; Zelizer, 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, 1993 Toren, 1993; Christensen, 1998, 1993 Christensen, 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, 1995 Stephens, 1995; Jenks, 1996; Wee, 1995; Qvortrup, 1994; James and Prout, 1990).

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

⁹ As Ackroyd and Pilkington (1999 Ackroyd 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 (1999 Ackroyd and Pilkington, 1999), the numerous examples of studies on British youth (Back, 1996; Hall, 1995, 1992 Hall, 1992) echo Stephens' (1995 Stephens, 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, 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 constraints 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 *Gypsiness* 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-Gypsiness* 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,b; Jordan, 2001b; Helleiner, 1998a,b; Helleiner, 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 *Gypsiness* 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,b; Helleiner, 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, 2001a,2001a,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 (1997; Okely, 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, 1997; Stewart, 1997; Okely, 1983; Sutherland, 1977, Sutherland, 1975; Miller, 1975), age has remained a much less examined variable in relation to explorations of the embodiment of *Gypsiness*. This happens in spite of the fact that both Sutherland (Sutherland, 1977) and Miller (Miller, 1975) recognised that the concept of defilement alters throughout the life circle among different age groups of Gypsies.

¹² For example, Okely (Okely, 1983: 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 (Stewart, 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,b; Jordan, 2001b; Jordan, 2001a), Markou (1998a,b; Markou, 1998b; Markou, 1998a), Vasiliadou and Pavli-Korre (1998; Vasiliadou and Pavli-Korre, 1998), Lidaki (1997; Lidaki, 1997), Ntousas (1997; Ntousas, 1997), Okely (1997; Okely, 1997), Liégeois (1994; Liégeois, 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-Gypsiness*, 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-Gypsiness* 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-Gypsiness* 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-Gypsiness* 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-Gypsiness* 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 *Gypsiness* 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 *Gypsiness* 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-Gypsiness* 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.

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*Class formation in the Ionian Islands during the period of British rule,
1814-1864.*

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INTRODUCTION

The historiography of class in Greece has followed a Marxist trajectory. From the rigid Marxism of Skliros and Kordatos of the early years of Greek social history to the more nuanced analysis of Moskof, Tsoukalas, Mouzelis and Filias, sociologists and political scientists, but not historians, have provided the dominant paradigm for the evolution of Greek social formation since the late eighteenth century – the usual starting point. While this earlier focus was (predictably perhaps) on the peasant and, on fewer occasions, the working class, the history of the bourgeois class has remained largely unexplored with the exception of the ‘diaspora bourgeoisie’ concept, to which special reference will be made later.

More recently the parameters of Greek historiography have been reconfigured, following developments in historiography elsewhere. In Britain, especially, an ostensible necessity to abandon any class framework of historical explanation dominates, not as a result of the fall of communist regimes in Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe, which supposedly discredited historical materialism, but as a result of the aggressive criticisms against the very epistemological foundations of History by some historians and most commonly by thinkers and literary critics, usually called in an unhelpful and generalizing way ‘postmodernists’. Central in this critique has been the urge to abandon categories of historical explanation (too fixed to account for the complexities of the subject we are told), and the dismissal of narratives that claimed and indeed required some allowance for historical objectivity, in the sense of following a social science methodology. The Marxist narrative of class analysis in history was in this spirit abandoned, as a ‘metanarrative’. Other historians in Greece were less willing to jump ship but following the general trend means there are hardly any pockets of historiographical ‘resistance’ left that are prepared to situate class at the centre of their analysis.

Class of course is a debatable and indeed controversial term. Never a concept or an analytical category, as class is often called by the more methodology-minded, has aroused so much interest, generated fierce debates and inspired historians (among others of course), only to be subsequently abandoned as a bankrupt, invented and insignificant category of social taxonomy, as opposed to, for example, race and/or gender. The larger narrative to which this paper belongs aimed to analyze Ionian society with class at the centre of the narrative. The research identified the Ionian Islands during the period of British rule, 1815-1864, as the 'case study'. Historians of class in the Ionian Islands are historians immediately set apart from historians of the Greek state due to a significant difference; in the emerging Greek State there was no indigenous (or autochthonous – to use a Greek word) bourgeoisie, whereas in the Ionian islands the bourgeois class emerged gradually from the last period of Venetian rule, on to the period of incorporation of the islands to the Greek State and beyond. On this, there is a general consensus among historians of the Ionian Islands.

In the existing Greek historiography one particular group, merchants, became one of the constitutive elements of a Greek bourgeois class and played a significant (but not absolutely crucial) role. In the Ottoman Empire and in port cities around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, merchants originating from islands and coastal areas from the seventeenth (and more intensively from the late eighteenth) century onwards accumulated wealth as they replaced the French in several Mediterranean emporia and facilitated the expansion of British manufactured goods and the provision of grain to West-European economies. This class, merchants, bankers and often speculators played a role not only in the emergence of the Lilliputian Greek state (as historians have claimed for decades now), but also in the incorporation of the area of eastern Mediterranean to the global economy through their activities in shipping and commerce. This is in fact a much less researched area which would enable Greek historiography to engage with the debates that are currently taking place in the field of global economic history and concern globalization, development and growth from the 1500s onwards.¹ At a local level (and perhaps at a national level too) merchants were equally important in the reconfiguration of social and power relations, both in the area of the Ottoman Empire that became the Greek State and in the Ionian Islands, an area with an entirely different historical trajectory altogether.

¹ The literature is growing fast. For a recent review of the debates in global history in general, see, A.G.Hopkins (ed), *Globalization in World History*, Pimlico, 2002 and the more recent and more broad, B. Mazish and A. Iriye (eds), *The Global History Reader*, Routledge, New York & London, 2005. For Global Economic History from the late nineteenth century onwards, see, K.O. Rourke and J.G. Williamson (2000), *Globalization and History. The Evolution of a Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Economy*, MIT, Cambridge & London.

Class is always about power and any investigation of the former was bound to engage with the complexities of the latter. The questions about the class identity, character and agency of Ionians during this period inevitably involved questions about their status and power in their local society. Economic power and social status concurred with moral authority and a hybrid British-Ionian perception of the world emerged, a perception that gradually abandoned its Italian origins and orientated towards the centre of an emerging nation, Athens. The thesis set out to look at class and power relations in the Ionian Islands during this rather convenient 'slice' of time, 1815-1864, periods of time being in any case a device historians use in order to control the unruly character of events in the past, and train themselves in the profession. Research was concerned with more than one town, in fact with all the port cities of the Ionian Islands, but methodological constraints and the limitations of sources (as usual) imposed a focus on Corfu, not at all arbitrary and meaningless however, since the town was the administrative, commercial and military capital of the Ionian Islands. This is not to say that the other towns were of less importance but that the epicentre of many historical developments was located in Corfu; particularly well-known, for instance, are the parliamentary events that led gradually to 'enosis' – unification - following the ceding of the islands to Greece.

The thesis and the paper do not focus on these developments. Instead, the main question the thesis set out to examine was the impact of institutional change on the process of class formation. While no class can be seen in a vacuum and relations with other classes are inherent in the analysis, the impact of institutional transformation on the merchants of the islands as a group became central, because of the importance of commerce for the islands' economy and the recurring manifestation of the increased role of merchants, or at least of some merchants in the towns' social and economic life. What about the political expression and articulation of interests of this class though? The issue will be discussed in more detail, suffice it to say here that from the beginning, the analysis required first of all a broader definition of politics. This re-definition of political agency, articulation of interests and essentially power became feasible with the use of institutions of urban governance as an analytical tool.

As in every social science research the problem had to be clearly formulated and the questions set out: what were the institutional changes that could possibly lead to a reconfiguration of social and power relations among different classes in Ionian society during the nineteenth century, as all historians have previously suggested? The emergence of a bourgeoisie in the Ionian Islands that at the end responded to its 'class obligation' and

required 'enosis', union with Greece is one of the most recurring arguments in the historiography, but that does not necessarily make it credible. Whoever reads and studies the social history of the islands will be surprised with the consensus on the emergence of the Ionian bourgeoisie, more often taken for granted than explored, especially for the period of British rule.

The historiography of Greek merchants, on the other hand, usually called Diaspora, has become in the last few years too significant to ignore even if it was subsequently abandoned as a historiographical context; nevertheless, one would have to engage with it and with the concept of community specifically, that is usually adopted in the examination of the role of Greek merchants in Mediterranean ports in the nineteenth century. The critique is too lengthy to summarise here and will only be briefly mentioned. The paper proceeds with a background of class relations in the Ionian Islands before the period of British rule, the relevant historiography on Ionian classes and merchants; this is followed by a brief overview and analysis of the main institutions examined during the period and the ways in which these institutions became the breeding ground of the new Ionian 'upper class'.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

While North's model of institutional change and definition of institutions as informal constraints and formal rules is one of the most prominent ones in institutional economic history, there have been objections and attempts to check North's theory by sociologists who do not perceive the economic and the social as separate spheres of human agency.² According to Granovetter, the main shortcoming of New Institutional Economics, which is North's approach, is neglect of social structure.³ Granovetter's criticisms focus on the neglect of collective economic action by economic theory. This action is socially situated and can be traced in the involvement in companies (joint-stock, for example), and also in the close-group organisation of commercial mechanisms and decision-making bodies, such as

² According to Douglas C. North, institutions are 'humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction. They consist of both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions and Codes of conduct), and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights)'; D.C. North, 'Institutions', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 5, 1 (1991), p. 97. North refers to, and is primarily concerned with, the relations, which transformed long distance trade and paved the way for the creation of economies of scale. Since, however, the central focus of the paper is not the growth, stagnation or decline of Ionian economy, but class relations in Ionian society and the emergence of a new social group, the hypothesis formulated is whether institutions which clearly advanced commercial exchange constituted the site of formation, as well as of agency, of a commercial class.

³ M. Granovetter, 'Economic Institutions as Social Constructions: A Framework for Analysis', *Acta Sociologica*, 35, 3 (1992), pp. 3-11. In an previous, defining article, Granovetter argued that in non-market societies the 'level of embeddedness of economic behaviour is lower'; M. Granovetter, 'Economic Action and Social Structure: the Problem of Embeddedness', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 91, 3 (1985), 481-510.

the Exchange and the Chamber of Commerce. Thus, for Granovetter, institutions can only be perceived as social constructs. This argument has particular importance for the hypothesis of the formation of a commercial class in the Ionian Islands. These institutions were important in changing commercial structures and impacted considerably on the social organisation of Ionian towns and class formation, in particular. At the same time, these commercial mechanisms were sites of political agency too, as merchants articulated and pursued their interests (adoption of economic liberalism in the grain trade, or more frequent steamer communication with Trieste, for instance) through the Chamber of Commerce, which was used as a platform for negotiation with the British High Commissioner.⁴ Also, according to Acemoglu, the aim of more efficient allocation of resources by political and economic elites and economic growth is also achieved through institutions, but not without conflict, as the ‘social conflict’ view holds.⁵ This in fact is the issue that has hardly been analysed for the case of Greece, namely the impact of institutional transformation (or the lack of it) on the Greek economy and industrialization in particular.⁶

This paper deals with the class formation by looking primarily at a group, the merchants of the islands, whose activities were primarily, if not exclusively, commercial; activities, which, however, did not determine any static class position.⁷ Analysis of class formation was never going to be the same after E.P.Thompson’s defining book *The Making of the English Working Class*, in which class is a historical relationship and a process, no more a category or a structure, no more static and determined by exogenous and given factors such as the mode of production, although class experience was still determined by the productive relations into which men were born.⁸ Thompson’s approach saw the appearance of a number of studies of nineteenth-century Britain, with an emphasis on ‘activity, above the imperatives of structure, in the process of class formation. The focus on urban institutions,

⁴ The medium of negotiation was lengthy petitions, submitted to the High Commissioner. The signatures at the end of those petitions allow us to construct a prosopographical as well as a group analysis of the merchants negotiating with the central administration.

⁵ D. Acemoglu, S. Johnson and J.A. Robinson, ‘Institutions as the Fundamental Cause of Long-Run Growth’ in P. Aghion and S. Durlauf (eds), *Handbook of Economic Growth*, North Holland Amsterdam, 2004.

⁶ T.D. Sakellaopoulos, *Thesmikos Metashimatismos kai Oikonomiki anaptiksi*, Eksantas, Athina 1991. The work belongs to the ‘development of underdevelopment’ literature which examined Greece in comparison to the industrialized states of North-Western and Central Europe, and found it, not surprisingly, underdeveloped.

⁷ Weber identified the primary significance of the ‘commercial class’ in a) the monopolisation of entrepreneurial management for the sake of its members and its business interests, and, b) the safeguarding of those interests through influence on the economic policy of the political and other organisations; M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. G. Roth and C. Wittich, University of California Press, Berkeley 1978, 2, pp. 302-7.

⁸ E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 1963, (reprinted), Penguin, Middlesex 1984, pp. 8-9.

whether local, government or voluntary, has become central'.⁹ Moreover, the issue of urban governance has recently been identified as one of the main ways of looking at urban elites,¹⁰ and towns are treated as fields of social power.¹¹ What was more important however, since the project aimed to discern the formation of a commercial bourgeoisie in the Ionian Islands, was to engage with the literature on diaspora merchant communities, or, as R. Clogg has termed it, the mercantile bourgeoisie.¹²

HISTORIOGRAPHY

In recent years, studies on Greek merchant communities have proliferated.¹³ The scope of these studies though is delimited by the geographical location of the port cities that were examined, since these never became part of the Greek Kingdom as it emerged during the third decade of the nineteenth century and expanded in the following decades, and they are relevant mostly to the history of the Greek *diaspora*, important as this certainly is. In the case of Corfu, and to a certain extent the other Ionian Islands, the construction of internal coherence of any merchant group in particular and of the bourgeoisie in general cannot be attributed to ethnic, religious or cultural common identity characteristics only, the main

⁹ Crossick G., 'The bourgeoisie in nineteenth-century Britain: recent developments in research and interpretation', [English version of 'La bourgeoisie britannique au 19e siècle. Recherches, approches, problematiques', *Annales ESC* 53, 6 (1998), 1089-1130]. Crossick refers to the studies of R.J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party. The Making of the English Middle Class: Leeds, 1820-50*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1990, and T. Koditschek, *Class Formation and Urban-Industrial Society. Bradford, 1750-1850*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990.

¹⁰ J. Smith, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', *Urban History*, 27, 2 (2000), 255-275.

¹¹ P. Abrams, 'Introduction', in P. Abrams and E.A. Wrigley, *Towns in Societies. Essays in Economic History and Historical Sociology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1979, p. 5.

¹² R. Clogg, 'The Greek Mercantile Bourgeoisie: 'Progressive' or 'Reactionary'?', in R. Clogg (ed), *Balkan Society in the age of Greek Independence*, The Macmillan Press Ltd, London 1981.

¹³ The literature is an expanding one. Only the studies used for this research are mentioned here. O. Katsiardis-Hering, *H Elliniki paroikia tis Teryestis (1750 – 1830)* [The Greek paroikia of Trieste], Athens 1986, on Alexandria H. Hadziiosif, 'Emporikes paroikies ke anexartiti Ellada: erminies ke provlimata' [Merchant paroikiae and independent Greece: interpretations and problems] *O Politis*, 1983 (62), pp. 28-34, on Odessa and the grain trade: V. Kardasis, *Ellines Omogeneis sti Notia Rosia 1775 – 1861* [Greek omogeneis in south Russia], Alexandria, Athens 1997. D. Vlami, *To fiorini, to sitari ke i odos tou kipou. Ellines emporoi sto Livorno 1750 – 1868* [The florin, the grain and the garden street. Greek merchants in Livorno], Themelio, Athens 2000. The genealogy of these studies would have to go back to the research of N. Svoronos in 1956 and T. Stoianovich in 1960; N.G. Svoronos, *Le Commerce de Salonique au XVIII Siecle*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1956 (Greek translation – Themelio, Athens 1996), T. Stoianovich, 'The conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant', *The Journal of Economic History*, 20, 1960, 234-311. These two studies provided the thematic range and the conceptual tools for the analysis of merchant communities in diaspora. Stoianovich explored the emergence of an idiosyncratic group of merchants with very specific cultural characteristics, Orthodox, Balkan and conquering, which by the eighteenth century were extremely successful in dominating south-eastern European trade. N. Svoronos, in his study of commerce in Thessaloniki from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, set out the main elements of the analysis of trade and foreign merchants in a town that was (and still is) the main port and commercial centre of the southern Balkans. For a useful overview of the literature until the early nineties and some theoretical considerations, see, I.K. Hasiotis, *Episkopisi tis Istorias tis Neollinikis Diasporas* [Overview of the History of Modern Greek Diaspora], Vanias, Thessaloniki 1993.

feature of the methodology adopted in the above mentioned studies. Instead, it is the contention of this paper that one needs to look at the institutional changes which took place during the first half of the period of British rule and which had far-reaching consequences, surpassing those of the cession of the Islands to the Greek Kingdom, particularly when it comes to issues of class formation and the power relations in Ionian towns. It is through the establishment of institutions that this merchant group seems to have developed a sense of identity, a convergence of commercial and other interests and a sharing of common ideas, and found common ground with other members of the Ionian elite.

One of the reasons for the use of class as an analytical tool is its contemporary meanings among Ionians. Class was a contemporary term, although the term used varied in each case, depending on the language used on each occasion by the multi-lingual Ionians. The dominant picture of the social classes of the Islands in the existing historiography derives from contemporary definitions of the social order, which divided society into three classes, the *nobili* (the nobles), the *cittadini* (the citizens) and the *contadini* (farmers or peasants).¹⁴ This differentiation goes back to Venetian times and was perhaps the most fundamental aspect of social organization until the early nineteenth century.¹⁵ Thus, Hiotis, historian of the Ionian State, mentions that in 1817, Count Landos while welcoming the opening of the Legislative Assembly expressed his gratitude to the British for directing the laws, which would cater for the well-being of all the classes of people.¹⁶ For Hiotis the population was divided into classes according to their occupational activity. Narrating the economic consequences of the 1849 uprising in Kefalonia, Hiotis notes the deleterious effects of the stoppage of commercial activity ‘for the various classes of artisans, merchants, industrialists and proprietors’.¹⁷ Other, less educated than Hiotis, perceived and talked about class in terms of wealth and status.¹⁸

¹⁴ C. Maltezou, talks about the stratification of Ionian society into ‘a)nobili, b)civili, c)popolo’; C. Maltezou, *Istoria tou Ellinikou Ethnous*, Vol. I., p. 220; but elsewhere she talks about the strife between the ‘nobili’ and the ‘cittadini’; C. Maltezou, *Istoria tou Ellinikou Ethnous*, Vol. IA., p. 213.

¹⁵ Vlachos-Politis argues emphatically that we can talk of a *corpo* (body) of nobles as a group with distinct social and political roles for the Venetian period only. He then attempts to provide some aspects of the demographic, economic, political and social history of this stratum; X. Vlachos-Politis, ‘To Telos ton Evgenon’ [The End of the Nobles], *Deltio Anagnostikis Eterias Kerkyras*, 24 (2001), pp. 141-186.

¹⁶ P. Hiotis, *Istoria tou Ioniou Kratous* [History of the Ionian State], vol. 2, Zakynthos 1877, p. 5. The work of Hiotis has been a significant influence to practically all subsequent historians, despite his rather Rankian approach to history which nevertheless is counterbalanced by his meticulous attention to detail, and it is this attention to detail as well as his statements that make his two-volume *History of the Ionian State* so valuable and influential.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹⁸ Like the bakers of Corfu, who in 1837 petitioned for longer opening hours for their shops and for being allowed to prepare more (white) bread for the affluent classes, the ‘classe piu agiata della citta’. Petition 164,

In the nineteenth century British sources frequently referred to the merchants of the Islands as the commercial class. In other sources, written in Italian, merchants referred to themselves as the ‘Body of Traders/Merchants’ (*Corpo di Negozianti*).¹⁹ Class was a contemporary term, although the term used varied in each case, depending on the language used on each occasion by the multi-lingual Ionians. For Hiotis, the population was divided into classes according to their occupational activity. Narrating the economic consequences of the 1849 uprising in Kefalonia Hiotis notes the deleterious effects of the stoppage of commercial activity ‘for the various classes of artisans, merchants, industrialists and proprietors’.²⁰ For British contemporary observers the ‘middle classes’ consisted ‘of those Ionians and others who are occupied in trading. Of these a large number are English, and a few are Germans, many of whom have been long settled in the Island, doing business as merchants and bankers’.²¹ The representation of Ionian society containing ‘middle classes’ was the only available class discourse to Victorian visitors and administrators in the Ionian Islands.²² The same exercise was conducted at the beginning of the research, when occupations in Ionian towns were classified and then re-entered into meaningful categories, classes in fact, according to occupation and status.²³ Despite the pluralism of sources that enable historians to conduct such exercises, these can hardly advance understanding of social stratification; they do provide nevertheless an occupational map of any town, useful for further analysis and questions.

‘Bakers. Pray to be allowed to open their shops’. CO 136/661, National Archives, Public Record Office (hereafter NA ,PRO); or the coffee-house keepers, who claimed that their customers, the ‘lowest class of citizens’ and the ‘working class’, would prefer to spend time in their shops than go to Church and petitioned for being allowed to open during the early hours of Sundays and religious holidays, during Mass. Petition 308, CO 136/821, NA ,PRO.

¹⁹ These contemporary perceptions of the social order and of social and occupational identities will have to be taken into account, as the meaning of the term bourgeoisie, or of the term middle class, *class moyenne*, *bürgertum*, *borghesia*, *astiki taksi*, depends to a large and very crucial extent on the evolution of that term ‘within distinct national and linguistic cultures’. G. Crossick, *op. cit.*

²⁰ P. Hiotis, *Istoria tou Ioniou Kratous* [History of the Ionian State], vol. 2, Zakynthos 1877, p. 5. Hiotis, mentions that in 1817, Count Landos while welcoming the opening of the Legislative Assembly expressed his gratitude to the British for directing the laws, which would cater for the well-being of all the classes of people; Hiotis, p. 175. The work of Hiotis has been a significant influence to practically all subsequent historians of the Ionian Islands, despite his rather Rankian approach to history which nevertheless is counterbalanced by his meticulous attention to detail, and it is this attention to detail as well as his statements that make his two-volume *History of the Ionian State* so valuable and influential.

²¹ T. D. Ansted, *The Ionian Islands in the Year 1863*, London, William H. Allen, 1863, p. 15.

²² The meaning of class as denoting social stratification entered the vocabulary in England in the second half of the eighteenth century. See, P.J. Corfield, ‘Class in eighteenth-century Britain’, in P.J. Corfield (ed), *Language, History and Class*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1991.

²³ Occupational classification of Corfu according to the 1864 Electoral List: Craftsmen 24%, Merchants 19%, Servants 15%, Proprietors 14%, Retailers 12%, Professions 9%, Labourers 6%, Other 1%. Electoral List 1864, Eghoria Diahirisi (Domestic Administration), 1544, *Istoriko Arheio Kerkyras* (hereafter IAK). These occupations reflect division of labour (to some extent) only inside the town walls and not the suburbs.

Existing interpretations of nineteenth-century Ionian society seem to define the classes of Ionian society according to two criteria. One is the definition of social group(s) according to their position in the mode of production (class of landowners, class of merchants, class of agriculturalists) drawing largely from contemporary descriptions and stratification and an implicit Marxism. The other criterion is according to the attitude and respective role of each given group towards the issue of union with Greece.²⁴ The issue of union and the rise of nationalism did not only dominate the political life of the Islands from the late 1840s onwards, but it has equally dominated historians' concerns ever since.²⁵ Overall, the literature is concerned more with allocating groups into a given social structure, rather than identifying how this structure was formed and changed during the nineteenth century.

In English-written works on the Ionian Islands, the term 'middle class' is interchangeably used with the word *bourgeoisie*,²⁶ or it is avoided altogether.²⁷ The literature seems to agree on the convergence of economic, with political power for merchants, following the collapse of Venetian Republic in 1797 and the advent of French Republicanism, which unleashed unprecedented political changes in the Islands, initiated a period of turmoil and the first instance in the political and social history of the Islands, in which merchants, as a group, are recorded as a separate group from the 'bourgeoisie', or the *astoi* and the *astiki taksi*, to use

²⁴ Leontsinis, attributes to the bourgeoisie a progressive role, which he associates with the expansion of Ionian trade and Ionian merchants in the European trade. An economic ascendance of the bourgeoisie was followed by social ascendance taking advantage of the decline of the mercantilist Venetian state; G. Leontsinis, *Zitimata Eptanisiakis Koimonikis Istorias* [Issues of Ionian Social History], Tolidi, Athens 1991, p. 267.

²⁵ The reason for that, and the case of Greece is not atypical in this respect, is the far easier to digest narrative of national integration and assimilation of new territories such as the Ionian Islands, to an expanding Greek state, told usually in a manner of national pride, expectations and anticipated fulfillment. In fact, the focus on the issue of union serves extremely well the division into the three-tier social system. In the narrative of the nation-state, the landowning nobility is usually the evil collaborator, while the bourgeoisie is usually presented as split into two groups. One is the progressive one, the bourgeoisie aware of its national consciousness, from the ranks of which the group of the radical unionists emerged. The other group is the reformists, seeking to reform the Ionian State politically but not overthrow British rule. In fact, the Ionian Assembly becomes the only field of struggle for union with Greece, a struggle which is ultimately a constitutional one, since it takes place inside existing institutions by using them and not attempting to overthrow them by revolutionary movements. For the latter see, D. Moschopoulos, 'Krisi nomimotitas sto Ionio Kratos' [Crisis of legitimacy in the Ionian State], in A. Nikiforou (ed), *Kerkira, mia Mesogiaki synthesi: nisisotismos, diktiom anthropina perivallonta 16os - 19os aionas* [Corfu, a Mediterranean synthesis: island mentality, networks, human milieu, 16th -19th centuries], International Conference Proceedings, Corkyra, Corfu 1998, 191-211.

²⁶ G. Yannoulopoulos, 'State and Society in the Ionian Islands 1800-1830', in R. Clogg (ed), *Balkan Society in the age of Greek Independence*, The Macmillan Press Ltd, London 1981.

²⁷ D. Hannell, 'The Ionian Islands under the British Protectorate: Social and Economic Problems', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 7 (1989). Hannell identifies with insight that 'the social and economic history of the protectorate is characterised by class, agricultural backwardness and political impotence'; his analysis, however, does not live up to the ambitious task, especially difficult since it is attempted in the space of an article. The repetition of the descriptive terms the 'educated and wealthy' surely does not advance considerably our knowledge of nineteenth-century Ionian society and its stratification.

Greek historiographical terms.²⁸ With the advent of French republicanism, a period of anarchy ensued, well documented by contemporaries, which lasted until the constitutional restoration of the old order in 1803.²⁹ The most important development during this period of the Septinsular Republic (1800-1807), though, was the specification of political principles in a Constitution, upon which the new polity was based. This was voted in 1803 and after abolishing the hereditary aristocracy of the nobility created the ‘new constitutional nobility’ comprised of nobles and burghers, depending on their income, degree or profession.³⁰ The new constitution was a mixture of liberal and conservative elements, and it formed the basis for the Seaton reforms several decades later, in 1848, when the political rights were granted to those above a certain income (different for each island), and to those in possession of a degree, or in a certain profession.³¹ The importance of these institutional arrangements for the formation of a distinct commercial class lies in the articles granting political rights to merchants ‘maintaining a prosperous store’, expressed in a certain amount of money, defined by the constitution.³² It is also interesting that the constitution makes provision for people from ‘all classes’, who can participate to this polity once they fulfill one of the criteria (capital, store or university degree – therefore capital expressed in property or knowledge). The reference to the word ‘class’ is important and signifies the linguistic and other cultural transfers at play, as the constitution was written in Greek.³³

The above survey of the literature has demonstrated that the representation of Ionian society during the period under consideration has been rather problematic and largely inadequate. This is because the history of social classes in the Ionian Islands has long suffered from the imposition of external social models, and their uncritical (in most cases) application, reflecting a more general trend in Greek historiography. This paper argues

²⁸ For a number of scholars, the defining moment was the composition of the deputation from the municipal councils in 1801. E. Koukou, narrating the political changes brought about in the Islands by the French and their consequences during the following months, notes: ‘The commission for public order called representatives from the peasants, the artisans, the merchants and from the middle class of the town, to discuss their demands. The districts and the villages elected 48 representatives and the artisans and the merchants 16, altogether 64’; E. Koukou, *Istoria ton Eptanison apo to 1791 mehri tin Agglokratia*. [The history of the Ionian Islands from 1797 until English rule], Athens 1999, 3rd edition, p. 105.

²⁹ P. Hiotis, *Istoria ton Eptanison apo ti Venetokratia mehri tin elefsi ton Agglon 1500-1816*, [History of the Ionian Islands from the Venetian rule until the advent of the English], vol. 3, Zakyntos 1878, Karavias, Athens 1980 (reprinted).

³⁰ N. Moschonas, *op. cit.*, p. 397.

³¹ Electoral Law, Ionian Islands Government Gazette (hereafter IIGG), 55, 7/19 January 1849.

³² E. Prontzas, *Nomimata kai Foroi stis Dimosies Prosodous. Apo tin othomaniki spentza sti forodotiki ikanotita* [Regalia and Taxes in Public Revenue. From the Ottoman spentza to the tax-paying ability], Sakkoula, Athens 2003, p. 111.

³³ N. Pantazopoulos, *“na geni I glossa tis dioikiseos kai o diermineftis ton energeia politon”* [‘may the language of the administration become the active people’s interpreter’], University Studio Press, Thessaloniki 1998, p. 90.

instead for looking at the process of institutional change in the urban world of the Ionian Islands and reconstructing the process of class formation through the agency of the merchants and other groups; this approach allows for discerning the subtleties inherent in any process of class formation. These subtleties are not only the cohesion, sociability and convergence of worldview of the main protagonists, the merchants of the Islands, but also the conflict, antagonisms and struggle for power, as well as negotiation and accommodation between different social groups that could have belonged to the same class. Following the above necessary historiographical review, the need to employ an alternative method for discerning the process of class formation becomes even more apparent.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AND CLASS FORMATION DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD

The institutions examined in this research are primarily the law, the ultimate decision-making apparatus, commercial associations and mechanisms that were as important in the nineteenth century for the Ionian Islands as the *scuole* were in earlier times in the islands and the guilds in western Europe, philanthropic and literary associations, the Savings bank but also new forms of business organisation, the joint stock company, expressed in a British-Ionian bank and several maritime insurance companies. These examples of institutional change signify the broader changes in the Ionian economy and to a large extent society. The merchants of the islands, as an economic and social group were at the heart of those institutional changes, without, of course, being the only ones who were affected by them. At another level, values and customs were also changing during the period and again it was merchants that sought to establish the values that deserved to be praised and the vices that had to be condemned. Specifically it was the merchants-creditors who aimed at prescribing what they considered 'proper' economic and to an extent social behaviour of debtors, and with these criteria they assessed their cases when they became insolvent and their cases reached the courts; the Commercial, if the case was a bankruptcy or the Criminal courts if the debtors were accused of fraud.

The impact of the above examples of institutional change can only be summarised here. The institutionalisation of commercial practices, such as the codification of civil and commercial legislation, in 1841, in the Ionian Islands Commercial Code, was not the first regulation during the period but it was certainly the most significant. The British-administered Ionian State facilitated the introduction of an institutional framework through a

series of laws, decrees and resolutions, the most important of which was the codification laws with the introduction of the Civil, Criminal and Commercial Codes in 1841. In 1840, the Ionian Bank - a British bank, commenced operations in Corfu, Zante, Kefalonia and in the neighbouring Peloponnese. From its onset, the bank functioned as the financier of the Ionian State and as a credit mechanism for the currant trade. Other institutions were important not only for the economy in general but particularly crucial for the structuring of the merchants in hierarchies and the emergence of an elite group of merchants. Despite the differences among merchants from different Islands, institutional change affected all Islands and to an extent functioned as a unifying force, which forged this commercial bourgeoisie. These institutions were the Exchange in Zante and Corfu, and the Chamber of Commerce in Corfu and Kefalonia. Through these commercial mechanisms the merchants of the Islands acquired greater autonomy, elected their representatives and advised the State on commercial issues as well as assisted if not determined, the settlement of debts in the commercial courts, through their function as Assessors elected by their peers. Frictions were not absent however, as it will be demonstrated in the case of the Corfu Chamber of Commerce, and the process of moulding an elite group of merchants was far from orderly. At the same time, the new business organisation set up by the Commercial Code enabled the establishment of a number of joint-stock companies, most of them financed by local capital, with the exception of the Ionian Bank. These companies were primarily in the field of maritime insurance and production of agricultural exports, wine and silk. They also performed banking operations, aiming to challenge the privilege of the Ionian Bank to issue notes, but the support of the Ionian State to the British-administered and financed bank was overwhelming. Other aspects of the institutional transformation between 1830s and 1860s included the introduction of advertising techniques, the adoption of scientific administration of the new forms of business organisation, the joint-stock companies and the creation of a shareholding mentality, which affected several and diverse groups of Ionian society. Through these new business strategies and developments, we can discern the merchants who demonstrated entrepreneurial spirit, possessed the necessary capital to invest in the new business opportunities and had the advantage of the protection offered generously by the British administration. The latter was particularly valuable in commercial operations abroad, in cases where British consulates had to mediate and act on behalf of Ionian merchants.

The role of these institutions and their function in the process of ‘redeploying the corporate system’ has been examined in the context of the emerging commercial capitalism

in Europe³⁴ In a different context the function of the Chamber of Commerce as intermediary between business and government and its role as a medium used by social groups in ascendance, such as merchants, to negotiate relationships with the declining landed elite, has been demonstrated.³⁵ In nineteenth-century Livorno, the Chamber of Commerce was one of the institutions, which ‘would serve to reflect the new concerns of the merchant community and to aid in their articulation and implementation’.³⁶ What has not been stressed is the redefinition of the term merchant and its social meaning through these institutional changes, that took place in the Ionian islands during the period, and the hierarchy created among the commercial class as a result of these institutional changes.

No class or social group can be studied in vacuum and the new forms of business organisation, primarily banks and insurance companies attracted not only the financial interest of merchants but also of landowners, professionals and the occasional priests and teachers, as well as female siblings. Shareholding became a novel activity taken up by both members of the old nobility and the emerging urban elite. The Ionian Bank shareholders (the bank founded and administered by London merchant bankers and financing the currant trade in the islands and Morea) were title-holding members of the nobility. On the contrary, the shareholders of the insurance companies in all islands were merchants, shipowners, and some members of the professions, responding to the opportunity for accumulation of some small profit by investing in one or more of these new forms of business organisation.³⁷

What these companies represented was an idea of modernity whose origins lay in the British ideology of progress (economic, social and political) through commerce. Time and again British High Commissioners declared their belief to this idea of progress that would ultimately lead to the political maturity of Ionian and would render British protection redundant. This very liberal ideology assumed its local expression in the field of politics through the parties of the Ionian Assembly, namely the Reformists and in a more radicalised

³⁴ G. Bossenga, ‘Protecting Merchants: Guilds and Commercial Capitalism in Eighteenth-Century France’, *French Historical Studies*, 15, 4 (1988), 693-703.

³⁵ E. Ridings, ‘Chambers of Commerce and Business Elites in Great Britain and Brazil in the Nineteenth Century: some comparisons’, *Business History Review*, 75, 2001, pp. 739-773.

³⁶ D. G. LoRomer, *Merchants and Reform in Livorno*, p. 94. For the role of Greek merchants in the Livorno Chamber of Commerce see Vlami D., *To fiorini, to sitari ke i odos tou kipou. Ellines emporoi sto Livorno 1750 – 1868* [The florin, the grain and the garden street. Greek merchants in Livorno], Themelio, Athens 2000.

³⁷ More details on the insurance companies, see, S. Gekas, ‘Nineteenth-century Greek port towns. History, historiography and comparison. The case of the marine insurance companies’, <http://www.ehs.org.uk/ehs/conference2004/assets/gekas.doc>).

version, the Radical Unionists.³⁸ In the commercial sphere, merchants also adopted a liberal ideology, manifested in their urge to convince the Ionian State to follow and adhere a free trade policy. The National Archives hold a number of petitions by merchants, written and submitted collectively over the issue of the grain trade and the opening up of the communications market to foreign steamer companies.

The adoption of the practically same ideology, liberalism, by different groups in Ionian society is certainly worth exploring further, and the connection between the two might be important in any analysis of nineteenth-century Ionian Islands social formation. Another field, however, that was explored during the research is the extra-economic means through which this emerging group of merchants sought to establish itself and assert its authority over the rest of the urban population and in accordance or in alliance with other groups. Such groups included the members of the British administration (such as army officers), the political class of the Islands (until 1848-49 predominantly comprised of the landowning ‘nobility’),³⁹ the higher clergy of all denominations, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant, and also members of the professions, such as lawyers and physicians.

It has been asserted that one of the most important tools for the analysis of urban elites is the concept of governance.⁴⁰ Governance and, in particular, urban governance, is not confined only to the political institutions of the Ionian State, the Assembly, the Senate and even the Municipal Council (significantly curtailed before the reforms of 1848-9). Instead, governance is also to be found in the institutions responsible for the administration of urban economic and social life. These were sites of power too, institutions through which power was diluted without the existence of ideological mechanisms of the State (such as schools, the Ionian Academy and the official newspaper). Tracing and identifying these institutions and their role in shaping the urban hierarchies, as well as the individuals who established, administered and shaped these institutions, is an extremely important process

³⁸ See the detailed study of E. Calligas, ‘The “Rizospastai” (Radical – Unionists): Politics and Nationalism in the British Protectorate of the Ionian Islands, 1815 – 1864’, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of London, London School of Economics and Political Sciences, 1994.

³⁹ On nobility and the special meaning it acquired in the Islands, and for a recent clarification of the description see N. Karapidakis, ‘Oi sheseis dioikounta kai dioikoumenou sti venetokratoumeni Kerkyra’ [Relations between ruler and ruled in Corfu under Venetian rule], in A. Nikiforou (ed), *Kerkira, mia Mesogiaki synthesi: nisiotismos, diktia, anthropina perivallonta 16os - 19os aionas* [Corfu, a Mediterranean synthesis: Island mentality, networks, human milieu, 16th -19th centuries], International Conference Proceedings, Corfu 22-25 May 1996, Corfu 1998, pp. 179-190. Towards the end of the period, many lawyers were among the ‘petite bourgeoisie’- so called of the Islands. Some of them were among the most radical elements in the Ionian Assembly. As it has become clear from the analysis so far though, this thesis is concerned more with developments in Ionian society outside the sphere of the Assembly rather than with developments and arguments inside the Assembly walls.

⁴⁰ J. Smith, ‘Urban elites c. 1830-1930 and urban history’, *Urban History*, 27, 2 (2000), 255-275.

for addressing the issue of power in any society at any given time. During the period of British rule, the institutions of urban governance were created with the initiative either of the elite or of the State and, in some cases, through the interaction of both. Instrumental to the establishment of hierarchies in the Ionian towns was the local bourgeoisie, in particular the commercial bourgeoisie. These were the wholesale merchants, insurance companies' directors, bankers and creditors, who have been identified so far in the previous chapters. The involvement of these merchants and businessmen indicates their perception of a sense of social responsibility to the less affluent of their society. These very public roles were either assigned by the State, appointing the merchants to committees, or were taken up by the merchants themselves through philanthropic and other initiatives. The character of these initiatives complements the picture of an emerging bourgeoisie, with merchants being among the protagonists, who play a central role in the establishment and administration of these institutions of urban governance. Sociability, convergence of mentality, worldview and interests with other strata, would have to be at the centre of any historical project tracing the emergence of a bourgeoisie in the Ionian Islands.

This process of establishing institutions of urban governance was exceptionally unifying for the urban societies of the Islands. The same laws for the opening of poorhouses, lunatic asylums and prisons were devised by the central authorities in Corfu and were applied to all the three main Islands to enable the local administration, British and Municipal, to address a problem which became increasingly acute and visible during the period of British rule; poverty and vagrancy, its principal manifestation. At the same time, responses of the wealthy towards the increasing social problems caused by economic distress and pressures were similar. Both the institutions of coercion established by the State and the institutions of urban governance, will be seen as the means to the same end, urban power and control. State and urban elite employed the different but converging methods of coercion and philanthropy respectively. This convergence of aims to control the urban poor was part of a wider development during the period. The State assumed its 'usual' role of surveillance and coercion from very early on, in fact from the first days of British rule in the Islands. Through a series of laws, decrees and regulations, and their implementation through the police forces of the State, a complex apparatus of surveillance and coercion was put in place.⁴¹ On the other hand, the urban elite assumed its primary role in the field of

⁴¹ Kirkwall, while touring and researching on the Islands for his book, found his own 'proof' of the autocracy of British rule:

I also read some of the correspondence between the Marquis Rivarola, then in the British service and General Campbell, at that time [1814-6] Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief at Corfu. These

philanthropy. The constant deficit of the Ionian budget and the dismal fiscal condition of the Ionian state, as a consequence, did not allow its officials and head of State to intervene drastically and provide solutions to the problem of deteriorating living conditions of the population, especially in the districts both inside and outside the town walls. Following the British model of social organisation and its ramifications in terms of practices (surveillance, rationalisation, ‘progress’), the Ionian State allowed philanthropy to flourish and encouraged its practice, not only because it confirmed the role and presence of British imperial power, but mainly because it covered the absence of social welfare and the inability of the State to respond to the demands of the Ionian citizens for education, sanitation and, especially, for a viable income from agricultural production and the commercial activity of the port.

The British-inspired organisation and administration of economic and social life was incorporated in the worldview of the urban elite. The institutions of urban governance responsible for the implementation of policies were simultaneously sites of agency and exercise of power by the urban elite. The Savings Bank, the Agricultural Society (closely associated with the Savings Bank), the Reading Society, the Ionian Society, a number of philanthropic initiatives, organised in annual subscription funds but also raised in exceptional circumstances, as well as sanitary committees responsible for urban hygiene, form a power nexus so dense that cannot be ignored by historians. At the same time, there was also a convergence of ideology and on several occasions the view of society aspired to by merchants, members of the commercial bourgeoisie and the State coincided, at the expense of less privileged social groups, in and around the town walls.⁴²

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This paper has argued for the necessity of examining a number of legal, economic and urban institutions as instrumental in the process of class formation. This new class, the Ionian bourgeoisie, and one group among them, the merchants of the islands stand out in the history of social class in Greece and still await closer examination. Nevertheless, the

letters amply proved the complete, but I believe most necessary despotism established by the English in 1815. The corruption of judges, and other officials in those days, and the general state of the Islands, after their many vicissitudes, made a strong government indispensable for the welfare of the inhabitants. Kirkwall went on to defend the establishment of autocratic rule as indispensable also for the security of life and property, ‘which form the main objects of all rational governments’. V. Kirkwall, *Four Years in the Ionian Islands*, Vol. 2, 1864, p. 139.

⁴² The population living outside the town walls in Corfu was largely poor and destitute. A particular moment of crisis came when in 1855 there was a cholera outbreak in Manduki, a suburb of Corfu, and the Health Committee considered the option of cordoning off the suburb, thus condemning its residents to death. Instead, the philanthropic initiative by merchants to establish a fund that raised subsequently considerable sums for the care of the cholera infected diffused the situation.

appearance of a number of works recently is an indication that the islands' social and economic history has, at last, attracted historians. So what did this class do on the issue of union with Greece? Traditional Marxist historiography would assume that the 'progressive' bourgeoisie would demonstrate nationalist inclinations and support the unionist movement. In the case of the 'political class', by the late 1850s it was comprised of parties-blocks with fairly clear political goals. Among merchants, however, as the example of the competition in the banking sector shows, between the Ionian Bank and the insurance companies, on the occasion of the renewing of the Ionian Bank's note-issuing privilege, clear lines were not really taken until the late 1850s, and even not until the moment of union, indicating the ambivalent attitude of merchants towards the forthcoming status quo. Other merchants, though, had already established business networks and had initiated a process of integration to the Greek national economy, much earlier than the political decision for ceding the islands to the Greek kingdom was taken. The position of other members of Ionian society, professionals, shopkeepers or labourers, is much harder to establish. Merchants, nevertheless, were divided over the issue of union.

Towards the end of the period and as it was clear since 1863 that the islands would soon be ceded to the Greek State, the new urban elite, constituted not by landowners, people with titles and officers, as it was the case during Venetian times, but by professionals, merchants, and officers, had asserted its presence and affirmed its hegemony through economic power, alleged moral superiority, and political representation. The British authorities only intervened when it was absolutely necessary, as in the 1848 Kefalonia uprisings, and on a more day to day basis by providing the necessary military support for the maintenance of order in the islands, and especially Corfu where almost the whole British garrison were stationed. This issue of maintaining order became more pressing immediately after the departure of British troops. As Storcks, the last British High Commissioner himself noted, the upper and conservative classes were deeply concerned about the reactions of the peasants and growers after the departure of the British.⁴³ Political developments that followed the long-delayed settlement of the land ownership laws and the transition from feudal to civil legislation and status (an area left untouched by the British despite a number of other institutional changes), indicate that a coalition among different property-owning groups, whether landed or not, was necessary in order for the peaceful transition from a semi-colonial to national administrative framework to take place. The institutions examined

⁴³ G. Progolakis, *Anamesa stin timi kai to chrima. I Kerkyra sta hronia tis Agglidikis kiriarhias, 1814-1864*, Istoriko Arheio, Emporiki Trapeza tis Elladas, Athina 2003, p. 408.

in this research demonstrate parts of the process of achieving a consensus among old and new elite groups in Ionian society, negotiating the changing power relations with the British authorities and also among themselves. The process of class formation during the period of British rule if seen through the institutions necessary for the encounter of disparate groups is a quite exceptional case compared to other Greek cities in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the study of the Greek bourgeois class cannot but take into account the developments and changes in the social formation of these areas that were gradually incorporated by the Greek State.

It is considered that the idiosyncrasy of the Ionian State as a protectorate and, thus, as neither a colony nor an independent State, permeates any examination of the social and economic reality of the Ionian Islands at the time, and this paper forms no exception. Without being a sufficient condition for the process of class formation of the Ionian bourgeoisie, as far as merchants and the economy of the islands is concerned, the economic dependence of the Islands on British imports for the vitality of Corfu's transit trade and currant exports to Britain for the livelihood of the residents of the southern Ionian Islands, was more important than any political dependence conferred by the status of the islands.⁴⁴ This is also evident during the after-union era in the continuing dependence of the Greek (not just the Ionian) economy, on the currant trade and markets in Britain and elsewhere. At the same time, the transfer of British attitudes to social and economic organisation was a necessary condition for the emergence of an Ionian bourgeoisie in this particular form and it was as important as the historically western-oriented attitudes and culture that permeated the fabric of Ionian urban society. Had the islands passed under a different administrative framework and ruled by a different power, the emergence of a bourgeoisie would probably have taken another historical route. In this particular historical conjuncture though, the process of institutional change did not only aid the economic and social ascendancy, but it can also be considered as a form of political domination, provided we adopt a much more broad sense of politics and include also the institutions of urban governance, a field of sociability, power and construction of urban elite identity *par excellence*.

⁴⁴ The lacunae in the existing historiography cannot realistically be filled in a paper, however ambitious it may be. It is important to discern, though, the shortcomings of this historiography and of any approach which would assume that the issue of union is more important than any other aspect of historical reality of the Ionian Islands.

Title: Strategies of Success and Limitation in an Arvanite Village
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Abstract

This paper is the result of investigations done for my dissertation for PhD in Anthropology at the University of Durham. The fieldwork took place from 2000 to 2004. Gogofis (pseudonym) is a community in the Northern part of Attica province near Athens, Greece. Gogofis traditionally has been an Arvanite village. Arvanites until recently spoke Arvanitika, a Tosk dialect of Albanian but presently Arvanitka is in decline. This paper examines social networks and family social structures as a basis of power relationships in Gogofis. Gogofis is much like many societies in the Mediterranean in that power relations are directly related to social networks. In Gogofis, Albanian immigrants do not have direct access to formal power structures such as those found in party politics. As a result they are dependent on informal networks, preexisting kinship structures and unofficial power structures. Furthermore, patron/client rituals maintain social relationships which are inevitably tied to formal power structures. As a result, Albanian immigrants in Gogofis have limited participation in such rituals. Thus, Albanian immigrants in Gogofis use several forms of symbolic capital to maintain and sustain themselves. This paper discusses how some strategies are more successful than others by investigating kinship structures of the native Gogofis populations as well as social networks the Albanian immigrants have developed over the last ten years of their residence in the village.

Introduction

To commence this paper it is important to conceptualize what an Arvanite is. What makes an Arvanite an Arvanite? Secondly and equally important is what is an Albanian. Are Arvanites Albanians? Are Albanians Arvanites? The definitions of who they are, in this paper is for the most part, their definition of themselves. It is not a definition based on academic historical accounts or biological based genealogies of how the people are but how they seem themselves. This understanding of who they are is not without confusion as there are many tropes of Greekness and Albanianess. Having potentially non-Greek speaking origins Arvanites feel, puts them under suspicion of not being Greek. Arvanites see themselves as Greeks. Greekness is defined as have a long-standing legacy tied back to Ancient Greece. In addition, they see Greekness quintessentially defined as being Orthodox Christian. The Greek model of nationhood professes there is a continuity where Greek culture permeates through time and the people of Greece (Gogofis included) are the care-takers of this legacy. Of course there are several problems with this model of Greekness as it ignores the influences of varied empires and migratory peoples who have cohabitated in Greece proper over the thousands of years. The Arvanites are one of those peoples. As a result being Arvanite is a public secret. They have had to rationalize their own existence with in the sometime conflicting Greek National model. They see themselves as speaking the oldest 'Greek' dialect, the dialect of the proto-Dorians. Thus, they have a claim to the Greek legacy. But with the arrival of Albanian immigrants their Greekness is again contested, if not so much by others but by themselves. When I asked about who the Arvanites were and what they have to do with the place they live, one informant answered me by saying he wasn't sure if it really had anything to do with 'us' [the people of Gogofis]. I asked several Arvanites who are the Albanians? I was given

several answers. One common response was that they are, *Touki*, Turks, or Turkish Albanians, *Turko-Alvani*. Thus, to differentiate themselves from Albanians, they use the religious millet system set up by the Ottoman Empire to differentiate themselves and the Albanians. Albanians are Muslim and Turkish while Arvanites are Christian and therefore Greek.

I had brought an American Student with me to the field. He had been living in Kosovo so knew Albanian but did not know Greek. One of my Arvanite informants told him in Greek, I am not Albanian. As I explained to him that my friend did not know Greek he told me to tell him that he was Christian and that only the grandparent's generation knew the language. This is a typical response to outsiders. The fact of the matter is that the old Arvanite knew Albanian but was presenting himself as a Christian and a Greek. This response may have been different before the mass migration of Albanians to Greece in the last decade. In fact in writings from as late as the 50's and 60's the Arvanite villages were described as *alvanophono horia*, or Albanian speaking villages. Koumaris, a physical anthropologist in 1948 for the University of Athens suggested that the modern Greeks are a Mediterranean type which is a mixture of Ancient Greek and Albanian origin. Today such suggestions would be completely politically incorrect. Albanians are seen as uneducated, poor barbaric peoples¹, a new invasion of thieves. Immigration and crime are referred to in the media when *ftora* (erosion) infers Albanians. Thus, being associated with being Albania is not good. As a result Arvanites have had to publicly disassociated themselves with Albanians or hide the 'Albanian' origins. The Arvanites of Gogfis define Greekness as described above. They are Christian Orthodox. Thus, they have chosen to the idea that they are of the first Doric tribe as discussed by Biris (1984) or as Proto-Greeks or Pelasgi who first came down from what is now Albania. Thus they can claim to be Greek as they tie themselves to the matrix of Greek ancestors.

Albanians of the other hand use another mythical historic model to explain their existence. They claim to be the modern predecessors of the Illyrian peoples. The Illyrian culture at one time stretched as far west as Corinth and as far East as today's Croatia (Pluto 1984). But the national model they created for themselves is a more secular model than the Greek one. Albania is a country of many religious faiths and sects. Where as religion was the basis of nationalism in the Balkans (Kitromilides 1990), religion could not be a basis of national identity in Albania (Vickers 1991). Furthermore religion could not be used as a moving force to differentiate themselves from the Ottomans as the majority of Albanians were Moslem. Thus, culture and language were the basis of national identity.

During a discussion at a wedding celebration I discussed how Albanians feel about religion and being Albanian. A Muslim Albanian said,

“We are luck to be Albanian. One of my sisters married a Christian man, he is a good man. That's what matters, not what religion his family is. We are not like the Greeks,

¹ The word 'barbarians' has a special meaning in this case as barbaric neighbours are blamed for the fall of the Byzantine Empire.

they have to marry Christians. See I am friend with both Christians and Muslims. Both are here, no difference.”

Often they refer to their national hero, Skanderbeg, in this context.

“Skanderbeg was not concerned about what religion he was he married a woman from the south ... He rejected his [Turkish] Muslim religion and position to be Albanian”

The Village of Gogofis

Gogofis is an Arvanite mountain village in Northern Attica. It is within 20 minutes drive from several important Archeological sites and an hour's drive from Athens the nation's capital. As a result, the village has always been greatly influenced by the city. In addition, the archeological sites are a constant reminder of the Greek influence on the area. In the last 30 yrs. fewer community members know Arvanitika (a Tosk dialect of the Albanian spoken in Greece (Tsiptsis 1995)). Many of the Arvanite residents live in the village but commute for work to either Athens or to larger towns in the valley. A large percentage of the villagers work for the civil service. Several families have lucrative small-scale limestone quarries. In addition to what they consider their full time job, the residents of Gogofis work their land. Few are full time farmers but all except few feel obligated to harvest their family's grapes for retsina wine and to harvest their family's olive groves for oil. Although sheep and goat herding were their primary mode of production in the past, today most people only have a few head of sheep or goats. The Albanian immigrants work as day laborers doing odd jobs either in the fields or in the village. Several Albanians have become quite talented in stonework. Thus, they make a good living building walls or finishing stone patios. In fact those who have become specialized technicians hire out other Albanians as their employees. There are also a growing number who work for one Arvanite employee on a (permanent) full time basis. Albanian immigrants also help Arvanites tend their fields even though they say they usually do not do this type of work and only do it as a favor to their Arvanite hosts. But what is the difference between an Albanian Immigrant and their Arvanite counterparts?

Commonalities between Albanian and Arvanite

So what bonds the two groups in Gogofis? Clearly common origins are a source of symbolic capital. When Albanians and Arvanites attempt to weaken ethnic boundaries they use common elements of their common histories. Interestingly two things happen simultaneously. 1) Commonalities build bonds and ethnic boundaries weaken the differences between Greek/Arvanites and Albanians and, 2) Ethnic boundaries are created or reinforced. First, language is the most obvious common denominator between the two groups. The elder Arvanite generation, in particular, feel very comfortable having a conversation with Albanians. Although, many Arvanites have expressed to me that Arvanitic is less refined and “uglier” than Albanian. They also feel uncomfortable seeing the Albanians using an otherwise domestic language in the public realm, where the Albanians do not make such distinctions. Although attitudes are changing towards the public use of the language, Arvanites still relegate speaking Arvanitic to the private. The next most common thing people discussed was Arvanite and Albanian common origins.

The Arvanites are ashamed that their ancestors were mercenaries. Although they are proud that they were fierce warriors, they believe themselves to be an untrustworthy race, willing to betray someone at the highest bidder. Albanians, on the other hand do not see their mercenary ancestors this way. They also see themselves as fierce warriors but also as adaptable and resourceful diasporatic people who were the protectors of great empires. In addition, both see the Ottoman Empire as a time of occupation. The Arvanite, on the one hand see the Ottomans within a Greek context. In the context of 400 years of slavery, a dark age where Orthodoxy and the Byzantine Empire were robbed of its greatness. While, Albanians see it in a similar context but they see the Ottomans as robbing them of 500 years of the greatness, where they could have become as Albanians or as Europeans. When both parties discuss such subjects they attempt to create common ground. But because of the models, which both parties assume, create inner conflicts. Therefore common ground was only partially achieved. As a result boundaries were maintained even though common histories and language were better understood. What appeared more powerful in building common boundaries were the concepts less exact in nature. Those were the concepts of 1) poverty and 2) a strong work ethic. The idea of being hungry is understood by anyone who has experienced it. The details of why someone is poor are not always obvious but those who have experienced it understand the experience of what it means to be poor. Firstly, Gogofis was poorer than many of the communities below in the valley. People would do seasonal harvest work or work as labors in Athens as construction workers or as waiters in restaurants because their fields could not support the entire community. They grew up with very little, which was the case up and until about 25 years ago. Arvanites would use the statement, “we would eat raw garlic and olives” suggesting great poverty. Similarly Albanian immigrants experienced hunger and poverty. All the immigrants in Gogofis are from rural areas so their experiences were similar even if the circumstance of their poverty was very different. Albanians first arrival in Greece exemplified extreme poverty too.

Secondly, both groups have a strong work ethic. They both believe their progress was caused because of their persistence, sacrifice and hard work. Arvanites see their past selves in their Albanian counterparts, starting with nothing and making something of themselves. They understand each other when working or discussing work and poverty. They understand each other, creating common experience and common identities. The Albanians, likewise, believe they work very hard and have earned a certain amount of respect for their good labor. Of course these common understanding and experiences are only as important as those individuals make them. They are important because agents choose to use these elements of commonality for specific purposes. Otherwise, Albanians would be no different from Pakistani or Polish immigrants.

Why, then, have Albanians been accepted into the village? It is a sometimes-uneasy acceptance. Albanians remind many Arvanites of their polluted origins (Tzanelli 2003). Arvanites generally see the Albanians differently than they may be seen in non-Arvanite communities. In non-Arvanite communities Albanians are seen as a good source of labor but are also seen much as a threat (Moor 2003). Men bring their wives to the village. Shortly thereafter children are born. In Gogofis most of the primary school children are Albanian. In fact, the population growth in Greece would have had a negative growth if

not for foreign workers in Greece (Tzilivakis 2003). Non- Arvanite Greeks were concerned about being overtaken by Albanians (Moor 2003). In Gogfis the opposite is true. Gogofians are happy to see Albanian mothers and children in the village. I was told, “the children will grow up to be good members of the community,” by some Arvanite women. When I suggest that they are not Greeks, they tell me they will become Greek just as they [Arvanites] had. They see the new immigrants not as a threat overtaking the village by over population but rather as new blood in the village, new citizens (Greeks). In addition, they see the new immigrants as members of their own community already. They see Albanians as the semi-barbaric as they [Arvanites] once were. But, they also see them as having cultural continuity, which is not necessarily true for how they see the Asia Minor Greeks who settles in the valley in the 1920’s. The Albanian immigrant settling into the village secures several objectives. 1) dependable labor source, 2) reproducing the village, 3) making new Greeks and, 4) cultural continuity.

The Albanians have another set of objectives. They see living in Gogofis better than other places because the work is steadier. Elsewhere they are looked upon as cheap labor and nothing else. They would have no social bonds or relations with their employer. From discussions with Albanians living in the city, I found their position is sometimes much compromised. In many cases they do not have legal working status that means they are not registered as being employed. They may not be guaranteed a wage or any of the social benefits associated with it, such as national health insurance, or government benefits, etc. In addition, legal employment gives immigrants the right to maintain workers, resident’s permits and freedom of movement back and forth from Greece to Albania. Without legal employment an Albanian immigrant quality of life is quite unstable. There is the constant fear that s/he may be deported, injured or left destitute. Albanians in Gogofis have job security being employed and contracted by the villagers. Social relations with Arvanites more or less guarantee them some sort of job. All the Albanians living in the village have had constant employment and are legally employed and therefore have all the benefits that they are entitled to. Since their income is more or less constant they are able to send remittances back home. Someone’s worth with respect to his colleagues (koligjet) is determined by the willingness to send money home.

A contact told me not to keep company with Beni because “he was not a good person. He spends all his money on himself and sends nothing to his family.”

The reason they are in Greece is to work. Therefore constant employment means constant remittance to their families in Albania. Finally, better social relations allow the Albanian immigrant to choose whether s/he wants to eventually settle in Gogfis or not. Some of the Albanian residents in Gogofis have chosen to not return to Albania. This is a luxury. Many Albanians living in Athens have shown concern about their future in Greece. A shortage of cheap housing is a problem. In addition few have permanent employment (Iosifides 1997). In Gogofis, houses were provided free of charge to newly arrived immigrants, “until they were able to support themselves”, as an elderly Arvanite women told me. Even after they became established, the cost for housing was given at a reduced price. Housing in the beginning would have been a spare room, a basement, or an older stone house (‘pyrgos’ or ‘kulla’ without electricity or indoor plumbing. But when

the Albanians brought their wives', they quickly found better accommodation. But, modern accommodation was not available for everyone. Since, housing is in high demand some individuals made agreements with their Arvanite host to improve the older houses in exchange for free housing. As a result they were able to improve their standard of living in a relatively short period of time, while their counterparts in Athens had to pay large amounts for rent and live in basement apartments. The Albanians living in Gogofis had a relatively guaranteed wage and affordable accommodations. As a result many have chosen to not go back. Several contacts have even decided to invest into the community by buying land with the hope of building a house some day.

Symbolic Parenthood - Foster Parenting

What makes the relationship between Albanian and Arvanite atypical for the Greek case? The typical relationship between the immigrant and their host is a labor relationship (Psimmenos & Kassimati 2003, Iosifides 1997). This entails a relationship of negotiated labor for monetary reward. The employer measures the cost benefit to give his employee benefits such as IKA (access to the national welfare system) or housing, etc. In other words it is a patron/client relationship. In the case of Gogofis, Albanians immigrants are given housing, employment and IKA. In addition, host and guest eat together and the Albanians call their host by kinship terms. I would propose that the Arvanite-Albanian relationship is not just a patron/client relationship. Rather, their relationship is one like that between a parent and a child. I realized this when was discussing with an elderly Arvanite man, Kotsos. He was upset with Armond, a man who he had let stay in his basement. His complaint seemed petty to me at the time because he was complaining about how they feed him and ask nothing in return, and how he showed little respect to them. When Armond was in the room they got along fine. Armond would do errands like getting cigarettes and bread. Armond would spend many hours in the house watching television and keeping Kotsos and his wife company. They in turn helped him get his work papers and would feed him. After Armond had married, his wife would help around the house. They in turn brought her to the hospital when it was time for her to give birth. Later, Kotsos and his wife took care of the child when Armond's wife wanted to work. They were like a family. Complaints that Kotsos and his wife would have were reminiscent of a father and mother and a son. In addition, Armond would feel burdened by them wanting to know where he was and if he was all right. Armond also felt obligated to them because of their assistance to him and his wife. I found this common with many young Albanian men in the village. Another example which suggest a symbolic parent-child relationship is when an Albanian man was baptized by his "employer", who indecently also gave him a nice house to live in. The "foster family" relationship thus, fulfills the objectives of both the Arvanites and the Albanians. 1) Arvanite- labor, repopulation of village, making Greeks, and cultural continuity 2) Albanian- work, remittance, settlement and a better quality of life.

Finally, what more can be added about the relationship between the Albanians and the Arvanites. Before the new mass migration of Albanians to the region speaking Arvanite or expressing one's identity in public was taboo. So too, is the Arvanite's relationship with the Albanian immigrants. One would not openly express their relationship in public.

Likewise Arvanites speak scornfully to any stranger when asked about the Albanians in the village. In fact, I heard countless times individuals state how they were an 'atimi ratsa', an honorless race and could not be trusted. But Arvanites' private actions contradict what they say in public. This became clear when Gjini was leaving the village to live with his brother in another part of Greece. Yannis, a man who had employed him in the past came to say good-bye. He had never spoken Albanian (Arvanitic) in public. He had never spoken Albanian in my presence either. He came and spoke to him. He wept and gave him a gift and helped him prepare to go, never once using a Greek word with Gjini. Gjini's departure was a sad event for him and his adopted families. Gina's relationship with Yannis was a private one. To the outsider it appeared as though they only had an employee/employer relationship. But when Gjini had first arrived in Gogofis he had let him stay in a house of his even though it had been abandoned for many years. Yannis had fed him and clothed him and given him work. But they were rarely seen in public. They would be seen together only for the purpose of work. Yannis and Gjini's behavior was typical. Occasionally, Albanians and Arvanites might sit in the same café but almost never at the same table. Their relationship was one of *cultural intimacy* as coined by Hertfeld (1997). But why is this so? It has more to do with the Arvanite's position in Greek society. Being an Arvanite is relegated to the private realm. Therefore the Arvanites '*culturally intimate*' relationship with the Albanians was delegated to that private realm. In public, Arvanites were Greeks therefore they were expected to speak harshly of the Albanians. They were expected to treat them as "others": as pariah or at best employees. An example of this was when I took Gjini and his brother for a drink by the sea. We arrived home around dusk. The neighbors watched as we parked outside my home. They reprimanded me and told me the Albanians could not be trusted. Where as, many of them had Albanian "foster children," I was not supposed to. If I had to I could hire them for work but nothing else. I was not supposed to show our social relationship in public. Arvanites have to live between different tropes. This sometimes makes maintaining their relationship very difficult. On the one hand, they have a close relationship to their Albanian "foster children" while on the other, publicly scorning them. This strains their relationship because the Albanians dislike this behavior. I have often heard my Albanian contacts say the Arvanites are more Greek than the Greeks.

Kinship structures and ego centered networks

All individuals have structural groups which they are members. Time honored definitions of kinship structures are defined by either blood (consanguinal kin), marriage (affinial kin) or in the case with most Christian Mediterranean societies by sponsorship in baptism or marriage (fictive kin). Kinship groups are group centered structure which exist whether one individual dies or not (Boissevain 1968) Kinship structure thus ascribe an individual within it and are finite. Kinship has been a time honored study for Anthropologist as it has given an understanding of structural functional view of how societies work but has limitations when discussing informal group interrelations such as patron/client relations or local/national politics.

Networks are the essence of patron/client relations which is a quintessential part of everyday life in the Mediterranean. Thus, in contrast, network relations are determined

on the individual. They are ego-centric structures which are much more ephemeral in nature. If someone dies, therefore, his/her network dies with them but are potential infinite (Boissevain 1968). Boissevain (1968) has outlined networks into several ranges of networks. He suggests there are initially two types of networks. 1) *Intimate networks* – “relatives or friends, with whom ego is on closest terms” (p. 547) and 2) *effective networks* – these are “persons whom ego knows less well and from whom he can expect less” (p. 547). The third range he calls *extended networks* “is made up of persons ego does not know personally but of whom he knows and can easily get to know. (p 547)” In addition there are a range of extended networks of third parties which are unknown to ego which can assist him or her when the need arises (Boissevain 1968). These individuals are friends or kin of friends of friends. This range of networks is infinite. Albanian immigrants are not part of the kinship structure of Gogofis. When they arrived they had not formed any networks in the village but later acquired relationship which then formed networks.

Methods

This paper is a result of an investigation of one component of my dissertation. Research for the dissertation began in 2000 through 2004. Fieldwork was done on a full time basis from 9-2001 to 10-2002. Data collection methods were primarily qualitative in order to obtain rich textual data set. The methods include participant observation, interview schedules. Interviews were both structured and semi-structure. Interviews were taken from Albanian immigrant men and women, local Arvanite community leaders, local Arvanite people in various age groups and genders as well as representatives of National Arvanite organization such as the Arvanitiko Synthesmos tis Eladas (the Arvanite Contact of Greece). In particular, genealogies were personally take of the key families of the village and verified by archival research. Recording of data was taken in an ethnographic diary. Note were taken of impromptu conversation, formal and informal encounters and direct observation. In addition individual and group interviews were taped, transcribed and cataloged for cross-referencing. For this paper kinship and social network analysis were used to find coded patterns of social relationships.

Results

The Agnatic kin or *vëllai* (literally meaning brothers) have been an important socio-economic institution in Albania. It is the basis of social organization and blood feud in the Kanun i Lec as described by Halsuk (1967, 1954). The Post World War II authoritarian state saw it as a threat. Thus, Hoxha attempted to dismantle the system by allowing only two brothers to live in the same household (Poulton 1991) but after the fall of the iron curtain Albanians have reorganized themselves back into patrilocal households but with some alterations. The household tends to be patrilocal but brothers tend to live in separate residence within the same neighborhood. The father lives with the eldest son. In Albania limited space and communist urban planning limits this desired type of residence. But outside the country it is especially clear. I have observed the *vëllai* residence patterns in both the Athenian urban center and in rural Gogofis. Although when I began this fieldwork Gogofis’ limited housing made it difficult for *vëllai* residence but

with time Albanian Immigrant agnates slowly have been moving closer together. In Gogofis men tend to initiate their settlement according to their *vëllai*. A man or several brothers comes into the village and establish him/themselves. Several agnates follow. After establishing themselves, they go home to Albania, marry, and bring their wives to Gogofis.

This paper contrasts two *vëllai* and their relationship to existing kinship structures (see fig.1). I shall attempt to illustrate how an Albanian objective are achieved by his use of existing Arvanite kinship systems in this newly settled place and how they use kinship to create new social networks.

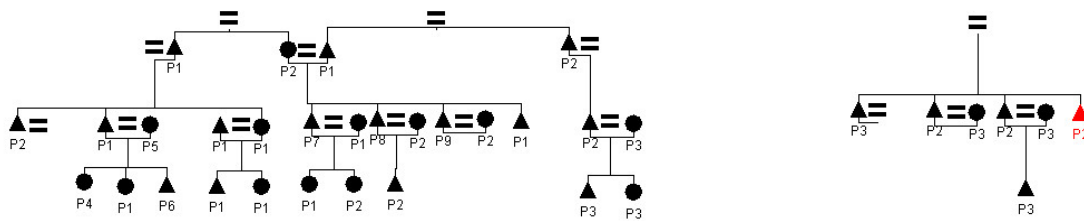


Fig.1

The Lulë and the Shpuzë *vëllai* came to in the village in the early 1990's. Some of the Lulë brothers have become some of the most prosperous immigrants in the village. Thus their family size has grown. The Shpuzë, on the other hand, had to finally abandon Gogofis as they could not do more than subsist in the village even though they had a good reputation as hard worker. Tilli Lulë has done very well for himself. He has found a niche in the village. He cultivates and maintains many olive groves taking his profit from half the harvest at the end of the year. He sells firewood from the cuttings from the olive trees and paints houses and does odd jobs during the rest of the year. He is the only Albanian adult to have become an Orthodox Christian in Gogofis and the only one of his *vëllai*. As a result, he is paid by the Church to bury the dead after someone dies. He is very busy. He usually worked 6-7 days a week often turning down work as he has too much to do. He has very extensive social networks, more so than any other members of his kin in the village. Thus, he has better than a guaranteed wage, equal living accommodations with the average person living in Gogofis, money for remittances and has no problem maintaining a legal residence and working status with the government. In fact, he was one of the first Albanian immigrants to have processed his immigration papers for his family. One of his brothers has returned to the village in Albania and has opened a convenience store.

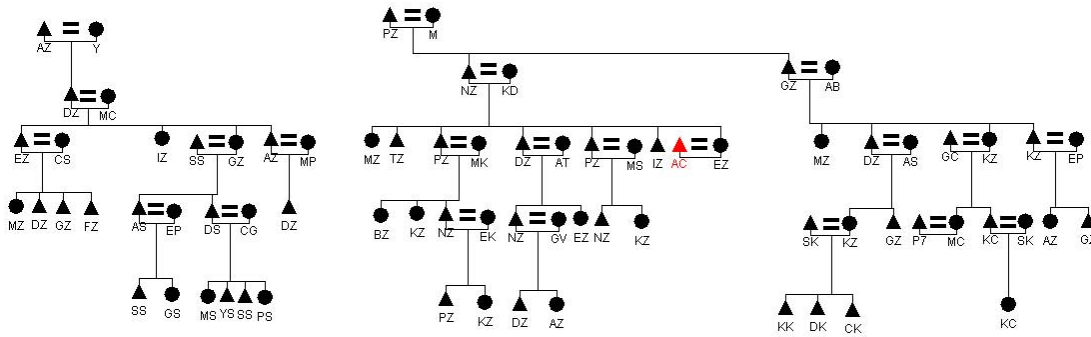


fig.2

In contrast, Gjini Shpuzë decided to leave the village. He was given for the most part seasonal agricultural work and work in construction. He told me he worked about 4-6 days a week but sometimes when things were slow he would work only 3 days out of the week. He eventually moved to a village (where another brother has been living) about two hours from Athens and three hours from Gogofis. There he has attained more stable work. He has made enough to buy a car but because he has moved away from Gogfis he has had to solicit former neighbors in Gogofis to help him process his immigration papers (but his former foster family has shown some apprehension). Why is Tilli doing better than Gjini in Gogfis? There are several factors. Till's foster family is the "Z" family. The kinship chart shows that the "Z" family is a relatively small family. It isn't one of the more wealth families in the village either. But they have been very helpful in supporting Tilli. Tilli says,

"They have taken me in have taken care of me and my family. If it wasn't for them life would be very difficult. They are like family."

In fact they have become formally fictive kin as the "Z's" cousins baptized Tilli and his wife while their children were baptized by the "Z's" themselves. Now that his children are a bit older his wife was able to get a part time job at a tavern by the sea employed by the "K" family which is cousins of the "Z's"

In addition, Tilli works for non-Gogofians. He does work for wealthy Athenians who have summerhouses in Gogofis. Thus he has a very mixed group of *extended networks*. Gjini worked almost exclusively for the "S" family. Gjini told me he felt obligated to stay and work for the "S's" because they gave him shelter and fed him and took care of his children when he had to work. In addition, "S's" has large extended kin network (see fig. 3) which kept Gjini fairly busy but which did not always have direct economic benefits. Although Gjini's immediate foster family is not the wealthiest in the village, with closer examination the "S" family is one of the wealthier Arvanite families in the village. They control production of two of the most important agricultural products in the village, grapes for retsina and olives for oil. Gjini's network does not extend much beyond the "S" family and he has no networks outside of the greater Gogofis. This strategy he chose was adequate before the induction of the Euro. But with its introduction and inflationary

practices which followed, there were greater economic pressures on him and his connection to maintain himself and his family. More of Gjini's *vëllai* did not migrate to the village thus his extended networks remained limited to his foster family. After the accidental death of his eldest brother one of his brothers left to find other work and he finally followed. Moreover his relationship with his foster family is maintained by his presence in Gogofis. I spoke with his foster father. Gjini had been back to request assistance to process his papers. He debated whether to support him saying, "poname yia afton ala then ine pia edo", "We feel pain (sympathize) with him but he is no longer here" As a result, he may be sent back to Albania if he does not get his working papers in order. Gjini depends on the "S" family for shelter, work and for assistance with legalization of his status. Tilli has the same needs but because he has more extensive social networks he is able to utilize more 'wells' of influence. He is not dependant on a few members of the community for his needs. In addition, Tilli has extended networks contacts beyond the region of Gogfis. As such he can find other members of his family work beyond the confines of Gogfis and thus, is a patron to his family and friends himself. As a result his *vëllai* has grown and his extended network has grown.

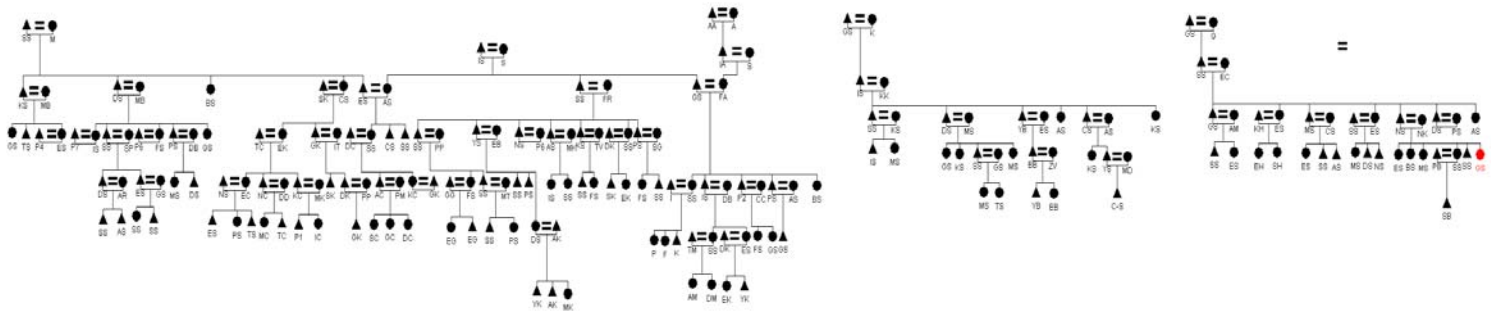


fig. 3

Conclusion

Although it appears as though Tilli and Gjini have used their own agency which created the results to which they exist, their agency is limited. They do not choose who their foster parent might be. The Arvanites are the ones who choose to take in an Albanian immigrant into their home. Thus, Tilli's 'fortune' to have been chosen by the "Z" family gave him different options than Gjini's. How each individual used those options depend on which pre-existing kin structure to which they became associated with. As a result, Tilli's *vëllai* have become more integrated into the Gogfian society. Tilli's family members are all proficient in Greek while Gjini and his wife Greek are not fluent. In Albanian, Gjini was eloquent and full of wit but he has trouble expressing himself in Greek. As a result Gjini decided to leave where are Tilli's position and his *vëllai* have become better and more stable with time. Tilli has decided to settle in Gogofis and would like to live there permanently. In conclusion, the Arvanites are in control of most of the symbolic and cultural capital in the village. They choose whether to adopt an Albanian or not. Their choice directly affects the options the Albanian immigrant is given as they try to create a life for themselves away from 'home'.

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