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# "Night Passion". *The social life of whisky in music halls with live Greek popular music in Athens*

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*Δεν κοιμάμαι τώρα πια τα βράδια,*
*Σβήνω στο ουίσκυ τα δικά σου τα*
*Σημάδια*
*(Σημάδια)*

*I do not sleep anymore during nights,*
*I extinguish your traces in whisky*
*(Traces)*

Popular song by Christodoulopoulos

## Introduction

When I first began my research on the consumption of imported alcoholic beverages in Greece I was already deeply intrigued by the amount of whisky consumed in night clubs and music halls and the persistence of people to order the same drink. As time went by the same pattern was unfolded in various spaces such as coffeehouses, card-clubs, households and various aspects of cultural life including name-celebrations, reunions, weddings, funerals and night outings. It was not though only the materiality of whisky as such that posed serious questions of cultural hegemony, changing consumption patterns, power relations and localization. The life worlds of interlocutors were begging for an analysis on their excessive practices, their conspicuous consumption and their attitudes towards drinking in the context of entertainment. More importantly the fact that a global commodity was absorbed into what in anthropology can be described as local either in economy, ethnicity, the politics of locality, popular culture and music, or social relationships, there was still a question to be answered. Are social and cultural patterns changing as a result of what various scholars have called globalization or empire resulting to cultural appropriation and hybrid social identities on various levels? And if they are changing how is cultural appropriation manifested and under what terms?

The project started a few years ago when various anthropologists were still digesting the theories of Appadurai on the global cultural economy with the flows of ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes (Appadurai 1996). That was a period that the terms local and global were approached on their ethnographic and abstract relationship (Miller 1995a). It was obvious that something was happening as a result of cultural critique, that the ethnographies of place were challenged and that projects such as "follow the thing" were emerging based on a theoretical commitment to more general processes and ethnography of the global (Marcus 1998: 80-104, Fischer 2002). Culture was becoming increasingly commodified and millennium capitalism was in process (Comaroff J. and Comaroff J.L. 2000: 291-343). Transnational capitalism and neoliberalism were already established and consumption and material studies came at the front as issues of objectification were clear within late modernity (Miller 1987, 1994, 1995b, c 1998, 2001, Tilley 2001).

In the twenty first century anthropology, increasing social inequality, commodification, identity politics, ethnicity and trasnationalism were interconnected to flexible accumulation, the decline of industrialism and the emergence of services, materiality, the proliferation of cultural industries including mass media and marketing (Moore 2003: 72-88, Appadurai 2005: 55-62). In terms of economic capital, globalization resulted to a spatialization of the world economy and more particularly to easy movement that occurred across national and political boundaries (Trouiloot 2003: 48). This internationalization was not something new but the speed of the circulation of capital, commodities and markets was surprisingly unique. Capital, labor and consumer markets created entangled spatialities and shaped the world economy.

Within this context commodities became appropriated and interconnected with ethnicity, gender or various other identities depending on each context (Miller 1998, 2001, Appadurai 2001). As Tilley put it "if alienation is an intrinsic condition of our relationship to goods in Western society it has been recognized that people convert these alienated things into meaningful possessions, through endowing them with subjective meaning in relation to ethnicity, gender, social roles and statuses (2001: 266). Various scholars in Greece began researching how consumption was entangled with social positionings and reproduced social

relationships (Petridou 2000, Kotsoni 2003) while others had already examined how alcohol expressed the negotiation of gender and local identities (Gefou-Madianou 1992, Papataxiarchis 1992). However imported beverages were not given enough attention despite the fact there was an obvious change of consumption patterns noted by the few in urban and island Greece (Caraveli 1985: 268, Papagaroufali 1992, Stewart 1989: 87,). Whisky ruled the night-life and became institutionalized in music halls with live popular contemporary Greek music. The cultural industry and the consumers had appropriated the beverage and some would even call it "the national drink of Greece" vis-à-vis retsina which was pure "folklore" (Greek Playboy Magazine Jan. 1990: 136-141). No matter if that was a hegemonic appropriation in Gramcian terms (Stewart 1989: 86) or a localization based on larger subordinating schemes such as tradition and modernity (Argyrou 2005: 149-150) one is certain, that the dichotomy that Herzfeld described (Herzfeld 1987) was expanded, capitalized and bewildered within Greece, based on social differentiation.

Herzfeld described the tension between a European and an Oriental version of social identity on the level of national and scholarly discourse. According to him "some Greeks, some of the time, claim a European identity that other Greeks claim they have either never attained or never desired" (Herzfeld 1987: 18). As Argyrou has stressed this dichotomy is also invested with other meamings such as modern and traditional on a micro level and "follows the logic of symbolic struggles between social groups" (Argyrou 2005: 3). Groups and individuals display European and Oriental identities on various levels and it is more likely the case that those who are persistent on grounding those dichotomies are the ones who bewilder them.

The hegemony of Western European food and alcohol is evident already in nineteenth and early twentieth century Greece (Bakalaki 2000). The famous book of Tselementes for example was published in 1920 and it was an effort to purify and Europeanize the Greek kitchen (Bakalaki 2000: 78). Since then European food and alcohol products colonize in a proliferating manner various aspects of the social life in Greece and their consumption constitutes a symbolic capital that distinguishes the actors and reproduces notions of social identity. It follows that the consumption of imported alcoholic beverages in late modernity Greece is a narrative of success of transnational capitalism and symbolic domination to conceptualizations of modernity. However the cultural meanings and practices associated with the consumption of whisky carry on in such manner that the product becomes a key-symbol of popular identity in music halls with live Greek music and a drink that expresses excess, masculinity and certainly a night passion that is based on an unproductive mentality. While various theorists have seen this consumerist unproductive mentality as a tactic of middle and high income groups without status in the social hierarchy (Karapostolis 1983, Varouhaki 2007: 19) they neglect that this mentality is manifested in ship owners already from 1960s, high class society in 1960s and 1970s, members of parliament in recent decades, football teams and television programs with high educated actors and famous guests. How is then this mentality to be explained and how is it related to music halls with live Greek music and the consumption of imported beverages and whisky? How is whisky culturally appropriated and what are the practices related to its consumption in music halls with popular Greek music? Finally how whisky expresses social positionings and what is their relationship to music halls?

## 1.1 Going out in music halls in Athens

While researching the meaning of imported beverages among middle and low income groups in the centre of Athens I was faced with a major way of socialization and entertainment: the gatherings in music halls with popular Greek music. My interlocutors were between their late twenties and fifties, most of them were living in kypseli, some were working in small family businesses and others were public servants. While being on fieldwork, I participated in many outings with two different companies in various music halls, where I collected the material presented. My methodology was based on qualitative social research including open interviews and participant observation, in total for six months during 2006. My primary questions were associated with the cultural practices in night entertainment, the position and symbolism of imported beverages in everyday life and the establishment of whisky as a celebratory drink in popular music and discourse.

The endless night life in Athens varies from expensive clubs in the centre where singers such as Remos and Vandi perform to cheaper places where less known artists appear[1]. During my research in Athens, the main drink of consumption in many music halls with contemporary Greek music was whisky. Rarely people ordered other spirits and the companies visiting these places would all share the same bottle of whisky. At the beginning I thought the institutionalization of whisky was related to these few clubs that we were visiting but with time and more new experiences I realized that whisky is almost synonymous to night entertainment in Athens. Despite I had my doubts about the extent of this phenomenon in Athens, my argument became even stronger when one night I was reading the Athinorama (Αθηνόραμα) magazine, in an effort to decide with my interlocutors which music hall we would visit.

Athinoarama is the oldest and most informed magazine about Athenian night life and entertainment. The magazine is divided in several sections; the cinema, theatre, music, bars and clubs, music halls (πίστες) and taste (γεύση) in relation to food. A television guide is also included at the end of the magazine. The difference between the category of bars and clubs with the music halls is the fact that music halls constitute spaces where there is always live Greek music. The music hall section is divided in the famous music halls (μεγάλα προγράμματα) and the less known and popular musical scenes (μουσικές σκηνές), Hot clubs, dancing floors (πίστες), rebetika-popular music (ρεμπέτικα και λαικά πάλκα), oldies, small nightclubs (μπουάτ), traditional, taverns with music and clubs to book. Among these sections the first five categories are the biggest and most popular ones. However the difference is that the category of 'rebetiko' represents usually halls where food is served while the majority of the music halls do not offer anything except alcoholic beverages, wine and champagne. Interestingly enough all categories refer to their prices in terms of whisky. For example in the first category we read:

[1] Partucular examples are Efi Thodi (Εφη Θώδη), Sabrina and Terlegas (Τερλέγκας)

*Asteria. Asteria Glifadas 2108944558, 2108946898*
*Stelios Dionisiou, Hristos Nikolopoulos, Kostantina,*
*Ilias Makris. Bottle of whisky 150 euros and 170 euros*
*(inclusive), wine for two people 80 euros (inclusive)*

The same style of entry is used by all the other clubs while prices diverge. The main point of observation though is that the bottle of whisky refers to what a company of four people have to pay while the bottle of wine refers to just two. Wine could be argued represents prices for couples and women while whisky is related to bigger groups of friends and men. Furthermore the bottle of whisky is the representation of the cost of nightlife in music halls and most night clubs, a key-symbol of night prices and alcohol consumption. This is reinforced by the social activity of "booking a table" or "booking a bottle". The booking however should clearly state if it is about a regular or a special whisky. In various music halls, regular whisky is served after the arrival of the customers while special whisky is placed on the "booked table" distinguishing the customers from the rest of the music hall.

One of the clubs that my interlocutors visited was the Athenian[2]. The club was situated in the area of Aegaleo on a central avenue. This area was full of neighbourhoods with car and motorcycle repairs, spare parts of cars, retail stores, tool shops and similar businesses. However the customers did not come necessarily from this area of Athens as the popularity of a singer might bring people there even far from the countryside.

In the entrance of the club there is the "metr" who is welcoming the customers and takes the people to the table that they have usually booked. The role of "metr" is very diverse, he has the knowledge of the customers and therefore he decides which table is given to each company of people. Within the club there is a hierarchy of tables. The tables that are close to stage are higher in status and usually the first row is the most prestigious. On the "first tables" there are usually bottles of special whisky that has already been reserved. Brands such as Chivas Regal, Johnny Walker Black label and Dimple are the most popular. The tables that are behind the stage and central follow in hierarchy and the lowest class of tables are the ones on the sides of the stage, especially the ones that are placed on the back. This logic of this hierarchy depends on two primal concepts. The first one is access to the stage usually for dancing or throwing flowers and the second one is the ability to have a good view of the performers. These two concepts are going to be further discussed. The "metr" choice for the table is related to a number of different factors. An important factor is the relationship with the customers which can be friendly or close to impersonal. Except of the network of customers who might come from the close environment of the "metr", the performers or other people who are working in such context, the majority of the people build up their relationships in these clubs. Relationships are build with time and with the amount of money spend during a night. Regular customers who spend a lot are highest in the list of the "metr" who is going to give them a table next to the stage.

The centre of the music hall is the stage. The stage is so important that music halls have also been called "stages"(πίστες). The stage is where the singers perform sometimes with small sketches. More importantly it is the space where the customers dance zeibekiko or

[2] The pseudonym "Athenian" is used for a music hall with live contemporary Greek music situated in the area of Aegaleo.

tsifteteli when the mood for "kefi"[3] comes. The zeibekiko is considered a highly masculine dance that in the past was performed mainly by men and in various contexts it was considered an insult if a woman among a certain company of people danced zeibekiko. The typical female dance is considered the tsifteteli, a dance which was found in various areas of the Ottoman Empire[4]. While *kefi* is not necessarily a result of drinking alcohol, whisky is considered a good luxury beverage that helps in keeping the spirits high. Each club has a variety of blended and special whisky. The special whisky brands are usually Johnny Walker Black label, Ghardu, Dimble, Chivas Regal and the blended Johnny Walker, Famous Grouse, Dewars, Cutty Sark, Bells and Jack Daniels. The whisky is always served on the table with a relatively big plate of ice accompanied by nuts and other assortments and sometimes there are fruits served with it depending on the club.

The amount of money spent in such a context is very relative as customers might spent from 140 euros which could be the price of a blended bottle of whisky to three hundred or even more for a special. The bill pads as customers spent on "champagnes" and "flowers". The practice of "opening champagnes" is very wide spread especially among the second rate clubs. Usually the customer orders one bottle to a box or even more "champagne". Then the service opens the champagnes on the stage while the singer is singing and serves the singer. The singer never drinks the "champagne", takes the glass and waves to the customers who treated him. This fake "champagne" is called 'Bolero' and is produced in Greece particularly for this kind of practice in night-clubs throughout Greece. However in many clubs as such there is the possibility of opening real champagne to drink which is usually consumed by women and it is certainly considered a female drink especially in relation to whisky.

Additional costs are related to the practice of "flowers", which is found in almost all music halls and constitutes an excessive way of spending. More recently "flowers" are even found on the popular television programmes on days of celebration where usually a studio is transformed into a tavern or a music hall with famous artists, actors or people from the 'star-system.[5] While the singers perform several "flower-women" (λουλουλούδες) circulate around the customers with baskets filled with flowers. Depending on the song and the singer, the customers buy the baskets and throw the flowers or all the baskets on the singers. It is also accustomed that the "flower-women" walk on the stage and throw the flowers by themselves on the singer while pointing at the customer who treated them. It is the case that the most popular singers of each club receive flowers. The amount of "flowers" thrown each time is also a way of estimating the popularity of the singer.

Another institutionalized practice with in such contexts that was legally prohibited during the dictatorship has been the breaking of plates. Despite the fact that there are no clubs in Athens anymore that permit the breaking of plates, this practice can be still found in rural areas and towns such as Larissa. While the breaking of plates has been considered a "low" and "vulgar" aspect of Greekness by mass media and intellectuals which emerged with a new rich middle class (Oikonomikos 1988: 30) it is deeper and older discursive system which does not have many differences with the accepted nowadays practice of flowers. The breaking of plates according to Petropoulos has been practiced among 'rebetes' in taverns where small groups of musicians would perform (Petropoulos 1991: 132). During their fix they would

[3] For an analysis of the emotion of "kefi" read Papataxiarchis, E. 1992 and Cowan, J. 1990
[4] In relation to dance and gender identity read Cowan, J. 1990
[5] While being on fieldwork for example on Christmas and New years eve of 2006 several television programmes presented studios as music halls with the practice of throwing flowers to the singers. Similar observations I drew on 2007

either smash glasses or plates that were used for food. On a symbolic level this practice can be associated with the plate symbolizing the household and the family values while its breaking can be understood as a way of breaking out of this system of 'obligations' and social restrictions. It is no coincidence that women were prohibited from such spaces before the Second World War. Still today the expression "let's break them" (να τα σπάσουμε) literally means let's entertain ourselves. A similar phrase used is "let's burn it" (να το κάψουμε).

Despite the fact that the breaking of plates became the trend in various music halls all over Greece and gradually disappeared it has always been considered a "low" practice and decadent way of spending money. Several newspapers, magazines and intellectuals have been referring to this phenomenon with disgust and criticised the 'meaningless' character of this excessive consumption which carries on with the expensive bottles of whisky and flowers. Ironically enough famous politicians, football teams and stars have been entertaining themselves within such contexts of excessive consumption. Excess therefore has to be understood as part of the "night" and a necessary ingredient of the music halls with Greek music.

One of the most excessive and performative practices has been the "demolition" (κατεδάφιση). One of my interlocutors describes it as such " I remember I used to go out with a guy who owned some apartment blocks in Glyfada. We were going to Dilina where Litsa Diamanti was singing and we used to have a table next to the scene because he knew her. We would order a bottle (of whisky) but he could not drink a lot because he had heart problems. In any case the waiters would bring the bottle and the fruits and after some time he would through the table with all the stuff on it on the stage. Afterwards the waiters would bring back the table with a new bottle and fruits but he would through again the table on stage. He was in love with her (καψούρης)"[6].

The "demolition" might take a literal form in exceptional cases. Within this context the consumer might demolish all the music hall. A typical case has been well described by the director Pantelis Voulgaris in the film *ola ine dromos* (Όλα είναι δρόμος). A man around his fifties who is living in rural Greece is hanging out in a 'dog-club'. One day his wife decides to leave him with his child and asks for a divorce. The same night the man decides to go to the dog club to let of the steam. At the beginning he "breaks" all the plates in the music hall. When no more plates are available he is willing to pay to break the toilets. After breaking the toilets there is nothing more left so he decides to buy the music hall and demolish it the same night with a bulldozer.

The concept of 'destruction' has been of major importance in the night industry in music halls. Songs such as "γκρέμιστα ολα πια σκληρή καρδία" (destroy everything harsh heart) are typical examples of the idea of destruction in popular music and night entertainment. Destruction might also take the form of burning banknotes[7], throwing whisky on the floor and putting fire on it, breaking the bottle, (Petropoulos 1991: 133), breaking chairs and pulling the table cloth. However such practices are not encountered so often and they have been replaced by the mentioned institutionalization of "flowers" and in some case "plates".

[6] The bill in that instance was 500.000 Gr. Drachmas which would translate as a sum between 1500-2000 euros nowdays

[7] A song associated with this practice is stating "θα τα κάψω τα ρημάδια τα λεφτά μου" (I will burn my damned money)

While Greek ethnography has been predominantly based on models of commensality and 'exchange' in drinking (Papataxiarchis 1992, Madianou 1992, Iossifidou 1992) that correspond accordingly to dichotomies of public and private, market and gift relationships or calculation and spontaneity, the case of music halls and the excessive consumption there, is characterizing a different cosmology. More recently anthropologists in Greece have viewed alcohol under commodification and consumerism shifting away from non competitive relationships (Abatzi 2004, Souliotis 2001). In music halls with popular music, social relationships might be reinforced or reproduced through destruction or consumption. Consumption is considered from one hand an individual processes but from the other hand is a social activity which aims at the stimulation of other subjects. As such in this contexts acquaintances, relationships of friendship or more importantly sexual and love relationships are reinforced.

While interviewing most of my interlocutors, they would all remember the nights and the context that excessive consumption took place[8]. It is this memory of excessive consumption that makes the feelings of joy and parting (γλέντι) meaningful. In that sense the expression "τα σπάσαμε όλα" (we broke everything) means "we had a fantastic time". The expression is also accompanying cases that there was a single payer who covered totally a bill in cases of personal celebration which could range from 300 1000 euros. It is this particular immense unproductive mentality that can not be explained on the basis of non competitive social relationships. However the conspicuous consumption might transcend the limits of calculation and express deep emotions and a passion of destruction.

Very often excessive consumption is related to sexual or love relationships. The "kapsura" which literally means the burning for a woman is considered a major cause of consumption that legitimates all type of actions. In many cases that my interlocutors tried to explain the phenomenon of excessive consumption they referred to the term and they considered that emotion the source of such behavior. Similarly Alexandris is also referring to various cases of customers who would spend fortunes in a night because they were "crazy" or in "kapsura" about a female singer or a woman from his dance group. More particular the term "damage" (ζημιά) means the bill that an individual makes in one night in reference to a particular person or singer or artist. For example Alexandris in reference to a particular figure he stated that "he supported me with the damages he did for me". He meant that this person was so much in love with him that he made "excessive damages" in his effort to express his feelings (2000: 62). It is also of great interest that the term "I make a funeral" (κάνω κηδεία) means that usually the female artist[9] is smart enough and she is able to make "damage" at least up to three hundred thousand drachmas[10] (2006: 62). Similarly my interlocutors legitimated nights out on the concept of kapsura which explained the amounts of money spent for a bottle of whisky. When somebody is "in love", in other words "καψούρης"[11], whisky is the drink that sets people (σε στρώνει), relaxes and helps someone to get over the past or the present problems. According to Kostas "if you are in love and you want to drink, you will drink whisky". This conceptualization falls within a wider trend in Greek social life about the

[8] On the role of memory in culture see Kuechler –Melion Images of Memory (1991)
[9] The term artist is used in relation to singing, dancing and in combination in rare cases to sexual services
[10] These amount would correspond at that time at least to 1000 euros
[11] The "kapsura" (καψούρα) is an emotional situation that literally means burning. The metaphor though makes sense in the Greek language context because it describes the emotion of loving someone without receiving back any emotional stimuli. The subject then is 'trapped' in this one sided affection which might last for years. For more information on the subject see Abatzi (2004). The metaphor of fire and burning is used regularly in the Greek language in relation to failed and uncompleted relationships of love such as "με έκαψε". Such phrases are usually referred to women but the term also applies to men.

role of alcohol as a "medicine". In such contexts drinking is encouraged by the company of interlocutors and is the means of effecting a smooth recovery.

Destruction in this context is also the mean to express the self of the subject. Battaile has stressed the fact that several practices in modern industrial societies do not make sense because they are viewed under the autonomy of the world of production as this has been demonstrated by Weber in his Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1991: 126). According to Bataille "nothing is more cynically opposed to the spirit of religious sacrifice, which continued prior to the Reformation to justify an immense unproductive consumption and the idleness of all those who had a free choice in life" (1991: 126). For Battaille eroticism is a form of expenditure which goes beyond use-value and it is erotic activity that does not conserve any energy but consumes it because "erotic activity always takes place at the expanse of the forces committed to their combat"(Battaile 1991: 118). Can Eros then be one of the driving forces of human agency?

The motives and desires of subjects involved in excessive consumption that sometimes might be considered radical remain difficult to grasp if viewed under the light of Kantian conviction, Foucaultian technologies of the self and Bourdieu's habitus. It is the extreme passion of humans that upsets the social categorizations and can not be understood unless it is viewed as a driving force of action. However passion is not reducible to Eros; it is un unspoken social contract shared in festivals and rituals, in religion and politics. According to Battaile this passion is manifested in festivals and entertainment and can be understood as something that "constantly threatens to break the dikes, to confront productive activity with the precipitate and contagious movement of a purely glorious consumption. The sacred is exactly comparable to the flame that destroy the wood by consuming it […] Sacrifice burns like the sun that slowly dies of the prodigious radiation whose brilliance our eyes can not bear, but it is never isolated and in a world of individuals it calls for a general negation of individuals as such (quoting Battaile in Botting and Wilson 1997: 22). The moment that communal excess is taking place the webs of significance are less important than the sacred like character of expenditure. The result is that these lived experiences are beyond the social but affirm it and reproduce it. It is sacrifice as such that carries a destructive divine character expanded to various aspects of social life.

The music hall is a 'spectacle of excess[12]'where all agents including customers and providers of services, consume publicly and in performative ways. Varouhaki (2006) for example after examining many publications on the life or the 'life-style' of artists in music halls with popular Greek music concludes that most are concerned about spending excessively and projecting their self as a 'consumer'. Similarly most of my interlocutors enjoy spending excessively in such contexts even if some of them can not always afford it. Therefore the excessive consumption in music halls is not necessarily related only to a 'nouveau riche' group of people who appeared in Athens during eighties as a result of Urbanization and State contracts. Low income groups from the center of Athens are also engaded in an excessive consumption which can be partly understood in Battaile's socializing passion and it is entagled with whisky drinking in music halls with popular Greek music. How new though is

[12] I adopt this term to refer to a social context where ritualized forms of actions reproduce notions of excessive consumption which are not necessarily publicly or socially accepted but are the basic means of socialization and consist the main thread of such a 'web of significance'.

this mentality? Did it emerge in the eighties with the institutionalization of whisky in most popular music halls or is it a deeper and longer system that appropriated the consumption of imported beverages in terms of symbolic domination as it is manifested in the conceptualization of modernity and British modernity more particular?

## 1.2 The changing face of the "night". From "rebetika" to "skyladika" and contemporary popular music

The"night" (νύχτα) is a way of life in ethnographic terms but also an industry in Adorno's sense. The night as such is a concept that refers to the night entertainment, to the music halls and the night industry but also to a 'poetic of doing'. The "night" has its own sexual, moral and entertaining codes depending on the context. Within "night" whisky has taken a leading role as one of the most institutionalized beverages in various, bars, clubs and music halls. It is not only whisky though but alcohol in general that is the important ingredient of "night", the celebration of "night" and the glue of the "parea" (παρέα), the social unit of individuals that come together to socialize and entertain themselves[13].

The night entertainment in the capital of Greece has always been of interest for the Athenians and various investors. The night life or 'night industry' of Athens was already booming from the beginning of the twentieth century with music halls[14] in the centre that served champagne and imported wines, had live music and dance and occasionally food. These were the clubs of the Athenian elite that would stand in opposition to the low class taverns and smoky basements, the places where Greek underground and popular music was forming. The music known in Greek as 'ρεμπέτικο'[15] (rebetiko) was a result of internal and external migration from refuges who came to Greece from Minor Asia and other areas of Turkey, but above all its creation was particularly influenced by urbanization during the beginning of the twentieth century. (Kotaridis 1999: 21). The music that was stigmatized and characterized as the 'music of the underground world' and of the hashish users (χασικλήδες), ironically enough was to become essentialized, nationalized and even part of the 'Greek heritage'.

More particularly after the Second World War in Athens a variety of places such as "Stelakis" (Στελλάκης) in Haidari and "Vlahou" (Βλάχου) in Aigaleo would offer, live music and food with wine and beers (Perpiniadis 2000). The music in these places would vary from "rebetika" and folk to more popular songs and therefore the role of the orchestra was very important in shaping the identity of each music tavern. Even more importantly the artist's name was a good reason in bringing success into the business. The customers of these places were usually middle and low income working class people.

[13] For an analysis of parea see Papataxiarchis 1992

[14] I adopt the term 'music halls' to refer in general to spaces where night entertainment has been taking place and refers to the term 'νυχτερινά κέντρα' in Greek. I use the term in relation to music halls where live popular Greek music is performed. However I am not intending to essentialize this category of the 'night industry' which is very diverse and might correspond to completely different 'lifestyles' and social groups in the capital of Greece. When I refer to particular details and social relationships in relation to a music hall, the reader has to keep in mind that my conclusions are based on participant observation and therefore they are bounded by the ethnographic particularity. In relation to more general changes in the 'night industry' I use historical sources and descriptions of individuals that try to reconstruct some pieces of the past.

[15] For more information on Rebetiko see Kotaridis 1999, Damianakos and Petropoulos 1991

After the War the rebetiko music was gradually commercialized and found in many poor neighbourhoods of Athens. Musicians of that kind would usually play in small taverns where they could earn a living in small groups of two or sometimes more people. Till that time rebetiko was known as a marginal subculture that appeared during the beginning of the 20th century in major urban centres such as Athens. Rebetiko expressed the social exclusion and problems in the life of immigrants coming from Minor Asia and other Greek speaking areas of the Ottoman Empire. As a result the language, the music and the lifestyle of rebetiko performers was deeply influenced by their own cultural backgrounds. Gradually rebetiko was popularised, essentialized and objectified within debates about Greekness and national identity (Andrikena 1999: 225- 257)

This period coincided with the restructuring of Greece within the Marshall plan and the slow development of the "night industry". Taverns and restaurants that used to be stigmatized by the "rebetes", the underground working class music players, became gradually trendy and they transformed their programme to attract a wider audience. The music of the bouzouki slowly colonized the high class entertainment music halls and a new post war "popular music" began to form. Names such as Tsitsanis, Perpiniadis and Zambetas emerged out of this period which has been vividly represented through the 'golden age' of the Greek cinema during sixties.

After the Second World War entertainment in Athens became increasingly influenced by the visions of modernity employed by the night industry and the performers. This new modernity required a shift and a Europeanization of the entertainment and the music produced during that time. The purification was a slow but effective process that included music, food, clothing, style, language and alcohol. The sound of the orchestras became electric and sound systems were installed in the various music halls (Varouhaki 2006: 24). The western maggiore replaced the eastern minor and the music became softer and more European like. A characteristic figure of this period is Tsitsanis who adopted a European way of playing and negated the traditional Turkish scales that were central in the popular rebetiko music before the War. His music and songs dominated the night entertainment and his popularity grew bigger as a result of the refinement of his sound. While this type of music was growing the musicians who had remained faithful to the old scales did not enjoy success. Musicians such as Marcos Vamvakaris played music in poor taverns for a living while the juke box replaced the expensive orchestras that could not be afforded by small restaurants.

The commercialization of the new version of rebetiko and the domination of bouzouki resulted to the well know debate about the value of bouzouki in Greek music during sixties (Oikonomou 2005). The fact that bouzouki was associated with the underground rebetiko music that was played by marginal groups of immigrants and its Turkish sounds and roots resulted to a harsh criticism by various intellectuals. Despite the debate that was based on Eastern or Western visions of modernity, bouzouki ruled the night and became a symbol of Greek popular music. However the purification of the scene continued.

According to Varouhaki (2006) there are some phases in the modern Greek music that correspond to different kinds of night clubs and entertainment. The first phase is between 1950 and 1965, related to the transition from 'rebetiko' to 'popular' music (λαικό). During this period the simplicity of the taverns was transformed with wooden stages and electric sound systems. The 'popular' music became commercialized, the first recordings took place and artists such as Kazantzidis, Bithikotsis and Mery Linta appeared in the new scene. People

as such would perform in music restaurants where food and wine could be ordered and the customers were also entertained with the music and other performances. However the same period, high class Athenian music halls emerged with a "Western" aesthetic and would include bands, singers and performers from abroad in their entertainment programme[16] (Kerofilas 1997). These clubs sometimes would also include striper performances and the main alcoholic drinks of consumption were whisky, vermouth, champagne and other 'foreign' beverages.

The second period spans from 1965 to the end of 1970s and corresponds to the creation and gradual popularity of 'popular music'. The 'bouzouki' music halls (μπουζούκια) became slowly popular, replacing the music taverns and the high class Athenian clubs (κοσμικά κέντρα) remained in the centre of the city. The 'bouzouki' music halls were situated in the outskirts of the city and the people who were performing there were not always as famous[17]. However in these places also famous people would perform such as Tsitsanis and Bellou in the well know 'bouzouki'- hall 'Harama'. Customers in 'bouzouki' halls would vary from working class to middle class professions such as construction workers and sailors (Kerofilas 1997: 349). On the other hand the halls situated in the centre of the city kept their 'western' character and were more appealing to middle and high class Athenians.

During the third period and more particular during eighties and nineties, what is known as 'Greek contemporary popular music' (σύγχρονο λαικό τραγούδι) was established and commercialized. Artists who performed in the outskirts of the city moved into the centre music halls of Athens. The music that was characterized as part of 'buzuki'- halls became gradually commercial despite the fact it was stigmatized especially because of the practices associated with it. The performances and the music of artists who were part of this scene became mainstream and the style projected was mainly "western" oriented. Artists such as Pantazis and Antzela Dimitriou become stars and there was an increasing number of music halls with 'popular music'. The debate of "σκυλάδικα" (skyladika) litteraly meaning dog-clubs, appeared during this period concerning the "quality" and the "taste" of the practices associated with the new popular Greek music.

The term 'dog clubs' has come to signify a growing amount of music halls with popular Greek music in their programme and as a neologism is widely used in popular discourse. Despite the fact that the term nowadays is used to refer to a wide category of music halls, there are only theories how the term first appeared and what is the meaning of the word. The popular myth about the origin of the term skyladika is related to the low quality of the singers and the music in the music halls. For example in an article about Athens in the New York Times we read " Today, Iera Odos is packed with dance-until-dawn live-music clubs devoted to skyladika — the Greek bouzouki-backed music, both reviled and beloved, that, because of its singers' tendency to howl agony-filled lyrics of set-me-on-fire love, literally translates as "the place of dogs."(21 January 2007 by I. Kakkisis).

According to Oikonomou the 'skyladiko' is a term used widely after 1970s in reference to the commercial popular music in Greece and the underground, 'second class' music halls that became popular during the dictatorship (2005: 360-398). However the author is stressing that the term is much older. The term was used according to various

[16] Particualr example of this kind of music halls was 'Embassy' situated in Panepistimiou and Amerikis St., Arizona and Ritz situated in Stadiou 65. About Ritz Kerofilas writes "it was a night club with German stuff occasionally, a magnificent juggler and the 'queens of sex', Sabine and Iris." (1997: 205)

[17] Particular examples are Floriniotis and Kafasis

sources after the Second World War to refer to small 'hidden' taverns that had a bit of food, wine and a single bouzouki performer and occasionally were related to prostitution and smoking of illegal substances. These places were called dog clubs because "dogs" (σκύλοι), meaning hard street urchins (μάγκας)[18], were hanging out there regularly. According to other sources, the word "dog" could have meant the man who dances only zeibekiko[19] (ζειμπέκικο). Other sources claim that the places appeared in Trouba (Τρούμπα) after 1950s, a neighbourhood with bad reputation close to the harbour of Piraeus. This area was full of 'cabarets' and prostitutes who were called 'dogs' (σκύλες). No matter when and how the term was invented, 'dog-clubs' were music halls for very low class audience. One of my interlocutors stated "I still remember several dog clubs here in Aegaleo after the World War when I was a child. There were people coming from Athens to entertain themselves. The 'dog clubs' were mainly halls with live music but they were called 'dog clubs' because anybody with any kind of clothes could get in. You could see people with their working clothes on, with their dirty boots. These were really low class places". Nowadays the term dog-club refers to music halls with live popular Greek music where non famous artists perform. However the term used to be connected to several practices and consumption habits such as the consumption of whisky, which were widely popularised and at the present time can be found almost in all music halls with contemporary Greek music.

More particular during seventies the commercialization of entertainment to a more massive phenomenon resulted to several changes in the "night" of the capital. A well known popular singer who worked into this sector from 1950s described the situation in 1971 as such: "The "night" and entertainment in general were already changing. The singers did not sit for eight hours on the stage like in the old times. Five or ten songs at the beginning, the same in the middle of the programme and the night would finish with all the protagonists together. The breaking of plates that had already started in 1964 was institutionalized almost everywhere. One time my shoes were cut through because of the amount of broken plates on the stage. Another night they hit my legs. They apologized of course, it was not on purpose. What can you say and how can you stop it especially if the shop owner is waiting to make money out of this? Likewise nowadays the same happens with flowers […] In combination with the institutionalization of plates around 1964-1965, there was no kitchen and no food served and we passed to whisky with ice and dried nuts. I never understood how you can enjoy only with drinks and no food".

The "modern" music halls dominated the Athenian nightlife after seventies. Whisky became the main drink of consumption without food, the consumption of flowers to through on the singers and the breaking of plates became institutionalized, the focus shifted gradually to the singers placing the orchestra on the back of the stage. The music varied from "light" popular songs (ελαφρά λαικά) to "heavy" popular songs (βαριά λαικά) while the rebetika

[18] According to Cowan (quoting Petropoulos) the 'magas' was a masculine identity constructed by Greek immigrants from Minor Asia who would live in the margins of Greek society and who would criticize all aspects of the social shared values. For example he would never get married and never hold his girlfriend in the street. He never wore a tie, never had an umbrella, he would smoke hashish, hate the police and it was his honor to go to jail (Cowan 1990: 183)

[19] Zeibekiko is a male solo dance that has its immediate origins among the Zeybek warriors of Anatolia. It came to Greece - in part with the post-1923 population exchanges following on the Treaty of Lausanne. Nowdays it has become naturalised into a Greek dance and it is re-exported to Turkey as Greek dance.The dance was associated only with 'rebetes' but gradually the commercialization of music resulted to the wide popularity of the dance. The dance is highly individualistic and performative and is effected by the placement of the arms horizontally on the level of the shoulders in an almost cross like figure. It is highly performative and masculine and it has been described as an anti domestic and anti family discourse(Cowan 1990: 185)

(ρεμπέτικα) were minimized. The audience became much wider and more massive in comparison to the past. The night entertainment was accordingly divided to large clubs where famous artists performed and where situated in the centre and 'underground' clubs situated in the periphery of the town, where unknown singers made their appearances. An interlocutor who has been living in the area of Haidari and Egaleo which is situated outside of the centre of the city, close to the national boulevard he stated "I remember this area has been full of music halls after the Secant World War. They were filling up with people who would come from the centre. Before this period most places would also serve food and wine. Gradually this trend changed". Both scenes were characterized by the reproduction of "Western" lifestyles and values, something which is evident in the consumption of imported beverages and more particular whisky and in the influences of music.

During sixties the performative destruction of wealth became popular. According to a Greek historian already in the carnival of 1965 several changes had been taking place in the night entertainment such as the replacement of retsina with whisky (kerofilas 1997: 310). The consumption though of whisky was popularized among high class Athenians who spent time in parties taking place in the hotel "King George" or night clubs. Furthermore the night clubs where the popular stars of the time performed institutionalized the breaking of plates. The historian who witnessed this transformation is stating "The new Year's day of 1966 was celebrated by Athenians in taverns and night clubs and that was an opportunity to notice the social transformation that was taking place. Entertainment had changed. The parties (γλέντια) of high and low class Athenians had changed […] the plates that people where breaking for entertainment were tens or hundreds. There was also a technique. Customers would ask the waiter to bring the plates, then he could place them on the table or on a chair and then somebody among the company of people would through them on the floor. Immediately after the event another waiter would come to clean the mess so this kind entertainment could go on.. This kind of entertainment was popularized not only in popular clubs (λαικά κέντρα) but also in expensive places where the ship owners and the 'new rich' could entertain themselves and show off their wealth" (Kerofilas 1997: 349).

Despite the massive character of the underground and the mainstream scene of that time the 'night industry' was not the same. The breaking of plates, the burning of money, the performative consumption and the excessive destruction of wealth was characteristic of the underground clubs that were situated in the periphery of the city. Therefore the practices taking place in these clubs were not widely accepted and they were also stigmatized. Despite the criticism for the "low quality taste" of such activities, these practices are possibly related to a scene that has been essentialized and portrayed as 'authentic Greek, the "rebetika" (Varouhaki 2006). The dance still today varies from 'zeimbekiko' to 'tsifteteli' dances that were popular among the people who were into the scene of rebetiko . However there were particular ways of breaking.

According to Petropoulos already among the 'rebetes' the 'ritual' of breaking was different for glasses and different plates (1991: 131). The glasses that were to be broken were the short tavern wine glasses and the water glasses. The rest such as beer glasses and the short ouzo glasses should not be broken because the glass bottom was thick and they could not break easily. Older 'rebetes' broke glasses with the front part of a knife and younger generations started breaking them with their palm on the table. Throwing glasses on the floor was highly inappropriate as it could be dangerous for others. Concerning the braking of plates they were thrown on the stage where the musicians were situated. Each time there was not

more than a single plate being thrown. However the plates had to be thrown horizontal, so when they would touch the floor could break evenly and without danger.

The shift towards the commercialization of the music halls with contemporary popular music after 1980s coincided with the gradual disappearance of the practice of breaking plates. The braking of plates was abolished in music halls during the dictatorship but secretly and illegally it was going on. However after 1980s the breaking of plates was almost disappeared from the music halls of Athens but continued to take place in small towns such as Larisa. Nowadays the practice of breaking plates in music halls is almost extinct in Athens and it has been replaced with the throwing of flowers on singers and on the stage. The throwing of flowers is also a performative destruction of wealth that takes place in most music halls with contemporary popular music.

The commercialization of the music halls with popular music during eighties also resulted to the massive establishment of whisky as the main drink of consumption[20]. More particular Oikonomou has observed that whisky is entangled with the culture of modern Greek popular music (2000). According to him whisky has come to symbolize the –out of control- and party mood atmosphere in music halls. Furthermore the domination of whisky has excluded the category of food. As a result whisky is being consumed with a few fruits and dried nuts. Most likely spirits and particular whisky are not going to be consumed with food in music halls. However there have been music halls that served food after drinking the spirit or in rare cases while drinking. The majority though of the music halls in Athens with contemporary Greek music is based on whisky consumption without food. Wine is usually ordered by women and it is considered a choice for a couple. The main reason is that while men are "naturally" going to consume whisky which is considered a "masculine' beverage, when going out with women it is possible they have to accept the choice of women and drink something "light". Under that perspective wine corresponds in terms of payment to two customers, a man and a women, while whisky at least to four.

The transformation of entertainment that was based on commensality to the consumption of the spirit and more particular whisky has to be understood as an invention of a form of entertainment that was considered "modern" by various agents in the 'night industry'. This transformation was based on purification that was fed by the dichotomy of European and Oriental representation as Herzefeld has argued. However this processes took place on a social level in Greece and produced social differentiation in relation to social identity based on popular music. That resulted to a clear distinction between commensality and whisky consumption that has been reproduced by the subjects who entertain themselves in music-halls. While having dinner with some of my interlocutors one stated "I can never eat and drink whisky. I always need an empty stomach when I decide to consume the spirit". In his perspective whisky can not be mixed with food but only with wine. Therefore it is clear that the mentality of distinguishing between the spirit and the wine is embodied by subjects in various forms. Another interlocutor stated that "wine can not be drunk straight without food (ξεροσφύρι) while spirits and particularly whisky should be consumed in this form".

[20] It is very possible that whisky was also the main drink of consumption in cabarets and "bars with women" in various areas of Athens and more particular the area of Truba before and after the Second World War. The "bars with women" are spaces where the company of women is exchanged for the offering of alcoholic beverages by the customers. According to Abatzi "the bottle" of whisky was found in various "bars with women" before the dictatorship (2004: 58).

## 1.2. The consumption of whisky within the context of cultural positionings

In recent years various scholars have researched the 'night industry' of Athens. More particular Souliotis has examined the role of urban landscapes as the means of constructing collective identities (2001: 211-238). This process is based on collective practices and discourses in relation to the central areas of 'Kolonaki' and 'Exarhia' in Athens. Both areas are characterized by a massive amount of cafeterias and bars and consist busy spaces of socialization among Athenians. The interlocutors stress their social identity in relation to the consumption of leisure and symbolic goods in both areas and they are 'included' or 'excluded' accordingly. Kolonaki is considered a place with "quality" people and therefore various bars have face control in the entrance of the club, in an effort to exclude those who have no quality clothes. On the other hand, Exarhia is considered an alternative place which is not commercialized. The rock bars and the leftist 'history' of this place are major concerns among the consumers who identify themselves in opposition to Kolonaki. Therefore leisure in relation to the social life of bars and cafeterias, emerges as a primary source of self identification within the context of imagined urban identities.

Likewise social identities and more particular "lifestyle" is constructed on the basis of nightlife among the interlocutors of Ioannou in Kastela (Ioannou 2001: 239-262). People identify themselves in opposition to those who are "dogs" (σκύλοι) despite the fact interlocutors entertained themselves in "dog-clubs" (σκυλάδικα). The concept of "dog" is identifying those who do not have "quality", do not know hot to behave and more importantly they do know not how to consume in the context of music halls with popular music and night clubs.

Papagaroufali has also investigated the role of alcohol in the construction of gender identity among feminist groups in Athens. According to her drinking practices can be media of a gender redefinition and negotiation (1992). She states that women use drinking as "a violation, or resistance, or reversal, or transformation of the 'Establishment' and the legitimation of these women's actual and dreamed of interest: to become culturally visible the way they 'wished'" (1992: 66). It is within the context of alcohol that women articulate an alternative discourse to go against the dominant view of men and pursue their own tactics.

Further research in relation to gender identity has demonstrated how imported alcoholic beverages are divided in "male" and "female" drinks in the context of "bars with women" (Abatzi 2004: 152). The male drinks are divided in "special" and "regular", with whisky being the central symbol this categorization. According to her the majority of male customers are drinking whisky and rarely vodka or gin. Customers are able to distinguish themselves with the whisky brand which is usually known among the bar tenders and the way that the drink is going to be served. People insist on using long or short old fashion glass and having a particular number of ice cubes in their drink[21].It is the context of this classification that reproduces gender identity and makes clear how objects and particular alcoholic beverages objectify social identities.

[21] I have also faced similar cases of consumers who state "I always drink my whisky with two ice cubes". The number depends upon the consumer but the choice of ice becomes a very personal matter of identification which is possibly related to the fact that many people are drinking the same whisky brand but it is not always the case that they have the same amount of ice cubes. Ice therefore becomes one more parameter of social distinction.

According to Stewart the consumption of whisky in Greece has been a long pattern of claiming higher status. He states that "The recent increase in the quantity of whisky imported into Greece (124.000 liters in 1971 to more than four million liters in 1982) could not possibly be interpreted as an indication of increased consumption by this elite […] Rather, these statistics suggest that the drink has been adopted everywhere, and this evidence of the degree to which elite style has penetrated the society at large […] Such changes in "taste" elicit responses from the elite who may alter their own style in order to retain distinct identity. One elderly Athenian woman, whose fluency in several European languages signaled her high degree of cultivation, took evident glee in parodying the pronunciation of the masses clamouring for whisky. "What do they want with gouiski?" she mocked. Granted that whisky is no longer an effective marker of elite style, those who would claim elite status are opting for new patters of consumption" (1989: 86-87). Nowadays the quantity of brands has increased giving more choice to those who want to distinguish themselves. While in the past the distinction between special whisky such as Chivas and Dimple and regular whisky could have been interpreted as a characteristic consumption pattern of the elite nowadays is not the case.

Among my interlocutors there are individuals who claim to be more knowledgeable in relation to whisky than others. Particular example is Kostas who is educated in England and he is working as a broker. Kostas stated that "special whiskies are not good. People drink without knowing, everybody drinks whisky nowadays. The best whiskies are Single malt. I have a collection of single malts with some representative pieces." The category of single malt whiskies has emerged the last decade as a popular category of whisky among the elite who want to distinguish themselves in opposition to the popular consumption patterns. The price of these whiskies range between 50 to several hundreds euros and they can be purchased in a few places in Athens. Most people though buy these bottles from abroad and more particularly from the United Kingdom where is a variety of the mentioned category. The fact that the bottle has been purchased "abroad" and is not found in Greece adds more to the symbolic value of the bottle and the cosmopolitan character of the interlocutor.

Single malt has been advertised massively in recent years. The fact that most Scottish distilleries passed on to multinationals that trade a variety of beverages all over the globe, resulted to a reinvention of Single malts. For example many distilleries that produce single malt were closed (non productive) and they were reopened only recently after they were acquired large multinational corporations. In that sense their popularity in Greece has been growing but still they are very expensive beverages to be drunk by the few.

Single malt has emerged as 'positional good' in recent years which is clearly related to the elite and high income groups who claim that they know "how to drink", they travel to find their cosmopolitan bottles and they are willing to pay high amounts of money to consume these type of whiskies in the bar or in their home. People position themselves to the relationship they have with these particular goods and they try to distinguish themselves by means of consumption. The consumer is also expressing the consumption knowledge in the techniques of the body. The way somebody drinks the beverage, the way of smelling and looking at it and the way of ordering are also means of reproducing the 'taste of refinement'.

Most of my interlocutors though are not consumers of single malts and they describe themselves as "whisky-man" (ουισκάκιας). The whisky man appreciates good whisky and is usually going to consume it in cases that do not include commensality. Name celebrations, birthdays, meetings among friends home or in bars are for example occasions that whisky is

going to be consumed. Whisky is considered a drink for "men" and is going to be used in the "right" moments. It is not to be consumed daily because it is "strong" but it is ideal for social occasions that are meaningful for the interlocutors.

Whisky is usually drunk in short glasses with ice but it can be served in long glasses especially if it is mixed with cola. While straight whisky or with ice is considered a "man's" drink, whisky with Cola is considered a "woman's drink". Moreover some of my interlocutors stated that they like "taking their whisky gay-like" (το πίνουμε λίγο πούστικο)[22]. This expression means that they like mixing their whisky with Cola which is considered a "female" drink. In addition in the context of 'music halls with popular Greek music' whisky with Cola might also be consumed by men. However this happens because the quantity of whisky consumed is large and Cola makes the drink softer and easier to drink.

## Conclusions

The social life of whisky in Greece as it is manifested in entertainment and music halls with popular Greek music, is a narrative of success, excessive consumption, passion and social differentiation. The appropriation of the beverage and imported beverages in general has been a result of purification of entertainment based on the dominant views of modernity. The drink is viewed and consumed as a symbol of entertainment that in various cases accompanies a general excessive unproductive mentality. This passion can be understood under the sacred like character of destructive practices that aim at transcending the social while reproducing it.

The excessive practices are traced back to the rebetiko, as an argument against the point that whisky is a result of such contexts entangled with a new rich class. That stresses the possibility that imported beverages fell within an already cultural pattern that was gradually transformed while keeping its sacrificial character. The localization in other words is a process deeply entangled with cultural practices in entertainment that emerged at the beginning of the century.

Finally the beverage became also a reference of social identity as part of entertainment in music halls with live popular music. References of modernity, gender and distinction are part of the discourse about the drink which in various cases is used as a positional good or symbolic capital of social differentiation when consumed in music halls. The belonging to a popular identity of Greek popular music consumer is also employed.

While retsina and ouzo have gradually been minimized within the last decades, Greece remains one of the highest countries globally in the consumption of Scotch. Despite that fact though the beverage is considered "ours" and is consumed in "our" way. It produces social differentiation in terms of social identity and results to a reexamination of the social life of commodities as such, in late modernity Greece.

[22] The "πούστης" is considered to be a passive male gay figure in various contexts of social life in Greece while it is also used as a highly inappropriate discursive insult. If somebody is also not moral or is considered a scum, he is characterized as such. The concept might also have more neutral connotations which describe small illegal practices that are not considered discriminating especially in relation to the state

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# Undertaking phenomenological research in Greece: a theoretical discussion based on some empirical observations


## *Abstract*

The paper aims to discuss the implications of undertaking phenomenological research in Greece. The author's research interest focuses on retail and specifically on the retail location decision-making process. The phenomenological approach being taken to this topic can e regarded as a potential methodological contribution to knowledge, as the author understands a phenomenological study on management decision-making has never been undertaken in Greece before.


## *Introduction*

The term *phenomenology* has been used in many and controversial ways in social sciences research (Ehrich, 2005). Depending on the epistemological and ontological stance of the researcher it is either conceptualised as philosophy by the Husserlian school of thought or as methodology by the Heideggerian one (Goulding, 2005). Even though phenomenology has strong roots with ancient Greek philosophy (Sanders, 1982) there is no evidence that has ever been used in management research in Greece.

The paper is divided into three parts. In the first part of the paper the philosophical underpinning of phenomenology is discussed. In the second part the methodological issues behind phenomenology are addressed. In the third part of the paper, the case study research method will be discussed in the phenomenological framework. In order to provide some practical examples, reference to a pilot study undertaken by the author will be made. The aim of this paper is not to discuss the findings of the pilot study, but to contribute to the methodological debate about phenomenology by presenting how case studies can be used in the phenomenological context.

# The philosophical foundations of phenomenology

Phenomenology emerged in the late 19th century as a reaction against the then dominant positivist view of philosophy (Ehrich, 2005). Berglund (2005) mentions that phenomenology deals with a fundamental philosophical question: what is real? Husserl (1931, p.43), who is considered to be the founder of modern phenomenology, suggested that knowledge is produced by "…setting aside all previous habits of thought, see through and break down the mental barriers which these habits have set along the horizons of our thinking". Phenomenology assumes that even though we cannot be certain about the independent existence of objects in the external world, we can be certain about how they appear to us in consciousness (Carson *et al*., 2001). Gibson and Hanes (2003) suggest that phenomenology focuses on the meanings that individuals assign to phenomena rather than raw descriptions of observed behaviours and actions.

Husserl's main aim for philosophical phenomenology was to analyse phenomena for what they are, intuitively and directly, not as what they mean, theoretically and from a certain viewpoint (Berglund, 2005). Husserl wanted to develop a schema for describing and classifying subjective experiences (Goulding, 2005) where the implicit structure and meaning of human experiences will become explicit (Sanders, 1982). Crotty (1998) says that phenomenology is about saying "No". It is a critical approach to phenomena that will lead to a fresh look at the pure essence of them. Therefore, phenomenology is a critical reflection of conscious experience, rather than subconscious motivation, and is designed to uncover the essential invariant features of that experience (Jopling, 1996).

# Phenomenology as a methodology

Four major philosophical concepts of phenomenology are presented that provide the foundation for phenomenology as a research methodology: *intentionality*, *lifeworld*, *intersubjectivity*, and *phenomenological reduction* (Sanders, 1982; Moustakas 1992).

## Intentionality

The term *intentionality* indicates the orientation of the mind to the object; the object or experience exists is one's mind in an intentional way (Moustakas, 1992). Husserl (1931, p.31) himself describes intentionality as "a concept which at the threshold of phenomenology is quite indispensable as a starting point and basis". Intentionality is important to phenomenology as a research methodology because the purpose of phenomenological research is to understand how humans experience and perceive certain objects or phenomena in the world (Gibson and Hanes, 2003). As Moustakas points out (1992) the act of consciousness and the object of consciousness are intentionally related. When something – an object or an experience - is presented to us it is presented as something, we see it, interpret it, and understand as something.

Husserl (1931) used the Greek terms *noesis* and *noema* to indicate the intimate relationship between intentionality as a total meaning of what is expected (noema) and the mode of experiencing (noesis). Moustakas (1992) mentions that for every noesis there is a noema; for every noema there is a noesis. Sanders (1982, p.355) maintained that in a noematic experience there is always a "bearer", one who is interpretating a noema. She has illustrated that through the following figure (Figure 1):

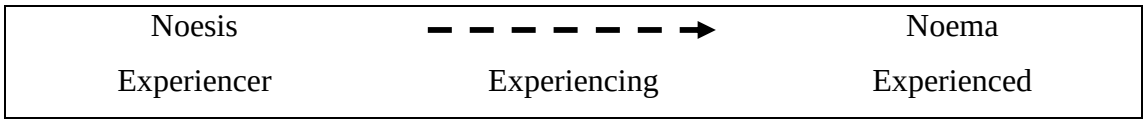


**Figure 1: The noesis – noema experience (Sanders, 1982; p355)**

## Lifeworld

Guilding (2005, p.302) defines *lifeworld* as "the world in which we, as human beings among other human beings , experience culture and society, take a stand with regard to their objects, are influenced by them, and act on them". Husserl (1982, p.51) used the expression "Me and my surrounding world" to describe lifeworld. The lifeworld is the place where humans are in the world and therefore could be the starting point for

research in social sciences. Lifeworld is the context where researchers must go and study the way in which individuals experience phenomena in their natural attitude (Gibson and Hanes, 2003).

## Intersubjectvity

Phenomenological *intersubjectivity* concerns the lifeworld that the researcher creates by synthesising the different layers of reality that the researched individuals experience (Moustakas, 1992). The essential property of intersubjectivity is the construction of a research context by participating in an empathetic way in the experience of the researched individual. Moran (2000, p. 176) explaining the term says that "I can live in other's experience in an intuitive manner but I don't undergo that experience myself in an original fashion". Intersubjectivity is related with both intentionality and lifeworld. Though the layer that is set by the intersubjectivity the meanings that are assigned in an intentional way to objects and experiences by the researched individuals are positioned in the lifeworld.

Gibson and Hanes (2003) mention that lifeworld is an intersubjective world in which the researched individuals are in a relationship with the world. This relationship is primary for the experiencer but it is acknowledged in an analogy by the researcher (Moustakas, 1992). In phenomenological research, intersubjectivity is the act of researchers being with and developing a trusting relationship with the researched individuals as they describe their experience with the phenomenon being investigated (Gibson and Hanes, 2003).

Related to the latter mentioned three concepts (intentionallity, lifeworld, and intersubjectivity) is the concept of the *embodied consciousness* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The importance of Merleau-Ponty's contribution is that he removed the metaphysical and transcendental nature of phenomenological research and brings it closer to the needs of the social science research. The concept of embodied consciousness highlights the spatial and temporal relationship between researcher and the researched object (Gibson and Hanes, 2003). Gibson and Hanes (2003) say that the embodied consciousness is the mean through which the researcher experiences the

researched individuals' lifeworld. They also mention that it is important that the researcher receives the experiences of the researched individual without prejudice and facilitates the free and open expression of these experiences that constitute the lifeworld.

## Phenomenological reduction

*Phenomenological reduction* is the basis of phenomenological research (Gibson and Hanes, 2003). This action is divided in two procedures (Sanders, 1982; Giorgi, 1997). The first one is called bracketing or according to the Husserlian (1931) terms "*epoche*"[1]. The bracketing only concerns the researcher. It is the process when the researcher sets aside his prejudgements, biases and preconceived ideas (Moustakas, 1992). The bracketed matter does not cease to exist, rather it becomes inactive until the researcher revisits it and integrates it with knowledge that will be produced by his primary research.

The action of reduction that is the second procedure "takes on the character of graded prereflection, reflection, and reduction, with concentrated work aim at explicating the essential nature of the phenomenon" (Husserl, 1931; p. 114). Husserl's explanation of reduction was interpreted by Moustakas (1992) as a process when the researcher perceives, thinks, remembers, imagines, and judges the contents that build the phenomenon. The world is reduced to the contents of consciousness alone (Carson *et al.*, 2001). In management research practice this is interpreted as the process of collecting, assessing, and synthesising data that come from alternative sources. Through this process the researcher constructs his research context which will be enriched and integrated with the data that he will collect through his field research.

# Phenomenological research in management studies

Ehrich (2005) suggests that phenomenological research is suitable for researching fields like general management, leadership, marketing, organisational and corporate strategy, and accounting. Some examples of such research are Moreno's (1991) study

[1] A Greek word meaning to stay away from or abstain (Moustakas, 1992; p.85)

of people's experience of the transformation of their work life because of IT evolution, and Berglund's (2005) study of entrepreneurship as a lived experience. Goulding (2005) maintained that phenomenology has its own unique characteristics that are beneficial in terms of theory building around lived experiences in the field of strategic decision making. Carson *et al.* (2001) suggested that in the marketing context the phenomenological approach could be used to research how managers perceive their marketing decision making roles within their work environment. Gibson and Hanes (2003) said that phenomenological research can be used when the research wants to understand the complexity of human experience and gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of participants' experience in order to understand the phenomena itself.

Over twenty years ago, Sanders (1982) argued that phenomenology is the new way of viewing management research. Scholars that recently published review papers on phenomenological research in management cited a small number of phenomenological studies. For example Goulding (2005) cited eleven phenomenological studies of consumer behaviour and Ehrich (2005) cited four studies of general management. Some explanations for the limited usage of phenomenological research are provided by Hill and McGowan (1999). They maintained that many management researchers have built on existing normative paradigms that have their routes in economics, psychology or sociology that have a long history of utilising quantitative methods for understanding social phenomena; these researchers have inherited their research approach to their students thus the positivist paradigm was transferred from one generation to the other; and finally they point out that government funding are more in line with quantitative research approaches than qualitative. Ehrich (2005) adds to these explanations that other reasons for the limited use of phenomenological research are the perception that qualitative methods are second rate (Gummerson, 2000) or lack the rigor and objectivity of the quantitative approach (Patton and Appelbaum, 2003).

## The phenomenological research process

Easterby-Smith *et al.* (1994) provide a summary description of the phenomenological paradigm (Table 1). They provide an outline of the characteristics of phenomenological enquiry although neglecting to cite the principles that a phenomenologist should have. Even though their summary is imperfect, it provides a starting point to discuss the research design of this research.

| | **Positivist paradigm** | **Phenomenological paradigm** |
|---|---|---|
| Basic beliefs: | The world is external and objective<br>Observer is independent<br>Science is value-free | The world is socially constructed and subjective<br>Observer is part of what observed<br>Science is driven by human interests |
| Researcher should: | Focus on facts<br>Look for causality and fundamental laws<br>Reduce phenomena to simplest elements<br>Formulate hypotheses and then test them | Focus on meanings<br>Try to understand what is happening<br>Look at the totality of each situation<br>Develop ideas through induction of data |
| Preferred methods include: | Operationalising concepts so that they can be measured<br>Taking large samples | Using multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena<br>small samples investigated in depth and over time |

**Table 1: Positivist Vs Phenomenological paradigm (Easterby-Smith et al., 1994)**

Sanders (1982) argues that phenomenology is a qualitative research method. It is a detailed study of the lived experiences[2] of the individuals who are being researched. Colaizzi (1978) suggests a series of seven steps to describe the phenomenological research process:

1. The first task of the researcher is to read the participants' narratives, to acquire a feeling for their ideas in order to understand them fully.
2. The next step, "extracting significant statements", requires the researcher to identify key words and sentences relating to the phenomenon under study.
3. The researcher then attempts to formulate meanings for each of these significant statements.

[2] Husserl (1970, p.385) notes "The appearing of things does not appear itself to us, we *live* through it".

4. This process is repeated across participants' stories and recurrent meaningful themes are clustered. These may be validated by returning to the informants to check interpretation.
5. After this the researcher should be able to integrate the resulting themes into a rich description of the phenomenon under study.
6. The next step is to reduce these themes to an essential structure that offers an explanation of the behaviour.
7. Finally, the researcher may return to the participants to conduct further interviews or elicit their opinions on the analysis in order to cross check interpretation.

Phenomenology is a qualitative way of researching social phenomena. Ahmad and Ali (2003, p.2) note that "qualitative research is used where there is a concern for understanding how things happen and how they are related, rather than only measuring the relationship between variables". The objective of qualitative data is to provide depth and details of action, events, and perspectives through the eyes of the actors or those being investigated (Bryman and Cramer, 1988). As a result, a qualitative methodology can provide the investigator with meaningful insights by delving more deeply and examining the intangible aspects of complex issues of process (Lofland, 1971; Mintzberg, 1983; Van Maanen, 1983). Therefore, qualitative methodologies are characterised as 'deep' (Sieber, 1973), 'story telling', 'full rich and real' (Miles and Hubert, 1984) but also 'soft' and 'narrow' (Hardy, 1985). All these characteristics show the power of qualitative study to answer several research objectives suited to the use of this methodology. However, such methodology is costly and time-consuming, and data can only be gathered from a small sample size (Sekaran, 1992).

The issues of validity and reliability from the phenomenological viewpoint have been addressed by Easterby-Smith (1994). The validity of research is dependant on the access that the researcher gains to the knowledge and meanings of the informants. With respect to that Sanders (1982) suggested that the phenomenologist researcher should probe the research problem in-depth without caring for the quantity. Reliability of the phenomenological research is gained if similar observations will be made by

different researchers in different locations. The validity and reliability of phenomenological research are discussed in detail in a later stage of the paper.

## The case-study research method

In-depth interviews are a common method of executing a phenomenological research project (Sanders, 1982; Moustakas, 1992; Thompson, 1997, 1998), although the interviews are supported by other sources of data like archival data, documents, and observations (direct or/and participant). Yin (2003) suggests that in the case study method there are six major sources of evidence that are used by the researcher. These are:

1. Documents,
2. Archival records,
3. Interviews,
4. Direct observation,
5. Participant observation, and
6. Physical artefacts

The case study method has been used in a variety of research problems that concern decision-making (Eisenhardt, 1989; Perren and Ram, 2004). Yin (2003) provides an extensive guide to the practical implementation of the case study research technique for academic purposes, while Perry (1998) shows how the case study technique should be used for the purposes of doctoral research. Based on the methodological implications imposed by the phenomenological dimension of my research and the widely accepted guidelines given by Yin (2003) and Perry (1998), the practical issues of case-study research are discussed bellow.

### Theory development

The case study method can be used both in inductive and deductive research programmes (Perry, 1998). Eisenhardt (1989) mentioned that a research question is necessary to start because without one it is easy to become overwhelmed by the volume of data.

## Case selection

The number of the cases that are necessary for a case study research project is not clearly addressed in the research literature. Perry (1998) has done a review of the case study literature and he concluded that a four to six units of analysis and four to ten cases are usually enough to reach the theoretical saturation point (Eisenhart, 1989), which is the point where additional information does not add additional knowledge. The selection of the cases is usually purposive since all the other sampling techniques are characterised as "not preferable" (Eisenhardt, 1989; p. 536). Patton (1990) mentions that *maximum variation* sampling is the more appropriate because it ensures the maximum richness of information.

## Development of instruments and protocols

The collection of data through all the alternative ways mentioned before is necessary for *bracketing* (epoche). Husserl (1931) originally defined *epoche* as a process where the researcher doubts the facts and his knowledge based on the review of external sources of information. Later, other researchers interpreted Husserl's definition and concluded that the epoche is the process where the researcher is creating the research context before he starts to reflect on it influenced by the knowledge he will create by the in depth interviews (Sanders, 1982; Moustakas, 1992). The case study method provides a structured framework where the researcher has the opportunity to create a context based on all the sources of information that are available to him and where the interviews will be the catalyst that produce new knowledge out of this process.

Yin (2003) suggests that the case study instruments are just a part of the case study protocol. In there, the use of various data types is described and according to

Eisenhardt (1989, p. 538) the combination of data deriving from various quantitative and qualitative sources can be "highly synergetic". Yin (2003) proposes that each case study protocol should have four sections:

1. Introduction: The research aim and objectives are reviewed and the theoretical framework of the case study is addressed.
2. Data collection procedures: An analytical database is created where important dates, names and other details of the cases are imported. In addition to them *a priori* data sources are reviewed and the preparations needed prior to visiting the sites are listed.
3. Case study questions: In this section of the protocol the research questions are linked with the methods that will be used in order to access the necessary data to answer them. This section does not only include the interview schedules, but also includes reminders for the researcher like things that he should observe while on the sites of the retailers or documents that he should find and review.
4. A guide for the case study report: With respect to the phenomenological approach of the enquiry this part of the case study will include the data that will be reviewed by the interviewees where they will reflect and give their feedback. This part of the protocol is related to the phenomenological reduction because through the outlines that will be set here the data will be classified and organised in order to be analysed at the next stage.

## Data analysis

The data analysis part is related to the theoretical background of the research as well as the methodological stance that the researcher is taking. Perry (2004) suggests that the data analysis should be based on the theory upon which the case study was build. Eisenhardt (1989) maintained that a *within-case* data analysis approach should be taken. The basic premise of within-case data analysis is the development of "detailed case study write-ups for each site" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 540). This helps the researcher to reflect on his data but also is a tool compatible with the

phenomenological approach, which calls for the validation of the analysis by the interviewees.

The main aim of the within-case analysis is the detection of theoretical replications (Perry, 2004). Eisenhardt (1989) mentions that the process of the detection of theoretical replications gives the investigator a rich familiarity with each case and this accelerates the cross case comparison. Eisenhardt (1989) suggests that the researchers' focus should be on finding cross-case patterns. She points out that an efficient way to proceed is to select categories or dimensions and then look for within-group similarities coupled with intergroup differences. Yin's (2003) suggestion is to base the pattern matching on the theoretical assumptions of the study. Eisenhardt (1989) points out that cross-case searching enhances the probability that the investigator will capture novel findings, which may exist in the data. The data analysis in case study research stops when the incremental improvement to theory is minimal (Eisenhardt, 1989; Perry, 2004).

## Criticism of the case study approach

Case studies have been criticised as every other research method. Yin (2003) mentions that the greatest concern has been over the lack of rigour of case study research. He also stresses, "too many times, the case investigator has been sloppy, has not followed systematic procedures, or has equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the directions of the findings and conclusions" (2003, p.10). The development of a complete and efficient case-study protocol assures that systematic procedures will be followed and the biases will be suppressed.
Tellis (1997) also suggests that a frequent criticism of case study methodology is that its dependence on a single case renders it incapable of providing a generalizing conclusion. Yin's (2003) reply is that case studies are generalisable to theoretical prepositions and not to populations. The case study does not represent a sample, but in doing a case study the goal is to expand theories and not to enumerate frequencies.

# An example of a phenomenological case-study

The latter theoretical discussion is reflected in an exploratory study that the author undertakes as part of his doctoral research. The aim of the research is to create an understanding of how retail managers experience environmental uncertainty and how they are making location related decisions within an uncertain environment.

## The research context

Retailing in Greece until early 1990's seemed in many ways not to have changed since the earliest shops were established there four millennia ago (Bennison and Boutsouki, 1995). The changes that began at the start of 1990's were sudden and occurred with great speed (Bennison, 2002). The small shops that used to characterise Greek towns have been superceded by modern developments mostly located at out-of-town areas. The major reason for that change was the deregulation of retail as part of the harmonisation programme for the introduction of the Single European Market in 1992. The changes that were introduced were the lift of price controls; the extension of opening hours (excluding Sundays); the removal of the prohibition on the use of overtime and part-time labour; and finally the deregulation of the sale of fresh bread, meat and fish that had only been distributed by specialist shops.

These changes motivated foreign – mainly American and western European – retailers operating in a number of sectors to show their interest in Greece. The newly liberalised market gave them the opportunity to enter, and although the market size was relatively small it was considered worthy by many of exploitation since the indigenous competition was perceived as being weak. The expansion of the foreign retailers had an immediate impact on the sector. New marketing techniques were introduced, modern logistic and warehousing strategies were implemented, retail location analysis became more systematic and new markets were exploited.

## Sampling

Statistics are of no concern to phenomenological methods (Berglund, 2005), so sampling was purposive, focusing on the maximum variation of cases. Since in my research aims I suggest that there are differences between the indigenous and international retailers a sample of both is taken. In order to identify extremes in the decision-making process, independent retailers and retail chain companies were researched and location decisions at all levels were in focus. I chose four retail firms two indigenous and two foreign in order to study the differences between them; and I also chose two small-medium size companies and two large ones in order to study if the differences are influenced by the size of the organisation.

## Data collection

At that stage of the research in-depth interviews, observations, and physical artefacts were integrated in order to create a holistic view of the managerial experience of decision making under uncertainty. The research strategy I followed was to collect data that could assist me in composing the research context – the phenomenological lifeworld – and use the primary data that I would collect from the interviews in order to understand managers' experience. Finally, I asked for physical artefacts, in the form of cognitive maps, in order to have a tangible mean of discussion that could be reviewed and developed by both the researcher and the researched individuals.

## Research strategy

The research was divided into seven steps. The purpose of each step was to build a holistic view of the managerial experience by combining managers' views and the researcher's interpretation.

### First step: Construction of the lifeworld - Bracketing

The starting point of the research was the understanding of the macro-environment where managers are making decisions. In order to understand the environment I undertook desk research where I identified a number of issues that potentially can influence the retail companies' micro-environment. These issues were addressed in the case study protocol and they were included in in-depth interviews schedule. Another reason for doing the desk research is that documents and quantitative data supports the research and increase its validity (Yin, 2003).
In order to develop a basic understanding of the micro-environment I visited a number of retail companies where I observed the working environment and I identified elements of the culture of the company that I incorporated in case study protocol. Carson *et al.* (2001, p.144) highlight that usually observation is a "first touch methodology" that can give a superficial view of the research object but also it gives "rich and insightful understanding of real phenomena".

## Second step: In-depth interviewing

Four interviews that lasted about an hour were done that were tape-recorded. A research schedule was developed based on the findings on the research of the first step. The major issues that were addressed included managers' perception of uncertainty and their understanding of the experience of decision making. Since a phenomenological approach was adopted, where reflection on data is necessary, cognitive maps were used in the interviews. Cognitive maps offer a tangible mean of research, what Yin (2003) describes as a physical artefact that gives validity to the research.

Cognitive maps are a method used to elicit the structure and the content of people's mental processes (Daniels *et al.* 1995), which provides a mental model. A mental model can be broadly defined as a simplification or a representation of understanding (Ahman and Ali, 2003). It can be seen as providing a framework which directs and controls a decision-making process at an individual level. It affects the way an individual views the world, influencing the way in which he or she thinks about or perceives problems or issues. Ultimately, it affects individual behaviour and action (Spicer, 1998). Spicer (2000) defined cognitive mapping as a suite of techniques and

methodologies which are designed for the elicitation and representation of individual knowledge and understanding. Cognitive mapping techniques are one of the tools to draw cognitive maps. These techniques are used to explore graphical descriptions of the unique ways in which an individual views a particular domain (field of thought or action) (Langfield-Smith, 1992). As a research tool cognitive mapping has its strengths and weaknesses, which can be summarised in Table 2.

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| Structure thought through symbolic representation | Exerts undue influence on mapping process |
| Graphical rather than linear layout | Needs skill and highly trained researchers |
| Quick insight into the structure of information | "Reading" maps is difficult |
| Information clearly communicable | Large maps become complex to administer |
| Managing large amount of qualitative information | Time-consuming |
| Capture individual knowledge and experience | Mapping unavoidably changes the understanding being mapped |
| Improve interviewing capability | Stress and uncomfortable feeling of respondent |

**Table 2: Strengths and weaknesses of cognitive mapping technique, Ahmad and Ali (2003, p.5)**

The rationale behind using the cognitive mapping technique is that the author wanted to understand the cognitive negotiations that take place in an interviewee's mind while describing the decision making process. Ackermann *et al.* (2004) suggested that cognitive mapping helps the researcher and interviewee to structure, organise, and analyse data. They also mention that the implementation of the technique may "increase the user's understanding of the issue through the necessity of questioning how the chains of argument fit together and determining when isolated chunks of data fits in" (Ackermann *et al*., 2004; p.2). See Figure 2 for an example of a cognitive map.

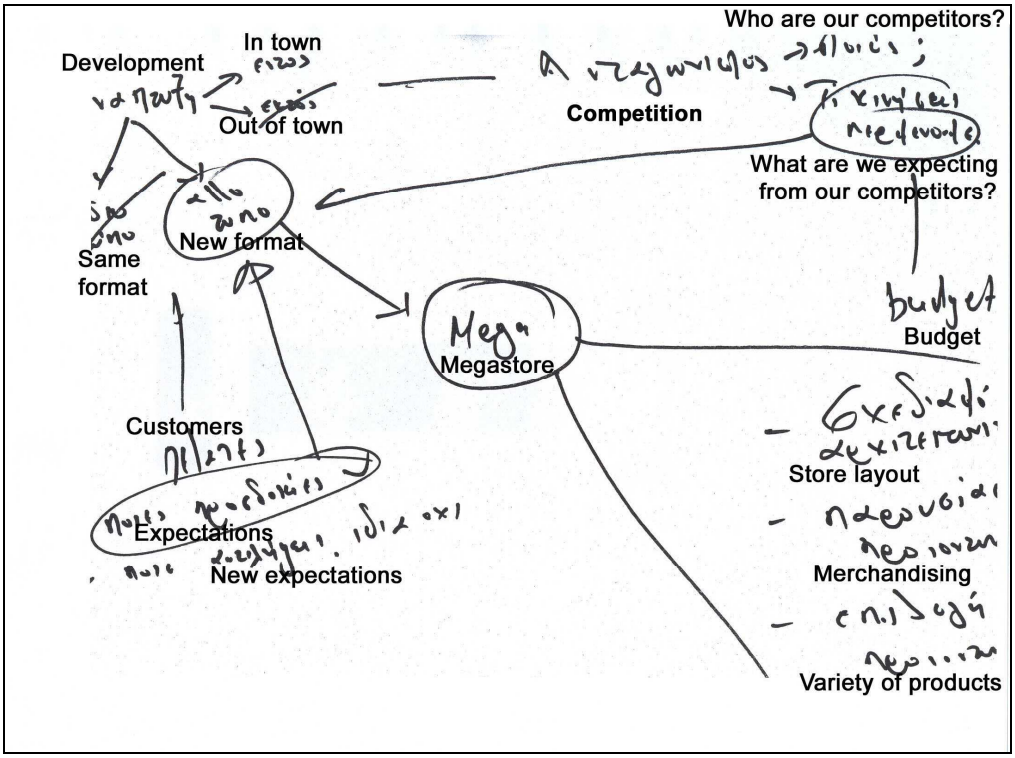


**Figure 2: Example of cognitive mapping**

## Third step: Exploration of intentionality

In this part of the study the research interviews and the cognitive maps were analysed and meaning units were identified. The technique that was employed in order to identify the meaning units was thematic analysis. A total of eighteen meaning units – themes – related to uncertainty emerged from the analysis that needed to be reviewed by the interviewees.

At that stage the researcher should go back to theory and find the correspondence of the knowledge that emerges with it from the phenomenological interviews (Sanders, 1982) that trough that process features of the micro and macro environment were identified are meaningful to the managers. Better understanding of the uncertainty concept was achieved and distinct differences of the perception of uncertainty between the managers of the indigenous and foreign retail companies were traced.

## Fourth step: Validation of data by the interviewees

Moustakas (1992) suggests that the validation of data by the interviewees increases the validity and credibility of the research because interviewer's interpretation is assessed by the same persons that were interviewed. The interviewed persons received the author's interpretation of their interview and a report of the synthesis of the interviews of all the interviewed persons. This step is also consistent with Yin's (2003) discussion about construct validity of the case studies.

The interviewees reviewed the reports and gave feedback on them. The step of validation is also related with the achievement of the phenomenological intersubjectivity because the researcher receives feedback on his interpretations by the researched individuals. The researcher's interpretation of the interviews reflect his empathic understanding of the interviewed persons' experience because he has already constructed their lifeworld and positioned himself in there during the interviews.

## Fifth step: Phenomenological reduction

Since the researcher receives the interviewees' feedback he starts the process of phenomenological reduction. Berglund (2005) describe this process as a quest for factors and superfactors, a classification of units into wider units. In this step the researcher integrates the knowledge he created through the bracketing with the existing theory and the phenomenological interviews. This is the part of the research where the researcher actually builds his case study because he is using all the different data sources he has in order to understand the experiences of interviewees, to reflect on them and build his theory.

Through this process the eighteen meaning units mentioned earlier were reduced into five wider units that describe the experience of uncertainty. The reduction aims to highlight the meaningful contents of the researched individuals' lifeworld. It was expected that the meaning units that would emerge from each interview would be different, since each lifeworld is different and the interviewees experience it in a different way. Through the reduction process of these different lifeworlds the

researcher is looking to find the overlapping layers, that could construct a common lifeworld where a theory that explains interviewees experience can be meaningful.

By analysing the data and synthesising the common lifeworld the eighteen meaning units were reduced to five, that were relevant with the experiences of all the managers that were interviewed.

## Sixth step: Theory building

In the final step of the research the data that has been collected, assessed, analysed and synthesised drives the development of theory. The researcher has to produce a theory that corresponds with the research methodology and his methods, and it has the credibility, validity and reliability to be accepted. For the purposes of this study a quality protocol based on Carson's *et al.* (2001) instructions for high-quality qualitative research, Yin's (2003) quality tests for case studies, and Moustakas's (1992) validation test for phenomenological research (see Table 3) were used.

| | |
|---|---|
| Carson's *et al.* (2001) instructions for a high-quality qualitative research | Researching in the natural setting of the phenomena |
| | Using purposive or theoretical sample |
| | Comparing results across different contexts |
| | Depth and intimacy of interviews |
| | Prolonged and persistent observations |
| | Negative case analysis – look for exemptions |
| | Debriefing by peers |
| | Maintain memos |
| | Triangulation of different data sources |
| | Independent audits |
| | Feedback on the findings from respondents |
| Yin's (2003) tests for case-studies | Use multiple sources of evidence |
| | Establish chain of evidence |
| | Have key informants review draft case study report |
| | Do pattern-matching |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Do explanation-building |
| | Address rival explanation |
| | Use logic models |
| | Use theory in single-case studies |
| | Use replication logic in multiple-case studies |
| | Use case study protocol |
| | Develop case study database |
| Moustakas's (1992) validation for phenomenological research | Interviewees give feedback on researcher's interpretation of lifeworld construction and in-depth interviews |

**Table 3: Quality protocol of phenomenological case-studies**

The rigorous implementation of this quality protocol provides the basis of developing a theory that is coherent with existing literature and informed by the primary desk and field research and contributes to original knowledge which is the main purpose of a doctoral research. By following these steps in the research described here a theory was built which now remains to be tested.

# Phenomenological research in Greece – Problems and opportunities

The methodological framework discussed above has never been used before in the Greek context. There are actually very few examples of phenomenological studies that were undertaken in Greece (e.g. Chronis, 2005). A major problem of phenomenological research is the time the interviewees have to spend on the interviews and the revision of the researchers' reports. Particularly when phenomenological research involves managers from small-medium companies the time element is more important because they usually are busy with multiple managerial tasks. A wider issue relevant to the applied academic research in Greece is that both academic and marketing research are not part of the entrepreneurial culture of the Greek managers. The problem that the academic researcher has to tackle is that he has to build a relationship of trustfulness with the interviewees so that they will be

open to share their experiences with honesty and furthermore than that they will give access to the researchers to documents and records of the company. Another problem that is relevant with the construction of the lifeworld is the lack of formal sources of information. Public institutions like the National Statistical Service of Greece and the Bank of Greece provide plethora of data but the process of getting them is problematic because they either do not provide the full datasets or there is no access to this data online.

Even though researching in a phenomenological way is problematic it is still a valuable methodological approach that offers a lot of opportunities to the researcher. Management researchers that are interested in the Greek environment have in many cases to develop and test theories, hence qualitative research methods are particularly useful in contexts that are under-researched (Carson *et al.* 2001). Experiences research could be the basis for qualitative research because they provide rich and insightful descriptions of human views (Moustakas, 1992). Phenomenology also provides the researcher the opportunity to cover the gaps that remain unaddressed by integrating alternative methods and sources of data. Finally and in addition to the above, phenomenological research is based on the development of human relationships and trust relationships between individuals so there is the opportunity for the researcher to promote the value of academic research to managers.

# Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to discuss the implications of undertaking phenomenological research in Greece. Phenomenological methodology is a valuable methodology in researching managerial experiences (Ehrich, 2005) even though management researchers keep a distance from it. The major argument against phenomenology is that it is descriptive and interpretive and thus it lacks of credibility. A reply to this argument is the employment of case-studies instead of in-depth interviews as a research method. The increased number of data sources that are triangulated and the tests that can be used to assure the quality of the research, as this is defined by the validity, creditability and reliability of the research, could encourage

researchers to include phenomenology in their methodological arsenal. Phenomenology can be the appropriate research methodology when research aims to understand management phenomena and particularly looks at the human dimension of management practice (Ehrich, 2005).

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