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Social marginalization, cultural diversity and education: teachers' representations of Greek-Gypsy identity[2]

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[1] Για τις επιστημονικές θέσεις και απόψεις που διατυπώνονται στο κείμενο αυτό υπεύθυνος είναι ο συγγραφέας. Οι θέσεις και οι απόψεις του συγγραφέα δεν δεσμεύουν τον επιστημονικό υπεύθυνο του Προγράμματος «Ένταξη Τσιγγανοπαίδων στο Σχολείο» ή το Υπουργείο Εθνικής Παιδείας και Θρησκευμάτων.

[2] Το παρόν κείμενο αποτελεί επιμορφωτικό υλικό στα πλαίσια του προγράμματος του ΥΠ.Ε.Π.Θ. «Ένταξη Τσιγγανοπαίδων στο Σχολείο», το οποίο υλοποιείται από το Πανεπιστήμιο Ιωαννίνων. Η παρουσία του κειμένου στο διαδίκτυο εξυπηρετεί επιμορφωτικές ανάγκες και ανάγκες ευαισθητοποίησης των εκπαιδευτικών της προσχολικής, πρωτοβάθμιας και δευτεροβάθμιας υποχρεωτικής εκπαίδευσης, αλλά απευθύνεται και στο ευρύ κοινό. Κάθε αθέμιτη χρήση του κειμένου υπόκειται στις διατάξεις του νόμου περί πνευματικής ιδιοκτησίας.

Although the concept of citizen –a typical political condition in the national state and a product of modernity– by definition tends to favor homogenization in claiming equality of legal treatment for individuals having a special (legal) relationship to a certain state, contemporary nations –in the sense of national states– remain culturally diverse. This is due not only to the presence of newcomers (people like immigrants, refugees) or aliens incorporated into the national borders after a political discontinuity (war, peaceful arrangement of borders). It is rather a structural condition of capitalist societies, politically organized as national states, to have an unequal distribution of resources –material and symbolic ones– and to be organized hierarchically. A hierarchical organization of individuals or groups is not possible without the acceptance and systematic (institutional or other) validation of social boundaries. Material and symbolic culture or capital as a rule constitute what usually what social boundaries are made of. In a sense cultural diversity is a condition sine qua non of contemporary national state democracies. The process of globalization –strong though it may be– is probably not going to affect this condition, unless the globally distributed material and symbolic culture are not only accessible to everybody, but remain the only options for everybody.

If the question is not diversity itself, but its various patterns, it might be of interest to look at types of cultural diversity within a national state or across national states and its relationship to schemes of classification used by individuals and/or organizations in establishing social identity. Consider for example the following questions: what types of cultural difference (real or imagined) do people implement to indicate or legitimize social position, regional identity, ethnic / national identity? Can one and the same type of difference sustain one or more types of identities in all possible contexts[3]?

Before Fredrik Barth's seminal work on ethnicity the leading tradition in the social sciences –especially in ethnology, history and cultural anthropology– assumed a correspondence between objective traits a certain collectivity (e.g. ethnic group, nation) presumably has and the decision of an observer to classify an individual into this group. In this paradigm group membership means objective possession of certain

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[3] Lazarus and Steinthal in an early attempt to approach the concept of ethnicity from a social-psychological perspective gave a negative answer to this question, opting for a contextual definition of ethnicity. See M. Lazarus, H. Steinthal: Einleitende Gedanken über Völkerpsychologie als Einladung zu einer Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft (1860). In: Eckardt, G. (Hrsg.) Völkerpsychologie -Versuch einer Neuentdeckung. Beltz: Weinheim, Basel, 1997.

cultural traits and similarity – at least concerning the possession of these traits by the members of the collectivity. It is Barth's work which succeeded into establishing a new –phenomenological and relativistic– paradigm arguing that group identities and memberships are established in a very different way: through a process of ascription. According to this theoretical tradition, the sort of cultural difference establishing a certain type of identity cannot be objectively decided. It remains to be seen in the process of negotiation of identities. This means that a certain trait may legitimize a certain identity in one context and an opposing one in another, as is the case when actually the same cultural stuff supports a regional identity for some and an ethnic / national identity for others.

Continuity of residence and the establishing of genealogies have been widely used in the past (in some cases they are still used) to establish ethnic/national[4] identities in an objective way. Especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth century national movements during which geographical areas of the imploding Ottoman empire were claimed by several antagonistic groups. The claim itself was legitimized upon the basis of residence continuity (autocthone populations), a different origin might be interpreted to constitute a lack of legitimacy of a claim for a certain area[5]. At times both majority and minority groups have utilized real or assumed difference concerning the ancestors' place of origin as a boundary distinguishing the "own" from the "alien"[6]. Recent research in the field of sociology and social anthropology suggests though that ethnic/national identity develops more on a symbolic level rather

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[4] The word «ethnic» refers to the individual's sense of membership to a collectivity that considers itself a separate "people", but either has not (yet) formed a state or is geographically separated from the already established national state. Thus German migrants in the US are an ethnic group, and the same holds for Kurds in Turkey. National identity is the identity of an individual belonging to a nation which has formed a state. This identity is normally the collective result of the functioning of the state burocracy. Cp. L. Danforth: Η Μακεδονική Διαμάχη. Αθήνα: εκδ. Αλεξάνδρεια, 1999.

[5] Consider for example the strong reaction of the greek intelectual establishment in the early 19th century against the theory of the Bavarian historian G. Fallmereyer, who proposed that contemporary Greeks are not the direct (biological) offsprings of the ancient Greeks. As a proof for his claim Fallmereyer brought – among other things– the fact that contemporary greek culture was not the same with classical greek culture, implying that cultural continuity presupposes biological contitnuity. The irony is that his opponents reversed his argument (there is culture dissimilarity, therefore there must be blood discontinuity) retaining the same assumption of the "national character" –set of traits peculiar to every nation (ethnos) which are physically transmitted from one generation to the other. See Gotovos, A.: Education and Diversity. Issues on intercultural education. Metaixmio, Athens 2003 (in Greek).

[6] The most recent development in this sense has been the attempt to establish an ethnic identity to the present Gypsy population by referring to their ancestors' travelled from northwest India towards the byzantine empire and eventually to western Europe. The "otherness" of the present Gypsy is anchored to geography and history, both different from the ones of the "autochtones". Ironically enough, this discourse is used both by those who are interested in dissociating the majority from the minority, but

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than on the level or objective historical or contemporary data. In a rather extreme form some scholars have suggested that national identities and nations as mental images are the products of the (national) state[7]. Critical though one may be towards such generalizations, one is obliged to accept that modern educational systems are directly and indirectly involved in the process of national identity formation.

Constructing social identities: vocabularies of exclusion and inclusion

Erving Goffman's sociology –especially his work on stigma[8]– has offered great help in understanding and assessing the dynamics of classification and evaluation of individuals in everyday life. As he suggested, in the context of contemporary urban environment individuals are depended on social categories in order to impute identities to each other, identities being the socially sanctioned categories used for the classification of the participants in interaction plus the (again, socially sanctioned) traits associated with these categories[9]. As opposed to personal identity[10], social identity is what an individual shares with others, what she/he has in common with all those who fall into the same type. At the same time, social identity implies belonging to some collectivity, small or large, plus the subjective sense of belonging somewhere. In Goffman's terms, all religious, regional, linguistic, ethnic, national, federal or global identities are *social identities*. They exist not only as claims of the individual that he belongs to a certain group, but also as acts of acceptance and validation by the observer of the self-classification. Since social identity implies some form of consensus –otherwise it would not be social– both on the classificatory scheme and on the fact that an individual finally belongs to a certain category indicated by the corresponding label, conflict may appear on both aspects. The conflict might take the form of an individual claiming a self-classification the audience objects, or the audience may put the individual into a category the individual

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also by those who are fighting against what they perceive as "assimilation" of the minority into the majority.
[7] E. J. Hobsbawm: Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990, E. J. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger: The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge: at the University Press.
[8] Cpf. Erving Goffan: Stigma. Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity. Penguin Books: London 1976.
[9] Goffman, op.cit. p. 12
[10] Goffman, op. cit. p. 68 ff.

does not accept. As a result multiple categorization may arise for an individual or a group: one for the inside group, the other for the outsiders. Unless such identity conflicts are resolved by negotiation or other peaceful arrangements, tension and feelings of exclusion will arise and affect the relationship between majority and minority.

Conflict between the individual and the audience may also arise when the established classificatory schemes are used in a deviant (innovative) way, either by the audience or by the individual. An interesting type of innovation in the above sense refers to the meaning of the categories involved. The boundaries of the meaning of terms like "Greek" or "Gypsy" may be defined in a way that the terms are mutually exclusive or in a way that one category includes the other. In the second example, being a "Gypsy" does not contradict being a Greek in exactly the same way that being "Cretan" or "Epirot" etc. does not contradict being a Greek. This can only happen if a broad definition of Greekness is accepted. Narrow definitions of Greekness would exclude from this category (Greek) all those who in the eyes of the observer do not have the specific attributes the definition sets as conditions for membership. It is exactly the point where the sense of minority arises in the observer's consciousness.

Policies of exclusion and inclusion determine the relationship between the meanings of such categories. At the official level it is rather usual to expect that under normal circumstances –that is, when a state is not systematically and willingly contradictory– you will have either an exclusive or an inclusive policy. But in the realm of the mass media and in the context of everyday life discourse things may appear more complex: actually in one and the same school –which by the way is an official setting– you may have both tendencies at the same time: some socialization agents may adopt an inclusive vocabulary, while others may do the opposite[11].

If social identities are to be seen as socially recognized and accepted modes of classification, we tend to have stable identities when the two parts involved (identity incumbent/audience) validate them through their classificatory practices. From the point where either party starts to question the accepted pattern, the destabilization of identity begins. "Revisionism" –or reconsidering the usefulness of classificatory schemes– may be triggered from above or from below. It may start by official

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[11] Empirical data from the Project "Educational Integration of Greek Gypsy Children" sponsored by the Greek Ministry of Education and the European Union and implemented by the University of Ioannina (1997-2000) suggest the above mentioned duality of pedagogical practice.

decisions as to the use of certain terms in public. National states have been agents of classification and the population they are constituted of, the most important classification being the positioning of an individual to the category of "citizen" or the category of "alien". All the rulings directing who, when and how is to be considered a citizen show that the state is a systematic classifier of individuals, continuously excluding and including individuals from/to the "own" and the "alien".

Apart from the difference between "citizen" and "alien", one may find several other types of difference within a national state: regional, religious, linguistic, status, ethnic and cultural difference among others. All of them eventually result to corresponding typologies of social identities. As with any social identity, the identities mentioned above are associated with beliefs on both the part of the incumbents and the audience as to the "qualities" of the identity holder. The "citizen" identity may unite the non-alien population inhabiting a certain area into the citizenry of a state. But since the sum of citizens (or "nationals") of a state does not necessarily coincide with the members of the nation after which the state is usually named, it is possible for an intermediate type of identity to emerge, surpassing regional, religious and linguistic divisions but not overcoming the basic inclusive category for the national identity. These identities are usually called *ethnic identities*, meaning that some individuals believe (and the audience may accept this belief) that a subgroup of citizens belong to another "people", different from the people constituting the majority of the population of the national state (e.g. the ethnic group of Mexican Americans or Indians or Greek Americans in the United States)[12]. What makes minority individuals feel that they belong to a "people" different from the people of the majority – or what makes majority individuals think there are citizens in their country not belonging to the "own" people? The general answer to a question like this is that not culture per se is the reason for declaring a type of difference (real or imagined) as an ethnic boundary, but the political expedience of inclusion and exclusion. Sometimes the ethnic difference dimension is unintended, but for certain reasons an originally not-ethnic difference is elevated into an ethnic division. Thus an indicator of regional identity in the past, may fully develop into a sign of ethnic identity in the present. Empirical evidence both on the part of some Greek Gypsies

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[12] In a strict sense a national state is the state of a certain nation («people») and the fact that the nation has as citizens individuals not belonging to the nation the state is named after, is contradictory to the

and non-Gypsy Greeks (e.g. teachers of elementary school) which will be presented in this paper, show that in Greece cultural difference between Gypsies and non-Gypsies –when it appears– has not led into ethnic division. As a rule, Greek Gypsies (socially integrated or marginalized ones) do not exclude themselves from the greek nation (people) and non-Gypsy Greeks typically include Gypsies into the category of Greeks as a nation. The greek situation thus seems to be markedly different from the situation in other european countries, where certain Gypsy groups are considered –at least by the majority of the "host" population– to be ethnically different[13].

Greek-Gypsy identity in historical perspective

Being aware of the fallacy of some types of historicism –the tendency to reduce all aspects of modern life to the past experience of the ancestors of the now living population in a certain area– does not mean that historical experience as one of the shaping factors of contemporary social reality could easily be ignored. If some of the inclusion or exclusion practices from categories still existing in modern societies (e.g. religious or linguistic groups) have their origin in similar processes of the past, affecting almost all subsequent generations[14], then the past experience is very present. If, on the other hand, for several reasons people start to question established social identities, even if they have a long history, the past no longer determines the present experience of the individual[15].

The presence of Gypsy populations (named "Athigani", "Atsingani", "Egyptioi", "Katsivelloi", "Tsigani", ""Gyfti" or "Turkojyfti") during the byzantine and ottoman empires throughout the 19th century in the geographical area of what is

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very idea of national state. It goes without saying that there is no single national state in Europe which might be considered as fully homogenous on the ethnicity level.

[13] The fact that Gypsies are not officially recognized as an ethnic minority in some European countries does not prove that they are not seen by the "host" population (or by themselves) as an ethnically different group. On the other hand the fact that some states have recognized Gypsies as an ethnic minority does not by itself prove a common origin, history, language or culture.

[14] It is possible to think this continuity of inclusion/exclusion as the product of mechanisms of definition and validation of the religious, linguistic or ethnic boundary. Stability of exclusion means stability of the definition of the corresponding boundary. What constitutes the mechanism of boundary reproduction, though, is a complex issue going beyond the scope of this paper.

[15] All cases of identity shift validate this simple fact. Thus even if greek identity has a long history, second, third or fourth generation greek immigrants in the United States have already acquired a new, different identity, the only remnant of the former being the usually truncated or anglified surname of the individual.

today Greece and Turkey can not be seriously disputed. How early these populations become visible in the byzantine times is not yet resolved. Although the present findings of the historical research on early Gypsy presence by far has not yet covered the whole byzantine period, there is some evidence that the early references to groups goes back to the 8th century, but research in this field needs to be done[16]. What seems to be undisputed is that the presence of Gypsy groups in central and southwestern Europe is a relative recent development, if the first references to such populations come from the early 14th century. Both the byzantine and ottoman empires were multi-ethnic states where "national" identities –as we perceive them in the modernity– were unknown. This does not mean that ethnic groups did not exist, or that there were no religious, linguistic or cultural boundaries in these societies.

At the same time both empires had assimilatory functions, even if assimilation took place along religious rather than linguistic or ethnic lines. Early references to the situation of Gypsy populations in Crete (Heraklion) and Corfu indicate that the initial marginal situation of the Gypsies had changed. Neither the professions of (at least some) Gypsies, nor the economic situation was marginal or socially degraded in any sense[17]. These findings indicate that some Gypsies had well-established occupations in the field of metal processing, agriculture and trade and some of them were even literate and relatively wealthy[18]. There were Gypsies involved in the marginal occupations during the byzantine period, but marginality was not a Gypsy specific. The placement of Gypsy subgroups into an established economic niche, the gradual religious assimilation and bilingualism may explain why the Gypsies can not be described as an historically ever moving, extremely poor, steadily rejected and marginal population, as it is usually described in the references made to Gypsy presence in central and southwest Europe[19].

As already mentioned, both the byzantine empire and its successor, the ottoman empire, were de-facto multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies,

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[16] A. Sklaveniti "The presence of Rom in the Byzantine state". Unpublished paper submitted to the project "School integration of Gypsy children" (in Greek).
[17] Mavromatis, I., 1999. The Atsinganoi of Handakas. Project "School Integration of Gypsy Children", Ioannina (in Greek).
[18] Mavromatis, op. cit.
[19] This point is masterfully brought forward in the work of Willems, Lucassen. See Willems, W.: In Search of the true Gypsy. From Enlightenment to Final Solution. Frank Cass, London / Portland, Or. 1997, L. Lucassen: "Zigeuner". Die Geschichte eines polizeilichen Ordnungsbegriffs in Deutschland (1700-1945), Bölau, Cologne/Vienna 1996, Leo Lucassen, Wim Willems, Annemarie Cottaar: Gypsies

operating mainly along the religious division line. Especially during the ottoman times, religious identity functioned as a melting pot for all conquered, non-islamic groups. This holds in principle for the Gypsy, too. This coincidence of religious, ethnic and political (conquered people) identities for a relatively extended period of time (almost 400 years) marks a difference in the historical experience of the Gypsies in the East as opposed to the Gypsies who moved to the West around the 13nth century. The exclusion experience in the West was due to (a) a visible cultural distance between the indigenous population and the incoming Gypsy, (b) the development of what might be called the early phase of nation-building (in the sense of a culturally based sense of identity as a separate people), (c) economic development which made the distance between marginal occupations and established professions socially visible[20], (d) exclusion strategies by the catholic and protestant church and by the state, (c) comparatively efficient burocracies exercising control over "alien" groups residing in the territory of the host country.

The integration of the Gypsies into the greek-orthodox community before and after the independence war (1821-1829) seems to have been relatively smooth, basically due to the shared religious identity and common marginal economic position of large segments of the population during the first phase of the greek state[21]. The contribution of the Gypsy population to what is today known as greek tradition could be documented during the process of material development for the project "School Integration of Gypsy children"[22]. Maybe the most visible contribution of the Gypsy to the development of greek tradition is the field of folk music in mainland Greece, where, until very recently, the Gypsies had the monopoly in the production of musical

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and Other Itinerant Groups. A Socio-historical Approach. Centre for the History of Migrants, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 1998.

[20] In societies with delayed industrialization and urbanization marginality is a condition affecting large segments of the population. The ethnicity of these segments may differ, but the experience of marginalization is shared with many others. Contemporary Greece is such an example of relatively delayed modernization. It was after the 50's that social progress made it easy for large societal groups to escape from the marginal position in which they have been previously confined to. It is not accidental that the Gypsies as a *different* group starts to be mentioned after this period. The reason, as suggested by Pisanias, is that during the process of urbanization subgroups of Gypsies become more visible as a social group. See Πιζάνιας, Π. (1999) : Για τους γενικούς ιστορικούς μηχανισμούς αναπαραγωγής της περιθωριοποίησης των ελληνικών τσιγγάνικων πληθυσμών. Ένα δοκίμιο. (in Greek)

[21] This type of marginality lasted well into the 20ieth century, its major indicator being the typicality of occupational shifts during the lifetime of an individual. Cp. Pizanias, P. The poor of the cities. The survival know-how in Greece between the great wars. Athens 1993 (in Greek).

[22] Georgiou, I., Dimitriou M., E. Politou: Educational material for the utilization of the symbolic capital of the Gypsy in the school. Ioannina, 1998 (in Greek).

services. This evidence shows that from a historical perspective the societies preceding contemporary Greece and modern greek society have been rather inclusive towards Gypsy groups, facilitating a rather loose definition of the boundary between the Gypsy and the non-Gypsy populations and encouraging identity shifts and finally integration. This bears some importance for the student-teacher interaction in everyday school life, as we will see later.

Ethnicity and identification: teachers' perception of Gypsy identity

Educational systems in national states fulfill several functions, a special one being the transmission of normative elements (values, norms, beliefs, taken-for-granted assumptions about self and others) or, as some scholars have put it, *ideology*. As a homogenizing device, school has been an identity sensitive environment, taking care that the identifications occurring among the students are not at odds with the general belief of the national state that all its citizen belong to the same "folk". There are two generic types of experience every student is exposed to in educational settings concerning self- and other-identification: *identification through instruction* and *identification through action*. The first type of experience refers to the teacher trying to deliver the message that his students belong to a certain nation, whereas the core values of the nation (or the "national character") are defined, usually in an a-historical sense (e.g. the basic traits of the nation are considered to have been always the same). If there are students in the classroom the teacher feels they do not belong to the "nation", division lines are developed and the "code of ethnicity" (we/you, us/you, our/your, we are(do)/you are (do) etc.) validates them as systematically, as the school routine can guarantee. The overall message in such situations is "we belong to this nation/you belong to that nation" or "we are like this/you are like that". If the school is following a segregationist programme, teachers are expected to insist on the boundary classifying their students into different groups, corresponding to the "nations" they are supposed to belong to[23].

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[23] This is the situation in countries with recent immigrants, when their children attend the same school as then indigenous population. Sometimes the word "multi-cultural" only replaces the more realistic term "multi-national" or "multi-ethnic", thus transforming national/ethnic division lines into cultural ones.

The second type of experience refers to everyday interaction between persons occupying different or similar structural roles (teachers/pupils) but belonging to different collectivities at school and includes practically all encounters and the respective action taking place at school and constituting what is perceived as school life. Students usually have their beliefs about ethnicity and culture that may influence the interaction process. Messages, like for example "who belongs where", may be transmitted through direct or indirect labels for corresponding groups or collectivities. The same message could be transmitted through patterns of action. Consider for example students who systematically avoid to sit in the neighborhood of other students, belonging to a specific group ("alien", "Gypsies" etc.), or students who are systematically excluded from sports and other activities at school for religious reasons. These are strong interactional messages not only about which collectivity a person belongs to, but also about the treatment one should have because of his/her belonging to a collectivity.

Given the central role of the teacher in formal educational settings – especially the elementary school teacher – his perception of ethnicity is due to have an impact on students' self-definition. A teacher who perceives Gypsy identity as something impossible to be included within the Greek identity, because the identities involved are seen as mutually exclusive, will directly or indirectly convey this message to his students. If such a teacher embodies the dominant "Gypsy-theory" at his school – further: if his perception coincides with the official line of the educational administration– the "differentness" of the Gypsy students will be officially sanctioned.

For marginalized Greek-Gypsy populations, school attendance has been in the past rather the exception. At least that was the case when the project "School Integration of Gypsy children" started in 1997[24]. Two relevant questions arise at this point: if Gypsy children attending schools are getting the message that they are different from the rest of the pupils (feeling of "otherness"), and if this otherness is

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[24] This project is being implemented by the University of Ioannina from 1997 onwards. It represents the official educational policy on disadvantaged social groups and belongs to the innovations the Greek Ministry of Education is undertaking in the field of intercultural education. It aims at full school integration of Rome children at the compulsory educational level (primary and early secondary education) and includes the whole country. The main activities the innovation consists of are social research on the conditions of the Gypsy groups in Greece, material development, network building, and in-service teacher training. The project in its sixth year of implementation has managed to get the drop-out quote of Gypsy children at the primary school level from 75 % (1997) to 20 % on the average.

perceived by the school at the level of an ethnic distinction. To put it simply: do children of a Gypsy background at the greek elementary school get the message that they do not belong to the greek *ethnos* (people) but to a different one? If the school environment directly or indirectly conveys messages of (ethnic) exclusion, it is expected that the children perceive their Gypsy identity as a separate ethnicity and not as a variation of Greek identity.

On the way to answer similar questions within the frame of the project mentioned above, a representative sample of 1080 elementary school teachers from twenty different areas representing 19 greek districts (from Alexandroupoli in the east to Heraklion and Rhodes in the south) were asked during the school year 1999/2000 about their perception of Gypsy identity. 458 of the teachers involved in the study (45.5) had Gypsy students in their classes and 548 (54,5 %) did not. The key questions they were asked to answer referred to a biology factor ("race"), an ethnicity factor ("ethnicity"), a linguistic factor ("language/bilingualism") and a cultural factor ("educational aspirations") of Gypsy identity. The following table illustrates the answers of the teachers to the above questions:

Table I: Teachers' perception of Gypsy identity

How do you personally think about the following descriptions?	agree	rather agree	rather disagree	disagree
Gypsies belong to a separate race, different from the greek one[25]	27,7 (294)	27,2 (289)	23,7 (251)	21,4 (2,7)
Gypsies do not belong to the greek nation, they have a nation of their own	10,0 (106)	11,1 (118)	18,4 (195)	60,5 (642)
Where there is a separate language, there is also a separate nation	7,8 (82)	12,2 (128)	22,5 (236)	57,4 (602)
School and learning are alien to the Gypsy	7,1	19,8	31,7	41,3

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[25] The questions had to be phrased in a language of the sociologically "not-initiated" discourse participants, that is in the language of common sense knowledge. The expression "the Greek race" or "the race of the Greeks" are common in this discourse. Even at an official level one can find similar expressions (e.g. in some textbooks) and more in the teachers' everyday language use. The concept "race" here has a meaning very close to what some Enlightenment thinkers (e. g. Kant) meant by the very same term when they refer to the "human races", namely biological distinct groups of humans who constitute a nation.

way of thinking	(76)	(212)	(339)	(442)

Gender, age and school type of the teacher do not seem to change the distribution of the above variables at the 0.05 significance level.

The answer to the four identity-relevant questions, as they are presented in the above table, need some comentary. From a pedagogical point of view the most interesting finding is that the big majority of the teachers (a) do not associate Gypsy identity with a special mentality towards education, (ii) do not perceive a negative reaction of the Gypsy towards education. Given the strong European stereotype that Gypsies are not interested in education, this finding has its value when it comes from the main educational agents of the new generation: the teachers.

The second finding is one that seems contradictory on the surface: although 54,9 % of the teachers impute the Gypsy a special, non-Greek racial identity, markedly fewer (21,1 %) are ready to bestow them with a separate, non-Greek ethnicity. The message here comes from the answer to the second question (ethnicity) rather than the first. The ethnic boundary in everyday discourse is indicated by the term "ethnicity", meaning that the person in question belongs to a separate collectivity at the "people" level – actually the most abstract level within the ideological discourse of the national state. Thus from the viewpoint of traditional greek nationalism, if someone has a different ethnicity, he can not belong to the greek nation, although as a citizen he may belong to the greek state[26]. The concept of "race" (in greek, "φυλή»") in non-academic discourse points to a set of realities, partly coinciding in its meaning with the primary meaning of the word "race" in English[27] and sometimes referring to an extended genealogy (clan, ancestry, extended family). In this sense the "nation" (in Greek, "εθνος»") may consist of more than one "races", all of them sharing the sense of belonging to the same collectivity, to a "family" (ethnos) including all. According to this thinking, the ethnic identity of the individual is the invariant, whereas his "race" identity may vary, as in the case of Gypsies in Greece, seen from the teachers' perspective.

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[26] Citizenship refers to the formal relationship between a state and an individual, especially to the individual's formal obligations and rights. Ethnicity refers to the individuals perceived membership to a group (people, folk) rather than to a state and has some psychological implications on the level of solidarity, cultural similarity and common ancestry. Some states formalize ethnicity, in the sense that they officially differentiate their citizen along ethnicity lines, so that sometimes state's decisions about citizenship take the individual's ethnicity under consideration.

What holds for "race", holds even more for language: for the great majority of the teachers asked ethnic identity and linguistic group do not necessarily coincide, since on the average eight from ten teachers reject the notion that a different language (as in the case of Gypsy language[28]) points to a different ethnic identity. Given the doctrine of the greek state ideology that the core of "Greekness" is to be found in the greek language and its continuity, the way teachers perceive social reality seems to deviate from the official belief – a belief they were obliged to teach in the past. This gap between the state ideology of the language as the main pillar of ethnic (greek) identity and the teachers' "common sense" idea that there is no compulsory relationship between greek identity and greek language marks a shift from a traditional (objectivist) to a more realistic (relativist) framework of perceiving ethnicity among greek teachers.

Summary

Empirical evidence indicates that Gypsy children attending elementary school in Greece face a complex reality at school and may therefore receive mixed signals about their "otherness". For a minority of teachers, anthropological ("race"), linguistic (Gypsy language) and cultural (low educational aspirations) elements are used to construct an ethnic boundary between their students. These teachers perceive Gypsy children as belonging to a different, non-Greek, "folk", although they are citizens of the greek state. This type of perception has much in common with traditional greek nationalism which has been rather linguistically based, objectivist and substantial in its methodology. One might see the carriers of such a perception as the "nationalist lag" of the greek educational system. On the other hand, the main body of elementary school teachers are more inclusive in their way of perceiving ethnicity, especially Gypsy ethnicity. Although they may accept the "otherness" of their Gypsy students, they will not declare this difference to an ethnic boundary. This indicates another

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[27] It should be clear that the same term is used interchangably with the term "ethnic group" – at least in some contexts.

[28] It is not realistic to associate Greek-Gypsies with Romani in all social contexts. Data from the project «School integration or Gypsy children" indicate that the majority of socially integrated Gypsies in Greece do not know and do not use Romani at all. On the other side, the majority of socially visible Gypsies are either bilingual (Greek-Romani) or monolingual (Greek only). In Thrace there are also trilingual (Greek, Turkish, Romani) or bilingual (Turkish, Greek) Gypsy minorities.

perception of ethnic identity, if not a relativist one, then at least a less "objectivist" one. The inclusive way of perceiving "otherness" may help Gypsy children integrate easier into the greek school, as it allows students perceive themselves as basically similar, each of them possessing elements of "otherness" for the rest. In times of economic distress due to the severe competition among unskilled labor after the migratory movements[29] following the collapse of communist or socialist social orders in east Europe and the Balkans, this shift of perception may have benevolent effects for Gypsy children and may help the planning of successful educational careers on their part. There are some hopeful signs that parents start to rethink school[30] and reevaluate the chances their children have for successful schooling. Inclusive ideologies of identity may convince the parents that it is possible for their children to acquire the type of qualifications school promises to all children attending it and therefore it is possible – with some good historical luck - to move from a marginal social position to the mainstream of greek society.

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[29] The vast majority of the migrants living and working in Greece come from Albania.
[30] Rethinking school here does not necessarily mean a shift in orientation as to the importance of schooling for one's social carrier, but also a reevaluation on the part of the parent of the resistance of the institutional environment to accept and promote his children.