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EUGENIA ARVANITIS
RMIT University

GREEK ETHNIC SCHOOLS IN A GLOBALISING CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION:
GREEK ETHNIC SCHOOLS PROFILE AND AIMS

The entire presence and history of Greek educational centres in Australia continues a long tradition throughout the Greek diaspora. Although the socio-historical context was different in Australia from places such as Alexandria and in Europe, the strong linguistic and cultural awareness of Greeks led to the formation and maintenance of an enormous network of part-time schools throughout Australia. Since 1896, when the first Greek class was established by the Greek Orthodox Community in Sydney, these schools have been the vehicles through which the Greek language (together with associated cultural and religious traditions) has been maintained as a social symbol and a means of communication.

Norst (1982) in her report on ethnic schools in Australia described them as "community based autonomous schools or classes, not run for profit, which conduct regular voluntary part-time courses for students (generally of school age) outside normal school hours and which are designed, primarily, to teach a community language other than English, in its cultural context" (Norst 1982, p. 3). Similarly, Tsounis (1975) whose landmark study brought their existence into public view gave the following description: "Greek ethnic schools, commonly known as afternoon schools or *apogevmatina scholeia*, operate after normal school hours and some of them on Saturdays; in them Greek children attempt to learn the language, history and culture of their parents" (Tsounis, 1975, p. 345).

However, the term 'school' itself takes on a different meaning when it refers to ethnic schools. These institutions are not schools in the normal sense[1], although the term 'school' is widely accepted when referring to ethnic schools. The emphasis on the term 'ethnic school' rather than 'ethnic or language class' has been due to the traditional emphasis placed on education among Greek people, the importance of the particular

institutions in language and cultural maintenance and, finally, their independent modus operandi. Their development in turn led to the emergence in the 1980s of five[2] full-time Greek schools in Victoria.

Moreover, the primary aim of ethnic schools, as several reports and studies have stated (Report of the Committee on the Teaching of Migrant Language in Schools [CTMLS] 1976; Tsounis 1974; AIMA 1980; Norst 1982; Tamis 1994; Cahill 1996), is the provision of language and cultural instruction for maintenance purposes. Their role and function within both a pluralist and religiously diverse society such as Australia and in the Greek diaspora context have been identified with so-called "Greekness". Furthermore, Greek schools have constituted a major means through which it is claimed that the Greek-Australian identity has been preserved. Greek ethnic schools have served a vital function (over the last century, especially in the post-WW II period) within the Greek *paroikia*[3] in anchoring the maintenance process through a socio-educational agency larger than the family. For that reason, Greek schools are viewed as being an integral part of the Greek paroikia. At the same time, Greek schools have been an alternative and counter-cultural institution to the assimilationist influence of the public school system, allowing the Greek language and culture to be promoted in the absence of mainstream political interest and formal educational commitment on the part of the wider society (Smolicz 1971; Tsounis 1974; Pannu & Young 1980).

However, the transition in the Greek ethnic schools profile from the early 1990s due to a numerical decline in enrolments brought about by generational, demographic and social factors signaled a change in their aims and objectives. This change, however, does not mean a total shift from the basic maintenance aims, but rather a differentiation in perceptions as to how this process should be implemented in order to better reflect and respond to the new educational context. Findings of the latest research study on Greek ethnic schools (Arvanitis 2000) have revealed that their aims have remained the same. More specifically, the interview data gathered from community personnel and parents was centred on three basic reference points: a) The centrality of the Greek language in the maintenance processes "in order for Greekness to be secured", b) the necessity of cultural maintenance[4] using ethnic schools as "mechanisms' of defence against the assimilation process and finally, c) the promotion of a multicultural awareness. However, these three reference points masked a wide spectrum of views about the content of such language and cultural instruction. The curriculum focus of these institutions is culturally-oriented, highlighting the importance given to the maintenance process by the communities and the preservation of Greekness. Important elements of Greekness along with language and cultural awareness were bicultural identity and the feelings of being Greek, which takes on a different meaning within our globalising world.

GREEK ETHNIC SCHOOLS IN A GLOBALISING AND A DIASPORIC CONTEXT: THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY FORMATION AND DIASPORA CONSCIOUSNESS

A broader understanding is needed in order to capture the global changes and especially the new conceptualisations of identity formation and maintenance and an increasing proliferation of transnational identities, which is generating the construction of new identities and subjectivities. The diversification of migration experiences and the meanings of diaspora in the modern era have allowed for identity to be built in a different and complex way. Although the word 'diaspora' first emerged in ancient Greek thought as the consequence of migration and colonisation, the modern idea of diaspora[5] has been interpreted differently by various peoples and their experience (Jews, Armenians, Chinese etc.). More specifically, a different (postmodern) view suggests that the collective identity of homeland and diasporic communities is a constantly changing set of cultural interactions that fundamentally challenge the very notions of 'home' and 'host', with important sociological consequences (Cohen 1997, p. 127). An important feature of transnational communities is the 'diaspora consciousness' marked by dual or multiple identifications with more than one nation. However, this consciousness "stimulates the desire to connect oneself with others, both 'here' and 'there' who share the same 'routes' and 'roots'" (Vertovec 1999, p. 450). Thus, personal and collective representations provide an 'imaginary coherence' (Hall, 1990) for a set of malleable identities, as a diaspora can to some extent, according to Cohen (1996, p. 516), "be held together or re-created through the mind, through cultural artefacts and a shared imagination".

Thus, as Cohen (1997) has noted, all diasporic communities acknowledge a bond with the old country (the homeland), which is usually linked to language, religion and cultural customs. This bond can be strong or weak depending on the circumstances. In addition, "a member's adherence to a diasporic community is demonstrated by an inescapable link with their past migration history and a sense of co-ethnicity with others of a similar background" (Cohen 1997, p. ix). In other words, there is a kind of emotional attachment and the sense of obligation towards the homeland. It appears that diasporic communities in the modern era and their particular characteristics can be interpreted either as specific cases or can be subsumed under the broader category of transnational ethnicity (Kitroef 1989; Constas and Platias 1993). According to Kitroef (1989), another important feature of diasporic communities (along with an ethnic group's political or economic links to and influence in its homeland) is the capacity to place political pressure on the host governments (eg. Greek-American lobby), and the existence of particular forms of organisation/institutionalisation, which distinguishes them from other

ethnic groups. In that context, ethnic schools constitute networks of the Greek trans-national community and to a certain degree represent its continuity and transformation over time.

Triadic Relationships

Globalisation has created a new dynamic and complex framework where both transnational communities[6] and educational institutions can either adapt and broaden their functions or be marginalised. This is especially critical for long-established networks such as the Greek schools, which are in a transitional phase. Ethnic schools, thus, having been sustained under specific socio-economic, generational, and political changes, act at the same time as transnational community institutions engaging themselves into a 'triadic relationship'. This relationship concerns (i) a globally dispersed but still collectively self-identified ethnic group, (ii) the current country state and context where this group resides and (iii) the homeland state and context whence this group or its forebears came (Vertovec 1999, p.449). It is the social and cultural profile of the Greek *paroikia*, its vision and expectations, along with the responses of both the Australian and Greek governments to these institutions, and finally the influences of the transnational communities that eventually construct the positioning of these educational institutions.

An example of how this triangular relationship impacts on ethnic schools is the diversity in the ethnic schools' terminology which: a) reveals the lack of a coherent educational policy on the part of the government (the fact that ethnic schools have been always on or near the margins of Australian educational planning), b) indicates the various community responses to the failure in teaching the immigrant languages by government and finally c) illustrates the homelands' stance.

Whilst the Australian public has generally one label, namely 'ethnic schools'[7], the Greek community has an extensive nomenclature depending on the type of the sponsoring agency. The Greek communities themselves rarely use the term 'ethnic school'. The terms in use are: 'Saturday/Sunday (Σαββατιανο or Κυριακάτικο) school', 'afternoon' (evening/απογευματινο) or 'Greek school' (ελληνικό σχολείο), 'community school' (κοινοτικο) vis-a-vis 'church school' (ενοριακο) and 'private' or 'independent school' (ιδιοτικό) and 'παροικιακο σχολείο' (παροικία *schools*). These terms are largely unknown in Greece itself. However, specific terms which are used in Greece itself, such as *omogeneiaka scholeia*/Greek schools abroad or 'τμήματα μητρικής γλώσσας'/mother tongue schools and 'σχολεία ελληνόγλωσσης εκπαίδευσης' (Greek language schools/units) reveal the link between the Greek communities abroad and the homeland.

The Greek State: A Defining Actor

In our attempt to trace the development of Greek part-time ethnic schools in Australia, it is important to refer briefly to the Greek State's perception of educational institutions abroad and to consider its broader relationship and institutional links with the so-called Hellenic diaspora communities. This perspective is important in considering the role of education in the reproduction of the state and nation itself and the importance attached to the diasporic networks (e.g. educational agencies). However, little research[8] has focussed on Greek government policies in promoting language and cultural maintenance to Greeks abroad even though the Greek diaspora has played a prominent role in the history of Greece.

The interaction between homeland and diaspora communities falls into the broader concept of transnational politics, as both poles play an important role in shaping the international scene by engaging themselves in triangular relations (between the homeland, the diaspora and the host-country). States remain the 'dominant actors' in the international political system since they take decisions and implement them, although diasporas constitute 'international actors'[9] and influence state policies. In addition, homelands make great efforts to maintain supremacy in their relations with their diasporas and to manipulate them in favour of their own interests. Sheffer (1993) has argued that diasporas usually view the homeland's manipulation as 'natural', while they rebel and refuse to implement the policies advocated by the homeland-government when the latter crosses certain 'red lines' in sensitive political and social issues[10] and, especially, when there are disagreements about 'centrality' and 'peripherality'[11]. 'Peripherality' becomes a critical barrier in homeland-diaspora interaction when the diaspora claims that its own position is not less central than that of the homeland.

In the case of the Greek diaspora, there is no such rigorous process in redefining the traditional distinction between centre and periphery. The link between diaspora communities and the ethnic centre was vital in the construction of the Greek national/ethnic identity in Australia and in other Greek transnational communities[12]. In addition, there is no consensus in acknowledging the importance of distinct diaspora centres such as Cyprus. Thus, the Greek state has maintained a rigid approach regarding its diaspora communities and consequently Greek schools. Diaspora Greeks were viewed as simply Greeks living abroad whose duty was to promote the interests of the Greek State and provide support in spreading the nationalist ideology. Greek schools were viewed as a medium for the transmission of such ideology (Psomiades 1993).

Furthermore, the political, economic and cultural links between Australia and Greece were never particularly strong due to the 'tyranny of distance' and to the weak influence

of Australian-Greeks on the political situation in Greece compared to American-Greeks. However, the notions of insistence and unbroken continuity of the Greek race from classical times until recent years and the idealisation of the glorious past characterised the maintenance process of the Hellenic diaspora. The view that ethnic identity should be preserved intact abroad has been an important attitude for most governments of nation-states and especially for Greece, which has had a long history of dependence on its nationals living abroad.

Moreover, the role of church and religious practice was an important pillar in forming the Greek ethnic identity both in Greece and Greek diaspora communities. However, the centrality or otherwise of the Greek Orthodox faith in bicultural formation was a controversial issue for community leaders and parents, as indicated in recent research findings (Arvanitis, 2000). This is not to say that the Greek Orthodox religion is not important to the identity maintenance process, but it is less important than language, cultural awareness and self-identification as Greek. Attachment to religion may not involve actual religious practice, but be more of a symbolic attachment, as younger parents do not favour religious practices such as fasting or church attendance. Religion is mostly a cultural custom rather than a faith commitment.

In Australia, the Greek Orthodox Church has not succeeded in establishing a well-organised network of multi-ethnic religious schools or in accommodating religious education similar to the Catholic system. Thus, the Greek part-time schools were seen as 'schools of need' (Arvanitis, 2000, p. 333) in attaining minimum religious instruction. But Greek schools as such remained on the periphery of the broader church infrastructure in Australia. The church schools are still catering for the poorer, less successful and less mobile Greek migrants who enjoy lower levels of satisfaction with their standard of living, and who also have difficulty in financially supporting their children at ethnic schools (Arvanitis, 2000).

The Orthodox Church's slow response to an increasingly changing world and to perceiving the implications of globalisation and the necessities of an ecumenical and inter-faith perspective to Orthodox faith education within a religiously diverse society became apparent in the school curriculum content. Parochialism and religio-centrism prevailed in religious education, particularly in church-schools. Religious instruction is at the core of the church schools' function together with language, and culture forming a separate subject, although generally Greek schools focussed more on culture and language and less on religion. Despite the focus on religious formation, students' knowledge of Greek Orthodoxy could only be described as poor and stereotypical. A mono-religious approach was employed failing to address the broader issues of identity formation and inter-religious education. Orthodoxy was never presented in an ecumenical context, nor in a universal context which stands at the core of an authentic Orthodoxy with its sense

of universalism. Greek Orthodoxy in Australia is still tied to its traditional alliance with a certain ethnocentrism.

On the other hand, the lack of an organised and secular Greek co-ordinating body (e.g. a Congress or a Federation) has been evident throughout the presence of Hellenism in Australia. This organisational weakness together with the internal divisions (deep conflict between the Church and the communities and the struggles between various interests and factions) has prevented the Greek *paroikia* from developing long-term planning in educational issues and lobbying for its own interests, both domestic and international. This division, which constitutes the norm for the Greek diaspora, led to an ongoing conflict over strategy and tactics and to the reduction of diasporic community effectiveness/capacity to impact upon homeland policies. Certain organisational attempts were made from time to time up until the early 1970s, but they were short-lived and without any substantial result.

Moreover, the Greek State did not create sufficient agencies and institutions to assist its diaspora communities. The General Secretariat of the Greeks Abroad (1983) in the Department of Foreign Affairs, for example, could neither facilitate communication among the Greek transnational communities nor understand the long-term existence of diaspora Greeks and their particular characteristics. This fact derives from the homeland's weakness in conceptualising the highly complex trans-state networks that influence transnational communities, on the one hand, and, on the other, the lack of adequate information about significant developments within the diasporas (Sheffer 1993). Similarly, the formal administrative mechanisms for dealing with the Greek diaspora in Australia seem to be ineffective and insufficient, while no significant trade, financial, educational or cultural exchange occurred[13]. Despite the lack of rigorous educational planning, the Greek government's support and commitment to language maintenance efforts in the early 1990s was very significant.

Finally, the formation of the SAE (Council of Greeks Abroad) in 1996 as well as the latest educational legislation in Greece (Greek Educational Act 1996) dealing with Greek Education Abroad signalled the slow, but ongoing change in rhetoric of the Greek State on issues associated with the Greek diaspora. The effort that has been undertaken by the Greek Ministry of Education to produce appropriate educational materials and resources for all school units abroad in association with the various communities around the world is a mammoth attempt. However, this indicates that Greece has not moved from its traditional view of itself as the central point of the Greek diaspora and that it is legitimate for the "national centre" to decide about its diaspora communities. It also indicates the effort on behalf of the homeland to dominate the relations with its diaspora communities, while it takes them for granted. At the same time, diaspora communities themselves because of their internal divisions seem unable

to address their own problems and participate in a dialogue with their homeland in implementing viable solutions.

The Australian Educational Policy

Australian public discourse on immigration has reflected a wide and changing spectrum of attitudes from hostility and assimilationist practices to acceptance and encouragement of language and cultural maintenance. Similarly, the presence of multilingualism in Australia has triggered a direct and conscious political response in areas such as education, and has taken on different ideological complexions over time. Languages were seen as the clearest and most evident component of cultural diversity (Ozolins 1993).

The function and development of ethnic schools, and in particular the Greek ethnic school system, was a process which combined broader socio-political and educational considerations such as the official understanding of migration as well as inter-communal relationships and the Australian community's response to the educational needs of culturally and linguistically diverse peoples. Thus, ethnic schools constituted one key 'topos' (or milieu) where both the aspirations of ethnic communities and official policy and practice responses to Australian inter-ethnic relations intersected, indicating that these schools have played more than an educational role. They constitute '*actors*' or participants in broader social structures responding to the absence of a concrete policy towards language maintenance. Their very presence factually denies the assumption that Australia is essentially a homogeneous society. At the same time, these schools attract the 'definers' response.[14]

In the view of this researcher, Australia's response to ethnic schools falls into three major phases:

a) The period of official ignorance until 1980, which covers the period of assimilation and integration.

b) The period of ethnic schools' recognition and Commonwealth support in the 1980s, which was a period of legitimising ethnic schools under the prism of multi-culturalism.

c) Finally, the period of marginalised tolerance and continuance in the 1990s, a period dominated by the newly developed ideology of economic rationalism as well as the notion of 'mainstreaming'.

In general terms, ethnic schools are institutions that fall into the sphere of Australian language policies. At the same time, there are 'wicked problems'[15], whose resolution lies in the activism of the various vested ethnic or private interests and on the broader directions of language policy and planning in Australia. Their image and status is clearly defined as being an 'ethnic issue', concerning mainly the ethnic communities, despite the

official recognition. Ethnic schools have always remained on the periphery of Commonwealth and State planning, thus always receiving low funding. No substantial co-operation between full-time system and ethnic schools has been achieved. The transfer of responsibility from federal to state governments has also indicated that ethnic schools are no longer central to national language planning, and a laissez-faire approach has taken over. Despite their vitality and growth, ethnic schools have never been considered a major language provider, because that function was viewed as the responsibility of the mainstream full-time sector. However, ethnic schools in the 1990s and under the prism of economic rationalism were increasingly seen as complementary and convenient providers to meet the aims of the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (1991). Despite the proclamations that ethnic schools are accredited providers of second language learning, these institutions are not equipped to play this new role because of both the lack of sufficient funding and co-operartion with the mainstream schooling system.

FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR THE GREEK SCHOOLS

Greek ethnic schools are undergoing a transitional phase within both their local and global contexts. Their role and practice needs to be repositioned along three major dimensions:

● LANGUAGE TEACHING VIA INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

Globalisation has created a new dynamic and complex framework where both transnational communities and educational institutions can either adapt and broaden their functions or be marginalised. This is especially critical for long-established networks such as the Greek schools during a time of transition. The research findings (Arvanitis, 2000) have suggested that Greek ethnic schools' future will be secured only via modern and pedagogically appropriate educational planning. The improvement in quality is at the heart of Greek schools' development.

However, teaching the language raises some pedagogical issues as these schools take part in the process of educating children in a globalising context. Ethnic schools need to consider the particular contexts where Greek language operates and adapt their own programs as language teaching exceeds the narrow boundaries of the Greek speaking community in Australia. Thus, the quality of Greek language instruction has to be at an equivalent level to any other language program, allowing for the teaching of contemporary language genres to correspond to language use in a diversified world.

The research findings (Arvanitis, 2000) revealed a general shift towards spoken communicative competence (not literacy) and the need for Greek as a language for commu-

nication both in Australia and overseas contexts. Greek ethnic schools clearly have succeeded in their aims in maintaining the language and reinforcing children's communicative competence. However, the quality of language teaching in the new homeland raises some questions as its use tends to be restricted in public life outside school. The literacy skills acquired in school, for instance, is an issue which needs to be addressed, as it is likely that if students attend the educational system in Greece, they would be a long way behind. However, that is a matter of further research. Thus, the engagement of a multi-tasking methodology is necessary to include broader cognitive and communicative patterns along with provision of a wide range of linguistic genres, idioms, and types of discourse, which correspond to students' language experience. The need for up-to-date pedagogical techniques that will promote a more hands on approach to learning the language is apparent. Language learning in the Greek diasporic context is a purposeful engagement and not merely an emotional process. Practical/communicative reasons such as communication with relatives and travelling are important reasons for language learning in such a context.

- FORMATION OF BICULTURAL IDENTITY AND THE INTERPRETATION OF GREEKNESS IN ITS GLOBAL DIMENSIONS

Questioning the notion of a static Hellenism is a neglected issue within both the philosophy and practice of today's Greek schools in Australia. The lack of community dialogue about the various forms of Hellenism around the world in the Greek transnational communities creates also a vacuum in interpreting Greekness. The lack of acceptance of students' bicultural identity in its various expressions and the problematic/static notion of culture taught within Greek schools seem to be important challenges impacting on the continuity of Greek schools.

However, ethnic identity (eg. Greek-Australian identity) remains a fluid concept under the influence of the constant change of social and generational contexts and of ethnic boundaries themselves in diasporic contexts (Cohen 1997; Vertovec 1999). Identity formation is a more dynamic, complex and ongoing process of ethnic change experienced by an ethnic group or individual than a rigid assimilationist process toward 'mainstream' society (Clark et al. 1976; Keefe & Padilla 1987; Rosenthal & Feldman 1992; Laroche et al. 1996). This argument is very apparent to the societies that have been transformed by immigration, where assimilation has been a very persistent process. The strong ethnolinguistic vitality exhibited by many ethnic groups around the globe, the different degrees of their cultural maintenance[16], and the failure of the assimilation process to be totally imposed, thus suggest a multi-dimensional model of analysis/concep-

tualisation of ethnic change itself. The inter-generational shift and the symbolic eth-nicity in particular, observed within ethnic groups are catalysts for such diversification.

Similarly, any repositioning of the Greek-Australian identity coincides with the multi-dimensional nature of ethnic community change. However, this changeability of identity modes was not apparent to the great majority of the community leaders, as only three reflected on how ethnic identity is not experienced by everybody in the same way since there is no single way of being Greek. A former senior public servant, for instance, argued "I accept the term 'ethnic identity', but I accept as well that within our paroikia there are different ideas about what identity and Hellenism mean. There is a general acceptance that you are Greek because of your origin, your self-determination of being Greek along with a basic historical consciousness and commitment to continuity, but there is no clear idea about what constitutes the notion of Hellenism". The same person reflected more philosophically on the identification of second and third generations. "How do I claim that being Greek is being expressed in my everyday life? Is it enough to say that I am Greek?" He argued that identity takes on a different meaning in Greece because there is a single nationality and citizenship. In Australia the reality is different as the new generations are simultaneously Greek-Australian, Australian-Greek, Greek and Australian. For these generations these are all expressions of identity[17]. He finally pointed out that mixed marriages constitute another aspect because many of these inter-ethnic families have accepted the Greek way of life. This last comment, however, failed to note that in other intercultural marriages, the Greek partners had for all intents and purposes allowed their Greekness to lapse.

The fluidity of identity modes and the lack of research prevented the key stakeholders from accurately defining the Greek-Australian identity and its particular characteristics within the Australian multicultural context. Parents, for instance, considered cultural tradition and history (39%), family values and respect towards the elderly (28%), religion (18%) and language (14%) as being authentic components of one's Greek identity, although they stressed the difficulty in inculcating such values in a modern society. On the other hand, the affiliation and background of the community leaders strongly determined whether the core value of identity is primarily concerned with language or culture or religion. There was hesitancy and uncertainty. For instance, a first-generation informant said "certainly language and certainly religion", while a second generation welfare officer argued "a bit of religion, the cultural background and a very small percentage of language are going to be points of reference". In general terms, the community leaders focussed on bicultural identification and Australian citizenship (31%), the Greek language (29%) and the feeling of being Greek (23%) as the main elements of the Greek-Australian identity.

● MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS

Greek ethnic schools are institutional reflections of Australian multiculturalism. The research findings strongly supported the notion that the multicultural perspective must permeate all curriculum aspects, preventing ghettoisation and ethnocentrism. Ethno-nationalisation of the school curriculum is strongly rejected because promoting multicultural awareness was viewed as a core value not only for ethnic schools, but also for all educational institutions. In addition, ethnic schools are related to broader issues such as multiculturalism itself with the promotion of one's identity and culture, maintaining language and cultural diversity and facilitating interethnic harmony.

Despite the rejection of ethnocentrism within the school curriculum, it seems that the majority of schools only vaguely understood their current role within the Australian multicultural society. Multiculturalism itself was an aggregation of different groups, which should harmoniously reside in coexistence with each other. The community leadership interpreted multiculturalism as simply being cultural pluralism (celebration of diversity), failing to address the notion that multiculturalism is a social theory which includes both social policy and educational practice. Their understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity is problematic, also because it fails to concede language as an integral part of the social process and to address the fact that there is no equality in language statuses, while it considered culture in a simplistic and superficial way. Thus, Greek schools have remained captive within the narrow ethnic group boundaries. The internationalisation of their function and vision seems to be an important future challenge, which is not yet a current consideration among the various stakeholders. School practice also revealed that stereotyped ideas and cultural bias were frequent, although no overt fanaticism or racist messages were transmitted to the students. Teachers were seen as important factors in preventing bias.

CONCLUSION

Multicultural policy development during the 1990s and the reinterpretion of multiculturalism in terms of an economic rationale and a renewed social justice rhetoric (Castles et al. 1988), "which renews earlier perspectives of disadvantage, and sees the government's role as the overcoming of inequalities arising from economic and social differences" (Ozolins 1993, p. 256), created a new context for community languages which have been clearly defined as 'capital investment'. This caused the revamp of a "hard-nosed" multiculturalism, as Lo Bianco (1990) notes, as that which defines the relationship of culture and economy under new conditions.

For instance, the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 1989) supported language maintenance on an economic driven base and made no reference in its recommendations in regard to the ethnic schools issue. The notion of systems-management of ethnic relations, the emphasis on economically significant languages and the fact that Australian Language and Literacy Policy is focussed more on a language-in-education policy, rather than a more comprehensive national language policy (Djite 1994, p. 26) were significant developments during the 1990s.

For Greek ethnic schools, these new developments as well as their transitional phase and the changing statistical and social profile of their communities, call for another repositioning not only within a global context but also within their own ethnic/living context. In addition, the fluidity in identity and language modes implies that Greek language maintenance has become a complex process that corresponds to different cultural expressions of the Greek culture. The interpretation of this process and implementation in its modern form lies with Greek communities and ethnic schools and their future role in a multicultural and globalised society.

SUMMARY

The present article examines the educational and social role of Greek part-time ethnic schools in Australia, which have been constructed as the key community strategy with regard to the transmission and promotion of the Greek culture and language over the last century, especially in the post-WW II period.

However, ethnic schools in a globalising and diasporic context constitute complex educational organisations where Australian social, ethnic community and the transnational community dimensions intersect in a 'triadic relationship' (Sheffer 1986; Safran 1991). In this context, the social and educational role of ethnic schools may be not only to promote a basic awareness of the Greek ethnic identity, but also to inculcate a transcultural-diasporic consciousness along with the adoption of modern pedagogical approaches in order to face current needs and future challenges.

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NOTES

1 They are not full-time and they operate only once per week. However, Athanasiou (1990, p. 13) argued that the term 'school' when it refers to ethnic schools in Australia has the conventional meaning.

2 St John's Greek Orthodox College (1979–), 'Sts Anargyroi' Greek Orthodox College (1983–), Alphington Grammar School (1989–), St. Basil's Brunswick Grammar School (1986–mid 1993) and Evangelistria College (1981/2–Feb. 1995). Within the Greek community the full-time ethnic schools are known as day colleges (ημερήσια δίγλωσσα) or independent colleges

(ανεξάρτητα κολέγια). They enjoy some community credibility because they have the status of day schools and are accredited through a more rigorous process, are staffed by qualified teachers as well as having students of non-Greek background.

3 Tsounis (1993) explains the term 'παροικία' (community) as the one which refers to "a community or settlement of ethnic Greeks, both immigrant and native born, who live within a particular geographical area in which they can communicate regularly and combine into social organisations or institutions to serve common or group needs". Furthermore, he noted that the notion of "παροικία does portray the idea of an expatriate community, an idea often felt by Greeks in this island-continent not least because of the 'tyranny of distance'" (Tsounis 1993, p. 25). However, the term has its own problems when it refers to isolated and segregated communities. For the English speaker, however, the term conjures up the idea of 'parish' or 'parochial' which refers mainly to Catholic and Anglican local churches defined by fixed geographical boundaries, and hence it has largely ecclesiastical connotations, although it is also used in legal and property documentation. 'Parochial' also has the meaning of 'closed' and 'narrow-minded'.

4 It is interesting to note that the expressions used to describe the maintenance process varied. Some of the key personnel used the term 'maintenance', others 'preservation of heritage' or 'transfer of Greekness', or as one media reporter mentioned "to keep the language, customs, cultural values, heritage and Greek-Orthodox ideals". The researcher gained the impression that key informants had no clear idea as to what elements need to be maintained or preserved, and they did not seem to take into account the fact that language and cultural modes are constantly changing and developing.

5 The word 'diaspora', is derived from the Greek verb 'σπείρω' (to sow) and the preposition 'δια' (over) refers to dispersion. A modern typology proposed by Cohen (1997) refers to victim, labour, trade, imperial and cultural diasporas indicating the complexity of their development.

6 Ethnic diasporas (or, as Tololyan 1991 & 1996, said 'exemplary communities') constitute paradigms in understanding transnational formation. This formation is better described by the development of complex networks reinforced by the new technology, which transforms social, cultural, economic and political relationships (Vertovec 1999, p. 449).

7 The term 'ethnic school' has been consistently used in all government policy documents as well as in major reports that have described the phenomenon since 1974 when Tsounis published his landmark study on Greek ethnic schools. The term itself, whilst not accurately describing these schools, has been used in the broader Australian society as a label of convenience.

8 The Greek diaspora, according to Kitroef (1989), has been merely studied as a 'trading diaspora' in Africa and elsewhere.

9 An international actor must meet at least three criteria: *a)* to have continuing impact on international politics, *b)* to be considered by the state's policy makers as significant international actors in the formation of state policies (perceived significance) and *c)* to have some degree of autonomy (Cosgrove & Twichett 1970, pp. 12–13)

10 In general terms, the triangular relations tend to be problematic when: a) the relations between diaspora and homeland are poor, b) the diasporas demand a greater role in the homeland's polity scene, c) the diaspora communities do not want to act as lobbying mechanisms because they fear that their loyalty to the host country may be questioned (the 'dual loyalty' problem),

and d) the divisions within the diaspora communities are significant and reduce their effectiveness in international politics (Constas & Platias 1993, pp. 19–21).

11 The distinction between the 'κέντρο' (centre)/homeland and the diaspora or 'περιφέρια' (periphery) was a pivotal point in defining Hellenic diaspora and it was mainly developed by intellectuals in the homeland. However, this conceptual model fails to capture the importance of the various centres outside Greece/homeland in constituting major cultural pillars by themselves as well as influencing Greek culture. Especially in the 18th century, the Greek European diaspora contributed to mainstream Greek thought and culture, laid the intellectual groundwork for the Greek Enlightenment, and, finally, played a significant role in initially defining and then shaping the modern Greek state itself in 1830 (Papoulias 1989; Psomiades 1993).

12 The Greek State until recently considered Greeks abroad as *apodimous* (emigrants) Hellenes, indicating their direct link with the natal state and the notion that the homeland was the centre of the Hellenic diaspora. But currently there is some discussion over intercultural education due to the changing profile of Greek society and the intake of immigrants into Greece during the last decade and after the deconstruction of Yugoslavia. Thus, the need of a new genre of analysis becomes apparent.

13 After 1974 Australia reduced its diplomatic presence in Greece following budgetary restrictions and a decrease in immigration intake from Greece.

14 Martin (1978) made the distinction between 'definers' of public knowledge and 'actors' or 'participants' in social structures. In social relations, the 'definers' have the capacity to define, construct and validate social knowledge to the exclusion of others as well as to monopolise access to knowledge.

15 'Wicked problems' are the issues of confrontation between different interests. In this confrontation all participants are interested in defining the 'problem' according to their needs. Ozolins (1993) refers to the majority acceptance of the National Policy on Languages (NPL) as an example of the articulation of the attitudes and aspirations of the different interest groups and the resolution of these "wicked problems".

16 For example, research findings (Laroche et al. 1996) have shown that ethnic group affiliation and acculturation do not exclude one another or that the loss of cultural awareness, that is the knowledge of cultural traits, does not mean the loss of ethnic loyalty. In other words, "an ethnic member's acculturation toward the host society does not necessarily entail his or her identification with the host society or loss of his or her identification with ethnic origin, implying that acculturation and ethnic identification are not a parallel process in ethnic change" (Laroche et al. 1996, p. 116).

17 Ethnic youth of Australia in particular have different experiences, attitudes, values and codes of behaviour which are placed within a bicultural context. "They are simply the products of a different generation and different personal history", according to Cahill and Ewen (1987, p. 84). Their characteristics are focused on features such as bilingualism, bicultural orientation and attachment to the traditional values, adaptability and change, commitment to the Australian nation and social system and, finally, they are the symbols of Australia's future directions (Cahill & Ewen, 1987, p. 85).