

ETUDES HELLENIQUES

HELLENIC STUDIES

**L' éducation en Grèce et
dans la diaspora
Education in Greece and
in the Diaspora**

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The limits of autonomy of cultural codes in modern European societies: ethnicity, education and culture

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RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur de cet article aborde les dilemmes éducatifs de l'Europe contemporaine, et plus spécialement dans les pays avec des populations migrantes considérables. Il fait valoir que ce n'est pas seulement la culture, la langue ou la religion qui comptent, mais aussi et peut être davantage, l'origine ethnique. Dès lors l'association de la diversité culturelle avec la différence ethnique est d'une importance capitale pour comprendre la réalité éducative contemporaine des systèmes éducatifs européens, particulièrement ceux de la Grèce et Chypre. Le multiculturalisme en éducation est examiné de façon critique, comme une solution possible et viable face aux défis de la cohésion sociale et la stabilité économique auxquels sont confrontées les sociétés modernes dans un contexte influencé par la globalisation de l'économie, du politique et de la culture.

L'auteur conclut que le multiculturalisme tout comme la coexistence de sociétés parallèles au sein d'un Etat, sans codes culturels et politiques et sans projets sociaux communs est loin d'être un objectif éducatif souhaitable pour les sociétés modernes. En ce sens, le véritable dilemme n'est pas le multiculturalisme, mais la possibilité d'une diversité culturelle dans un cadre de codes communs à la fois culturels, politiques et économiques qui définissent l'espace public et privé d'une société.

ABSTRACT

In this article the author discusses the educational dilemmas in contemporary Europe, and especially in countries with considerable migrant populations. He argues that it is not only culture, language or religion that matters, but also and may be primarily, ethnicity. In this way the association of cultural diversity with ethnic difference is of paramount importance in order to understand educational reality in contemporary European educational systems, including Greece and Cyprus. Multiculturalism in education is critically examined in this article as a possible viable solution to the challenges of social cohesion and economic stability faced by modern societies in a context of global economic, political and cultural influence.

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He concludes that multiculturalism as coexistence of parallel societies within a state, without common cultural and political codes and social projects is far from being an educational goal for modern societies. In this sense the real dilemma is not multiculturalism, but the possibility of cultural variety within a frame of common cultural, political and economic codes defining the public and private sphere of a society.

Educational dilemmas in contemporary Europe, especially in countries with (indigenous or migrant) considerable minority populations, are in some sense very old: we have experienced them in the past, if we only look at the questions raised by minority policies of central European states on the one side and by minority educational demands toward these states before the first world war, as well as the interwar period on the other¹. The phenomenon of ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity within society - a feudal empire or a modern nation state - is not new. The terms to denote this reality have changed: we do not talk about multi-national states and we do not consider migrant populations as “national minorities” in the traditional sense. We rather prefer the term “multicultural society” to refer to diverse social groups constituting a modern society or state, although the consensus on the term does not necessarily - and as a rule does not - imply agreement about the content of this term. So it has become rather easy to agree that modern societies are “multicultural”, but the question of the multiple and partly contradictory meanings of this term still remains. There are indeed different views about what the term “multicultural” exactly denotes. The ideologies behind the different contents of the term may range from a version of multiculturalism, as it was practiced in past empires - roman, Byzantine, ottoman, German, or Russian - to multiculturalism as it is known from the North American, Australian or modern European experience.

In this paper I am arguing that it is not only - and not primarily - culture, language or religion that matters, when we are faced with problems of diversity within educational contexts in Europe. Instead, the form these problems are presented at school is closely linked to another variable: *ethnicity*. The association of cultural diversity with *ethnic difference* is of paramount importance, if we are to understand educational reality in contemporary European educational systems, including Greece and Cyprus. In a time of emergent aggressive minority nationalism in Europe, especially after 1989, it is not cultural difference that counts, rather than its dominant presentation and interpretation within a context of *ethnicity* and (state or minority) *nationalism*.

But how is it to explain that in an era of globalization, of weakening of national

state authority and national borders, an idea from the past, namely *ethnicity* – that is, the sense on the part of the individual of belonging to a distinct human group - experiences a come-back? The answer to this paradox may be sought in two directions: *identity formation* and *power strategies*.

In a context of globalization, with rapid and unexpected cultural change, individuals may resort to traditional concepts as a means for maintaining a coherent self-image in an extremely variable world. On the other hand, groups conscious about their possibility to exert – either themselves directly or through a “mother-country” - influence on the central state, may be tempted to question the status of the state’s official codes, either by following a program of cultural and administrative autonomy, or by direct secession. Such examples are known in Europe during the last forty years and some others are probably still to be seen in the future. Specific versions of the ideologies of *culture equality* and *minority recognition* on the one hand, power politics and appeasement strategies on the other², have accelerated these processes rendering comprehensive educational options extremely difficult in some European contexts.

Looking at the ways scholars have attempted to capture the meaning of ethnicity, one could agree with Fredrik Barth³ that there are at least two approaches, one - which has been dominating in past academic discourse - oriented toward the contents of ethnicity in terms of cultural traits of ethnically distinct individuals or groups, the other setting the emphasis on the social nature of the ethnic boundary. This second approach has been used not only in the disciplines of social and cultural anthropology, but also in that of sociology of education⁴ and it has proved to be relatively fruitful. It is within this tradition of defining ethnicity that I feel academically obliged and I will try to apply for the discussion of identity in contemporary societies, especially from the perspective of an educationist.

Ethnicity as a System of Shared Assumptions

From a social psychologist’s point of view *ethnicity* may be seen as a set of socially sanctioned assumptions⁵ for the construction of a type of social identity⁶. There are three basic types of assumptions ethnicity is related to: assumptions about *folk taxonomies*, or classificatory schemes about “*ἔθνη*” (i.e. peoples or nations), assumptions about the nature (or character) of a certain people or nation, and assumptions about who belongs to which people and why.

As to the first, there is usually a consensus among migrant, diaspora or minority communities and the dominant (indigenous) group as to which nations /peoples

(«έθνη») exist, at least inside the borders of a certain state, and as to who is legitimized to claim which ethnic identity⁷. Lack of consensus on the categories of the classificatory scheme has to do with revisions of the scheme appearing in times of revival of ethnic thinking and the resulting nationalism⁸.

The second type of assumptions refers to *cultural diversity* originating from ethnic diversity. In its crudest form, the assumption goes that there is a bunch of personality traits behind each ethnic group. According to this belief, an individual belonging to an ethnic group carries within himself the same "cultural luggage" with any other member of the same group. In the past some scholars and states have tried to legitimize this perceived or postulated similarity among members of the same ethnic group with biological arguments, the best known case being the race "theories" of Nazi scientists in Germany which had a strong influence on the education of German minorities in eastern European states, such as Poland and Chechoslovakia⁹. But if one takes away the diversity from the reasoning behind the postulated similarity, it remains that in the minds of ordinary people who share the basic assumptions on ethnicity, ethnicity and personality are tightly connected. Especially *this* assumption has important implications for education, as we will see later.

The last type of assumptions helps define the individual's and others' relationship to the folk taxonomy already mentioned, that is, it helps in resolving the issue of belonging to a human group defined by the ethnicity criterion through a matrix of "ethnicity signs". Learning and handling this code of signs, one is able to relate himself or herself and others, to certain categories of the folk taxonomy.

One last thing about ethnicity assumptions: as any other assumption about things and people, these assumptions are also a product of learning and education. The meanings of ethnic ascriptions are learned from a relatively tender age, that is, as soon as division lines can be drawn within the family discourse¹⁰. Peer groups, powerful communication networks such as television and radio, films and the market, and finally school, just build on what has been learned at home and turn these assumptions into institutionally sanctioned beliefs, into *common sense truths*.

Ethnicity and Diversity in Educational Contexts

Educational contexts might interest an educationist either as settings for specific interaction processes or as organizational settings for political decision making (educational policy). Ethnicity is not something inherent to educational contexts,

but when it appears there, it tends to influence the structure of social interaction or the process and content of educational decision making. Educational organizations may be inclined to accept the concept of ethnicity - mainly through the concept of *ethnic identity* - in order to legitimize variation in the curriculum, different approaches for the organizing of teaching, school performance, images of self and other etc.

But ethnicity as a social reality¹¹ is also present outside school, in everyday life, and shapes the ways people act toward one another, especially in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies, such as societies including traditional minorities or Diaspora groups, especially when ethnicity maintenance is defined as one of the goals of these groups¹². At the interactional level ethnicity appears in the form of relatively firm and socially sanctioned shared assumptions of the participants' ascriptions about self and "other". Ethnic ascriptions are structurally similar to normal ascriptions we are used to in our everyday life, such as gender, age, class, status etc., but the collectivities they refer to are more elusive compared to the more or less well defined groups of gender or age. The collectivity which *ethnicity* points at may be a state, but it may also be a cultural group. To some extent, as Anderson¹³ puts it, ethnicity points to imaginary communities. In this sense, ethnic identity is just another form of *social identity* - in the tradition of Erving Goffman¹⁴ - and as such it can be only understood under the condition that individuals tend to put themselves and others into social categories, that is socially accepted classificatory schemes. The sense of an individual's belonging to a category like this (*ethnos*) appears in his and the other's conscience as his ethnic identity. In everyday communication the term *ethnos* comes very close to the meaning of the word "people", the only main difference being its historical dimension. In this sense, from the point of view of an individual, *ethnos* is the imagination of a collectivity of individuals of similar origin and traits producing and reproducing itself through time, in other words a *people* seen in its historical dimension. The fact that ethnicity refers rather to *assumptions about reality* than to reality itself, has made some scholars take a critical stand toward this concept and question its analytical value and its political implications¹⁵. But even if ethnicity were a myth altogether - and this is not necessarily the case - the social scientist has no alternative than take it into account, if individuals and other social agents ascribe meaning to it or, even more, if they organize their action in reference to their beliefs about ethnicity. Following the thought of William Thomas we may argue that if ethnicity is defined by social subjects as *real*, it may have some real consequences.

On the political level - especially in minority contexts - *ethnicity* functions as a code for creating a community of interests and as an instrument of controlling

political action¹⁶. Especially in multiethnic and multicultural societies ethnicity might be used by several political agents, such as the mother-country state, the host-country state or institutions of *Diaspora* or minority groups, in order to exert some sort of influence toward ongoing political processes.

Ethnicity, Multiculturalism and Culture Maintenance through Education

The concept of multiculturalism, both in everyday language use and in academic discourse, indicates either the existence or the possibility of several (at least two) cultural systems within the same political entity. Looking at pre-modern societies, politically organized as multi-ethnic empires, one comes across a considerable variety of cultures in the broad sense (including language, religion, economy, art, lore, styles etc.). The social groups involved, co-existed within the same political environment. Empires neither tried nor could they have pursued integrationist or assimilationist policies on a large scale. They were dealing with subjects, not citizens. For a variety of reasons homogeneity would be counterproductive within such political systems. On the contrary, boundary maintenance as a rule was an expedient tool for the administration and a mechanism for the reproduction of the political system¹⁷. In such environments the development of a common cultural code could not be understood as a political demand. On the other hand, the educational systems of the empires had neither the range nor the function of modern educational systems of national states. Social mobility was not a legitimate idea for every subject and school could not be the pivotal factor for upward social mobility. Somehow groups co-existed as self-perpetuating cultural systems, without having the option to participate in a common contest¹⁸ in order to create access to higher social positions and higher social status.

Modern societies, as egalitarian societies constituted of citizens with formally equal access to social positions, favor the idea of legal and – to some extent - moral consensus. They are societies with a common legal system and a common moral code, at least concerning cultural ends¹⁹. Notwithstanding economic inequalities in modern free market states, access to social position and social status is not legally made dependent on one's economic class. Social origin, ethnic background, language identity, religious affiliation, gender etc. are formally considered as irrelevant factors for one's legal possibility to create access to social position. Education still plays an important role as a mechanism for status allocation and the rules of the contest for social position by default do not reflect cultural or ethnic diversity in a society. The rules for this more or less common contest are set by the politically dominant segment of the society and it is

important for all members interested in full participation - which of course includes institutional participation - to acquire and command the proper cultural capital or codes²⁰ in order to play the game successfully. Education is the main arena for this contest and therefore the school career of the child and adolescent is of considerable importance.

Judged by their degree of ethnicity awareness, societies form a continuum with highly *ethnicity-sensitive societies* to be placed at one end, and neutral societies towards ethnicity, at the other. For the first type of societies ethnicity constitutes an integral part of the social order. Institutions like friendship, marriage and family, neighborhood, market, leisure, education etc. may be strongly influenced by the high visibility of ethnic identity. On the contrary, societies characterized by a lack of interest into the other's ethnic background, let other principles guide social interaction. The emphasis here is on the members' sharing of a common cultural code, whereas citizenship becomes the basic principle in the organization of public life.

As already mentioned, pre-modern societies showed a high degree of ethnicity and religion awareness²¹. It is more than clear, though, that ethnicity survived modernity. More than that, one can see the social relevance of ethnicity at present for both typical national-state societies and officially multicultural ones.

The question, however, is what awakens the public interest about ethnicity in modern societies. Part of the answer should be sought in the utilization of the concept of *ethnic identity* in modern societies through the discourse on nationhood and multiculturalism.

The academic discourse on multiculturalism on a state level has often created an ideologically twisted and romantic picture of co-existence of many cultural systems within the same political entity without any reference to the compatibility of the systems involved. Beginning with a variety of languages or dialects, dressing and food habits, religions, life histories of predecessors etc., it fosters the illusion of the co-existence of a diversity of institutional cultural forms within society, such as the legal system, science, education, politics, economy and technology. Since this is not the case even in the countries proclaiming themselves as the bulwark of multiculturalism, one is obliged to seek for the *ideological function* of such concepts. That is the reason why one has to differentiate between the *reality* of multiculturalism and the *rhetoric* of multiculturalism.

Perhaps the central ideological function of the multiculturalism assumption is that the social discourse about cultural diversity, especially when it is officially sanctioned by the host societies, may develop into an expedient tool for *ethnic boundary maintenance*. As already mentioned, ethnicity could be looked upon as a

set of beliefs about the other's cultural difference, as opposed to the culture of the individual belonging to the dominant group. Ethnocentric societies or groups usually possess an ideology about the nation (ethnos) which has functioned as a tool for the reproduction of the beliefs concerning ethnicity. Even if the *other* has not got any visible remnant of his alleged different culture, he is still considered to be different. The areas of difference just shift from visible to invisible traits (such as loyalties, commitments, tastes, attitudes, feelings and thoughts), which are hard to falsify. That is the reason why some individuals are excluded from mainstream society and stamped different, even without their consent, in spite of empirical reality. States which are relatively new and do not possess an elaborate ideology about the "ethnos" may use other constructions in order to maintain social boundaries in the form of ethnic boundaries. The same is true for traditional national states, when the nationhood discourse is out of tune with recent political-ideological developments. Multiculturalism, as a belief about the legitimacy of ever-going cultural diversity, may in some contexts acquire the function ethnocentrism has in traditional societies as a mechanism for boundary maintenance, in that it reminds the minority individual of his being on the other side of the boundary. Under certain circumstances multicultural rhetoric is creating, validating and preserving symbolic divisions within the society.

If the perpetuation of such social division were only symbolic, one would not unnecessarily bother with this practice. But it is not always the case²². Ideas about the other's different nature may shape the believer's behavior toward the other, especially in educational environments, and create real results concerning achievement, that is they tend to exert negative influence on the educational career of children and adolescents and shape negatively their chances for acquiring social status and enabling full participation in society. That is why ethnicity may have political implications for all individuals involved.

Ethnicity and the "Mother-Country"

If assumptions about cultural diversity in a society were elements of a philosophical discussion without any real consequence in everyday life, engaging into the definition and management of ethnic identity would be an academic sport with only a few eccentric scholars willing to engage in it. On the contrary, assumptions about reality may shape one's reaction towards it and this is the reason why defining ethnicity has also a political dimension. Different agents expect different things from certain definitions of ethnicity, all these expectations having to do less with ethnicity itself and more with power, or politics of influence.

One could name three major agents of ethnicity definition - and thus cultural diversity definition - in countries with migrant or minority communities: the mother-country state, the host country state and the diaspora or minority institutions²³.

In ethnocentric discourses developed in the country of origin but also within migrant and minority communities, the home state of the first generation immigrant or minority group is depicted as "mother country". This imagery is pointing at the solidarity bonds between the migrant or minority groups and the state of origin, whereas at the same time it claims the legitimacy of this state to behave as a "protector" towards the minority community both on the material level (other financial forms of support), the ideological (culture continuity) and on the political level (loyalty of the minority community toward the mother state in cases of political conflict)²⁴.

The "home state" acting through its bureaucracies, especially cultural and educational institutions, may see it expedient for its political objectives to embark on (traditional) policies of cultural maintenance in migrant or minority communities, hoping that this is the best way to create a powerful pressure group within the host state which can be used in order to exert influence on the balance of power between the home state and the host state, especially, but not exclusively, in the field of foreign policy²⁵. If the home state acts in a traditional way, it provides migrant or minority communities with a national culture, which is usually different from the regional cultures the first generation is familiar with or has brought together to the host country. This incompatibility between what the mother state defines as "national culture" and the migrant or minority community perceives as "national culture", is one of the mechanisms of alienation of the second and of the subsequent generations from the migrant or minority community,²⁶ in some contexts.

Educational policies for migrant or minority communities has been the favored tool for the implementation of ethnic boundary maintenance through culture maintenance either on the part of the home country, on the part of the host country or on the part of both. The most politically conservative version of ethnic boundary maintenance through educational policies is the encouragement of separate (ethnic) schools, operated by teachers dispatched by home country authorities abroad for a certain time period. These schools are thought to be cultural alternatives to the educational system of the "host" country which is usually denounced and rejected as assimilationist²⁷. The logic of this model favors a total protection of ethnicity against alien influence, where "alien" influence is defined as the cultural influence of the society the children are born and

socialized. Apart from such educational policies, home states may favor policies of bicultural identity as strategies for ethnic boundary maintenance. The concept of bicultural identity includes the possibility - and desirability - of an individual activating two cultural systems, or codes, in his everyday life, according to the context the action is situated. One part of his cultural identity is enough for keeping the individual within the ethnic boundary, since it will differentiate it from the identity of the mainstream citizen in the society²⁸.

The Role of the Host State in Ethnic Boundary Maintenance

Depending on the context²⁹, policies of the host state toward migrant or minority communities may vary between preventing a marginalization of the first and consequent immigrant generations and the social tension following such a development on the one hand, and controlling an all-too-swift social mobility of the migrants on the other, especially if this trend produces a social tension of a different type: racism and nationalism against minorities on the part of the host community³⁰. The policy of controlled integration, if successful, results to a model of social coexistence of indigenous and minority groups, in which the ethnics are accepted without at the same time threatening the social position of the indigenous population. Powerful ideologies have been developed in order to legitimize the host state's attempts to keep minorities as a group at bay. Ethnicity ideology (i.e. the social discourse about the usefulness of cultural diversity in society, positive discrimination policies towards groups of citizens defined by ethnicity) developed and refined by host state bureaucracies seems to take a leading position among those ideologies. In propagating the isomorphism between cultural and ethnic identity, it officially proclaims and validates an allegedly fundamental difference between majority and minority citizen. The postulated essential diversity between minority identity and dominant identity is the core of the system of assumptions about "us" and "them" which we defined earlier as *ethnicity*. From the point of view of the host state, ethnic identity - as an ascription from outside - serves as an expedient concept for the legitimate anticipation of cultural difference, according to the doctrine, where there is ethnic differentiation there has to be cultural difference. The social relevance of postulated cultural difference may vary from a positive to a negative value. Educational programs aimed at the preservation of cultural variety and at fighting against cultural homogeneity are based on *a priori* positive definitions of cultural difference. At the same time they imply a certain obligation of the minority individual to be and publicly admit that he is culturally different from the dominant society as a member of an ethnic group. Being a member of a

minority and at the same time culturally similar to the typical individual of the dominant group is somehow impossible or incompatible in the minds of both the dominant and minority community, as long as the host state is successful in propagating ethnicity romanticism.³¹

Minority Institutions and Ethnicity

Second and third generation minority or migrant children may perceive *ethnicity* as a frame for special social expression, as an obligation to behave in a certain way. Depending on their parents' definitions of their role in the host state and their self-conception as mainstream citizens or minority members, they may be recipients of ethnicity as a divisive concept. Ethnicity serves here as an orientation for action, at least in certain types of social situations. It prepares the bearer to claim a certain status in a folk taxonomy, to accept in a natural way this status when awarded from a third party, and to express some form of cultural difference in interaction. Because such demands³² are from the child's point of view in fact unrealistic, culture maintenance romanticism may lead to stressful situations in the family and in full-blown conflict during adolescence.

Towards the other extreme, ethnicity is perceived as something which may jeopardize one's esteem or success in social performance, especially if the environment is not very friendly towards the specific ethnic category.³³ Although there may also be parents who convey to their children definitions of ethnicity as a "social handicap" in an attempt to obtain a fast integration into the host society,³⁴ it is usually the children who tend to dissociate themselves from *tokens* of minority identity, especially in public places, in order to pass as "normal".

Minority institutions (family, secondary organizations, cultural groups, church) may vary in their perception of ethnicity as a mechanism (strategy) for culture maintenance. Host country context, policies of the home state, historical situation, generational sequence etc. could be mentioned as some at least of the factors responsible for this variation. They may also be in congruence or in dissonance with the culture maintenance policies of the home state. As a fact, the home state will try to play a role within minority institutions in order to reach some degree of compatibility between its definitions of culture and ethnicity and the ones favored by minority institutions. On the other hand, minority institutions may develop in a rather antagonistic way, some allying with the home state and getting its support, whereas others allying with the host state, if their interests are - or are perceived to be - more compatible with their definitions of ethnicity³⁵. Depending on the type of the institution, it may set emphasis on different ethnicity markers.

Thus church may see it expedient to define religious belief as the *differentia specifica*, ignoring arguments about language as a *sine qua non* condition for someone claiming a certain ethnic identity. Institutions close to educational contexts may adopt just the opposite position. In some settings minority institutions may try to define ethnicity through ritualistic elements, allowing individuals to identify with a collectivity or a state without possessing linguistic or cultural “documents” of their ethnicity claims.

The dilemma for minority institutions is to keep a balance between functioning as a tool for political pressure toward the home state in order to secure support and recognition, allying with the host state in order to receive affirmative action, and trying to be an independent agent who negotiates with both the host and the home state in order to promote minority interests, whereas at the same time keeping the definition power as to what those interests are. This dilemma translates into the institution trying to promote the social conditions of a minority³⁶ through accepting its minority position, or trying to step away from the initial minority position and secure full integration into the mainstream society. Culture maintenance is something for the first strategy, culture independence is something for the second case.

Globalization and the Radicalization of Minorities

Globalization rhetoric in its version as an ideology about the prevalence of general human rights and universal models of state action - as they are defined by those who possess the definition power - over national state expediencies tends sometimes to destabilize delicate balances developed between dominant societies and minority or migrant communities not only in the Balkans, Middle Europe and the former Soviet Union, but eventually in countries like Australia, Canada and the United States. Current definitions of human rights by western leading states include issues long known in the discussions about ethnicity and culture. The global discourse about the obligation of the host state to deliver some type of cultural autonomy to minority groups may become responsible for a shift of power within minority communities to the benefit of community institutions or minority institutions favoring culture maintenance and of conservative definitions of the ethnic boundary.

In some contexts this tends to create conflict situations for both the host state and the minority community, and may trap the latter into an orbit of cultural and educational separatism with detrimental effects for the future generations. Ethnic radicalism in its ideological structure and social function is not different from nationalism proper, except for the fact that it is extremely difficult for

minority communities to imagine - let alone create and operate - a state of their own, even an autonomous province, without external intervention or support. But in a global environment ethnic radicalism may seem an expedient tool for some policy agents to exert pressure on national states through ethnic groups, when these states must be controlled or destabilized.³⁷ In this sense, the ideology of multiculturalism may become the modern descendant of the ideology of expansive nationalism as it is known from interwar Europe.

In other contexts, ethnic radicalization encouraged by the global discourse on human rights, may lead to a marginalization of minority communities, the loss of social status of its members being the price to be paid for the support of conflict politics and politics of culture maintenance. If the host state does not face considerable social tensions by such a marginalization, it has no strong motive to counteract the process of ethnic radicalization and may feel quite at ease with it.

Concluding Remarks

Ethnicity is a social reality and it transforms itself into a political reality when competing agents are attempting to define and include it in their strategies of power and influence maintenance and increase. The power configuration between the agents who define ethnicity is not always symmetrical, but the similarity of the definitions may be independent of that. Home state, host state, minority institutions, family, peer groups and the individual itself are trying to establish *markers of ethnicity* and thus to set the position and the nature of the ethnic boundary. Ideologies are helpful instruments in this process and they range from overtly nationalistic and ethnocentric to cultural ones. The sense of belonging is essential in modern, complex societies. But no individual belongs only to one group. We are all bearers of multiple collective identities. The problem with traditional definitions of ethnicity has two sides: (a) since dominant group members do not need an ethnic belonging, in the same society some have it (ethnicity) and some do not, and (b) the binary thinking according to which one is either a member of a dominant or of an ethnic group. This division is socially conservative. It implies that one looks at things either from the perspective of the dominant society or from that of a minority. But democracies do not recognize cultural or code dominance in terms of cultural substance, they accept only political dominance, that is relative majority rule under the condition of freedom of expression. Awareness of a group a citizen belongs to - even if this group is defined historically - does not imply a limited interest to participate in the institutions of the mainstream society. When it does, ethnicity starts to be a

mechanism for ideological manipulation of the social, economic and political structure of the society.

From a communicative point of view, ethnicity may be understood as an additional dimension for an individual's personality, either a facility or a motivation to participate in an additional network of communication. What counts is the chance of the individual to create and share meanings with others. These meanings or networks may not be the ones the mother or host state perceives as valuable or functional, but the choice is within the individual's range. In such an understanding of multiculturalism, there is no need to measure it by a list of typical "content" traits. If an individual in an ethnically diverse society starts to develop an interest towards history, language or culture of a certain people, region or state associated with his predecessors and starts participating in some form of communication with other individuals also interested in the same issues, an additional dimension in his personality is being created. From the educational point of view this interest is most welcome and creative under the condition of recognition of common values, loyalties, responsibilities and aspirations toward a free and democratic state and society on the part of the individual. Multiculturalism as co-existence of parallel societies within a state, without common cultural and political codes and social projects is far from being an educational goal for modern societies. In fact it could be a regression toward a traditional class or stand society. In this sense the real dilemma is not multiculturalism versus cultural homogeneity, but the possibility of cultural variety within a frame of common cultural, political and economic codes defining basic contents and procedures of the public and private sphere of a society. The development of this citizenship is a priority task for European educational systems of the present.

NOTES

1. See Lehmann 1931, Keil 1967, Horak/ Blanke 1985, Tomiak et al. 1991.
2. Gotovos 2007.
3. Barth 1969.
4. Gotovos/Merkens 1982.
5. Gotovos 1991.
6. The concept of *social identity* is used here in the sociological tradition of Erving Goffman.
7. Consensus on the last issue is not always present, the recent dispute on

(slav)macedonian ethnicity in Australia has shown this lack of consensus in a rather strange way. Cf. Danforth 1995.

8. The collapse of the Soviet Union gave way to the expression of such nationalism and is probably going to mark the future developments in some east and south European countries.
9. Nazi race theorists did not develop their educational plans *ex nihilo*. Concepts and action favoring irredentism through education, are not rare in minority contexts. Whether they become dominant or not, as in pre-war Chechoslovakia, depends on non-educational parameters. See Preissler 1967, Osterloh, 2006.
10. Cf. Gotovos 1979.
11. The term *social reality* should be understood in the tradition of social constructivism, i.e. as a socially constructed reality. Cf. P. Berger /T. Luckmann 1966.
12. Damanakis 2008.
13. Anderson 1991.
14. Goffman 1976.
15. Merckens 1991.
16. Culture may or may not be implied in this definition. In some Diaspora communities ethnicity is totally void of any cultural content different from or not included in the cultural system of the host society, but it is socially present as a principle for organizing the lives of individuals through a sense of belonging to a distinct group in order to promote legitimate goals (e.g. influence, power, social position) as a group. Others could promote the same goals using non-ethnic concepts.
17. This should not lead to the conclusion of a romantic picture of peaceful co-existence of culturally differentiated groups within an empire. As some scholars suggested, boundary shifts were sometimes in the agenda and they were centrally planned (either through encouragement or by using force) in order to preserve social order. Forced islamizations by the Ottoman Empire are such an example. Cf. Kazamias 1991.
18. The idea of *contest* as a legitimate procedure for acquiring social status is based on the ideology of modernism, that is, on the appearance of the political reality of citizen in the foreground. Cf. Turner 1974.
19. Merton based his theory of *anomie* on the very concept of commonly shared cultural ends and its opposition to the social disparity of means for their fulfillment. Cf. Merton 1968.
20. Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural capital points at some of the basic sources of social inequality in capitalist societies and the role of education in transforming cultural capital into educational career. Cf. Mörth/ Fröhlich 1991.
21. In pre-modern social order ethnicity was not necessarily based on language or

- descent, but could be based on other division lines such as religion or profession. Even in contemporary national states ethnicity's markers may vary considerably.
22. The social engineering of Turkish ethnic nationalism by the “mother country” in Cyprus and Western Thrace in the second half of the twentieth century are two typical examples of the implementation of the concept of multiculturalism in a process of fostering minority nationalism through education. See also Gotovos 2007.
 23. In a global world there are other agents expecting gains from the way some collectivities will finally handle ethnicity, for example whether they will connect it with segregationist or separatist projects or not. This has to be taken in account when processes of ethnicity definitions are discussed.
 24. It was this thinking which in the eyes of the Canadian public opinion legitimized the treatment of Japanese Canadians in Canada during the second world war. Cf. Sunahara 1981.
 25. One might think other fields of influence, such as the social or educational policy of the host state toward diaspora communities, the economic domain (commerce, tourism), etc.
 26. Given that the most common strategy in presenting Greek identity for diaspora populations has been the historicist approach (classical Hellenic Culture or 19th century struggle for independence as symbols for Greekness), the home state is usually fixing ethnic identity within a highly selective and not always realistic historical frame.
 27. The German context has been typical for the implementation of ethnocentric educational policies on the part of the Greek state over the last 40 years. A realistic analysis of the true motives of both the segment of the Greek diaspora there demanding an isolationist educational solution and the Greek state fulfilling this demand, shows that the true motives behind the identity maintenance rhetoric are of less noble quality, such as attracting migrants' capital and securing positive educational discrimination in Greek higher education for the children of Greek nationals in Germany. For a critique of this model cf. Gotovos 1997. Denouncing German schools as tools for assimilation of migrant populations, though, is not a typical “Greek” reaction. In a recent occasion (Cologne, February 2008) the present Turkish Prime Minister declared assimilation as “a crime against humanity” and demanded the establishment of Turkish schools – even universities - in Germany. See *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14.2.2008.
 28. This explains why bilingualism as an educational objective is not enough for the supporters of bicultural education, since language is not to be considered as an equivalent for culture.
 29. Historical, demographic, economic, social and political factors could play a role in defining the context for the host state's policy toward Diaspora communities in a certain historical period.

30. Those who usually benefit from the newcomers' social placement in the lowest status ladder as unskilled labor, belong to the lower and lower middle class of the host society. It has been argued that migrant communities function as a "cushion" for the underprivileged of the host society, even as a mechanism for the elevation of their social status. See Damanakis 1987:23 ff.
31. In some receiving states which have long rejected a definition of themselves as migration countries, ethnicity has been a key legal concept in keeping segments of the population on the other side of the citizen boundary. Even in officially multicultural states, ethnicity has helped create a special status for migrants which one might call "annex status". Migrants, even if they are naturalized in the host societies, are considered - and sometimes consider themselves - as a segment of the population belonging to the whole, but not fully participating in societal institutions.
32. At the educational level ethnic romanticism results in demands to the host state concerning some form of culture maintenance within educational organizations. Theoretically speaking, the host state is confronted with a demand on the part of the parents that their children be culturally different from the mainstream children through state action, in order to be able to claim ethnic identity in a legitimate way. From the parents' point of view, a fully integrated into the mainstream society member of the Diaspora who claims ethnic identity does something absurd, since the individual mentioned claims ethnicity without being able to present any specific cultural content.
33. Aggressive anti-Hellenic sentiment fostered by concerted attacks against the "Greeks" in the German public discourse since the beginning of 2010 has created an unfavourable context for the public presentation of Greek ethnic identity in this country.
34. Second and third generation Diaspora children have to choose between social and economic marginalization - mainly due to the social position and cultural distance of their parents - through culture maintenance, and social mobility through cultural shift. Although it is finally the family's decision what to do, the result will depend on the pattern of interaction between the host state, the mother state and the Diaspora institutions. Families have to make their way through these communicative influences using their knowledge about educational institutions and their definitions about the costs and the gains of alternative decisions.
35. It is clear that this type of conflict has a structural dimension and can be seen in many Diaspora communities, even if these are usually thought of as united and solid. On the other hand one should not forget that tension among the Diaspora institutions itself functions as a mechanism for boundary maintenance, in that only Diaspora individuals could be involved in a struggle over the future course of the community toward the host society. Conflict helps create and perpetuate a discourse about "us" (Diaspora) and "them" (dominant society) and marks those participating in it as *ethnics*.

36. We are talking here about minorities in a sociological sense, not about the legal concept of a minority as a segment of the population having a special legal status as opposed to the rest of the citizens.
37. The Munich agreement of 1938 is a typical case of this strategy.

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