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If we assume that culture is not a static phenomenon, but one which develops in line with concrete political, social, economic and cultural circumstances, then we must assume that that the Greeks in the Netherlands, who live and work in circumstances which are different to those of the Greek inhabitants of Greece, also develop different cultural models. Furthermore, if we assume that someone’s identity is not fixed and is not inherited, but is formed and developed in successive concrete circumstances, then one can expect that the individual develops an identity (or in general a personality) which suits their social environment.

In the case of allochtonous children, their environment for socialisation is generally bicultural-bilingual. Greek children in The Netherlands come into contact with different worlds: one - on the streets or at school for example - where the Dutch element is dominant, another – family life - where another sort of culture has developed, and life in Greece during the summer. What parents and teachers of the mother tongue call “ours” cannot be the same for children born in a foreign country. The question then naturally arises: “Who am I? What is my relation to this here and that there?

Since the environment of these Greek children is bicultural and bilingual (or even multicultural and multilingual), then their ego synthesis will also have a certain bicultural character. In theory a synthesis of the two cultures will take place in the mental world of the children.

This thesis reports on an investigation into the bicultural-bilingual socialisation of Greek pupils in the Netherlands against the background of the migration of families and their social-cultural and economic position in the Netherlands. The research carried out is sociological in nature, with a strong educational bent. This means that the relation which the Greek pupils have with Greek language teaching is examined at the same time. Which problems have an influence on Greek language teaching, and how can these be dealt with?

The reason for conducting this research lies in the issues raised by the position of Greek migrants in the neo-European structure and in the role which education can play in forming the ethnic-cultural identity of Greek children in the Netherlands. The changing perception of the Greek
government with regard to education policy for Greek pupils in the diaspora, and the resulting changes in objectives, are an important reason for making these pupils the target of the research.

The social goal of the research is to survey the socialisation of Greek pupils in multicultural Dutch society. The aim is to gain insight into the set of factors involved in socialisation. The scientific goal is to contribute to the theory development in the area of the socialisation of allochtonous (Greek) children.

Acquiring a bicultural identity is of great importance to allochtonous children when it comes to social success. The encouragement of a joint radical (education) policy by both countries (country of origin and country of residence) will be advantageous to both sides, not only for the individual but also for the society as a whole. The results presented in this research report could form a frame of reference for delineating a policy in this area – by means of bilateral agreements – between Greece and the Netherlands. The policy-makers could take the opportunity to make a concrete formulation of the problem against the background of the dream of the new Europe. A comparison of the results with other allochtonous groups in the Netherlands is also of social relevance: an analysis of the socialisation of Greek pupils can throw light on the position of other groups of allochtonous pupils. Apart from this, a theoretical need is also being served. Research into the cultural conditions in both societies is important from both a sociological and educational viewpoint.

The research is set up in two stages:

a) Background

This is a discussion about the theoretical framework which has served as a starting-point for determining the central themes in the research. From a theoretical standpoint it is important to determine which factors determine the socialisation of allochtonous children in bicultural-bilingual (or multicultural-multilingual) societies.

b) Survey

The survey charts the socialisation of the Greek pupils using a range of instruments developed within the framework of this research. To this end, extensive information has been gathered from all Greek pupils in the Netherlands who are following Greek lessons from mother tongue sections and OALT departments in the top three classes of primary school. This information covers the characteristics of these pupils as well as those of their parents and the schools which the pupils attend. Bearing in mind the goal and nature of the research, as well as for practical reasons (the desired size of the research group), it seemed preferable to use a postal survey. This is a relatively economical way of obtaining information from four target groups.

The research has acquired an explorative and descriptive nature, and the variables are measured on an ordinal and nominal level. The explorative side of the research involves possible connections between characteristics of the research units. Various (possible) links are traced, ideas crystallised, hypotheses adjusted in line with interim results, etc.
On the basis of Damanakis’ tables and analyses, an attempt is made to apply a structural-analytical model, and to analyse its components in the framework of the bicultural-bilingual socialisation of Greek pupils in the Netherlands. With a view to a global approach, the author goes on to develop general hypotheses which in turn lead to analyses being made on several levels. On the basis of these analyses the following can be established.

The host-country (the Netherlands) maintains a marginal status for the Greek language and culture, i.e. to the language and culture of a fellow-member of the European Union. The Greek language and culture have no place in the official Dutch education system, their use being limited to the family sphere and to the ethnic-cultural community – provided, of course, that the latter has organised itself and functions as an association. The result is that Greek language and culture is not of value to the individual in their social and professional development, neither in the host-country nor in the country of origin.

To counter this cultural and educational policy of the Dutch authorities – which can be characterised as ethnocentric in as far as it goes against the directives of the European Union – the Greek state and the organised Greek communities have developed their own policy with regard to Greek immigrants. At enormous cost, the Greek Ministry of Education has ensured the provision of mother-tongue teaching sections and the transfer of domestic teaching personnel to the host country. Moreover, the various communities have set up different kinds of organisations which are aimed at maintaining and cultivating the Greek language and culture, e.g. youth clubs, women’s organisations, sports clubs.

In turn the Greek migrant community tries to maintain the children’s emotional ties with Greece, focussing its efforts on the emotional dimension of their socialisation. The result of the efforts made by parents and migrant organisations is that the children have a positive attitude towards the Greek language and culture.

At an individual level, the socialisation of Greek children takes place under bicultural and bilingual circumstances which are seldom free of contradictions. Generally speaking, however, the relation which the children have towards both languages and cultures appears to be well balanced. It is true that the cultural stimuli to which they are subjected come predominantly from the society of the host-country, as does the use of the Dutch language, but the majority do not regard Greek as a foreign language and they still feel an emotional tie with Greece. As for using two languages and experiencing cultural elements from both countries, the children regard this bilingualism and biculturalism as self-evident.

The conclusion could be drawn that, in the eyes of the Greek pupils, the “weak” Greek language and culture have managed to quite a considerable extent to find an equilibrium with the “strong” language and culture of the Netherlands, despite their being in the midst of the all-dominant social-cultural environment of the host-country.
not developed to the same extent amongst all pupils, the parents form, to a considerable degree, the reason for their heterogeneity and their language and cultural predisposition towards the Greek school. For this reason the role of parents in the socialisation process extremely important.

**Pupils**

Generally speaking the pupils reflect homogeneity with regard to their migration history. Most of them belong to type I, i.e. they were born in the Netherlands or came to the Netherlands at a very young age.

The socialisation process of all Greek pupils takes place in bicultural and bilingual circumstances in the host-country, but these social experiences do not guarantee uniform conditions for their cognitive development. The extent to which the Dutch language and the experience of cultural elements from both countries have permeated the Greek family also plays a role.

In the research, a large number of social-cultural elements of the Greek pupils and of the families to which they belong are analysed. To a certain extent, the social-cultural features of the pupils relate to their bicultural-bilingual socialisation. A number of these social-cultural features are related to each other and influence each other: the circumstances under which the Greek language is taught, the experience of cultural elements from both countries and the use of both languages, the supportive domestic climate, the ethnic-cultural orientation, the ethnic composition of the family, the place of residence, etc.

The attitude of the pupils towards both languages and cultures appears to be in balance. Although some pupils may lean more towards one than the other, most pupils’ everyday lives are oriented towards both the Greek and Dutch communities. The majority of the pupils have equal regard for both languages and cultures. But pupils who live in urban industrial centres with a large concentration of Greeks and an organised Greek community have a more positive regard for Greek language and culture. This goes also for pupils whose mother was born in Greece.

Using rational (economic and political) criteria, Greek language and culture are behind their Dutch counterparts. Dutch is positively evaluated as a potential instrument for upwards social mobility. However, in emotional terms, the Greek language and culture have a special place in the children’s hearts. This is apparent from the pleasure which they experience during Greek festivities or from their wish to return to Greece. In this context, the relationship which, according to the pupils, they have with ethnic “symbols” (fatherland, national football team) is particularly strong. It is the author’s opinion, however, that this relationship is more symbolic in character. It should be emphasised here that the strong emotional ties which the children have with Greece do not go hand in hand with an unfavourable attitude towards Dutch society. Generally speaking the pupils expect their future to lie in the Netherlands, but let this depend on their parents’ plans. In most cases these plans have not
Below is an overview of the results obtained for each target-group questioned.

**Parents**

From the perspective of differentiation with regard to ethnic composition of the family, what is apparent is that the Greek language and culture are more strongly cultivated in families where both parents were born in Greece, than in families where at least one parent was born outside Greece or is non-Greek, or is a second-generation Greek abroad. As a result, pupils from families which do not have two Greek parents are highly assimilated into the Dutch system. A large percentage of the families (43%) have Greek and Dutch parents. In mixed families the mother plays a very important role in the socialisation process of the children. She spends more time with the children than the father, so that her influence is of overriding importance. The “Greek” mother therefore emerges as the bearer and guardian of the Greek consciousness. The differentiation of parents according to their level of education does not appear to play any special role in the language and cultural development of the pupils.

The language and culture of the host-country have heavily permeated the Greek family. In general the parents attempt to gear the education of their children to the education which they see Dutch parents giving, and to do so in concrete form. The children are encouraged by their parents to speak and to read Dutch, with the parents playing an active role. In this way the family is a source of bilingualism and biculturalism: both languages are used during communication within the family and with other Greek families, and the cultural activities which are developed both within and outside the family relate to both cultural systems. As a result, the parents are clearly oriented towards a bicultural identity of their children. The few exceptions to this general picture can be interpreted as an indication of the degree to which the family is integrated into the host-country as well as an indication of the family’s social-cultural orientation and its orientation with regards to the future.

Biculturalism and bilingualism within the family and within the ethnic group are common features of Greek migrants in the Netherlands. However, these features are more apparent in the family sphere than in that of the ethnic community. We can therefore state that the family only acts as bearer and cultivator of Greek language and culture to the extent that it is integrated into the minority group, which in turn must of course be organised, if it wishes to be able to cultivate Greek language and culture. It follows from this conclusion that Greek language and culture can only be maintained and cultivated systematically through the school. The attitude of parents to the question as to whether their children should attend a Greek school is positive, but they have reservations concerning the teaching materials used. The parents believe in the need to teach Greek language and culture. This can, however, be explained by the fact that the parents have voluntarily chosen for their children to follow this type of education (it is not obligatory). The most important reason why Greek parents send their children to a Greek school is the education factor. Since bilingualism and biculturalism are
yet taken any clear shape. Moreover, compared to the other ethnic-cultural minorities in the Netherlands, the Greek pupils are interculturally oriented.

Their peer groups are generally speaking multi-ethnic in composition and cannot serve as bearers and cultivators of Greek language and culture.

Another medium which could help the pupils to cultivate Greek language and culture is satellite television. This could perform a truly socialising task if the transmissions were enriched with attractive children’s programmes.

The pupils’ attitude towards the teaching of Greek cannot be characterised as satisfactory since its old-fashioned and sterile nature gives them little pleasure. The unsuitability of the teaching materials must be mentioned here – they do not meet the learning conditions of the pupils. According to the teachers, the pupils have gained insufficient language and cultural knowledge after attending a Greek school, even when it is functioning under ideal circumstances. The result of all these problems is that the number of pupils per class is gradually declining. As the children grow older they tend to play truant more often. All this leads to the conclusion that it is necessary to individualise the education offered. The differences which exist between individual Greek pupils in the Netherlands require a pluralistic, flexible, and diversified educational method.

**Greek teachers**
The Greek teachers are civil servants who have either been sent from Greece to work in native language departments in the Netherlands or are Greeks residing permanently in the Netherlands and working in the OALT departments. Those who have been sent from Greece by the Greek Ministry of Education come to the Netherlands without any knowledge of the Dutch language, even though they are expected to teach bilingual pupils. They are not – at least for the first few years – acquainted with the Dutch social-cultural and educational systems and are not in a position to exploit the pupils’ bicultural and bilingual capital. In the linguistic area they are not able to analyse and deal with neither the problems which their pupils have with the Greek language, nor the errors they make in the language. These problems and errors are frequently to do with influence which the host country’s language has on the pupil’s use of Greek. Some teachers deal with their pupils in the same way they would deal with their pupils in Greece: they make exaggerated demands on them since they have no knowledge of the special characteristics and the linguistic/cultural profile of Greek pupils abroad. They are also possibly misled by the level of the textbooks which the Greek Ministry of Education puts at their disposal.

They work in schools which are in various urban industrial centres and teach students with diverse levels of knowledge in the same class. They usually teach different year groups at one and the same time, and this only exacerbates the problem. Some experienced teachers try to solve the problem by dividing the pupils according to the “external” criterion of age, or according to an
“internal” criterion – the pupils’ language situation (their knowledge of Greek). These divisions, however, run into organisational problems and do not offer a real solution. The teachers who took part in this research survey consider extra tuition indispensable where the socialisation process of the pupils is taking place in these bicultural and bilingual circumstances. The availability of suitable didactic-methodological manuals would help the teachers to complete their task successfully.

In the author’s opinion the teachers have a reasonable to good knowledge of Dutch and most of them use Dutch in their lessons for functional purposes.

They agree with the idea that their pupils must develop a bicultural identity and occasionally try to implement a bicultural form of education, be it rudimentary in nature. Some teachers also try to give attention to, for example, religious and national holidays. One comment they make in this context is the fact that the number of lessons each year is very limited.

The cooperation between Greek teachers and their Dutch colleagues is certainly not optimal, and this is clearly not in the interests of the pupils. The positive example of “integrated” schools, where group-teacher and Greek teacher regularly consult with each other and try to develop a good mutual understanding, makes it clear that immense effort and good will is required from both sides.

**Dutch teachers**

They teach in all types of primary school and consider extra tuition to be necessary to deal effectively with the cultural circumstances of the allochtonous pupils in their class.

They do not maintain contact with their Greek colleagues in order to inform each other about matters relating to the requirements of pupils of Greek origin; the lessons are therefore not geared to each other.

The Dutch teachers have a positive attitude to the teaching of Greek, but this is above all a question of the individual teachers’ personal views. Nevertheless, they do consider the Greek language lesson as “the odd man out”.

Most of them give special attention to bicultural education, but this occurs only incidentally.

**The role of Greek language teaching**

The situation in the Netherlands makes clear the dimensions and complexity of the question of teaching the mother tongue to children of Greek origin.

The role of Greek language teaching is marginal, due mainly to the fact that:
- it is not obligatory
- the lessons are mostly taught in the pupils’ free time
- the number of teaching-hours a week is very limited
Summary

- The progress made by the pupils in their language lessons does not play any direct role in their educational or professional career.

Furthermore, the teaching of Greek does not have the flexibility necessary to adapt to the whole range of circumstances in which it is expected to operate. To be able to perform productively it must – where the appropriate conditions are present – be integrated into the regular curriculum of Dutch schools and be awarded the status of a regular course, complete with grades. In addition to lacking homogeneity, the teaching of Greek also suffers from a lack of suitable textbooks. Those provided by the Greek Ministry of Education are compiled for pupils of the same age who are living in Greece, whose mother tongue is Greek and who form a homogeneous group. This means in practice that these books assume a knowledge of Greek which the pupils abroad do not actually have, so that they have great difficulty understanding the texts. Another disadvantage of the books from the organisation (O.E.D.V.) is that they take no account of the pupils’ bilingual-bicultural capital: the subjects and illustrations do not relate directly to the pupils’ areas of interest, do not correspond to the social reality experienced by Greek children living abroad. Furthermore, in practical terms, they take no account of course timetables, nor of the teachers who must use the books, nor of the actual social needs of their users.

The results of this research appear to show that a number of assumptions which crop up in the literature on the subject are not – or only to a certain degree - supported by any evidence. Within this framework we assume that a change of culture through migration does not necessarily lead to a split identity. Three out of four Greek children regard themselves as a mixture, a composition of Greek and Dutch elements which, in time will show the tendency to form a new (what could be called a “Greek-Dutch”) personality and identity. Most of those carrying out research into Greek migrants seem to agree with this view of the “migrant identity” among younger Greek generations abroad. In some situations children feel Greek and identify themselves openly with Greek culture, whereas in other situations they consider themselves to be Dutch and see Dutch culture, or aspects of it, as theirs. All pupils must realise that they are bearers of two important cultures which can form a solid basis for their future.

Politicians and political institutions should realise that teaching the mother tongue to the children in question makes a decisive contribution to the supple development and integration of their personality, and that in the framework of a united Europe, integrated personalities can adjust more easily to the social system of both the host country and the country of origin. Both sides would benefit from society’s support and encouragement of mother-tongue teaching since the objectives given below serve not only the individual but also the society as a whole.
The author is of the opinion that the further development of the Netherlands as a multicultural society intrinsically goes hand in hand with a strong cultural and linguistic diversity in this society. Cultural diversity requires recognition of the importance of other languages, other than Dutch, as the core value of the cultural identity of allochtonous groups in a multicultural society. Non-acceptance of the allochtonous children’s cultural capital amounts to rejection of the children themselves, which itself impedes the process of social integration within the dominant system.

The author is in favour of a multicultural model of society. This model is a substrate of social values which are accepted and respected by all. The singularity of each separate culture, of every separate minority is cultivated on this substrate, a singularity which is always based on generally accepted social values. The members of each ethnic-cultural minority must indeed adapt to the social and cultural environment of the host country, learn the language and integrate into the society of the host country, but to do so without assimilating themselves. This view, known as “integrating while maintaining one’s cultural identity”, is the one advocated by the Dutch government.

Maintaining the cultural identity of allochtonous groups is the new challenge of this time. The problems of nationalism, racism and religious fanaticism cannot be fought by referring to an abstract world civilisation which favours cultural uniformity but by referring to the maintenance of cultural pluralism and the protection of the diversity of cultures through equality and mutual respect. Being open to other cultures allows individuals to gain a better understanding of themselves and helps to reduce their mistrust and fear of others. The sense of identity of an individual comes about through understanding and acceptance of the identity of another. Self-knowledge is acquired through knowledge of another.

Whenever one wants to curb the assimilation of young generations within the social-cultural system of the host country (in this case the Netherlands), then one must strive to protect what could be called the “Greek ethnic-cultural identity”. Ensuring that the children have a positive attitude towards their cultural origins is an important pre-requisite for the development of bicultural competencies.

The culture of the Greeks in the Netherlands is the product of a meeting between the culture of Greece and that of the host country. Whenever Greek pupils abroad are taught History and Culture, the history and culture of their own minority group in question should not be ignored, nor the contribution this teaching can make to the development of the ethnic-cultural identity of the younger generations.

From a pedagogical standpoint, what is required is that – depending on the actual circumstances in which the child is being socialised– all possible elements of Greek origin which the child has exploited in him or herself, be enriched and brought into contact with elements from the Greek community and from the host country, using an intercultural and bicultural-bilingual approach,
because these respond to the actual circumstances in which the child is living and are of importance to his or her life. Every effort should be made to cultivate the pupil’s (bi)cultural capital in line with his or her circumstances, so that, by means of a process of self-denotation, the child will be able to develop an ethnic-cultural identity of which a part is linked to the Greek cultural tradition and to at least a few manifestations of modern Greek culture.

The question is how the knowledge can be transformed into actual practice, how a child should find the compatibilities between the two cultures, and how the child can be helped to develop his or her ethnic-cultural identity. By choosing and imparting the appropriate learning ingredients, it is possible to develop a cultural identity, as well as the attitudes and the forms of behaviour which are appropriate to the cultural characteristics of the pupil as well as to the spirit of a European and intercultural upbringing and education.

With the thought that a child’s ability to think in abstract terms has developed by the age of around ten, so that the child is able to understand historic-cultural elements, the author has written teaching material – *Greeks in the Low Countries 1600-2000* (Dialektopoulos, 2000) – which builds a bridge linking the world of the child (the multidimensional cultural and linguistic reality in which the child lives) with his or her ethnic origins.