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Ethnic Greeks from the Former Soviet Union as “Privileged Return Migrants”

INTRODUCTION

The presence of migrants in contemporary Greece is ubiquitous. Since the early 1990's, Greece, like other Southern European countries, has turned from an emigration to an immigration country [King et al., 2000].

The aim of this paper is to offer an analysis of the emerging policy framework within which the ethnic Greeks from the former Soviet Union (FSU), are singled out and allocated a privileged status when compared with other newcomer groups, e.g. other migrants and refugees. It argues that Greece does not have an immigration policy in place and that for the past 15 years ethnic return migration of Greeks from the Former Soviet Union (a total of 155,000 settled repatriates according to the 2000 official state census data, MM-T, p.41) has functioned as a migration policy in disguise. In this respect Greece is not unique. The particular type of policy favouritism vis-à-vis former East European citizen of co-ethnic descent is also observable in other European countries (e.g. Finland, Germany, Poland). These states acknowledge the presence of a

historical diaspora in former Eastern Europe and by implication allocate a privileged status to their co-ethnic returnees. State immigration policies in these states are grounded in *jus sanguinis* that defines membership in terms of ethnic descent [De Tinguy, 2003, pp.113-114].

The approach in this paper is anthropological; it addresses the dialectic between the Greek co-ethnic 'returnees' and host expectations, on both state and societal levels, as articulated in the *language* used by the state (e.g. state officials, legislative acts), the host population and the migrants themselves. It also focuses on issues of 'labelling' as part of the negotiation process between newcomers and hosts. For example, focusing on the post-1989 arrivals from the former Soviet Union (FSU), there is ample ethnographic evidence of the newcomers' preference for being called, and using as a term of self-ascription, 'refugees' (*prospyges*) rather than 'repatriates' (*palinnostoundes*) or 'returnees' (*epanapatrizomenoi*), as various Greek state actors have labelled them

Table 1. Arrivals of ethnic Greeks from the former Soviet Union in Greece by year and type of visa

A/ A	YEAR	INDIVIDUALS	TOTAL %	REPATRIATION INDIVIDUALS	REPATRIATION %	TOURISM INDIVIDUALS	TOURIST VISA %
1	1977 - 1986	334	0,215	321	96,108	13	3,892
2	1987	169	0,109	168	99,408	1	0,592
3	1988	669	0,431	653	97,608	16	2,392
4	1989	5.195	3,345	5.099	98,152	96	1,848
5	1990	16.716	10,762	15.968	95,525	748	4,475
6	1991	17.331	11,158	15.055	86,867	2.276	13,133
7	1992	19.846	12,778	14.050	70,795	5.796	29,205
8	1993	25.720	16,559	16.680	64,852	9.040	35,148
9	1994	14.737	9,488	8.084	54,855	6.653	45,145
10	1995	14.586	9,391	7.632	52,324	6.954	47,676
11	1996	14.298	9,206	6.368	44,538	7.930	55,462
12	1997	12.381	7,971	4.020	32,469	8.361	67,531
13	1998	5.761	3,709	1.452	25,204	4.309	74,796
14	1999	4.676	3,011	536	11,463	4.140	88,537
15	2000	1.307	0,841	71	5,432	1.236	94,568
16	Δ/A	1.593	1,026	1.006	63,151	587	36,849
	TOTAL	155.319	100,000	97.163	62,557	58.156	37,443

It is evident from the above table that the basic change in the migration strategies of the newcomers in Greece since 1977 is the progressive increase of the 'tourist visa' as an entry point to Greece. For instance, in 1993 those entering the country on a 'repatriation visa' totaled 16,684 (64%) while those entering on a 'tourist' visa were 9,040 (35%) of the total of 25,720. By 1999 these patterns has been transformed: only 531 (11%) arrived on 'repatriation visas', while 4,140 (88,5%) of migrants arrived on a 'tourist visa', of the total of 4,676 arrivals from countries of the former Soviet Union [M M-T, 2001, pp. 46-47].

[Voutira, 2003, pp. 61-68].¹ The use of these labels is significant because they establish identities and confer entitlements such as subsidized housing, access to language training programs and social services.

Where the notion of a *privileged* and or preferential treatment of these migrants emerges is in the context of a comparison with 'undocumented migrants' (e.g. mainly Albanians, Iraqis, Afghans), refugees seeking asylum and other non-European aliens arriving en masse in the 1990s. With respect to the latter, Greek policy remains highly

restrictive and there has been a lamentable lack of policy vis-à-vis non-ethnic Greek migrants. For example, although since 1991 the major migrant influx has been from Albanian labour migrants (calculated on the basis of the 2001 national state census to be 443,550) [Baldwin-Edwards, 2004, p. 15],² there has been no equivalent state response with respect to them. In this context Greece has been severely criticised for its extensive use of expulsions, since 1991 and for its delayed introduction of a regularization program for 'undocumented migrants'.³

¹ Typically, as used in the context of Modern Greek, the term 'repatriate' (*palinostoundes*) refers to the more recent arrivals of Soviet Greeks by distinguishing them from the political refugees of the Greek Civil War, who fled to communist countries and were granted the right to return to Greece (*epanapatrizomenoi*) after the end of the military junta (1974).

² The issue of documenting the different categories of legal and illegal migrants in Greece demographically is a particularly thorny one because no official base line data is readily available. This view is well-argued and critically presented by Baldwin-Edwards 2004.

³ According to UNHCR statistics, there has been a decrease in asylum applications in the last three years in Greece, contrary to the prevailing trend in Europe. The acceptance rate has been also one of the lowest ones among EU states. In 2002-4 the acceptance rate of asylum seekers in Greece dropped to a dire 0,08%. The relatively small number of refugee inflows is seen as one of the main factors that have contributed to the inertia of the Greek state in the refugee protection domain [Sitaropoulos, 2001]. Evidently unprotected aliens, especially in small numbers, possess little political clout in a foreign host country, while the national electorates are at best indifferent towards them.

THE EVOLUTION OF GREEK POLICY FOR THE RECEPTION OF REPATRIATES

One important set of considerations in assessing policies and their impact on social life is how policies - and policy makers - construct their subjects [Shore and Wright, 1997, p. 3]. Within the discipline of anthropology there has been a novel approach that challenges the view of 'policy' as a tool used to regulate populations from top down through rewards and sanctions. It focuses on a reconceptualization of governance not as a simple, neat, linear and rational activity but as a complex process by which collective decisions not only impose conditions from above and outside but influence people's indigenous norms of conduct so that they themselves contribute, not necessarily consciously, to a government's model of social order. Using this revised notion of policy, this section details the 'trial and error' interactive process of policy formation that is identified in three main stages of evolution covering 15 years (1990-2005).

Phase A: Crisis-management and rural settlements

The National Foundation for the Reception and Resettlement of Repatriated Greeks (EIYAPOE or "National Foundation") adopted the strategy of using EU and state funding to design and implement a rural settlement plan in Thrace, known as the 'national programme' (to *ethniko programma*), to which Greeks from the FSU would be channelled was a policy essentially inspired by the 'irreplicable achievement', that is, the successful agricultural settlement of the Asia Minor refugees (1922) in Northern Greece [Voutira and Harrell-Bond, 2000, pp. 60-61]. The state policy assumed the following:

The repatriates are people with low economic claims, demands, and therefore they can accept without any kind of complaint even the most difficult form of life in the border-line regions' [EIYAPOE, 1992, p. 8];

'Their presence in these regions will be able to create in and of itself an economic revitalization and this would generate the 'pull' for a return migration among the local population that had emigrated' [EIYAPOE, 1991, p. 6].

By 1993 some 120,000 Soviet Greeks had 'repatriated' to Greece. In the official publications of the National Foundation the assumption that Soviet Greek 'repatriates' are Greeks appeared to be unassailable. The meaning of *Greek in this context was informed by the bureaucratic criteria of identifying a Greek in terms of a repatriation visa acquired in Moscow through the embassy. Since the acquisition of this visa involves, in principle, the proof of one's ethnic Greek descent*, the assumption that those who come with a visa were Greeks simply reaffirmed the belief that the bureaucracy worked. The Greek state's eventual acknowledgement that the people could acquire repatriation visas through illegal means, and that people who had claims to Greekness could not acquire *repatriation visas* because they lacked the necessary funding, seriously undermined this view [Kamenides, 1996, pp. 12-14]. Overall, however, the perception of the newcomers as 'Greeks' remained dominant. What has changed is the debate about what criteria should be used to define Greekness as an entitlement in the context of the particular type of ethnic migration.

On the side of the newcomers, particularly during the early 1990's, the variety of expectations concerning Greece as a 'historical homeland' was informed by an emerging mistrust toward the disintegrating Soviet system and a progressive engagement with the capitalist order of the West to which they saw themselves as having a privileged connection. The stronger their disillusionment with their Soviet past, their fear of economic and physical insecurity, and the threat that minority rights would be undermined in the context of an emerging nationalist discourse in different regions of Central Asia, Georgia or Southern Russia, the more they expected from Greece; 'Greece will protect us' they said.

Phase B : Immigration management (1995-2000)

By 1995 the Greek national rural settlement plan was considered incomplete and inef-

fective [EIAPOE, 1994].⁴ A novel state actor undertook to resolve the *unintended consequences* of the early 1990's policy responses to the immigration influx. The General Secretariate of Returning Diaspora Greeks began operating in late 1994. In its Memorandum of activities for 1995-1996, the General Secretary Christos Kamenides notes that - from the perspective of the state - the critical problem for the majority of the Greeks from the FSU was their legal status. 'Since 1996 more than half of the total estimate of 140,000 newcomers from the FSU who have entered Greece have neither 'repatriate' nor 'refugee' status' [Kamenides, 1996, p. 4]. They were formally *illegal immigrants* either because they had extended their stay on the 'tourist visa' entry or acquired their documents illegally on the 'black market.' This realisation clearly influenced the perception of 'the problem' and by implication the policy response appropriate to address it.⁵ Further to this, under pressure from ex-Soviet Greek civil society organizations it became clear that the problem with the existing National Foundation Plan for Soviet Greek settlement in Thrace was not simply one of effectively completing housing construction plans. This was because the vast majority of newcomers preferred to settle in urban areas where housing is scarce and expensive but employment opportunities are much greater. The second phase follows the earlier model of agricultural settlement, promoting state assistance through the National Foundation for Reception and Reinstatement of Immigrants & Repatriate Greeks (EIAPOE). The Foundation's aim was to provide funding to families who undertake agricultural settlement; the program included subsidized

settlement in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace with an immediate financial contribution of 11 million *drachmas* per family plus an additional 500,000 per child and dependant adult. The loan was 30% interest-free and repayable over 15 years. Proof of Greek descent, certified by the Greek consular authorities in the country of origin was a necessary condition for the loan.

Greek state policy since 1996 has shifted towards a more flexible model of self-settlement and loans, initially within the context of the activities of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. Subsequently, as the role of EYIAPOE shrank, state and regional funding expanded to cover the entire Greek state, applying a settlement policy of incentives for the settlement of 'repatriates'.⁶ One significant difference in state policy after 1999 is that the settlers' Greek descent is certified *after* their arrival in Greece.

Phase C : Post-repatriation immigration (2000-present)

The introduction of the new law on repatriation (2910/2000) marks a new stage in the evolution of Greek immigration policy. The provisions concerning 'Entry and stay of aliens in the Greek state' and 'Attainment of Greek citizenship through naturalization and other provisions' were introduced with special reference to the Soviet Greeks. In a relevant circular announced to the State Authorities on 15 May 2001, these amendments were justified according to the rationale that, in the judgment of the consular authorities, the practice of compulsory certification for the attainment of Greek citizenship by *homogeneis* residing in former USSR countries was insufficient.

With the new provisions, especially Para-

⁴ One of the critical factors for determining the assessment of the 'national settlement plan' as a failure [EIAPOE, 1994] is the recognition that the new approach adopted by Greece vis-a-vis its diaspora in the FSU changed; since 1994 the official Greek policy has been one of *containing* rather than encouraging the immigration influx from the FSU.

⁵ A new policy of legalisation of status for those FSU citizens already in Greece was introduced in 1998-9 with a view towards addressing the problem [Triantaphyllidou and Veikou, 2002, 197ff].

⁶ This policy was finalised, after the introduction of Law 2790/2000, with the design and promotion of a

"zoning" program dividing the country into 4 regions, with the explicit aim of decentralization, through the provision of economic incentives and specific privileges depending on place of settlement: Zone A (Eastern Macedonia, Thrace, and the islands of the Northern Aegean), Zone B (border regions of Central and Western Macedonia and Epirus), Zone C (the rest of Greece excluding Athens, Herakleion, Thessaloniki, Patra, and Peiraeus), and Zone D (urban areas of Athens, Herakleion, Thessaloniki, Patra, and Peiraeus). It is interesting that, in spite of the direct economic advantages to settling in Zone A, most repatriates choose to settle in Zone D.

graphs 1 and 3 of Article 76 of Law 2910/2001, the criteria are defined by committees responsible for the investigation of the Greek descent of *homogeneis*. The committees must 'investigate whether the identity of the *homogenis* appears in the person of the applicant for Greek citizenship, as this identity is defined by legal theory and testimony, and not simply by Greek descent.' The critical factor in characterizing an individual as *homogenis* is not just Greek descent, but rather the individual's possession of a *Greek national consciousness*. The presence of a *national consciousness* is therefore a decisive factor in the certification of an individual's Greekness [Triantaphyllidou and Veikou, 2002, p. 198]. After interviewing the applicant, the committee determines whether the applicant feels that he or she belongs to the community of Greeks living in the former USSR, has contact with the Greek mores, customs, traditions, and lifestyle as these have evolved in the areas in question, speaks the Greek language or the Pontic dialect, and so on. The determination of an applicant as *homogenis*, depends on evidence which may include registration in consular records, old Greek passports, military records, or any other certificates or other public records bearing the inscription of 'Greek' nationality. The new amendment states that 'the above constitute *evidence*, not documentation, and as such they do not need to be certified if they are public records.' According to the authorities, this measure aims to resolve certain practical problems, such as

bribery, trade in passports, and passport falsification, all of which tend to emerge in the context of a corrupt bureaucracy.

The upgraded and decisive role of the interview with the committee's four-members (representing the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare, the Ministry of the Interior, the General Secretariat of Repatriates and the District) superficially indicates a spirit of 'liberalization' of the naturalization process. However, the absence of clear criteria for determining Greek consciousness during the interview results in two possible responses: Look [some of my informants tell me], the interview is nothing big. First they ask us where our parents came from (e.g. Kars, Trebizond or Samsun), what language we speak, whether we celebrated or celebrate the 25th of March while in the FSU and now in Greece. It's just for show really! The important thing is to tell the truth, for one family that spoke Turkish claimed they didn't speak it and their application was ripped up. When they asked us what language we speak at home, we said Russian - since they know we speak Russian at home, why would we lie?

Others get very nervous, and prepare for the interview as though it were an exam. The rumors multiply:

They flunked them because they didn't know what *tzatziki* was, or how to dance Pontic dances.

In such instances insecurity is magnified and, depending on the final result, the repatriates' bitterness at the proceedings may also grow.

COMPARISONS BETWEEN NEWCOMERS AND HOSTS

Cultural collision between newcomers and hosts involve largely incongruent expectations. On the *inter-group level*, (mainland Greeks and Soviet Greeks), Soviet Greeks are seen as 'Russians', 'lazy' and 'ignorant'. By comparison to the 1923 refugees, who were hailed as a major resource for Modern Greek national development, the newcomers are seen as not *real Greeks* suffering under the Soviet regime. Rather they are often criticized as 'capitalists who only come to

Greece to trade and make a better living.' On the *intra-group level*, (Soviet Greeks arriving in the 1980's and Soviet Greeks arriving in the 1990's) such criticisms were repeated by those who compare the most recent arrivals with their own hardships 10 years earlier. Finally, among the third generation of the 1922 Asia Minor refugee settlers in Thrace, the disillusionment with the newcomers is voiced in terms of a comparison with their own perceptions of their grand-

parents' experiences of settlement and the ways those people 'tamed their own fates' through personal sacrifice.

When our families came from Asia Minor they had nothing and it was only through their hard work and sacrifices that they were able to succeed... They worked and worked until they would get juice from the stones (*na vgaloun zoumi apo tis petres*)... but these people who are coming now from Russia are lazy (*tembelides*). They don't like to work -

they prefer to sit and wait or to get money from the state through the EU subsidised programmes.

Disillusionment with the newcomers was also voiced by government officials in Athens, who saw the newcomers as unappreciative of the state's efforts to provide 'material assistance and training: unfortunately we found them to be choosy and ungrateful towards the Greek state' (Secretary of State V. Tsouderou, interview 6.6.1995).

COMPARATIVE ISSUES IN EAST WEST MIGRATION

One of the basic paradoxes in the socio-cultural management of the contemporary repatriation from the FSU concerns the fact that the repatriates arrive with the prospect of full political, social, and cultural rights, yet their incorporation remains uncertain, given that they are still *visible* in terms of their values and behavior. There are also language barriers. This lack of communication seems to be connected with the level of expectations entertained both by the newcomers and by the society into which they are received.

Services in Greece do not have the efficiency or organisation structure of the Absorption Ministry in Israel that deals, on the basis of the Law of Return with the Jews from the Soviet Union, or the Social Services Departments in the Federal Republic of Germany dealing with their *Aussiedler* on the basis of Article 116 of the German Basic Law. Based on these laws, the immigrants in both countries enjoy a special status acquired upon their arrival. Research shows, these are people who despite their formal citizenship status they remain relatively marginalized as migrants in their own country [Shepherd, 1993; Markowitz, 1995]. A common feature in these situations is the declassing and deskilling experience that accompanies the process of immigration and resettlement.

As Markowitz notes, for the majority of the Soviet Jews in the US, Prior to immigration, they viewed America as a haven, not of comfort and complacency, but a safe place where they could finally publish their

thoughts and be heeded... Some turn their doubts into anger at America, some turn them inward and die of melancholia... By far the majority, however, are those who find their roots through which to express and use their intellect. Many recent immigrants work at jobs below their former professions and educational qualifications. While they may experience initial difficulty adjusting to this drop in status, in time, often find alternatives in their jobs for self satisfaction [Markowitz, 1995, pp. 129-130].

Shepherd qualifies the immigration picture commenting on Israel's long history of immigration. She points to similar accounts of disillusionment among hosts with the most recent arrivals as those articulated among the Greeks.

The main difference between the Russians who came in the seventies and those arriving now, is the quality of their 'human material' (a nasty but familiar expression which jarred with the concern expressed for the immigrants). There is no ideological motive behind the current immigration. They come for social and economic reasons. In the seventies, immigrants could cope with cultural shock better because they were motivated... Israel in the 1990's is very highly developed technologically, and that is where the Russians skill could be much better used. Instead the politicians either leave them to the National Insurance Institute, or talk about 'relief works' as if we were still in the sixties and could send people out to plant bushes and sweep streets. [Shepherd, 1993, pp. 33-34].

PRIVILEGED FOREIGNERS

From the migration policy perspective, it is clear that Greece, like Israel and Germany gives privileged status to its co-ethnics (*homogeneis*) in its immigration process, compared to its treatment of foreign nationals (*alloethneis*), including refugees; [Voutira, 2003, pp. 61-68]. This practice derives from the fundamentally nationalist ideology by which membership in the state presupposes membership in the nation. Like Germany, which is a better-known example, Greece includes the diaspora in the former Soviet Union among members of the nation and gives them axiomatic right of entry.⁷ In the language of Benedict Anderson (1991), these diasporas belong to the 'imagined community' that makes up the nation. Both the citizens of the homeland and their ethnic co-nationals in the FSU are presumed to belong to the same community, sharing a collective identity independent of any actual collective experience.

Demographically, the current situation of the Greek east-west repatriation relates to the legal status of those approximately 200,000 ex-Soviet citizens of Greek descent. Among these, according to information provided by the Greek Ministry of the Interior, 106,000 have attained Greek citizenship, while another 60,000 are currently at some stage in the process of acquiring it [M.M-T, 2001, p. 8; Kaurinkoski, 2003, p. 125]. Apart from the repatriates, who have a formal right to claim Greek citizenship, according to the General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad there are about another 100,000 'former Soviet citizens' living within the Greek state, mostly

in Attica.⁸ The overall picture of the repatriates, as it emerges from a twelve-year study-census (1989-2000) conducted by the General Secretariat of Repatriating Greeks of the Ministry of Macedonia-Thrace [M.M-T 2000, 2001, 2002], reveals that most are adults, the vast majority are settled in Northern Greece (74%), most speak Russian, and hail from former Soviet republics such as Georgia (52%), Kazakhstan (20%), Russia (15%), Armenia (6%), the Ukraine (3%), Uzbekistan (2%), and other nations formerly belonging to the USSR (2%) [M.M-T, 2000, pp. 50-51].

The official status is usually unclear, especially after 1995, when the standard practice among 'repatriates' from the former USSR has been to come to Greece 'experimentally' on tourist visas before deciding whether or not to repatriate. During this period, they remain temporarily in a 'gray zone.' Repatriates have a relatively better fate than illegal foreign migrants, or alien (*allogeneis*) immigrants who tend to survive by operating in the unofficial job market, mostly in urban Athens [Psimenos, 2001, pp. 100-101] and living under the fear of expulsion or deportation.

From the point of view of the Greek state, their classification falls within the broad and blurred gap *between* the introduction and the application of a series of legal provisions regarding repatriation from the former USSR, culminating in Law 2910 (2/05/2001). In contrast with prior legislation, Law 2910 allows for the 'particular naturalization' of foreign nationals of Greek descent residing *within* Greece, and defines the status of repatriation based on

⁷ As detailed in Triantaphyllidou and Veikou, 2002, 199ff., Greek Albanians are also given a preferential status as 'people without Greek citizenship but with Greek nationality' but they receive fewer benefits, allocated on a discretionary basis by local authorities, than the Pontic Greeks from the FSU. In this respect the idea of a 'hierarchy of Greekness' is an apt way of describing the varieties of criteria used to determine social inclusion and exclusion practices vis-à-vis migrants in contemporary Greece.

⁸ As everyone who deals with 'refugees,' 'immigrants,' or 'minorities' knows, the question of numbers is particularly thorny, since the different parties (i.e. state, NGOs, migrant associations) involved in the procedure of calculating numbers have their own reason to increase or decrease the figures. In Athens, the discrepancy is quite large, as the official figure lists 15,000 Ukrainians, while the Ukrainian societies give the number 100,000 [Kaurinkoski, 2003].

the principle of family unification.⁹ As the Soviet Greek repatriates characteristically note, 'In order to get a Greek identity card today, you need to have a family member already settled in Greece and in possession of a Greek identity card themselves -otherwise you cannot *become* a Greek.'

A second paradox has to do with the analysis of the east-west migration phenomenon which includes the movement of *borders across* people, not just the movement of people *through* borders. It is evident that the wider category of Greeks of the former USSR is technically incorrect since 1991, since it refers to a now-defunct state authority, and therefore, to the need for incorpo-

rating the Greek minority into the corresponding post-Soviet Republic on a political and social level. Despite the use of old Soviet passports by most repatriates, they are now required to bear passports issued by the former USSR state in question.

Similarly the Greek state employs a classification based on country of origin. This is evident in the study undertaken by the General Secretariat of Repatriate Greeks of the Ministry of Macedonia-Thrace entitled 'The identity of co-ethnic repatriates from the former USSR' (2000). This collective work uses the criterion of country of origin as a main axis for classifying repatriates.¹⁰

REPATRIATES AS HUMAN CAPITAL FOR THE HOST COUNTRY

Most socio-economic studies of repatriates' adjustment to Greek society focus on their role in the Greek job market [Fakiolas, 2004; Kasimati, 1998]. One of the relatively recent estimates with respect to their assimilation is that repatriates are 'demographically dynamic, as their age distribution is younger than that of our own country'

[Kasimati, 1998, p. 286]. In terms of education as cultural capital, they also seem to have the advantage over indigenous Greeks, especially in terms of tertiary (27%-15%) and secondary education (36%-15%). From this perspective, it is obvious that their presence is considered positive.

"DIFFERENCES" ON THE INTER- AND INTRA-GROUP LEVELS

The dialectic of the recognition of immigrants' rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis their host country is defined by the aforementioned institutional framework. From an anthropological perspective, the conceptual distinctions between 'ourselves' and 'others,' or 'us' and 'them,' comprise the basic categories of identification which, as we

know, are *not* in themselves determined by rigid objective criteria, but rather as other-determining factors in the framework of multiple identities which together make up a social group's *subjectivity* [Barth, 1994].

On a cultural level, the distance of relocation does not refer simply to the geographic distance, but also to the ensuing cultural

⁹ For a well-grounded opinion regarding the development of Greek policy towards the Greeks of the former Soviet Union, see Notaras, 2000, pp. 311-325. Notaras notes the evolution of Greek policy and identifies three stages in its development: a) from a 'conspiracy of silence' (1970-79) during the Cold War to b) a problem of policy, client mobilization, and national awareness of the 'Pontic problem' (1979-1989), which was circumstantially identified with the problem of Thrace's development, to c) a 'national problem,' identified as such as a result of the activities of the National Foundation for

Reception and Resettlement of Repatriate Greeks (1990-1995).

¹⁰ It is perhaps noteworthy that in this case the former intra-group appellations, such as 'Uzbek', 'Georgian', or 'Kazakh', as used by the migrants themselves, based on 'inter-subjective' criteria such as accent, differences in behavior, cuisine, and dietary preferences (for instance, the habit of putting milk in one's tea is peculiar to Central Asians), acquire a bureaucratic dimension and are legitimated by repatriates' classification in the records of the Ministry of Public Order by 'country of origin.'

differences (values, social practices) that remain an important question for the people relocating, as revealed by a series of studies on the processes for repatriates' social and cultural integration and adjustment. The context of this relocation is often competitive. Therefore, to the extent that being Greek, or of Greek descent, is a privilege in terms of the treatment of immigrants and their access to social benefits (residence permits, permanent settlement permits, rent subsidy programs, favorable loans towards a first home, social benefits, and pensions) in the host country, the immigrant's identity is defined by the 'other,' and is experienced, on an intra-group level, as being negotiable. For instance, during the process of attaining permanent residence through the National Foundation for Reception and Resettlement of Repatriate Greeks in the agricultural settlement program in Thrace, the definition of the 'other' on the intra-group level was often intense and sometimes discordant: 'You are not *real* Greeks, because Stalin didn't exile you,' said the repatriates from Kazakhstan. 'How can you be Greeks, with faces like those? Why are your eyes slanted? From the dust of Kazakhstan?' the people from Georgia would reply. A third group of repatriates - the Turkish-speaking Greeks of Tsalka - who also settled in Thrace, trumped this with another criterion, that of given names: 'We're *more* Greek, because our first names are Greek, see our names:

Epameinontas, Pericles, Odysseus, Sophocles...'

It is worth noting that the essential argumentation in the above conversations about the subjects' Greek identity is not defined *qualitatively*; it is defined *quantitatively*, i.e. in terms of *how* Greek someone is and not simply *whether* s/he is Greek.¹¹ Both in Thrace (Sapes) and in the western quarters of Thessaloniki repatriates, known up to now as *Rossopóntii* ('Russian-Pontics'), have been progressively defined over the last three years, on the basis of their country of origin; Kazakhs, Georgians, Russians, Armenians, Uzbeks.

From the host country's point of view, the change in the repatriates' official classification based on country of origin entails a *nationalization* process, and, by extension, an increasing cultural differentiation which is significant from a social dynamic perspective, even though for the majority of the host community, ex-Soviets still remain the undifferentiated mass of '*Rossopóntii*.' The multifaceted relationship between documentation policy and the development of collective identities is a complex social process, in which the multiplicity of the acting parties (e.g. state, political parties, NGOs, mass media, citizenry), and their ability to name, classify, and therefore to construct social reality, are a fact of modern politics [Kertzer and Arel, 2002, pp. 6-10].

POLICIES, LIVELIHOODS AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

It is often said that policy is the 'ghost in the machine,' in other words, the force which animates the administrative apparatus and gives life to the futility of bureaucracy. I have attempted to paint, in broad strokes, a picture of the process by which the policy of migration as repatriation develops within a context of interaction, negotiation, and

management of migrants as active participants adopting survival strategies, manipulating the institutional framework to their advantage, though often in spite of itself, in the particular migration pattern discussed here, the concept of 'ethnic minorities' is a transitional stage in the acquisition of Greek citizenship, that is then used by the migrants

¹¹ It is characteristic that such dialogs on the intra-group level have frequently been this repetitive since 1989, regardless of cultural context. In other words, they are similar, whether they occur in the *kolkhoz* of Kazakhstan, in the markets of Tbilisi, or in the queues

outside the Greek embassy in Moscow between 1991 and 1993, when I studied these groups *prior* to their repatriation. They also appeared in the EIAPOE facilities in Thrace between 1994 and 1997.

either as a passport for further migration within the European Union, or for return to their countries of origin (mainly Georgia and Southern Russia). Using old Soviet passports still in their possession, they increase their potential for mobility, both *within* and *outside* of the post-Soviet region. Thus, as a *livelihood* strategy, most migrants do not abandon their former identities. They use them as a comparative advantage for investing in the country of origin (FSU), to the extent that this offers some benefit, e.g. real estate investments. For others, repatriation to Greece, and the Greek identity they acquire during the process, serves as a transitional stage in the sense that it allows access to a system of social welfare currently unavailable in their country of origin. Quite unexpectedly, an interesting 'reverse migration' pattern is observable in more recent years with special reference to the category of repatriate pensioners to which the elderly are entitled. The pensions (some 120 Euros per month) are relatively meager by contemporary Greek standards, but they can constitute the main source of income in the country of origin, to which many repatriates return. It is cheaper and less painful to live 'there' (FSU) than 'here' (Greece). In this case, repatriates as *migrants* co-exist in two spaces, trying to draw their comparative advantage from each: lower cost of living, lower cost of medical care, greater familiarity with the environment, and better application of linguistic and cultural aptitudes in the countries of origin as opposed to a better social welfare framework, better job market and direct family networks in Greece.

Those who 'return' to the post-Soviet region in order to live there as consumers are increasingly becoming a form of 'transnational migrants' or 'denizens'. From the life-history perspective of each migrant or migrating group, the various migrations

they have experienced, whether these occurred during each individual's own life or through the family history's, constitute a *cumulative migratory capital* [Van Hear, 1998, pp. 51-52]. This *capital* includes different types of 'know-how': knowledge of transport networks, facility with border negotiations with the authorities and the various bureaucracies, and access to social welfare systems and job markets.

Repatriates from the former USSR are counted twice. Greeks and possible voters in the Greek state, they are Greek citizens, while as Greeks living in the former USSR, they belong to the Greek minority networks in their countries of origin thus increasing their cultural and economic capital in the framework of everyday survival without decreasing the value of their Greek descent in the post-Soviet region. This adjustment is not necessarily either illegal or worthy of censure; it is part of the utilization of cultural and *migratory capital*, which includes movement between two *homelands*. Conceiving of and accessing this particular type of dual arrangement *is not* an inalienable right supported by an official state policy; it is a type of investment open to post-Soviet citizens that are able to maintain their co-ethnic networks on both sides of the East-West migration route.

Evidently the above migration pattern does not fit into the traditional bipolar distinction between the settler and the migrant worker model. It involves a transnational migration pattern which uses the assets provided to the 'privileged migrants' (i.e. those who have access to a European and a non-European citizenship) in the subjects' own interests. And this development has put pressure on states to address the issue that has to date not been subject to deliberation in the context of migration: i.e. dual citizenship.

CONCLUSION

Preceding sections have detailed the evolution of Greek immigration policy that has emerged in the last fifteen years with a view to settling its ex-Soviet diaspora. I have

referred to this group as 'privileged foreigners'. The notion of 'privilege' presupposes an implicit comparison: who are the privileged being compared with? As noted,

the ethnic Greeks from the FSU are privileged with respect to other aliens (undocumented migrants and refugees) in terms of social, political, and economic rights, inclusion of access to full citizenship status. By comparison to native Greek citizens they are also seen as privileged since the recent economic incentives for self-settlement in both

rural and urban areas are viewed as a type of favoritism not available to natives. What remains significant is the fact that for those ex-Soviet citizens willing to maintain a transient (transnational) existence between two homelands, access to both systems is not excluded; and this lack of exclusion is also a privilege.

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