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Chapter

# The Appropriation of Discourses and Practices: Female Migration from Russia to Greece in the 1990s and 2000s

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## Abstract

The article examines transformations in identities of women as a result of their migration from Russia to Greece and appropriation of Greekness. The concept of appropriation is advocated as a key idea of analysis and interpretation of migrants' experiences. The author's position regarding the relevancy of the concept of appropriation is based upon Paul Ricoeur's understanding of the process of interpretation and some contemporary anthropological works. The results of the author's fieldwork in Greece are presented in the article which is concentrated on two life stories. These life stories are juxtaposed so as to compare different techniques of appropriation. The discussion provides evidence of ways in which identities can be manifested and changed during the process of appropriation. The argument is that the appropriation of Greekness may take place (and be used) in contrasting ways, the causes of which are rooted in pre-emigration experience. The author concludes that one case demonstrates how rural Greek identity was successfully appropriated and the other case shows how the process of appropriation and re-appropriation of urban Greekness resulted in construction of global identity.

**Keywords:** appropriation, re-appropriation, identity, migration, Greece, Russia

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 State biopolitical discourses

Since Michele Foucault revived the discussion of the concept of biopolitics and imparted to it new intellectual impulses, some research communities of post-Foucaultian analysis of this phenomenon were formed. Foucault did not provide us with the "theory of biopolitics." Following the changes happened in Europe of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Foucault demonstrates two poles of "power over life": one of them is concentrated on the discipline of body, it relates to the seventeenth century and was named by Foucault "an anatomo-politics of the human body"; the second pole "formed somewhat later" is concentrated on the regulative control over "species body" and called by Foucault "a biopolitics of the population" ([1]: 139). When he bound biopolitics with its object—population, Foucault created a marking-off for studies of forms of state management. Introduction



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of "biological" categories in the context of the social seems to be an inseparable quality of the field biopolitics describes. By means of biopolitics, the state regulates and controls its populations with no interest to subjectivity, cases, and personal stories. Concepts such as 'homogenization,' 'naturalization,' 'assimilation,' and even 'migration' have natural science connotations. All of them are elements of state discourses on populations but not discourses of people talking about their personal experience.

### 1.2 "Appropriation" as a key concept

As for my fieldwork of 2009–2011 in Greece, I was interested in opinions of people, those people who had lived through migration from Russia to Greece. The previously mentioned concepts could not enrich my toolkit in order to study their stories because those concepts are the products of state discourses and associated with them. In search of a relevant concept which would serve as an explanatory model of perception by former Russian citizens of Greek discourses and practices, I came to the anthropological literature operating with the term "appropriation." In June 2010 on the annual seminar *Newer Anthropological Theory* held in the University of Oslo, where I reported the results of my research of identity discourses of Greek migrants, Arnd Schneider presented his book about appropriation [2]. The concept of appropriation seemed me important in terms of explanation how migrants perceive and accept (or reject) the elements of everyday life of the Greek society they live. The head of the seminar, professor Bruce Kapferer, recommended me to try out the concept of appropriation in my research in order to interpret migrants' identity as an alternative to the state gaze on migrants and migration.

This article is an attempt to use the concept of appropriation in the analysis of two women's stories about their migration from Russia to Greece. Comparison of the stories gives evidences of how identities may be manifested and changed during the appropriation process. I have already demonstrated that migration with no capitals (except symbolic) was a widespread form of migration of ex-Soviet citizens to Greece [3], and women's stories represented here are evidences of such a form of migration. Characters of the stories are similar to a certain extent: both of them came from Russia, were about the same age, both made decisions to go to Greece, and became successful, each in their own way, in terms of appropriation of Greekness. But there are also significant differences between them: social and ethnic origin; attitude toward family, religion, and career; horizons of communication; and techniques of appropriation.

My main argument is that the appropriation of Greekness may take place (and be used) in contrasting ways, the causes of which are rooted in pre-emigration experience. Consequently, the aim of the article is to demonstrate what happens with identity[1] during individual woman migration and what elements of identity are rigid and are formed in the process of appropriation. With this aim in mind, I can formulate the next tasks (1) to discuss a possibility and relevance of the concept of appropriation to the study of migration; (2) to represent in short my field materials characterized two stories of woman migration collected by me in the period 2009–2011 in Greece[2]; to analyze and also afford a certain interpretation of migrants' stories; (3) to compare two stories of migration in terms of techniques of

[1]See the detailed discussion of the concept of identity in: [3].

[2]This fieldwork would be impossible without financial support by L. Meltzers Høyskolefond, Samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet (Universitetet i Bergen), Institutt for sosialantropologi (Universitetet i Bergen).

appropriation; and (4) to demonstrate and evaluate changes in identities using two stories as examples. The main problem this article directed to is that the transformation in identity discourses during migration is underrepresented in contemporary anthropological literature. I look toward filling this gap proceeding from my field data, its analysis and interpretation.

### 1.3 Appropriation: from Ricoeur to anthropology

One of the sources for the aforementioned Schneider's understanding of appropriation is Paul Ricoeur's *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation* [4]. Therefore, I will dwell on Ricoeur's main statements regarding appropriation. Of course, he did not mention migrants. His interest is concentrated on the acceptance of a text by a reader. But who is (in semiotic sense) a newly arrived from Russia migrant if not a reader, the reader of an unfamiliar to her/him text under the name of *Greece*? Ricoeur says about that a reader appropriate the *meaning* of the text and this is "the culmination of reading in a concrete reader" ([4]: 144). He examines a problem of interpretation of a text as play of relations of distanciation and appropriation, borrowing the concept of play from Gadamer. Moreover, Ricoeur understands reading in a very broad sense as a familiarity with a discovering world:

> *If it is true that interpretation concerns essentially the power of the work to disclose a world, then the relation of the reader to the text is essentially his relation to the kind of world which the text presents (*[4]: 144*).*

Ricoeur as can be seen from above identifies world and text and puts on a par the concepts of disclosure a world, interpretation, and appropriation. As an opposition to appropriation, Ricoeur suggests the term "distanciation" which is understood by him as a concept "linked to any objective and objectifying study of a text." ([4]: 145). According to him, objectification of the world-text is expressed in the process of distanciation intrinsic, in my opinion, to biopolitics of the state, while subjective acceptance and understanding of the world-text are expressed in the process of appropriation, inaccessible to objectifying discourses of the state but accessible to people capable of understanding/reading. Therefore, the appropriation is the opposition not only to distanciation but also to biopolitics. Ricoeur notes that appropriation apart from everything else "*gives* the subject new capacities for knowing himself" ([4]: 154), and this remark is of fundamental importance for my migratory perspective. A migrant finds herself/himself in other country; often does not understand the language of this country; and faces with unfamiliar conduct, with different understanding of privacy and publicness, and sometimes with aggression and the criminality. She or he has to solve a lot of problems connected to bureaucracy procedures, job search, etc. And yet, as the friend of mine left together with his Russian family for Canada says: "Migration gives you another chance, the chance to become someone you will never be in your home country. And you have to use this chance." Understanding of appropriation as a process of acceptance of a new world and simultaneously a new ability and probability of self-improvement and in the end as formation of new identity corresponds in a better way to my tasks and aim. Ricoeur notes:

> *'Appropriation' is my translation of the German term Aneignung. Aneignen means 'to make one's own' what was initially 'alien'... Appropriation is the concept which is suitable for the actualisation of meaning as addressed to someone. It takes the place of the answer in the dialogical situation... (*[4]: 147*).*

At the present time appropriation as a term used for description of social and cultural processes is wide spread [5–8].[3] Schneider's version of appropriation [2] is developed by him on the base of his analysis of Buenos Aires art field integrated indigenous and European imaginaries. According to him, the process of appropriation is based on a play on identity in the art field. Ricoeur's idea of appropriation and its hermeneutic perspective allowed Schneider to consider globalization and cultural processes from the points of view of individual actors; and his main purpose became the discussion of crossings of different processes of collective and individual construction of identity ([2]: 33, 169–170).

> *...[A]ppropriation in its formal sense means a taking out of one context and putting into another, yet the extended meaning I have been advocating sees it as a hermeneutic procedure that, consequently, implies not only that cultural elements are invested with new signification but also that those who appropriate are transformed, and ultimately construct and assume new identities (*[2]: 29*).*

Schneider in such a way links the topic of appropriation with the topic of new identities. It is important because it demonstrates the difference in the positions of state viewing the picture of gradual homogenization of the populations in terms of naturalization of migrants (or, at least, having a platform to view it) and a migrant appropriating a new life, becoming such a person she/he 'has never been before', and acquiring new identities. For a migrant, this process is a disclosure of a world and changing of herself/himself (though not always successful and not always happening in the direction acceptable to the state); for the state, the same process at the best looks like homogenization, at the worst—like formation of new ethnic and social groups together with their rules, borders, and political interests.

No less attractive is the concept of appropriation of Roger Sansi [9]. He studies appropriation in the framework of his research of Candomblé, a system of Afro-Brazilian sorcery, and its transformations. He poses a question: how did the forbidden until the mid-twentieth century magic practices become "Culture" and even "National Heritage" of Brazil ([9]: 2)? This process, according to Sansi, was brought about by "a historical transformation of practices, values, and discourses" ([9]: 3). Brazilian intellectuals objectified Candomblé as the Afro-Brazilian culture, but it was not a reification because the objectification of intellectuals was supported and appropriated by supporters of Candomblé, who " have assumed the discourses and practices of Afro-Brazilian culture as their own" ([9]: 3). Sansi demonstrates three stages of this big transformation: objectification, appropriation, and re-appropriation ([9]: ch. 2, 3, 8, 9). He explains this as follows:

> *...I use 'objectification' to describe processes in which things, persons and places are recognised as bearers of specific and different forms of value or quality... This notion of objectification always has to be accompanied by its complementary term: appropriation, or the process by which strange things are recognised as familiar, as parts of the self (*[9]: 4*).*

[3]In this article, I do not discuss all the spectrum of the term of appropriation use in English, Russian and Roman Languages. This term is derived from Latin *approprio*—"to make one's own" ([14]: 144), *appropriare*—"to take to one's own separate use" ([15]: 83). The term *appropriation* is most widespread now in the field of law and also in such disciplines as jurisprudence and law history, in the field of art and in the field of economy. Schneider in his discussion of the relevancy of this term to anthropology argues that the meaning of this term should be taken from Ricoeur's hermeneutic interpretation, where the process of understanding is based upon appropriation; its other meanings should be stay aside ([2]: 26, 199).

Sansi compare the Brazilian situation with Pacific materials on appropriation presented by Nicholas Thomas [5], who demonstrates the parameters of "the indigenous appropriation of European things" ([5]: 83–124) and the reverse process of "the European appropriation of indigenous things" ([5]: 125–184). And if Thomas argues that local population and arrived Europeans appropriate cultures of each other (although asymmetrically), Sansi does not stop on the issue of mutual appropriation but moves on and argues the two sides of exchange "in many ways became one" ([9]: 4). In order to explain this, Sansi introduces the concept of re-appropriation; he considers that by means of re-appropriation people.

> *overcome and (involuntarily) mock both the official and the critical discourses... [T]hey create their own story around objects... [T]hey are doing something more than 'resisting', because they are not aware of opposing an official interpretation; they are producing something else, something new, inscribed in a time and a space (*[9]: 4*).*

In the case of Brazilian city of Bahia, the object is discourses and practices of heirs of African descendants; in the case of Argentina, heirs of indigenous (Indian) population of the country. Both authors (Sansi and Schneider) account as subjects of appropriation persons or individual actors, whose capacity to appropriation determines their identity. As Schneider argues, practices of appropriation "are intrinsically linked to contested spaces of identity construction" ([2]: 22).

### 1.4 Migration from ex-Soviet countries to Greece

Coming back to Greek topic, it should be mentioned that in the 1990–2000s, the form of family migration was most typical for ex-Soviet Greeks.[4] Whole families of repatriates came to Greece or sometimes they stayed in Russia (or other post-Soviet country of their origin), one or two persons who were responsible for selling the rest of family real estate or business properties. Individual migration was a rather rare phenomenon. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, family ties in the USSR (as well as in post-Soviet countries) have always been an object of construction and enforced support by the state (see, for example: ([10]: 138–140). As for ex-soviet Greeks, they have had first-hand experience of the "family principle" according to which their families were subjected to forced displacements and repressions in the 1930–1950s. Moreover, in terms of wealth, the three most common sources of migratory financial capital for those who decide to migrate were private real estate (which considered by Greek families as common and shared among family members according to their customary law), private entrepreneurial property (which has ever considered as family ownership too), and savings.[5] Many of those who left their homes in post-Soviet countries converted all their ownerships into financial capital; others, in contrast, by all means tried to keep their ownerships in Russia and other countries and did not hasten to burn the possible way back. The money from the sales as well as savings was spent in Greece for rent

[4] "We [ex-Soviet Greeks] depart to Greece in whole families mostly. Some [families] send to Greece scouts first, one or two, other families go all together," told me my Athenian friend came from Abkhazia.

[5] In the cases mentioned here, formal ownership right confirmed by the state is just a "symbolic right" for family members, who according to customary law may consider this right as common or shared where the family, but not a single family member who is officially the owner of a business, bank account or real estate, is a "real" collective owner (see, for example, Vladimir's case described in: ([3]: 92). Inevitably there are two possible scenarios in the situation of dispersal of ownership: division according to customary law and division according official law (in controversial cases).

or purchase houses and flats.[6] Therefore, family ties were a sort of guarantee during the process of migration and initial appropriation for ex-Soviet Greeks.

Secondly, Greek families having shown a tendency to fragmentation in Soviet times[7] could keep stable ties among their members and among kindred families thanks to their living in non-Greek environments in the places of their forced resettlements. Family ties stayed strong even in those cases when young family members left their families for other cities in order to education and work.

In the framework of post-communist transition, an independent women's migration is being discussed as a "post-wall" phenomenon and characterized by new opportunities for women who are "trying to face new market conditions or to escape the dominant discourse of nationalist projects in their home countries" ([11]: 8).

## 2. Anna and Irina: life in Russia

### 2.1 Anna's case

Anna P. is single; she lives in Athens in her own flat and works for an insurance company. She was born in the Soviet Union in 1971 in the city of Yessentuki (Southern Russia). This is how she describes her life in Russia:

> *Well, what, basically, [was] in Russia? I grew up in a normal family, well. Daddy was a captain, Mother—a physician. Yes, a deep sea master, a mariner. Then at a certain stage, I think I was around fifteen, he stopped his travels and started working at a meat processing plant; he was [graduated as] an engineer, therefore, he ... [could find a job]. I studied hard at school, and even finished with a gold medal, as far as I remember. I was born in Yessentuki, [the region of] Caucasian Mineral Waters. There I have been studying, finished musical school. Well, in principle, it was such a family ... classical Soviet family, intelligentsia (intelligenty). Well, Daddy earned, of course, more money than Mum did; Mum was a physician, so, in principle, in Soviet times it was a prestigious profession, but [physicians] didn't earn much money. So, it was a pleasant atmosphere [in the family].*
>
> *I studied well at school, then entered the Pharmacological Institute in Pyatigorsk; studied in Pyatigorsk.[8] Then, basically, the perestroika started, at the end of my education the perestroika started. ... (my translation)*

In this fragment of the interview, as well as in her other stories about her family, Anna remembers the life together with her parents with warmth, using such terms as "classical Soviet family," "kind atmosphere," and "intellectuality"; and against a background of a successful and intellectual family[9], she demonstrates her own success in education. In Anna's family, the question of ethnicity has never been substantial. They had rather weak contacts with maternal relatives (Greeks), and after

[6]According to my interviews with Nikolaos F., age 41, Athens, Greece, 2009; Alexandros V., age 56, Athens, Greece, 2009; Philippos S., age 57, Pyrgos, Greece, 2009.

[7]As Voutira ([16]: 387) put it, "the more you divide, the more you survive."

[8]Pyatigorsk lies 16 kilometers from Yessentuki.

[9]The Russian term *intelligentsiia*, although it has certain semantic connotations with Eng. *intellectuals*, is rather specific and has social implications especially since its Marxist definition as a "social stratum" engaging its position somewhere between classes. In late Soviet and post-Soviet common use, it meant not only the social category of people earning intellectually, but also thinking independently and supporting specific life-styles.

the death of Anna's mother from cancer in 1992, those contacts ceased completely. At the same time, the discourse on intellectuality still remains an important element of her identity.

When Anna trained at the institute, she passed the tests and was invited to work in Moscow for one of the foreign pharmaceutical companies. She was awarded a diploma in 1993 and moved to Moscow, where she started to work for this company. She entered postgraduate course (*aspirantura*) at a university to study pharmacy (where, subsequently, she defended her candidate dissertation). Anna worked for the pharmaceutical company almost until her departure to Greece in 1999. Recounting the Moscow period of her life, Anna aspires to stress that she, a provincial girl, was able to build a career in Moscow and to keep her place even during periods of major economic turbulence. Success, independence, and fortune are key categories in the description of her Moscow period.

Anna's decision concerning emigration is not exactly understandable to me. On the one hand, Anna had a good job and earned enough money; on the other hand, she characterizes the situation in the country as unstable, with vague perspectives. Once, I asked her directly: "Why did you leave Russia?" and she answered: "I wanted something new. I wanted to see if I could live in another country."

> *It was such a period when I had to make a decision, because in general it was a difficult situation. Moscow is a brutal city. I thought about how and what I had to do ... In principle, I had my Greek roots. And at least I had a possibility—I thought so—[to migrate thanks to] my position, [which] was legitimate. (my translation)*

Her father supported Anna's decision; moreover, her younger sister also showed her willingness to migrate and together they processed documents for Greece. Anna's financial conditions are also not quite clear to me: Anna arrived in Athens by coach (the cheapest transport for travel to Greece from Russia) having 500 US dollars given to her by her father. Hence, she did not have any savings.

When Anna decided to migrate, Maria, a lawyer and local Greek Society employee who processed Anna's documents, rendered her "a great service." During our conversations, Anna mentioned Maria time and again with warmth and gratitude. It is interesting to note that Anna's aunt (her mother's sister) worked at that time at the Passport and Visa Service as an officer processing documents for departing repatriates; she did not render any assistance to Anna, and when she learned about Anna's decision, she took it with a pinch of salt. In turn, one of Maria's points of advice, which in the future simplified the process of acquisition of Greek citizenship, was to change Anna's birth certificate (contained the record "nationality: Russian") into new one (with the record "nationality: Greek") and to go to Greece as a Greek and a repatriate, but not to use a tourist visa for entry into the country. Although this manner of processing the document was more expensive (about 500 US Dollars), Anna, being unfamiliar with these matters, accepted Maria's opinion and did everything that she advised. Her father subsidized the exchange of birth certificates for both his daughters as well as their new Russian passports because Maria insisted in that it was necessary to go to Greece "not just as a repatriate but as a daughter of a Greek woman, not only as a daughter but as a Greek yourself."

> *Apparently... how shall I say it in Russian... destiny does exist, perhaps. ...Maria told me, 'You have to take all your documents with you, [including] the birth certificate of your mother and your own...' I even took the birth certificate of my grand-mother! To confirm that all of them were Greeks. She told me: 'When you arrive, translate them straight away.' ...I am so grateful to her. ... (my translation)*

Thus, the processing of documents did not cause any difficulties for Anna. Moreover, thanks to Maria's advice, she simplified the procedure of gaining Greek citizenship.

Ever since the start of mass repatriation, regular coach routes have operated a service connecting some cities in the South of Russia with Thessalonica and Athens. Operating coach routes run via the territories of Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, and Bulgaria. Consequently, to get to Greece by coach, Russian citizens had to procure additional transit visas to Romania and Bulgaria (Ukraine and Moldova provided visa-free admittance to their territories). Moreover, to reach Greece from Russia by these routes requires passing through 10 customs checkpoints, often involving long queues in regard to inspections. The most emotional Anna's memories were connected to this coach trip.

### 2.2 Analysis of Anna's case

So, Anna to the moment of her departure from Russia was formed as a successful woman. Her identity was built upon intellectuality and ethnic indifference (not only Soviet school internationalism but also the lack of consideration for the Pontic Greek diaspora affairs). Anna took seriously her career growth and therefore moved to Moscow and defended the dissertation there; consequently, personal career and development are also important elements of her identity. To the same (career), discourse on identity may be ascribed "prestigious profession" of her mother, school gold medal, and her musical education. Possessing absolutely inessential financial capital, Anna owned great symbolic capital. Possibly, indefiniteness and instability in post-perestroika Russia did not allow Anna to manifest her identity, to develop her career, and to demonstrate her success and intellectuality. This reason may serve at least in some degree as an explanation of her departure.

### 2.3 Irina's case

Irina B. (born in 1974) is married; she had nine children and was living in the village of North-Western Peloponnesus at the moment of our acquaintanceship. She was a housewife but worked part-time as a seamstress in Patra. Irina's recollections about her life in the USSR have quite another perspective. She was born in Central Asia and spent most of her childhood there in a military town, where her father served as an officer. Her mother was a housewife. Irina also had an elder sister and younger brother. When she was 7 years old, she started school, like all the children in the USSR, and, according to her story, she was the best student in the class. When she was 13, her father received a new appointment at a military base located in Maikop in the South of Russia (now it is a capital of the Republic of Adygea). The family bought a small house in the village of Predgornyi near Maikop. Starting from that moment, Irina's recollections become disordered and contradictory. It is unclear what happened with her father but his figure just vanishes from Irina's stories of her youth. Her mother very quickly turned into a chronic alcoholic, likewise her sister and then her brother. Irina's academic aspirations get worse and worse ("I slid down to low marks (*skatilas' na dvoiki*)") and she hardly completed the ninth grade. After that, she enrolled at a vocational technical college in Maikop and specialized in sewer treatment processing after 2 years. In the village where Irina lived, there were many Greek migrants from Tsalka (a rural district in Georgia) who had close relationships with Greece, giving Irina the possibility to get information about this country and about intensive migration to Greece.

She married very soon after finishing vocational technical college and gave birth to her first son (she was 17). Her husband, a local resident, committed a crime

(theft) before their son's birth and went to prison for several years. When her son was about 1 year old, she departed to work in Greece by boat and gave custody of her son to her mother. As expected Irina should be started working at a garment factory in Patra, together with other young women from Russia. She signed this contract in the biggest Southern Russian port of Novorossiysk (about 250 kilometers from Maikop), thanks to her "Greek connections." However, when she reached Patra, she discovered that she had to work in the nightclubs of Peloponnesus either as a dancer or as a waitress.

When describing her family's life during the Maikop period, Irina was very reluctant to go into any detail. She said almost nothing about her brother, sister, or (first) husband, and when she did, she described them rather negatively. The only issue (in Russia) troubling her was a quarrel with her sister over the real estate remaining after her mother and brother's deaths. Before leaving Russia, she had not worked anywhere and never learnt Greek.

Nevertheless, Irina keeps her positive attitude toward Russia and gave all her children dual citizenship (i.e., they are citizens of Greece and Russia). In answer to my question "Why did you give them Russian citizenship?", she said, "To go to my motherland." Here, it is necessary to mention the circumstances of our acquaintance and the presence of my family for more than a month in Tanos' household. When Irina lived in Russia, she was a friend of my cousin who helped her with various bureaucratic affairs. I got to know Irina having gotten in touch by phone. Irina was ready to put my family up but asked me to introduce myself as her cousin with whom she had had no contact for a long time. I agreed. Hence, I became a cousin of Irina not only for her family's sake but also for the informants I met, thanks to her. Tanos and his parents knew hardly anything about Irina's relatives in Russia; none of them has ever been there. Therefore, that misrepresentation was not too difficult for her. Thus, they took us for remote relatives and allowed us to occupy a small, recently built house on the premises of their dwelling where four of their sons had lived. Irina explained this by saying asking that her family would not receive outsiders as guests, so she would have had difficulties explaining who we were and why we had to stay with them. But another reason for our deception became obvious to us later. By representing us as her relatives, she could demonstrate that she is not alone and that her cousin and his wife are "decent people" and, by such, raise her status in the family (especially on the side of the minor daughter-in-law—see more about her below).

### 2.4 Analysis of Irina's case

Thus, Irina by her departure to Greece had not have any symbolic capital, except for the skill to sew. She could not stop sewing curtains to Patrassian hotels even during our presence in her family. "It's the real money," she explained. Additionally, she was familiar with agricultural labor because her previous life in village was connected to everyday agricultural activity on the land plot of her Russian family. A few circumstances of her life in Russia she told me about witnessed that even if Irina's pre-migration identity had particular important elements, they most likely were odds and ends of state discourses like (1) affiliation to Russians she manifested not too much (perhaps, the most serious argument in support of her Russiannes for her Greek family was our appearance in their household as her relatives) and even did not aspire to teach her children the Russian Language and (2) love to motherland, to Russia given that she was born and grew up in Central Asia and then moved to Adygea. Everything touching her Russian family represented by her as already coped negative experience from what she was building her new positive appropriated Greek world (see below about anti-identity). Irina had nothing to get with her

in Greece except for her scarce symbolic capital (which has played a significant role in her personal technique of appropriation of Greekness though). She said time and again that her husband Tanos taught her everything bearing in mind agriculture and stockbreeding but also local rules of life. That means that she was in complete denial about her Russian experience and its relevancy to Greek life.

## 3. First experiences of life in Greece

### 3.1 Anna's case

Anna remembers her first days in Greece in great detail. She came to Athens by coach in the night; her fellow passengers advised her to find a cheap hotel in Omonia (one of the central Athenian districts situated around the Omonia Square). Accordingly, having got off the coach, she took a taxi, paid the driver a considerable amount of money, "for which it would be possible to go around Athens several times," as she says, and reached Omonia, which was a 15 minutes' drive from the bus stop, and ventured into an old bar where they were apparently speaking Russian to enquire about staying overnight.

Although Anna says that before arriving in Greece she had already visited some foreign countries and had certain notions about Greece, she notes that she did not know that the Omonia district was one of the roughest parts of the city. Despite having relatives in Greece, Anna has never formed any relationships with them and, because she was on bad terms with the Greek side of her family in Russia, she did not even know their addresses. For all that, Anna had only one lead—the telephone number of a woman living in Athens. She was a cousin of Anna sister's friend, a migrant from Russia of Armenian origin. But Anna decided not to disturb her so late at night and searched for accommodation by herself.

In that bar, where she came out of the taxi, a certain Zhora from Georgia promised her a comfortable overnight stay and took her to the apartment. In Zhora's apartment, she discovered five men asleep. "I was in absolute shock," she resumed. In the morning, one of them, who originally hailed from Zheleznovodsk, a city about 25 km from Yessentuki, suggested Anna use his room until she had made contact with her "relatives." "This place isn't for you," he added. Several times, during the day, Anna tried to phone her only Athenian contact; Zhora and his friend followed her all that time. Anna was wondering: "My God, is this really Greece, is this really the center of a city? Usually city centers are prestigious and flashy, but this area here was a complete hell hole!" At last, her Armenian friend responded and sent her husband by car to pick up Anna and her luggage from Zhora's flat.

Anna's story is represented by her as a series of lucky accidents, and at the same time, she clearly demonstrates her ability to make decisions and her aspiration to change her life for the better. Her single acquaintance in Greece through the Employment Service found her a job as babysitter, and on her third day in Athens, Anna landed a job (accommodation and meals included) with a prosperous Athenian family, where she worked not only as a babysitter but also as a house cleaner. In recounting this period of her life, Anna's intellectual identity appears. For example, she talks about how her hosts were surprised by her ability to use cutlery at mealtimes; how they were amazed at her proficiency at playing the piano; and how the host a year later, when saying goodbye to her, said that he understood that Anna deserved an altogether different sort of work (i.e., work that would stretch her intellectual abilities).

This family, according to Anna's words, rendered significant assistance to Anna. During the 1-year period of working as a babysitter, she mastered the spoken

language, thanks to the intra-family communication. She took the chance to attend Greek courses so that she was able to describe the history of her family (her mother's family) when she filled in documents for gaining citizenship. This family acted as guarantors, when officials were accepting a decision concerning Anna's Greek citizenship, and provided their address for her registration. This family, moreover, found a job for Anna's sister who arrived after Anna (to care for the host's aged mother). Ever since then, Anna still keeps friendly relations with the family and visits them on holidays.

When she had mastered the Greek language and gained citizenship, Anna decided to seek work in her specialty (pharmaceutist), along with submitting her diploma for confirmation to the Center for Recognition of Titles of Foreign Universities. Despite not having that confirmation, she managed to find a job in a small private chemist's in the north of Athens. After a year of her working there, thanks to her efforts and experience, the income of the chemist's increased fivefold. Thanks to familiarity with the local population and clients of the pharmacy, she was able to rent a cheap flat not far from the pharmacy, where she has been living for 7 years. Anna notes time and again that, during her work as a babysitter and at the private pharmacy, she did not think about the size of her salary: "Well, there is some salary and it's good!" All her energy was directed toward the Greek language acquisition, formation of social networks, receiving a full status as a citizen of Greece and confirmation of her diploma. When she had her diploma confirmed, had a good command of language, and received professional experience in Greece, Anna transferred to another pharmacy, and here the question of salary is vital to her. According to Anna's own estimation, that was a point in her biography concluding the period of "initial adaptation" to the life in Greece.

Before departing from Russia, Anna had a boyfriend, Mark, who migrated to Israel at the same time as Anna had left. They kept in touch with each other and when Anna became a Greek citizen, she decided to go to Israel in order to marry Mark and probably settle down there. They intended to plan their wedding on Cyprus. However, after a month in Israel, she understood that migration had changed both her and Mark. They parted, although they continue to be on friendly terms. When talking about Mark, Anna compares the differences between hers' and his migration. Her opinion is that the state of Israel takes care of its repatriates much more than Greece. Thus, after a year in Israel, Mark worked as one of the co-directors of a large organization. In other words, he did not lose his symbolic capital collected in Russia as well as the time for integration into the new society, whereas what is known migration to Greece leads to "declassing" and "deskilling" ([12]: 538).

### 3.2 Analysis of Anna's case

Appropriation of Greekness has begun in entirely advantageous conditions for Anna by contrast to Irina and many other migrants I am familiar with. She spent 3 days for the search of the source of subsistence and accommodation and only 1 year for the return to her profession. Events of her first year in Greece together with the circumstances mentioned demonstrate that she did not reject the elements of her identity most important to her, even her professional identity did not suffer. At the same time, Anna is not bored with the 'conversion into Greek mores;' she uses the homology, equivalency of social fields (in Russia and Greece) and settles easily down to new places (her intellectuality helped her on her first place of work, her professionalism—on the second one, i.e., those symbolic capitals she had acquired in Russia happened requested in Greece). The use of Greek origin of her mother, that is, Anna's ethnic symbolic capital, provided her with Greek citizenship without

major problems. What can be related to difficulties of appropriation is the language and bureaucratic procedures of confirmation of foreign diplomas and other documents. But even here, it all turned out successfully for Anna. She mastered the New Greek language pretty quickly and received her confirmed diploma also quickly. Many migrants from Russia complained about their poor command of the language, explaining it with that they just had no time to attend language courses due to their work; and if they for all that attended classes they fell asleep from exhaustion.[10] As for the diploma's confirmation, a friend of mine, the migrant from Georgia, has been waiting for such a confirmation for 15 years, and after that, he got a suggestion to pass eight qualifying exams; he rejected this suggestion ([3]: 137–155). Anna was able to find job according to her specialty and, consequently, to use her educational capital for the access to the field of pharmaceutics in Greece thanks to she had got the confirmation of her diploma. The technique of appropriation Anna demonstrates allowed her not to break, not to deny her Russian identity, and use it for the purpose of career growth and financial independence in Greece (even if she puts Israel repatriation program ahead of Greek one). Her Greek identity is not ethnic but civic. Anna is still indifferent ethnically; she condemns Greek nationalism to be a Greek for her means to have full civil rights.

### 3.3 Irina's case

Irina recounts hardly anything about her first 2 years in Greece. On the base of her unrelated phrases from our conversations and occasional recollections, it is possible to state that when she had just arrived, she forfeited her passport. Her future second husband, Tanos, decided to marry her and searched for a long time for "those bad people" who had kept her passport. He redeemed the passport for 300 Euro, and then spent a lot of time helping to procure a new visa for her because her first visa had expired long before. When she got the new visa thanks to Tanos, Irina went to Russia in order to divorce her first husband. When she arrived at her village, she discovered that her husband was in prison again for a fresh crime, making her divorce proceedings easier. When she was divorced, she took her son away and departed for Greece and her next marriage.

Her future husband, Tanos, had met Irina in one of the Patrassian night clubs, where she worked. He came from a peasant family; his parents own large plots of land that they use as fields, vegetable gardens, melon fields, and live-stock farms; the major part of their land consists of old olive groves. All his family (Tanos' parents and aunt, and Tanos himself as an eldest son) lived together in the village situated on a plain between Patra and Pyrgos. Tanos' brother and sister had already resided separately up to the time of Tanos and Irina's marriage. Everybody in Tanos' family knows that Irina is Russian, and they treat her kindly. This situation is possible because the family shares the common Greek discourse of a benevolent relationship to Russia and Russians. Moreover, this family has a friendly attitude toward Russians because Tanos' grandfather bought the biggest part of his lands, basically olive groves, from a Russian emigrant who had escaped to Greece after the Russian revolution of 1917. According to a family tale, that emigrant, being familiar with the limited means of grandfather's family, had sold the land at a very low price.

Irina and Tanos married in 1996, three and a half years after Irina's first arrival in Greece.

[10]According to my field materials of 2009–2011 from Athens, Thessalonica, Alexandroupolis, and Kamena Vourla.

### 3.4 Analysis of Irina's case

For Irina, her first year in Greece is also connected to a negative experience and stays also in the shadow of her contemporary successes as well as the Russian period of her life. Details begin together with appearance the figure of Tanos in her life. Unharmed joining Tanos' family for Irina was conditioned upon her not big agrarian capital and, the most important, that she aspired to full appropriation of Greek identity (see details below). It was important that her ethnic capital, her Russiannes, did not manifested by her in any form. Her coming back to Russia connected to her divorce and obtaining a new visa was necessary only for that she could get repeatedly married and take the son with her. Irina does not plan her return to Russia and connects her future with Greece only. And her identity begins to be formulated as Greek identity.

## 4. To be or not to be a Greek woman

### 4.1 Anna's case

When Anna had been working for about 2 years at a large Athenian pharmacy, she met our common friend, Antonios, who recommended her to his acquaintance, Odysseus, the owner of a finance company. Anna gets a senior position there with a high salary and becomes an economist. Moreover, she enters university and is awarded a diploma in economics while continuing to work for that company. The friendship with Antonios and the beginning of work at the financial company mark a new period in Anna's life. It is possible to say that during this period, her identity, which is based on discourses of *intelligentsia*, *independence*, and *full rights*, forms completely. Antonios acted as her proposer not only to that company but also to the Russian Embassy, to various organizations, both state and nongovernmental, which were engaged in bilateral international relations between Greece and Russia.[11]

Thus, Anna has changed not only her profession but also her technique of appropriation; during the first two periods of her migration history, she aspired not to make contact with natives of Russia and had built up her social networks on the basis of interactions with locals. However, from the moment of her acquaintance with Antonios, her social networks expand significantly with her new contacts in the sphere of Greek-Russian international relations. Using Bourdieu's terminology [13], it is possible to say that she invests, on one hand, her bilingualism, and on the other hand, the symbolic capital developed both in Russian and in Greek educational fields to fields novel to her: cultural,[12] economic,[13] political,[14] and even scientific.[15]

[11]The financial company where Anna worked was connected to Russia and not only commercially. Its owner, Odysseus, millionaire and communist, was from a rural Greek family who supported communists in the time of the Civil War in Greece. Odysseus' father spent 15 years behind bars (see more about political repressions after the Civil War in: [17]) while Odysseus was living in the USSR, where he was awarded a doctoral degree in medicine. His financial company Odysseus was registered in Great Britain.

[12]As an organizer, she participated in various "cultural" events conducted in the Russian embassy and consulates.

[13]I mean her activity at the financial company concerning deals between the company and Russian organizations.

[14]I mean her work in commissions maintaining international agreements.

[15]She is a member of the non-governmental Russian-Greek scientific organization.

After 4 years of working for the financial company, Anna became a victim of colleagues' intrigues who were wary of her career development, and the owner of the company had to dismiss her. When Anna became unemployed, she had to leave her rented flat. She decided not to rent in future and bought a flat in one of the Athenian districts. After about half a year, she found a job as a medical insurance agent for a foreign company. She is pleased with her new work inasmuch as this work satisfies her aspiration to independence much more than others. Furthermore, she continues collaborating in various Greek-Russian organizations.

### 4.2 Analysis of Anna's case

From a social perspective, Anna stresses her intellectuality stemming from her family and education. From an ethnic perspective, she positions herself as a Greek although usually she uses this term in the sense of citizenship. She speaks about "Greek Greeks" mainly in the third person and the Rusoponti[16] or Russians in general as "us." Anna is disposed critically to Greek nationalism; social parameters of a person are always more important to her than ethnic ones are (as in the case of her discussion of school parades in: ([3]: 145–146). She rarely touches upon the question of ethnicity and formulates her identity as I have already noted using such social concepts as intellectuality (Rus. *intelligentnost'*), independence, and full rights (Rus. *polnopravie*). That is, ethnic identity for her is just an instrument; hence, she was allowed full rights in the host country and to realize her identity as an independent and intellectual (Rus. *intelligentnaia*) woman. Anna keeps some distant from dominating Greek society nationalistic discourses and allows to herself a particular criticism of them from the intellectual point of view, demonstrating in such a way her independence. It is very important to her to stand up for her rights as a full member of the Greek society when she is stigmatized negatively as a foreigner, as a non-Greek.[17]

She votes for candidates of small parties that have never been in power in Greece, but they propose programs corresponding to her identity (for instance, the Green Party); she convinced her colleagues (at the financial company) that all the languages (ethnicities) are equal and compelled them to engage a specialist in the Russian language in order to speak in their office in Russian. Certainly, such a measure could only be realized in cities like Athens or Thessalonica, and I doubt whether it would be implemented in a village community, for example, in Irina's village. Anna is indifferent to religion and the church, although she had been baptized

[16]The Greek term *rusoponti* means 'Russian Pontians' or 'Pontic Greeks from Russia.' The term *Pontians* is a general mobilizing name for the post-perestroika Greek ethnic mobilization in post-Soviet countries, as well as a usual name for Greek migrants from those countries to Greece. However, some groups of migrants prefer to use other terms in order to manifest their identities (see about the term *Pontic* in: [3, 18–20].

[17]One of the examples: one day, Anna, waiting in a supermarket queue, conversed in Russian with her guest from Russia. When they came up to the cashier, "she began chatting with her colleague and ignored us for a long time." Anna tried to attract her attention, but heard "her caddish remark in the spirit of 'nobody called you to Greece." Anna demanded to see her manager and the woman who was chatting with the cashier introduced herself as a tour manager and recommended that Anna appeal to the police if she felt abused. Anna paid for her purchases, accompanied her friend to a car, then she came back to the cashier, claimed that she was a Greek citizen, and was not going to tolerate such rude, ignorant behavior. She found out the names of both women, participants in the conflict, and informed them that she was going to go to the police and to the court seeking for their dismissals. After that the cashier apologized for her remarks, begged for forgiveness and urged Anna not to go to the police. Eventually, Anna said: "I'll think it over." However, she did not go to the police knowing how difficult it is to find work as of a check-out assistant at a supermarket. During our conversations, I heard numerous stories of this sort from Anna, where she asserts her rights using her status of a citizen.

in Russia when she was a baby. In analyzing Anna's migration story, it is possible to note that the idea of career has an important significance to her, and her biography been built retrospectively represent the history of her career development. Her independence is contingent on her career, and vice-versa., that is, independence and career form the same semantic frame in the discourse on her identity.

### 4.3 Irina's case

Irina's marriage to Tanos was registered at the local church in 1996. She gave birth to eight more children (she has got six boys and three girls altogether; the eldest son was 18, the youngest daughter 3 at the moment of our meeting). She can talk a lot about God and the Orthodox Church, although she did not go to church in Russia before her departure. All Irina's children were baptized. Their names were chosen according to local rules in honor of elder relatives of her husband, excluding two sons: the eldest who was given his name in Russia, and one of Tanos' sons who was named after the oath taken by Irina to the Blessed Virgin. At the time of our acquaintance, Irina spoke Russian with an accent, remembering some words for a long time. None of her children speaks Russian, not even the eldest son.

Irina tries to behave "as a Greek woman" entirely sharing all the family's practices and discourses. For example, she reacted negatively, together with all the family, to her brother-in-law's decision to marry an Albanian woman. Her aspiration "to be a Greek" is expressed in that she fully supports practices connected to the status of daughter-in-law: she dresses herself as a rural married woman preferring dark colors, she prepares both everyday "simple village food" and holiday dishes, except for bread, which Irina's mother-in-law bakes every week, and so on.

Mainly Irina speaks about the Greeks as "us." Her Rusoponti friends say that Irina speaks Greek better than they do, as a "natural Greek." She has never aspired to independence. Her current lifestyle suits her completely. She holds great respect for her husband; at least, I did not hear any disrespectful words from her concerning Tanos. She also speaks respectfully of her husband's relatives (excluding her brother-in-law's wife of Albanian origin). She visits Russia once every 2 to 3 years, but the main aim of her travels to Russia is the question of real estate. During Irina's years spent in Greece, her mother and brother both died of alcoholism. Their houses are the subject of a longstanding dispute between Irina and her sister. Irina tries to travel to Russia without children but sometimes she has to take her little babies with her.

### 4.4 Analysis of Irina's case

As I have already mentioned, Irina prefers to remain silent about matters concerning her Russian family, and at first glance, this nondisclosure may be characterized by the situation of nonidentity as one of Schneider's informants put it ([2]: 168). However, I would note that the nondisclosure plus negativity forms a certain discourse on identity, which serves as a referent antithesis in Irina's search for a "happy life." In this sense, the respect and regard that Irina demonstrates toward her parents-in-law are determined not only (and not so much) by a technique of appropriation of Greekness but also by the direct influence of the discourse on Irina's parental family. For example, in viewing her parental family as a negative model, Irina is an initiator of banning any consumption of alcohol (including beer) in her family (to be exact, anywhere on the household premises) which involved my family as well. She justifies the ban by saying that her children do not have to become alcoholics. All the members of the household support this ban. At the same time, Irina is barely concerned about drinking outside the house. It was interesting to note that even on her father-in-law's celebration day, where many guests were present, there were no alcoholic drinks on the tables.

The fact that Irina has an experience of life in Russia and, moreover, in a Russian village, has played a positive role in the process of her integration into the Greek rural family. That is, her identity is formed as anti-identity (we should not talk about non-identity, though) on the discursive level, but she had villager's identity on the level of practices.

During the period of her life in Greece, significant changes have taken in Irina's identity. The negative Russian experience pushed her to intensive appropriation of Greekness. As a result, Irina became a respectful woman not only in her family but also in the village. Greek identity includes religiosity, too. Irina becomes an active person of Orthodox faith; she visits the local church regularly; together with Tanos, they make a pilgrimage to different holy places of Greece annually. Immediately before our arrival, they had returned from such a pilgrimage and brought with them a local icon painted on stone especially for us. Irina told me a lot about her charitable activity connected to the church. Rejecting her Russian experience, Irina destroys her Russian family for the purpose of creation her new Greek family. I have no possibility to document a lot of details of my observations, but I can express them in such a way: Irina is a Greek in a greater degree that her Greek relatives. And this is the result of her intensive appropriation of Greek discourses and practices.

## 5. Conclusion: comparing variants of appropriation of Greekness

The biographies described previously (even in their very summed up form) express two tendencies that may be characterized as two techniques of appropriation. The object of appropriation in my cases is "Greekness" (i.e., the complex of practices and discourses appropriate to certain local communities as well as the Greek language which is both an object and an instrument simultaneously).

In comparing two stories and two techniques of appropriation, it is evident that Irina's technique is expressed in a "complete" or "maximum possible" appropriation of Greekness, while Anna builds a career. In other words, Anna creates something new for herself, conceiving Greekness both as a context and an instrument but not as a desired result of what she has to possess/become. In this sense, her technique may be defined, following Sansi [9], as re-appropriation. Anna creates her own "world" of her Greekness on the basis of nonethnic identity, on the basis of intellectuality together with personal independence and Greek citizenship as main discourses of her identity. It is also important that Irina migrated "from village to village," while Anna migrated "from city to city." This re-confirms my main argument that different techniques of appropriation are due to different pre-emigration experiences. In other words, Irina gained Greek identity; she became a respectful Greek rural woman, guarding local practices and discourses. Anna, appropriating Greek identity, restored that position she lost in Russia, and then by means of re-appropriation moved beyond. However, her move is understood by her as a career development and as an acquisition of full civil rights with a possibility of critical intellectualism. Her contemporary identity is Greek one, but it is based on her previous Russian identity and could be become Israeli or any other identity.[18] Such an identity can be considered as global because the possibility of it is provided by resemblance of social fields in different states and a chance of transferal of symbolic capital over borders.

[18]It does not mean that she rejects dominant discourses and practices or communication and ties with people in Greece. But, she could retain her critical intellectual position. The process of appropriation of Greekness is not a vital task for her because she "already is a Greek woman" and her Greek ethnicity was confirmed by two states—Russia and Greece. Therefore, she had a possibility (or just created it for herself) to adopt an independent position.

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