Title: *Community Aspirations for Greek Language Schooling in Australia: Future Challenges and Directions*

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Introduction: Greek ethnic schools profile and aims

This paper will focus on Greek community aspirations towards ethnic schooling based on the major findings of a recently completed study on Greek ethnic schools in Australia (Arvanitis 2000). Over the past century, especially since WWII, the strong linguistic and cultural awareness of diaspora Greeks has led to the formation and maintenance of an enormous network of part-time schools throughout Australia. Since 1896, when the first Greek class was established by the Greek Orthodox community in Sydney, these schools have been the key community strategy through which the Greek language (together with associated cultural and religious traditions) has been maintained as a social symbol and a means of communication. Ethnic schools' development in turn led to the emergence in the 1970s and 1980s of the government programs as well as of the full-time Greek schools.

Maintenance of the Greek language and culture and support of the Greek identity remain the cornerstones of Greek schools' raison d'être and their perceived value. Their role and function within both a pluralist and religiously diverse society such as Australia and in the Greek Diaspora context have been identified with so-called "Greekness". Furthermore Greek schools have constituted a major means through which it is claimed that the Greek-Australian identity has been preserved. Greek ethnic schools have served a vital function (over the last century, especially in the post-WW II period) within the Greek paroikia (community) in anchoring the maintenance process through a socio-educational agency larger than the family. For that reason Greek schools are viewed as being an integral part of the Greek paroikia (Tsounis 1974 & Arvanitis 2000). At the same time Greek schools have been an alternative and counter-cultural institution to the

assimilationist influence of the public school system allowing the Greek language and culture to be promoted in the absence of mainstream political interest and formal educational commitment on the part of the wider society (Smolicz 1971; Tsounis 1974; Pannu & Young 1980).

Building on a tradition that is already a century old, Greek community leaders, parents, their children, teachers and principals consider ethnic schools as acceptable and appropriate mechanisms for cultural and language transmission. However, the data suggested that there is an inter-generational differentiation in interpreting language and cultural maintenance, as the Greek community is not a homogenous social entity. This transmission for the first generation stakeholders and parents in these schools has been required by a 'moral imperative' essential for maintenance and furtherance of the 'ethnomoral tradition'. The existence of Greek schools is closely related to the vital link between ethnicity and language, whereas the attachment to the homeland is unchallengeable. Language is a tool of communication, the 'quintessential symbol' and the very essence of a group's authenticity (Fishman 1977 & 1989). For second-generation stakeholders and parents, Greek schools ought to cultivate and develop cultural awareness, promote G*reekness* and accept bicultural identification of students and promote language acquisition into a vibrant cultural context. Clearly cultural awareness and identification issues are highly prioritized among second-generation parents. Language has lost its leading position, indicating a slow shift which may impact on ethnic schools' curriculum.

There was no questioning of the actual institution, mainly because ethnic schools had managed to teach the language under difficult conditions and they were responding to deeply-felt needs within the Greek-Australian psyche. This study (Arvanitis 2000) has clearly demonstrated that all school principals and sponsoring organisations were committed to continue operating their schools despite the problems and the constraints whilst acknowledging the important role of these institutions in the language maintenance process. However, there was some sense of crisis and urgency among the majority of community leaders and some school principals. These stakeholders

considered as being a negative development the Australian emphasis on languages of trade, commerce, regional and national security importance. Interview data, though, suggested that community stakeholders were unable to justify Greek language education in Australia by providing viable arguments and long-term planning. Global trends and their implications in justifying language teaching in Australia, such as the binary of *geographic regionalism* and *English based economic globalisation*, (Lo Bianco 2004) were largely ignored. The majority of Greek community leaders and principals were still focusing on traditional arguments for language education and maintenance such as that of token acknowledgement of community status and viability[1].

Community and school stakeholders were mainly concerned about school quality[2] as well as operational and pedagogical issues ignoring the broader context in which Greek language teaching in Australia occurs. The formation of specific educational goals and a long term planning became apparent mainly due to the great diversification in ethnic school methods and curriculum, instances of poor pedagogy, excessive fees, and the pressure of time, which was important mainly for second-generation parents. Data revealed that parents in private and community schools were significantly more satisfied with curriculum materials and teaching methods than those in church schools, indicating that larger and better organised school establishments are more likely to survive and attract second and third generation parents. This is an important issue for school administrators, especially the Church providers who consider ethnic schools mainly as a vehicle for maintaining Greek-orthodox values and traditions.

[1] The use of various intellectual and cultural claims about bilingualism and biculturalism as well as the language as a *right* were also major points which are no longer convincing arguments. These traditional arguments were prominent during the 1970s and 1980s, where the Greek community largely contributed in forming the language policy in Australia.

[2] The pluralism that exists in Greek school practice due to the lack of government and community policies, educational planning and curriculum framework makes a generalisation about the quality impossible.

The diversification of ethnic school practice, the different providers as well as the lack of a common curriculum framework revealed the differing opinions, aspirations and visions amongst the various vested and usual contesting Greek community, church and private interests in Australia.

Community stakeholder aspirations for ethnic schools

Greek schools were primarily seen as the defence against cultural and linguistic erosion and ethnic de-culturation as there is a sense of historicity in the community's effort to maintain the Greek language and culture in the various parts of the Greek diaspora. Greek schools have been a bulwark against assimilationist forces, generating simultaneously group pride and communal solidarity.

But the current role is more than ever connected with the desire of the various stakeholders to maintain and develop the Greek-Australian tradition beyond the third and subsequent generations. The role of educational structures in ensuring and enhancing the maintenance process is fundamental because the automatic enculturation of the young generations via exposure to the daily activities of the family no longer can be counted upon to ensure ethnic continuity (Arvanitis 2004). Their operation as a critical *topos* of socialisation larger than the family in enhancing friendship networks was very strong among all stakeholders, and particularly within the community and church schools (Smolicz & Secombe 1977; Kalantzis et. al. 1989). Mixing with people from Greek background was essential particularly for children, although in private schools friction also was higher due to the presence of many third generation children, though it never negated the value of mixing with other Greek-Australians. In general terms, the data revealed that the Greek community or church schools more than the private ones act as a social nucleus with symbolic value, playing

a central role in community life[3], operating in privately owned premises next to the community centre or church. On the contrary Greek private schools loose this communal significance and connection due to the presence of many second and third generation children, whose attachment to Greek community organisations becomes more symbolic than real.

Most importantly, the Greek schools were seen as an authentic cultural and linguistic environment for Greekness to be effectively sustained, cultivated and developed. Bicultural formation was also placed at the heart of the Greek-Australian ethnicity, but it had become more diversified in its expressions. Bicultural identification, proficiency in the Greek language as well as cultural awareness and the subjective feeling of belonging to the Greek tradition were the genuine expressions of such identity. However, one of the upcoming challenges is the realisation that children go to the Greek school with their ethnic identification either consciously or unconsciously developed; accepting students' cultural capital is critical. Schools' role, thus, is to help students to maintain and clarify a model of interpreting their Greekness in accord with their Australianness. This is quite pressing in the current situation due to the inter-generational change.

Furthermore, the transition in Greek ethnic schools' profile from the early 1990s due to a numerical decline in enrolments brought about by generational, demographic and social factors signaled a change in their aims and objectives. The Greek schools are not, if they ever were, institutions preparing students for returning to the homeland. Rather they are enablers for them to appreciate their background. The shift towards the maintenance of Greek as their heritage language was partly occurring. The ongoing generational shift in both student and parental population and especially the under-representation of the second generation within the various community institutions are at the heart of current Greek community development with major implications for the future.

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[3] Historically these community ad church schools have been seen as an integral part of community life and a marker of its commitment to maintenance as Tsounis (1974) has found.

Almost half of the parents in the six case study schools (Arvanitis 2004) belonged to the second generation cohort with English as their first and dominant language. Bilingualism was a feature of the parents' linguistic profile. However, the increasing dominance of English did not affect parents' strong affiliation with their Greekness. Yet there was an unwavering commitment to the Australian nation, particularly by the second generation group of parents and students: Australia is their homeland.

On the other hand all Grade six students were second (59%) and third generation (41%) Greek-Australians being very much attached to, confident with and committed to their community/heritage language. However, this personal identification with the Greek language and its maintenance and the fact that language is a tool of self-determination does not necessarily mean an increase in language use (Fishman 1985, Clyne 1991). English is the children's language in which they communicate, although Greek is still a very special code. The Greek language was also perceived by students as the most important element of their bicultural identity compared to cultural awareness and religious practice. Greek is a symbol of ethnic pride and a primary cohesive element as well as an identity marker. Language, especially for the second and third generation parents and students, is a means of purposeful communication with the first generation parents, grandparents, Greek elders and relatives as well as with the Greek speaking community at large. Language shift across to English was more apparent within the school context and among parents, students and teachers. Greek schools have been transformed into vibrant bilingual contexts with the extensive use of English by the Australian-born teachers and students in all facets of school routine. Private schools experience this trend much more strongly as they cater for second and third generation families. It was clear that the second generation parents were finding it harder to maintain Greek though they wanted to implement strategies to maintain the language such as children's exposure to the culture via both the Greek school and broader socialisation.

The generational change that occurred, however, does not mean a total shift from the basic maintenance aims, but rather a differentiation in perceptions as to how this

process should be implemented in order to better reflect and respond to the new educational context. Findings of the latest research study on Greek ethnic schools (Arvanitis 2000) have revealed that their aims have remained the same. More specifically, the interview data gathered from community personnel and parents was centred on three basic reference points: a) The centrality of the Greek language in the maintenance processes "in order for Greekness to be secured", b) the necessity of cultural maintenance using ethnic schools as "mechanisms' of defense against the assimilation process and finally, c) the promotion of a multicultural awareness and identity formation.

These three reference points masked a wide spectrum of views about the content and the methodology of such language and cultural instruction in a globalizing context. Let us examine each of these points in some detail.

Language teaching via innovative pedagogy

The strong intergenerational use of Greek in Australia has proven the strong commitment of the Greek community to maintain the language. However, the research findings (Arvanitis 2000) have suggested that Greek ethnic schools' future will be secured only via modern and pedagogically appropriate educational planning. The improvement in quality and the adoption of innovative methodology is at the heart of Greek schools' development.

Teaching the language raises some broader pedagogical issues as these schools take part in the process of educating children in a globalising context. As Lo Bianco commented language education in post-modern settings must be considered as a practise of intercultural exploration, a competence-acquiring process for dealing with otherness and as a local experimentation in global difference (Lo Bianco 2004). The transferable skills, competencies, cultural sensitivities, awareness and knowledge acquired by language learners constitute symbolic and practical carriers in negotiating local and global identities. Maintaining and teaching languages and their cultures in our contemporary world means the creation of local distinctive networks, organisations and

institutions which oppose to a homogenous global society. At the same time these networks remain connected to their respective mainstream institutions and contribute to the so-called national building. It is in these spheres of public domain where differing opinions about 'constructing' the ethnic identity itself can contribute both to the acceptance and promotion of cultural diversity and pluralism in national building and the development of ways of dealing with change and multiple identities. People who can identify with more than one milieu, language and culture can more effectively negotiate their position in local, national, diasporic and global settings and contribute to the notion of a *new progressive qualitative citizenship* (Lo Bianco 2004). This notion of citizenship according to Lo Bianco is a discourse of combining equality of participation and economic and educational opportunity without surrendering people's distinctive ways to be different.

Thus, modern language teaching pedagogy enables global learners to acquire basic language skills and competencies as well as a broader awareness and understanding of being citizens in multiple local and global post-modern contexts. The intergenerational use of the Greek language in a purposeful and practical manner provides a paradigm of bilingualism and biculturalism which extends and negotiates the Australian citizenship. In this context ethnic schools need to consider the different settings where Greek language operates and adapt their own programs as language teaching exceeds the narrow boundaries of the Greek speaking community in Australia. Contemporary Greek is well maintained in Australia and in the Greek diasporic context for symbolic, cultural as well as communication reasons. Language learning according to research findings (Arvanitis 2000) is a purposeful engagement and not merely an emotional process. Practical/communicative reasons such as communication with relatives and travelling are important reasons for language learning in such a context.

Furthermore, the quality of Greek language instruction has to reflect learners' needs in acquiring modern sociocultural skills as well as a framework of transferable linguistic competencies in multiple contexts. Greek language teaching needs to be at an equivalent level to any other language program, allowing for the teaching of

contemporary language genres to correspond to language use in a diversified world. The research findings (Arvanitis 2000) revealed a general shift towards spoken communicative competence (not literacy) and the need for Greek as a language for communication both in Australia and overseas contexts. Greek ethnic schools clearly have succeeded in their aims in maintaining the language reinforcing children's communicative competence. However, the quality of language teaching in the new homeland raises some questions as its use tends to be restricted in public life outside school. The literacy skills acquired in the school, for instance, is an issue, which needs to be addressed as it is likely that if students attend the educational system in Greece, they would be a long way behind. However, that is a matter for further research.

In general terms, Greek schools have been successful in promoting language teaching as most students had good, if not very good, communicative competence[4] in speaking Greek, although their reading and writing skills were generally good[5] (in all three measured modes, they made mistakes). Students had a positive image of themselves being bilinguals, reflecting their confidence in using both Greek and English according to the situation. Important factors that influenced students' positive self-rating were their strong Greek identity, the importance given to language, the reading of Greek books, the frequent exposure to discussions on the Greek language and culture and the attendance at community functions. The importance given to continue Greek school for communication with relatives, possible traveling to Greece and broader cultural

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[4] The vast majority of students were either adequate (58%) or completely adequate (16%) in speaking Greek.

[5] All students showed good reading and writing skills by scoring an average of 51 points out of 70. This reveals a comprehensive reading and written productivity. Almost half of the students (47%) scored between 50 and 59 points, 30 per cent of them between 40 and 49, while a small group (16%) scored more than 60 points. However, students' scores do not represent their actual literacy skills and grammatical accuracy, as the testing tools measured their overall competence to comprehend and respond to the questions asked (Arvanitis 2000, p. 307).

knowledge were also important. Students felt that learning Greek does not interfere with their English language. Children's positive self-perception of their Greek speaking skills was significantly related to their cultural and language scores and they required less help from their parents. Finally, students, motivated to continue learning Greek because of traveling, had also significantly better communicative competence.

Generally students' good language scores reflected parental academic expectations. Parents in general terms had very positive perceptions of their children's bilingualism. However, first-generation parents were tied to a more traditional view of their children's schooling as they considered its role as improving the home language and preparing children for repatriation and having stronger vocational and academic expectations. On the contrary second-generation parents were more demanding of modern teaching methods and pedagogy with less homework. It was apparent that they were not prepared to push their children to continue Greek school, especially onto secondary level. Parents with high motivation levels about the Greek school were more positive in appraising both their children's progress at ethnic school as well as the school itself. However, second generation parents were less satisfied with their children's progress and less motivated in sending their children to Greek school.

Finally, from the above data it becomes evident that student needs as well as parental vision and aspirations differ from one generation to the other. This intergenerational shift has significant implications in the overall teaching planning and pedagogy within ethnic schools. The engagement of a multi-tasking methodology is necessary to include broader cognitive, symbolic, cultural and communicative patterns along with provision of a wide range of linguistic genres, idioms, and types of discourse, which correspond to students' language experience. The need for up-to-date pedagogical techniques that will promote a more hands-on approach in learning the language is apparent. An important step towards this direction will be the development of a common and up-to-date linguistic and cultural competency framework for all Greek schools.

Cultural Teaching

Formation of bicultural identity and the interpretation of Greekness in its local and global dimensions

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

Re-conceptualizing culture and identity is an important process towards enabling students to operate as citizens in this post-modern world. A reform curriculum agenda for ethnic schools will integrate the notion that cultures and identities are overlapping, interactive and internally negotiated processes (Tully 1997, p.10). Identity formation (e.g. Greek-Australian identity) remains a multiple and fluid process under the influence of the constant change of social and generational contexts and of ethnic boundaries themselves in diasporic and global contexts (Cohen 1997; Vertovec 1999). In addition, identity formation is a more dynamic, complex and ongoing process of ethnic change experienced by an ethnic group or individual than a rigid assimilationist process toward 'mainstream' society (Clark et al. 1976; Keefe & Padilla 1987; Rosenthal & Feldman 1992; Laroche et al. 1996). The different degrees of cultural maintenance and the failure of the assimilation process to be totally imposed, thus, suggest a multi-dimensional model of analysis of ethnic change itself. The inter-generational shift and the symbolic ethnicity in particular, observed within ethnic groups are catalysts for such diversification.

Thus, any repositioning of the Greek-Australian identity coincides with the multi-dimensional nature of ethnic community change. However, this changeability of identity modes as well as the dynamic nature of cultures was not apparent to the great majority

of the community leaders as only three reflected on how ethnic identity is not experienced by everybody in the same way for there is no single way of being Greek. In general terms, the community leaders focused on bicultural identification and Australian citizenship (31%), the Greek language (29%) and the feeling of being Greek (23%) as the main elements of the Greek-Australian identity. Parents, however, considered cultural tradition and history (39%), family values and respect towards elderly (28%), religion (18%) and language (14%) as being authentic components of one's Greek identity, although they stressed the difficulty in inculcating such values in a modern society (Arvanitis 2000).

The importance of identity formation and diaspora consciousness

Intergenerational use of the language as well as identity formation occurs also in the context of the Greek diaspora. This adds another dimension to the Greek language schooling, as it captures a broader understanding of the global/diasporic changes and especially the new conceptualizations over the construction of new transnational identities and subjectivities. The diversification of migration experiences and the meanings of diaspora in the modern era have allowed for identity to be built in a different and complex way. The collective identity of homeland and diasporic communities is a constantly changing set of cultural interactions that fundamentally challenge the very notions of 'home' and 'host', with important sociological consequences (Cohen 1997, p. 127). An important feature of transnational communities is the 'diaspora consciousness' marked by dual or multiple identifications with more than one nation. This consciousness "stimulates the desire to connect oneself with others, both 'here' and 'there' who share the same 'routes' and 'roots'" (Vertovec 1999, p. 450). Thus, as Cohen (1997) has noted, all diasporic communities acknowledge a bond with the old country (the homeland), which is usually linked to language, religion and cultural customs. In other words there is a kind of emotional attachment and the sense of obligation towards the homeland.

The strong linguistic vitality experienced by the Greek community in Australia (despite the natural linguistic attrition) reveals that language speakers and learners have maintained this emotional and sentimental bond with the old country and its diaspora.

Learners' concrete language, cultural and communication skills, together with knowledge and positive attributes towards Greekness, are the connecting points of the different Greek language speakers around the world. This bond creates an 'imaginary coherence'[6], a collective representation of the emerging Greek transnational identities. Greek ethnic schools need to understand this additive, extending, meaningful and powerful process and expand their curricula enabling students to interpret and negotiate social change and difference. This new learning promotes an unthreatening bilingualism and biculturalism which adds to the Australian pluralistic identity and secures social cohesion.

Multicultural awareness

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

Despite the rejection of ethnocentrism within the school curriculum, it seems that the majority of schools only vaguely understood their current role within the Australian multicultural society. Multiculturalism itself was an aggregation of different groups, which should harmoniously reside in coexistence with each other. Community expectations were directed to more comprehensible cultural teaching and were slowly tending to favor the multiculturalization, if not the internationalization, of Greek language and culture. However, school practice proved to be problematic. The majority of the schools focused

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[6] Personal and collective representations provide an 'imaginary coherence' (Hall, 1990) for a set of malleable identities, as a diaspora can to some extent, according to Cohen (1996, p. 516), "be held together or re-created through the mind, through cultural artefacts and a shared imagination".

on simple factual data of historical or cultural importance giving an Olympian/static and stereotyped view of the culture. Indeed students' level of cultural knowledge was moderate. However, students attending community and church schools had significantly better scores on the cultural test than those in private schools due to the curriculum areas covered. Contemporary Greek and Greek-Australian cultural elements were largely ignored, whereas very few leaders stressed the need for comparisons to be made through the discovery of the Greek transnational communities as well as discussion to be held on the various forms of Hellenism around the world. Teachers were seen as important factors in preventing bias.

Greek language Schooling in a globalising context: Future Challenges

Greece, Australia, Diaspora: Triadic relationships

Greek ethnic schools' diverse forms and operational modes (different providers, different time and dates of operation, different curriculum structures and so on) developed over past decades reflect the differing philosophies regarding ethnic education and the struggle of a heterogeneous community to perpetuate Greekness within a pluralistic and religiously diverse society. Moreover, globalisation has created a new dynamic and complex framework where both transnational communities and educational institutions can either adapt and broaden their functions or be marginalised. This is especially critical for long-established networks such as the Greek schools, which are in a transitional phase. Ethnic schools, thus, having been sustained under specific socio-economic, generational, and political changes, act at the same time as transnational community institutions engaging themselves into a 'triadic relationship'. This relationship concerns (i) a globally dispersed but still collectively self-identified ethnic group, (ii) the current country state and context where this group resides and (iii) the homeland state and context whence this group or its forebears came (Vertovec 1999, p.449). It is the social and cultural profile of Greek paroikia, its vision and expectations, along with the responses of both the Australian and Greek governments to these institutions and finally the influences of the transnational communities that eventually construct the positioning

of these educational institutions. In that context thus, ethnic schools constitute networks of the Greek transnational community and to a certain degree represent its continuity and transformation over time.

The Greek State remains the 'dominant actor' and maintains supremacy in the relations with its Diaspora and tends to manipulate them in favour of its own interests. Sheffer (1993) has argued that diasporas usually view homeland's manipulation as 'natural'. In the case of the Greek Diaspora there is no such rigorous process in redefining the traditional distinction between centre and periphery. The link between diaspora communities and the ethnic centre was vital in the construction of the Greek national/ethnic identity in Australia and in other Greek transnational communities. In addition, there is no consensus in acknowledging the importance of distinct diaspora centres such as Cyprus. Thus, the Greek state has maintained a rigid approach regarding its diaspora communities and, consequently, their Greek schools, which were viewed as a medium for the transmission of nationalist ideology (Psomiades 1993). The notions of insistence and unbroken continuity of the Greek race from classical times until recent years and the idealization of the glorious past characterized the maintenance process around the Hellenic diaspora.

Moreover, the Greek State did not create sufficient agencies and institutions to facilitate communication among the Greek transnational communities and to understand the long-term existence of diaspora Greeks and their particular characteristics. This fact derives from the homeland's weakness in conceptualising the highly complex trans-state networks that influence transnational communities on the one hand and, on the other, the lack of adequate information about significant developments within the diasporas (Sheffer 1993). Similarly, the formal administrative mechanisms for dealing with the Greek diaspora in Australia seem to be ineffective and insufficient, while no significant trade, financial, educational or cultural exchange occurred. Despite the lack of rigorous educational planning, the Greek government's support and commitment to language maintenance efforts is very significant, although better allocation of resources is required.

The Australian educational policy

Ethnic schools are institutions that fall into the sphere of Australian language policies[7]. There are 'wicked problems'[8], whose resolution lies in the activism of the various vested ethnic or private interests and on the broader directions of language policy and planning in Australia. Greek community activism has clearly failed to maintain the prominent role of the Greek language in current policy debates. This failure has mainly undermined the presence of Greek in public schooling (primary, secondary and tertiary) especially over the past two decades. Since 1987 and the report on National Policy of Languages (Lo Bianco 1987) Greek has been removed from policy debate in education and official target lists. Greek language education has been marginalised and became an 'ethnic issue' alone, concerning mainly the ethnic community organisations, despite the official recognition.

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[7] Acording to Arvanitis (2000, p.69) Australia's response to ethnic schools falls into three major phases:

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

b) The period of ethnic schools' recognition and Commonwealth support in the 1980s, which was a period of legitimising ethnic schools under the prism of multiculturalism, and finally,

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

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

Ethnic schools have always remained on the periphery of Commonwealth and State planning receiving low funding[9]. No substantial co-operation between the full-time system and ethnic schools has been achieved. However, ethnic schools in the 1990s and under the prism of economic rationalism were increasingly seen as complementary/accredited and convenient providers to meet the aims of the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (1991). This mission, however, has been fulfilled with little Commonwealth support, without proper organisational and legal status (they are not even an educational system), and with inadequate funding, although Greek schools only partly depended on government funding as communities and parents particularly in private schools covered eighty per cent of the school budget (Arvanitis 2000).

In addition, the transfer of responsibility from federal to state governments has signalled that ethnic schools are no longer central to national language planning, and a laissez faire approach has taken over. Despite their vitality and growth, ethnic schools have never been considered as a major language provider, because that function was viewed as the responsibility of the mainstream full-time sector. The lack of supportive federal policy has also undermined proper educational planning, quality and accountability particularly within the smaller community and church ethnic schools. Despite this development Greek is among the best intergenerationally maintained languages in Australia (Clyne, 1991 & Lo Bianco 2004).

Systemic Governance

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[9] Ethnic schools are viewed as community agencies, appropriate to take responsibility for teaching community languages on behalf of the education system because of the real practical difficulties in implementing multilingualism in the school curriculum. This constitutes the removal of some educational responsibility to the semi-private sector in the form of meagre subsidies to community-run ethnic schools as the public practice for language maintenance provision in the name of 'pluralism and community autonomy' (Kalantzis et al. 1989).

The dilemma described by Tsounis (1974), whether language teaching should be undertaken by the government sector or should be left to an improved system of ethnic schools, is still alive at the turn of the millennium. The fact that there is no way for all languages to be accommodated within the official educational system implies that students may have the educational benefits of learning another language throughout schooling, which might not be their own ethnic language, but an Asian language such as Chinese or Japanese. This is an important realisation especially in the case of the Greek community, which has forged a continuing role for ethnic schools alongside Greek language programs in systemic schools and not as a superficial and temporary solution such as that pursued by the Italians with insertion classes.

The status of Greek language programs seemed to be under threat because of the dispersal process of the Greek paroikia, the friction between different language providers, and the failure of the Greek language to attract a non-Greek student population. The marketing of the Greek language within this system was mainly trapped in emotional reasons and not economic or communicative/practical reasons. Thus, the decline of enrolments in this system is serious. On the other hand ethnic schools maintenance will always be a struggle. It is difficult to see them, no matter how much they are integrated into the full-time sector, other than being on the edge of the mainstream system. This does not mean they are not important, but reflects the reality they are not concerned with all aspects of the curriculum. Systemic education authorities have largely ignored ethnic schools, although they have received considerable attention since the early 1980s due to their proliferation and resilience.

Furthermore, the co-existence of the various Greek language providers and the 'mixing of interests' have created a long dispute within the paroikia about the place where language could be appropriately taught. However, according to the vast majority of all survey participants (except the church principal who was strongly opposed to the government programs), all Greek language providers play a useful role in their individual way because they manage to serve a great variety of parental and children's needs. Greek language teaching within the day sector (mainstream and ethnic colleges) was an

important issue that emerged in the survey, although opinion was divided regarding quality. Ethnic schools' role was viewed to be complementary and not competitive to the day school system. For both parents and key personnel, ethnic schools provide an authentic language environment as well as securing Greek language teaching in case the mainstream reneges on teaching Greek. The community leaders are convinced that ethnic schools will always have a role to play, but they need to modernise their operation. There was general agreement amongst all stakeholders on a productive interface between the two systems (full-time and part-time) in securing Greek language teaching both within the ethnic group boundaries and outside to the broader society.

They also proposed rigorous registration and accountability processes as well as common curriculum planning and co-ordination among the various Greek language providers. The establishment of a self-regulatory body was simply not feasible unless it was to be enforced from the outside by a body such as the Australian or Victorian government as the private providers in particular feared losing their autonomy. Three major issues prevented this development: namely, the various vested community, church and private interests, the profit orientation of private providers, and the fear among the private providers of losing their autonomy. These providers proposed the establishment of an advisory body or for no changes to be made. There are other tensions. For example, the second generation principal was mistrustful of the first generation leadership pointing to the differences in vision, practices and philosophy. The lack of cohesiveness in expressing identity, loyalty, self-determination and vision indicates that there is no one single and cohesive Greek community, which correlates with the speaking of Greek. Apparently language is a stronger marker of ethnicity than the ethnic group itself. The importance of this argument is evident in the official rhetoric of multiculturalism in Australia that understands individual ethnicity on the basis of uniformity and ethnic unity.

The Move Towards Privatisation

The move from community based schools to privatisation is apparent, which has resulted in increased competitiveness. The majority of students are enrolled in schools

managed by private providers. Privatisation is the ongoing trend not only for Greek schools, but also for Australian education generally as a result of economic rationalism. However, the differences in school leadership philosophy and management team style are observable even among private providers.

Generally, private providers have catered better for the emerging needs as they have established schools scattered across the Melbourne metropolitan area in tandem with the dispersal of the Greek community. Hence, they have catered to the aspirations of better educated parents and those more adapted to the Australian way. No private school operated in rural areas or in provincial cities. Successful publicity and marketing campaigns in attracting students, based on schools' image and reputation, their textbooks, the more interactive teaching methods and the increased professionalism and accountability, have emerged as new features of the sector. The differentiation in the various private providers and the diversity in the school philosophies do not allow for generalisations to be made. Thus, the private school profile varies from pedagogically sound establishments to market driven agencies where education is a commodity. The role of the principal owner in all cases is critical. Funding is an important issue for private providers, which generates the opportunity for both improving services and exercising political power. However, funding for private providers is a controversial issue for the Greek community. Opinion on their funding is divided, and some leaders speak about teacher exploitation and low remuneration as well as the unprofessional attitude of some principals.

The role of Church

The centrality or otherwise of the Greek Orthodox faith in bicultural formation was a controversial issue for community leaders and parents as indicated in recent research findings (Arvanitis, 2000). This is not to say that the Greek Orthodox religion is not important to identity maintenance process, but it is less important than language, cultural awareness and self-identification as Greek. Religion is mostly a cultural custom with symbolic importance rather than a faith commitment and practice.

In Australia, the Greek Orthodox Church has not succeeded in establishing a well-organised network of multi-ethnic religious schools in accommodating religious education similar to the Catholic system. Thus, the Greek part-time schools were seen as 'schools of need' (Arvanitis, 2000, p.333) in attaining minimum religious instruction and remained on the periphery of the broader church infrastructure in Australia. The Orthodox Church's slow response to an increasingly changing world and to perceiving the implications of globalization and the necessities of an ecumenical and inter-faith perspective to Orthodox faith education within a religiously diverse society became apparent in the school curriculum content. Parochialism and religio-centrism prevailed in the religious education in church-schools. A mono-religious approach was employed failing to address the broader issues of identity formation and inter-religious education. Orthodoxy was never presented in an ecumenical context, nor in a universal context which stands at the core of an authentic Orthodoxy with its sense of universalism. Greek Orthodoxy in Australia is still tied to its traditional alliance with a certain ethnocentrism.

Leadership, Organisation and Participation

The complexity and multi-formity has been one important aspect of Greek ethnic schools' profile since their proliferation in the 1950s and 1960s and the more recent explosion of the private sector. Greek schools thus, constitute a multi-dimensional paradigm of ethnic institutional expression functioning in a multicultural society and markers of diversity within the ethnic group itself.

The role and quality of school principals was critical in the diversity of school development. What was striking was that succession in school leadership was not clear. Principals were in their vast majority first generation, middle aged and committed; they are the lynchpins of the schools retaining their position for over 10 years on average. Their leadership was exercised in very different ways impacting on the school philosophy. The first generation principals had more or less strongly Hellenocentric views and slow response to modern educational trends have led to isolation and

perhaps ghettoisation, especially, in the small community and church-based schools. In contrast, the sole second generation principal in one of the case study schools had a strong bilingual and bicultural identity and was more conscious of the diverse student needs.

Another important challenge for Greek schools was the changing profile of the teaching force, but generally teachers were committed. The teaching force is undergoing significant change in both expertise and experience. The increasing difficulty in finding experienced and qualified teaching staff was particularly stressed in the interviews. However, teachers' need of intensive professional development seminars remains a very important issue in ensuring quality. Teachers are lacking either in methodology or in language and cultural knowledge as many staff members, especially the second-generation, were no longer native speakers with high language proficiency. Professional development for staff members is on the periphery of many Greek schools' planning, whereas no planning in attracting and nurturing the ethnic school teacher of the future exists.

The case study data revealed that building a school-parent interrelationship (information sessions and parent schools) and forming a collaborative and democratic school environment (e.g. operation of parent and teacher associations and representative school councils) seemed to be neglected. There was the lack of a strong partnership philosophy binding together the school principals, teachers and parents. The absence of strong and effective school councils was clear denoting the lack of an open and informed decision-making process. The co-existence of different generations within the Greek schools created a new dynamic across the sector where different aspirations and practices were in place. Whereas parents seemed largely unaware of the second language learning process, the benefits of bilingualism and their role in assisting children's learning. Parent participation in school life was generally poor (except for school celebrations) as was school-parent communication. However, only some leaders drew attention to such issues arguing that there is no plan as how to attract parents and make them more involved. This is an important future challenge for Greek schools.

Conclusion

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

Greek schools seemed to maintain the same aims in facing the new millennium, whereas community leadership seems hampered in addressing the real issues. Language and cultural transmission (however defined) failed to exceed the community boundaries, whereas globalisation and international trends as well as modern technology developments seemed to have bypassed many ethnic schools. Greek schools find themselves at a crossroad in trying to be valued as not only mechanisms for cultural maintenance, but most importantly as educational and pedagogical institutions and as such to reinforce students' enculturation, ethnic self-awareness and transnational consciousness as well as the sense of a new progressive qualitative citizenship. The last point has significant implications as the Greek culture cannot merely be defined in its traditional forms. The integration of a transnational/diasporic perspective within the Greek school curriculum seems important. Currently the notion of ethnic schools being transnational institutions able to bridge the old with new homeland (the local and the global) is only vaguely reflected in both community perceptions and the school curriculum.

Ethnic schools have changed from language maintenance institutions to accredited, but still not equivalent, second language providers and partners. This study revealed that ethnic schools are not ideally equipped to fulfill this role due to the lack of resources and because they are still on the periphery of educational planning. This is an important

future challenge, as those schools will independently contribute to language maintenance beyond the third generation.

The continuity and survival of these institutions depend on the implementation of strategic planning, new pedagogy, the increase of resources, open curriculum planning to include modern and global cultural aspects and their real integration into the educational planning. Greek schools finally, should integrate a transnational/diasporic perspective in interpreting and understanding both Hellenism as well as the change in identity and cultural modes occurring within the paroikia.

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