

MONIKA RERAK-ZAMPOU

University of Patras

SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF POLISH ADOLESCENTS FROM GREEK AND POLISH HIGH SCHOOLS IN ATHENS

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, migrations are a recognized phenomenon with masses of people leaving their homelands to settle in new societies, transforming themselves and their new environments at the same time. During the first half of the twentieth century over 100 million people migrated, voluntarily or forcibly, from one country to another (Aronowitz 1984), and since then the number of migrants has grown further. The total number of international migrants increased over the first decade of the new millennium from an estimated 150 million in 2000 to 214 million people in 2010 (IOM 2010: XIX).

Currently, various forms of family-led mobility have become a major component of migration intakes worldwide. Family-related mobility has been named the main channel of legal entry into the EU, as well as into traditional immigration countries, such as Australia, Canada, and the United States (Kofman and Meetoo 2008: 151). Therefore, it has become essential for mobility to be conceptualized in a broad spectrum of family relations, taking into consideration all members with their individual experiences in the process of migration.

The aim of this article is to draw attention to the social integration of Polish adolescents residing in Athens and to identify the factors influencing this process. The data comes from two case studies: on the social and school integration of young Polish citizens (2010), and on a Polish family and its migratory and educational strategies (2012). The first project involved interviews with Polish adolescents (17 and 18 years old) attending Greek and Polish high schools in Athens. The research problem was investigated from a qualitative perspective. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used to encourage participants to talk freely about their lives. Through this method we wished to elicit adolescents'

thinking and feelings about their social integration experiences in the peer group as well as in a wider, social context. Students from Greek high schools were sampled on the basis of their attendance at Polish Saturday school. The research sample consisted of twelve Polish pupils, six from Polish schools and six from Greek schools (three boys and three girls from each school). The participants attended the last grade of high school and mainly represented the second and one-and-half generation of immigrants; all of them possessed only Polish nationality.

The second case study involved seven in-depth interviews with Barbara, a Polish mother of two children, Kamil, 11 and Dominika, 17. Sessions took place every five to six weeks between February and November 2012 and lasted from an hour to an hour and a half. In this study we looked into family networks, the children's education, residential satisfaction and migratory plans in order to indicate the role of family members, including the children, in the process of migratory strategy formation. During this research issues related to the social integration of Barbara's children arose in every session.

POLISH MIGRATIONS

In the landscape of worldwide migrations Polish citizens occupy a significant place. Poland has been portrayed as an emigration country characterized by one of the most mobile populations among EU Member States (Marouf 2009: 3). For Polish people leaving their country has become a way to overcome socio-political problems and to search for higher standards of living. These were however not the only reasons; Polish citizens often see migration as a part of their path of personal development, a response to curiosity about the world. For many mobile Polish individuals globalization and becoming a part of European Union has changed the word *migration* into *travel*.

Greece – landscape of the destination country

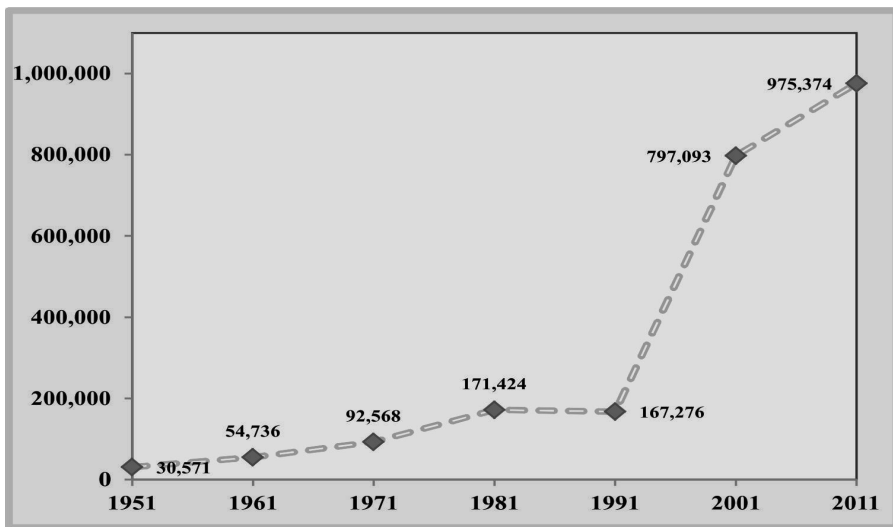
Greece has a long history of immigration. Figure 1 presents data from the Greek Censuses 1951–2001 and the Hellenic Statistical Authority (December 2011/January 2012, <http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE>) on the numbers of foreign citizens in Greece.

Recent research estimates Greece's immigrant population at about 1.3 million, or 12% of the total population of 11 million (Rami, Karakatsani and Le Roy 2011: 14), from more than 120 countries. Rising numbers of immigrants and asylum seekers in Greece can be explained by EU policies such as Dublin II, as well as by the fact that for many years Greece was the only EU Member State in the Balkan area, and by the country's geographical position – with an extensive

coastline with small islands that are difficult to monitor and so become a port of entry for irregular immigrants into the EU. Additionally, the nature of the Greek economy is one of the most relevant pull factors. On the one hand, the large informal economy together with many small family businesses (rather popular in Greece) requires a cheap, unskilled or semi-skilled labour force. On the other hand, young Greeks consider working in menial jobs degrading, therefore immigrants willing to work find employment relatively easily.

Figure 1.

Number of foreign citizens in Greece



Source: Parsonoglu (2008) and data from Hellenic Statistical Authority (<http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE>)

Immigrants to Greece are generally of working age, employed in construction, retail, agriculture and fishing, as well as hotels and restaurants, housekeeping and child care. Baldwin-Edwards (2008) has identified and indicated major differences between the living arrangements of the major immigrant nationalities in Greece, dividing them into two types. The first group represents the nuclear family (Albanians, Turkish, Polish, and Russians), while the second represents more multi-member households (Pakistanis, Bulgarians, Georgians, and Ukrainians).

The surge of immigration into Greece in the recent decades has led to significantly increased numbers of immigrant children attending Greek schools. Since the mid-1990s, the Greek public schools have gradually been faced

with an ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse school population (Rami, Karakatsani and Le Roy 2011: 14). The number of foreign students in Greek elementary schools rose from 10,634 in 1995/96 (Spinthourakis, Papoulia-Tzelepi and Markopoulos 2001: 4) to 45,598 in 1999/2000 (Giavrimis, Konstantinou and Hatzichristou 2003: 424). During the last decade, there has been an even greater increase noticed in the numbers of immigrant students in Greek schools, who primarily come from Albania and the former Soviet Union, but also from other European countries and Asia. In 2005–2007, more than 17% of children born in Greece had foreign nationality, in 2008 there were more than 18% of children born of foreign or co-ethnic returnee parents (Baldwin-Edwards 2008, Rami, Karakatsani and Le Roy 2011: 14). Many of these youngsters are raised in houses where Greek is not spoken at all.

Traditionally, immigrants in Greece have constituted a substantial part of the population and have supported the Greek economy and substituted for the lack of flexibility in the labour market (Siadima 2001). The situation has changed with the emergence of the crisis in 2008. Currently, for Greek media and public opinion-formers migration issues are of utmost importance and remain in the centre of attention, while the attitudes towards immigration in Greece are generally negative.

Polish immigrants in Greece

Greece has never been one of the main destination countries for Polish emigrants. Still, in terms of population size, the Polish community is among the ten largest immigrant groups residing in the country. Polish people moved to Greece mainly in search of work and higher standards of living. Nevertheless, curiosity and attraction towards the country, with its climate, culture and traditions, also worked as pull factors.

Some Polish citizens settled in Greece in the immediate post war period and soon after, mainly due to marriage with Greek citizens, but the first great inflow of Polish immigrants came in the early 1980s after the imposition of Martial Law in Poland. During this phase emigrants came to Greece as false tourists and then stayed as false refugees (Marouf 2009: 6) treating Greece as a transit country on their way to the USA, Canada or Australia. Their number grew every year, with 1987 as the peak year, when 92,767 tourists' came from Poland (Romaniszyn 1996: 324). After 1988, however, there was a steady decrease in the arrival of Polish citizens (Romaniszyn 1996: 324). Between 1987 and 1991 more than 200 thousand Polish people lived in Greece, most of them in Athens; and some of those immigrants still live there now. Men found work mostly in construction or harvesting and women in the service sector. During their stay in Greece

Polish political immigrants managed to create an infrastructure for the economic immigrants that followed.

The next phase of Polish immigration to Greece began with the collapse of the Communist regime in Poland in 1989, after which Polish citizens were free to leave their country. However, at the same time Greece tightened its migration policy; legal entry of foreigners and settlement with the purpose of working became nearly impossible. Hence, Polish immigration started again in 1995 when Polish citizens no longer needed a visa to stay in Greece for periods of up to three months.

At the beginning of the new millennium Polish workers constituted the third largest group of undocumented immigrants in Athens (Siadima 2001: 11) with 80% of people concentrated in Attica. In 2003 the Greek ambassador in Poland estimated that the number of Polish residents in Greece was between 40,000 and 50,000 people (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2006:15). The accession of Poland into the EU did not dramatically change the number of Polish citizens residing in Greece, as it was in case of some other EU countries (just to mention the UK and Ireland). Table 1 presents numbers of Polish citizens in Greece between 2002 and 2011 according to the Central Statistical Office of Poland (<http://www.stat.gov.pl/>).

Table 1.

Emigration from Poland to Greece (in thousands)

End of year	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Thousands	10	13	17	20	20	20	16	16	15

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland (<http://www.stat.gov.pl/>)

There was a noticeable decrease in the Polish population in Greece after 2008;. Due to the crisis that struck Greece, Polish families started to re-emigrate to other EU countries (e.g. the UK, Germany, Denmark), or chose more distant locations (Canada) or returned to Poland.

The Polish community in Greece has been often portrayed as one of the best organised minorities in the country (Marouf 2009: 2). There are many independent Polish and Polish-Greek organisations that aim at strengthening relations between Polish and Greek citizens. Polish newspapers established by so-called Solidarity immigrants in the mid-1980s with the collaboration of Greek journalists are still published (e.g. “*Kurier Ateński*”, “*Polonia*” and “*Informator Polonijny*”).

The Polish population in Greece remains concentrated in Attica, with the cultural centre in Athens, in Michail Voda Street, where the Catholic Church of Christ Saviour is located. A large informal network of Polish private services is organized around that district (including everything from childcare, to shops, restaurants, legal offices, surgeries, and more). This area is a meeting place for Polish citizens where they socialize and exchange information concerning all aspects of immigrant life in Greece.

In terms of education Polish families in Athens have access to a number of institutions – Greek public and private schools, various international schools as well as the Group of Schools at the Polish Embassy in Athens (GoSaPEiA). However, taking into account the migratory pattern that the majority of Polish immigrants represent, that is economic emigration characterized by low paid jobs, actual school choice concerns free of charge institutions – either the Greek public schools or the GoSaPEiA.

The GoSaPEiA is one of the biggest Polish schools of this kind outside Poland designed to cater for Polish children temporarily residing in Greece. The number of pupils in the school year 2009–2010 (when the first study on social and school integration of young Polish citizens was conducted) was 1358: 709 pupils studying on daily ('regular') basis and 649 on complementary basis, i.e. taking classes in Saturday school intended for children attending Greek high schools. The GoSaPEiA includes a primary, a junior high, and a high school. The language of instruction is Polish; Greek is treated as a second language. The school is coordinated by the Group of Schools for Polish Citizens Temporarily Living Abroad, with its headquarters in Warsaw and is funded from the Polish state budget. Since 1997, the GoSaPEiA operates based on similar regulations as all public schools in Poland, and implements the entire curriculum of the Polish school. The Saturday school curriculum includes Polish language, the history and geography of Poland, religion, and social studies. Graduates of the Polish high school take their final exams (*Matura*) in Warsaw, Poland. Passing them allows to study in both Poland and Greece according to each country's regulations and requirements. The Greek state recognizes the GoSaPEiA as a foreign school. Thus, if its graduates want to study at Greek universities, they must meet admission requirements common for all foreigners, present a translated Secondary School-leaving Certificate, possess a residence permit, go through a medical check-up, and possess a certificate proving their knowledge of the Greek language.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The concept of *social integration* is a broad phenomenon which captures educational and economic outcomes as well as more subtle dimensions such as the composition of people with whom immigrants live, work, and form families (Åslund, Böhlmark and Skans 2009: 2). The integration of immigrants is a complex, multi-dimensional process that relates to all aspects of the social, cultural, civil, economic and political lives of the nation (Ager *et al.* 2003: 4). There is no universal agreement on what is meant by *social integration*, not to mention its dimensions and models. Various authors explain the notion of integration as a situation, phenomenon, process or relations that refer both to immigrants and host societies. In case of relations between the host society and immigrants, integration is usually understood as a process of the incorporation of new elements into the existing social system, whereby such incorporation should take place in a way that the extended system continues to function harmoniously and efficiently (see Koryś 2003). Research suggests that integration always brings about common tasks that need to be done by the immigrants themselves and by the host society. Thus, there needs to be an agreement between both groups that integration is an acceptable way to engage in intercultural relations.

Bosswick and Heckmann (2006: 3 after Esser 2000) proposed four basic forms of social integration – acculturation, placement, interaction, and identification. Acculturation (also referred to as socialization) designates a process by which an individual acquires knowledge, cultural standards and competencies needed to interact successfully in a society. The greatest influence on this process comes from significant others (Turner 1998); at first – parents and close relatives, but with time other people become more relevant: peers, teachers, close friends, partners. Acculturation is a precondition for placement – the process in which an individual acquires a position in the society: in the educational or economic systems, in the professions, or as a citizen. Interaction takes place when individuals form connections and networks – friendships, romantic relationships or marriages, or acquire more general membership of social groups. The last form of integration, identification, has both cognitive and emotional aspects and refers to a process of individuals' identification with a social system. According to this theory, the integration of immigrants into the society of settlement should be understood as a special case of social integration, to which the concepts of placement, acculturation, interaction and identification can be applied. Heckmann and Schnapper suggested that these four forms are basic dimensions of integration and could be conceptualized as structural, cultural, interactive, and identification integration.

The following study is based on a multicultural view of social integration of immigrants. Within this framework integration means the full participation of immigrants in the socio-economic life at the destination country without them having to give up their cultural identity, although with an expectation of the adoption of certain values (European Commission 2003). We approach integration as a process referring to the mutual relationship of an individual (Polish immigrant adolescent) with the host society (Greek society) – the degree to which an individual is connected to other individuals in a network. The consequences of this relationship concern both sides – the host society forces changes but at the same time undergoes some of them itself in the process of integration.

Adolescents and social integration

Adolescence is a time of unpredictable and powerful reactions and responses of great relevance for later life – no other transition in life is as demanding. Experience in peer groups has an important influence on adolescents and is vital for development and expression of autonomy. Their social world is highly complex, characterized by changing relationships with other people, authority figures and institutional structures, and with the society at large. Immigrant adolescents additionally need to struggle to establish and redefine their relationship with the new society. Accelerating geographic mobility, a characteristic of contemporaneity, is a difficult experience for young people. As they adjust to a new life, a new school, a new language, and a new culture, many immigrant adolescents face social and educational challenges. In addition to low economic status, these challenges include the pressure to make stressful adaptations to unfamiliar, evolving roles and relationships within families and social networks, high residential mobility, coping with emotional stress caused by the need to adjust to new social norms and a new institutional environment, family disruptions or separations and inadequate social support to compensate for broken community ties in their native countries (McCarthy, 1998: 16). For youngsters immigration is a difficult experience and in some cases, such as in the case of adolescents that go through complicated stages of human development and face great changes in their biological, cognitive and social spheres, integration processes might not proceed smoothly. As immigrant adolescents function within the contexts of their home, school and community environments the process of resettlement is not monolithic for them, but is rather a series of smaller changes in various life spheres (Birman, Trickett and Vinokurov 2002: 586). Young immigrants are faced with the new physical, social, and cultural environment of the host country and they have to rebuild their social networks. The literature on the subject suggests that adolescents are more likely to make friends with those whom they see most often as well as those with whom they feel they share

characteristics. Therefore, it is often a case for immigrant youth to befriend other immigrant children, especially those of the same ethnicity. Discrimination by their mainstream peers creates an important problem as it leads to segregation in and after school, alienation of recent immigrants, and creation of ethnically enclosed groups of students. Moreover, many immigrant children are brought up in households impacted by various socio-economic issues such as cultural and language barriers, unemployment or underemployment, social isolation, illiteracy, discrimination, and limited civic participation (Van Ngo 2009: 85 after Cooper 2003; Delgado *et al.* 2005; Statistics Canada 2003).

SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF POLISH ADOLESCENTS IN GREECE – THE RESULTS OF TWO STUDIES

From the results of the two projects on Polish immigrants in Athens five main themes regarding the factors influencing the social and school integration of Polish adolescents have emerged: the type of school the pupils attend, Greek language competency, peer relationships and other social networks, extracurricular activities, and parents' socio-economic status.

School

School has the power and tools to trigger positive inter-group contacts thanks to which diverse groups can interact and learn from one another. This, in turn, leads to strengthening the process of social integration. The Polish school in Athens was established for children temporarily residing in Greece. Due to its unique character as a Polish institution in the Greek society, in some ways it led to inequality as it placed Polish students in Polish reality, and created and strengthened networks among Polish pupils. Students attending this school spoke exclusively Polish and learned about and celebrated Polish religious and national holidays. The choice of school, often made by parents, had an influence and corresponded with social integration. Families which planned their future in Greece sent their children to Greek schools. These children seemed aware of the fact that they might stay in the country for longer, thus wanted to belong to the Greek society. Greek schools were places where Polish adolescents met with Greek pupils, socialized with them and generally participated more strongly and deeply in Greek culture¹ compared to adolescents from the Polish school.

¹ In this research we understand the notion of *culture* as shared pursuits within a cultural community; social aspects of human contact, including the give-and-take of socialization, negotiation, protocol, and conventions.

Celebrating Greek feasts and holidays together with their schoolmates and friends connected Polish adolescents with the Greek society. The greater participation in Greek culture seems to strengthen youngsters' social integration.

Greek language competency

Most educators and social scientists agree that it is crucial for immigrant children to master the mainstream language. Mastering it can propel children into the educational mainstream, allowing them to excel at school and improve their chances of successful and meaningful post-graduation employment. It is a generally accepted view that the ability to speak the language of a settlement country plays an important role in the process of integration, as it is a precondition for social participation. Good knowledge of the language of the receiving society facilitates the immigrants' social integration into different spheres of the larger community (Taft 1977, Vegler 1988). Thus, Greek language competency could be regarded as a booster but also as an indicator of the level of social integration of Polish immigrant children residing in Athens.

Polish immigrant students attending Greek schools initially had to deal with language difficulties. However, with time and the help of Greek teachers, the level of language proficiency greatly improved and at the time of the research the majority of them spoke both languages fluently.

At the beginning it was a little bit difficult; I wrote Greek words with Polish letters. I'm only a year in the Greek school, but I already write, although I am still having troubles with spelling. If they ask us to write an essay with 500–600 words I have no problem, I manage. The teachers are very helpful. They are OK for foreigners. (K., 17, GS)

Overall, Polish youth attending the Greek schools had a greater level of Greek language competency than their friends from the Polish school. A Polish mother we spoke to, as well as most of the young respondents declared that they exclusively used Polish at home, watched Polish TV, read Polish newspapers and books, and spoke Polish with friends. In this context the school becomes a relevant arena of Greek language acquisition. The Polish school regarded Greek as a foreign language; our respondents had up to two hours of Greek per week. Relatively little emphasis on Greek language in the Polish school may stem from the fact that it was primarily established for children residing temporarily in Greece with the aim to move back to Poland in the future.

Extracurricular activities in which adolescents participated also influenced their command of the Greek language – boys playing in Greek football clubs had to communicate with their Greek teammates (but also with other nationals – Greek

was a common language for communication in sport clubs). Since adolescents from Greek high schools participated in more extracurricular activities than their friends from the Polish school, they had more chances to practice speaking Greek not only at school but also outside of it.

Peer relationships and other networks

As we have already mentioned, adolescents tend to befriend those whom they see most often, as well as those with whom they share characteristics. In the group of adolescents from the Polish school all respondents stated that they had more Polish than Greek friends. As the GoSaPEiA's entire population was made of Polish pupils, it was difficult for students to befriend Greek peers while at school. As we have said, youngsters tend to spend the majority of their time at school. After school Polish respondents still spent time with their school friends or children of their parents' Polish friends. Polish students from Greek high schools had more Greek friends than their peers from the Polish school. Nevertheless, we cannot say that the majority of Polish youngsters from Greek schools had Greek friends. Possessing more Greek than Polish friends in the group of respondents from Greek schools is explained by the distance to the "centre of Polishness" – Michail Voda Street and its neighbourhood.

I have mainly Greek friends from my school... I live so far away from the centre... there are no Polish people in my neighbourhood that I know of. (K., 18, GS)

This is consistent with the literature that describes integration as a process occurring mainly at the local level. The frequency and quality of personal interactions and contacts between immigrants and the mainstream population in their neighbourhood or district is a key element of effective social integration.

Lack of Greek friends in both groups of respondents was often explained by not possessing enough time, residential mobility and ties loosening with time. Places where Polish pupils met Greeks were the same in both investigated groups – neighbourhood, sport clubs, language schools, school (pupils from the Greek high schools), as well as through friends who knew Greek people. Polish friends, in turn, our respondents met mainly at the GoSaPEiA, through friends, family, and the Polish parish. The fact that youngsters met Polish people through parents and their acquaintances was named the easiest and most convenient way of befriending Polish peers.

If I want to go out and meet with someone, they are usually from my mother's circle of friends, so Polish. But sometimes I also go out for example with Greeks,

who live next to me. A boxing club is next to my block and from there I have some of my [Greek] friends. (K., 17, GS)

Finding out more about the adolescents' personal lives helped us recognize what might strengthen the integration processes. When it comes to romantic relationships, we noticed that youngsters do not have problems with nationality or ethnicity in this context. At the time of research or in the past they had both Polish and Greek partners. However, when talking about future and more serious relationships, some interviewees from the Polish school suggested that they would prefer to have a Polish partner.

I would rather in the future have a Pole. I would like to have Polish children... (Da., 17, PS)

In case of the group of Polish respondents attending the Greek schools none of them spoke about preferences towards a Polish partner. Since romantic relationships might be regarded a pointer of social integration, we noticed a greater level of social integration among respondents from the Greek schools. Still, a larger sample would be necessary to confirm this observation. Yet, it seems accurate to say that even though love is on the forefront of adolescents' minds, issues concerning adolescents' romance are as mysterious to social scientists as they are to teenagers themselves (Furman, Brown and Feiring 1999:2).

Extracurricular activities

Interviewees often shared with us information on how they spent their free time. They mostly went out and met with friends. Participation in various organizations, especially ones connected to sport proved to be interesting. Sport generally contributes to broadening social networks and this was visible in our research. Even though the majority of ties created through participation in sports were rather weak and could be better described as acquaintanceships than friendships, having these weak ties seemed to benefit the social integration of Polish adolescents. Sports enabled these young people to develop networks of friends with similar interests. Sport clubs were places where Polish youth met and cooperated with Greeks, and at the same time a field where they could learn a lot about the Greek society and could also share their experiences about Poland and the Polish culture. Sport clubs proved to be a well-suited arena contributing to the process of social integration not only by enabling social contacts, but also by increasing Greek language competency. As it has been already stated, youngsters from the Greek high schools participated in more and differentiated extracurricular activities compared to respondents from the Polish school.

Parents and social integration of Polish adolescents

Parents' socio-economic status proved to be among the factors influencing social integration of Polish youngsters living in Athens. Attitudes towards and terms on which the parents were with the Greek society, as well as their occupational prestige and socio-economic status corresponded with their children's integration. In the case of some respondents, the parents were responsible for the school selection. Youth tended to have rather strong opinions about educational choices – some interviewees from the Polish school stated that if the decision about the school had been theirs, they would have chosen differently.

I do not like it here. I believe that teachers, most of them, do not know how to explain things well. You must take additional classes and pay for it. But if we are talking about colleagues, then I like it: we often meet after school. My mother enrolled me in this school. She decided that since I am Polish, I should be educated in a Polish school, and not Greek. I would definitely prefer to go to a Greek school. (J., 17, PS)

The majority of our respondents' parents had secondary education and did low-paid, mainly manual, jobs: mothers – domestic help, cleaners, nannies, waitresses, sellers, two unemployed housewives; fathers – construction workers and car mechanics. Within the group of youth from the Polish high school only one mother had higher education (economics). Still, she worked as a cleaner, which, as we noticed, made her daughter embarrassed. Therefore, it could be assumed that the parents' occupation indicating family's social status and allotting the family's position in the society was relevant for adolescents. In the group of Polish pupils from the Greek high schools four mothers and one father had higher education. From these, two mothers were not working, one worked in a pharmaceutical company (office job) and one worked as a nanny and was attending a Greek high school for adults in order to upgrade her level of the Greek language, as she planned to apply for a position of a PE teacher at a Greek school. Her daughter, when talking about her mother's current job, underlined that it was only temporary, and seemed to feel proud that her mom attended a Greek school and had solid plans regarding the future.

In our research children with better educated parents proved to be better integrated into the Greek society. This finding has not been confirmed by any other research in the field of adolescents' social integration and due to our small sample it cannot be generalized. Still, this is an interesting discovery that should be tested more thoroughly in the future.

Lower socio-economic status is often associated with fewer friendship opportunities – poorer children may be less able to participate in extracurricular activities. Youngsters from families with a more stable economic situation tended to go to language schools, sport clubs and sport centres (swimming pool, gym, or boxing club), and so on. Extracurricular activities are areas where friendships tend to be solidified. Yet, these activities can be expensive and require a time commitment from parents (e.g., giving lifts), as well as patience and understanding that this kind of pastime is important and boosts the child's development. Immigrant parents tend not to have as flexible work schedules as native parents and often work longer hours with lower wages. Therefore, their engagement in their children's activities might be limited.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Children of immigrants constitute a significant percentage of the EU population. Their integration into receiving societies becomes a basic requirement for these youngsters to turn into citizens able to contribute to the advancement of their new environments. Social integration of immigrants is a long-term and complex process, which influences and changes both: the host society and immigrants themselves. Migrants can obtain full social citizenship on the basis of mutual respect between different cultures. In this sense they have the actual right to participate and actively contribute to social life on equal terms with destination country nationals (Beqaj & Pieracci, 2006: 2). In case of relations between the host society and immigrants, integration always brings about common tasks that need to be carried out by both parties. For the last couple of years Greece has been struggling with increasing numbers of immigrants. Especially nowadays, in the times of the economic crisis that stroke this country hard, migration issues are of utmost importance and remain in the centre of attention of Greek media, public opinion-formers, as well as a great part of the Greek society; while the attitudes toward immigration are generally negative. This could create an obstacle for the social integration of Polish adolescent immigrants who reside in this country.

Our research showed that the social integration of Polish adolescents residing in Greece depends on the school the youngsters attend, Greek language competency, social networks within the Greek population, parents' socio-economic status, and extracurricular activities. When it comes to the networks within the Greek population, respondents from the GoSaPEiA had generally weak ties; mostly acquaintances, whilst pupils from the Greek schools had both strong and weak networks within the Greek society – friends, romantic relationships, and

acquaintances. Even though all networks are regarded as important for the process of social integration, Polish adolescents from the Greek schools had stronger, wider and more differentiated social networks within the Greek society than the group of adolescents from the Polish school. Thus, if we utilize Lasso and Soto's conceptualization (2005), which infers that social integration can be measured by the number and type of ties and the frequency of contacts, conclusions derived from our study may point to greater integration of Polish adolescents from the Greek schools when compared to respondents from the Polish school. Youngsters from the Greek high schools had more opportunities to meet Greeks, socialize with them and participate more widely in the Greek culture, which in turn positively impacted their integration. The GoSaPEiA, supposedly due to its unique character as a Polish school in the Greek territory, in some ways led to inequality as it seemed to place students in a Polish reality, create and strengthen networks among Polish individuals, even though in its statute it committed to organizing various activities in order to strengthen Polish – Greek relations. Relatively little emphasis on Greek language in the Polish school may stem from the fact that this school was primarily established for children residing in Greece only temporarily and not permanently. Thus, the school seemed to put emphasis on those subjects, which could be helpful and beneficial for children in their future careers in Poland. The relevance of the, often parents', choice of school to the analysis was also visible in the fact that families planning their future in Greece tended to send their children to the Greek schools. These youngsters, realizing that they would probably stay in Greece for longer, wanted to become a part of the new society. The school choice also appeared relevant for the Greek language competency. Obviously, youngsters from Greek schools had to master Greek since they attended schools where it was the language of instruction. Polish students from the GoSaPEiA did not have that chance. Our research, as many others in the field of migration, shows that the language is a crucial factor in the process of social integration of young immigrants.

Parents' socio-economic status also proved relevant for the process of social integration of Polish adolescents. Better-off parents could afford their child's participation in extracurricular activities outside the school, where Greek friendships and social networks in general were made and strengthened. Additionally, those parents seemed to understand the importance of such a pastime for their offspring. Extracurricular activities enabled participation in Greek culture which additionally built up social integration. Especially sport clubs proved important as a well-suited arena contributing greatly to social integration among young Polish immigrants.

Polish adolescents attending the Greek schools gave evidence of being involved in the new society while still retaining their ethnic heritage. These

youngsters spoke Polish and Greek fluently and generally described their life in Greece in a positive context. Pupils from the Polish high school were characterized by high Polish language proficiency and its everyday usage and low Greek language competency, as well as social contacts primarily with their co-ethnic peers. We found that Polish parents in Athens may adhere to Polish language, food, music and TV, and way of dressing with the aim or hope of passing them to their children. Our research confirmed the presence of this cultural transfer mostly in case of adolescents attending the Polish school, but also a partly in the group attending Greek high schools.

REFERENCES

- Ager, A., Curley, G., Fyvie, C., and Korac, M. (2003), *Integration: Mapping the Field*, Vol. 29. Online report: Home Office, <http://migration.ucc.ie/imiscoe/italianreport/Mapping%2520the%2520Field%2520Polciy%2520UK.pdf> [Accessed: 7.29.2013].
- Aronowitz, M. (1984), *The Social and Emotional Adjustment of Immigrant Children: A Review of the Literature*, "International Migration Review", Vol. 18, Issue 2.
- Åslund, O., Böhlmark, A., Skan O. N. (2009), *Age at Migration and Social Integration*, Discussion Paper, Bonn: IZA.
- Avramopoulou, I., Karakatsanis, L., Pavlou, M. (2005), *Greece, Current Immigration Debates in Europe: A Publication of the European Migration Dialogue*, Brussels/Athens: Hellenic League for Human Rights and KEMO, Minority Groups Research Centre.
- Baldwin-Edwards, M. (2004), *Statistical Data on Immigrants in Greece. An Analytic Study of Available Data and Recommendations for Conformity with European Union Standards*, Athens: Mediterranean Migration Observatory.
- Baldwin-Edwards, M. (2008), *Immigrants in Greece: Characteristics and Issues of Regional Distribution*, Athens: Andreas Papandreou Institute of Strategic and Development Studies (ISTAME)
- Beqaj, A., Pieracci, A. (2006), *Socio-cultural integration of young immigrants in Italy*. INTI Programme of the European Commission FUTURE Project, International Seminar *The integration of young immigrants in Europe: European experiences compared*, Pisa, <http://www.futureplatform.eu/downloads/trelacionesocioculturalideigiovaniimmrivedutaa.pdf> [Accessed 3.20.2010].
- Birman, D., Trickett E. J., Vinokurov, A. (2002), *Acculturation and Adaptation of Soviet Jewish Refugee Adolescents: Predictors of Adjustment across Life Domains*, "American Journal of Community Psychology", Vol. 30, Issue 5.
- Bosswick, W., Heckmann, F. (2006), *Integration of Migrants: Contribution of Local and Regional Authorities*, Dublin: European Forum for Migration Studies (EFMS) at the University of Bamberg, Germany.
- Central Statistical Office of Poland, (2012). *Wyniki Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2011. Podstawowe Informacje o Sytuacji Demograficzno-Społecznej Ludności Polski Oraz Zasobach Mieszkaniowych* [The results of the National Census of Population and Housing 2011. Basic information about demographic and social situation of the Polish population and the housing stock], Warsaw: Central Statistical Office of Poland.

- European Commission, (2003), *Migration and Social Integration of Migrants*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Furman, W., Brown, B. B. Feiring, C. (1999), *The Development of Romantic Relationships in Adolescence*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Giavrimis, P., Konstantinou, E., Hatzichristou, C. (2003), *Dimensions of Immigrant Students' Adaptation in the Greek Schools: Self concept and Coping Strategies*, "Intercultural Education", Vol. 14, Issue 4, DOI: 10.1080/1467598032000139859.
- Hellenic Statistical Authority, <http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE> [Accessed: 7.29.2013].
- IOM, (2010), *World Migration Report 2010, The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change*, Geneva: International Organization for Migration.
- Kofman, E., Meetoo, V., (2008), *Family Migrations, International Organization for Migration World Migration 2007: Managing Labour Mobility in the Evolving Global Economy*, Geneva: IOM
- Koryś, I. (2003), *Migration Trends in Selected Eu Applicant Countries: Poland*, CEFMR Working Paper, Warsaw: Central European Forum For Migration Research.
- Lasso, C., Soto, N. (2005). *The Social Integration of Latino Newcomer Students in Midwestern Elementary Schools: Teacher and Administrator Perceptions*, Vol. 1, Issue 14, <http://www.usca.edu/essays/vol142005/lasso.pdf> [Accessed:11.01.2010].
- Maroufouf, M. A. (2009), *Polish Immigrants in Greece*. Athens: IDEA.
- McCarthy, K. (1998), *Adaptation of immigrant children to the United States: A review of the literature*, for: The New Jersey Immigrant Youth Project, Center for Research on Child Wellbeing: Working Paper #98-03, <http://crcw.princeton.edu/workingpapers/WP98-03-McCarthy.pdf> [Accessed 21.01.2010].
- Motti-Stefanidi, F., Pavlopoulos, V., Obradović, J., Masten, A.S. (2009), *Acculturation and Adaptation of Immigrant Adolescents in Greek Urban Schools*, "International Journal of Psychology", Vol. 43, Issue 1.
- Parsonoglu, D. (2008), Greece: Country report, Report for INTI project OSS, IMEPO, Athens, http://www.osti.acidi.gov.pt/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=67&tmpl=component&format=raw&Itemid=57&lang=en [Accessed: 7.29.2013].
- Rami, J., Karakatsani, D., Le Roy, E. (2011), *Education for an Inclusive Europe: Movement within Europe, CiCe Erasmus Academic Network*, London: Institute for Policy Studies in Education.
- Romaniszyn, K. (1996). *The Invisible Community: Undocumented Polish Workers in Athens*. In: New Community, 22: 2, http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/188335_758077517_923546044.pdf [accessed: May, 2008].
- Roubanis, I. (2008), Challenges for the social inclusion of the migrant population in Greece, in: M. Baldwin-Edwards (Ed.), *Migrance: Ethnicity and migration: A Greek story*.
- Siadima, M. (2001), *Immigration in Greece During the 1990's: An Overview*, Master Thesis, Mediterranean Studies, King's College London, <http://www.mmo.gr/pdf/library/Greece/grckaimigracija.pdf> [Accessed:11.01.2010].
- Spinthourakis, J. A., Papoulia-Tzelepi, P., Markopoulos, C. (2001), *ICT in Teaching Greek as an L2. Needs Analysis of European Curricula in New Technologies and Language Teaching (ECNTLT)*. Patras: University of Patras.
- Taft, R. (1977), *A Comparative Study of the Initial Adjustment of Immigrant Schoolchildren in Australia*, "International Migration Review", Vol. 13, Issue 1.
- Triandafyllidou, A., Gropas, R. (2006), *Immigration to Greece: The Case of Poles*, Athens: Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP).

-
- Triandafyllidou, A. (2009), *Greek Immigration Policy at the Turn of the 21st Century. Lack of Political Will or Purposeful Mismanagement?*, "European Journal of Migration & Law", Vol. 12, Issue 2, doi: 10.1163/157181609X440013.
- Turner, J. H. (1998), *Socjologia. Koncepcje i ich zastosowanie*, [Sociology. Concepts and their application], Poznań: Zysk i S-ka.
- Van Ngo, H. (2009), *Patchwork, Sidelining and Marginalization: Services for Immigrant Youth*, "Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies", Vol. 7, Issue 1.
- Veglery, A. (1988), *Differential Social Integration among First Generation Greeks in New York*, "International Migration Review", Vol. 22, Issue 4.