ETHNIC IDENTITY OF IMMIGRANT STUDENTS IN COMPULSORY EDUCATION

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Summary

The aim of the present essay is to study the aspects of ethnic identity in adolescent, immigrant students and to compare them to the equivalent of native students, based mainly on the two components of ethnic identity ('commitment' and 'exploration'). The method used to implement the study was to conduct quantitative research, in the form of a structured questionnaire, distributed to students of the last class of Primary school, as well as to students of the first and second class of High school. According to research results, immigrant students seem to form the layers of exploration and commitment to their ethnic identity through the conflicting elements of the social environment in which they live. Furthermore, there is a distinct difference in the formation of their identity as opposed to that of native students.

Key words: immigrants, ethnic identity, educational policies.

1. INTRODUCTION

As of 1990, immigration towards Greece, due to social (e.g. poverty, unemployment etc.) (Damanakis [1]), political and religious (the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, wars, persecutions) conditions has increased enormously (Liberaki [2]). One factor that contributed drastically was globalization, which resulted in the liberation of all those components (economy, culture, values, technology, commerce, knowledge) that had been isolated within the borders of countries (Levitt [3]).

Immigration is a dynamic phenomenon which pertains to different types of people, heterogeneous motivations for movement, multiple roles and procedures of assimilation in the receiving communities (Zografakis et al. [4]). The primary goals of this movement are the quest for a better life, finding a job and the improvement of living conditions (Damanakis [1]: 14). According to data of the EU (EU [5]), out of

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842,000 immigrants, 546,000 are subjects of countries outside the EU, whereas, based on the population census of 2001, 56% are Albanians, with another 2% being subjects of countries outside the EU (Kotzamanis and Stathakis [6]). Immigrants living in our country are at a productive age (15-64 years old), with most of them being male (Zografakis et al. [4]:43). Greece is the only country in the EU where one ethnicity (Albanian) exceeds the 50% of the total of immigrants living in the receiving country (Baldwing-Edwards and Kyriakou [7]).

In 2000, remigrants and immigrant students composed approximately 8% of the educational population (Koulaidis [8]). During the school year 2006-2007, from a total of 1,164,958 students, 106,732 of them were immigrants, while 23,311 were remigrants. During the school year 2007-2008, out of 1,208,056 students 112,211 were immigrants (table 1) (NSSG [9]). Nowadays, immigrant students reach 9,5% of the educational population in primary and secondary schooling (OECD-PISA [10]). We need to clarify that the main accumulation of immigrant students is noted in the Administrative District of Attica, where over 10% of the total of immigrant students are to be found. In 2010, the number of immigrant students up to17 years old was 200,000 (10% 0f the total number) (Bougioukos and Fasoulis [11]).

Table 1: Distribution of immigrant and remigrant students in Greece during the school years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008.

	School year 2006-2007		School year 2007-2008	
	Immigrants	Remigrants	Immigrants	Remigrants
Primary school	60,847	5,340	65,355	5,239
High School	37,346	12,600	40,385	10,983
TEE	8, 539	5,371	6,471	2,512
total	106,732	23,311	112,211	23,623

Source: NSSG [9] and IPODE [12] (2007)

As regards Greek legislation on immigration, we find that it is in accordance with the general framework of European policy. More specifically, L. 3386/2005 ([13]) is evidently modified and enhanced in comparison with older laws, and more specifically to L. 2910/2001 ([14]), since the law calls for simplified procedures, decentralization in facilitation and other improvements. However, legislation in Greek pertaining immigrants still promotes a controlling and tax-collecting policy, which is

not accompanied by regulations for economic, political and cultural assimilation of immigrants in the Greek society.

2. SOCIAL IDENTITY-ETHNIC IDENTITY

Immigrants are an important part of the Greek society and their assimilation in the social web is a dynamic procedure, which may cause social inequalities, discriminations and xenophobic or racist manifestations, especially during the times of economic crisis (Androutsou and Askouni [15]:10), while simultaneously forming both their social and ethnic identity (Sam and Berry [16]).

In modern times, social identity is seen upon as a social fabrication. According to modern perception, an individual can manifest multiple and often contradicting identities, which do not constitute a whole unified entirety (Fornäs [17]). Tsaousis ([18]), while referring to the identity of the society, specifies the factors that affect the readjustment of the identity as follows: a) the individuals that form social surroundings, from which the self-defined individual is differentiated and b) the cultural elements that form the basis for the differentiation. Goffman ([19]: 64) refers to a potential ethnic identity, where society ascribes certain traits to certain persons. He also advocates a true, ethnic identity, referring to the true characteristics and traits that a person possesses. According to Turner ([20]: 108), the formulation of the social identity runs through three phases: during the first phase the person identifies oneself as a member of a certain social group. In phase number two, they adopt the stereotype norms of the group and in the third phase they accept and identify those norms as an integral part of themselves, thus enhancing their influence in the group. According to Rosenberg (1986 in Hatzichristou [21]:9), the social identity of a person entails: a) the social role (gender, age, occupation), b) participation in groups (ethnic, religious, political etc.), c) the social characterization attributed to the group, d) the personal history of the person, e) the social type (based on interests, habits, preferences) and f) their personal identity. Similar elements can be found in social identity according to Ashmore et al., ([22]): a) *self-categorization*: identification and categorization of the individual according to the criteria of a social group, b) *evaluation*: individuals' attitude towards the social categorization, c) *importance*: the participation of the individual in the social group, d) *attachment and sense of interdependence*: the individual's emotional involvement in the

group, e) *social embeddedness*: the degree to which the collective identity influences social relations, f) *behavioral involvement*: the degree of the collective identity's involvement in action, g) *ideology*: perceptions of the history and the experiences of the social group and h) *narrative*: the internal narrative that the person forms through observation of themselves and the group.

Marcia ([23]) refers to two procedures of identity formation: Exploration (a procedure of assessment of beliefs and social orientations) and Commitment (stability in beliefs, goals and social orientations). Depending on combinations, there arise four statuses of identity: a) Diffused ethnic identity: the individual does not explore and does not feel they identify with their identity, b) Foreclosed Identity: the individual does not explore but they are committed to their identity, c) Moratorium Identity: the individual explores but they do not commit to their identity and d) Achieved Identity: the individual explores and is committed to their identity (Marcia [23]. Phinney [24]).

As a member of a group, the individual adopts certain social traits, such as gender, ethnicity, social class, religion, and at the same time they also form emotional and ideological bonds with the group to which they belong and in which they participate (Tajfel [25]: 292). Elements, such as common origin, common language and religion, as well as common traditions, consolidate ethnic identity in a nation. Ethnic identity belongs to the category of social identities, since the individual is integrated in a group which shares common language, religion, customs, traditions, history (Avdela [26]: 33. Gotovos [27]: 52) and common origin (Fragoudaki and Dragona [28]: 14-15). According to Phinney ([29]), ethnic identity is a dimension of acculturation, which is linked to the individual's feeling of belonging in a cultural group.

According to Damanakis ([30]:9), '*ethnic identity expresses the "classical layer" of identity definition, which can be composed of common components and collective experiences, but not of myths'*. Ethnic identity differentiates people by emphasizing their differences, not their similarities. It pertains to a constant procedure of hetero-determination, which contributes to the continuing reproduction of ethnic identity. Many researchers support that ethnic identity is not a defined notion, but a product of social interactions (Jenkins [31]). Ethnic identity always sustains a reference to 'the other' (Avdela [26]: 55. Triandafyllidou [32]). According to Fragoudaki and Dragona ([28]: 14-15) everyone 'outside' the ethnic community is rejected. This refusal

of 'otherness' is usually based on the rejection of those elements unfamiliar to the group, which are attributed to the 'other' and which are assessed as negative. Foucault views the 'other' as a 'construction, which is a necessary condition for the stabilization, the presence of the social body as being' (Strozier [33]). Ethnic standards are elements of distinction and rejection and they constitute archetype procedures which lead to the devaluation of the 'others' (Fragoudaki and Dragona [28]: 15-16).

As far as the definition of Greek identity is concerned, Tsaousis ([18]) pinpoints the starting point sometimes with 'us' and other times with the 'others'. In the first case, Greek identity is identified by the different traits that characterize us and that are also acknowledged by the 'others'.

As for the manifestation of ethnic identity, Berry ([34]) supports that it is described by a quadruple model. According to this model, *assimilation* reflects the person's tendency to adopt the new culture and to reject those traits that signify their own ethnic identity. Through the technique of *Integration* individuals is included in the society of the country of reception, although they preserve their ethnic and cultural traits. Individuals that choose *Separation* as a technique of adaptation reject the elements of the new culture and adhere to their ethnic identity, while those that follow *Marginalisation strategy* reject both ethnic groups. According to research, most immigrants choose *Integration*, since it ensures their mental stability and the preservation of their ethnic identity (Prelorenzou and Dalla [35]: 30. Phinney et al. [36]). Ethnic identity is closely linked to mental well-being, self-respect, self-evaluation, depression, performance at school and substance abuse (Phinney et al. [36]. Berzonsky [37]).

A research conducted by Pavlopoulos and Besevegis ([38]) showed that Albanian students are more oriented towards Greek society, while at the same time keeping their traditions, values and culture to such a degree that does not influence their adaptation to the reception society (*harmonization* strategy). Next follows *assimilation* (3/10), then *distinction* and last *marginalism*. It should be stated that 2nd generation immigrants show a preference for *assimilation*, as opposed to 1st generation immigrants (Pavlopoulos et al. [39]: 416).

3. EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN GREECE

According to Article 29, paragraph γ of the Constitution, education is required to promote appreciation for the parents, the identity, the language and the cultural values of the student. It must also cultivate the ethical values of the country in which they live, those of the country of origin, as well as respect to diversity (Gamarnikow [40]: 134). In the early 80s educational policies for the integration of immigrant students showed an 'assimilation' orientation (Dafermakis [41]: 106). Reception Classes (RC) and Tutoring Classes (TC) were established according to L. 1894/1990 ([42]) aiming at the 'gradual adaptation of remigrants and children of Greek immigrants in the educational system'. These special classes were integrated in the school curriculum and they taught Greek language and elements of the Greek civilisation (Gousis [43]).

The great influx of immigrants in the 90s found society and its educational system unprepared to deal with the new social formations. With the L 2413/ 96 ([44]) the Special Educational Ministry of Expatriates and Cross-cultural Education and the Institute of Expatriate Education and Cross-cultural Education were founded and there was an effort to integrate expatriates and remmigrant students in the Greek educational system, which unfortunately did not bring the desirable effects. This law introduced Cross-cultural schools, which aimed at educating students with educational, social, cultural or education differences. Zografou ([45]: 265) believed that this law would lead to ghetto- schools, which would enforce prejudices and racism against these students. Sadly, this was the case in many schools, which were stigmatised and marginalised due to the multi-cultural composition of their students. At the same time, Greek teachers did not have the knowledge to deal with multi-cultural classes, causing confusing phenomena in the class interaction (Markou [46]) and at the same time underlying the deficiencies of the educational system.

In 1999, with the Ministerial Decision Φ10/20/Γ1708 (F.E.K. 1789/ Β/28-9-99) there was an introduction of RC (types I and II), the TC and the Expanded School, 'so that remigrants and immigrant students' education be more productive and active and the students be integrated in the educational system'. In addition, other parameters were finalised, such as the duration of RC, the curriculum and the teachers involved in this programme.

According to the New Curricula, the Ministry of Education adapted the cross-cultural educational system, aiming at 'providing education to students with

educational, social, cultural and educational differences' (Petrakou and Xanthakou [47]). The New Curricula stated that every individual has the 'obligation' to live harmoniously with the otherness, and to respect other cultures and languages. It was also declared that every individual has the right to preserve their ethnic and cultural identity (Dafermakis [41]: 110).

According to Article 40 of L. 2910/2001 ([13]): '1. Underage immigrants who live in Greece as obliged to the minimum of schooling just like natives. 2. Underage immigrants who study in any grade have unlimited access to all school or educational activities.' Special adjustments of the Ministry of Education and Religion and the Home Office allow for 'optional teaching of the mother tongue and the culture, where there is an adequate number of students……….and there should be a definition of the qualifications of the teachers teaching the mother tongue and cultural elements'. Most statutes (e.g. reception classes) were not implemented accordingly, and in the cases where they were implemented, there were difficulties faced (lack of material, lack of qualified personnel, inadequate administrative support). There was also difficulty in the co-operation among standard schools and schools with 'different' student dynamic (formation of ghettos, racism and social barring) (Zachos [48]).

From 1997 to 2008, the Ministry of Education, with the co-funding of the European Social Funding, realised three projects for immigrant and remigrant students on a national basis. Two of them were named "Education for remigrant and immigrant students' (1997-2000 and 2002-2004).The first one aimed at dealing with educational problems of students and the second at the students' integration and their families' support, the production of appropriate educational material and the education body awareness. The third one, entitled 'Integration of remigrant and immigrant students in Primary schooling', (2006-2008) aimed at the upgrading of the school buildings and at the integration of the students and their families into the Greek society.

4. AIM

The aim of the present paper is to investigate facets of the ethnic identity of adolescent immigrant students, as well as to compare them to native peers. Specifically, immigrant students' ethnic identity is being investigated based mainly on the two components of ethnic identity ('commitment' and 'exploration'). Furthermore, other

aspects under study are their differentiation from the ethnic identity of natives, their association with society and the preservation of ethnic identities.

5. METHOD

5.1 Sample

The sample for the study are subjects (natives and immigrants) that attend the last class of Primary school, as well as the first two classes of High school. The choice of Chios was made since a) the islands of the Northern Aegean are natural borders with the E.U., b) insularity and geographical discontinuity lead to socio-economic and educative differences and c) Chios and the other islands of the Northern Aegean constitute the arrival point of immigrants.

In total, out of 1536 students, we addressed 410 students (27%). The 83 immigrant students of the sample were simulated with 83 natives (out of 327). The criteria were the place of residence (urban or rural), sex, age and the parents' education level. The final sample was made up of 166 students. 60 (36,1%) were in the final class of Primary school, 52 (31,3%) attended the first class of High school and 54 (32,5%) went to the second class of High school. 43 boys and 40 girls participated in each group. 98 students came from an urban environment (59%), while 68 lived in the countryside (41%). 64 students came from Albania (77,1%), and there were students from Bulgaria (4,8%), Russia (3,6%), America (3,6%), Germany (1,2), Romania (2,4%) and other countries such as Poland or Georgia (7,2%). Out of 83 immigrant students, 34 were born in Greece (41%) while the rest 49 were born in their country of origin (59%). Layered sampling was used to collect the sample.

5.2 Research tool

Phinney's questionnaire ([49]), adapted appropriately, was used for the present study. J. Phinney's questionnaire (Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure - MEIM) consists of 12 questions. MEIM was composed to measure the procedure for ethnic identity development in adolescents (12+) and young adults. It has been used in multiple studies and has shown remarkable accuracy ($\alpha > 0,80$) in a wide range of ethnicities and ages. Using MEIM in a wide sample of teenagers, Roberts et al. ([50]) designated two parameters: a) the Exploration of the ethnic identity (a cognitive

procedure), which includes five questions, and b) the Commitment of identity (an emotional, behaviouristic procedure), which consists of seven questions. Reliability (Cronbach a) in the first case of the Exploration had an inflection of 0,55-0,70 for different ethnic groups and a=0,70 for the whole sample. In the second case of Commitment, we had an equivalent 0,81-0,88 and a=0,85 for the whole sample.

The questions of the MEIM questionnaire were translated and reconstructed so that they be understood by all students. They were then categorised into: a) Demographic characteristics (sex, age, ethnicity, class, educational level of parents) b) actual questions and c) students' opinions on their integration in the educational and social environment. The third part of the questionnaire was based on quotations from bibliography (Sam and Berry [16]. Papastylianou [54]), on the curriculum of the Ministry of Education and on researchers' experiences on cross-culturalism.

Furthermore, Exploration and Commitment were both used in the research. Reliability on Exploration was Cronbach a=0,608 and for Commitment Cronbach a=0,741.

6. FINDINGS

The statistic results of the study showed a significant difference between native and immigrant students, as far as Exploration of the ethnic identity is concerned. Specifically, the results regarding Exploration were (t_{166}=6,374, p=0.00<0.05, MW^3= 4,065 (SD=0,51), MM= 3,54 (SD=0,54), and pertaining Commitment (t_{166} =3,021, p=0.03<0.05, MW=3,75 (SD=0,52), MM=3,49 (SD=0,59). In other words, native students explore and commit to their ethnic identity significantly more than immigrant students.

Combining Exploration and Commitment and using the Clusters Analysis, we categorize individuals in sub-categories according to the state of identity in which they belong (Marcia [23]). Clusters analysis uses the similarities among people or situations with given variables (in this case the variables being the factors of ethnic identity) for their classification. Therefore, using the afore-mentioned method, four groups emerged.

When studying the grade point average figures (table 2) that derived from clusters analysis, we conclude that these four groups share certain characteristics: a) he

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^{3} MW: Mean Women, MM: Mean Men

first cluster (Achieved identity) is characterised by a high level of exploration and commitment of the ethnic identity, b) the second cluster (Diffused ethnic identity) shows a low level of exploration and commitment of the ethnic identity, c) the third cluster (Moratorium) is marked by a high exploration and a low commitment whereas d) the fourth cluster (Foreclosed identity) displays a low level of exploration but a high level of commitment to the ethnic identity. Students' sorting in the four categories is as follows: Achieved identity: 46 students (27,7%), Diffused ethnic identity: 31 students (18,7%), Moratorium: 59 students (35,5%) and Foreclosed identity: 30 students (18,1%). Most students are experiencing the Moratorium or the Foreclosed identity phase.

Table 2: Clusters centers

Phases	Clusters			
	Achieved	Diffused	Moratorium	Foreclosed
Exploration	4,39	2,91	4,00	3,28
Commitment	4,29	2,87	2,95	4,35

The four groups show an important statistic discrepancy to one another [$\chi^2(3)=$ 13,711, p=0,003], manifesting in this way the differentiation of ethnic identity in people.

The distribution of the statuses of ethnic identity in the countries of origin (table 3) is statistically significant [$\chi^2(3)=$ 32,073, p=0,000]. Table 3 indicates that the majority of native students have moulded an Achieved identity or they are in the procedure of the Moratorium phase. On the contrary, the immigrant students of the sample are in the Diffused ethnic identity or the Moratorium phase, or they have developed a Foreclosed identity.

Table 3: Identity and country of origin

Ethnic identity	Country of origin			
	Greece		Other country	
	N	%	N	%
Achieved	35	42,2	11	13,3%
Diffused	6	7,2	25	30,1%
Moratorium	34	41,0	25	30,1%
Foreclosed	8	9,6	22	26,5%

Total	83	100	83	100

During the analysis of questions concerning the immigrant students' attitudes and the attitudes of those that influence them (family, teachers and friends), it was found that statistically, these attitudes had a great influence over the formation of identity. For example, in questions that pertain to the student's attitude towards the cultural elements of origin:' I feel good that I come from this country and I have the particular cultural background' $[\chi^2 (3)= 24.149, p=0.000<0.05, MRA^4=67.27, MRD=28.94, MRM=47.50, MRF=37.95]$, 'I like using cultural elements of the country of origin' $[\chi^2 (3)= 13.316, p=0. 004<0.05, MRA=66.77, MRD=37.22, MRM=39.78, MRF=37.57]$.In questions that refer to the student's family's attitude 'My family has strong ties with our country of origin' $[\chi^2 (3)= 15.389, =0.002<0.05, MRA=62.59, MRD=33.62, MRM=44.22, MRF=38.70]$ and in questions concerning the attitude of teachers and friends 'My classmates and teachers respect my language, religion etc' $[\chi^2 (3)= 10.285, p=0.016<0.05, MRA=55.50, MRD=33.10, MRM=48.50, MRF=37.98]$. The findings demonstrate that the immigrant students with Achieved identity use elements of their ethnic identity, in addition to conceptualizing the attitude of family and important social webs as positive. The results show a significant difference in the numbers of students in the other three phases of identity. Immigrant students with Confused identity are those using the least their own cultural elements, in addition to experiencing the worst attitude from the other members of their social environment. The rest of the students with Moratorium or Foreclosed identity find themselves between these two extremes of conceptualisation of personal and social acceptance and expression of cultural elements, with the former having a more positive attitude.

7. DISCUSSION

Social identity is moulded through a multitude of social identifications that an individual performs with different social groups. Ethnic identity is part of the social identity and pertains to the individual's integration in groups with cultural, linguistic and religious characteristics. These groups provide a sense of security, protection and self-confidence to the individuals, a feeling that they 'belong'.

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[4] MRA: Mean Rank Achieved Identity, MRD: Mean Rank Diffused Identity, MRM: Mean Rank Moratorium, MRF: Mean Rank Foreclosed Identity

In contemporary Greek society, the increasing intensity of immigration has led to the co-existence of people with different ethnic identities, creating thus multi-cultural societies, characterised by discriminations, xenophobia and racism. Furthermore, the educational system, which is unbreakably linked to the official Greek, orthodox culture, aims at mitigating the distinctions between the 'different' students by creating redeeming institutions (e.g. Reception classes). Unfortunately, the success is not always guaranteed.

Analyzed data indicate that native students 'explore' and commit to' their ethnic identities significantly more, in comparison to the immigrant students. According to Tsaousis ([18]), the readjustment of ethnic identity is linked to the social surroundings and the cultural elements that form the basis for differentiation and discrimination. A fundamental factor in the reproduction of ethnic identity is the public educational system (Avdela [26]:33). As far as the Greek educational system is concerned, immigrant students socialize in a school environment that disregards their own cultural elements (language, religion, and customs) and in many cases these cultural elements become the basis for discrimination (Gotovos [52]. Petrakou and Xanthakou [47]. Gropas and Triandafyllidou [53]. Triandafyllidou and Veikou [54]. Unicef [55]). Native speakers are supported by an educational system that enhances their own cultural elements, thus rendering them the dominant party. On the other hand, immigrant students' cultural background is marginalized. This procedure causes the majority of native students to manifest an Achieved identity or to find themselves in the Moratorium phase, in contrast to immigrant students who experience the phase of Diffused ethnic identity, of the Moratorium or have formed a Foreclosed identity. Most immigrant students, therefore, either explore their ethnic identity or have adopted a Foreclosed identity, whereas native students acquire their ethnic identity through procedures of exploration and commitment. Immigrant students interact with natives and form significations for themselves (Kateri and Karadimas [56]. Giavrimis [57]. Giavrimis et al. [58]), their origin and the ways to integrate in the reception country (Berry [35]. Cummins [59]. Damanakis [60]. Papastylianou [51]. Pavlopoulos et al. [39]. Sam and Berry [16]). In addition, as part of a group, the individuals acquire emotional and ideological bonds with the group to which they belong and in which they participate (Tajfel [25]: 292), they define themselves in the group and embrace the

stereotypes and norms of the group (Turner [20]:108). At the same time, social aspects such as family, school, friends and the media, contribute to the formation of the ethnic identity, having sometimes contradictory orientations that emerge through stereotypes and prejudices. Research in the Greek bibliography has shown these contrasting stands (Galanis [61]. Kavounidi et al. [62], Tsiganou [63]. VPRC [64]).

The immigrant students with Achieved identity in this research use elements of their ethnic identity, and at the same time they experience their family's attitude as positive. These individuals self-define themselves and they share common knowledge, ideas, attitudes, conceptions, traditions, ways of communication and interpretations of social reality (Moscovici [65]). This group of immigrant students explore and commit to their ethnic identity for two main reasons. Firstly, they are seconded by their families and other supporting networks (teachers or friends) and secondly the time of absence from the countries of origin creates the need to preserve their cultural characteristics (Kasimati [66]: 86-87).

In conclusion, immigrant students develop levels of exploration of and commitment to their ethnic identity through elements of their social surroundings. A substantial difference to the native students' formation of ethnic identity is also noted. The ambivalence (Achieved identity, Diffused ethnic identity, Moratorium, Foreclosed identity) that emerges from the formation of the ethnic identity is characteristic of the acculturation osmosis that takes place, but also of the effort to attune contradictory cultural elements and to ensure, to a certain extent, the emotional balance of the individual (Phinney et al. [36]). It is imperative that the Greek society and consequently, the Greek educational system, develop a cross-cultural understanding as an everyday practice, identifying and respecting cultural differentiation. Moreover, the correct application (Gropas and Triandafyllidou [53]) of the Greek curricula, which emphasize the principle of the acceptance of differentiation, the acknowledgement of immigrant cultures (YPEPTH [67]) and the life-long training of teachers in cross-cultural teaching, can demarcate the framework of signification and development of a sufficient ethnic identity for all individuals.

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