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ἀσκητόν οὔτε
μαθητόν, ἄλλα
φύσει
παραγίγνεται
tοῖς
ἀνθρώποις ἢ
этому τινί τρόπω
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The scope of the MEJER is broad, both in terms of topics covered and disciplinary perspective, since the journal attempts to make connections between fields, theories, research methods, and scholarly discourses, and welcomes contributions on humanities, social sciences and sciences related to educational issues. It publishes original empirical and theoretical papers as well as reviews. Topical collections of articles appropriate to MEJER regularly appear as special issues (thematic issues).
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THE SCHOOL IMPACT ON BRIDGING AND BONDING SOCIAL CAPITALS: THE CASE OF 12 POLISH ADOLESCENTS IN ATHENS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social capital is a sociological concept, which refers to the everyday interactions between people and connections between members of groups or networks. Despite its cross disciplinary usefulness, the term social capital remains vaguely and variously defined in scholarly usage (Gonsalves, 2007). Social capital is an attractive and immediately advantageous perspective in trying to understand various processes that occur in societies within changing times. Regardless of the importance of this concept proved by broad scientific research, only few studies have investigated the potential difference in the relationship between bonding versus bridging social capital and school’s impact on them. Drawing upon a research on social and school integration of 12 Polish adolescents from Polish immigrant families residing in Athens, Greece, this study seeks to examine the association between bridging and bonding social capitals and the assumed influence of school on each type of the capital. Following Putnam’s (2000) distinction between bonding and bridging social capital, we utilize social capital as participation in social networks fostered by the school. Presented data consider social capitals relative to 12 Polish adolescents attending schools in Athens, Greece. The general aim of the study that the presented paper is based on focused on addressing the social and school integration of Polish adolescents and also at identifying what fosters these processes for children with an immigrant background. It was a qualitative research relying on semi-structured in-depth interviews with 12 respondents, aged 17 and 18 years old, from Greek and the Polish high schools in Athens, as well as on literature review and text analysis (on social integration, social capital, migrations and adolescence).

2. POLISH MIGRATION TO GREECE

Polish citizens are among ten largest immigrant groups, in terms of population size, residing in Greece. They were coming to this country mainly in the search of work and better living conditions. Curiosity and attraction towards the country itself, with its climate, culture and traditions, have always worked as pull factors appealing to Polish people (Romaniszyn, 1996, Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2006). Yet, Greece has never been one of the main destinations for Polish emigrants.

The waves of migration from Poland to Greece are related to the social, political
and economical circumstances in Poland combined with Greece’s migratory policies (Maroufof, 2009). In the immediate post war period and later some Polish citizens were settling in Greece mainly due to marriage to a Greek citizen. The first huge inflow of Polish immigrants came in the early 1980s after the imposition of Martial Law in Poland. During this phase emigrants following the Solidarity refugees came to Greece as false tourists and then stayed as false refugees (Maroufof, 2009) treating Greece as a transit-country on their way to the US, Canada or Australia (Romaniszyn, 1996). Romaniszyn (1996) indicates that between 1987 and 1991 more than 200 000 Polish people were in Greece, most of them in Athens. Men found work in construction or harvesting and women in the service sector. The collapse of the Communist regime in Poland in 1989 started a new wave of Polish immigration to Greece. Following phase of Polish immigration to Greece was characterized by the year 1995 when Polish citizens were not required to possess a visa in order to stay in Greece for a period up to three months. At the beginning of new millennium Polish workers constituted the third largest group of undocumented immigrants in Athens (Siadima, 2001) with 80% concentrated in Attica. In 2003 the Greek ambassador in Poland estimated that the number of Polish residents in Greece was 40 to 50,000 people (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2006, p. 15). The majority of Polish immigrants belonged to the most productive age groups: 20 to 50 years old (both men and women). These were mostly single men and women, but also entire families migrated (Christou, 2008). Accession of Poland into the EU’s structures did not change dramatically the number of Polish citizens residing in Greece, as it was in case of other EU countries. Table 1 presents numbers of Polish citizens in Greece according to Central Statistical Office of Poland.

Table 1. Emigration from Poland to Greece. Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland (http://www.stat.gov.pl/)

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Decrease in Polish population can be noticeable after 2008 crisis that has largely hampered situation of immigrants in Greece making loads of them leave this country in search for better life elsewhere. Entire Polish families started to re-emigrate to other EU countries (UK, Germany, Denmark, Sweden), some chose more distant locations (Canada) or returned to Poland. No one, not even Polish Embassy in Greece or Greek authorities, was able to exactly estimate the amount of Polish citizens in Greece (Romaniszyn 1996, Christou, 2008; Maroufof, 2009). However, it is said that only about one third of the Polish immigrants that resided in Greece before the crisis still live in this country.¹

Currently, Polish population in Greece is concentrated in Attica, with the cultural

¹ This information comes from author’s meeting with the representative of the Polish Parish and Embassy which took place in spring 2014. No official documentation has confirmed this information so far.
center in Michail Voda Street, where Polish Catholic Church of Christ Savior is located. Around that district large informal network of Polish private services is organized (including everything starting from child care, shops, restaurants finishing with legal offices, surgeries, etc.). This area is a meeting place for Polish citizens where they can socialize and exchange information concerning all the aspects of immigrant life in Greece. Polish immigrants in Greece seem to be among organised minorities in this country (Lazaridis & Romaniszyn, 1998). According to Lazaridis and Romaniszyn, (1998, p. 12) Polish workers in Greece have a relatively high level of specialization and education. Men are mainly specialized in construction (and this is their typical job and women - in service sector including catering, cleaning, entertainment, etc. (Siadima, 2001). When it comes to educational level of the Polish immigrants in Greece it is said to be higher not only than that of Greece’s total foreign population, but also than its general population. According to the data of the Labour Force Survey for the 2nd quarter of 2008 86% of Polish immigrants living in Greece were graduates of secondary education, or higher, while the corresponding percentage for the country’s total population was 66% (Maroufof, 2009, p. 11).

Peculiarity of Polish immigrants in Greece lies in the fact that these people finding themselves in a foreign country, with difficulties in the language, customs and religion, create a social niche were they inform themselves about the homeland, socialize and create a microcosmos on the periphery of the Greek society - a protected environment of solidarity and friendship formed in the city center of Athens (Siadima, 2001, p. 16). Lazaridis & Romaniszyn (1998) call this phenomenon invisible community. These scholars believe that Polish networks should not be understood as an ethnic enclave or as a community seeking to preserve its cultural or ethnic identity. They seem rather to be functional in catering for the cultural, social and economic needs of Polish immigrants in Athens. These networks have a pivotal role in partly rendering Polish immigrants autonomous from Greek society but also, to a certain extent, they act as sources of contact between Poles and Greeks. Another characteristic of Polish immigration in Greece is its “family” character: Polish immigrants either came to Greece with a family, or started a family there: got married and had children in Greece.

3. EDUCATION OF POLISH CHILDREN IN ATHENS

In terms of education Polish families in Athens get to select from the variety of educational offers: Greek public and private schools, various international schools as well as the Group of Schools at Polish Embassy in Athens (GoSaPEiA). However, taking into account the migratory pattern that majority of Polish migrants’ present, namely economic migration characterized by low paid jobs, the actual school choice concerns free of charge institutions: either the public Greek schools or the GoSaPEiA. The GoSaPEiA is one of the biggest Polish schools of this kind outside Poland. It was held for the Polish children temporarily residing in Greece. The number of pupils in the school year 2009-2010 (when the study was done) was
1358: 709 pupils from daily (‘regular’) system and 649 from complementary system (Saturday lessons for Polish children attending Greek high schools). The GoSaPEiA included primary school, junior high school and high school. All lessons were in Polish; Greek language was thought as a foreign one. School is coordinated by The Group of Schools for Polish Citizens Temporarily Living Abroad, with headquarters in Warsaw. It is funded from the Polish state budget. Since 1997, the GoSaPEiA operates on regulations same for all public schools in Poland, implements entire curriculum for a full program of the Polish school. Complementary curriculum includes Polish language, history and geography of Poland, religion and social studies.

4. THE NOTION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital is often conceptualized as a set of norms and values such as truthfulness, honesty, principle reciprocity, trust, etc., shared by members of a group. It is also referred to as a network of connections and dependencies, which together form a structure that enables and facilitates the functioning of individuals. Social capital is unique in that it is the product of relationships: it is generated by, between and among people, in their interactions (Adler & Kwon, 2002 cited by Gonsalves, 2007). This concept describes the various resources that people may have through their relationships in families, communities and other social networks (Catts & Ozga, 2005). In a broader perspective, “networks of people can be viewed as a wider set of norms and relationships that enable people to achieve their goals” (Salem, 2009, p.13). Social capital describes circumstances in which individuals can use membership in groups and networks to secure benefits (Sobel, 2002). It is also a powerful form of learning, as it provides a range of social settings in which one can observe, practice and develop various skills (Field, 2005). Social capital is also viewed as an important social resource in the process of ethnic identity formation and the maintenance of kinship bonds (Reynolds, 2007, p.384).

It is believed that the notion of social capital first appeared in Lyda Judson Hanifan’s discussions of rural school community centers (Infed, 2011 after: Hanifan 1916, 1920). The encyclopedia of informal education implies that Hanifan used the term to describe those tangible substances that count for most in the daily lives of people (1916: 130). It is believed that the notion of social capital was introduced in a systematic manner into the social theory in 1983 by Pierre Bourdieu, and then utilized, inter alia, by James Coleman and Robert Putnam. These three scholars are referred to as the intellectual triumvirate of social capital (Law & Mooney, 2006).

According to McGonigal (2007, p.3) central to Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam’s attempts to define the social capital is its location as belonging to and existing within the relational bonds of human society: the durable network of relationships (Bourdieu, 1983), the social structure (Coleman, 1994), or social networks (Putnam, 2000). Still, these three scholars are associated with different schools to understand and define this concept: Coleman refers to social capital as to resources available to individuals and families to achieve social mobility; Putnam saw it as foundation for
civil society important for economic growth and establishing democratic institutions; Bourdieu believed that social capital is about power and inequalities and how they are reproduced in social networks (Dwyer et al., 2006).

Although differences arise among users of the notion of social capital in relation to a precise definition, there is a broad agreement that trust, norms (of reciprocity) and social sanctions are at the core of this concept. Social capital is also strongly connected to power: a person’s social capital can provide him with networks of advantage linking to skills, ideas and knowledge which can then be used to one’s own advantage (Morrice, 2007). There are different forms of social capital: family, school, people living in the same neighborhood, classmates, civic organizations one is member of, internet chat group, etc. The forms of social capital can be divided into formal: e.g., actions linked to authorities, parents’ organizations, and informal (Putnam, 2004, p.7-10): people playing football, gathering in one pub, family dinners, etc. Thus, social capital is a summary of all different forms put together.

The issue of adolescents’ social capital is a relatively new in the scientific research and generally connected to exploring young people’s use of social capital in constructing identity across diverse ethnic and racial groups (Reynolds, 2007). As shown in scientific research, young people’s social networks are generally informal, based on friends and acquaintances (Tomanovic, 2005). Their uniqueness lies in the fact that they are mostly based on friendships, but also, on a smaller scale, on family members and neighbors. The concept of social capital is useful for understanding the essence of friendship networks that generate wider social contacts and networks, which additionally benefit individuals. Social capital is a product of social relationships (such as trust, loyalty, security, self-confidence) that youths have within such groups as the family, school, and other community organizations (Bassani, 2007). Adolescents might participate in, as Putnam (1993) named them, voluntary networks, such as sports and other after school activities. Moreover, they can also be involved in formal community networks or take part in actions linked to local authorities.

5. BRIDGING AND BONDING SOCIAL CAPITALS

A complete definition of social capital sees it as a product drawn from the combination of bridging and bonding relationships (Gonsalves, 2007). These notions come from the works of Robert Putnam (2000, p.22–24). Bonding social capital means relationships between members of one (homogenous) social group such as friends, close family members, neighbors and work colleagues, thus people who are similar in ethnicity, age, social class, etc. with their associated cognitive values, beliefs, and attitudes. Naturally, relationship between people that are similar is more likely to strengthen links within a group: social capital lays the structure for specific reciprocity and mobilizes solidarity (Salem, 2009, p.14). Bridging social capital is a resource that encompasses various people across different social cleavages (Putnam, 2000, p.22-24) and helps them to build relationships with a wider, more varied set of people than those in the close family or school.
environment. It is characterized by loose ties e.g. more distant acquaintances from other circles, groups or social classes, people belonging to different communities, or those from another ethnic group. It is believed that social ties outside the close circle of people similar to one another are relevant in creating mutual understanding and in achieving advancement in life (Karsten, 2010). Bridging social capital enforces exchange of information. It bridges for example at school and with community organizations (Gonsalves, 2007). Tomai et al. (2010) state that bridging networks literally create ‘bridges’ among people who normally would not have chances to meet and co-operate. The relationships that they develop may lack in depth, but they offer breadth: they provide the chance to get to know people of various backgrounds (Tomai, et al. 2010).

When discussing bridging and bonding social capitals one should remember that these are not “either/or” categories, but rather that many groups bond along some social dimensions and bridge across others (Walseth, 2008). When these two kinds of capitals are combined the deeper aspects of network dynamics are uncovered and unique circumstances are created (Eyal, 2007). Putnam stated that bonding is good for “getting by”, but bridging is crucial for “getting ahead” (Putnam, 2000, p. 23).

For bridging and bonding capitals important are networks and interactions that create various ties within a society. Bridging networks lead to the creation of a greater identity and reciprocity through the links to external resources and dissemination of information. These types of networks are the ones that can eventually facilitate the process of integration (Salem, 2009), while bonding social capital might be exclusive and can produce strong out-group antagonism (Putnam, 2000). It is believed that a very strong bonding social capital can work in an exclusionary way and develop hostility towards non-members, undermining bridging social capital in a society and thus acting in segregated manner towards outsiders (Karsten, 2010). Forms of integration between different groups, can only be established when weak social ties between the members of different kinds of group progress (Karsten, 2010).

When it comes to immigrants, bonding networks can help them feel more comfortable in the new society. However, continuous reliance on these networks could lead to the earlier mentioned negative consequences. Bonding social capital is inward looking and strengthens exclusive identities and homogenous groups. It is frequently formed in ethnic enclaves where immigrants rely on their connections with "same" people: either compatriots or other immigrants that face similar problems and situations in a new society (Salem, 2009, p.14). According to Salem (2009) in the case of immigrants, the bridging social capital is present when both the immigrants and the host society work together to build social relations and can be reinforced through schools without ethnic segregation.

It is believed that the social capital that children possess in their social networks of friends is a bonding one (Tomanovic, 2005). When it comes to adolescents, and especially foreign adolescents that live in a multicultural community of foreigners,
they also cumulate bridging social capital. At their schools and after school they meet and make friends with peers from different countries and have a chance to learn about their customs, traditions, and habits. The subject literature shows that bridging social capital plays a vital role during both adolescence and emerging adulthood (Gonsalves, 2007).

6. THE ROLE OF SCHOOL IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGING OR BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Schooling is regarded to be the ultimate instrument for advancing civilization and personal achievement (Karsten, 2010). That is why schools and education were always accompanied by high expectations. In the subject literature schools are regarded as primary arena where children develop social capital that is independent of their parents (Weller, 2006 cited in Reynolds, 2007).

For Putnam social capital and education coexist in a kind of vicious circle, with education seeking to promote social capital and social capital intending to enhance efficiency of education (Clarke, 2004). Putnam argues that the development of mutual trust as well as doing things for one another in networks reinforces solidarity and positive attitudes towards institutions and relationships which compose civic community. Schools in this context are relevant institutions in which positive attitudes may be developed. Still, according to scholars, the literature on the theoretical exploration of social capital has not been adequately expanded and is not well developed in relation to empirical evidence in education with only few studies focusing on schools as communities for building social capital (Karsten, 2010; Bassani, 2007; McGonigal, 2007). Reynolds’ research (2007) showed that the most of the young people’s close friendships were established in school or college and these friendships bonds have mostly endured across time. It reinforces the claim that school is one of the most important settings for befriending, forming relationship and, in this way, acquiring social capital. According to Bassani (2007) youth-based groups (including school-centered ones) have social capital that depends on and consists of the social capital that all group members enter the group with. Reynolds’ study indicated that strong bonding networks are established through a shared ethnic identity and belonging. Also Mulford’s (2008) research recognizes the importance of groups, networks, norms, and trust, so bonding social capital, for both students’ feelings of self-worth and day-by-day enjoyment of school and academic results, but also for pupils’ later life chances. Catts and Ozga (2005) believe that bonding social capital may be developed and recognized in different ways in a school setting: some forms may work with the school aims and organization while others may seem to work against it.

For marginalized groups in society, such as emigrants, same-ethnic friendship networks have the potential to create community and group consciousness and also act as a protective buffer and support mechanism in the face of social exclusion and discrimination (Reynolds, 2007, p.385). However, it is believed that in extreme situations the ties that youth has with their ethnic groups may become so strong
that the social capital may in fact restrict or completely disassociate the youth from ‘outside’ group ties, thereby limiting the positive effect that social capital in formal groups (e.g., schools, peer groups, etc.) would otherwise have on these youths (Bassani, 2007). In Reynolds’ study (2007), same-ethnic friendships dominated the category of close friends and cross-ethnic friendships were generally found in the ‘casual friend’ or ‘acquaintance’ categories and functioned in more instrumental and strategic ways. Reynolds’ explanation of the dominance of same-ethnic friendships relies on the fact that people usually choose friends who are very similar to themselves. The cross-ethnic friendship networks developed at school were proven important social resources for bridging across different ethnic groups (Weller & Bruegel, 2006 cited in Reynolds, 2007). Reynolds believes that based on Putnam’s theory, exploration of young people’s use of ‘bridging’ social capital to develop cross-ethnic friendship bonds can be done. The more bridging that occurs between two groups, the more social capital develops (Bassani, 2007). Bridging social capital occurs among and between schools (Mulford, 2008). According to subject literature bridging in school setting can occur not only among students, but also between the family and school. It happens for example when students are involved in the school’s extracurricular activities and when parents volunteer in the school.

Catts and Ozga (2005) state that due to social capital’s capacity to give opportunities to people and communities for abilities development, it could and should be recognized and promoted in schools. Tomai, et. al. (2010) suggest that schools with more social capital display higher performance levels and accordingly students with more social capital tend to boast higher self-esteem, satisfaction with life and more engagement in after school activities. In general, research shows that social capital is associated with higher levels of educational performance. In order to perform and feel well, children and adults need to feel safe and part of a community (Tomai, et. al. 2010). In accordance with this, it is believed that social capital formation in the school setting requires also paying attention to the space: schools should be designed in a way to encourage easy, casual connections among people.

7. THE RESEARCH: DESCRIPTION

In this paper we focus on the influence of different school types (Polish and Greek) on the bridging and bonding social capitals of 12 young Polish migrants. We utilize Putnam’s (2000) conceptualization of bonding and bridging social capital and approach social capital as participation in social networks fostered by the school. This paper is based on 2010 research on the social and school integration of Polish adolescents residing in Athens. It was a qualitative research relying on semi-structured in-depth interviews with 12 respondents, aged 17 and 18 years old, from the Greek and the Polish high schools in Athens, as well as on literature review and text analysis (on social integration, social capital, migrations and adolescence). A phenomenological approach and qualitative perspective were chosen to explore the lived experiences of Polish high-school students, to elicit adolescents’ thinking and feeling about social integration experiences in the peer group as well as in the wider,
social context. Qualitative perspective emphasizes phenomenological view, in which reality inheres in the perceptions of individuals (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005, p. 40). It is based upon interpretivist and constructivist paradigms. Subject literature underlines that qualitative research can provide an explanation of phenomena characteristic for migration processes, which are invisible in statistics. The findings are bound to particular social contexts and are not generalizable to entire groups or population.

8. THE SAMPLE

The research sample consisted of 6 boys and 6 girls from the last grades of the Polish and Greek high schools. The interviewees’ selection process was not random, but intended to ensure that interviewed population met certain selection criteria, such as age (17-18 years old), gender (equal numbers of boys and girls), type of school (either Polish or Greek) and place of residence (Athens). Adolescents represent mainly the second generation of immigrants with 8 respondents born in Greece, and one-and-half generation of immigrants that came to Greece either as very young children (2-6 years old: 3 interviewees) or teenagers (only one boy). Half of the group, so students from the Greek high schools, was sampled through their status as pupils attending Polish school on weekends. Table 2 displays a demographic and socio-economic presentation of the research sample.

Table 2 Demographic and socio-economic presentation of the research sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Age at arrival to Greece</th>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Parents’ occupation</th>
<th>Parents’ education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agnieszka</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Her parents are divorced, she lives with her mum. Agnieszka has “...kind of... stepfather. (...)Polish”. She has one “real sister” and one from another mother. The rest of the family lives in Poland.</td>
<td>Mother - domestic help; Stepfather – works at construction site.</td>
<td>Mother – graduate of technical college; Stepfather - vocational school graduate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanna</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Joanna is the only child; the rest of her family is in Poland.</td>
<td>Father – owner of a painting business; Mother – unemployed</td>
<td>Father – graduate of technical electrical college; Mother has finished high school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 The names of respondents were changed to guaranty anonymity and confidentiality
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Age at arrival to Greece</th>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Parents’ occupation</th>
<th>Parents’ education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrzej</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Andrzej lives with his parents and younger brother. Some members of his family are in Greece: 2 aunts 3 uncles and one grandmother; the rest is in Poland.</td>
<td>Father - owner of construction company; Mother works as a cleaning lady.</td>
<td>Father has finished technical college; Mother is a high school graduate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damian</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Damian is the only child, lives with both his parents. The rest of his family is in Poland.</td>
<td>Father - works at construction site; Mother – works as waitress.</td>
<td>Father – graduate of a technical electrical college; Mother has finished some sort of college (Damian was not sure).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marek</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Marek lives with parents and a younger brother. The rest of his family is in Poland.</td>
<td>Mother sells flowers at Bouzoukia (Greek night club); Father works as a plasterer.</td>
<td>Mother – graduate of medical college; Father - graduate of mechanical technical college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paulina</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Paulina is the only child, lives with her parents. The rest of her family is in Poland.</td>
<td>Mother works as a cleaning lady; Father works as car mechanic.</td>
<td>Mother graduated from the university in the field of economics; Father - graduated from mechanical technical college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamila</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Parents are divorced; mother is remarried to a Greek. Kamila has 2 sisters in Stepfather – retiree.</td>
<td>Mother – nanny;</td>
<td>Mother graduated from the Academy of Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Age at arrival to Greece</td>
<td>School type</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Parents’ occupation</td>
<td>Parents’ education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igor</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Igor lives with his parents and 2 brothers: 18 and 8 years old. All his relatives live in Poland.</td>
<td>Mother - works as domestic help; Father - works at the construction site.</td>
<td>Mother - high school graduate; Father - vocational school graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aneta</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Aneta is the only child, lives with both her parents and the rest of her family lives in Poland.</td>
<td>Mother - unemployed; Father - owner of a construction company.</td>
<td>Mother - high school graduate; Father has finished a technical college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasia</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Kasia is the only child, lives with her parents. The rest of her family lives in Poland. She has a Greek godmother.</td>
<td>Mother - unemployed; Father makes fireplaces.</td>
<td>Both Kasia’s parents are musicians with higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konrad</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Konrad lives with both his parents. He has a 15-year-old brother. The rest of the family lives in Poland.</td>
<td>Mother works for a pharmaceutic company as office worker; Father does not work but does casual works (carpenter).</td>
<td>Mother finished university (she is a nurse); Father – graduate of a technical college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Born in Greece</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Adam lives with both his parents and two younger brothers. He has</td>
<td>Mother works as nanny; Father works</td>
<td>Adam’s both parents have finished technical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. BRIDGING AND BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL OF POLISH ADOLESCENTS IN ATHENS

Social capital literature shows that school is one of the most important settings for forming relationships and that the most of the young people’s close friendships are quite so established at school. Similarly, psychology also points out at schools as at important settings in friendship formation (Weiner & Craighead, 2010). The bonds that started at school are said to tend to last for a long time. These claims prove the importance of investigating schools’ impact on social capital, especially when children of immigrants are concerned.

As we have already said, social capital occurs among and between schools. That is why relations between schools in a specific area are of great importance. According to Maroufof (2009) the Polish school in Athens often participates along with other schools in various events, which seems to have brought the school very close to the other schools of the area, while, at the same time, gave the opportunity to its pupils to come in contact with other children of the same age. Yet, Maroufof’s positive opinion about the majority of extracurricular activities offered by the Polish school and its bridging role in Greek society has not been confirmed in our interviewees’ responses, for example:

- Agnieszka (Polish school), 17: *Hmm ...there are some* [activities, events], *but generally only in primary school and gymnasium, in high school there are no such things*....
- Joanna (Polish school), 17: *There is probably no such things* [activities, events]. *Maybe sports; it is only the volleyball that I take part in.*

Putman (1993) believed that participation in various organizations builds social capital what in its turn strengthens social integration. Adolescents’ participation in, as Putnam (1993) named them, *voluntary networks*, namely sports may lead to the accumulation of social capital and a larger social network (Walseth, 2008) impacting their social integration. Schools take on an important part in this context as they organize sport teams that Polish students were members of.

- Kamila (Greek school), 17: I take part in volleyball division (...) at school.
- Joanna (Polish school), 17: (...) it is only the volleyball that I take part in.

When it comes to the Greek schools that Polish respondents attended, we can only infer about their relationships with other schools from interviewees’ responses.
Polish pupils generally stated that their Greek schools do not organize many events that they could participate in:

- Kasia (Greek school), 18: I think there are no [activities, events]. Or there is something connected to music, but I do not participate in it.
- Konrad (Greek school), 17: Greek school does not organize any activities...

Respondents from the Greek schools participated in some extracurricular activities where they could meet Greek peers and where some specific contacts and networks were present:

- Adam (Greek school), 17: I am (...) active in school government.
- Kamila (Greek school), 17: I take part in (...) history contests at school.

Respondents attending the Polish school were deprived of this area of social contacts with reference to bridging social capital. Contacts they had thanks to “indoor” school activities reinforced bonding ties: those with peers of same ethnicity. Even though the Greek schools seem not to organize many activities and outdoor, inter-school events, they are places where Polish adolescents meet Greek youngsters and have chance to befriend them:

- Adam (Greek school), 17: school is normal. Children are OK, together we organize a lot of things. I feel well there. I am even active in school government, I organize different things there. I think that all the kids know me there.
- Konrad (Greek school), 17: It is very nice in my Greek school. I have a bunch of friends and feel great with them.

The Greek schools, moreover, allow and facilitate participation in Greek society and culture. Polish pupils attending these institutions had a chance to “taste” various customs and traditions taking part with their Greek school-mates in festivals, celebrations and holidays organized on different occasions, such as Christmas and Easter, Independence Day, etc. Among the few intra-school activities organized by the Greek schools respondents mentioned school government, school band, theater group and sport teams.

We believe that the Greek schools impact on their pupils’ social capital in three ways: organizing various intra-school and inter-school events and celebrations and, as a context, allowing participation in Greek culture, necessitating and thus strengthening their command of the Greek language.

As we have earlier said, literature suggests that school environment, with its norms, values, and support offered there, plays an important role in facilitating language acquisition (McCarthy, 1998). The level of knowledge of the Greek language in the case of students from the Polish school varied within the student population and was generally related to the time they spent in Greece (Maroufof, 2009, p.16). Still, Greek language courses at the Polish schoolwere not divided into groups with a different level of advancement and the school carries out relatively

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3 In this research we understand the notion of culture as shared pursuits within a cultural community; social aspects of human contact, including socialization, negotiation, protocol, and conventions.
few lessons of the Greek language, below the requirements of regulation for the private schools in Greece (Marchlewski, 2008). The results are that Polish students from the Polish high school are less competent in the Greek language than respondents from the Greek schools. Competency in mainstream language influences social contacts that immigrants have with natives. The Polish school in this context seems not to do enough to enhance its pupils’ knowledge of the Greek language, which in turn could reinforce their social contacts in the mainstream society. Greek high school attendance forces Polish pupils to improve their language skills. Otherwise they would have problems following the Greek curriculum. On the other hand, the Greek schools facilitate Greek language acquisition also as a result of continuous contacts with native peers that the school setting enables.

The relevant component of Putnam’s theory, namely social networks, seems to be influenced in a large degree by the school youth participates in. Our research pointed out that respondents from the Greek schools had more Greek friends and acquaintances than pupils attending the Polish high school. However, we cannot say that the majority of interviewees from the Greek schools had Greek friends: only few respondents stated they did. In contrast, Polish students from the Greek schools said they generally met with Polish peers, and not children from their schools.

- Aneta (Greek school), 17: The circle I move in is more Polish: Polish Church, Polish friends, Polish school. I know some Greeks, but, you know, relations are a bit different. I cannot define it. Maybe I cannot open up. I start talking to them, (...) for example about the lessons, or just generally, but there are not any great friendships there. Maybe except for 2-3 persons. People are OK, just some of them are not...
- Igor (Greek school), 17: All of my friends are Polish: from the Polish school I attended earlier.

Not clear difference in friendships patterns with Greek peers in case of Polish pupils attending the Greek and Polish high could be due to the very recent migration. We can assume that with time Poles attending Greek schools might get more Greek friends. Polish pupils from Polish high school were deprived of this chance (of foreseeable development of friendships, contacts with Greek peers).

Having only a few Greek friends in the case of Polish pupils attending the Greek schools can perhaps be explained based on the social capital theory. People usually choose friends who are very similar to themselves (Reynolds, 2007), in case of emigrants - people of the same ethnicity. For minority groups in society, such as emigrants, same-ethnic friendship networks have the potential to create community and protect and support members of this community from any negative aspect of their migrant lives.

On the other hand, one respondent from the group of adolescents from the Greek schools stated that she had mostly Greek friends:

- Kasia (Greek school), 18: I have mainly Greek friends from my school... I live so far away from the center... there are no Polish people in my neighborhood that I know of.
This was caused by the distance from the “center of Polishness” — Michail Voda Street and its neighborhood (with Polish shops, restaurants, church, libraries, cafes, discos, etc.) where many Polish nationals live and spend their free time. Due to her place of residence Kasia stated to socialize with Greek peers.

In the group of adolescents from the Polish school all respondents stated that they had more Polish than Greek friends. Some of them had some, and some said they had no Greek friends. The example is Agnieszka who stated that she did not have any Greek friends, but only some acquaintances:

- Agnieszka (Polish school), 17: I meet Greek people for example when my friends have Greek friends. But the majority of my friends do not have Greek friends.

Polish youth from both groups tended to possess same-ethnic friends and cross-ethnic acquaintances. The Greek schools in this context are settings that enable Polish to meet and keep in touch with their Greek peers. Everyday contacts with mainstream population they experienced at their schools gave opportunities to create more contacts in the Greek society compared to the situation of Poles from the Polish high school. The latter group had fewer chances to interact with Greek peers. This might have had an impact on their limited contacts with Greek students. The presented findings are in accordance with Reynolds (2007) research. Social capital theory states that school reinforces mainly bonding networks and our study is in line with this claim. The school networks of Polish pupils attending the Greek schools were more of a bridging character (due to interactions with various ethnicities, not only Greek nationals), and school networks of Polish adolescents from the Polish school referred more to bonding social capital (enabling contacts only with Polish youth). At this point we should acknowledge that for social capital acquisition what is important is not only the existence of social networks but also the kinds of networks. Even though the majority of ties created in the Greek schools was rather weak and may be better described as acquaintances than friendships, having these weak ties to one’s school-mates also seemed to have benefits for the integration of Polish adolescents. According to Putnam’s theory (2000), loose ties and networks help people to ‘get ahead’.

When it comes to contacts that are important for adolescents’ social capital acquisition with relation to its bridging and bonding types, personal relationships and some more specific contacts should also be discussed. With regards to romantic relationships, evidence from the interviews showed that respondents from the Polish high school either did not have boyfriends or girlfriends, or had Polish ones.

- Agnieszka (Polish school), 17: I do not have a boyfriend. I used to have, but they were mainly Polish.

- Marek (Polish school), 17: I am in relationship with a Polish girl now. In the past I had some Polish and Greek girlfriends. But I must say I prefer Slavic girls. Still, if a beautiful Greek girl appears...

Youngsters from the Polish school seemed not to have problems with nationality
in the context of dating.

- Joanna (Polish school), 17: Now I have a Polish boyfriend, but previously I went out with Greek boy for two years.
- Damian (Polish school), 17: Currently I have a Polish girlfriend, but I like Greek girls, I like to flirt with them...

However, when talking about future and more serious relationships, some of the interviewees from the Polish school suggested that they would prefer to have a Polish partner.

- Paulina (Polish school), 17: I have a Polish boyfriend, who is studying in the Greek university. I had two Greeks and the rest of Poles [boyfriends in the past]. But I would rather have a Pole. I think Greeks have a different mentality. When I go out with a Pole he is more gallant, asks me how I was, etc.
- Damian (Polish school), 17: I would rather in the future have a Pole. I would like to have Polish children...

In case of the group of students attending the Greek schools, only one boy, Adam, confirmed he had a girlfriend (Greek one), and two girls, Paulina and Kamila, said they had a boyfriend (Polish one). The rest used to have some romantic relationship with both Poles and Greeks, or even young people from different nationalities. None of them spoke about future or present preferences towards a Polish partner. As Kasia stated:

- Kasia (Greek school), 18: It does not matter whether he is Polish or Greek, it matters what kind of person he is.

School as a place where young people spend a large part of their day has to some degree an influence on its pupils’ romantic relationships. In psychology, romantic relationships are regarded as a kind of close friendships (Weiner & Craighead, 2010). As friendships are generally formed from people that attend the same school (Weiner & Craighead, 2010), it can be assumed that school is therefore also a setting enabling romantic relationships. In this view the Polish high school gives opportunity for pairing off between same-ethnic pupils, whilst the Greek high schools give more chances for creation of inter-ethnic romantic bonds.

10. CONCLUSIONS

Social capital can raise social integration and fight social exclusion as participation in groups and networks is essential for overall integration processes of immigrants in mainstream society. For adolescents friendships are especially of great importance. As we have already mentioned, psychology regards proximity and similarity as two key predictors of friendship formation: friends usually live near one another or attend the same school. In this context school is the setting enabling social contacts. These contacts could be bridging as in cross-ethnic contexts (Greek schools) or bonding as in same-ethnic contexts (Polish school). In our research respondents attending the Greek schools had both strong and weak networks within Greek society, namely friends, romantic relationships and acquaintances, whilst Polish
adolescents from the Polish school had rather weak networks in Greek society, mostly acquaintances. Even though all networks are regarded as important for the process of social integration, evidence suggests that students 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. The subject literature acknowledges that the cross-ethnic friendship networks developed at school are important social resources for bridging across different ethnic groups. This is the case of Polish students attending the Greek high schools. Based on our findings and referring to Putnam’s theory of bonding and bridging social capitals as well as literature review done on the Polish school and social integration, it could be assumed that for our respondents the Polish school in Athens was a place promoting bonding social capital and with lacks in facilitating bridging one. However, due to the qualitative character of our research and relatively small sample size our findings cannot be generalized and more investigation is necessary to substantiate these claims. Due to the recent migration that seems to be the case in our study, there has been a transition noticed. On the one hand, the Greek schools seem to be promoting a greater integration into mainstream society. However, this situation is not uniform: there has been a varied – individual - rhythm of integration observed in participants of this study. In contrast, the Polish school seems to defend the pure "Polishness" and keeps students more connected to Polish networks.

The Polish school in Athens was established for children temporarily and not permanently staying in Greece. Due to its unique character as a Polish institution in the Greek society, in some ways it leads to inequality as it keeps Polish students in a Polish reality; it creates and strengthens networks among Poles, regardless of the fact that they function in Greek society, and it does not pay enough attention to teaching the Greek language. The literature claims that in extreme situations the ties that youths have with their ethnic group may become so strong that the social capital may in fact restrict or completely disassociate the youth from ‘outside’ group ties, thereby limiting the positive effect that social capital in formal groups (e.g., schools, peer groups, etc.) would otherwise have on these youths. We posit that this could be the case of our respondents and their connections within Polish community. However, yet again more research and a larger sample are indispensable in order to explain this situation adequately. Although, as it was declared by respondents, the Greek schools do not offer much of extracurricular inter and intra-school activities to participate in, they are still places where our respondents met with Greek pupils, socialized with them, celebrated Greek feasts and generally exhibited stronger and deeper participation in the Greek culture than interviewees from the Polish school. Thus, it seems that the Greek schools impact on their pupils’ social capital in three ways: organizing some intra-school and inter-school events and celebrations and, as a context, allowing participation in Greek culture, necessitating and thus strengthening their command of the Greek language. Ethnic schools, while strengthening bonding social capital of their pupils, do not
support a bridging one, but rather appear to isolate pupils from mainstream society and culture. As we have already mentioned, bridging social capital seems to contribute to social integration, while bonding social capital can produce strong out-group antagonisms. Attendance at the Polish school may therefore weaken the process of adolescents’ integration into the Greek society, boasting pupils’ sense of ethnicity; while the Greek schools appear to provide opportunities to facilitate the process of social integration into the Greek society to a larger degree. Adapting Putnam’s theory of bridging and bonding capitals we can state that the networks of respondents attending the Greek schools were of a bridging character, while the networks of Polish adolescents from the Polish school referred more to bonding social capital. The literature presents the view that when it comes to immigrants, bonding networks can help them feel more comfortable in the new society, but continuous reliance on these networks could lead to negative consequences as bonding social capital is inward looking and strengthens exclusive identities and homogenous groups. The school environment plays also an important role in facilitating language acquisition which leads to strengthening linkages within various communities by providing opportunities for interaction and networking. In this context the Polish school did not impact on the language acquisition of its pupils, contributing to weakening of the process of their integration into the Greek society. The Greek schools that our interviewees attended required and, therefore, forced pupils to use and learn Greek language supporting in this way their social integration.

The results of our research indicate that for the 12 Polish adolescents the Greek schools were institutions promoting bridging relations and bridging social capital, whilst the Polish school supported bonding relations and bonding social capital. However, more research and a larger sample are necessary to more fully authenticate these claims. Our assumptions and conclusions are limited to the pupils that we interviewed and therefore cannot be generalized to the entire population of Polish adolescents in Athens.

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THE SCHOOL IMPACT ON BRIDGING AND BONDING SOCIAL CAPITALS: THE CASE OF 12 POLISH ADOLESCENTS IN ATHENS


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