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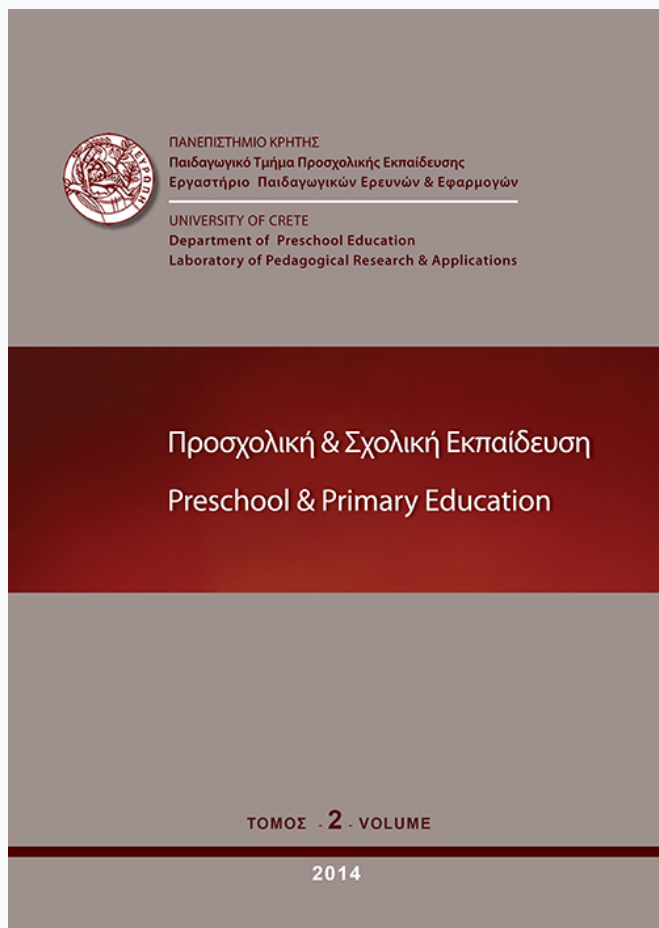
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National Identity versus European Identity The Dimensions of Change Developing the Greek teachers' European identity

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National versus European identity: The dimensions of change, defining Greek teachers' European identity

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Summary. This study examines the attitudes of Greek teachers towards Europe in relation with their national identity. Because of the Greek debt crisis and Greece's entry into the IMF and EFSM mechanisms, two successive studies were conducted using the same questionnaire (the first with 1036 and the second with 482 teachers from all over Greece in 2009 and 2011 respectively). A two-step cluster analysis was performed and four particular dimensions were identified. The statistical analysis showed that there is a shift away from a European orientation, a finding that is attributed to economic difficulties.

Keywords: National identity, teacher, European integration, debt crisis

Introduction

Counting 50 years of history, the process of European integration has led to the formation of hyper-governmental economic and political institutions, which are meant to serve as instruments of the gradually forming federal or supranational European state. These new institutions, however, are not always accepted by citizens. The rejection of the European Constitution through recent referendums in France and the Netherlands has demonstrated that the degree of the citizens' identification with the institutions of the European Union still remains low (Risse, 2003).

To date there have been no valid indications to document the configuration of the new 'European' identity of the member-state citizens, one which is concurrent with or predominant over their national identity (Eurobarometer 73, 2010). Considering that the impact of the decisions of the institutional organs of the European Union on the life of citizens is substantially increasing, it can be predicted that the lack of development of a European identity will produce attitudes of political alienation, which means that citizens will be increasingly feeling that their lives are determined in the future by imperative 'upper' decisions of a political system with which they do not identify themselves (Bakke, 1995; Ball, 1990). The vote against the European constitution was a clear indication that a substantial part of the citizens - probably the major one - does not keep up with the political elite of Brussels' course towards integration (Flash Eurobarometer, 2005). Moreover, the debt crisis of many European countries, as well as the reluctance of the powerful to offer help, means that European integration is rather far away. Therefore, configuring – or, reversely, the failure to configure – a European identity will determine a positive activation, a passiveness or even an active reaction by the citizens against European integration.

First it must be recognized that identity is an extremely powerful agent, and can be dangerous. Furthermore, 'identity construction is a political process … "We" utterances must be treated as partial statements of claims rather than as descriptions of a reality' (Wintle, 2002). It is always important and essential to ask who is promoting a particular collective identity and why, and who is resisting it. Expressions of identity are aspirational and not so well defined, for it can well be claimed that there is no such thing as a complete, finite and perfect collective identity (Spiering, 1996). Identities can be destructive and negative in their effects, and although they are almost always 'positively valued' by their owners, their faults and defects can pose serious political and social problems for them and others (Mikkeli, 1998).

Secondly, most academic experts agree that identities are constructed according to the social, cultural and geo-political environment, and are subject to change over time and from place to place (Michael, 1996). Identities are not self-evident, and not given; on the contrary they are man-made constructions. This is not to deny entirely the influence of climate, physical environment, bloodline, genes and the rest, but rather to accept that these facts are only some of the elements in the complex construction of a collective identity. Collective identities, then, are largely to do with nurture, not nature, and are defined in the main by culture and society rather than genes (Delanty, 1995). Still, popular myths about in-born, shared characteristics and essentialities can take on their own part, and generate enormous political forces once their credibility is established – as happened in Nazi Germany and in many other ultra-nationalist situations. But in spite of popular conviction on occasion, collective identities are not unchangeable: they change over place and time (Smith, 1995).

And if collective identities are based on perceptions, such perceptions are not only of ourselves, but of what we think 'we' are not. All kinds of collectivities, including peoples, states, nations and indeed continents, identify themselves partly by defining their own characteristics, but also by defining those which they think they do not share. This 'othering' process, or the construction of identity by defining alterity, is to do with noticing difference between 'us' and 'them', whether real or imagined. Some differences seem obvious and physical, to do with skin or hair color; most perceived differences are however behavioral. Indeed, it is often easier to identify characteristics in an 'opposite' group than it is in one's own (Macdonald, 1993). It is a kind of identity-formation based on the perception of stereotypes, or even scapegoats; often malignant prejudices are involved, and indeed it is essential to expose any such misconstructions which may underpin a European identity (Andréani, 1999).

The concept of identity as part of the self-concept embraces three principal dimensions:
1. The sense of the person's 'belongingness' in a social subgroup.
2. The sense of 'commonness', i.e. the existence of a number of common social features between the person and the particular subgroup.
3. A 'cohesion', i.e. the person's positive communication with the rest of the subgroup members (Gecas & Burke, 1995).

In social identity theory, social identity refers to the conviction of the person's belonging in a certain category or group. A social group can be defined as a group of people who identify with each other in social terms (Hewitt, 1997). Through the procedure of social comparison people categorize themselves as an 'in-group', in which case they consider they manifest the features constituting their group identity, while at the same time they categorize the ones who differ as an 'out-group'. Initially, social identity comprised affective as well as evaluating correlations of the 'in-group' categorization (Stets & Burke, 2000). The most prominent objective expression of the subjective sense of the identity is a readiness to act, i.e. a readiness for the activation of an identity. The identity extends as far as that

readiness of the activation itself. That identity activation in certain circumstances allows for the person's fulfillment of personal and social goals (Hurtado, Gurin, & Peng, 1994). In that sense the projection of the central identity is of utmost importance and determines the person's self-perception. Furthermore, the sense of satisfaction that results from the activation of the particular identity is considerable and colors the person's own self-perception.

Thereby, the sense of identity is not only multi-dimensional but also multi-leveled at the same time, which means that each person simultaneously belongs to more than one subgroups, some of which postulate contradictory demands from the person (Sedikides & Spencer, 2007). Possessing more than one allocated identities, persons find themselves to be caught in 'cross-fire', and are forced to decide on whether they should fulfill demands of a certain identity, which may be more powerful than another. Therefore, if there is a conflict between a national and a social identity - detected in nationally divided societies - the person needs to make a decision upon what or who he/she will act: as a member of a national community or as a member of a political party, and that decision is based on the significance (centrality) of the person's identities (Green, Nelson, Martin, & Marsh, 2006).

In the process of European integration, frictions and conflicts are inevitably developed between the supranational (federal) state of the European Union and the national state members. In the context of the person's forming even of a substandard identity, conflicts are translated as intrinsic conflicts of their allocated identities – the national and the under-configuration European identities.

Both poles of the field inside which these conflicts develop are occupied by the social groups that support the European unification on the one hand, and leaderships that are negative to that perspective, on the other. Both sides make use of their own means and power with which they attempt to affect the citizens' attitudes, as well as to direct the course of action so as to serve their own purposes (Hix & Hoyland, 2011).

Based on the above, it is made evident that the European integration model, as well as the configuration of the European identity, are not totally harmonious procedures, but on the contrary they constitute conflicting procedures inside which contradictious views and profits are expressed. In that framework, education, as a powerful field of cultural transfer, is assigned a decisive role – to construct the European identity and awareness, and serve as a mechanism of an expanded cultural reproduction, and an area of management of human manpower (Bash, 2005; Bottery & Wright, 2000; Day, Fernandez, Hauge, & Moller, 2000).

Since the end of the 70's European communal and non-communal organizations (Council of Europe) have focused on education and the teacher's role so as to promote and incorporate the 'European' idea in the educational systems of the member-states; introducing the European Dimension in Education has contributed in the creation of new institutions, as well as the enactment of a series of measures and actions for the promotion and development of the purposes of European integration (Elliott, 2004; EURYDICE, 2002, 2003, 2004). In these actions the teacher is a critical factor in educational changes, since he/she is considered to have the main part in forming the future setting of the European unification (Hartley & Whitehead, 2006). The study of Greek teachers' European identity in both primary and secondary education is characterized as an important issue (Faas, 2011; Starida, 1995). The teacher is universally considered to be the most determining factor of the educational procedure (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2000). His/her daily contact with the students creates the prerequisite conditions for the transmission of knowledge and models. The present study aims to study the centrality of Greek teachers' European identity. In particular the study attempts to inspect and decipher the particular social group's attitudes concerning European citizenship, as well as the government's objectives that relate to European integration.

Inside the education system teachers have a complex part as far as the production and reproduction of official and unofficial school knowledge is concerned. Today's reality is characterized by the renegotiation of traditional terms on the basis of the subjects' self-perception as members of a social group (OECD, 2005). Consequently, concepts such as the ones of a citizen, nationality, national identity, are renegotiated through a dual and contradictory procedure of examination and disruption of their content. Therefore, the Greek teachers' attitudes and views generate interest that relates to the way they define themselves through the developing dialectic conveyed within the relationship between national and European identity, in the frame of the recently acquired status of the European citizen.

Method aims and research questions

Initially, an attempt was made to detect the extent of teachers' internalizing a European identity as opposed to a transitional stage where they demonstrate positive or negative attitudes towards their European citizenship. That question also relates to the determination of dimensions underlying a questionnaire constructed for the purpose of the present research. The measurement of National Identity is a complex issue, since it involves taking into account the multidimensionality of the concept, and thus multiple items are needed so as to express the different aspects of National Identity in a questionnaire. The measuring of individuals' attitudes usually involves the use of questionnaires with several items referring to different aspects of the concept. The main research question was related to the idea that the economic crisis and the entry of Greece into the IMF and EFSM mechanisms has not changed teachers' attitude towards the European Union and European integration and these changes, if any, would have influenced the their attitudes towards European and national identity.

Moreover, having clarified the dimensions of changes in European versus national identity, a cluster analysis was carried out, to identify the number of existing clusters and to classify subjects into groups of certain characteristics. Thus, an additional question was how the hypothesized groups changed from 2009 to 2011.

Sample

In order to ensure sufficient participation of primary and secondary teachers from all over Greece, stratified sampling was used. The stratification of the population was made on the basis of school category (primary/ secondary school) and the place of service. Two successive surveys were conducted with slight differences in the questionnaire. The first one was conducted in the autumn of 2009 - just before the outbreak of Greek debt crisis - in which 1036 teachers of primary and secondary education participated, while the second survey was carried out in the autumn of 2011 with the participation of 482 teachers. The questionnaire was based on research that was conducted previously by Kelpanides &Vrinioti (2008) on the 'European identity of students of European schools in Luxembourg'. The low percentage of response (44%) can be explained by the Greek teachers' feeling of distrust concerning all forms of research (Papanaoum, 1989; Xochelis, 2000). The questionnaires were collected via internet, which combines advantages considering cost, time, and reliability and handling convenience (Coromina & Coenders, 2006).

Description of the Questionnaire items

The questionnaire included four different types of items: (1) Items that emphasized Traditional Identity (T-ID); (2) Items that emphasized Independence/Unification issues (IU),

based on the recognition of EU advantages, such as the pros and cons; (3) Items that emphasized Authority Recognition for Local aspects (AR-Local).

The first group of questions concerned the teachers' views on issues such as i) the creation of a united European team in the Olympic games, ii) the introduction of a common textbook of history with the participation of all European member-states, iii) the abolition of the member states' national celebrations of war victories against other countries and finally iv) the abolition of street names referring to those wars.

The second group of questions related to i) teachers' attitudes concerning the country's entry into the EU in 1981 considering it was not a unanimous decision, ii) the teachers' views on the advantages and disadvantages that were brought on by Greece's participation in the EU, iii) their agreement or not with the conviction that dangers of conflicts and wars in Europe and the Balkans are minimized within a powerful EU environment, iv) their agreement or not with the idea that the EU should maintain its own army in order to preserve peace in crisis periods, v) their view on how political decisions should be taken (i.e. by national ministries or by the corresponding ministries of the EU), and finally vi) the teachers' perception of personal identity (i.e. Greek, Greek-European, European-Greek, or European).

The third group included questions about political decisions such as taxation, health and education, as well as questions referring to the origin of the decision making itself i.e. national or European ministries.

Statistical Analysis and Results

Nonlinear Principal component analysis - CATPCA

Standard principal component analysis [PCA] is based on a number of assumptions that are often not valid in the social sciences, i.e., variables are assumed to be measured at interval or ratio measurement level and the relationships between variables are supposed to be linear. In fact, in social and behavioral sciences many variables are nominal or ordinal and the relationships between them could be nonlinear. Thus, PCA is often not the most appropriate method of analysis.

In order to avoid the above limitations, the nonlinear principal component analysis known as categorical PCA (CATPCA) was implemented using monotonic (spline) transformations (Gifi, 1990; Linting, Meulman, Groenen, & Van der Kooij, 2007). CATPCA is an optimal scaling method belonging to the nonlinear multivariate analysis techniques and it is suited for variables of mixed measurement level that may not be linearly related to each other (Linting et al., 2007). Nonlinear PCA is applied to nonlinearly transformed data and provides category quantifications that are optimal in the sense that the overall variance accounted for in the transformed variables, is maximized. In the optimal scaling process, information in the original categorical data is retained in the optimal quantifications, depending upon the optimal scaling level that can be chosen for each variable separately (Meulman, Van der Kooij, & Heiser, 2004; Linting et al., 2007). Note that the transformed variables, unlike the original ones (nominal or ordinal) have metric properties. This allows one to use all standard methods conceived for managing continuous variables. Monotonic transformations were applied, which are suited for ordered categorical or continuous data

The CATPCA was performed with SPPS software through the *Optimal scaling* procedure, which transforms the input ordinal variables to continuous scale variables. Since the dimensions extracted by CATPCA are hard to interpret and it does not provide the analytical option with rotation, the CATPCA transformed variables were introduced to the ordinary PCA and the analysis proceeded with Varimax rotation in the usual way. The

Varimax rotation method for the three factors led to a pattern of loading that is as diverse as possible and easier interpretable. The tests for multivariate normality and sampling adequacy, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin-Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO Test) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were 0,73 and 3547,77, df=78 (p-value<0,001). Table 1 provides the extracted PCA model summary with the four factors.

Table 1 Results of Principal Component Analysis for the Total Sample (N = 1436)

	1 T-ID	2 AR-Local	3 -IU-B	4 AR- Global
Eigenvalue	2,104	2,004	1,901	1,395
% of variance explained	16,181	15,416	14,620	10,728
Cumulative % of variance explained	16,181	31,597	46,216	56,944
T-National Celebrations	0,889			
T-War Victories	0,879			
T-Book of History	0,567			
A-Health Quantification		0,841		
A-Taxation		0,775		
A-Education		0,770		
IU-Pros & Cons			0,747	
IU-Entrance			0,675	
IU- Peace Issuses			0,621	
IU-Consiousness			0,577	
IU Army				0,712
IU- Terrorism				0,657
T-Olympic Games				0,475

Figure 1 presents the scree plot for the eigenvalues. All satisfy the factors Kaiser's >1. The four factors with eigenvalues 2,10, 2,00, and 1,90 and 1,40 respectively, lead to an accumulated explained variance of 16,2%, 31,6%, 46,2% and 56,94 respectively.
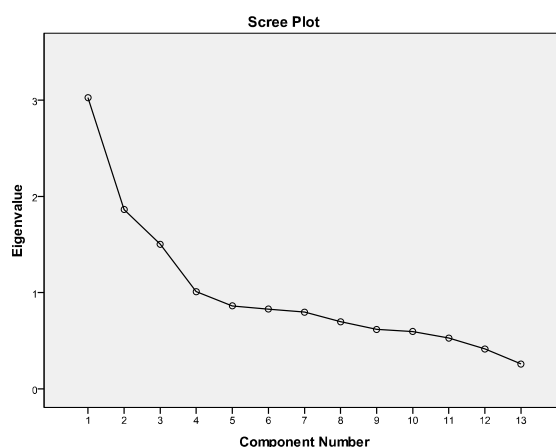
Figure 1 The scree plot for the eigenvalues

The four factors extracted by PCA (with eigenvalues >1) correspond to the following dimensions: T-ID is an Identity dimension, which includes items emphasizing traditional identity aspects. AR-Local is an Independence /Unification dimension, which includes items emphasizing Authority Recognition for Local aspects. IU-B is an Independence /Unification dimension, which includes items emphasizing recognition of advantages or benefits of European Union; finally, the AR-Global is an Independence /Unification dimension, which includes items emphasizing Authority Recognition for Global aspects.

Hypotheses Testing

The statistical analysis showed that there is a sex difference in the mean score in AR-Global dimension (t test: t=2, 59, p=0, 01). No correlations were observed with age or years of service, or with post graduate studies or foreign languages. T-Test analysis between sample 1 and sample 2 showed that there is a statistically significant shift towards lower values, in the IU-B and AR-Local dimensions. That is, a shift away from EU- orientation and it could be interpreted as the effect of economic crisis or IMF intervention.

Cluster Analysis

In order to identify distinct groups of subjects with certain characteristics/ orientation (GR or EU), a Cluster Analysis was performed. The algorithm of Two-step Cluster Analysis was applied, which is an exploratory tool designed to reveal clusters within a data set by assuming independent variables in the cluster model and implementing the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) for the selection of the number of clusters. The dimensions with their factors scores extracted from PCA were used as variables for categorization. Cluster analysis was performed for both subsets (Pre-2009 and post-2011) separately.

For sample 1 (pre 2009)

For sample 1 (pre 2009) four Clusters were identified which approximately include 27%, 29%, 33% and 11% of the sample respectively. The marginal profile of the four group-cluster model is depicted in Figure 2 and summarized in Table 2; it could be interpreted as

follows:
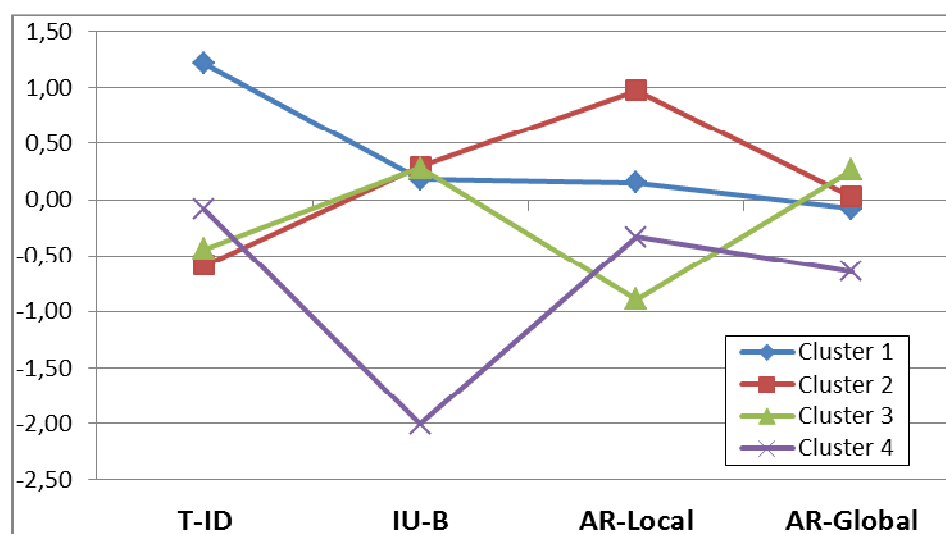
Figure 2 The marginal profile of the four group-cluster model (sample 1, 2009)

Vertical axis depicts factors scores; Low values correspond to GR orientation and high values correspond to EU orientation. Horizontal axis depicts the four dimensions.

Table 2 The marginal profile of the four group-cluster model (sample 1-2009).

	T-ID	IU-B	AR-Local	AR-Global	%
Cluster 1	EU-oriented	EU-oriented	moderate EU-oriented	EU-oriented	26,6
Cluster 2	GR-oriented	EU-oriented	EU-oriented	EU-oriented	29,5
Cluster 3	GR-oriented	EU-oriented	GR-oriented	EU-oriented	32,6
Cluster 4	GR-oriented	GR-oriented	GR-oriented	GR-oriented	11,3

Cluster 1: accounts for approximately 27% of our sample and represents those subjects who are rated as 'High' in T-ID dimension, that is, they declare weak traditional ID; They are rated as 'High' in IU-B dimension, that is, they show high recognition of EU benefits; They are rated as 'High' in AR-Global dimension and as "moderate' in AR-Local dimension, that is, they declare high EU-orientation as far as Global issues are concern, while they wish moderate EU intervention in Local affairs.

Cluster 2: accounts for approximately 29% of our sample and represents those subjects who are rated as 'Low' in T-ID dimension, that is, they declare strong traditional ID; they are rated as 'High' in IU-B dimension, that is they show high recognition of EU benefits; They are rated as 'High' in AR-Global dimension and in AR-Local dimension, that is, they declare high EU-orientation as far as Global and Local affairs is concern.
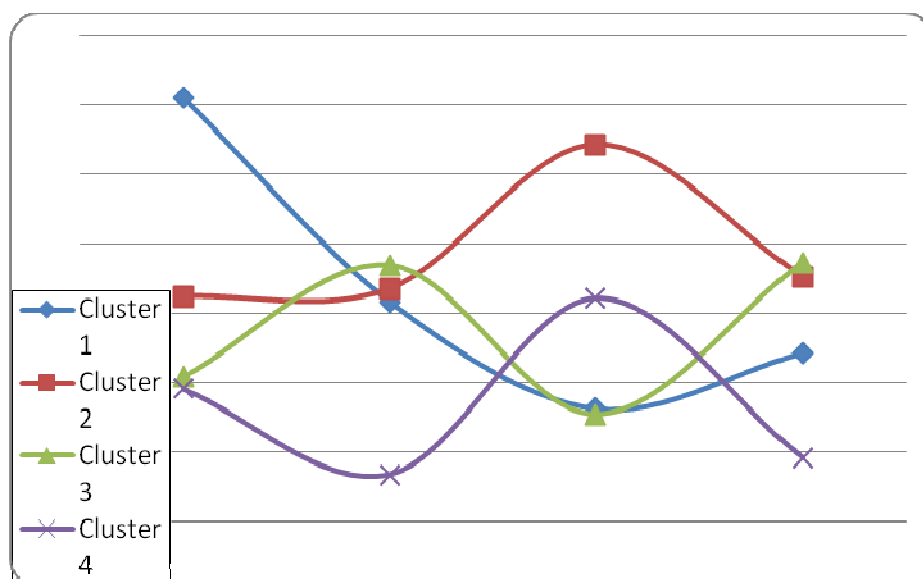
Cluster 3: accounts for approximately 33% of our sample and represents those

subjects who are rated as 'Low' in T-ID dimension, that is, they declare strong traditional ID; they are rated as 'High' in IU-B dimension, that is they show high recognition of EU benefits; They are rated as 'High' in AR-Global dimension that is, they declare high EU-orientation for Global issues, while are rated as "low" in AR-Local dimension, that is, they declare GR independence as far as Local issues is concerned.

Cluster 4: accounts for approximately 11% of our sample and represents those subjects who are rated as 'Low' in all dimensions, that is, they declare strong traditional ID, they recognize no benefits from EU and they also declare strong attitude against EU.

For sample 2 (post 2011)

For sample 2 (post 2011) four Clusters were also identified which approximately include 15%, 30%, 38% and 17% of the sample respectively. The marginal profile of the four group-cluster model is depicted in Figure 3 and summarized in Table 3; it could be interpreted as follows:

Figure 3 The marginal profile of the four group-cluster model (sample 1, 2011)

Vertical axis depicts factors scores; Low values correspond to GR orientation and high values correspond to EU orientation. Horizontal axis depicts the four dimensions.

Cluster 1: accounts for approximately 15% of our sample and represents those subjects who are rated as 'High' in T-ID dimension, that is, they declare very weak traditional ID; They are rated as 'High' in IU-B dimension, that is they show high recognition of EU benefits; They are rated as 'Low' in AR-Global dimension and in AR-Local dimension, that is, they declare low EU-orientation for both Global and Local affairs.

Cluster 2: accounts for approximately 30% of our sample and represents those subjects who are rated as 'moderate' in T-ID dimension, that is, they declare relatively moderate traditional ID; They are rated as 'High' in IU-B dimension, that is they show high recognition of EU benefits; They are rated as 'High' in AR-Global and in AR-Local dimension, that is, they declare high EU-orientation as far as Global and Local affairs is concerned.

Cluster 3: accounts for approximately 38% of our sample and represents those subjects who are rated as 'Low' in T-ID dimension, that is, they declare strong traditional ID; They are rated as 'High' in IU-B dimension, that is they show high recognition of EU benefits; They are rated as 'low' in AR-Local dimension that is, they declare high GR-orientation for Local, while are rated as "moderate" in AR-Global dimension, that is, they

accept a moderate EU intervention in Global affairs.

Cluster 4: accounts for approximately 17% of our sample and represents those subjects who are rated as 'Low' in T-ID, IU-B and AR-Global dimension and as 'moderate' in AR-Local dimension; they are subjects who declare strong traditional ID, they recognize no benefits from EU, have strong GR orientation for Global affairs, but have moderate GR orientation for Local affairs.

Table 3 The marginal profile of the four group-cluster model (sample 2-2011)

	T-ID	IU-B	AR-Local	AR-Global	%
Cluster 1	EU-oriented	GR-Oriented	GR-oriented	GR-oriented	14,8
Cluster 2	GR oriented -	EU-Oriented	EU-oriented	EU-oriented	29,5
Cluster 3	GR-oriented	EU-Oriented	GR-oriented	EU-oriented	38,3
Cluster 4	GR-oriented	GR-Oriented	GR-oriented	GR-oriented	17,2

Conclusion

The challenge posed to school and European society is a quality education, authentically European. Consequently, teacher training is necessary to revitalize schools. The changes in the education and society of all European countries seek new answers to new needs (Council of Europe, 2010). Today's teachers are increasingly asked to help young people become autonomous in learning, thanks to the acquisition of new skills and expertise. Moreover, nowadays, class groups are made up of a miscellaneous blend of people, coming from different backgrounds, having different skill levels, speaking different languages (EACEA/Eurydice, 2012a). It is the school's duty to prepare youth for an international collation-exchange, so that they can understand the world and its cultural differences. The changes occurring need not only new knowledge and skills, but also constant honing of these. The International advice stresses the need for broader teacher training on a European level, if the entire system of education and its students are expected to access the knowledge society of the 21st century. It is necessary to think about the educational situation in Europe and, possibly, all over the world (Office for standards in education [Ofsted], 2010).

In procedures of cultural homogenization like those taking place in the European Union today, a certain kind of stress is created in individuals and in groups because of the possible loss of their subjectivity and identity. This is presented as stress for loss of their nationality, which is conceived as one of the basic and stable aspects of their identity (Shild, 2001). In other words, what seems to be a response to the integration process is a reaction to a loss of autonomy and security because of a change in values and social orientation. From these perspectives a nation loses its continuity and stability and becomes a dynamic and flexible conception (Hoskins, Jesinghaus, Mascherini, Munda, Nardo, Saisana, & Villalba,

2006). It becomes an imaginary society, a social construction or a fantasy without clear points of reference. Nevertheless, all these constructions have a serious impact on reality. Therefore, Greek teachers sensing the consequences of such an evolution of their social reality believe that the invigoration of European identity complements, as well as threatens, their national identity (Schild, 2001). They believe that they are not only Greek, but also European citizens, stressing the fact that they see themselves as Greeks in the future. They feel pride and satisfaction that the origin of European culture is in classical antiquity, even though a large part of them feels rage and grief because this fact is not recognized as it should be. They believe that the financially more powerful countries impose their culture on the weakest, and that the Greek language is threatened by the domination of powerful languages.

The creation of a European identity is an issue that concerns European people in their vast majority either as citizens, parents or teachers. A teacher is a critical factor in students' socialization and an important moderator in the induction of a European identity in future active citizens. The outbreak of the Greek debt crisis has impelled many scholars to redefine the relationship between European and national identity.

New economic conditions, the country's decline and its encounter with the menace of an economic recession that emerged the last two years in Greece have set new conditions as far as interpretations of social realities and people's aspirations and priorities are concerned. The education system produces and reproduces views, currents and data that create tendencies which could lead towards or diverge from a European oriented direction. Being a major constituent part of the education system, it is imperative that teachers' beliefs about and attitudes to the EU be examined.

In this direction the present study aims to decode the teachers' sense of European identity as an inherent part of their professional role or personality. In analyzing the relevant data statistical analysis consisted of two parts. In the first part a factor analysis was conducted and four factors were recognized. T-ID which includes items emphasizing traditional identity aspects, AR-Local which includes items emphasizing Authority Recognition for Local aspects, IU-B which includes items emphasizing recognition of advantages or benefits of European Union and finally, the AR-Global which includes items emphasizing Authority Recognition for Global aspects.

Statistical analysis showed that there is a shift away from the European Union due to the economic crisis and the IMF intervention. Greek teachers are reluctant to undertake commitments even though it is acknowledged that a sustainable solution to fiscal crisis in Greece will be attained by a coordinated action in the European context. Moreover, the second study demonstrated a shift towards more traditional identity aspects. This finding should incite policy makers to review their ideas about the steps that they should follow to come to a resolution to the Greek problem.

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