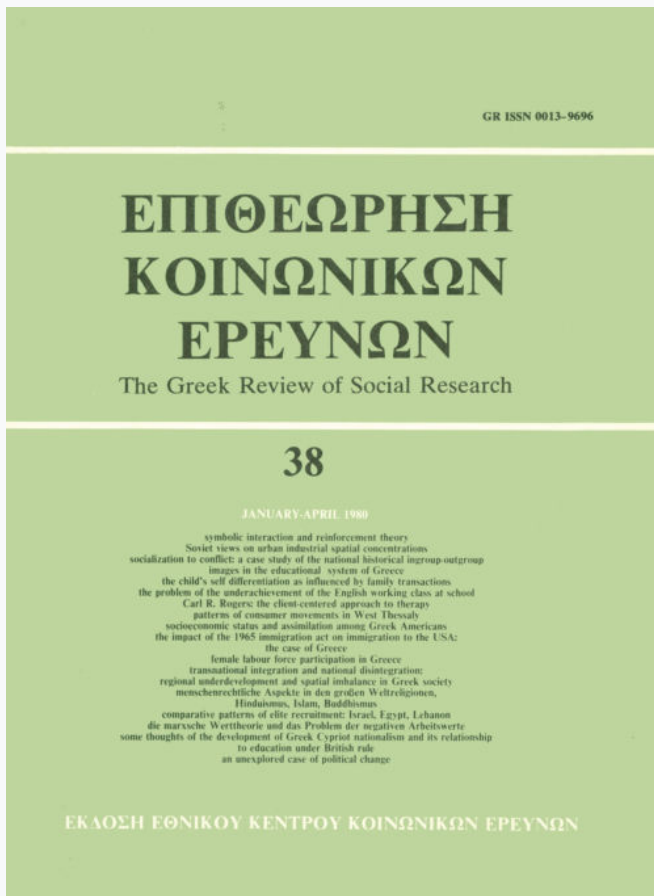


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## Socioeconomic status and assimilation among Greek Americans

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# socioeconomic status and assimilation among Greek Americans

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## ABSTRACT

The theory that high socioeconomic status is accompanied by assimilation was evaluated, using a sample (N=152) of Greek Americans from Cincinnati, Ohio. Several indicators of socioeconomic status and assimilation were used. Contrary to many previous studies, the zero-order results were generally not supportive of the status-assimilation thesis. In many instances, especially in the case of «income» types of status, the outcomes went reverse to expectation. However, there was more support for the status-assimilation thesis among the younger generations. A number of explanations, such as cultural compatibility in regard to mobility values, ingroup status validation processes, marginality among second-generation ethnics, the operation of ethclass, and historical changes in the United States, were suggested for the largely negative zero-order outcomes. Additional research, inspired by either dialectical conflict theory or exchange theory and using larger samples of ethnic Americans, was recommended to further test these explanations.

The mass influx of immigrants to the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and concern about their adjustment in the urban-industrial society stimulated the growth of theory and research on assimilation and acculturation. American social scientists, influenced by the evolutionary theories of Tonnies, Weber, and Durkheim, the class-consciousness theory of Marx, and by the ideals of the American Dream, developed cyclical theories of assimilation (Blauner, 1972: 1-14). These cyclical theories (e.g., Park, 1949) viewed the relations between the receiving and the incoming groups as passing from contact and conflict to accommodation and assimilation. In addition, they assumed a certain universality and inevitability in the process of assimilation.

Subsequent theory and research challenged the cyclical approach to intergroup relations (Kennedy, 1940; Davis et al., 1941; Etzioni, 1959; Glazer and Moynihan, 1963; Gordon, 1964). The multicausal and multidimensional perspectives to assimilation became more popular among social scientists. Assimilation was no longer the inevitable outcome of an invariable sequence, but became contingent upon a complex of historical, demographic, economic, racial, cultural, and psychological factors. The multidimensional nature of assimilation itself became an added causal variable in the process of assimilation (Eisenstadt, 1955: 11-14; Taft, 1957; Johnston, 1963; Gordon, 1964: 61-83; Sengstock, 1969). Thus, racial, ethnic, and religious groups would assimilate (or be assimilated) with respect to some types of assimilation, e.g., external, cultural, or behavioral, but remain unassimilated with respect to subjective, identificational, marital or structural assimilation.

Both cyclical and later theories considered «success» and upward social mobility by immigrants and their descendants as significant factors in the assimilation process. The present study attempts to assess the nature of this correlation among Greek Americans, descen-

dants of the «new immigrants» who came to the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although the causal sequence between the two variables is ambiguous (Spiro, 1955), and assimilation may either precede («reference group» theory) or follow («exchange» theory) status mobility, this study will concentrate on the more elementary question—whether or not socioeconomic status and assimilation are correlated with one another.

The overwhelming number of empirical studies have observed a positive correlation between socioeconomic status and various types of assimilation. A positive association has been noted for Mexican Americans of Detroit (Humphrey, 1944), the Jews of Minneapolis (Gordon, 1949), the Norse of Jonesville (Warner, 1949), the Italian Americans (Lalli, 1969), the Cuban exiles in the United States (Rogg, 1974), and the Hungarian immigrants to the United States (Weinstock, 1964) by those researchers who focused on external, behavioral, and/or cultural assimilation. The same positive correlation has been observed (Mittelbach and Moore, 1968) for Mexican Americans, using more social indicators of assimilation such as intermarriage. Finally, the positive correlation has been noted for Hungarian immigrants (Weinstock, 1964) and the Chinese of Bangkok (Punyodyana, 1971) even when more composite measures of assimilation were employed by social scientists.

Not all empirical studies, however, have documented the positive association between socioeconomic status and assimilation. Some studies noted that the outcome was dependent upon the nature of socioeconomic status. Consistent with status-assimilation theory, Borhek (1970) observed an inverse association between education and in-group friendship choices among Ukrainian Canadians, but found little correlation between occupational status and the assimilation criterion. Other studies discovered the results to be contingent upon the dimension of assimilation. Goldstein and Goldscheider (1968), working with Jews from Providence, Rhode Island, observed the positive association for the ritual measures of assimilation and for membership in non-Jewish organizations but not for membership in Jewish organizations or for intermarriage. A more recent study of Polish Americans (Pienkos, 1977), using both educational and occupational indicators of status and several measures of assimilation, noted results opposite to the status-assimilation thesis: the more ethnic respondents tended to have higher educational and occupational status.

Most of the above studies used homogeneous groupings and did not assess the status-assimilation hypothesis across different generations. One study (Goldstein and Goldscheider, 1968: 161-166, 192-193, 198-199) did make such generational comparisons but noted no uniformity across generations. For example, there was an inverse association between education and Jewish ritual among the foreign born, little association be-

tween the two variables among the native born, and a positive association in the third generation—with the post-college respondents being more traditional than those who had a high school education. Thus, there was confirmation of the status-assimilation thesis among the immigrants but not among the subsequent generations.

Few studies of Greek Americans have explored systematically the empirical relationship between socioeconomic status and assimilation.

Fairchild, a student of early Greek immigrants, was ambivalent about the association of status to assimilation. In his early work (1911: 82, 218), he felt that assimilation would accompany economic prosperity. In a later work (1926: 164-171, 175, 231-237), however, he saw no inevitable connection between educational campaigns, economic success, or educational attainment in the United States and assimilation. Such factors as parochial schools, ethnic ghettos, and the ethnic family undermined the assimilative potential of American public education.

Xenides (1922: 113), another observer of early Greek immigrants, predicted that educational attainment by second-generation Greek Americans would inevitably lead to Americanization. Most empirical studies of second-generation Greek Americans have generally been supportive of Xenides's prediction. Stycos (1948: 61-62), working with Greek Americans from New England, reported that success led to generational conflict and to a rejection of Greek values. Along similar lines, Vlachos (1964: 144-145) said that educational attainment was responsible for the higher rate of intermarriage among Greek-American men, in contrast to Greek-American women. However, both the Stycos and Vlachos conclusions rest on impressionistic or inferential evidence and cannot constitute an adequate test of the status assimilation thesis.

Two other studies of second-generation Greek Americans provide more relevant information. Seder (1966: 103-105) observed that the more educated respondents and those who worked for others tended to be more distant from the Greek culture on several behavioral and cultural criteria, including attitudes toward intermarriage. Conversely, those who had their own business were closer to the Greek culture. Seder's data suggest that there should be a stronger positive correlation between education and assimilation than between occupation and assimilation.

The other relevant study of second-generation Greek Americans was done by Tavuchis (1972). Tavuchis was interested in the impact of mobility on intergenerational and intragenerational kinship ties. Using a sample of mobile Greek Americans from the New York-New Jersey area, he observed that mobility did not jeopardize these kinship ties. Nonetheless, these mobile Greek Americans were overwhelmingly (90%) against co-residence with their parents both in theory and in

practice. In any case, the Tavuchis study is only suggestive since it used a purposive sample and did not assess the ethnic attitudes and practices of non-mobile Greek Americans.

A study of Post-World War II Greek immigrants in Montreal, Canada, (Gavaki, 1974) provided a more comprehensive test of the status-assimilation hypothesis. Gavaki assessed the impact of several factors, including socioeconomic status, upon various types of cultural integration, e.g., acculturation, identification with Canada, and alienation. Her data showed a positive correlation between income and acculturation but no uniform association between occupation or education and acculturation. In regard to the latter two statuses, acculturation increased up to a point but decreased among professionals and college graduates. Somewhat comparable results were obtained in regard to the identificational dimension. With respect to alienation, the less educated expressed more alienation; however, there was no uniform association between occupational category and alienation. The absence of consistent outcomes in the Gavaki study may in part be due to the use of immigrants, some of whom had attained their professional and educational status in Greece and who, upon arrival in Canada, experienced some downward mobility (Gavaki, 1974: 96). Her interpretations suggest that more consistency in outcome may be observed among subsequent generations who attain their socioeconomic status in the host country.<sup>1</sup>

#### methods

The data to test the status-assimilation hypothesis were collected by the author during the summer of 1970, using a sample of Greek Americans from Cincinnati, Ohio. Included in the sample were American-born, employed, males whose fathers were of Greek cultural background irrespective of the father's geographical origin or religious affiliation. The overwhelming majority (73%) of the respondents were located via the Greek Orthodox Church and the rest (27%) came from perusal of the Cincinnati Telephone Directory and from nominations by respondents themselves. The final sample consisted of 152 respondents; 126 of them were second generation (i.e., both of their parents were born overseas); and 26 were either third generation (i.e., both

1. The association between status attainment in the home country and assimilation in the host country has not always been consistent. Danuta Mostwin (cf. Znaniecki-Lopata, 1976: 118) observed an inverse association between status in the home country (Poland) and identification with the United States, while Rogg (1974: 125-127) noted a direct correlation between socioeconomic status in Cuba and cultural assimilation in the United States. While these differences may be due to the operation of assimilation, other factors, such as comparative status of the home country and the circumstances surrounding departure may also play a role.

of their parents were born in the United States) or of mixed generational background.

A number of objective and reputational, individual and collective, measures of socioeconomic status were used. Two indicators of status were derived from the respondent's principal occupation. The first of these included occupational status, a numerical score based on the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1963) system of job classifications. The second indicator, also based on the Census, assigned the respondents into one of four occupational groups: workers and employees; food-related managers and proprietors; nonfood related managers, proprietors, executives, insurance agents, etc; and professionals—with the last category reflecting the highest status.

The respondent's educational level was also assessed in two ways. The first method involved a determination of the number of completed years of schooling while the second determined the number of college degrees the respondent had obtained.

Several status indicators assessed the respondent's income level. Among these were reported annual income, the type of residence (renter vs. house owner), financial status of the house (whether paid-up or not), and the rental value of the respondent's domicile (Cuber and Kenkel, 1954: 141-142). The latter was used to standardize the status of renters and homeowners.

The final grouping of status indicators were collective in nature and were based on the residential dimension. One of these included an assessment of the respondent's neighborhood status and used a modified version of the Farber-Oisonach (1959) method which is based on the median education, income, and percentage of white collar residents in the respondent's census tract (U.S. Census, 1962). Another one consisted of an independent evaluation of neighborhood prestige by two graduate sociology students who had been residents of Cincinnati. The rank-order correlation between the two raters was .62.<sup>2</sup>

Both summated measures and individual items were used to tap various dimensions of assimilation. The first summated measure, assimilation orientation, focused on the respondent's attitudes toward mixed dating and marriages, parochial school, preservation of the Greek heritage, the organized ethnic community, and synchronization of Greek Easter with the American Easter. The assimilation orientation measure tapped the cultural, structural, identificational, and marital aspects of assimilation.

The second summated measure, American participation, also tapped several dimensions of assimilation. In contrast to the first measure, however, its main focus

2. The grouping of status indicators was not based solely on theory and intuition. Although all the status indicators were positively inter-correlated (product-moment), the coefficients were stronger within the various groupings than between the various groupings.

was on actual practices. It assessed the respondent's behavior vis-a-vis celebration of birthdays (vs. name-days), attendance at American (vs. Greek) picnics, possession of American (vs. Greek) records, ethnic identification of close friends, and self-identification as American (vs. Greek). Although an «other» and a «neither» category were provided, these two categories were seldom selected by the respondents.

The final summated measure implied less affectivity and commitment than the preceding ones and can be viewed as an index of external assimilation. It measured the respondent's knowledge about Greek culture, history, language, religion, and customs. Unlike others (Weinstock, 1964) who used information about the host culture as an index of assimilation, the present study used cultural retention.

The three summated measures of assimilation were tested for reliability and reproducibility (Cornell Technique). They were found to be reliable in terms of item-total correlations, item intercorrelations, and split-half reliability. The split-half reliability coefficients (*r*) for assimilation orientation, American participation, and knowledge of Greek culture were .81, .76, and .78, respectively. In regard to reproducibility, the coefficients of reproducibility and minimal marginal reproducibility were .94 and .78 for assimilation orientation, .92 and .65 for American participation, and .93 and .69 for knowledge of Greek culture. The assimilation orientation and knowledge measures were adequate on all informal criteria for unidimensional scales; the American participation measure, however, contained two (out of five) items with excess (12%) error and may not constitute a true unidimensional scale.

All three individual items used to tap assimilation focused on the respondent's behavior. They included membership in local, regional, and fraternal Greek organizations (structural assimilation), ethnicity of the spouse (marital assimilation), and adherence to the traditional naming practice (cultural assimilation) whereby the first sons receive the paternal grandfather's first name as their own first name.

Two types of validity checks were carried out on the indicators of assimilation. The first involved an inter-correlation analysis (Table 1). As can be seen, the correlations are in the expected direction. The second entailed predictions from exposure variables (Vlachos, 1964: 174-200; Fong, 1965; Kyriazis, 1967, Sengstock, 1969; Kourvetaris, 1971). Once again, the overwhelming number of correlations are strong and in the expected direction (Table 2). Membership in the Greek Church and wife's birthplace are especially strong predictors of assimilation. The low correlations (e.g., between ethnic generation and membership in Greek organizations) do not necessarily mean that the latter measure is invalid. Vlachos (1964: 174-200) notes a non-linear correlation between ethnic generations and

TABLE 1. *Gamma Intercorrelations among Assimilation Factors (N=152)\**

	AO	KGC	AP	MGO	DOW	NSP
Assimilation Orientation (AO)						
Knowledge of Greek Culture (KGC)	-.18					
Participation in American Culture (AP)	.64	-.67				
Membership in Greek Organizations (MGO)	-.28	.48				
Descent of Wife (DOW)	-.46	.77	-.78			
Name Succession Practice (NSP)	-.22	.64	-.65	.31		
				.81		

\* All gammas, except those involving DOW and NSP, are based on an N of 152. Those involving DOW and NSP are based on an N of 136 and 104 respectively.

TABLE 2. *Gammas between Exposure Variables and Assimilation (N=152)<sup>1</sup>*

	AO	KGC	AP	MGO	DOW	NSP
Ethnic Generation <sup>2</sup>	.07	-.63	.39	-.00	-.46	-.28
Years in Greek						
School	-.23	.46	-.40	.27	.34	.40
Wife's Birthplace	-.56	.75	-.43	.16	1.00 <sup>3</sup>	.76
Membership in Greek Church	-.45	.74	-.79	.86	.98	.70

1. See Footnote of Table 1.

2. The definition of categories and their frequencies for the exposure variables were as follows: *Ethnic Generation*: 126 were pure second generation and 26 were either pure third generation or a mixture of second and third generation; *Greek Schooling*: 33 had none, 69 had between one and five years, and 50 had six or more years; *Wife's Birthplace*: 121 were born in the United States and 15 were born in Greece; *Membership in the Greek Church*: 111 were members of the Greek Church and 41 were members of other Christian churches or were not affiliated with any church.

3. This gamma is not meaningful since all those whose wife was born in Greece had a wife of Greek descent.

participation in Greek organizations and activities. The non-linear outcomes, however, were more the exceptions than the rule. On the basis of the reliability, reproducibility, and validity tests, it was decided to retain the six indicators of assimilation for the main statistical analysis.<sup>3</sup>

## results and discussion

According to the status-assimilation hypothesis, Greek Americans who have attained high socio-

3. Several prospective indicators of assimilation, such as ingroup differentiation (distinguishing between «orthodox» and «cultural» Greek), affective distance from either the Greek or American cultures, frequency of godfatherhood, and membership in American organizations, were dropped from further analysis because they failed to meet one or more of the methodological tests. Membership in American organizations was not strongly correlated with many of the other indices and was also positively correlated ( $g = .19$ ) with membership in Greek organizations.

economic status are expected to be low (-) on cultural retention indicators such as knowledge of Greek culture, membership in Greek organizations, and name succession practice and high (+) on such assimilation indicators as assimilation orientation and participation in American activities. The data to evaluate the status-assimilation thesis are presented in Table 3.

Looking first at assimilation orientation, the composite attitudinal dimension, it is apparent that there is little support for the status-assimilation thesis. The gammas are hardly significant, and there is no pattern associated with specific statuses. Social status and assimilation attitudes are independent of one another.

The outcomes pertaining to American participation are also not in accord with theory. Out of ten coefficients, nine have negative signs: the higher the status the lower the participation in American activities. Although these results are suggestive, they are too weak to constitute a counter trend.

Contrary to the status-assimilation thesis, higher socioeconomic status goes along with greater knowledge about the Greek culture. All the coefficients are positive, and several of them (e.g., education, income, and home financial status) are relatively strong. These outcomes are not surprising as more educated and higher status persons may know more about *any* culture than less educated and lower status persons. In any case, the results suggest that status, and particularly education, may act as a deterrent even to other kinds of assimilation since knowledge of Greek culture was intercorrelated with other types of assimilation.

Weinstock (1964) anticipated a correlation between education (or intelligence) and information about the host country. However, he did not view education and intelligence as confounding factors; he felt they would determine the role and extent of acculturation. While information about the host culture may be more ac-

culturative than information about the ethnic culture, this should be empirically determined in a study which contains both of these veridical indicators and which assesses their association with non-factual indicators of assimilation.

The membership-in-Greek-organizations analysis provides little support to the status-assimilation theory. Contrary to expectation, higher social status—especially educational, occupational, and professional status—is associated with membership in Greek organizations. This type of association was also noted (data not shown) for socioeconomic status and membership in American social and professional organizations. As mentioned earlier (see footnote 3), membership in American organizations was correlated with membership in Greek organizations and was not a good indicator of assimilation. The outcomes pertaining to Greek and American organization membership are consistent with studies of social participation in the general American population. Membership in American organizations may serve mobility needs but may not lead to assimilation. Membership in Greek organizations, on the other hand, may deter assimilation among the higher-status respondents—unless it can be assumed (Treudley, 1949) that Greek-American organizations have assimilative goals.

The analysis of the other single-item indicators, descent of wife and name succession practice, provides some support to the status-assimilation thesis. Greek Americans with higher occupational, professional, and educational status are less likely to conform to the Greek practice than Greek Americans with lower status. This pattern, however, is not as marked as the pattern which goes against the status-assimilation thesis. In this case, there is a tendency for income or home-status variables to be correlated with retention of the Greek practices.

Those with high income and home status may be proprietors-restaurateurs rather than professionals. The restaurant business has facilitated the chain immigration of Greek relatives (Lovell-Troy, 1979) and has been associated with Greeks. As a consequence, this type of proprietorship may retard some types of assimilation. On the other hand, professionals, whether self-employed (e.g., doctors) or employed by the government and corporations (e.g., engineers, scientists), may be subjected to greater assimilation pressures due to their greater penetration of the larger community. The observed correlation between proprietorship and closeness to the Greek culture (Seder, 1966: 103) may be more a function of the *type* of proprietorship (restaurant rather than professional) than of proprietorship *per se*. These interpretations, however, are suggestive, as they are based on low correlations and are restricted to family practices.

TABLE 3. *Gammas between SES and Assimilation (N = 152)\**

	AO	KGC	AP	MGO	DOW	NSP
Occupational Status	-.05	.21	-.14	.25	-.10	-.27
Professional Status	.03	.24	-.11	.22	-.25	-.11
Education (years)	.10	.38	-.22	.36	-.01	-.07
Education (degrees)	.09	.24	-.14	.26	-.14	-.17
Income	.08	.29	-.14	-.01	.19	-.06
Rental Value	-.08	.27	-.20	-.05	.24	.21
Home Ownership	-.07	.19	-.04	-.13	.14	.29
Home Financial Status	.09	.43	-.19	.24	.30	.39
Residential Status	-.04	.09	-.18	.05	.18	-.02
Neighborhood Prestige	-.03	.02	.07	.00	.08	-.10

\* All gammas, except those involving DOW, NSP and Home Financial Status, are based on an N of 152. Those involving DOW and NSP are based on an N of 136 and 104 respectively. Gammas involving Home Financial Status are based on an N of 125, except for the DOW and NSP gammas which are based on an N of 116 and 94 respectively.

Since the Greek-American sample was predominant by second generation and was affiliated mostly with the Greek Orthodox Church, it was felt that the little support obtained for the status-assimilation theory may be a function of these sampling biases. The status-assimilation hypothesis was, therefore, retested under controlled conditions of church membership and ethnic generation status, using three socioeconomic status indicators and selected types of assimilation (Tables 4 and 5).<sup>4</sup> The higher-order analysis can only be suggestive due to the relative infrequency of cases among the younger generations and those not affiliated with the Greek Orthodox Church.

The correlation between socioeconomic status and assimilation should be positive and stronger among the non-affiliated and among the younger generations. This is not the case in the church membership analysis (Table 4). For the attitudinal variable, assimilation orientation, all three comparisons go against expectation, i.e., high status is accompanied by lower assimilation among those marginal to the Greek Church. However, the reversal is marked only for the income variable. For the behavioral variable, American participation, the results are comparable. In two out of three cases (occupational and educational status), the association is inverse among the non-affiliated, and there is no association between status and participation among the church affiliates. While the ethnic factor may override the status differences among the Church members, status makes a difference among the non-affiliated, especially in regard to participation. It is possible that high status (educated) marginals react to a threat of identity loss through compensatory ethnic activity.

4. Assimilation indicators were used which were non-cognitive in nature and which would not greatly affect the cell frequency in the higher-order analyses. Descent of wife was not used in the church membership analysis as 37 of the 38 non-affiliated respondents were married to an American spouse, leaving only one case in the Greek spouse category. Knowledge of Greek culture was correlated positively with socioeconomic status, under both conditions, in both the membership and the generational analyses.

TABLE 4. SES and Assimilation by Church Membership

	AO	AP
Occupational Status		
Greek Church Members (111)	.00	-.00
Non-Greek Church Rs (41)	-.08	-.48
Education		
Greek Church Members (111)	.19	-.06
Non-Greek Church Rs (41)	.04	-.56
Income		
Greek Church Members (111)	.32	-.04
Non-Greek Church Rs (41)	-.36	.04

TABLE 5. SES and Assimilation by Ethnic Generation

	AO	AP	DOW*
Occupational Status			
Second Generation (126)	-.02	-.23	.05
Third/Mixed Generation (26)	-.14	.13	-.41
Education			
Second Generation (126)	.09	-.10	-.15
Third/Mixed Generation (26)	.43	-.13	-.43
Income			
Second Generation (126)	.00	-.25	.33
Third/Mixed Generation (26)	.29	.40	-.54

\* Due to the single status of some respondents, the number of cases in the two generational categories are 115 and 21 respectively.

The generational analysis (Table 5) is more in accord with expectation. In two out of three cases, for both assimilation orientation and American participation, high social status is accompanied by assimilation among the later generations. In regard to descent of wife, all three comparisons are in the expected direction: the higher status among the younger generations tend to marry non-Greek (American) wives.

The generational findings on Greek Americans are not in accord with observations of increased ethnic consciousness among educated third-generation Jewish Americans (Goldstein and Goldscheider, 1968: 161-166, 192-193, 198-199). However, they do support Kourvetaris's (1976) observations in regard to the greater importance of class, as opposed to ethnicity and religion, for third-generation Greek Americans.

### summary and conclusions

Despite the fact that the predominantly second-generation Greek Americans attained their social status in the United States, there was little support for the status-assimilation theory. One exception was the presence of a weak association between some types of status (e.g., professional, educational, and occupational) and two family-related types of assimilation—ethnicity of the wife and naming practice. If anything, the overwhelming majority of the associations were against the status-assimilation theory, i.e., higher status was accompanied by greater adherence to ethnic practices as reflected in types of cultural activities, membership in ethnic organizations, ethnicity of wife, naming practices, and knowledge of Greek culture. Although the reversals are not sufficiently strong and consistent to constitute a countertrend, the mere absence of a direct association, between status and assimilation, calls for an explanation.

Several explanations may account for the outcomes of the present study on Greek Americans.

Firstly, the receiving and incoming groups may have compatible values, especially in regard to status mobility. Rosen (1959) has demonstrated the presence of strong mobility motivations among Greeks and native Protestants. In addition, mobility among Greeks, both in terms of attainment and of rewards, is a family process (Tavuchis, 1972: 168-171). There may be no need, therefore, to credit the host culture for achievement and to reciprocate via assimilation.

Secondly, status validation can be obtained within the ethnic ingroup in a variety of ways. One facilitating condition may be a positive assessment of the ethnic group's heritage by the host culture. Americans have generally considered Greek and Judaic cultures as the foundation of Western civilization. This sort of reputation may deter assimilation, especially among the more educated ethnics. Ethnic entrenchment among the more educated members may also occur among other racial and ethnic groups, such as the Chinese, the Chicanos, and the Blacks, as their cultural heritage is being increasingly recognized by the American culture.

Economic self-sufficiency is another condition conducive to ingroup status validation. Some ethnic groups, like the Amish and the Hassidic Jews, have been mostly self-contained entities. Other groups, like the Chinese and the Japanese, have a history of ethnic-related occupations. Kitano (1976) saw most pre-world War II Japanese-American occupations as non-aculturative since they were dependent on the ethnic community. Although most Greeks in the United States have not had this kind of economic self-dependence, the use of the restaurant business as a conduit for chain immigration and their reputation as restaurateurs may have produced an occupational subculture inimical to assimilation.<sup>5</sup>

A final condition facilitating ingroup status validation is the degree of religious and secular organization in the ethnic sub-community. Besides the organized ethnic churches, there are several sex- and age-graded social organizations on the local, regional, national and, even, international level in most Greek-American communities. These organizations do not impede only social (marital) assimilation but also serve to validate the members' extra-community status as they are rewarded by offices, recognition, and awards for various types of athletic, scholastic, and humanitarian competition. Ethnic organizations, including the church, may have become such important sources of extra-community status validation that they discourage those who have not made it from membership (or participation) and drive them either to marginality or assimilation.

5. If this argument is correct, second-generation professionals whose parents were in the restaurant business should be less assimilationist than second-generation professionals whose parents were in another type of business or not in business at all.

Thirdly, «ethclass» (Gordon, 1964: 49-54) may be a significant explanation. According to this notion ethnic groups restrict their relationships not only within their nationality and religion but also within their class. Ethclass probably became more important for Greek Americans as their numbers in the United States increased and they became more differentiated on class. There is some suggestive evidence (Kourvetaris and Dobratz, 1976) that ethclass is a more salient consideration for (mostly) second-generation Greek Americans than for Italian Catholics or Swedish Lutherans. The notion of ethclass can account, to some extent, for the low correlations between status and assimilation, but it cannot account for the reversals, unless it can be assumed that, for some reason or other, ethclass is more important to the upper status Greek Americans.

Fourthly, the greater vulnerability of the second-generation ethnic to marginality and identity diffusion (Duncan, 1933: 693-707; Smith, 1939: 243-249; Stonequist, 1964: 335) can lead to overcompensation. A number of writers (Erikson, 1959: 91-92; Bettelheim and Janowitz, 1964: 56-61) have connected the threat of identity diffusion with overidentification and ethnic superiority attitudes. It is possible that identity diffusion lies behind the overcompensation processes—either toward overconformity with American values or with Greek values—invoked by Vlachos (1964: 229-230) to account for certain non-linear relationships between generation and assimilation.

The crucial issue, however, concerns the relationship of status to overcompensation. Status mobility can produce a «cult of gratitude» and overconformity to the American values. On the other hand, these same processes can induce marginality and lead to overidentification with either American or ethnic values. Questions, however, remain as to the factors determining direction of overconformity. The present study suggests that the nature of the occupation (professionals vs. proprietors) may be such a factor. Other factors, such as comparative standing of the two cultures, critical experiences in the host culture or in the ethnic subculture, and relative deprivation also need investigation. Furthermore, the identification of marginality and overcompensation and their relationship to status need to be empirically demonstrated.

The final explanation involves the structure and attitudes of the host culture over time. The earlier stress on the «melting pot» and «Americanization» may have encouraged assimilation among those dependent upon the host culture for their material progress. With the emergence of the black consciousness movement and the increasing massification of our society, there has been some resurgence of ethnicity and greater tolerance for ethnic pluralism (Kopan, 1970). This social trend may have reduced pressures toward assimilation, particularly among higher status immigrants and second-



generation ethnics who are more likely to be aware of such changes.<sup>6</sup>

The preceding explanations are apparently less applicable to third-generation Greek Americans. In the present study, the data point to a direct association between status and assimilation among third-generation Greek Americans. Other studies (Kourvetaris, 1976, Kourvetaris and Dobratz, 1976) also point to the attenuation of ethnicity and religion, and the increasing importance of class factors among younger generations of Greek Americans. The findings and interpretations of the present study, however, are suggestive, and further empirical documentation, with larger samples of both foreign and native-born generations, is needed.

Future research on the status-assimilation theory must also consider the following theoretical and methodological improvements. A more systematic theoretical framework, such as exchange theory or dialectical conflict theory, should be employed. Secondly, more attention should be paid to the conceptualization of «social status». Differentiation between home-country and host country status, as well as between types of occupations, may be decisive. Finally, the concept of assimilation, itself, should be viewed in multireference terms. Up to now, most theoretical research on assimilation has had a dualistic orientation, with a focus either on assimilation to the host culture or on cultural retention. Researchers must also allow for bicultural, emergent, transcultural, transcendental, associational and other non-ethnic alternatives to cultural assimilation and retention.<sup>7</sup>

6. A personal experience may shed some light. During the completion of his doctoral research among Greek Americans, the author, who had immigrated to the United States during his early teens and had Americanized his name upon naturalization, reverted to his original name. His reading about Nordic prejudice against early Greek immigrants and about the attempts by militant blacks to rediscover their heritage through repudiation of slave names and adoption of African names; his experiences with successful second-generation Greek Americans who had retained their polysyllabic names; his sensitivity to the loss of individuality in a mass society; and, to some extent, the greater tolerance for differences, especially for academics, were all crucial factors in his decision. However, the extent to which these factors are relevant for other generations remains to be determined.

7. See Glazer and Moynihan, 1963: 13-14, 16; Vlachos, 1964: 214-241, and Yancey *et al.*, 1976 on «emergent» ethnicity.

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