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Elsewheres:
Greek LGBT Activists and the Imagination of a Movement

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ABSTRACT

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From twenty-six months of fieldwork conducted in Athens, Greece from May 2001 through July 2004, this dissertation documents the social and cultural contexts that shape the practices of activists working for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights in Greece. Those practices connect to conceptions of friendship, relations of patronage, informal democratic processes, the routine suspicion of economic profit, and beliefs about the relationships between sexual identities and social identities. The practices in which the activists engage both restrict the kinds of successes they are able to enjoy, and enable those successes they do achieve. These practices are brought to bear by the activists both consciously and not. Furthermore, these practices draw on and are drawn from a diversity of places, times and realms of meaning beyond particular moments of activist practice – a diversity of locations termed elsewheres. Accounting for these elsewheres, which need not be non-Greek, not only provides insights into how Greek LGBT activists imagine the movement, but serves as an allegory of democratic values and processes at a micro-scalar level, an index of reactions to processes of Europeanization, and a study of the localized responses to globally circulating activist forms, sexual and gender identities, and modes of collectivity.
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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments ........................................................................ iii

Table of Commonly Used Abbreviations ........................................ viii

Practices Between the Familiar and Elsewhere ......................... 1
  Coming to Terms .................................................................... 8
  Recognition ........................................................................... 18
  … And Being Recognized ..................................................... 26
  Structure of the Dissertation .................................................. 33

“Entering the Field”: The Polychromo Forum ............................. 35
  Points of Entry ...................................................................... 38
  Rhizomatics .......................................................................... 45
  Some Arrivals ....................................................................... 47
  Gossip and Ethnographic Authority ........................................ 52
  The Meeting at Lamda .......................................................... 60
  The Polychromo Forum .......................................................... 64
  Lines of Flight ...................................................................... 74

The Movement That Was Not? .................................................. 79
  1950-1977 – Visions of Sex Between Men ................................ 82
  1977-1981 – The Foundation of a Movement ........................... 85
  1981-1983 – An Epidemic of Information ............................... 90

Stolen Kisses: “Homophobia” Meets “Racism” ......................... 104
  Omofovía and Ratsismós as Non-Coextensive Terms ................. 105
  Why Do The “Muscle Men” Kiss On Elia? ............................... 112
  Is It Really About the (Trans)Gender? ................................... 116
  The Anti-Racism Festival ...................................................... 118
  On Internalization ................................................................ 121
  Sins And Faults .................................................................. 125
  The Stolen Kiss: Not All Phobias Are What They Seem ........... 127

Reading The Old Guard: Institutions, Identities and Interests .... 132
  Voice One: Gregory Vallianatos ............................................ 136
  Voice Two: Paola .................................................................. 143
  Voice Three: Vangelis Giannelos ............................................. 154
  Voice Four: Maria Cyber ........................................................ 159
  Voice Five: Paul Sofianos ....................................................... 166
  Themes and Variations ......................................................... 178
The Vanguard: New Assemblages? ............................................. 193

Timeout: Athens ...................................................................... 194

A Novel Assemblage of the Foreign and the Local? .................... 206

A Politics of Transliteration ...................................................... 214

The Omáda Drásis .................................................................. 216

Protovoulía Omofilófilon Politón ............................................. 226

OLKE ..................................................................................... 245

And Afterwards ....................................................................... 254

Appendix: The Trial of Tsapatsaris and Hamada ....................... 271

Bibliography ............................................................................ 280
Table of Commonly Used Abbreviations

ACT-UP – AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power; founded in the 1980’s in New York City as a response to the AIDS pandemic, it rapidly spread around the world; Greek chapter founded in the 1990’s

AKOE – Απελευθερωτικό Κίνημα Ομοφυλόφιλων Ελλάδας, Greek Homosexual Liberation Movement

ARF – Αντι-Ρατσιστικό Φεστιβάλ, Anti-Racism Festival

DA – Διεθνής Αμνηστία, Amnesty International

EOK – Ελληνική Ομοφυλοφιλική Κοινότητα, Greek Homosexual Community

ESR – Εθνικό Συμβούλιο Ράδιο-Τηλεόρασης, National Committee on Television and Radio

GHM – The Greek Helsinki Monitor

GMHC – Gay Men’s Health Crisis

KEEL – Κέντρο Ελέγχου Ειδικών Λοιμώξεων, Center for the Control of Special Diseases

KKΕ – Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας, Communist Party of Greece

KXPKB – Κόσμος χωρίς Πολέμους και Βία, World without Wars and Violence; associated with the Humanists movement

ILGA – International Lesbian and Gay Association

LOA – Λεσβιακή Ομάδα Αθήνας, Lesbian Group of Athens

LSD – Λεσβίες σε Δράση, Lesbians in Action

ND – Νέα Δημοκρατία, New Democracy; center-right political party associated with the Karamanlis family

OLKE – Ομοφυλοφιλική και Λεσβιακή Κοινότητα Ελλάδας, Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece

PASOK – Πανελληνικό Σοσιαλιστικό Κόμμα, Panhellenic Socialist Party; center-left political party associated with the Papandreou family

POEK – Πρωτοβουλία Ομοφυλόφιλων Ενάντια Στην Καταπίεση, Homosexual Initiative Against Repression; associated with SEK

POP – Πρωτοβουλία Ομοφυλόφιλων Πολιτών, Homosexual Citizens’ Initiative

SATTE – Σωματείο Αλληλεγγύης Τραβεστί Τρανσέξουαλ Ελλάδας, Body of Travesti and Transsexual Solidarity of Greece

SEK – Σοσιαλιστικό Εργατικό Κόμμα, Socialist Labor Party

TOST – Τομέας Ομοφυλοφιλίας και Σεξουαλικής Ταυτότητας, Division of Homosexuality and Sexual Identity; a working group within DA
Practices Between the Familiar and Elsewhere

In his analysis of prostitution in Rethemnos, Michael Herzfeld writes: “Illicit sexuality, so intimate in practice, must always be presented in public as foreign to local values” (1991:28). Earlier in the same volume, Herzfeld writes of Greece more generally: “European culture is both a goal and an imposition, a dream of incorporation into the civilized West and a nightmare of cultural colonization” (1991:25). This dissertation navigates the intellectual space carved out in the juxtaposition of these two fragments. The vessels taken for that navigation are various ethnographic accounts of encounters with Greek LGBT\(^1\) activists. Traveling alongside these activists, it is possible to get a sense of how they imagine the movements in which they are engaged, and of the other realms – semiotic, historical and geographical τόποι (tōpoi, places) – by which they chart their progress. Although a record of that journey may constitute an evocation\(^2\) of the conditions of contemporary LGBT lives in Greece, and of the activists who wish to shape those lives, it may also constitute much more: an allegory of democratic values and processes at a micro–scalar level;\(^3\) an index of the social reactions to processes of

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\(^1\) My use of the term “LGBT” rests on a careful unpacking and framing of its circulation in the Greek context. See discussion below.

\(^2\) “Evocation” is used here in the sense developed by Stephen Tyler in Writing Culture, in his description of an ethnography that would be “neither presentation nor representation” (1986: 123), and that would eschew as unachievable any aspiration to a precise, complete, one-to-one correlation of social scientific record to real world phenomena. “A post-modern ethnography is fragmentary because it cannot be otherwise,” he writes (131).

\(^3\) In this sense, this dissertation is indebted to the work of Greek political scientists such as Calliope Spanou (1998), who has undertaken to analyze the impact of patron-client relationships in the process of administrative convergence of Greece and the European Union.
Europeanization; a study of the localized reactions to globally circulating activist forms, sexual and gender identities, and modes of collectivity.

Despite the range of projects to which this dissertation connects, the core argument is a simple one. The practices in which the activists engage simultaneously restrict the kinds of successes they are able to enjoy, and enable those successes they do achieve in decisive ways. Those practices are brought to bear by the activists both consciously and not. Furthermore, those practices draw on and are drawn from a diversity of places, times and realms of meaning beyond particular moments of activist practice – a diversity of locations this dissertation calls elsewhere. While not using this language, George Marcus has described these elsewhere in the context of what he calls the “strategically situated (single-site) ethnography”:

Within a single site, the crucial issue concerns the detectable system-awareness in the everyday consciousness and actions of subjects’ lives. This is not an abstract theoretical awareness such as a social scientist might seek, but a sensed, partially articulated awareness of specific other sites and agents to which [they] have (not always tangible) relationships (Marcus 1998:96).

We can think of these elsewhere as something like resources, although the use of that term here should not be read only within the framework of a branch of social movement theory associated with that term, resource mobilization. Just as activists

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4 Borneman and Fowler (1997).
5 On the intertwined relationship of the local and the global, see Ekholm-Friedman and Friedman (1995) and Hannerz (1992).
bring practices to bear both consciously and not, so are they both aware and unaware of the various elsewheres upon which those practices draw. But on just which elsewheres do Greek LGBT activists draw? To the extent that they are aware of them, how do the activists imagine them? How do the activists deploy these elsewheres in the daily work of making a social movement? How do the activists see their movement? Do they see it as “theirs” at all? These are the questions that animate this research.

Returning to the first quotation of Herzfeld’s above, similar questions have animated the work of many other analysts of sexuality and activism. The impure, the dangerous, is often from a place elsewhere. Robert Mugabe, among other African leaders, has famously claimed that homosexuality is a Western import into Africa, that it did not exist before colonialism brought it and a host of other evils. Although Mugabe’s motivations for this claim differ greatly from those of many Western academic analysts of sexuality, and especially from analysts of sexuality in

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8 Again, the word “imagine” has become perhaps over-determined by scholarly engagement with it, especially since Anderson’s (1983) use of it in conjunction with “communities.” Yet communities are not the only things that are imagined, and often, the imagination of a thing exists as a social fact (Durkheim 1966[1895]) quite independent from the referent. What endures, however, is the importance of looking to the symbolic realms with which activists interpret places, times, and realms of meaning elsewhere.

9 On this, see Mary Douglas’s *Purity and Danger* (1966).

10 See the excellent analysis of Mugabe’s rhetoric by Neville Hoad (1999).

postcolonial and transnational settings, the irony is that in two vital respects, they all agree. First, the emergence of "homosexuality" as an identity is now widely accepted to be both of recent vintage and culturally located. Gay identity has even been theorized to have a specific relation to the social order of industrialized capitalism. Second, along with so many other objects and ideas, homosexuality as social identity is also seen to circulate in global sexual economies, competing in widely dispersed marketplaces of ideas and entering into complex relationships with pre-existing social identities, gender practices, and conceptions of the body. To be rigorous, to say these things only of "homosexuality" would be to miss the point. Similar processes have swept up "bisexuality," "transgender," "queer" and other markers of what this dissertation terms socio-sexual identities (see discussion below). Global circulations of people and peoples – tourism, refugee flows, international corporations, diasporic communities – carry these social identities along with them. Media representations of these people travel alongside the travelers themselves, and even faster along

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13 This position is most famously set out in the works of Foucault in his History of Sexuality (1990 [1976 and forward]).
14 Specifically, see the arguments made by the Canadian sociologist Barry Adam (1985) and the American historian John D'Emilio (1983); this conjunction of Marxist historical analysis with sexuality addresses questions quite distinct from assertions of the existence of a "social role" for "the homosexual" (McIntosh 1968).
15 For example, Peter Jackson discusses Thai Buddhist accounts of male-male sexual relations (1995) and goes on to document competing conceptions of male-male sexual relations in conjunction with gendered roles (1997). Michael Tan provides similar arguments in his analysis of the emergence of two gay male organizations in the Philippines (1995a), and his portrayal of the shifts between "bakla" and "gay" (1995b). Niko Besnier also provides an analogous discussion of gender liminality and transgender identities in Tonga (1997).
16 This conception of media flows owes much to Appadurai (1990), Hannerz (1992), and Marcus (1998 [1995]).
canalized routes of data transmission like cell phones, satellite beams, radio waves, and internet backbones. There are legitimate concerns that these circulations are not necessarily welcome, particularly in cultural locations where the daily practices that global socio-sexual identities might colonize are already imagined differently. Those concerns challenge the claim to universality made by human rights discourses that rely on specific socio-sexual identities.\textsuperscript{17} Particular populations may snatch up the social identities on offer to them through global capitalism, but not necessarily for the reasons that their “original” exponents might imagine. Alternately, they may be highly ambivalent, if not actively resentful of these identifications.

Turning now to the other quotation that brackets the intellectual space of this dissertation, Herzfeld describes the ambivalent space in which many peoples and nations committed to a path of “modernization” or “development” find themselves. Following the language of Immanuel Wallerstein (1974), those countries that wish to avoid the economically servile position of the periphery must emulate the more developed countries, aspiring to semi-peripheral status or perhaps even full ascension to the core. This process is shepherded not just by other nation-states, but also by organizations of the core like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and in the case of Greece, alliances like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and more recently the state-like, multinational political and economic unit called the European Union. The ambivalence towards the “core” that comes in the process of that development is rooted in the palpable fear that desirable economic change

\textsuperscript{17} I draw heavily here on an analogous argument made elsewhere in the ethnography of Greece, in Jane Cowan’s analysis of the construction of the Macedonian ethnic minority (2001). Similar concerns about universalizing discourses of human rights have been expressed by Wayne Morgan (2001).
necessitates undesirable social and cultural sacrifice. Some analysts of economic development in Greece attend to social and cultural change as a source of ambivalence, particularly in studies of tourism.\textsuperscript{18} To be sure, however, the ethnographic record suggests that domestic tourism is a more fundamentally acceptable source of cultural transformation than foreign.\textsuperscript{19}

This dissertation endeavors to think these two observations together while examining recent developments in Greek LGBT activism. These activists are highly educated and often well-traveled citizens of the European Union who seek to bring about an historical change in the country they call their own. They wish to intervene in local conceptions and beliefs about the sexual. For inspiration, arguments, and rhetorical examples, they also frequently look to various places elsewhere, places foreign to Greece, and to other historical moments in Greece and abroad.

Yet even as these elsewhere are tools, potential levers of public sentiment and openings into debate, they retain various levels of symbolic ambiguity and if for no other reason than that may fail to achieve their desired effect. The appeal to "Europe," "America" or anything foreign as the embodiment of a desired ideal is always subject to a rhetorical boomerang that asks why the local is not good enough, why change would be any good at all. The good ought to be near at hand, the bad, far

\textsuperscript{18} Susan Buck-Morss (1988) and Cornelia Zarkia (1996) provide cogent analyses of cultural change over time in the context of tourism. Until the 1990’s, tourism studies tended to accept Emanuel de Kadt’s (1979) model of the “demonstration effect” unproblematically; some analysts continue to do so, such as Apostolopoulos and Sonmez (2001). The “contact model” discussed in social psychology suffers from the same theoretical problem; see Anastasopoulos (1992) for an example.

\textsuperscript{19} Roland Moore (1995) provides a particularly coherent analysis of how any operation of a “demonstration effect” must be understood in the context of how the various agents of the encounter view each other as ethical beings or as high-status beings worthy of emulation. People will not copy that which they do not admire.
away. Conversely, however, Herzfeld reminds us of a tendency equally familiar, what he terms structural nostalgia. “In each generation, people attribute the superior qualities of the past to its more perfect adherence to a set of structured rules and principles for the conduct of social life. In the villages and town alike, sexual morality was once more nearly perfect than it is today, these people claim, as their predecessors had also claimed before them” (1991:75). In this respect, this dissertation stands at the rapprochement of history and anthropology that Ortner describes (1994[1984]). Yet the history at hand is not just the official and formal state history, although narratives like those detailed by Richard Clogg (2002) do play an important role. Rather, it is social histories\textsuperscript{20} that are most critical, how various socially located agents understand their pasts and put them into practice. Thus, the past – ours or that of any other social τόπος (τόπος, place) – can also be an elsewhere, about which we in the present often make claims, not only to narrate a change perceived then, but to set in motion a change desired now.

Yet not all is change. Some things “ought” to stay the same. Activism is, after all, an ethical project, a normative project engaged in discourses and practices that aim to shape the world as it “ought” to be. Similarly, the tools to which the activists turn are not always seen as foreign, not always coded as being from elsewhere. They are familiar, close at hand, and in a sense, their utility is based on

\textsuperscript{20}This conception of “social history” owes much to the “new social history” movement begun in the 1980’s in the United States, where popular culture, class, ethnicity, race, gender, and sexual identity became central organizing themes to understanding the texture of the daily lives of those outside formal structures of power, structures whose histories were all well known, recorded, and taught – something of a history from “underneath.” Some exemplars of this new social history are Nan Enstad (1999), John D’Emilio (1983, 1992, 2002), George Chauncey (1985), and George Lipsitz (1990).
the social fact of their being preferred. One such practice central to this dissertation is friendship, particularly the socially acceptable uses to which it may be put.

It is thus the alchemy of the “familiar” with the “elsewhere” that this dissertation seeks to map. It is not important simply that activism takes place, it is how that activism is grounded culturally, as in the way that AIDS activism in Greece was and continues to be firmly shaped by gender expectations and their connection to globally circulating and socially visible sexual identities. It is not simply that activists speak of homophobia, but that it is connected to racism in a way entirely different from that experienced as “true” in the United States and elsewhere in the West. It is not simply that activists employ models of media communication as community building structures, but that their modes of achieving those networks also recall relationships of patronage and all the incumbent associations of power, personality, and reciprocity those relationships entail. It is not just that various elsewhere is summoned rhetorically as activists attempt to persuade and educate one another as to proper courses of action and political alliance, but that these elsewhere exist in a symbolically weighted universe of other options.

**Coming to Terms**

For that reason, choice of terminology, particularly the choice to use terms from elsewhere, must be a central site of inquiry. James Faubion has already aptly surveyed a range of terms of sexual connotation and denotation in Greece (1993). I wish here to add several terms to his catalogue, all stemming in design from a central

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21 The reference to Richard Dyer’s essay is intentional (1985); though the original is difficult to locate, it was reprinted in 1990, in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, edited by Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Cornel West, pp 289-298. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
term: LGBT. In America and elsewhere, the acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender” has been subject to numerous critiques, many of which paved the way for queer theories.\textsuperscript{22} Despite these critiques, it remains in the United States social landscape a term of political utility, indicating a set of interests shared by four groups. Different sectors of society order the acronym differently – some feminists and academics tend toward the order of LGBT, as I present it here; other academics, both recognizing that queer became an identity and demonstrating that many of the arguments of queer theory have become obscured through their dissemination and promulgation, append the “Q” of “queer” and/or “questioning” to the end, producing LGBTQ; stylebooks in the GLBT press present it in just that order, with the gay before the lesbian. In every case, the logic of the acronym presents groups understood to be both internally unified by identity, and set apart from each other and “straight” society by that same identity. LGBT(Q, plus any number of other cabooses to the train) expresses within it the conundrums of coalition politics. The four (or more) factions brought together can fall apart, even into fragments more abundant than what the number of letters in the acronym might imply.

The ethnographic and social theoretical problem in applying “LGBT” to the Greek setting, especially in a study concerned with symbolic elsewheres, is precisely that it \textit{does} derive from elsewhere: the movements based in the United States, Canada, and Northern and Western Europe. Yet it is a term that the activists themselves employ. Moreover, it is a term whose foreignness they sense, and often, but not always, seek to ameliorate through a range of cognates that are “more Greek,”

\textsuperscript{22} Lisa Duggan’s work (1992) was foundational in this critique.
yet refer back to LGBT, whether through form or through meaning. In this way, the use of LGBT and its cognates are an apt miniature of the project of the dissertation as a whole. For example, one alternate acronym, ΛΟΑΤ (pronounced “lo-at”), translates the words “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender” to roughly matched Greek counterparts. Like LGBT, ΛΟΑΤ is used as an adjective, as in ΛΟΑΤ κοινότητα – written out as λεσβιακή, ομοφυλοφιλική, αμφιφυλοφιλική και τρανσεξουαλική κοινότητα (lesviaki, omofulofiliki, amfiofiliki kai transexualiki koinotita) or “LGBT community.” It is a borrowing of the logic of the term LGBT, but translated, made “more Greek.” “ΛΟΑΤ” enacts a tie between Greece and the elsewhere in which LGBT circulates.

Expanding the acronym invites us to notice further that even the individual terms represent the argument of the dissertation in miniature. Λεσβιακή stands in for “lesbian,” indexing a Greek island name (Lesvos) adopted through Western European notions of Sapphic history, and thus lesbian history, now imported alongside lesbian tourism as the signifier of a socio-sexual identity now so widely recognized that many Greeks residing on or visiting that island prefer instead to use its other name: Mytilini. 23 Ομοφυλοφιλική stands in for “gay,” a transformation doubly preferable, both due to the ease of pronouncing the acronym in Greek, and due to the comparatively lesser “Greekness” of γκέι (gkei, the exact Greek counterpart to the English “gay”) to that of Ομοφυλοφιλική – which, while composed of suitably Greek morphemes itself, is in turn patterned off of an English adaptation of a German

23 The linguistic story of “lesvia” thus mirrors the structural relationship of Europe and Greece as analyzed by Herzfeld in Anthropology Through the Looking-Glass (1987).
invention using Greek and Latin roots. The term stands in for “bisexual” in a relatively unproblematic way as far as linguistics is concerned; as a social identity and as a set of social practices, this is another matter, a fact all the more relevant in the context of HIV/AIDS education and outreach.

The final term of the acronym is perhaps the most complex of all. Not one of the terms associated in Greece with the “T” of ΑΟΑΤ can be taken as “more Greek” than any other. The academically preferred Greek term is διασεξουαλικότητα, translating “transsexuality.” Τρανσέξουαλ (transsexual), τραβεστί (travesti), transgender – they are all loan words in Greek, with transgender being the more recent arrival, and thus retained in the English. This description does not wish to implicitly reify the status of “transgender” as an uncontested term to English-speakers; even as some English-speaking analysts take the English term “transgender” to be the general term encompassing a range of gender identity and gender “bending,” other analysts contest that positioning and propose alternatives like

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24 On this derivation, see Faubion (1993:216-7).
25 A detailed description of this problem is provided in chapter three, “The Movement that Was Not?”
26 Diaseksoualikotita – for a specific analysis of this term and transgender as categories, as identities, and in relation to other identities of sexuality and gender in Greece, see Anna Apostolidou’s careful essay (2005).
27 Travesti is a self-descriptive term used by Greek men who dress and behave as women, and who often engage in sex work. Although they may have taken hormones or undertaken breast construction surgery, they have retained their male genitalia. While there are significant parallels to travesti discussed by Don Kulick (1998), there are significant differences, too, which are further complicated by the shifting fortunes of travesti as a social category in Greece over the last three decades. I did not hear of silicone injections, for example, during the time that I was in Greece. Further, among transsexuals and travesti in Greece, there is considerable discussion as to whether they are all “still” gay, whether being gay men is a stage they pass through on their way to becoming women, or whether they are something else entirely.
the abbreviated "trans." As for the linguistic usage in Greece, the documents of the Σωματείο Αλληλεγγύης Τραβεστί Τρανσέξουαλ Ελλάδας (Somateio Allilenguis Trabestí Transéxoual Elládas, Body of Travesti and Transsexual Solidarity of Greece, or SATTE) vacillate over whether to present the word "transsexual" in Greek orthography, or to retain the English orthography that demarcates its status as a loan word. Τραβεστί, itself a loan word (from the Italian, as the President of SATTE, Paola, has correctly argued), is presented in Greek more often than in any Roman typeface. Other than SATTE, organizations such as the Ομοφυλοφιλική Λεσβιακή Κοινότητα Ελλάδας (Omovulofiliki Lesviaki Koinotita Elladas Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece, or OLKE) provide τρανσέξουαλική as the proper place holder for the T.

Not all organizations or activists are in agreement that ΛΟΑΤ is the term they wish to use, for a variety of reasons. However, most activists have a clear understanding of the referent of the term. Proposals other than ΛΟΑΤ were not as successful. ΟΓΑΤΑ (pronounced "o-ga-ta") was one such contender. An acronym for the phrase "γυναίκες και άνδρες ομοφυλόφιλοι, αμφιφυλόφιλοι, τρανσέξουαλικοί και transgender" (homosexual women and men, bisexuals, transsexuals and transgender), ΟΓΑΤΑ followed the same coalitional logic of ΛΟΑΤ, although it lacked the clear one-to-one correlation of word to letter that made the

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28 Other anthropological treatments are available in the works of Don Kulick (1998) and David Valentine (2002). There is also excellent work from younger anthropologists like Erin Calhoun Davis and Megan Davidson.

29 Given the large number of organizations and abbreviations, please refer to the Table of Commonly Used Abbreviations provided in the front matter.

30 It should be noted that Anna Apostolidou, mentioned in an earlier footnote, is also active within OLKE, intimating to some degree the depth of scholarly debate available to the group in their choice of terminology.
acronym ΛΟΑΤ appealing. It, too, retained “transgender” in the English, holding it as distinct from τρανσέξουαλ in much the same way that SATTE held τρανσέξουαλ distinct from τραβεστί. Interestingly, ΟΓΑΤΑ is the term proferred in the charter for the organization POP (Πρωτοβουλία Ομοφυλόφιλων Πολιτών, Protoboulía Omofulófilon Politón the Homosexual Citizens’ Initiative), many participants of which would later become members of OLKE.

Thus, in this dissertation, “LGBT” is the preferred term for several reasons. It is a key instantiation and symbol of the multitude of elsewheres that inform this project. Moreover, it is a term that Greek activists themselves employ. Through it, the activists fit themselves to discourses of human rights that run along the same LGBT strands: the International Lesbian and Gay Association of Europe, and the Human Rights Campaign, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation in the United States. Other elsewheres activists have encountered during my fieldwork include ERMIS (a German organization), Sweden’s gay and lesbian pride, Euro Pride, and a smattering of pride events in the Balkans and Turkey. For all of this connection to the foreign, for all of this fraternizing with the Other, the terms still must be Hellenized. LGBT becomes ΟΓΑΤΑ or ΛΟΑΤ.

I ought also to clarify my use here of the term socio-sexual identities. Neologisms are usually best avoided, but this one serves several purposes for this dissertation. The first purpose is a political one, about the value of academic work that the phrase “sexual identity” fails to communicate in the context of the United States at the time of this writing. With the recent shifts toward socially conservative
policies in the administration of funding opportunities, academic discourses bearing any association with "sexuality" have been targeted,\textsuperscript{31} forced to reframe themselves in order to retain funding,\textsuperscript{32} or been dismissed as holding any worth beyond what they might have for the personal life of the researcher.\textsuperscript{33} This situation is nothing new, however. Esther Newton, writing of the political conditions in the academy and the United States as a whole in the 1970's, has noted that without the support of David Schneider, her dissertation at the University of Chicago would never have been completed (Newton 2000). Even then, there were many careful conversations about how the combined politics of her research subject – a drag bar – and her personal subject position would shape the remainder of her career. Despite the generation of researchers since Newton whose efforts have in many ways redefined the conditions of labor in the academy regarding studies that incorporate sexuality, Kath Weston

\textsuperscript{31} This policy is discussed in an article in \textit{Science} by Jocelyn Kaiser (2003).

\textsuperscript{32} I refer here to the decision of the Department of Health and Human Services, acting through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), acting in turn through the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC). They pressured a conference into changing its workshop title and descriptor at the SPRC regional conference in Portland, Oregon, Feb. 28 through March 2, 2005. The original title of the workshop was "Suicide Prevention Among Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Individuals". Conference organizers were informed by SPRC that unless the words "gay", "lesbian", "bisexual", and "transgender" were removed from the workshop title and descriptor, SAMHSA Administrator, Charles Curie, would not be allowed to attend the conference. Subsequent communications involved threats of funding losses. Eventually, congressional intervention through Representative Barney Frank secured a retraction of all threats from SAMHSA, and the conference proceeded as planned, but only after great damage was done to the credibility of the administration. Dr. Stephen Kennedy has confirmed in conversation that similar language control issues occur in the context of the National Institutes of Health, extending to the category "men who have sex with men."

\textsuperscript{33} This last phrase reflects comments received, by myself and by other researchers concerned with the social aspects of the sexual, from federal funding sources such as the National Science Foundation.
was still able to write of a process that Newton must find hauntingly familiar: assumptions are always made about the personal lives of those who do academic work on sexuality. To say that we study “sexual identity” in this political climate, even when clearly in conjunction with other realms of life, is to allow the term to be misinterpreted as referring only to sexual acts, to the ideas that individuals have about sex. From that perspective, the term lacks anything other than prurient interest, which is, after all, the quiet argument underneath the claim that such work could only be of interest to a narrow group of people.

The necessary counter-argument, for the social sciences at least, begins with the premise that the importance of sexuality extends far beyond that narrow range of practices. From that premise, the conclusion that social sciences ought to draw out clearly in this political climate is that diverse social arrangements often have a great deal to do with the way that people think about the sexual. It is not enough to declare that people must think a certain way, and then move on, believing that they do; research must be undertaken to confirm whether or not they do think that way, and what the long-term effects of that thinking might be. That is why attention to socio-sexual identity is important. Although analysts of sexuality agree that “sex” and “identity” are already of themselves social, there is a need now to re-emphasize that point. HIV/AIDS research and prevention are not the only concrete problems affected by this tendency that atomizes sexual thinking, that removes the social from the sexual. “Women’s health,” “abortion,” “family planning,” “abstinence

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35 Gayle Rubin, among others, has been making that argument for some time (1975, 1984).
education," "a woman's right to choose," "safer sex," "the culture of life" – all of
these phrases posit specific modes, often contradictory and contested, of imagining
the sexual socially. As illustrated by the diverse studies of Paul Farmer (1992), Ralph
Bolton (1989, 1995a), and Eugenia Georges (1996), it matters greatly which social
imaginations of the sexual are encouraged, become privileged, and are legitimated by
competing structures of power.36

The second argument in favor of the term is a less political one, but its
implications bear upon the first. The term does not refer only to some one person’s
idea of themselves as a sexual being. Rather, the term points to a much broader social
realm of ideas about sexual identities and social identifications of individuals as
particular kinds of sexual beings, identifications indexed to a variety of signs
including but not limited to gendered behaviors, artifacts of material culture,
occupations, and beliefs. The term points to the sexual aspects of a subject position,
or more clearly, a subject as socially positioned, rather than a reification of sexual
identity as existing somehow independently of social interaction. The term pushes
our awareness toward a subject’s location within various social networks, where
others, significant and not, also have ideas about that individual’s sexual being, ideas
which may or may not cohere with those of the individual in question. The emphasis
on the "social" seeks to mark a difference that may also be expressed as that between
a personal, privately held sense of self, as opposed to the categories that circulate
socially, into which actual persons both are placed and feel themselves to belong.

36 This emphasis on the need to reconnect the sexual to political economy and
structures of power is echoed in The Gender / Sexuality Reader, edited by
The point of the distinction is not to reify some personal/public divide; that would also be to miss the point. Rather, the sense of a sexual self, felt so deeply as personal, forms in relation to ideas and images of the sexual that circulate socially, in a world of values. The term *socio-sexual identities* is meant to underscore that orientation, in which individual sexual acts, practices, behaviors, positions, beliefs and desires become valuable for social science *only* insofar as they participate in a social fabric of meaning and values that exceeds the individual and the idiosyncratic.\(^{37}\)

Thus, the term *socio-sexual identities* serves to focus attention on the social circulation of sexual identities, how those identities are culturally valued, and the implications those value schemata have socially. As is explicated in various points of the dissertation, the works of James Faubion (1993) and Kostas Giannakopoulos (1998) together propose a clear distinction between two sexual economies, at least for understanding sexual practices between men. Sexual practices between women offer a similar, but differently structured distinction, as documented in the work of Elisabet Kirtsoglou (2003, 2004) and Venetia Kantsa (2002). Both distinctions are grounded in the common realization that social identification as "gay" or "lesbian" does not necessarily derive either from sexual practices between men or from sexual practices between women, respectively. This disjuncture between sexual practice and socially claimed identity is already familiar to United States readers in the medicalized category of "men who have sex with men," and to academic and activist followers of queer theory. Other United States readers may find this disjuncture more familiar

\(^{37}\) This discussion of socio-sexual identities draws heavily on Bourdieu’s analysis of Durkheim’s understanding of the social rule (Bourdieu 1977[1972]: 22-30), as well as Wittgenstein’s analysis of rules (1958: 25 *et passim*).
through the phenomenon known among Black Americans and others as “on the down low,” or through the novels of E. Lynn Harris. This same disjuncture, so well-documented ethnographically in Greece, also impacts Greek LGBT activists: in their forms of organization, the content of their messages, and the strategies they employ in pursuit of their goals.

**Recognition...**

This emphasis on socio-sexual identities should not be taken as an invitation to debate over “how many sexualities” exist in Greece, like that which took place in the scholarship on Thailand. To the contrary, as recent developments in theories of social movements and human rights indicate – particularly those around the concept of recognition – such a debate, even if it begins with the observation that sexual identities circulate globally, misdirects our attention away from the constitutive paths of circulation to a supposedly coherent object moving along them. Such “counting” of sexualities reifies them, implying that they exist somehow independently from human social interaction. Recent analyses of recognition, on the other hand, foreground the value-laden social structures along which these sexual identities are

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39 Rosalind Morris has argued that a system of two sexes and four sexualities emerged out of an earlier system of tripartite sex (1994: 38). Peter Jackson, whom Morris acknowledges in her essay, has for his part argued primarily about the emergence of a mainstreamed, masculine-identified category of men who have sex with men in the context of pre-existing Thai conceptions of sex, sexuality, and gender (1989, 1995a, 1995b, 1997). However, as Mark Johnson points out in his review of Jackson’s *Dear Uncle Go* (1995b), Jackson’s attention to such men “largely ignores the further minoritizing effect of the gay masculinization process” on effeminized men who have sex with men (1997: 114). I would add that while the various concatenations of biological sex, gender, and sex practice are “good to think” as evocations of various subject positions, that debate must return to the symbolic values attached to each such position as a social identity.
constituted in their circulation. These developments thus mesh well with the two organizing concepts introduced earlier: elsewherees and socio-sexual identities.

Among the first extended treatments of the concept of recognition is that of the German philosopher, Axel Honneth. Drawing from the phenomenology of Hegel, Honneth finds recognition to be the core feature of intersubjectivity, “the reciprocal relation of knowing oneself in the other” (1995 [1992]: 39). Analysts of recognition also trace the intellectual circulation of the concept to an essay by the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition.” Therein, he argued that recognition had become a significant problem for identity politics, because the identities in search of recognition in the contemporary era had begun to shift from externally derived sources – social status, or positions of “honor” or “preference,” as he calls them (1995 [1992]: 226) – to internally derived sources. Whereas recognition by status was relatively unproblematic in his formulation, because already social, the subject seeking recognition for an inwardly derived sense of identity can fail to be recognized by others in the way that the subject desires.

This language of the internal sourcing of identity generated a problem, however, particularly for social constructivists and others who critique essentialist notions of identity. Thus much of the theoretical writing on recognition since Taylor has centered on assessing the severity of that problem. From empirical evidence

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40 In the original, Honneth writes “das reziproke Sich-im-Anderen-Wissen” (1992: 66). This sense of reflexivity as the groundwork for human rights mirrors the developments of anthropology as cultural critique; see the volume of the same name from Marcus and Fischer (1986). It is also appropriate that in his development of recognition, Honneth discusses friendships, sexual relationships and love relationships as foundational arenas of recognition, arenas which are in turn foundational for the social analysis presented in this dissertation.
taken from the lesbian and gay movement in Vermont, sociologist Mary Bernstein has argued that “pursuing a politics of recognition does not necessarily result from, or rely on, essentialism, nor do identity politics necessarily reinforce the identity on which the movement is based” (2002: 86). The philosopher Cressida Heyes (2003) has explored a similar concern, and concludes that recognition is compatible with queer theories of identity, as recognition is inherently dialogic, and thus not essentialist. However, other scholars find that recognition models must still be carefully crafted to avoid essentializing tendencies. Political philosopher Nancy Fraser has found that identitarian models must in general be avoided. She proposes instead a “status model” (2003: 27 ff.), ironically returning recognition to the very distinction that Taylor fingered as the problem of contemporary identity politics: the difference between, on one hand, identities understood through publicly recognized status positions where recognition was “unproblematic” (Taylor 1995 [1992]:231), and on the other hand, identities understood as interior and personal realities that required external and social expression and thus created a need for recognition in order to have social effects. Also in contrast to the findings of Bernstein and Heyes, anthropologist Jane Cowan (2001) has found in her work on the making of a Macedonian minority that claims for recognition produce an erasure of ambiguity, if not outright essentialization of identities. Furthermore, anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli (2002) has explored both the degree to which indigenous peoples shape their self-representations consciously in their engagements with nation-states, and the results of fitting themselves to those categories of identity recognized by nation-states.
Comparing these accounts of recognition, an unresolved tension appears. On the one hand, there is theoretical and empirical support for the argument that recognition does not require any restriction to essentialist identity models. On the other hand, the ethnographic record indicates that essentializations do in fact occur. This dissertation purposefully leaves that tension unresolved, seeing it not as a problem in need of resolution, but rather as a generative debate to be revisited. As Eve Sedgwick argues in her analysis of analysis of “minoritizing” (essentialist) versus “universalizing” (social constructivist) strategies, any such proffered resolution would be inevitably illusory, “given that the same yoking of contradictions has presided over all the thought on the subject, and all its violent and pregnant modern history, that has gone to form our own thought” (1990:90). Following Sedgwick, the present project looks to the roles that minoritizing and universalizing arguments play in Greek LGBT activists’ appeals to structures of power, and the elsewheres involved in those appeals.

Human rights discourses, and the organizations which espouse them, number among those elsewheres. Significantly, Greek invocations of human rights discourses in connection to same-sex sexuality follow a European trend of hopeful expectations of legislation from Brussels,\(^{41}\) much as international law has become the link between sexuality and human rights in other locales, such as India.\(^{42}\) However, both the desirability and the effectiveness of connecting sexuality to human rights in this way

\(^{42}\) On India, see Narain (2001); for a more general accounting of legal discourses and human rights in regard to sexuality, see also Stychin (1998).
have been questioned. Some, such as Carl Stychin,\textsuperscript{43} are concerned about "the limitations and distortions which rights politics can foster when it is privileged so centrally within an activist strategy" (2000:282). Stychin argues that, "given the focus of European rights discourse on the ‘market citizen’ and the creation of a ‘transnational capitalist society’, the sometimes taken-for-granted politics of European sexual citizenship rights is much in need of interrogation for its broadly political economic implications" (2000:282). Importantly, he does \textit{not} argue for the absolute disconnection of sexuality and rights discourses; rather, he worries about the \textit{suitability} of current European rights discourses – economically based as they are – for handling issues of sexuality.\textsuperscript{44} Stychin also voices the concern that rights discourses will prematurely close down the categories of recognizable individuals to whom protections will be extended:

\begin{quote}
A central paradox in the use of legal discourse towards the recognition of same sex relationships thus becomes apparent. Social scientists increasingly are confirming through empirically based research what many have long known: that lesbians and gays construct an infinite variety of ways of living – and of relationships widely defined – which not only replicate but also resist the disciplinarity of heterosexual monogamous cohabitation. Yet, when legal discourse is deployed in activist struggles for social change, the engagement with the law seems to require constructing relationships which replicate monogamous, heterosexual cohabitation as the ‘ideal’ to which
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{43} Wayne Morgan (2001) makes arguments similar to those of Stychin.

\textsuperscript{44} It is notable that Greece waited until 2005 to fully incorporate the two European Union directives that mandated non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, as well as on the basis of religious belief, and physical disability. Directive 78/2000 mandated equal treatment in employment and occupation. 43/2000 called for freedom of movement across borders, and contained a definition of family members that would include same-sex partnerships. Both of those directives were connected to labor issues seen as building the foundation of a neo-liberal labor market within the Union.
lesbians and gays can successfully aspire, and from which benefits then flow (2000:295).

Reintroducing the language of recognition from an entirely different academic background – he is a Professor of Law and Social Theory at the University of Reading – Stychin echoes the arguments made by Cowan and Povinelli, with the exception that in Stychin’s case, he does not appear to look as kindly on those activists who might actively and consciously, if only strategically and as a temporary measure, desire to replicate the narrow category of “heterosexual monogamous cohabitation.” What Stychin would advocate instead is “an engagement of activism with the construction of, and participation in, democratic institutions, and a politics, not only of legal recognition, but more broadly, of recognition and redistribution” (2000:282). Presumably, this engagement would bring the full diversity of lived experiences into the realm of legal recognition, and also provide for material redress.

Even were that full diversity to be recognized in the halls of Brussels and Strasbourg, other commentators express concerns about the effectiveness of these interventions from elsewhere. For example, Stephanos Stavros, writing from his position as référendaire at the European Court of Human Rights (1999) and previously from the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies in London (1995), has critiqued the deployments of European human rights legislation in Greece at a technical and judicial level. He finds that despite the various rulings by the Court of Human Rights, Greece remains slow to change its laws and judicial practices. Importantly, the majority of his arguments are limited to the area of religious minorities; his 1999 article left aside ethnic and linguistic minorities on the grounds that there had not been any rulings by the Strasbourg courts at the time. Sexuality is
also uniformly excluded from his work. However, the Greek court system has, at least on one occasion, ruled in a manner that was in effect supportive of same-sex relations, although the arguments deployed in the trial exhibit certain problems for the future.45

Thus, this dissertation conjoins recent developments on recognition with human rights discourses. It should be noted, however, that those developments rest in turn on a previous body of literature relevant to identity movements and identity politics, the literature on "new social movements." Indeed, resource-management and identity-oriented theories of social movements are not far beneath the surface in any discussion of recognition. Both in mapping the elsewhere(s) to which activists attend, and in mapping the circulation of socio-sexual identities, one could argue that the languages run parallel, as alluded to earlier, to those of resource-management (elsewhere(s) and identity (socio-sexual identities).

The Winter 1985 volume of Social Research – edited and introduced by Jean L. Cohen, and containing essays from Charles Tilly, Alain Touraine, Alberto Melucci, Claus Offe and Klaus Eder – is considered a watershed moment in this literature. Of these, I wish to highlight the relatively under-read final essay from Eder. In his inquiry into the social basis of collective actions in the new social movements, he emphasizes the relevance of socio-economic class. Just as Eder argues that the new social movements “are part of the history of the petit bourgeois protest which has from the outset accompanied the modernization of society” (1985:874), so the contemporary Greek LGBT activists are able to engage in activism

45 For reasons of space, the reader is here referred to the Appendix, which discusses the details of that 2001 case.
because of their class status. As university students, white-collar professionals and
often world-travelers, many of the activists do come from positions of relative
privilege. Many live in apartments significantly separate from family, even if their
family owns the property in which they live. Many are able to engage in activism
because the time structure of their job allows it. Others, particularly students, enjoy
the financial support of their families, and open blocks of time due to university
schedules. Yet the activists do not come from positions of affluence, nor from
wealthy, elite families. Many of them consider themselves to be financially
burdened, and some talk of struggling to make ends meet. Most, however, would say
that they are well-off enough.

This self-description returns us to the key question for Eder: why would
moderately well-off people want to protest? For Eder, although both objective class
position and subjective class consciousness are necessary to explain the ability to
protest, they are not adequate. For that reason, he turns to Bourdieu’s conception of
habitus to argue for the additional importance of the “life world” to explain why the
petits bourgeois engage in collective protest (1985:873). That life world is an
affective space, which need not be rational, and often is not. It is, in other words, a
space of values, precisely the same social fabric of meaning and value that was
sought earlier by looking to socio-sexual identities rather than just sexual identities,
and the same socially constituted network of meanings and values along which
circulate the various elsewheres of activist discourse.
... And Being Recognized

Among the values that played a significant role – both among the activists and in my personal conduct as a fieldworker – was honor, particularly the maintenance of a reputation for honor through concealing and revealing information about oneself and others. Although this value may be traced ethnographically to the complex of honor and shame, as described in the works of John Campbell (1964), John Peristiany (1966), and others, it should not be viewed only in that context. Information management, discrete gossip, and the graceful presentation of self in everyday life are universally valued social skills, though the terms of execution differ by topos.

On the subject of disclosing information about others, the use of names and pseudonyms in this dissertation required some careful decisions. Although many individuals had requested that I use their actual names, the only real names to appear in this dissertation are those that have appeared on public record in Greek media, in connection with their activism. Since so much of the activists’ efforts aim toward securing public recognition, it seems only fitting to honor both them and the positions they have fought for, and to maintain the connection between their deeds and their names. To be consistent in protecting those who do wish to shield their identity from public scrutiny, however, all people whose names do not so appear will be given one-name pseudonyms, or in some cases, no name at all. Those who can recognize the real identity of the pseudonymous and the unnamed from the narratives provided

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46 There is an extended discussion of honor and shame by David Gilmore (1982), and an interesting volume that builds from the concept of honor to that of grace, edited by Peristiany and Julian Pitt-Rivers (1992). Most recently, Charles Stewart has written on the subject (2001).

47 The reference to Goffman (1959) is quite intentional.
herein are clearly close enough to the social scene already that nothing written here should surprise them anyway.

As a researcher, coming to understand the ways in which others recognized and interpreted my person was critical, as this was a useful foundation for interpreting the kinds of information they were willing to divulge. Among the pieces of information that activists wanted to know about me was my sexual identity. For example, over drinks one night at a café in Syntagma, I was asked bluntly by Marina Galánou if I was gay or straight. Several of the people in our group had known me longer than Marina, and one of them had known me for over a year. Although there were multiple conversations going on when Marina asked me the question, all conversation ground to a halt as the whole table waited for my answer, even those who already knew it. It was clear that the factual answer was not really the point. It was how the answer would be given and received. I told her that I am gay.

“Απόδειξε το!” (Apódeixé to!, Prove it!) she replied. Everyone laughed, including me. It was an impasse, and all understood it. Anyone can claim an identity. Proving it, however, was impossible. An identity exists socially, embedded in shared memories and experiences; there is no proof, only a social fact. The only way forward was thus to make it social. I told her I had a boyfriend. “Πού βρίσκεται; Στην Αμερική; ή Ελληνας είναι;” (Pou vrísketai? Stin Ameriki? i Ellinas eínai?, Where is he? In America? Or is he Greek?) she shot back. The implication was that, in an ironic twist on so many relationships that are invented to save social face, I could claim to have a boyfriend back home, who could never be questioned, since he was conveniently absent. I told her that he was Greek, all the while looking at my
friend who had known me for over a year, and who had met my boyfriend. Right on
cue, he spoke up. That was the last that Marina ever questioned me about my
identity. On later occasions, when introducing me to other people, particularly
travesti and transsexuals, she would announce to them not only my name, but the fact
that I am gay.

“Coming out” while I was doing my research was never really a question for
me. Among the activists, I behaved as if my sexual identity were already known. For
some researchers, this might seem a luxury, while for others, just common sense.
Still, long before I left for the field, it was part of my intellectual repertoire to
question any privileging or “native anthropologist” stance that might be derived
from being a gay man doing research on LGBT activism. Being gay was not a sure
path to understanding all things that claimed that label. Being gay did not give me
any extra insight as a social scientist. And yet, my being gay played an important
part, no doubt, in the comfort level that people felt with me in the field. I was, in
some sense, one of them. We were, in some sense, all engaged in the same project.
Some people even introduced me as an activist (ακτιβιστής, aktivístís), rather than as
an anthropologist or as a student. For all of the theoretical work on reflexivity and
subject positioning, there was a subtle and almost unavoidable temptation, both on
my part, and on the part of the activists, to think that we did understand each other
already, that we were interpreting things in the same way. I did not have to be gay to

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48 See Kirin Narayan’s excellent essay on the pitfalls of this term (1993), and Kath
Weston’s extended meditation on the consequences of such a subject position, “The
do this project; I do not know and cannot assess how it would have turned out had someone not gay done it.

As the story about my disclosure to Marina demonstrates, however, my management of my own identity was intimately caught up with my management of others'. In telling my own, and in the way I told it, I implicated someone else: my boyfriend. For almost the duration of my fieldwork, nearly two years, I enjoyed the company of a man who identifies as gay, but who was not out to his family, or his co-workers. Although he had a small circle of gay friends, he had not come out to any of his straight friends. Over the course of our relationship, he did come out to some of them. We ended the relationship when I returned to the United States, and remain friends.

With the publication of the volume *Taboo* in 1995, anthropologists were able to take a look at themselves and their practices in a public way that had, until that point, not really been possible. The intellectual tradition upon which that volume is erected was not in place before then. Deeply indebted to the reflexive turn in anthropology, as well as to gender studies, lesbian and gay studies, and the Writing Culture moment of the 1980's, the essays in that volume drive sexuality directly to the epistemological foundation of the ethnographic encounter. In a dialogue, an encounter between subjectivities, what role does sexuality play? How ought that role to be managed? What are the sexual ethics of the fieldwork encounter?

The essays in the volume answer and elaborate on those questions in a variety of ways, but in relation to this project, I should emphasize two in particular. For ethnographic detail, the essay by Jill Dubisch (1995) provides subtle examples of
socially acceptable flirting in Greece, and the gender roles involved, at least for heterosexual couplings. The most challenging essay, however, is by Ralph Bolton. In his discussion of the ethics of his research on prevention knowledge of AIDS and HIV among gay men in Brussels, he responds to the review given of that work by Patricia Marshall, whom he describes as the leading ethicist in medical anthropology. In response to her assessment that he engaged in “passive deception” by having sex with people from whom he learned valuable information, he states “I did not engage in sexual encounters for purposes of research” (1995b: 156). It is a sensitive ethical position to argue, and one in which not a few anthropologists have found themselves.

For my own case, I would dishonor the depth of the relationship if I did not acknowledge the debt I owe to my boyfriend for the shared discussions and life experiences that have helped me to understand better the subtleties of living as a gay man in Athens, Greece at the turn of the twenty-first century. He introduced me to people I would likely have never met, and to experiences I might not have known to seek on my own. The influence of our relationship permeates this dissertation in a way that cannot be denied. It is here, however, that my experience diverges from that of Bolton. My lover is not the subject of this dissertation. He does not appear in it by name, nor by pseudonym. In one respect, that is so to protect him, as it would be to protect many other people with whom I spoke, and who shared something with me of their lives, but did not feel comfortable being directly named or described. But more importantly, that is so because those insights I gained through my time with him are not exclusive to his life. They resonated in the lives of so many others. Most

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49 See also the work of Zinovieff (1991).
important of all, however, it is the activists who are the subject of the dissertation. They are the meat and bones of the fieldwork. My interactions with everyone else, gay or otherwise, including my lover, shaped my perceptions while in the field.

Nonetheless, my sexuality is but one aspect of my identity that others found important. In many respects, it was also the least important. My status as a foreigner far outweighed any sympathy my being gay might have created, and generated the majority of the misunderstandings and blunders in my fieldwork. It was also the central metaphor of the borders that were erected in my relationships with the activists. I was “ο Αμερικάνος” (o Amerikános, the American) or to others “το Αμερικανάκι” (to Amerikanáki, “the little American,” an alternately affectionate and dismissive diminutive form). Still others addressed me as “πράκτορα” (práktora, agent or spy). My foreign academic training made me a resource for those who wanted bibliographic information, or to discuss what was being taught in American universities. As a United States citizen, I was also assumed to know certain things. I was selectively called upon to bolster arguments being made where an American example was at stake, to confirm a story, to clarify a detail, to report what people were “really thinking.”

I cannot assess how the project might have worked had I not been foreign. Had I been Greek, or perhaps even Greek-American, there would have been other hurdles to clear, not least of which would be a temptation similar to the one that emerged because of my actively claimed gay identity. If I were somehow Greek, both the activists and I might have assumed that I already understood what was happening, why some things were meaningful and others not. By the same token that
my being gay does not give me any authority of interpretation, nor would that hypothetical Greekness.

Fortunately, foreigners are not the only ones interested in the study of contemporary sexuality in Greece. With the establishment of anthropology as an academic discipline in Greece – due in no small part to the institution-building labors of Dimitra Gefou-Madianou (2000) and Eleni Papagaroufali (1992) at Panteion University in Athens, and Evthimios Papataxiarchis at the University of the Aegean on Mytilini – published works focused on sexuality are available in Greek from anthropologists Peter Loizos, Evthymios Papataxiarchis, Kostas Giannakopoulos, Venetia Kantsa, and Elisabet Kirtsgoglou. There are also volumes from Afroditikoukoutsaki (2002) and Constantinos Phellas (2002). A slightly younger generation of scholars is also emerging. Panagiotis Dendrinos is completing his dissertation on gender identity among gay men in Athens.\(^50\) Anna Apostolidou, studying at the University College of London, is completing her work on the coming out practices of gay men. Valantis Paphhanasiou is has done extensive work with HIV and AIDS awareness, and major studies of gender mainstreaming in the European Union. Evi Boukli and Panagiotis Kappas, two undergraduates at Panteion under Koukoutsaki, have written a detailed study of mass media representations of the 2003 police raid on the bar Spices. Evthimia Karayianni and Pantelis Tolis also wrote a thesis on “Homosexuality and Social Reality” for the Department of Sociology at the University of Irakleio. Nor is there a shortage of non-Greeks to evidence an interest in the field. James Faubion’s contribution was foundational for the English-language

\(^{50}\) Note that his photographs have been published in the 2001 volume by Yalouri.
ethnographic record. Bruno Aschenbacher in Switzerland is working on a masters-level paper. Andrew Clark, a Geography graduate student at Durham University in the United Kingdom, is also completing his doctoral research on gay tourism on Mykonos.

Structure of the Dissertation

To this young yet rich body of work, I submit this dissertation as the first sustained examination of Greek LGBT activism. The next chapter brings us into contact with the field, through a considered reconstruction of how I came to this present project. Chapters three and four take the key ideas of elsewheres and the rhizome and provide concrete illustrations – of homophobia and of AIDS activism, respectively – in their specific developments in Greece. In chapter five, we turn to examine five of the agents that had become central to Greek activism by the time I had arrived in the field. They are the figures from whom most Greeks have gotten their understandings of what LGBT activism is supposed to be, how it can work, and whether or not it is a worthwhile enterprise. The sixth chapter turns from these five figures to a range of emergent actors, some of whom have, since the end of fieldwork, taken on a central status of their own in terms of mass media exposure and connection to instruments and institutions of power. The seventh and final chapter is a reconsideration of the observations gathered throughout the first six chapters, and

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51 Clark’s contribution to the ethnography of Mykonos is long overdue. To date, the ethnographic record of Mykonos has depended on the work of Margaret Stott. Of her works that I have been able to obtain, none specifically address gay male tourism to the island, despite her careful focus on the socio-economic impacts of tourism (1985, 1996). Study of her other works (1973, 1979, 1982) may yet prove this elision unintentional, or alternately, provide arguments as to why specific reference is unnecessary.
attempts to place them into relation to one another, not in any predictive or
prescriptive way, but as a map that points to current tensions.
“Entering the Field”: The Polychromo Forum

Alle Dinge nämlich, die mir einfallen, fallen mir nicht von der Wurzel aus ein, sondern erst irgendwo gegen ihre Mitte. Versuche sie dann jemand zu halten, versuche jemand ein Gras und sich an ihm zu halten, das erst in der Mitte des Stengles zu wachsen anfängt.

[Those things which occur to me, occur to me not from the root up but rather only from somewhere about their middle. Let someone then attempt to seize them, let someone attempt to seize a blade of grass and hold fast to it when it begins to grow only from the middle.]

– Franz Kafka

The Athenian police raided the bar Spices in late February 2003, searching for the figures behind what the police report called a child pornography ring. The alleged ring operated a web page that, according to the newspaper Kathimerini, “contained adverts from pedophiles asking young boys to meet them at the Spices club.” Gossip circulated that the web page did feature images of young men, though it was not clear if they were actually under-age. Some versions of the story claimed the images were themselves pornographic; other versions reversed the direction of the appeal, suggesting that the web page was designed to tempt older men to come to the bar using images of younger men. Regardless of the actual content of the web page and its intended purpose, no single story about it could be corroborated. No verifiable images of it were reproduced in the commercial media, as far as I was able to determine. After the raid, I was unable to locate the web page on line, or any

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1 Compare the German text (Brod 1967: 9) to the various translations of it. The English translation provided here is Brian Massumi’s translation (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 [1980]: 23). Although Deleuze and Guattari cite the translation by Joseph Kresh, Massumi’s rendering differs marginally from Kresh’s (Brod 1948: 12).

2 According to article 347 of the Greek Penal Code, seventeen years is the age for consent to male-male sexual relations.
facsimile of it. Some questioned whether the web page had ever actually existed, citing its convenient absence as proof.

Nevertheless, by the end of that February weekend, eleven people had been arrested, including two of the bar’s owners and the disc jockey. Five of those arrested were charged in connection to the alleged child pornography ring. The disc jockey was further charged with showing pornographic films in the bar; it is unclear if he was also charged as part of the ring. Another three of those arrested that night were clearly not on any warrant, however. Again according to Kathimerini, after the police entered the bar, they witnessed these three men “engaging in sex before an audience.” They were accordingly charged with public indecency. The remainder of the arrested were charged with drug offenses. Aside from the club itself, the raid also included several private residences.

Kathimerini first carried the story on its own web page on Monday, February 24. Their coverage contained a great deal of factual information, including the names and ages of six of the arrested. The rest of the media carried the story as well, especially the afternoon television gossip shows, exemplified by Tatiana Stefanidou’s Φύλλο και Φτερό (Fúllo kai Fteró). While the mainstream press restrained itself to short articles announcing the fact of the raid and the identities of the arrested, the afternoon talk shows carried the theme for the whole week, repeatedly showing loops of footage copied from their respective channel’s news programming. Over and over again, garishly lit against the night by news camera flood lights, police walked down the steps of a private residence carrying an old computer they had just confiscated

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3 Literally translating as “leaf and feather”, the show’s name conveys the same thoroughness of inspection as the English saying “no stone left unturned.”
(perhaps explaining the disappearance of the alleged web page). Over and over again, the camera panned across a daytime shot of the facade of Spices, zooming in to linger over the thick chains and padlock on the club entrance. As these images filled the screen, guest experts voiced their outrage, not that the police had performed the raid, but that they had not performed it sooner, and that similar raids were not performed more often. These outraged experts were perhaps aware of parallel events in places elsewhere – such as southern France and Belgium, or even of the accusations circulating around Michael Jackson – events where pederasty and homosexuality were fused, confused, and subsequently abjected.

On Wednesday, February 26, Kathimerini reported that one of the arrested had committed suicide on Tuesday 25, sometime before the 5 AM change of guard in the police compound on Alexandras Avenue in central Athens. He had hung himself with the strap on his overnight bag. The paper also reported that he had left behind a note explaining that he could not live with the shame of being identified by the press. He also left behind a wife and several children. That same Wednesday afternoon, I heard the story for the first time when I went to a friend’s house for coffee. He was surprised that I had not heard earlier, because he knew that I was interested in these things. He reported all the details he had heard through the news and at his job. He had the feeling this would be important to me.

He was right. The raid on Spices promised to change everything.

4 Thanks to James Faubion for pointing out these European elsewheres.
Points of Entry

Like so many ethnographic projects, this present one is nothing like the one that originally brought me to Greece. That first trip, in the summer of 2001, was for a supervised group fieldwork grant supported by the Landes Fund of the Research Institute for the Study of Man. Lindsay Smith, Aimee Placas, Michael Powell and I all had separate projects. Nia Georges and Jim Faubion were to be our supervisors in the field. Michael and I stayed together in Pangrati, a middle-class suburb of Athens, in a first floor apartment conveniently above a restaurant that became the source of many of our meals for those summer months, despite the grocery store directly across the street. While Michael was trying to get executives in telephone companies to talk to him about security and technology, I spent my time trying to get to know the gay scenes of the city, at the time conceiving the work as a comparative project to supplement the one I was planning to do in the United States on networks of academics, activists, business owners, media, and politicians in lesbian and gay communities.

Before we arrived, my preparatory work included scanning the internet for any information that I might find. The most important discovery at that stage was the Roz Mov web site. Transliterating the Greek words for “Pink Purple”, the title indexes colors associated with gay men and lesbians, respectively. It is an extensive catalogue of mostly lesbian and gay history in Greece compiled over several years in the mid-1990’s by Eva Hadjaki, and last updated in 1998. Roz Mov is mirrored in several sites around the world, in addition to the Queer Resource Directory.

Hadjaki’s work was an impressive undertaking, and made meeting her a priority for the research. However, all attempts to reach her failed, whether through contact information on the *Roz Mov* web site or through personal connections gained in the field. Still, the background provided on the site was incredible: names and brief histories of activists, names and addresses of organizations, publications, bars and clubs. All of that became crucial orienting information during the first few months in Athens.

*Roz Mov* was not the only website that provided interesting results, however. Since *Roz Mov* had not been updated for so long, I set out to find more current information by going to chat rooms available through www.gay.com. By the year that I began the research, that website had positioned itself as one of the major United States portals for gay men and lesbians to communicate on line, particularly through chat rooms keyed for individual cities, larger geographic regions, and countries, including Greece. At the time, I knew no Greek, nor any Greeks, and the chat rooms promised a way to start fixing at least one of those problems. The window representing the room was full of the familiar English formulae used when cruising on line, mixed with strings of words that used English characters, but made no sense to me. Having nothing to lose, I posed questions to the room, like “Are there any gay publications in Greece?” and “Where are the best places to go?” Those queries were met with a resounding lack of response. After my questions had scrolled off the general room screen, I would re-enter them, hoping that someone would answer. Eventually, someone did: “There are no gay publications in Greece, ok? None. So quit asking.” It was a slap in the face, if an informative one. Like so many other chat
rooms, the users seemed to be focused on a particular set of reasons for being there. Impertinent questions from an annoying American were out of place, and ruined the sexual mood. Perhaps unsurprisingly, I never did end up meeting anyone in Greece through online chat rooms.

When our fieldwork group finally got to Greece, Aimee and our supervising professors provided many of our introductions. For example, through Jim Faubion, I made the acquaintance of Gregory Vallianatos, and eventually had dinner with him. For the most part though, the best way for me to meet people was by going out to the bars. I expected to meet many activists that way. That did not happen; indeed, for the entirety of my work in Greece, I never met an activist in a bar without being introduced to them by another activist. By the end of those first two months, however, I did get to know a small group of friends, and spent most of my evenings with them, at whatever house, movie theatre, café, bar or dance club was on the agenda for that night.

During the day, I lost myself in the city with my camera, taking pictures of things that seemed like they needed explaining. Why did the bars all seem so nondescript on the outside? Why did the main town on Mykonos seem, by contrast, to have a rainbow flag on every building? In fact, the only rainbow flag to be found in public view in Athens then was a small triangular sticker on a sidewalk level window on Tsakalof in Kolonaki. It was hard some days to convince myself that I was any different from a tourist, even if the pictures in my camera were slim on ruins, did not feature the changing of the guard at the steps of the Parliament, and had no images of old women in black waiting for the bus.
From these photographic expeditions, graffiti became an important part of that summer as well. In particular, one random afternoon walk yielded an astonishing find on the side of a residential building at the top of the Lofos Strefi, a hill in central Athens. Filling the yellow wall was the following English phrase in black spray paint: “HOMO MONEY / THE POISON OF THE / PLANET.” Who left that sign? For whom was it left to read? Why there, in English, in a spot clearly not frequented by tourists? As for the location, that particular bit of graffiti real estate seems to have been highly sought after, since the phrase was painted on an area that the residents of the building had clearly reclaimed from a previous work, if in a color that did not quite match the original hue of the building. As for the social meaning of the graffiti itself, it seemed to me at the time to be a critique of both capitalism and tourism, with homo(sexual)s as the central villains of the melodrama. Given the language, I even entertained the wild supposition that it might have been left by a wayward tourist, rather than a Greek. After learning some Greek, however, that supposition was put to rest. The orthography of the “y” in “money” is characteristic of the hand-printed Greek ypsilon. On a return trip nearly two years later, the residents of the building had once more reclaimed their wall.⁶

That same summer, I discovered another Athenian graffiti that left a less homophobic image behind. On Akademies, just before the French Embassy, a stone column facing the sidewalk bears the name of a low-budget Greek lesbian periodical

⁶ James Faubion intriguingly suggests that the graffiti is addressed in part to the residents of the house, and that these residents are English-speaking expatriates, perhaps career diplomats, who either are gay, or are taken to be so. Unfortunately, I have no way of confirming or denying this suggestion at this time. Should Faubion’s suggestion be accurate, I can only hope that the reproduction of the graffiti here does not irk the then residents of the house, no matter where they might live today.
from the mid 1990’s: Μάνταμ Γκου (Mádam Gou!). Above the title, the column also bears two intertwined female symbols, giving those not familiar with the periodical itself a point of entry into the subject matter. Though in a much more visible and well-trafficked location, this graffiti remained intact for the duration of my fieldwork, and may still remain to this day. Perhaps its relative semiotic obscurity has helped it endure. Then again, something that physically small could be easily lost in the jumble of Athenian graffiti.

After that summer, fueled by graffiti and the vertiginous difference between Athens and Mykonos, it was clear that a new project focused on Greece was far more compelling. That new project turned out, in retrospect, to be a shallowly explored set of questions about the impact of tourism on gay identity in Greece. The plan at the time involved extensive travel between Athens and Mykonos to observe the interactions of Greeks with tourists, to pay attention to how those interactions meshed with the Greek’s daily lives once back in their normal routines. That project was not only methodologically impossible as conceived, it began to sound like so many other studies that had been proposed on the “demonstration effect,” an insufficiently complicated theory of cultural interaction and exchange popularized in tourism studies. On the whole, the demonstration effect also tends to depict human agents as

7 The title of the periodical derives from καλλιαρντά (kaliarndá), the Greek homosexual argot documented by Elias Petropoulos. It refers to lesbians, and derives from the kaliarndá word γκουνιότα (gouniota), also meaning lesbian, which Petropoulos suggests is derived from a French source (1993 [1971]: 40). James Faubion, for his part, suggests that the word might also refer to “certain 70s Chinese martial arts (and occasionally lesbian-tinged) movies based on the novels of an author Gou or Gu” (personal correspondence, March 2005).
8 See de Kadt (1979) for the source of “demonstration effect” language, and Apostolopoulos and Sonmez (2001) for a contemporary re-engagement of it.
little more than passive carriers of behaviors, behaviors that circulate seemingly of their own accord once their human carriers come into sufficiently close proximity. The focus of the demonstration effect work also seemed focused primarily on those effects that “tourists” had on “natives,” rather than the reverse. There are notable exceptions to that tendency, such as a study by Petros Anastasopoulos that examined whether tourism between Greece and Turkey spurred any lasting kind of cross-cultural understanding. Unfortunately, he concluded that Greeks returning from travels in Turkey did not return with positive impressions (1992: 639).

Aside from framing a project, the return to Greece required other work. Language classes at the Montrose Greek Orthodox Church in Houston became a weekly event. Arrangements were made for language school in Athens, as well as internationally accepted medical insurance. Several trips and phone calls to the Greek Consulate in Houston were needed to secure a student visa. Learning the distribution of the field of Modern Greek Studies was also a priority, not only to find any relevant work, but to get a sense of how work on sexuality issues might be received.9 Perhaps more important than any of these, however, was the process of locating the networks of people that could provide insights, or better, access into Greek lesbian and gay circles.

9 Several significant bibliographies have been assembled of the anthropology of Greece. The Modern Greek Society Newsletter has released two, one compiled by Peter S. Allen and Perry A. Bialor and published in December 1976 (Volume IV, Number 1 of the Newsletter), and another compiled by Roland Moore in December 1992 (Volume XX, Number 1 of the Newsletter). Both of these are still available through Peter S. Allen. A more recent bibliography of the anthropology of Greece appears in Constantinidis (2000).
One point of entry that suggested itself was through the mailing list of the Modern Greek Studies Association. Through this list, I met George Gedeon and June Samaras. I arranged to have lunch with them both while in Canada for a conference. Both are residents of Toronto, and though they had known of each other through the mailing list, they had not yet met each other in person. It was an entertaining lunch, and both of them offered much encouragement in my project, mixed with cautious advice. George referred me to an organization called the Greek Helsinki Monitor. He was aware that they did work on human rights, and that some of this work involved lesbian and gay issues. I followed up on George's connection, and wrote to Panagiotis Dimitras, asking if we would be able to meet on my return to Greece. He suggested that I speak instead with the Greek Helsinki Monitor member who specialized in sexuality issues: Gregory Vallianatos.

Another point of entry came up entirely by luck. During the American Anthropological Association meetings in Washington, DC, Kath Weston referred me to a friend of hers who works as a journalist in Boston. She said her friend knew quite a number of people in Greece, and might be able to produce a lead. After writing to her friend, he wrote back a brief email saying that there was basically one person whom he considered knowledgeable about the state of lesbian and gay affairs in Greece: Gregory Vallianatos.

Intriguingly, each time I tried to find a new point of entry into the Greek lesbian and gay scene using contacts in the United States and in Canada, it closed down on just one man whom I had already met. Vallianatos was clearly well-connected, at least internationally. What was more curious, though, is that in each
case the contact information given for him was different, a detail that gave rise to several different impressions. Perhaps Vallianatos changed his organizational affiliations so frequently that he left a wide trail of contacts in his wake, creating the possibility that few or possibly none of them were current. Perhaps he managed his different social circles by partitioning them to distinct modes of contact: this email for that group, this phone number for that other group. If he was contacted by an unknown party, this partitioning might allow him to divine the connections that had been brought to bear. Perhaps he was simply involved in many divergent interests concurrently. Still, the short two months of preliminary fieldwork had demonstrated that there were many other people involved in the Greek lesbian and gay scene. It stood to reason that someone other than Vallianatos ought to have shown up through international networking, if not on their own, at least in parallel to him. A question quickly followed: how to explain the virtual monopoly Vallianatos seems to have in the realm of international connections? He seemed to be waiting, strategically positioned at the end of every new path I opened in my search for a new point of entry.

**Rhizomatics**

In their descriptions of the rhizome as a philosophical object, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari use a variety of terms, but their language drifts toward the semiotic, mathematical, organic and the biological. Their language works by evoking a sense of the organizational forms they seek to analyze. To demonstrate the properties of the rhizome that interest them, they choose instances that lack

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10 Again, in Stephen Tyler’s sense (1986).
glamour and juxtapositions that contravene bourgeois aesthetics. Rather than trees, they would have us attend to weeds, to couch grass, to things that grow in cracks, opportunistic forms of life. Rather than tracings that attempt to reproduce the contours of an object with precision, they would have us attend to maps that stand in relation to but are distinct from the objects that tracings would represent. Rather than the metaphor of the central taproot that structures all knowledge and social experience to a core, a General, an essence or to a central agent, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that we attend to the underground systems of fungus, a network of connections that reaches out with no core, no center point, where all points along the rhizome are in the middle. Encountering a rhizome, one always begins to grasp it in the middle. There are, by extension, innumerable points where one might encounter a rhizome, and move along it.

For the discipline of anthropology, among others, the rhizome can stand as a fertile image. It could allow a reorganization of the story of ethnography, recognizing that the singular moment once enshrined as “the entry into the field” has other sides. That singularity could give way to counterpoints: an encounter attenuated, stretched out, replayed and relayed along the duration of fieldwork, affording multiple points of entry. Perhaps the rhizome as image could even avoid the language of certain past anthropologies, the masculine and colonial language of penetration, piercing the heart of darkness, entering the field with a camera, a pen, a gun, and a retinue. Rather than possession (“my people,” we used to say), the language could help to produce a scene of participation, grounded in a shared knowledge of mutual complicity. As ethnographic metaphor, the rhizome could remind us of the importance of histories.
We as ethnographers are always arriving in the middle of things, trying to grasp a situation already in motion. Our access to those prior states comes through artifacts from and testimonial recollections of those times. These multiple points of entry into the past are also lines of flight connecting to the present. Artifacts are often made with the explicit hope that they might outlast the life of their creators; testimonials of the past are rarely told with disregard for who is listening now.

Notice, however, all of this potential work that rhizomes are to do must be constantly framed by conditionals. They could work this way, and then again, they might not. “You may make a rupture, draw a line a flight, yet there is still a danger that you will reencounter organizations that restratefy everything, formations that restore power to a signifier, attributions that reconstitute a subject” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 [1980]: 9). As an image for fieldwork then, it reminds us of the possibility that multiple points of entry could close down on a point. Say, for instance, Vallianatos. Alternately, the ethnographer could fail in the attempt and accomplish nothing more than a torturous and fruitless shift of language. Deleuze and Guattari provide plenty of exhortations about how a writer might go about doing it: “Write to the \( n \)th power, the \( n-1 \) power, write with slogans: Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant!” (1987 [1980]: 24).

Ethnography is more than writing, however. It is also a practice.

**Some Arrivals**

It seemed like the formal fieldwork began before I had even properly re-entered Greece. In June 2002, on the airport bus from La Guardia to JFK, I met a flight attendant with Delta who, as soon as I told him I was going to Athens, enthused
to me about the many times he had been to Mykonos. He was sure that I would have a great time. He was also amazed that anyone would think to study gay and lesbian life in Greece. The existence of Mykonos seemed to him to be sufficient proof that “being gay” was no problem, even in the remainder of Greece. A two-hour layover and a ten-hour flight later, I was chatting with the taxi driver on the way into Athens from the new and still disturbingly antiseptic Venizelos airport. My embarrassingly simple Greek was good enough to talk about vacations, particularly about what islands were good to visit. After conversing about a string of islands that featured Santorini, I asked him if he had ever gone to Mykonos. He had not. I asked him if he wanted to go. He did not. “I have a family,” he laconically explained. Even with my rudimentary Greek, it was a statement full of meaning. It was clear that the flight attendant and the taxi driver lived in very different worlds.

I had arrived with the intention of trying to map out those different worlds, to see where they might be commensurable, or at least, vaguely connected. Before any of that could really begin, however, basic things had to happen: improving language skills, establishing some sort of routine, meeting more people, learning the neighborhood in Zografou. By February 2003, things were progressing, but slowly. Language classes were going well, even if the walk up to the mountain-side campus of the Φιλοσοφική Σχολή (Philosophíkí Skholí, School of Philosophy) was less endearing than in the past, and the view out the classroom window to the harbor of Pireaus less distracting. I was reading Harry Potter in Greek translation. I had met a good number of people, most of them gay men met through other gay men, but a few chance acquaintances had broadened my social contacts greatly. The administrative
needs of securing the all-important ἀδεία παραμονής (ἀδεία paramonís, residence permit) were proceeding.

But the field notes seemed slim compared to the personal diary. To be sure, there were enough interesting stories, mostly snippets from conversations, but there were only a few shining moments. There had been a gay beauty contest on Mykonos called Mr. Gay Greece, put together by Paul Sofianos, the editor of a gay magazine called DEON. A group of friends in a scenic design school went to the theater often as a requirement for their studies, and going along with them seemed a good way to practice listening to Greek while doing something social and seeing what was on offer culturally in Athens. That social outlet turned almost imperceptibly into a catalogue of gay plots and subplots, since the plays ran the gamut from Bent and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof to contemporary Greek comic productions like Μάμα Μην
Τρέχεις (Máma Min Tréheis, Don’t Run, Mama). An editorial in a Greek men’s magazine disparaging gays for kissing on public beaches on Mykonos had sparked in me a fascination for stories about kisses in public, gay and straight. That fascination began to take formal shape in a paper (and subsequently, a chapter of this dissertation). Still, the initial luster of the tourism project had long faded, and the work was drifting. I had begun to rethink the project in terms of the European Union, and was gathering material on that angle. Then at a friend’s house for coffee one afternoon, he told me about the police raid on Spices and the subsequent suicide in jail.

The initial reactions to the events at Spices were very mixed in the different gay social circles I had located. One man in his thirties, who runs a shop in central
Athens, opined that it would be no loss if both Spices and Lamda (another well-known gay club in Athens) were to close forever. He finds dark rooms to be the last thing worth fighting for. He identifies himself as "queer" or "open-minded" (he uses the English terms), and not as gay. Several other men who identified as gay were all curious as to the exact identity of the man who committed suicide. One of these, also in his thirties, expressed his sense that maybe it would be a good time to not go out to any of the bars for a while. Several others focused their attention on the suicide, and while they expressed their sadness at the event, they found no sympathy at all for the actions of the deceased. They saw the charges of child pornography as correctly criminal. None questioned the legitimacy of the charges, and tended to see the suicide as confirmation of his guilt. Exceptionally, another man in his thirties, Christos, who works for a financial newspaper and dates both men and women (but more often men), found the whole series of events suspicious. He offered something of a conspiracy theory that the raid on Spices was actually part of a battle between Lamda and Spices for market share in gay nightlife. He had told me in the past that one of the owners of Lamda was at one point also on the police force. For that reason, Christos supposed that a well-placed phone call and a thick enough envelope of money would have been enough to trigger a raid, whether or not a website existed.

Initial reactions aside, entering an event in the middle of things makes it imperative to parse the different sources of information in play, and to chart out a generally accepted series of events, or at least to attend to the social locations in which different versions of a story are told. Especially useful in understanding the raid on Spices was getting a rough sense of what positions were available in the
media. Regardless of the extent to which initial reactions among my acquaintances were shaped by the media, certain media reflections of the Spices raid became of themselves gossip items and circulated alongside the stories of the raid. These reflections are not limited to the news and the afternoon gossip shows mentioned earlier. Lakis Lazopoulos, a celebrated humorist and actor, immediately incorporated the Spices event into the material of his comic television show, particularly in a regular sketch that involves two flamboyantly effeminate hair-stylists. Another well-known television figure, Fotis Sergoulopoulos, wore a t-shirt on the popular morning talk show Σαν Στο Σπίτι Σας (San Sto Spiti Sas, Like At Your House). The t-shirt, designed by Fotis himself, read “ήμουνα κι εγώ οτο Spices” (ήμουνα κι εγώ sto Spices, I too was at Spices). A gay and lesbian radio show, hosted on 94.1 FM by Maria Cyber between 11 PM and 1 AM on Thursday nights, had an interview with Gregory Vallianatos on February 27, talking about the implications of the arrests and the potential reactions from gay activists and concerned citizens. Revealingly, in the gay male circles I knew at that time, social gossip about the raid frequently turned to Lazopoulos and the t-shirt, but never to the radio show.

Whatever social impact media reflections of the raid might have had on Greeks, queer or not, attendance at the gay bars was noticeably lower that weekend. Then word started to circulate that a group of lesbian activists was planning to make an announcement concerning Spices and ανθρώπινα δικαιόματα (anthropina dikaiomata, human rights) at the bar Lamda on the evening of March 5. Along with those rumors came tales that the dark room in Lamda was to be torn down. One eye-witness account said the entrance had simply been blocked off, a gesture that offers
no certain way to gauge the prospect of a future demolition. On the night of the
scheduled announcement at Lamda, I called the bar to confirm the details of the
event, only to be told by the man who answered that the meeting was already over, an
hour before I had heard it was to start. Why I believed him at the time, I cannot say,
but I chose not to double-check his word. Given the tenor of the publicity
surrounding the raid, the possibility could not be ignored that the man who answered
the phone was just protecting both the bar and the meeting attendees from the
potentially unfriendly media, from other unwanted prying eyes, or perhaps simply
from someone who was audibly not Greek. Regardless, Maria Cyber announced on
the March 6 installment of the gay and lesbian radio show that a meeting had indeed
taken place the previous night. She also announced that it had been organized by
Paul Sofianos (and not a group of lesbians as I had originally heard). Some sixty
people were in attendance.

More importantly, she announced that another meeting was slated at Lamda,
Wednesday, March 12, at 8 PM. There was no way I was going to miss it this time.

**Gossip and Ethnographic Authority**

Ethnographic authority is often judged on the basis of the evidence assembled,
and the methods through which that evidence is gained. Ethnographic work often
relies on gossip as both evidence and method. Witness the language of the preceding
account of points of entry. Word circulates. Tales are told. Eye-witnesses give
accounts. Ethnographers do and do not double-check the word of the voice on the
other end of the telephone. Commercial mass media produce accounts of police
raids. Announcements of the meetings flow from a gay and lesbian radio program.
All of these sources of information are used in the practice of ethnography. The divisions between rumor, gossip, and news are less than stable. Although medium carries no guarantee as to the veracity of the message, we often say there are differences in quality between word that circulates by mouth, word that circulates online, and word that circulates in mass media like radio shows and printed ethnographies. Lines of credibility are drawn. Some kinds of evidence are more believable than others, or at least, better documented. So where are we to draw the lines for the basis of ethnographic authority? Ought gossip to be used as method? As evidence? As the basis for ethnographic authority? If not gossip, what more strict form of “information” will suffice? How documented does anthropological data need to be? Is it not all in the end determined by the relationship of trust that we, the listeners and readers, feel that we have with the source of information?

Gossip has received substantial treatments in anthropological literature. Since Max Gluckman’s 1963 essay, various ethnographers have found gossip and its relatives to be sources of social cohesion, social cleavage, social control, and above all, a vital source of information, both “in” the field and “out.” The most recent contribution to the literature comes in the 2004 volume from the husband and wife team of Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern.11 Their work highlights several basic arguments that have been put forth about gossip. According to one position, gossip contributes to the unity of groups, the observation central to Gluckman’s essay. A second position sees gossip as directed more towards personal interests, the

11 In a satisfyingly recursive twist of academic fate, the Greek ethnographers John Campbell (1964), Juliet du Boulay (1974), and Roger Just (2000) feature significantly in Stewart and Strathern’s analysis of the anthropological literature on rumor and gossip.
observation central to Gluckman’s critic, Robert Paine (1967). A third position, one congruent to the interests that Stewart and Strathern have in connecting gossip with witchcraft and sorcery, emphasizes instead that gossip tends to exist in “networks of competitive relationships marked by tension, distrust, or ambiguity” (2004: 55). Some observers might find much in common with that third position and the milieu of lesbian and gay activism in Greece. Regardless, Stewart and Strathern productively attend to how gossip and rumor are marked by what they call “interpretive ambiguity”: “Analysts have tended to stress either positive or negative ‘functions’ of these two activities. But there is always the possibility of both positive and negative results, and sometimes, these may be mutually implicated: a ‘positive’ result for some people may be ‘negative’ for others” (2004: 30). Moreover, there is much to be said about gossip that exceeds community coherence, the promotion of personal interests, and networks of distrust and tension.

For example, one aspect of gossip that anthropology does well to note, in contrast to the seeming formalities of community coherence, is that its practice stands firmly in the realm of the informal. The phrases used to describe gossip mark that informal status: “the word on the street,” “it has been said,” “idle talk.” Where formality would be a matter of public record, accountability and transparency, gossip is vaguely marked as to location and speaker, and lies outside the bounds of productive labor. To be sure, the realms in which gossip circulates do include the corridors of power, but not during formal meetings. As noted in the discussion of care, friends and family members gossip. Gossip is exchanged in whispers, in phone calls to which no one else is privy. Gossip is intimate knowledge. Gossip, when it
enters the formal realm, changes its name: scandal, slander, libel, rumor, lies, misinformation, hearsay, inadmissible evidence, uncorroborated. Yet the boundary between the formal and the informal is permeable.

Moreover, as a social science attentive to linguistics, anthropology could reframe gossip within the analytic of reported speech. In his “Exposition on the Problem of Reported Speech,” Volosinov\textsuperscript{12} develops his theory of the utterance—a fragment of speech situated socio-culturally, temporally and spatially—to account for utterances transported from the original conditions of their production. Although he confines the level of his analysis largely to that of syntax, Volosinov sets up the problem or reported speech as about far more than just syntax. The grammatical focus serves as a concrete ground of analysis, from which “to take the phenomenon of reported speech and postulate it as a problem from a sociological orientation” (1986 [1929]:113). Thus, he explicitly recognizes that the utterance is constitutionally dialogic, at the least. As the conditions of production for any utterance are always already social, any given utterance is part of a conversation that exceeds the monologic speaker. So much more so, then, for an utterance reproduced. Thus Volosinov argues that “earlier investigators of the forms of reported speech committed the fundamental error of virtually divorcing the reported speech from the reporting context” (1986 [1929]: 119).

Though he does not refer to gossip specifically, Volosinov’s insistence on understanding the “dynamic interrelationships” between the reporting context and the

\textsuperscript{12} I leave aside here the various debates and perspectives about the identity of the author as Volosinov or as Bakhtin, and refer the reader to the translators’ preface of the 1986 volume.
reported speech is familiar to those who pay attention to the social provenance of stories that circulate. Those who know the social network indexed by an utterance of gossip are able to dispel some but not all of the interpretive ambiguity that Stewart and Strathern observe. Indeed, interlocutors in Greece frequently strive to specify the provenance of stories, and in the process, to enhance their knowledge of the social network to which the reported speech is refers. For example, at an informal gathering at the home of a member of the Greek chapter of ACT-UP, that member was describing a recent meeting of the Greek Homosexual Community (EOK) to the president of ACT-UP, who had not been able to attend the EOK meeting. Every time the member reported speech in the name of the organization – for example, via the generalizing phrase “and then EOK said…”– the president would quickly interject “Who exactly said that?”

This attempt to properly source reported speech, in an almost citational style, mirrors the first of two tendencies that Volosinov finds in the relationship between reported speech and the reporting context: “a language may strive to forge hard and fast boundaries for reported speech” (1973 [1929]: 119). For his part, Volosinov is concerned with the ways that the style of the language itself maintains the distinction between the reported speech and that of the reporter. For our purposes, however, what is salient here is not the intricacies of grammar, so much as that the reported speech is treated as a nugget of information that may be extracted cleanly from the utterance within which it is reported. Though no grammarian, the ACT-UP president was preoccupied with maintaining the extractability of the reported speech.
The second tendency, writes Volosinov, is where “language devises means for infiltrating reported speech with authorial retort and commentary in deft and subtle ways” (1973 [1929]: 120). Again, Volosinov is concerned with syntactic constructions that allow the authorial speech to over-code speech reported in that context. For our purposes, what is salient here is that reported speech is no longer extractable as a coherent and unaltered self-sufficient unit. While this description implies the potential for sinister intent on the part of the reporter, neither design nor malice need be involved. Thus, rather than existing as a bounded entity, a modular nugget of language that can be delivered unblemished and intact into a new context, the second tendency acknowledges that reported speech may be colored, altered, and re-intoned by the mere fact of passing through a mediator. It is like the children’s game of “Telephone” where a long phrase is whispered in a circle from one child to the next, and the ending phrase is invariably quite different from the beginning one. Perhaps not coincidentally, the phrase χαλασμένο τηλέφωνο (halasméno tiléfōno, broken telephone) is frequently used by the president of EOK, Vangelis Giannelos, to describe situations of communication breakdown, between members of EOK in particular, and LGBT activists in general. It was precisely this second tendency that the president of ACT-UP was trying to avoid by asking the reporter for specific speakers. Yet even armed with names, nothing could guarantee that the remainder of the reportage did not slide under the influence of the reporter.

Like all reported speech, then, gossip exhibits the constitutional ambiguity of depending on a series of interpretations and relations of trust along the chain of reporters. There is nothing new in this being said of gossip. Nor of ethnography.
Clifford Geertz’s expression has remained foundational: “anthropological writings are themselves interpretations, and second and third order ones to boot” (1973: 15). Further, “this raises some serious problems of verification … of how you can tell a better account from a worse one” (1973: 16). Thus, gossip does not hold a monopoly on the problem of assuring its credibility. As brokers of gossip, journalists, ethnographers and quoters of all stripes rely on the trust of their audiences when they report that “X said such and such.” Lacking corroboration or some form of social triangulation, gossip is, it would seem, at perpetual odds with ethnographic authority.

Yet there are aspects of gossip that contravene that opposition, or at least ameliorate it. A third aspect of gossip that anthropology could emphasize is something of a fusion of the arguments of Gluckman, Paine, Stewart and Strathern, a fourth perspective that would see gossip as an expression or a social performance of care. Care in this sense is community oriented, but not abstractly so; rather, it is to a specific community of those common to the people who are gossiping. Care in this sense is thus also individually oriented: the gossiping is about the people who are important to the individuals involved. This sense of gossip as care, as Stewart and Strathern observe, is also very much about networks of people, yet the relationships between them are not necessarily marked only by tension or distrust. Ambiguity, however, remains inescapable.

Two key metaphors for gossip as care are friendship and family.\textsuperscript{13} Indeed, a staple of socializing with interlocutors in Greece consists of asking questions about

\textsuperscript{13} This language of kinship as care has already been explored by John Borneman (1997) and in detail in a volume edited by Faubion (2001). Although neither author makes the explicit connection to gossip as a practice of demonstrating that care and
people who are absent, but who are known to have some important relationship to those present. Asking these questions is considered not only polite, but a sign of deep respect, of nurturing, of being a good friend, of recognizing kinship. Asking these questions demonstrates and reproduces the relationships between the people who are gossiping. Asking such questions can also be a subtle way of gauging the emotional status of friends and family without naming potential problems directly. Talk about non-present others can also be a subtle way of maintaining social ties between people whose relationship is in other respects strained. Granted, it is always possible to be intrusive, to ask after people in a way that is insensitive, or to mention people about whom one’s conversation partners are unwilling to talk. The closer one is to a group of people, however, the deeper one’s knowledge of those relationships will be. In these ways, knowing the gossip about a group of people is an indicator of rapport with that group, or in another language, of complicity with that group (Marcus 1997). It is the stuff of ethnographic data. It is also socially visible evidence of personal connection. In this sense, gossip is also performative, a practice of the presentation of self in everyday life, and importantly, not just of any self – the performance is not just of some truth internal to the speaker, though that may well become part of the performance of gossip as well – but of a self intensely, properly and constitutionally social.

Gossip as an expression of care thus shifts the place of gossip in the construction of ethnographic authority. On the one hand, gossip is an historically connection, gossip hovers constantly in the background, as when Borneman writes: “[Humans] plot experiential sequences in narratives organized around that about which they care” (1997: 582). Gossip also haunts the borders of the pieces collected in Faubion’s volume, particularly when family stories are told and retold.
devalued form of evidence and a non-valorized (if universal) method in ethnographic research. On the other hand, access to gossip is a direct indicator of precisely the kind of rapport and degree of involvement (complicity) that remains highly valued (and problematized) in current anthropology. Gossip is a point of entry into the informal levels of everyday life, precisely the realm of knowledge that the ethnographer seeks to understand. The decision to accept gossip in the court of ethnography ultimately does not rest on those grounds, however. It rests, necessarily and sufficiently so, on the grounds that it is among the practices that we, brokers of gossip ourselves, witness as ethnographers.

The Meeting at Lamda

When I walked in the door of Lamda, I arrived to find a group of around twenty people already there. Some young men were putting up flyers on a column. Another knot of men stood by the bartender, talking quietly. Among them was Gregory Vallianatos. When he saw me, he grinned and said “You’re well-informed, I see.” Since I had missed the first meeting at Lamda just the week before, I could not decide quite how he meant it. Regardless, other people were arriving, and he moved on to greet them.

By 8:30 PM, there were about fifty people there, enough to fill the one side of the bar, and Vallianatos determined that it was time to start the meeting. Sitting on the corner of the bar, he began to give a summary of events, starting with the raid and the details of the arrests. As he spoke, a few voices chimed in to add what they considered relevant details. Still, there was no question that Vallianatos held the floor, until he was interrupted by an older gentleman who, at first, seemed like he was
asking about the grounds on which the police had entered the bar. As the gentleman continued to talk, however, he shifted to the website. From what he had heard on the news, he said, it seemed like the website was sufficiently incriminating. When a second voice interrupted to ask what news sources he was talking about, the gentleman included Tatiana Stefanidou’s show, and the crowd broke out into catcalls and hissing.

All this time, more people had been arriving. Just as Vallianatos reclaimed the floor from the general commotion, there was a call from the back of the audience that no one could really hear the speakers. It was around 9 PM, and the floor of the bar was now full of standing men and women, holding satchels, coats and cigarettes, craning their necks around those in front of them to get a glimpse of Vallianatos as he spoke. Though the attendance was hard to assess with any certainty, the talk later was that there were around 120 people there. To solve the problem, it was suggested that the speaking area move to the other side of the bar, where the speakers would not only be more visible, but would be able to use the microphone from the DJ booth. As the shift occurred, several men busied themselves passing out literature. One of them was part of an HIV/AIDS awareness campaign, a safer sex leaflet that posed the question “Do I spit or swallow?” The other, handed out by the same young men who had been posting the fliers when I arrived, was a photocopied text from the Πρωτοβουλία Ομοφυλοφίλων Ενάντια Στην Καταπίεση (Protobouliá Omofoilofilov Enántia Stin Katapíesė, Homosexual Initiative Against Repression, or POEK, by its Greek acronym), decrying the police raid, urging readers to act, and providing contact information for POEK. In what was a curious combination to me at
the time, the text of the flyer positioned the raid on Spices as part of a larger system of violence and exploitation that was also responsible for the war in Iraq, and capitalism was depicted as the driving force of that system. Later, I would learn that many participants in POEK also play a role in the Σοσιαλιστικό Εργατικό Κόμμα (Sosialistikó Ergatikó Komma, Socialist Labor Party, or SEK), a party characterized by several (non-POEK) Greek LGBT activists as adhering to the social and economic philosophies of Lev Davidovich Bronstein, better known as Leon Trotsky.

After Vallianatos closed his summation of the events, he took down the names of people present who wanted to talk. It seemed like a combination rally and therapy session, as one speaker after another called for action, and proposed various plans. There were calls for rainbow flags to be put outside of all bars serving lesbians and gays. There were requests that people contact lawyer acquaintances to get some clarity on what protections the law might provide from future raids. Several organizations were present: ACT-UP, Greenpeace, Amnesty International were among the familiar ones. Some of the individual speakers were familiar, too, at least by name and reputation. Vangelis Giannelos observed that many of the ideas put forward were worthwhile, but that few were immediately actionable. Paul Sofianos himself did not sign up to be on the list of speakers, but his presence was clearly noticed when he decided that he wanted to talk after all, and insisted that he be allowed to cut in front of other speakers, causing an uproar from the crowd. After Vallianatos pointed out that he was being rude, Sofianos bowed to the majority will. When her turn came, Maria Cyber received a warm welcome from the crowd, with one young man exclaiming “Ave Maria!” as she walked up to take the microphone.
Her relaxed and jocular style of speech somehow reached the needs of the crowd.

When she thanked Paul Sofianos for his work in putting the news of the raid on his website and in calling for the meetings at LaMa, the crowd willingly applauded, even after his attempt to cut in the queue.

For all these familiar voices, many of the speakers were new, or professed their newness to the scene. For example, one young man, who identified himself as Vasilis, spoke with great passion and conviction to the packed room about wanting to get involved. He said that he had looked for ways to contribute, but had found none, no organizations, no mentors. Several people – Sofianos was joined by Giannelos in this – shouted over the young orator that he had evidently not looked hard enough, and called on him to step down. They had already been doing things for years. The young man did step down from the stage, clearly embarrassed, but still smiling.

A line had been drawn in that moment. No one could deny that the raid on Spices, grim as its consequences were, had revealed new sources of energy much-needed in the existing lesbian and gay movements. Still, voices from that movement argued that night that new blood would do better to join existing efforts, rather than shoot off in directions that might seem new and untested. The implication was that those directions were actually care-worn, and possibly dangerous, if only for the scars of former battles. As a heuristic device, I came to think of those voices as the “old guard,” a group of activists tempered by previous experience and complicated by the relationships between them. Like all heuristics, it is an artificial category, and constitutionally porous. What made it good to think, however, is that it is a distinction deployed in the rhetoric of the activists themselves.
Towards the end of the gathering, a lengthy conversation took place about where and when to hold the next meeting. Lamda, apparently, had been happy to provide an initial venue, but if the meetings were to continue to draw more and more people, the space would soon be inadequate. It was also apparently a gesture of consideration to the women in the meeting who might not feel comfortable going to a gay men’s bar. One of the suggestions on offer was the Polytechnieo, a university complex in central Athens symbolically associated with resistance and revolution. It was there that students clashed with the police and the army on November 17, 1973, in a chain of events that would bring down the junta in 1974. That historical symbolism was not lost on those present. It was also explicitly argued that holding these meetings in a public space was a necessary step, to engage people who might not set foot in a gay bar.

As the meeting dispersed into smaller packs of louder conversations, I introduced myself to various people, including Giannelos and Cyber. With both of them, while we exchanged telephone numbers and emails, I observed them watching the dwindling crowd. It seemed that a large number of people were leaving. Only a few were ordering drinks from the bar. Perhaps that was another, unstated reason why the owners of Lamda were not necessarily keen to host such meetings on a regular basis. Be that as it may, Giannelos and Cyber did not order drinks themselves, but left soon after our introductions were made.

The Polychromo Forum

The next week, the meeting did move to the Polytechnieo, as suggested, with around 160 people in attendance. It took place there again the following Wednesday,
March 26, with nearly 200 people present. It was through those meetings that I
publicly announced myself to the activists as a researcher. It was also through those
meetings that I began to explore the various groups and individuals that came to
participate. In the deepest sense, many of the most important “arrivals” of this
fieldwork took place because of connections made through these meetings.

It was also at the Polytechnieio that these meetings got a name, courtesy of
Vallianatos: the Polychromo Forum. This “multi-colored forum,” as he put it, ought
to be an open meeting in which all interested parties could participate. He argued that
it should be a space of discussion and collaboration, with no permanent structures,
except for someone to moderate the discussion. Though over the subsequent months
there were occasional calls to convert the Forum into something more structured, like
an ομοσπονδία (omospondía, federation), those conversations always dissolved into a
stalemate. Every plan put forward to consolidate the Forum into a more permanent
structure also entailed the consolidation of political power among the groups.

Someone, it seemed, would always be in thrall to someone else. The term of choice
to describe that relationship was καπελώνει (kapelónei) – deriving from καπέλο
(kapélo), the word for hat, it translates literally as “puts a hat on something else,” a
metaphor for political control). It was a concept often deployed in the passive voice:
Καμία οργάνωση δεν θέλει να καπελώνεται (Kamía organósi den thélei na
kapelónetai, No organization wants to be controlled by another). Although such a
consolidation offered a potential for stability that appealed to many of the activists, a
significant majority of groups and individuals perceived it as a sacrifice of autonomy
that they were not willing to engage.
Although the Forum stopped meeting over the summer of 2003, it did resume in the autumn, and its meetings were formalized to fall on the first Wednesday of the month, with exceptions for holidays. The position of moderator also evolved into a semi-formalized job that rotated among the established organizations, moving in alphabetical order by full organization name. In addition to collecting agenda items beforehand from the organizations, the moderator of an upcoming meeting was further expected to hold a preparatory meeting if possible, to secure a meeting place for the Forum itself, and to announce the location in sufficient time to the groups. Some groups were more proactive than others in these duties, a detail which never went unnoticed by members of other organizations.

The uncertain housing of the Forum would prove a perennial agenda item, and became one of the favored explanations for why fewer and fewer people came to the Forum over time. From its peak of nearly 200 at the third meeting, the first at the Polytechnio, the headcount of the last Forum I attended in July 2004 had plummeted to sixteen, including myself. Whatever else its shifting location might reveal about the Forum, the locations that hosted it speak to the ways in which the various organizations were connected to other points in the Athenian scene. Among those locations are a subterranean auditorium at the back of the bar Ράγες (Rághes, Tracks), in Gazi, a connection made through Vangelis Giannelos. The Forum was also held at the Ἀνεξάρτητο Στέκι (Anexártito Stéki, Independent Hangout)\(^{14}\) in

\(^{14}\)The στέκι – a hangout and collective physical meeting space formed in opposition to established forms of social and political power – constitutes a cultural form of deep significance for social movements in Greece, particularly during and immediately after the junta. Although the physical forms and character of these places persist, their underground tone has shifted to be less revolutionary, though still radical. See
Exarchia, a connection arranged through the Λεσβιακή Ομάδα Αθηνών (Lesviakí Omáda Athínas, Lesbian Group of Athens, or LOA).

Another way in which the Polychromo Forum became formalized was in the creation of a electronic mailing list, forum@eok.gr. The idea for the list was proposed at the third Forum by Marianella Kloka, a member of Κόσμος χωρίς Πολέμους και Βία (Kósmos horís Polémous kai Vía, World without Wars and Violence, hereafter KXPKB), an organization which in the context of the Forum became synonymous with the magazine Antivirus, an LGBT periodical they began to produce just at the time of the raid on Spices. Giannelos offered his services to set up and host the mailing list. It was organized as a closed list for communication between organizations and individuals involved in Greek LGBT activism.

Since much of my research involved understanding the ways that activists communicated with each other, I asked Marianella if I could be included on the list, just as an observer. She was supportive, but said that it would have to be discussed by the list members. I asked her on occasion thereafter if the discussion had taken place yet. She always replied that it had not yet occurred. She suggested eventually that I speak with Giannelos. He informed me that he had no problems, but that I ought instead to speak to the moderator of the list. The moderator turned out to be Sotiria Theohari, a graduate student in Medical Sociology at the University of California – San Francisco. After my first and second emails to her went

Marlen Logotheti’s unpublished manuscript on the Counter-Power movements in Athens. Beyond the Independent Hangout, another such venue of importance to the Greek LGBT activists is the Στέκι Μεταναστών (Stéki Metanastón, Immigrants’ Hangout), where both OLKE and LOA participants have come to staff the bar regularly.
unanswered, I asked Giannelos to write her himself. She replied to me almost immediately after his email, saying that she would put the question to the list. A few days later, she reported to me that because there were no objections, I would be added to the list. It had been four months since I had originally asked Marianella if I could become an observer on the list.

One day later, however, the president of ACT-UP sent an email to the list with the opinion that not enough time had been given for discussion. Because of that email, I voluntarily withdrew from the list, and wrote to Sotiria and to ACT-UP that I would be happy to answer any questions they had. Apparently, over the next few days, a great deal of discussion took place about whether or not I was to be allowed to be an observer. In those conversations, a list of questions was proposed, basically an application for my participation, including the protocol of my research, my university and organizational affiliations, my funding sources, and my previous research experience. People began to greet me jokingly with a phrase I was at first at a loss to explain: "Γειά σου, πράκτορα" (Geia sou, praktora, Hi, spy!). Apparently, in one of the conversations about me, someone had suggested that so little was known about me, I might just as well be a CIA agent. Admittedly, it was amusing to think, given the United States administration of the time, that a CIA spy would choose gay research as a cover. Still, the humor of the situation did not erase the real suspicions involved.

Even after my new moniker emerged, I was not informed of the list of questions proposed for me until one of the members of forum@eok.gr, known on-line at the time as Hermia the InfoSharer, wrote an email to both me and the list, stating
that it was only fair that I be informed of what was expected of me. She took it upon herself to forward the list of questions in the same email. Her act signaled at least some level of support for my presence, although I was unsure what her motivations might be. There were several potential frames within which to read her action. It could be taken as an act of friendship, in the egalitarian sense of friendship described by Evthymios Papataxiarchis (1991); after all, she also frequently recorded the Polychromo Forum meetings, and her chosen moniker positioned her as an agent of the free flow of information for the good of all. Alternatively, her action could also be taken as an invitation to enter into a relationship more of the patron-client variety.\footnote{For a background on patron-client relations, see Campbell (1964), Loizos (1975), and Gilmore (1982). For an updated perspective on their continuing relevance to Greek politics and culture, see Spanou (1998).} By accepting her help, I would be in her debt, and publicly so. Either way, with the list of questions now known publicly to be in my possession, a response was required. At first, my instinct was that it was most important to get the materials translated into Greek, as an English-only application could be functionally exclusionary. However, the labor of translating promised to create a time lag that I feared would be interpreted as stalling and lack of transparency. So I forwarded to Sotiria not only the requested materials, but a significant surplus, all in English, with the promise of a translation at a future date. Unfortunately, this set of exchanges occurred in the middle of the summer of 2003, when most people were on vacations, or could at least say that they were. Whether or not people were actually willing to do anything about it at the time, the application went nowhere for four more months.
After the Forum meetings resumed in the autumn, I began asking discreetly on Sotiria’s advice to see where people stood, and found to my surprise that there was no longer any observable opposition. At one point, Vallianatos even joked with me that he could not understand why people were behaving this way. The relationship should be reversed, he said, and the organizations ought to be inviting me in to study them with open arms. However, in late December 2003, a flurry of email revealed that my queries were perhaps not as discrete as they ought to have been. An on-line fight erupted between Sotiria and Giannelos over the status of my application. From an email written to her by Giannelos, Sotiria had the impression that I was going behind her back to become a member of the list in secret. Giannelos had the impression that Sotiria was irrationally against my participation. I had the impression that Sotiria and Giannelos had miscommunicated about what I was doing, and saw the responsibility for that miscommunication as resting partially on my shoulders. When I wrote to her explaining that, Sotiria asked me if she could forward the letter to the list. Shortly after, Giannelos wrote me, asking me not to take Sotiria’s side. The fight escalated into Giannelos calling for her removal as moderator of the list. Things felt like they had escalated far out of proportion. I had the suspicion that something else was really at work, and that the disagreement about my application was simply the cover story. However, what that deeper disagreement might have been, I have not been able to determine. My suspicion, however, remains. After the fight, I dropped the question of my participation entirely. Sotiria remained the moderator, and I never did become a member. The only other time the subject was raised again was several months later,
when the president of ACT-UP did a stunning turn and apologized for having treated me with suspicion during a speech he was giving at the Forum.

The story is important on a number of levels. Foremost, it was a concrete illustration of the organizational maintenance of borders, of in-group and out-group categories. Ethnographers have a strong interest in making claims about the depth of their incorporation into the social fabric of the field. They have an equally strong obligation to recognize moments where they are shut out, and to explain the dynamics at work in those moments. The story of the mailing list became for me the primary symbol of that tension: an arrival, yes, but to a closed door. A point of entry that goes nowhere. Ethnographically, it also stood for me for the persistence of suspicion as a mode of social relations in Greece, a statement I do not make to foster any kind of essentializing discourse about “Greek society” or to impute that suspicion is the only register of social interaction. Rather, others’ suspicion of me was looked upon as rational, and to some extent, worthy of respect, if not admiration. It was a practice which I, too, had engaged in my attempt to understand why Hermia the InfoSharer would want to help me. Given that the language of friendship is used both for friendship and for relations of a more calculated sort, a certain level of paranoia was within reason.16 Although my subsequent disclosures could not guarantee acceptance or admission, they had the capacity to earn at least some honor by partially disarming one basis for the activists’ suspicions: the claim not to know who I “really” am. This sequence of events also made clear that, as an ethnographer, I was very much dealing in a universe of equals and superiors. The people I wanted to study are graduate

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16 The phrase is drawn from the sixth volume of the Late Editions series (Marcus 1999).
students, lawyers, professionals, translators, highly educated, urbane, cultured, organized, and politically connected. One of the members of ACT-UP, Chrisoula Botsi, is herself trained in medical anthropology. They have images and expectations of proper scientific method through which they interpret what I do and say, both in the field and after.

On an entirely different level, the twists of the mailing list story are also, I suspect, artifacts of the position that I consciously chose to occupy with respect to all of the organizations. In the ethnography of Greece and Cyprus, great emphasis is given on the structure of patron-client relationships, where the notion of belonging is exclusionary.\textsuperscript{17} It is said of a client, \textit{eínai dikós tou} (\textit{eínai dikós tou}, he is so-and-so’s man, where so-and-so is the patron), where the word \textit{dikós} gives a sense of possession, and hence, exclusivity. Favors may be forthcoming to the client, but the longevity of those perks rests on the continued power of the patron, which in turn rests partially on the continued support of the client. The fortunes of the client those of the patron are reciprocally bound. As my consideration of Hermia the InfoSharer intimates, I assumed that patron-client relationships continue to hold force in Greece culturally, although I was unsure at first as to the extent of that force. I took them as a precautionary tale, especially given the advice of an advisor on leaving for the field: “Don’t throw yourself at anyone.” Rather than ally myself too closely with any one group or person, and thus risk alienating some other organization, I chose to maintain a certain distance from them all. I would do favors to help individuals and groups, like translating texts or providing citations and bibliographic references, but I was

\textsuperscript{17} See footnote 15, p 71.
conscious to never do so in a way where I could be construed as supporting one group more than another. I never became a member of an organization while I was in the field, though I was invited several times to do so, by several different groups. This refusal to identify, even when explained in terms of maintaining access to all organizations, was not always understood. Spuros Apergis, member and chair of the Amnesty International working group on sexual identity, asked me to stop coming to meetings unless I became a member of Amnesty, even though I had already been attending meetings for eight months. He explained that he did not want to ask this of me, but it was necessary, since the information circulating at these meetings was “for Amnesty members only.” I explained that in any case, I planned to finish fieldwork and leave Greece in a few months, and asked him to indulge me. He eventually allowed me to remain.

Thus the distance allowed me to maintain cordial relationships with most people. However, because of that distance, I was also seen as something of a free agent, and therefore dangerous, uncontrollable because I was not bound to anyone save myself. This free agent perception is, I believe, the reason why it was important for the list of questions to include my funding sources, and where my organizational ties lay. They needed to have some sense of to whom I had to answer. The activists knew that I was moving from group to group as well. There was always the danger that anything they said in my hearing could be repeated, unbeknownst to them, in a different setting. My position of being, in theory, capable of arbitrage\textsuperscript{18}, while clearly advantageous to me as a researcher, could also be used by activists against each other.

\textsuperscript{18} I owe this conception of arbitrage to a lecture given by Wlad Godzich at Rice University during 1999.
It would be possible, if I were reporting speech from one group to another, to plant information for me to disperse in another location. All the same, I remember being complimented by many different people about how I did not carry information back and forth between the groups. I suspected at the time that such compliments were both sincere and thinly veiled warnings. If nothing else, it made learning the “rules” of acceptable gossip all the more imperative.

Thus, while strategically necessary, that distance assured that certain spaces would remain closed. Without falling into the delusion that the activists busy themselves so much with how to manage anthropologists, it must be recognized that the electronic mailing list was one of the few places that they could carry joint conversations to which no anthropologist was privy. Having already made myself present in so many of the spaces where activists interacted, the only ethical choice was to respect the activists’ expressed wish to maintain the list as their space.

**Lines of Flight**

Watching the Forum evolve as a social nexus, it mapped all too well for me to the form of the rhizome. It became a pack of organizations that merged at different speeds, with different trajectories. Its organizational structure followed fault lines in the lives not only of those involved but of people who never set foot into the Forum itself. The shifting physical location of the meetings recalled the fruiting bodies of mushrooms, emerging above the surface of the ground, but patterned by something just under the surface. The evanescent alliances and micro-politics of the Forum threatened dissolution at several turns, lines of flight, splinters. Yet I do not want here to deploy the language of Deleuze and Guattari merely to show how poetically
their terms map onto yet another real-world phenomenon. Rather, I use their language because it provided some valuable methodological exhortations, not only for writing ethnography, but for doing fieldwork, for entering the field. I do not by any means claim those exhortations to be unique to Deleuze and Guattari. They themselves would likely have disowned any such attribution of singular vision, regardless.

The first of these exhortations was alluded to earlier: one always encounters a rhizome in the middle. Thus, rather than framing the fieldwork as fortuitously catching “the beginning” of anything, it was important to follow the connections from the point of the encounter. One might conclude: “Of course you did not catch the beginning, you missed the first meeting at Lamda.” But that is to miss the point. Beyond that first meeting are uncountable histories and relationships that ground what might elsewhere be called the conditions of possibility necessary for the Polychromo Forum to have taken place at all. This dissertation is an effort at documenting some of those conditions. More importantly, “following” here does not mean just backwards and forwards in time. It means following the things that hook up to the point of entry, without knowing necessarily if that route will be productive. As a practicing ethnographer, one might ask, for example: given that the Forum found a home at a στέκι (hangout), to what is that στέκι connected, and what do those connections tell me in turn about the Forum? As a writing ethnographer, one might ask: if there’s no “beginning” to history, where to start telling it? Is it a story, a genre
dependent on beginnings, middles, and tidy endings? It makes a kind of sense to begin the telling at a point of encountering the rhizome, but given the multiple points of entry, which point to choose? Following a line of flight from a point of encounter – much as George Marcus (1995) suggests that ethnographers construct a problem by following something, be it capital, histories, people, objects, or in my case, an evolving social organization – can produce unexpected results.

Thus, a second exhortation, related closely to the first, is to follow the lines of flight that propagate along a rhizome. Look for connections to other semiotic realms, look for relations where perhaps familiar elements are reconfigured, put into new assemblages. Thus, in much the same way that Volosinov would have us attend to the manipulation of the reporting context and the reported speech through its being reported, in much the same way that a skilled decoder of gossip would look to the re-articulation of history and of the social network through the circulation of a rumor, Deleuze and Guattari would have us question the logics of reterritorialization. To what ends are pieces of history resuscitated and sutured onto the present moment?

An example offers itself from the early days of the Polychromo Forum. A young man from the organization POEK was speaking passionately at the end of the Forum. He was describing what the raid on Spices was doing to lesbians and gays in Greece, and in a moment of rhetorical flourish, he dubbed it "το Ἑλληνικό"

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19 Thanks to Jim Faubion for this probing question. He concludes that another genre is at issue, or perhaps required. For my own part, I doubt any kind of telling can permanently withstand the pressures placed on it by readers and fend off the collapse into the convenient categories of the story genre. The best that can be hoped for, so long as the story genre endures as the hegemonic mode of both telling and parsing, is for the teller to mark the desired difference, and to hope the parser understands those signs.
Stonewall” (to Ellinikó Stonewall, the Greek Stonewall), a phrase that syntactically signals the enduring origin of Stonewall as an elsewhere by maintaining it in the neuter, as with all recent loan words in Greek. In likening the reaction to the raid on Spices to the deeply mythologized riots that occurred in 1969 at a bar in New York City, when drag queens and faggots fought back against the police, the POEK orator was making a powerful set of claims. First, it was a claim that Spices should be remembered as a moment of revolution. And yet the raid on Spices did not result in rioting, as did the Stonewall raid. Second, it was a claim that previous history in Greece was not really relevant, a continuation of the trope that the revolution always arrives late in Greece. Indeed, already in 1977, a very revolutionary meeting had taken place at the Louzitania Theater in Athens, leading to the foundation of the first gay liberation movement in Greece, the Απελευθερωτικό Κίνημα Ομοφυλοφιλών Ελλάδας (Apeleftherotikó Kímnma Omofulofílon Elládas, the Greek Homosexual Liberation Movement, or AKOE). One wonders whether that moment was also called the Greek Stonewall? Nevertheless, the young POEK orator erased that history by vaulting across the ocean and time to Stonewall. Perhaps, like Vasilis at Lamda, he did not know his history well. Perhaps he knew it very well, and deemed that time a failure fit only to be surpassed. Curiously, no one rose to challenge his rhetoric. What remains is that the line of flight was drawn, not to Greece, but to America. It is borrowings like this that require explanation.

In many ways, then, Spices really did promise to change everything, not only for this anthropologist, but for the activists as well. It was a potentially revolutionary point of entry, caught in the middle of a network of historically complicated
relationships to which I, the newly arrived and precariously situated would-be broker of gossip, was not entirely privy. There was much following to be done, many lines of flight to be explored, many borrowings to try to put into perspective. The next two chapters detail some of those lines of flight. The first details a line that took off from a chance comment overheard from a member of ACT-UP at a Forum: “We’re not a gay organization, really.” The second follows a word, “homophobia,” as it travels like reported speech through complex networks of academics, activists, and orators, all of whom make conflicting claims on its meaning, provenance, and purpose.
The Movement That Was Not?

for healthy cells please remember
if touching something I am touched

– Olga Broumas and T Begley

On March 19, 2003, around 180 activists and other individuals interested in the rights of sexual minorities gathered in an auditorium of the Polytechnio. It was the third in a series of meetings initiated in response to a police raid on a gay bar earlier that February, a raid that had resulted in one of the arrested men committing suicide in jail after he had seen his name in the press. Among the activists at the March 19 meeting were members of several AIDS organizations, notably the Greek chapter of ACT-UP and a group called “Synthesis.” As the meeting ended and knots of people drifted into the corridors, a member of ACT-UP was overheard to say: “We’re not a gay organization, really.”

It was a striking comment, and raises questions about just what the dividing lines might be between organizations, whether drawn through mission statements, historical tendencies in their activities, or through casual comments in corridors. Why was the distinction meaningful? Why would a member of ACT-UP want to distinguish the group as not being a gay group? What might it indicate about what counts as a “gay group” for Greek activists? Further, what does it say about modes of cooperation available between organizations whose interests from time to time will intersect over the rights of sexual minorities, regardless of their mission statements? Beyond organizational politics, what might this distinction say about the relationships between gay men and AIDS in Greek culture?

1 From the poem “Prayerfields” (Broumas and Begley 1994: 40).
From the outset, AIDS was linked to gay men. Recall the “gay cancer,” Gay Related Immune Deficiency, and the group of “the four H’s” — “homosexuals, hemophiliacs, Haitians, and heroin-users.” However, with the global spread of various HIV strains and our increasing medical understanding of the routes of their transmission, those initial links to gay men soon became insufficient to describe the demographic distribution of the viruses. Despite this shift, the power of the initial linkage persists, and Greece is no exception to this pattern. According to official statistics from the Center for the Control of Special Diseases (hereafter referred to by the Greek acronym, KEEL), the Greek counterpart to the United States’ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 1998, the category “men who have sex with men” was superseded for the first time (worryingly, by “cases of unknown origin”) as the largest fraction of cumulative HIV positive cases in Greece (KEEL 2002).

It is tempting, then, to interpret the comment — “We’re not a gay organization, really” — in light of this changed atmosphere since the initial days of AIDS. AIDS is clearly everybody’s business now, the argument goes, and thus there is a political and demographic point to be made by saying that ACT-UP, while not denying that it does have something to do with some gay men, is not “really” (solely?, merely?, essentially?) a “gay group.” That interpretation falls short, however, by leaving the history and texture of AIDS and gay rights organizations in Greece uninvestigated. Specifically, it fails to account for the fact that, while gay men have often participated in AIDS service organizations in Greece and continue to do so, the involvement of gay rights activists in AIDS activism is the exception rather than the rule (by the
activists' own accounts), even though gay rights activism predates the official appearance of HIV in Greece by six years. In short, while places such as the United States saw organizations like the Gay Men’s Health Crisis (hereafter, GMHC) form in the early days of the disease, Greece never saw the development of a similar organization. Where gay activists publicly took the lead elsewhere, the public organizational response to AIDS in Greece came primarily from doctors and from women's social work organizations. Why?

Rather than casting this difference as a lack, as merely a form of disorganization among Greek activists, or as a sign of backwardness, I aim to sketch the roots of this difference by presenting certain aspects of the history of AIDS activism and gay rights activism in Greece, and the relationships between them as perceived by the activists themselves. I argue that the adaptation of activist strategies and arguments regarding AIDS was shaped by a range of partially articulated cultural assumptions about homosexuality. In addition to grounding the activists' conscious choices, I suggest that those cultural assumptions, rather than fostering institutional connections between gay rights activism and AIDS activism, encouraged a structural divide between various activist endeavors.

The remainder of this chapter thus takes on an historical cast, designed to illuminate a specific moment, and is organized chronologically, primarily on the basis

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2 By no means do I want to imply that the initial response to AIDS in the United States was entirely from gay organizations, nor do I mean to oversimplify the composition of "gay organizations" that responded to AIDS in the United States. Rather, I am pointing to a qualitative difference in the response in Greece. For analyses of the texture and social composition of early responses to AIDS in the United States, see Altman (1986), D’Emilio (1992, 2002), Kayal (1993), and Stoller (1998).
of dates significant to gay rights activism and the history of AIDS in Greece. In keeping with the way that so many speakers not only temporally frame their stories, but also expose their feelings about the time, this chapter presents that chronology in the context of national party politics. Given the sheer size of the Greek state, even if that state is theorized only as an employer widely assumed to be invested in patron-client relations regardless of the politics of the moment (see Spanou 1998), political winds are a significant factor in the conditions of activism, if only because they are perceived to be so.

1950-1977 — Visions of Sex Between Men

Throughout the history of the modern Greek state, homosexual acts have been subject to some form of legal control. Up until 1951, homosexuality itself was specified as a criminal offense. However, after the formal end of the Greek Civil War in 1949, the country undertook a broad restructuring. As a result, a new penal code was written in 1950, in which, among other things, homosexuality itself was no longer specifically criminalized (see Dokoumetzidis 1997). Instead, lawmakers appear to have been more interested in specifying under which conditions homosexual acts warranted legal control. Those conditions are listed in paragraph 347, located in a section of the penal code that broadly regulates public morals. Specifically, paragraph 347: a) criminalizes sex for pay between men (whether a one time event, or practiced repetitively), b) criminalizes the abuse of a relationship of dependence (economic or otherwise), and c) places the age of consent for sex between males at seventeen, where for heterosexual sex the age of consent is fifteen. This paragraph has survived intact to the present day, despite numerous revisions to
the penal code as a whole. Further, only male homosexual acts were apparently
deeded worthy of control; sex between females receives no mention in the penal
code.

While Greece is thus technically among the first states to decriminalize
homosexuality per se, this shift ought not to be seen as a sign of any broad social
acceptance. Rather, the shift appears to be more about the impact of then
contemporary medical theories of sexuality, that homosexuality was more properly a
sickness, and thus subject to medical, rather than legal control (see Koukoutsaki
2002). Further, the decriminalization was not undertaken as a separate project,
indicating the requisite political will, but occurred within a broad framework of legal
and social reform focused primarily on healing a country exhausted from almost a
decade of external and internal warfare. It was a single legal transformation obscured
in a forest of shifting trees.

Beyond legal and medical discourses, however, it is important to note that,
socially and culturally, sexual contact between men does not necessarily indicate any
particular socio-sexual identity inhering to one individual or another. James
Faubion’s analysis clearly captures the cultural absence of such a socially available
‘sexual identity.’ As he writes, ὀμοφιλοφιλία (omofilia), the word for
homosexuality, “had no currency” in everyday spoken Greek prior to the 1980’s. He
continues, “it seems to have had no actual referent, either” (Faubion 1993:217).
Rather, any instance of sex between men during that time ought to be read through
the lens of how the men so engaged do or do not retain their status as properly

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3 See Dokoumetzidis (1997) for his perspective about the extent to which the penal
code diverges from Greek social perceptions of the 1950’s.
masculine. “Behavioral effeminacy has its specifically sexual counterpart in the ‘passive’ homosexual posture” (Faubion 1993:222). On the one hand, the relationship of effeminate gender behavior to sexual practices is one of suggestion; the socially observed gender behavior points to the possibility, but not the necessity, of passive, non-masculine sexual practices. On the other hand, sexual passivity of one man to another is of itself effeminizing. This arrangement of gender does not claim that the effeminate man was simply a contemporary gloss for what we might call a “homosexual”, however. As Faubion is careful to note, “The effeminate man in Greece, traditionally and still today, is among the most scorned of social subversives. He is not always, and of course should not be confused with the ‘homosexual’” (Faubion 1993:222).

Thus, Faubion presents us a system where social opprobrium falls not on a sexual identity, but rather on those men who do not live up to the standards of their gender. The notion of an identity called “the homosexual” does not precisely fit this system. What circulates socially in this system is gender identity. Among the many ways one might fail to perform the proper standards of manhood is engagement in passive sexual positions. In this way, any male could have sex with another male and not be judged for it, so long as his sexual actions are all “aggressive” or “active.” His manhood does not come into question so long as he does not willingly “give up” his masculinity to another by taking a passive part. This emphasis on the centrality of how masculinity is figured runs throughout the ethnographic literature on Greece.⁴

⁴ Beyond Faubion’s analysis, the reader is again referred to a core group of studies germane to the connections of gender, sexuality and homosexuality in Greece: Apostolidou (2004), Boukli and Kappas (2003), Giannakopoulos (1998), Herzfeld
This understanding of male-tomale sex in Greece indicates something of the social structuring of it as well. It suggests that social connections between men were not bound by the idea that sexual contact between them was illicit of itself. Further, though we can suppose with some certainty that there were men whose sexual lives revolved exclusively around other men, we can be absolutely certain that exclusivity was by no means a prerequisite for participation in that sexual economy. The only prerequisite was that the workings of that economy, pervasive though they might be, must remain in the realm of the unarticulated common secret. Sex between men was not for social identities, but for private enjoyment. The outlines of this sexual economy can be discerned in the autobiographical writings of the celebrated author Kostas Taktsis, especially in his recollections of the years surrounding the fall of the military dictatorship in 1974 (see Taktsis 1989).

1977-1981 – The Foundation of a Movement

The euphoric years after the fall of the Junta gave an unprecedented mandate to Konstantinos Karamanlis and his governing political party, the center-right New Democracy (hereafter, ND). By 1977, however, a regression into dictatorship seemed less and less likely, and ND was beginning to lose some of its luster. Although elections were not to be held until 1978, Karamanlis chose to call them a year early, lest electoral sentiment slide even further toward PASOK, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement of Andreas Papandreou. In the year leading up to that 1977 election, the

(1985), Karagiannis and Tolis (1998), Loizos and Papataxiarchis (1991), Phellas (2002), and Vasilikou (1998). The reader is also directed to the work of David Halperin (1990, 1995), but with the requisite caveat that arguments about historical continuities from ancient times to present times are entirely ideological and can present no persuasive social analysis (see Danforth 1984).
ND government floated a draft law regarding “the prevention of venereal diseases.” Reaction to that draft resulted in the founding of the first homosexual movement in Greece.

There are several different versions of the story, but the agreed upon features can be summed up as follows: The draft law sought to control sexually transmitted diseases by giving the police the right to arrest anyone loitering in a public space if the police deemed they were loitering with the intent to seduce men. Further, the only evidence to be required by the law was a written deposition. In theory, anyone would be able to write to the police and whomever they charged would be duly arrested. The law was thus seen as a direct threat both to men cruising for sex and to *travesti*. Some also saw it as a blatant bid for the votes of the petite bourgeoisie.\(^5\) A group of recent university graduates, many of whom had been studying in Italy and France during the dictatorship, and who had also witnessed there the workings of gay rights movements, saw the draft law as the perfect moment to begin organizing a movement in Greece. Thus, the early homosexual rights movement in Greece formed in relation to places elsewhere from the very beginning.

That movement was to be called the Greek Homosexual Liberation Movement, or AKOE by its Greek acronym. The former students attempted to marshal every resource they could, including foreign contacts, the Greek *travesti*, and intellectuals like Loukas Theodorokopoulos and the previously mentioned Kostas Taktsis. Regardless of which version of the story you follow from there, the draft law was eventually withdrawn from the Greek parliament, possibly as a result of the

\(^5\) As noted by the *travesti* Betty (1979).
international pressure that AKOE had been able to muster on the issue. By the spring of 1978, the group had begun publishing a seasonal magazine, *AMFI*, in which it chronicled its achievements. By the early 1980’s, the movement would gain enough members to sustain an additional small monthly newspaper, *Lambda*. Despite the broad support it eventually achieved, the beginnings of AKOE were not entirely smooth. Certain details reveal tensions, between the cultural assumptions of “gay liberation” brought by those who were abroad during the dictatorship, and the cultural assumptions at work in the Greek male-to-male sexual economy discussed earlier.

One of those tensions is evident in the way that Taktsis originally responded to the invitation to help to start AKOE. He was approached by Andreas Velissaropoulos, who had studied theater direction in Paris. The two had met previously, in 1972, at which point they had a discussion of sexuality that Taktsis later wrote about: “Velissaropoulos insisted that anyone who went to bed with someone of his same sex be called a homophile [φιλαμφιλοφιλία, *filomofilia*]. If one accepts that, however, and given the social stigma suffered by homophilia [φιλομοφιλία, *filomofilia*], it was like denying the right of the majority of men to sleep now and then with another man without necessarily considering themselves a homophile, with all of the negative connotations that word has even for homophiles.

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6 The breadth of that support was evidenced repeatedly during my fieldwork. When interviewing people in their mid-forties and older, they frequently reported that they had passed through one AKOE function or another, even if they no longer wished to be involved in activism of any sort.

7 Although this chapter focuses on the male-male sexual economy, the historical female-female sexual economy deserves greater attention as well. Kirtsoglou provides a first glimpse (2003, 2004), as does Kantsa (2002).
themselves” (Taktsis 1989:292). Taktsis’ evaluation of that first meeting with Velissaropoulos thus clearly reflects the sexual economy described by Faubion.

Taktsis’ personal participation in that economy also clearly played a role in his response to the invitation to help found AKOE. Velissaropoulos’ proposal to Taktsis was to transplant the ideas of the French homosexual movement, organizing a joint demonstration with the travesti to protest the draft law. Taktsis wrote later of his refusal: “At that moment, I knew the police would see the protest as a provocation, therefore it shouldn’t happen, and I told that to Velissaropoulos. Even if those insane girls [αυτές οι τρελές, afteroi treles] insist on exposing themselves, I told him, I advise you to avoid getting involved at all. Founding AKOE under the skirts of some prostituted travesti would be the same as founding the women’s movement from the whores on Sokratous street” (quoted in Tsarouchas 1995:227).

It appears Taktsis judged that the seriousness of the movement could not be established if AKOE was founded in concert with the very people who flouted society’s rules of gender so brazenly. Taktsis took this position despite the fact that he had already for some time been dressing as a woman and working the streets much like the travesti he had just disparaged. As argued by Kostas Tsarouchas, an old school investigative journalist in Greece, these sexual practices were for Taktsis a private fetish, a personal kink, and not a social identity like that practiced by the travesti. Regardless of Tsarouchas’ interpretation, Taktsis clearly saw a conflict between, on the one hand, the imported French model of homosexual activism exemplified by Velissaropoulos’ insistence on identifying people as homophiles, and
on the other, the cultural assumptions of a Greek sexual economy to which Taktsis, among many others, had so grown accustomed.

Another indication of the tensions at play in the founding of AKOE can be seen in pages of AMFI. When the magazine first came out in 1978, the subtitle read “for the liberation of homosexuals” (για την απελευθέρωση των ομοφυλόφιλων, gia tin apeleftherosi ton omofilofilon). Liberation, it would seem, was to be for a class of people, an identity, a specifiable sub-group of people, now no longer homophiles, but homosexuals. Several issues later, in the summer of 1979, however, the subtitle changed to read “for the liberation of homosexual desire” (για την απελευθέρωση της ομοφυλόφιλης επιθυμίας, gia tin apeleftherosi tis omofilotiris epithimias). Now it was no longer the person or even a type of person that required liberation, but a desire that could be resident in anyone. The argument remained cogent for some time to come. As late as 1987, the editor at the time, Gregory (Ghrighoris) Vallianatos, saw fit to remind the readers of AMFI of the original argument behind the change in subtitle, that the magazine “is interested in every instance of homosexual desire, not only regarding particular people, but for all who might have homosexual desires alongside their heterosexual identity” (Vallianatos 1987: 5).8

This early shift in stance – toward the desire itself and away from the specification of the desiring subject – points to a debate between the demand for sexual liberation and the power of the cultural assumptions of the sexual economy that preceded AKOE. The resolution towards “homosexual desire” also points to a

8 James Faubion has argued that the sexual rights movement in Greece was thus “queer before its time” (personal communication).
platform of radical social reform, from a clearly leftist position, which resonated well at the turn of the 1980’s in Greece: Everyone has the right to autonomy and self-determination, including what they do with their bodies. That leftist foundation would prove double-edged over the following years.

1981-1983 – An Epidemic of Information

In 1981, PASOK turned its 1977 electoral gains into a solid victory, and the government of Andreas Papandreou initially enjoyed enormous power, arguably even more than ND had enjoyed after the dictatorship. Papandreou used that power to engage a raft of governmental and social reforms, addressing many of the inequalities around which people had begun to organize in the years of the ND government. The mood politically was of the redress of grievances. Even the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) was supportive of the changes PASOK was championing. This vibrant sense of political change had some unexpected side effects, one of which was that the government’s successes rather abruptly took the momentum away from the social movements of the Left, including AKOE. Indeed, the fast pace of AKOE’s initial years began to falter, a shift visible both in the complete lapse in 1981 of the monthly newspaper, Lomda, and in the ever lengthening gaps between issues of AMFI, which fell from three issues published in 1980 to just one in 1983. As a leftist philosophy floating in a sea of leftist politics, the force of AKOE’s message was diluted, and its membership began to wane.

At the same time, another sea change was brewing on the other side of the Atlantic. A mysterious “gay cancer” was beginning to make headlines in New York City, Los Angeles and San Francisco, and soon across the world. By the end of 1981,
the CDC in Atlanta classified the disease as an epidemic, and began calling it Gay Related Immune Deficiency. By 1982, they were promulgating a new name for it – AIDS. That same year, Nathan Fain, Larry Kramer, Larry Mass, Paul Popham, Paul Rapoport, and Edmund White officially founded the GMHC in New York.

As these momentous changes swept through the world of gay men in the United States and elsewhere, the events were also reported in Greece. As yet, however, there were no cases in Greece. This lag in time between a media-fueled awareness of the disease and the arrival of the virus has been a foundational point in the social analysis of AIDS in Greece, particularly in the work of Demosthenes Agrafiotis, a sociologist at the Greek National School of Public Health in Athens. He and his colleagues argue that “information about the disease arrived before the virus itself, and the AIDS epidemic began as an epidemic of information” (Agrafiotis, et al. 1999). They document how Greek mass media of the time referred not only to the disease, but also to the identification of the disease with so called “high risk groups,” particularly with homosexual men, persons with hemophilia and injecting drug users.

The argument of the epidemic of information holds not only for the high circulation mass media of which Agrafiotis writes, but also for more specialized outlets like AMFI. Despite the ebb in activity in AKOE, the magazine maintained a regular stream of news items from abroad, some of which were supplied by Ilias Diakos, corresponding from New York City. In the winter of 1982, his column titled “Kaposi’s Sarcoma: ‘Our’ Cancer, or their Bullshit?” detailed the discovery that Kaposi’s sarcoma had also been found in a number of young Haitian men who identified as straight and who did not report using poppers (amyl nitrate inhalants
initially associated with AIDS among gay men; see Diakos 1982). Clearly, and
certainly through more channels than Diakos alone, AKOE members were aware of
AIDS significantly before HIV reached Greece.

The significance of the argument of the epidemic of information is that it
accounts for how social perceptions of AIDS in Greece found a window of
opportunity in which to crystallize and become fairly widespread. Two related
arguments could be made for any other locale that experiences the time lag between
awareness and arrival of the virus. In any information saturated society, social panics
can occur even before a “disease agent” becomes physically present. At the same
time, realistic humanitarian responses can be crafted before the problem becomes
serious. This dual potential, opened by knowing about a disease before it strikes,
points to the limits of the epidemic of information as an argument. Although it helps
us understand how certain categories enter into a list of potential associations to
AIDS in any given place, it cannot of itself account for why specific attitudes are
taken towards AIDS, and not others.

Exceptionally, perhaps the one perception in Greece for which the epidemic of
information may account, at least initially, is that AIDS is essentially a foreign
disease. It was literally happening only elsewhere. That perception gained a foothold
during the two year window from the first signs of AIDS in the United States to the
diagnosis of the first case in Greece. It was then bolstered by the details of that first
case, a 25 year old student from Zambia who had arrived in Greece in early 1983.
His first symptoms appeared that July, and by November 25 of the same year, he had
died. His foreignness was the key issue for the media.\footnote{As far as my archival research has been able to determine, his sexuality was never discussed in the media reports, nor was drug use mentioned. Future research may determine otherwise in both cases.} Further, marking the official entrance of the epidemic into Greece, his story retained immense symbolic value and was recycled in the media for some years thereafter, reinforcing the foreignness of the disease. As the student was from Africa, the Greek public was able to maintain the belief that AIDS was something foreign, that Greeks themselves were not at risk. His death also coincided with the first reports of large outbreaks of AIDS in Central Africa. Further, at the time his symptoms first appeared, he had only recently arrived in Greece, fostering the (contestable) perception that he could not have possibly contracted the disease while in Greece.\footnote{Valantis Papathanasiou notes that the foreignness of AIDS continues to be marked by the retention of the English “AIDS” in popular discourse, rather than the proper Greek acronym SEAA, which circulates almost exclusively in medical and social science discourse (Papathanasiou and Agrafiotis 2003). Another mode of marking the foreignness of AIDS occurs in medical exams required for the residence permit. At my exam, I was ordered by the panel of doctors to take an HIV test, even though Greek law specifies only that foreign nationals be tested for tuberculosis at a Greek hospital (diagnoses from foreign doctors are not admissible). The trope of AIDS as foreign to Greece is discussed further in Chliaoutakis et al. 1993, Giannakopoulos 1998, and Tsaligoglou 1995. Also, the importance of the foreign endures in the connections drawn in Greece between AIDS and the Roma, as discussed in the work of Othon Alexandrakis (2003).} Unavoidably, however, with the Zambian student’s death, the epidemic in Greece had suddenly ceased to be one of information alone.


Thus, by 1983, AIDS had substantially cohered for many Greeks into a disease primarily of foreigners, and then more specifically of homosexuals, persons with hemophilia and injecting drug users. Once AIDS had ceased to be exclusively
foreign, the rush began to determine to what degree the country was exposed to any one of the “high risk group” populations. This was precisely the path followed by the journalist Giannis Tzimourtas, who concludes the following in his 1985 expose on AIDS in Greece: “As is well known, AIDS to a large extent threatens specific groups of people, such as homosexuals, drug addicts and people who need frequent transfusions. In Greece, however, where the number of homosexuals and drug addicts is small, in relation to other countries, the problem is seen most often in transfusions” (Tzimourtas 1985).\textsuperscript{11}

It is worth noting here that in 1984, the Greek government had already instituted mandatory reporting of AIDS cases. Hence, government data ought to have been available in some form to Tzimourtas and others who were in a position to mold public opinion. However, his story does not accord with those statistics. Official (although retrospective) data from KEEL for 1985 show the largest fraction of cumulative HIV cases to be among men who have sex with men (KEEL 2002). According to the same report, cumulative to 2002, the only route of transmission in Greece recorded less often than blood transfusion is intrauterine transmission from mother to child.

Tzimourtas’ assertions would not last, however. Less than ten months later, on May 16, 1986, the following alarmist headline ran in one of the newspapers of record, Eleftherotypia: “AIDS Found in 10% of Homosexuals.” The text of the article clarifies that the ten percent figure does not represent actual AIDS cases. Rather, it represents the twenty-six self-identified gay men who tested positive for

\textsuperscript{11} This evasion of AIDS as a sexually transmitted disease is also documented over a decade later (see Giannakopoulos 1998).
HIV out of 243 who participated voluntarily in a study by Giorgos Papaevangelou, one of the more respected Greek authorities on AIDS at the time (see Papaevangelou 1988). Significantly, the *Eleftherotypia* article maintained the connection to the foreign, specifically noting that the research revealed that of the twenty-six who tested positive, 61.5 percent had sexual encounters while abroad, and none of the twenty-six reported using intravenous drugs. While the article did not claim that the study was able to establish that the infections had been acquired outside of Greece, it was implied. Further on, the same article reports of another study, of injecting drug users. In that study, only six out of the 288 users (2.1 percent) studied tested positive. Transfusions received no mention at all in the article.

Comparing the *Eleftherotypia* article with that of Tzimourtas points to a tremendous spread of opinions and beliefs about who is susceptible to AIDS, and the extent to which those people are imagined to be present in Greece. In this media-fueled context of vacillating perceptions of danger and exposure, organized responses to AIDS gradually began to occur in Greece, following a pattern seen in many locales – grass-roots organizers responded first, followed by the apparatus of the state.

The first recorded grass-roots response came with the founding in 1985 of the organization “Prostasia,” a collective of doctors responding to the disease in the context of their own practices. Government statistics then put the cumulative number of HIV/AIDS cases at eighteen. Prostasia was followed in 1987 by “AIDS Sensitization” (123 cumulative cases), and in 1989 by “Elpida” (370 cases). Both AIDS Sensitization and Elpida were initiated and staffed largely by women. Then the “Center for Inspirational Living” was founded in 1990 (589 cases) as a holistic
approach to providing support services for positive individuals. While the Center’s initial and subsequent staffs have included gay men, the organization specifically distances itself from being for gay men alone; it serves the needs of all people living with HIV/AIDS. In 1992 (1154 cases), the Greek chapter of ACT-UP was founded by a group of doctors and others, including Gregory Vallianatos, all frustrated with the lack of official response from the government. ACT-UP Greece remains significantly tied to the medical profession to this day. The current president and secretary are both doctors at Syngrou Hospital, one of the major centers for HIV/AIDS services in Athens. Finally, in 1993, a decade after the first case, nine years after reporting of AIDS cases was made mandatory, and in the same year of a change of government from ND to PASOK, KEEL was established as the first permanent government body within the Ministry of Health to monitor and manage AIDS and other infectious diseases.\(^{12}\) By that time there were 1454 recorded cases of HIV/AIDS in Greece.\(^{13}\)

In all of these organizational efforts, there is a startling consistency. None of these organizations defines itself as a “gay group” or as “a gay group about AIDS.” The initiatives for their founding came not from AKOE, but from doctors and from women engaged in social work. Although gay men helped and volunteered in these

\(^{12}\) Quite late into the fieldwork, it emerged that a significant precursor to KEEL was the National Board on AIDS, without which the pressure to establish KEEL as a formal institution could not have been mounted. Unfortunately, the timing of that revelation did not permit proper research, and the history, membership and workings of the National Board remain in need of future study.

\(^{13}\) This is not to speak of cases that were never recorded, a phenomenon which Giannakopoulos (1998) and members of ACT UP and Synthesis suggest is far more wide-spread than is officially recognized by KEEL.
organizations, the first decade of AIDS in Greece saw no organization started by gay activists specifically to address HIV/AIDS.

So what were the gay activists doing after the entrance of HIV into Greece? As an organization, AKOE certainly provided a more or less constant stream of HIV/AIDS information in *AMFI*. Beyond the magazine, however, they seem to have maintained a distance from the disease, a tendency confirmed through interviews with several former members. This tendency also appears to have held for its public events, judging by a 1984 publication containing the speeches read at a week-long exhibition of alternative social movements, including AKOE. The exhibition ran from November 28 to December 5, 1983, just days after the death of the Zambian student made headlines, and over a year after initial reports of “gay cancer” were published in *AMFI*. Yet there is no mention of AIDS in any of the AKOE texts published from the exhibition (Gryponisiotis 1984: 57-70).

This narrative of the early history of AIDS activism should not be taken as a claim that individual members of AKOE may not have acted on their own. Several former members noted in interviews that some members were “better connected with the government,” a reference clearly directed towards Vallianatos, among others. One member in particular was at a loss to specify what AKOE did as an organization about AIDS, but asserted “surely some of them were writing letters, or something like that.” Recall, however, that the shift of government in 1981 had taken the wind from AKOE’s sails. Attendance at meetings dropped significantly. *AMFI* came out less frequently, and the newspaper stopped altogether. By early 1987, AKOE had a number of organizational and financial problems due at least in part to the drop in
numbers. Moreover, there were legal problems that had to be resolved if the publication of AMFI was to continue. At the time, mass action on AIDS may have been of secondary importance to the future of AKOE as an organization.

By the spring of 1987, AKOE had in effect collapsed. For a transitional period, Vallianatos personally took on the publication of AMFI, curiously explaining in the editorial of the first issue he produced that “AMFI is not subsidized by anyone, but it has ceased to be 'published through contributions from the membership of AKOE'” (Vallianatos 1987:5). After several issues under Vallianatos, the publication was taken over in 1988 by a new organization created by former members of AKOE. That new organization was called the Greek Homosexual Community, or EOK using the Greek acronym. EOK took the legal form of a corporation, a structure more suited to its significantly smaller membership. It would come to be led by Vangelis Giannelos, who remains its president after seventeen years. Irene Petropoulou would initially serve as editor of AMFI.\(^\text{14}\)

All this to say that, at least for AKOE, internal organizational pressures could have distracted it from approaching AIDS in any effective way beyond the pages of AMFI. One might also assert that with only six years of experience behind it, the homosexual movement of Greece was in no position to take on AIDS as well; indeed, Vallianatos argues today that AKOE deliberately distanced itself from AIDS for this reason. While both of these arguments certainly explain a great deal of the stance

\(^\text{14}\) It is worth noting that AKOE still exists, but in a very different form. The lawyer Manthos Peponas took on the admittedly reduced responsibilities of the organization in 1988 and carries them out still as of this writing. Interestingly, after EOK abandoned AMFI in 1990 as an economic impossibility, Peponas attempted to revive it, producing two volumes in 1994 and 1996. He still talks of re-establishing it.
taken by AKOE, they are incomplete without a third argument, one that would connect the cultural assumptions at work within AKOE about homosexuality and AIDS.

By the time Vallianatos was editor of AMFI in 1987, the periodical was emphasizing that there were not "high risk groups," but only "high risk practices," the core of the prevention message that was then being broadcast around the world under the label of "safer sex." Concurrently, as Vallianatos notes today, "It was necessary from the beginning to separate the disease from homosexuality."\(^{15}\) This tactic was deemed necessary in part because the damage worked by AIDS included the further stigmatization of those seen as susceptible to it, and despite AKOE's initial successes, gay men hardly enjoyed broad social acceptance by the time AIDS appeared on the scene. Consider also a report released by the Greek National Center for Social Research in 1983, the same year that the Zambian student died. Based on a survey of attitudes toward the legal system completed in 1977 of over 2000 individuals in a demographically diverse sample, the report found that 79.9 percent of those surveyed stated that homosexual relations between men should be a criminal offence, even though thirty years had passed since homosexuality \textit{per se} was decriminalized (Daskalakis, \textit{et al.} 1983: 258).\(^{16}\)

\(^{15}\) Personal interview, November 2003. Note also that Vallianatos feels that, though historically necessary, this deliberate strategy has complicated subsequent gay activism and AIDS activism in Greece, and that gay activists "continue to take advantage of the situation," even if it does not seem that way (Anna Apostolidou, personal communication, September 2004).

\(^{16}\) As that research was completed in 1977, the results reflect attitudes that significantly predate both AKOE and AIDS in Greece. Furthermore, the survey lacks any account of respondents' motivations and rationales for deeming homosexual relations between men to be criminal.
Thus, the responses to AIDS by gay movement activists were dominated by an attempt to fit together three necessary positions: the safer sex message, the need to separate homosexuality from the disease, and the sexual philosophy of the liberation of homosexual desire, begun in AKOE and subsequently continued in EOK through the magazine *AMFI*, and through the fact that many of the members of EOK had also been members of AKOE.

When the activists’ articulated and unarticulated assumptions are seen together in this way, this chapter suggests that the arrival of AIDS brought out at least two unforeseeable consequences of a sexual philosophy of desire that had its roots in a sexual economy based on a hierarchy of gendered roles rather than sexual identities that inhere in the individual. In the context of a movement based not on sexual identities, but instead on a politics focused on a desire that anyone might have, safer sex was a “natural” fit. A response to AIDS that focuses on the modification of specific behaviors dovetails easily both with the practice-oriented sexual economy of gendered roles into which AKOE emerged, and with the philosophy of a universally available desire that AKOE formed in response to that economy. Indeed, safer sex messages are present early on in the pages of *AMFI*. It was almost as if the Greek homosexual movement was pre-fabricated to accept the safer sex message.

The second unforeseeable consequence of adopting a sexual philosophy based on desire is that, by not operating on the assumption of sexual identities, the interpretation of how one goes about “separating the disease from homosexuality” becomes more complicated than saying not all gay men are necessarily HIV positive. If a sexual philosophy based on desire and not on desiring subjects is to be retained,
“separating the disease from homosexuality” requires a somewhat more extended formulation, like the following: Just because a man would engage his desire to have sex with other men does not mean that he is HIV positive, and just because a man is HIV positive does not mean he has a desire to have sex with other men. From the beginning, the members of AKOE had embraced a sexual philosophy that encouraged them to imagine the target population in need of outreach as far larger than just those who identify as homosexual.

In practical terms, this second consequence leads to a specific strategy regarding AIDS. Given the liberation of homosexual desire as the ultimate goal, and since that desire can exist alongside any socially available sexual identity, it would not make sense to organize a movement exclusively around any particular sexual identity. Analogically: the movement could not address itself to an identity-based class of people; nor could it imagine a response to AIDS that way. In other words, beyond any organizational difficulties which may have faced AKOE as AIDS began to spread through Greece, and beyond articulated strategies of creating conceptual distance between AIDS and gay men, the activists also had a number of cultural assumptions about sexuality – some articulated (their sexual philosophy), and some not so (the sexual economy) – that made the option of a GMHC-like organization both unthinkable and undesirable. Not only would such an organization have worked in the Greek context to reinforce the connection of AIDS with gay men, it would have run counter to the sexual philosophy on which the movement was then predicated.  

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17 This depiction runs the risk of presenting AKOE as a monolithic entity, without internal debate as to the suitability of this sexual philosophy based on desire and not
Following much the same path that AKOE had established, EOK continued to keep a minimal relationship with AIDS activism, even into the 1990’s. As observed by Panagiotis Damaskos, currently Director of the Office of Psychosocial Support at KEEL and former member of EOK, “EOK, as EOK, never engaged in activism around AIDS because it did not want to add any more weight to the idea that homosexuality was the same thing as AIDS.”\(^{18}\) To be accurate, however, EOK’s involvement in AIDS issues is not non-existent. In December 1990, EOK organized a public demonstration “with a bullhorn, four speakers, and a group of twenty people” (EOK 2004). Since then, it has participated a number of times in World AIDS Day marches, and a number of colloquia on the topic. Giannelos himself argues that now, with the presence of several AIDS organizations, there is less need for EOK to engage the subject.\(^{19}\)

By the time EOK was founded, the historical moment of the sexual philosophy articulated through AKOE was already beginning to fade. As if signaling a turn towards a new direction, EOK hosted the European convention of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) in 1989. With the suspension of AMFI in 1990, EOK seemed to leave the articulation of that philosophy entirely to the past. As argued both by James Faubion and by Kostas Giannakopoulos, a new perception of sexual identities was beginning to take root in Greece in the 1970’s – at least among those urbanites who might identify as gay – a new perception which

\(^{18}\) Personal interview, October 2003.
\(^{19}\) Personal interview, April 2004.
could co-exist and compete with the sexual economy of the years before AKOE. Faubion (1993) refers to this new perception in his discussion of Vallianatos’ displeasure with the term “homosexual” and his preference for the term “gay.” For his part, Giannakopoulos describes the new perception as a recognizable and visible “gay homosexuality” (gay ὀμοφυλοφιλία, gay omofilofilia) in contradistinction to a “masculine homosexuality” (ἀρρενωπή ὀμοφυλοφιλία, arrenopi omofilofilia), which designates “sexual practices which do not entail a homosexual identity” (Giannakopoulos 1998:82).

All the same, at the moment when AIDS arrived in Greece, that new perception had not yet taken hold. Whether we call it “masculine homosexuality,” a sexual economy, or a sexual philosophy of desire, the articulated and unarticulated cultural assumptions of sexuality at the time shaped the way that activists forged a homosexual movement in Greece, and the way that movement in turn responded to AIDS. Years later, as gay socio-sexual identities increasingly percolate through the sexual economy of Greece, it seems that the liberation legacy of AKOE is remembered, cursed, and forgotten, all in the same comment: “We’re not a gay organization, really.”

\[20\] Intriguingly, after he stepped down as editor of AMFI, Vallianatos began publication of a magazine titled “GAY,” a venture that proved short-lived.
Stolen Kisses: “Homophobia” Meets “Racism”

In the fall of 2002, the story traveled quickly around Athens, from friend to friend. The owner of a café in Thissio, a neighborhood of central Athens, had kicked out two men for kissing. There are many versions of the story now, and people are still talking about it. In these conversations, ideas of acceptable public behavior play a central role, along with notions of ῥάτσιμος (rapsismós, racism) and ὀμοφοβία (omofovía, homophobia).

The story’s survival to the present hangs on the wealth of contradictions it offers. Many suspect or know the owner of the café to be a lesbian. At the time of the expulsion, many lesbians and gays saw the café as a “gay and lesbian café”, or at least argued that the majority of the clientele was lesbian and gay. After the expulsion, despite a conscientious boycott by many lesbians and gays, the café continues to have a steady stream of lesbian and gay customers. Then there are the wildly varying stories of just what the two men were doing. In one version, they kissed on the lips at one of the sidewalk tables. The most salacious retelling held that hands were underneath clothes, but in the somewhat more discrete location of a couch inside the café near the back. Another version held that the two men were not expelled at all, but left in a huff because they were told to be more modest.

At this point, the exact details of the event are well beyond reach, both over-embroidered through recycling and possibly dampened by both the owner and the two men involved, all of whom may well be tired of entertaining the topic. Regardless, the “truth” of the event seems not to matter now as much as its social recycling, and the effective truths it has taken on through its assumption to collective memory.
Through the contradictions and discussions that keep the story alive, the expulsion also raises a variety of ethnographic questions about the ways that “homophobia” might be said to work in Greece. Why might a lesbian risk alienating her core customer base by expelling two men for kissing? How was the event read as “homophobic” or not? Moreover, what might any of this have to do with “racism”?

To approach these questions, this chapter, like the preceding chapter on AIDS activism, turns to previous ethnographic work that suggests the relevance of an ongoing shift in how same-sex sexual behaviors are conceived in Greece. Retracing that shift points to certain complications in applying homophobia to the Greek case as an analytic category, complications dramatized by the simultaneous and overlapping use of the languages of “racism” and of “homophobia”. On another level, fieldwork shows that publicly acceptable gender and sexual behaviors are maintained not only through the policing practices of others, but also through practices of “self-policing.” The reproduction of “homophobic” behaviors does not follow a simple line of force moving from an oppressing society to an oppressed sexual minority; “homophobic” behaviors are frequently evident in those who would presumably have an interest in avoiding them. Hence, as the analytic category of homophobia is deployed in Greece, whether by Greeks or by non-Greek analysts, it must be understood within three contextual frames: a shift in conceptions of same-sex sexual behaviors, practices of self-policing, and a parallel language of “racism.”

*Omofovía and Ratsismós as Non-Coextensive Terms*

To what degree can “racism” and “homophobia” overlap, then? At least in the public discourse of the United States, great care has been taken to distinguish
homophobia from racism. Daniel Wickberg (2000) has drawn a meticulous cultural history of the term “homophobia” in the American context, focusing primarily on the frameworks within which homophobia makes sense – particularly the critique of the authoritarian personality, and the ambivalent adoption of psychological discourse within the liberal left. Within those frameworks, Wickberg observes that the object of “homophobia” is determined rather more specifically than that of “racism” or “sexism.” He argues that while these later terms both hold open the possibilities of their objects – such that any race could be the object of “racism” and any sex of “sexism” – homophobia seems to narrow the possible scope of prejudice to just those perceived as homosexuals; those perceived as heterosexuals thus cannot become objects of homophobia. At another level, Wickberg notes that sexism and racism are seen as “social ideologies” (2000: 45), while homophobia is often seen as a psychological condition inhering in an individual. Moreover, even though one might imagine easily enough a situation where the terms of Wickberg’s analysis would become more entangled,¹ his analysis takes the objects of “racism,” “sexism,” and “homophobia” to be fairly distinct; they name different discriminations against specifiable aspects of a social identity: race, biological sex, and sexual orientation.

Byrne Fone (2000) follows a similar argument where homophobia is related to but distinguished from other categories of prejudice. He writes “homophobia has links with sexism as well as with anti-Semitism and with prejudice against people of

¹ For a crucial analysis of how homophobia is always already produced in the interstices of social categories and subject positions, see Martin Manalansan’s chapter in a volume forthcoming from Duke University Press. Earlier texts relevant to understanding how these categories of social difference must be thought of in parallel are bell hooks (1984) and Elizabeth Spelman (1988).
color” (2000: 5). However, Fone adheres to the logic that “the term ‘homophobia’ is now popularly construed to mean fear and dislike of homosexuality and those who practice it” (2000: 5). The object of homophobia thus remains distinct from that of racism or from other forms of prejudice.

Returning to the expulsion from the café, however, what is striking is that both ratsimóς and omofovía are used to describe precisely the same behavior. Furthermore, there are no cues of race at all in the different stories that circulate; the agents in the drama of the café are perceived by neither the agents themselves nor the analysts of the drama to be differentiated by race. And yet, the term ratsimóς is still applied by a range of speakers with no apparent dissonance. Clearly, the terms ratsimóς and omofovía have a large enough realm of discursive overlap. Ratsimóς seems to function in everyday speech to signify “general unjustifiable prejudice,” capable of describing “racism,” “sexism,” and “homophobia,” despite the existence of the more proper terms of προκαταλήψις (prokatálipsi, usually rendered “prejudice”), διάκριση (diákrisi, discrimination), and the more specific loan word σεξισμός (seksísmós, sexism). As this range of meaning should suggest, ratsimóς and omofovía are not coextensive. For any given case of discrimination against those “not Greek” – consider the range of prejudice shown towards, say, heterosexual female sex workers from the Ukraine – ratsimóς would still apply, while omofovía would not.

One other point of commonality between ratsimóς and omofovía lies in their provenance; like seksísmós, they are both loan words, incorporated relatively recently into the Greek language. While ratsimóς has been in circulation for several decades at least, omofovía has entered demotic Greek only in the last decade and its proper use
is still very much debated. The term contends not only with *ratsismós*, but with two of its cognates, ὀμοφιλοφοβία (*omofilofobia*, literally, fear of the same sex) and ὀμοφιλοφιλοφοβία (*omofilofilofobia*, literally, fear of the homosexual). Significantly, however, that later ripple of the debate seems to be confined to non-Greek academics, Greek academics who have studied abroad, and the relatively small group of Greek activists who focus on the rights of sexual minorities. Everyone else settles on *ratsismós* to describe what organizations like the ILGA would without hesitation determine as “homophobia.” Yet even among the Greek activists, the language of *ratsismós* is heard just as often as *omofovia*.

To explain the contours of that terminological debate, it is necessary to excavate some of the assumptions animating the terms, specifically, how activists envision the *object of prejudice*, regardless of whether they call that prejudice *ratsismós* or *omofovía*. In thinking about that object, Fone’s analysis provides a particularly useful turn of phrase: “the fear and dislike of homosexuality and of those who practice it” (2000: 5). Part of the utility of his phrasing is that it guides our understanding of homophobia towards practices in which anyone might engage, and shunts us away from the trap of thinking only with socially specifiable sexual identities that appear to inhere in the individual. Fone’s formulation thus allows us to speak of the way that homophobia might work in the lives of a self-identified bisexual woman who is married to a man, of Black American men “on the down low,” and, coincidentally, of a good many contemporary Greeks.

In the Greek case, however, this utility ought not to be construed as anything more than a lucky accident on Fone’s part. In his work, as in most surveys of
homosexuality that adopt a globalizing or trans-historical point of view, discussion of Greece is curiously limited to the ancient Greeks; he does not mention the modern Greek state. Such elisions could lead to a dangerous assumption of timelessness. Thus the crucial project of tracking how contemporary Greeks, living in a place whose ancient forms are claimed by so many others, might go about relating to and deploying their own pasts. In that spirit, an examination of the ethnographic record of same-sex sexuality in Greece reveals two significant trends. On the one hand, remarkable importance continues to be attributed to social and cultural expectations of gendered behavior, in accord with the broader ethnographic literature of Greece. On the other, one can discern an historical moment where understandings began to shift, from a sexual economy based primarily on gender roles to one where sexual identities began to proliferate. Before this historical moment, as was argued in the previous chapter, same-sex sexual contacts were not the stuff of social identities, but for private and concealed pleasures. With the rise of a homosexual movement, ideas

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2 For examples of how ancient Greece figures in various accounts, see Foucault (1990 [1976], 1990 [1984]), Miller (1995), Murray (2000); see Tin (2003) for an exception that proves the rule. One could argue, as Fone implies by saying that “nearly every age re-invents Greece in its own image” (Fone 2000:17), that western homosexualities have depended upon the idealization of the Greek past; see also Dover (1978), Winkler (1990) and Halperin (1990).

3 Again, see Danforth (1984) for a cogent analysis of the flaws in positing transhistorical continuities.


7 As in other locations, the need to maintain the common secret spurred the development of a specific argot in Greece, known as kaliarndá. The documentation of
of the homosexual as a socio-sexual identity began to circulate more widely in Greece. Regardless of its precise provenance, however, it would be wrong to suggest that this new discourse of sexual identity overtook the pre-existing sexual economy entirely. These two ways of seeing same-sex sexual practices continue to co-exist, if in tension. That co-existence must form the foundation for any understanding of homophobia as an analytic category in contemporary Greece.

The dual model suggests first that, in the context of socially proliferating sexual identities, some individuals who engage in same-sex practices will tend to distance themselves visibly from those who take up sexual identities in a socially visible way. Elisabet Kirtsoglou (2003, 2004) has documented such dynamics in a group of women who, though they do have erotic relations between them, refuse the identity of lesbians. Further, it is not as if Greek activists have ignored that social fact, and organized exclusively around the notion of a socio-sexual identity anyway. Witness the aforementioned shift in the subtitle of AKOE’s journal, AMFI.

This co-existence also suggests something of a hypothesis about why ratsismós and omofovía continue to circulate in parallel, aside from the relative youth of omofovía as a term. Those whose lives are not patterned after a politicized socio-sexual identity are unlikely to be exposed to circles where prejudice against homosexual practices and identities is spoken of as omofovía. It seems reasonable to suppose that “homophobia” as an analytic category will not overtake “racism” unless

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the argot (Petropoulou 1993 [1971]) is worth comparing to Gayle (Cage 1999) and Polari (Baker 2002). Elements of it have been incorporated into everyday Greek, but it remains a sign among gay men, not only of depth of knowledge of gay life in Greece, but also of femininity; some men disavow knowledge of kalitarná in order to mark their own masculinity, despite the words they actually employ.
sexual identity significantly displaces the notion of gender roles in the sexual economy. That, only the future will tell.

For the present, the continued salience of understandings of same-sex sexuality based on gender roles further suggests that practices which read as homophobic may be just as much about perceived gender behavior as they are about any kind of sexual behavior, if not more so.\(^8\) The continued use of gender-inflected words that predate the emergence of sexual identity politics in Greece underscores this point. Consider the Greek term πούπτης (poústis): roughly translatable as “faggot,” it does indicate sexual passivity, but also femininity and conniving. The majority of the term’s derogatory power, however, comes from the assertion that its subject lacks proper manhood; the poústis allows his abuse, accepts being penetrated, has no sense of shame, will be duplicitous, and surrenders his humanity without a fight.\(^9\) While poústis does refer to sexual positions, its scope of reference pushes beyond sex itself, pointing most strongly to the quality of the person’s moral character. Thus, although poústis is often used to describe the character of some gay men, it does not denote a homosexual identity per se; the two categories should not be conflated. Similarly, the term malákas also slides between the sexual and the description of personal character. Sexually, it denotes the masturbator, but also denotes a moral character not properly human. Socially, the malákas is rude, stupid, the jerk that is not man enough to do things the right way. Even if used ironically and playfully (and then, only between friends), both poústis and malákas simultaneously

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\(^8\) The recent development of a rhetoric of “sissyphobia” in the United States and elsewhere (Bergling 2001) also suggests that gender non-conformity may be a primary target of phobic reactions, rather than sexual practices per se.

\(^9\) For an extended analysis of gender and language, see Faubion (1993).
engage three levels of social discourse: an insult to full humanity, a slur on the proper manhood of the subject in question, and an insinuation of sexual depravity.

**Why Do The “Muscle Men” Kiss On Elia?**

The question above is the translated title of a 2002 editorial column that demonstrates these three levels of social discourse at work. The column appeared in *NITRO*, an Athens-based glossy life-style magazine aimed at a broad male audience throughout Greece. Although few praise its journalism, the magazine maintains a solid market share, and regularly features satirical editorials and interviews with well-known Greek and international celebrities. *NITRO* thus serves well as an indication of what is seen as possible, acceptable, and marketable in present-day Greek media.

Concerning this particular column, the editorial staff at *NITRO* certainly found it marketable enough; they placed the title on the cover page. Flipping to the table of contents, that teaser title changes slightly, as if to clarify just what the column is about: “Why Do Gays Kiss On Elia?” ¹⁰ The article itself is headed by a half-page color drawing by a free-lance illustrator (see figure, page 113). Two men are featured in their bathing suits on a beach with mountains in the background. The scene presumably takes place at Elia, one of the more famous beaches on Mykonos, an island most Greeks immediately equate with decadence and gay men. The two men’s bodies are tanned and muscled, with a conspicuous lack of body hair. They are leaning into each other with pursed lips and bent wrists, seemingly oblivious to the

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¹⁰ Rather than *omofílófilos*, the term used in the table of contents title and for the majority of the column itself is *γκέι*, the Greek transliteration of the English “gay”; see Halkias (2002).
“Why Do The “Muscle Men” Kiss On Elia?” Used with permission of the artist, Stavros Mitropoulos (originally printed in Nitro, October 2002, issue 84, page 40).
young boy in the foreground staring up at them with an expression of confusioncolored with horror. Visible in the background between the two men, another manlooks on the scene, his hands on either side of his protruding and slightly furry bellyand his jaw set in firm disapproval. A woman is also watching, only her head visiblein the background, with her eyebrow arched. Remember, this is satire, and perhapsshould not be taken too seriously.

Yet every joke shields an element of truth. The article beneath the imagepresents a familiar argument: the author objects to public displays of affection amonggay men, not only because he finds them disturbing, but also because he feels he isprevented from expressing his opinion by a double-standard that gays have created bydesignating themselves as oppressed. The author thus observes that, although hecould yell out to any straight couple to behave properly without any problem, hewould be considered a ρατσιστής (racist) to chastise a gay couple.

Immediately after stating this complaint, however, he hastens to clarify: “I believe inthe right of each person to choose whatever sexual life he desires and that this choiceis no one else’s business. Ok?” His target is clearly not gays themselves, just theirproper public behavior. He concludes: “The point is, if you do it publicly, no one willbelieve that you did it because you had to. And no rule can forbid someone fromshowing you that they don’t approve of what you do (and not of what you are) orfrom jeering at you, not because you’re gay, but because you’re a maldikas.”

To what does this publicly done “it” refer, however? What specific practicesare in question? Our editorialist describes a scene: “Every once in a while, one ortwo gay couples go into the surf, about ten meters in front of you, and start kissing
deeply. Usually, they don’t only kiss, but grab at each other obviously, and under the surface of the sea, hold and ‘play’ with each other, throwing occasional lewd and mischievous grins towards the beach.” Thus it is only the explicitly sexual behavior of the men in the public space of the beach to which the author objects.

However, the accompanying illustration suggests the editorialist’s list (or at least, the illustrator’s and the editorial staff’s imagination of that list) is not limited to gay men’s sexually explicit public practices, particularly in the context of the past ethnographic evidence. The two men in the illustration are not even actually kissing, nor pawing all over each other. They are depicted as behaving effeminately, with extravagantly bent wrists and pursed lips. Perhaps if the picture were set in motion, they might actually do something included in the editorialist’s list of bad public form. Perhaps they would merely kiss each other on each cheek, like many a European. Yet in this stationary slice of social commentary, the other actors are already disgusted, already scandalized. A man, a woman, a child: all the symbols of the family, into which the two men rudely interject themselves, disturbing the peace, splitting the foundation of society, and alarming the children. The illustration thus belies the explicit argument of the text that the list of bad behavior refers only to sexual displays in public by any combination of people. The list apparently also includes men not acting like real men. Alternatively, the combination of illustration and text suggests that non-conforming gender behavior may well function as a form of public sexual display, recalling the suggestiveness of gender behavior in the sexual economy before the discourse of sexual identities entered the scene. Regardless, since the word malákas connects to the system of acceptable gender behavior on three levels – the
intimation of sexual practice, the moral character of the person, and the proper gender
performance itself – the reader is left to wonder to which levels the editorialist
appeals when he concludes that his complaint holds “not because you’re gay, but
because you’re a malákas”.

Presumably, the editorialist would not want anyone behaving like a malákas,
regardless of the genders involved; if this is the case, many a lesbian and gay
Athenian might observe that there is no shortage of heterosexual couples eligible for
social control. Indeed, the author imagines three possible scenarios should that
eligible couple be a man and a woman (curiously, he never mentions two women
doing the same): “either you act like you don’t see them, or you yell at them, or you
whip it out and play with it, encouraging them with your participation.” Remember,
this is satire. “But in the case of gays,” the author continues, “you act like a malákas
yourself to not be seen as a ratsistís.”

Is It Really About the (Trans)Gender?

Not once in the NITRO article does the word omofovía or any of its cognates
appear. The language is entirely of ratsismós. Perhaps then the editorialist’s choice
of words should not confuse, but rather indicate how inequality and social difference
continue to be imagined in Greece with regard to sexuality. Indeed, our editorialist is
not the only one to use this language; recall that ratsismós also featured prominently
in the discussions about the expulsion of the two men from the café in Thissió.

There are other examples. Consider one meeting of the Polychromo Forum,
where the activists were discussing the inclusion of transsexuals and travesti in those
meetings, and the general level of cooperation between the activist groups. Several
travesti observed that most activists tend to exclude transsexuals and travesti. When Vangelis Giannelos, the president of EOK, rose to defend both his record and that of EOK on that point, Paola, the president of SATTE, shouted over him and directly accused him of being a ratsistís, clearly meaning prejudice against transsexuals and travesti. While the stand off eventually calmed down and the meeting continued, the intensity of the drama lingered; subsequent speakers were careful to be inclusive in their language.

Giannelos’ protests aside, Paola’s accusations do accurately describe a large number of Greek gay men. Talking with non-activist gay men about how Greek society sees homosexuality and what can be done to improve that relationship, a number of these men professed they would distance themselves from excessively effeminate gay men, and specifically from travesti. This distancing is also reflected in their professed criteria for erotic partners, the most pervasive of which is that they want their partner to be σοβαρός (sovarós, “serious”, a cue for masculinity); many are reluctant to date anyone τρελός (trelós, crazy) or γραφικός (grafikós, usually “graphic”, but in this case, someone who draws attention or makes a scene). As if to emphasize the rectitude of these convictions, some of these young men further qualify themselves, somewhat defiantly, as ratsistés. They do not see themselves as omofovoló. They feel that effeminate gay men, and travesti in particular, give homosexuals a bad name by extravagantly exceeding the boundaries of acceptable behavior, and that their excess impedes the acceptance of homosexuality in Greek society. They imagine that the only jobs travesti can hold include singing at an Athenian drag club called “Koukles,” or sex work on Syngrou Avenue, or more likely
some combination of the two. They imagine that *travesti* and transsexuals are mentally unbalanced, either genetically, or from the hormones involved in gender reassignment.

**The Anti-Racism Festival**

Sexual depravity, a lack of full humanity, and an abandonment of proper manhood – in their understandings of transsexuals and *travesti*, these young gay men deploy the same slurs they themselves endure from words like *poústis* and *malákas*. Some lesbian and gay activists view such forms of displacement as *esoterikevmenén* ομοφυλοφοβία (*esoterikevméni omofilofovía*, internalized homophobia) and see the need for large-scale conversations on the subject. To that end, several activist organizations assembled a panel discussion on discrimination amongst minorities in June 2003, at the 8th Anti-Racism Festival held in Illision Park in Athens. The Festival has over time come to host some 140 organizations, the vast majority of which support immigrants and ethnic minorities in Greece with a broad range of anti-discrimination, anti-globalization, and anti-capitalism messages. This Festival has also become the largest regular public display of lesbian and gay organizations in Athens. In the light of the shouting match at the Polychromo Forum, some had looked forward to the Festival as a chance to make amends; however, no transsexuals or *travesti* appeared at the three-day event.

At the panel itself, prejudice towards homosexuals, transsexuals and *travesti* was spoken of in several terms: *omofovía*, *omofilofovía*, and *ratsismós*. Still, most speakers employed the language of *ratsismós*. That tendency is also visible in the preparations for the Festival made by the Πρωτοβουλία Ομοφυλόφιλων Πολιτών
(Protovoulía Omofilófilon Politón, Gay Citizens’ Initiative or POP by the Greek acronym). While debating the language to use in their presentation, they continued to speak in terms of *ratsismós*, even though they found the term unsatisfactory; they all understood it to refer specifically to race, rather than to sexuality. The author of the draft statement had found *omofovía* both insufficiently Greek and too vague; a direct borrowing of “homophobia” from established non-Greek activist and academic discourses, it reads literally in Greek as “fear of the same,” and thus fails to accurately communicate the object of fear. Another contender was *omofilofilovía*, which, while it very clearly denotes the object of fear (the homosexual) and has the virtue of being good Greek, is just a bit cumbersome to write or to say. In the end, the group settled for *omofilovía*, which, though still somewhat awkward, at least denotes more clearly its object, the “same-sex”. Further, although no activist ever voiced the argument in this way, *omofilofilovía* advertises the fact of its *not* being a loan word; it intimates a level of reflection and debate among the activists that the quick adaptation of the foreign term “homophobia” never could.\(^\text{11}\) Despite the care put into the debate, however, their choice of language did not catch on at the panel discussion.

One might conclude that social discourse specifically about discrimination against homosexuals has yet to develop in Greece. This analysis would overlook the kinds of alliances that activists have engaged in for the last twenty-five years, and the

\(^{11}\) Significantly, Valantis Paphalanasiou, a Greek sociologist who has trained in Paris, Brussels and Toulouse, argues that the similarity of *omofovía* to “homophobia” is instead an advantage. For him, it facilitates understanding across disciplinary and national boundaries, and properly marks the theoretical development of “homophobia” beyond the Greek academic and activist traditions.
ways in which they have been able to raise collective consciousness of the issues specifically confronting homosexuals, transsexuals and travesti. Indeed, regular participation at the Anti-Racist Festival points to those alliances; however deep the common interests may actually run, speakers at the panel discussion repeatedly argued for the naturalness of common interests with the politics of the Greek Left, anti-capitalist movements, and most revealingly, with organizations working for the rights of immigrants. Given that ratsismós functions as prejudice against a “natural condition” – a condition that subjects do not choose, but into which they are born – one could also argue that the term allows some evasion of arguments that assign moral blame to those who “chose” non-conforming practices. Further, the umbrella term of ratsismós may also provide greater social leverage than a more specific term might; unlike omofovía or omofilofovía, it allows the same term to unite homosexuals, transsexuals and travesti with other, more “established minorities.”\(^\text{12}\) As the terminological debate suggests, however, momentum toward recognizing the specificity of oppression against homosexuals, transsexuals and travesti is not entirely absent.

Once the invited panelists had delivered their statements, the microphone was opened to the audience. Several of the attendees came forward with personal stories,

\(^{12}\) As an umbrella term, ratsismós may itself be subject to the same tensions as “queer”, a term that has never enjoyed a level of success in Greece comparable to that which it had achieved in the United States. The quotation marks around the couplet “established minorities” – and not just around one or the other term – are meant to signal the lack of recognition of minority groups in Greece at the political level, despite a high degree of social fascination and concern with the demographics of Greece. For example, one of the more hotly debated issues during my fieldwork was the case of an exemplary high school student who was denied the honor usually accorded to the top scholar of holding the Greek flag at the lead of his school’s parade on a nationalist holiday; the student is of Albanian descent.
all laden with the same theme: the need they felt to edit themselves to survive, to fit into a given social situation. One activist, playing off of these personal stories, suggested that it might be easier for straight people to come out in support of lesbians and gays than it is for lesbians and gays themselves. He argued that straight supporters were not subject to the same pressures of self-control (ἐλέγχος, ἐλενχὸς) that homosexuals are.

**On Internalization**

Significantly, the audience members displayed a high degree of consciousness of their dissemblance. They are not alone; in formal interviews, in activist meetings, and in informal gatherings of friends over coffee or beer, the subject of editing the self to fit into a social situation comes up repeatedly. In no case was dissembling ever an unconsidered act; a great amount of planning and preparation can go into it. It was always spoken of, on rare occasions apologetically but most often just practically orrationally, as maintaining social harmony and balance. “Why would I want to thrust it in their faces?” “What good would it do?” “It’s none of their business, really.” Although many do experience that dissemblance as unavoidable or as a necessity, concentrating on the inevitability of it would gloss over another consistent and more important feature of these acts of dissemblance: they are cast as ethical choices.

For some activists, particularly those who more vocally support “coming out” (and thus explicitly support the notion of specifiable socio-sexual identities), this considered differentiation of the self into the public and the private is often cast as symptomatic of εσωτερικήμενη ὀμοφιλοφοβία, and just as often, positioned as the
single most important problem facing Greek activists. Some activists say that these “closeted” gays (στη ντουλάνα τους, sti ntoulápa tous) have a responsibility to come out, that they are making themselves sick (ἀπροστοί, árrostoi), and it is only their fear that is holding back the acceptance of homosexuality in Greece. Other activists view the issue of coming out more circumspectly and, citing the backlash that has followed successful movements in the United States and elsewhere, argue that people could come out all they liked, but that something deeper would still have to change in the way that homosexuality is seen in Greece. Conversely, some activists argue that the only way people will want to come out is if conditions change first to encourage them – whether in law, the media, the work place, the schools, or the Orthodox Church.

What all sides of this coming out debate agree on is that many choose to stay “in the closet” out of fear. However, placing this debate in the context of shifting conceptions of same-sex sexual behaviors, the “choice” to identify or not takes on a different meaning that may have little to do with fear, and more to do with the conceptual distance between sexual practices and the ways individuals live their social identities. Not identifying oneself socially by sexual behaviors need not be homophobic of itself; once sexual identities become politicized, however, that choice becomes always already homophobic, if only to those who are politicized. Said otherwise, in the discourse of socio-sexual identities, consistency of the public and the private spheres is valued, requiring mutual exposure and recognition. In that schema, not speaking of sexual practices and not identifying oneself by them constitutes a problem: internalized homophobia. In the sexual economy based on
gender roles, however, that economy “works” partially because its sexual transactions are only suggestively brought into the social; sexual practices become the stuff of social identities only insofar as they are reflected through gender. Not speaking of sexual practices and not identifying oneself by them is only common sense. Moreover, it is valorized.

Whether seen as sexual identity or within a sexual economy based on gender roles, the presentation of the self thus remains an ethical project, an arrangement that recalls Foucault’s now famous analysis that the presentation of the self in relation to sex creates in sexual identity one of the clearest sites of the truth of the self (Foucault 1990 [1976]). Indeed, Foucault’s theorization of the subject as a locus of social control offers an appropriate optic through which to understand the co-existence of sexual identities alongside and within a sexual economy in which socio-sexual identities do not exactly make sense. While his analysis of the control of the subject can be traced further back, the 1975 publication of Discipline and Punish articulated discipline as situated externally to the subject and as able to colonize all aspects of life – “Not because the disciplinary modality of power has replaced all others; but because it has infiltrated the others, … making it possible to bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements” (1979[1975]:216). The image of the Panopticon was the image of power centralized in order to subjugate the masses. By the mid-1980’s in The History of Sexuality, the locus of Foucault’s attention to discipline had shifted from its capacity for infiltration to its internalization through the process of becoming a subject; though his move to the process of becoming a subject was meant to account for the agency of subjects, one can also observe that
discipline is much more effective when practiced by individuals on themselves and by themselves. Thus Foucault's analysis of "technologies of the self," and his conclusion that "a history of the way in which individuals are urged to constitute themselves as subjects of moral conduct would be concerned with the models proposed for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for the decipherment of the self by oneself, for the transformations that one seeks to accomplish with oneself as object" (1990[1984]:29). This ethical monitoring of the self is the basis of both the embrace of a socio-sexual identity (the logic of being true to oneself and telling others about that truth) and the socially proper gender identity within the pre-identity sexual economy.

Thus, the proliferation of publicly specifiable sexual identities can occur within and alongside a sexual economy where the sexual had been previously publicly visible only through gender roles. That proliferation then works an ethical sea change not just on norms of sexual practice, but on norms of public comportment and the presentation of self for all of society. As discussed earlier, when some begin to identify — as lesbian or as gay, for example — some others will distance themselves from those identities, like the women in Kirtsoglou's study, or married men who cruise other men in the Athenian parks. Should that distancing qualify as homophobia? Still others will identify as heterosexuals, and will do so in ways that cast doubt on the activist's assertion at the end of the discussion at the Anti-Racism Festival, that straight supporters are not subject to the same pressures of self-control that homosexuals are. Should their insistence on their heterosexuality qualify as homophobia?
Sins And Faults

During the 2003 theater season in Athens, the company of the theater Argo chose to stage David Mamet’s *Boston Marriage*. In Mamet’s oeuvre, *Boston Marriage* is known as his reply to critics who said he was incapable of writing women. The play was perhaps more riposte than reply; he produced a dry comedy of manners about a lesbian love triangle. In that season, however, *Boston Marriage* hardly stood out in Athens just for having a homosexual theme: the productions of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Bent* were highly advertised and well-attended; contemporary Greek productions such as *Μάμα, Μην Τρέχεις* (*Máma, Min Tréheis*, Mama, Don’t Run) and *Οι Τελευταίες Μέρες της Πομπιάς* (*Oi Telefáiies Mérès tis Pompíías*, The Last Days of Pompeii) also featured homosexual relationships as prime narrative elements.

What made *Boston Marriage*, under the Greek title *Ἀμαρτίες καὶ Πταίσματα* (*Amartíes kai Ptaísmata*, Sins and Faults¹³), stand out from these other productions was that EOK sponsored a “Lesbian Evening” at the Argo for a command performance of the play, followed by a discussion with the director and lead actress, Aimilia Ipsilanti. On the appointed night, the theatre was nearly full, mostly of EOK members, other activists, and women from a variety of lesbian and women’s organizations. At the emotional crux of the play, the two lovers kissed, to an extended round of applause.

¹³ *Amartía* is an error of deep moral implications, usually religious. *Ptaísmá* is also an error, but less severe than *amartía*; it is also the legal term that translates “misdemeanor”.
This kiss might have come as a surprise, especially for those of the general public who had seen the play during the regular season some months earlier, where at least on one occasion, the two lovers had not kissed at all, but had simply grasped hands with great emotion. Ipsilanti herself commented on this difference during the audience discussion, explaining that, as actors, they gauged the audience’s response to the presentation; sometimes they would kiss and sometimes they would not, according to that reaction. Directly following this comment, Ipsilanti repeated an argument that she had made earlier on a weekly lesbian and gay radio show hosted by Maria Cyberdyke and sponsored by EOK: the play is about the intensity of human relationships and the things people go through to maintain the relationships that mean something to them, through all of their sins and faults (thus the title). For that reason, says Ipsilanti, both the gender and the sexuality of the characters are actually irrelevant.

For a post-identitarian, it sounds like a dream come true: human relations seen outside of labels, where gender and sexuality do not matter. Several days after the command performance, though, the reactions from several lesbians were revealing. Many had begun to wonder: if the intensity of human emotions is what really matters, and not that the characters are lesbians, why change whether the characters kiss? It would seem that, regardless of what Mamet’s script calls for or allows, changing the kiss points to more than just artistic license.\footnote{The English script in fact calls for an embrace, though the Greek translation may differ; see Mamet (2002).} Perhaps the shifting kiss points instead to the criteria by which the actors understand their relationship to their audiences. The EOK audience was clearly deemed receptive. Still, given that the notices for the
play inescapably described the lesbian content, many lesbians questioned whether it was plausible to claim that audiences who chose to come to the play would ever be hostile. Further, actors have a script to which they might point, as an alibi of sorts; on stage, they are just artists. Seen in this way, it might seem curious not only that Ipsilanti mentioned her husband frequently during the audience discussion, but that she also related several personal experiences where more than one young woman had developed a crush on her, only to be disappointed, each one. Why would an actress feel impelled both to measure her stage performance and to perform her sexuality off stage, especially from the tripled safety of an established name, a husband, and a story she is merely presenting? Perhaps the burden of self-policing can extend even to the stage, and beyond, no matter who you “really” are.

**The Stolen Kiss: Not All Phobias Are What They Seem**

Talking casually with lesbians and gays in Athens, it turns out that self-policing is also something of an art. Beyond being well-versed in stealing kisses at opportune moments – in elevators, in darkened and empty side streets, obscured in the shade of parks – many take joy in these moments. There is a skill to it, a sense of out-smarting the enemy, like rubbing feet under the café table and not giving it away with a grin. It becomes a game of taking what you can without risking too much. You protect yourself by checking the potential audience. Public and private become defined not only by how many people are around you, but by your sense of who those people are. This sort of self-policing, pleasant art though it may be for some, is precisely what is condemned as internalized homophobia by the politicized practice of coming out. At the same time, since the presentation of self concerns what is
publicly acceptable behavior in general in Greece, the strategy of coming out is called upon, even by gays and lesbians, to justify itself as non-offensive.

So what happens when people “fail” to self-police properly and the codes of acceptable public behavior are breached? Consider once more the kiss at the Thissio café, and the opinions people formed from that drama. What of those who did not find the expulsion ratsistikí (racist) or omofovíkí (homophobic)? They argue that the sexuality of the owner is irrelevant to the operation of the café itself, which is a public space. Accordingly, the café is not just for lesbians and gays, but a “gay friendly” place open to all passersby. Indeed, the café is located on a busy pedestrian street with a clear view of the Acropolis, just the sort of place that might draw lovers on a moonlit walk. In this view, the owner has an obligation to respect and protect all of her clientele; there is no way for her to know their sexualities and sensitivities in advance. For some, this argument has an important corollary: the owner was also protecting the two kissing men from the potential consequences of their ill-considered actions. Perhaps not surprisingly, these individuals often also argue that all extended displays of physical affection in public are distasteful, including those of heterosexual couples; they would prefer not to see that kind of behavior from anyone. Moreover, it is among supporters of this view that the story of hands under clothing continues to circulate. Yet even some who doubt this version of events have no problem with the owner chiding her customers towards modesty; most also have no problem in patronizing the café.

On the other hand, those who found the event homophobic (and indeed use the word omofovía rather more often than ratsísmós in their interpretations) tended to
concentrate on two points. First, many suspect or know the owner of the café to be a lesbian. This matters because she, of all people, ought not to have a problem with two men kissing; it makes her a hypocrite, if not also a victim of “internalized homophobia.” Second, they focus on the perception of the café as a “lesbian and gay café”, a position supported mostly by assertions of the composition of the clientele. They argue that it is ridiculous to suggest that a café full of lesbians and gays would be offended by a kiss between two men. Some of those who found the event homophobic also arrive at a second conclusion: the owner actually exploits her lesbian and gay clientele; she is motivated only by kéρδος (kérδos, profit), and is happy to take their money, provided they do not show that they are lesbian and gay. Perhaps not coincidentally, supporters of this position most often held that the two men had kissed rather demurely; they found the tale of hands roaming under clothing ludicrous. They also continue the informal boycott. Some of these boycotters relate, with a hint of scornful satisfaction, that the owner went around to other lesbian and gay watering holes after the rumor of the expulsion had spread, “begging” people to come back.

It is no surprise that, of the activists who spoke about the expulsion, all were critical of the owner, a detail that goes some way towards explaining the social distribution of the language of omofovía. Given the activists’ broad support for

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15 The fact that so many people do not personally know the owner’s sexuality is not surprising. Given that the friendship group (παρέα, paréa) seems to be the primary social arena where sexuality serves as a social bond, those outside the paréa will only know indirectly through gossip. As the remainder of the dissertation will argue, a broad tendency to rely on paréa, particularly where sexuality is concerned, also seems to have distinctively shaped the successes and failures of lesbian and gay activism in Greece.
coming out as a political strategy, it would be tempting to take this logic a step further to say that all those who embrace a socially available sexual identity would also find the expulsion homophobic. However, there is a difference between embracing an identity and politicizing it. For example, among those who found it hard to call the expulsion homophobic is a man in his thirties who clearly identifies as gay to his friends, but is not out to his family or his non-friend co-workers. He believes that coming out, though difficult for many, is desirable. But being out for him does not mean groping and kissing in public. He also considers gay pride parades to be a crass public display of things that do not need to be advertised to strangers. Though he knows few of the activists, he finds the notion of activism far-fetched, and dismisses much of it as a platform for people seeking fame, or some sense of power or recognition. He defends the café owner’s right to control the atmosphere of her business, and asserts that the kissing couple had other options of where to display their affections to one another. To him, refraining from kissing in public is not internalized homophobia; it is just common decency. However, since he heard about the expulsion, he has chosen to take his business elsewhere.

Thus the kiss recedes into history, and the various perceptions of it remain. In those perceptions, a complex of cultural and historical factors can be discerned, factors that frame the ways that “homophobia” has come to be understood and deployed, whether it is spoken of as *omofovía* or as *ratsismós*. Some catalytic event may yet shake the terminological debate into a different resolution – the recently returned to power center-right New Democracy party may surprise and prove more amenable than past governments; currently “stabilized” AIDS demographics may
take off in an unexpected population; looming European Union directives on non-discrimination may force the government to alter the laws or face enormous fines.\textsuperscript{16} Meanwhile, the fluid social terrain of conceptions of same-sex sexuality does not permit of any predictions as to where it will lean next. And that terrain, above all other potential factors, remains the one to which “homophobia” is perhaps most firmly tethered.

\textsuperscript{16} At the time this chapter was originally written, the directives had not yet been incorporated. Now, after their belated incorporation, the extent to which they will be enforced remains to be seen.
Reading The Old Guard: Institutions, Identities and Interests

By contrast, how derisory are the voluntary struggles for recognition. Struggles occur only on the basis of a common sense and established values, for the attainment of current values (honors, wealth, and power).

– Gilles Deleuze

One of the most frequent complaints heard when talking to Greeks and expatriates about the “lesbian and gay community” in Athens is that there “really is no community.” Leaving aside the descriptive accuracy of such statements, when asked why, respondents would often say things like “the so-called leaders of the community are really in it for their own interests.” It was rare to hear discussion about prominent activists where their motivations were not called into question. Indeed, attention to \( \sigma \nu \mu \phi \varepsilon \rho \omicron \nu \tau \alpha \) (\textit{sumféronta}, interests), and particularly the need to be aware of the \textit{sumféronta} of others, has been noted repeatedly in the ethnography of modern Hellenic societies. Still, there is nothing uniquely Greek about that awareness, and nothing uniquely Hellenic to managing the attention given to personal interests when performing publicly oriented labor. Recall the 1990’s scandals in the United States over misappropriated funds from the Tanqueray AIDS Rides, or the 2004 legal troubles of the governor of Connecticut over favors for contract work on his house, or allegations that Halliburton is profiting illegally from the provision of auxiliary and reconstruction services in the Iraq war.

\footnote{Deleuze 1994 [1968]: 136.}
\footnote{Loizos (1975) renders it in a dialectic singular: \textit{sunferon}.}
So how to make social and cultural sense of Greek complaints of community undermined by self-interest? It has been suggested that they express a certain amount of competition and jealousy (Faubion, personal communication 2003). One could also see the complaints as part of a self-governing system, where the most strident criticism is saved for whomever is most powerful, were that not too functionalist a metaphor for containing Greek activists who might otherwise refuse to be accountable to the public they claim to serve. Perhaps, however, what these complaints do best is distinguish those individuals who have become socially meaningful, and therefore worthy of tracking. These select few have made a name for themselves among a public that exceeds self-identified lesbians, gays and other queer folk. They have become people about whom others talk. The importance of these complaints of self-interest thus goes beyond whether or not these prominent figures are objects of jealousy or personalities in need of social control, but lies instead in what all of these prominent figures might have in common.

Many figures are talked about in this way – Gregory Vallianatos, Paola, Vangelis Giannelos, Maria Cyber, and Paul Sofianos are mentioned most often. All are subjects of thoroughgoing critique, both by their activist peers and by non-activists who are to differing degrees aware of their activities. Their motives are divined, their initiatives questioned, and their means of economic support are objects of continual inquiry, particularly when these figures’ activities might otherwise be deemed altruistic. It seems unsatisfying to dismiss this continual inquiry as mere suspicion or mean spirits. It is equally unsatisfying to frame it as pure jealousy, although envy no doubt plays a motivating role for some critics. Taking these
critiques all together, they point to two defining features common to each of these prominent figures: their dual involvement in event promotions and mass-media structures.

On a theoretical level, the importance for queer communities of that intersection is no accident. As has been put forth by commentators such as Barry Adam and John D’Emilio, and as has been recognized by the 1999 publication of the *Columbia Reader of Lesbians and Gay Men in Media, Society, and Politics*, vibrant queer communities support mass participation events through a complicated network of mass media, recreational businesses and activists. The vibrant communities described here are predictably North American and European by geography, if culturally and socially more complicated.³ In this way, even theoretical description of what makes queer communities “work” in the abstract collides with the concrete and ongoing question of Greece’s cultural position as Western and Eastern (Herzfeld 1987). Said differently, Greek lesbian and gay activists’ urge to measure their progress against ideas and patterns of social organization from elsewhere should be seen as part of a national debate about the place of Greece in the world, and not merely as a symptom of Western lesbian and gay movements gone transnational. Indeed, the history of sexual identity activism in Greece suggests itself as a precise mirror of the broader struggle over Greece’s identity as European or not. To properly understand that struggle, it is also necessary to inquire into the criteria by which Greeks choose the elsewheres to which they compare themselves.

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³ See the work of Richard Fung (1988) and Daniel C. Tsang (1994).
Thus, what follows in this chapter are examples of mass participation environments organized at least in part through these five figures. In each event, the economics are structured in different ways: a one-time party, two organizational fundraisers, a regular party scene, and an annual charity fundraiser beauty contest. Each of these events was couched within a network of advertising in different forms, from word of mouth to mass media formats. Parallel to the narratives of these events are descriptions of each of the media worlds to which each of these figures has access. These parallel descriptions provide a context for the kinds of critiques aimed at Vallianatos, Paola, Giannelos, Cyber and Sofianos. Ultimately, analysis of these critiques also exposes a set of hegemonic ideals concerning volunteerism, profit, self-promotion, and at the most basic social level, concerning how gay men and lesbians ought to relate to one another (and by extension, Greeks; and still further, human beings). These critiques of self-interest are always ethical and often prescriptive statements of how a model community ought to work, regardless of whether that community is queer.

Note that these five voices are by no means exhaustive, neither of the activists, nor of the various Greek LGBT media sources available. The logic for choosing these five voices over others here is simple: they are seen, often even by themselves, as the old guard of Greek lesbian and gay activism. Questions of succession circulate around them. Theirs is a position that offers both the respect due to the experienced, and the contempt lavished on the entrenched. As for the work of younger voices, we will turn to them in the next chapter.
Voice One: Gregory Vallianatos

The afternoon speeches hosted by POEK during the annual Marxism conference at the Polytechnio had just ended. I approached Gregory Vallianatos as he was gathering his things and made small talk, asking him for a copy of the speech he had read. He asked me if I knew about a party he was putting on that weekend. It was the first I had heard of it, having never seen it advertised either. He gave me a rainbow colored pass with the name of the party printed in bold, black, English capital letters: CRUISING. I was intrigued, and asked if the pass was good for two. He gave me another pass. It was the first time he had invited me to a party of his, though I had heard much already about his previous ventures in the clubbing business.

One of those ventures, Factory, still sparks stories among gay men in Greece. They reminisce about the mix of people, the scantily clad dancers on boxes, the atmosphere. Not all of the memories are pleasant, however. Some people recall extensive drug use in the club, and indiscrete dealers trading goods and money in full view. Others recall with disdain that the drinks were served in plastic cups,\(^4\) implying that the rules of taste and hospitality extend beyond entertaining guests in one’s house and into the business realm. Given the door charge, it was apparently obvious to customers that they had paid for the right to drink from a glass, despite the safety appeal of plastic in a dance environment further amplified by a mix of unspecified chemistry. Still others circulate the tale that Factory closed under a cloud of suspicion, with allegations of bills and employees unpaid, and Vallianatos walking

\(^4\) Factory was and is by no means unique in this respect, even among high-end dance venues in Greece.
away with the profit. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these stories of ill-gotten gain tended to come from people who framed him as part of the old guard of activism, even though they admired his knowledge and his skill as an orator. It was the suspicion that he had made profit (κέρδος, k Erdos) at the expense of “his people” that was supposed to rankle.

With that background, seeing Vallianatos in the role of host became imperative. On the appointed May night, I walked with a friend to Bossa Nostra Noir, in Exarchia, apparently reserved specifically for the occasion. Although Vallianatos never said when the party was to begin, previous experience with the Athenian bar scene said that midnight was still too early to come. Yet as we walked up a little after one in the morning, the velvet ropes seemed out of place with no crowd to control. The three young men hanging around the ropes took minimal notice of our presence. The young woman at the ticket counter took the rainbow-colored passes from us, and we walked down some steps to the upper level of the club, facing a wide staircase leading down to the main dance floor. Several clumps of young men were spaced out along the main bar along the left side of the room below, perhaps sixty in all. The DJ booth faced them from the opposite wall. White plastic-leather couches and low black tables filled the tiers surrounding the remaining edges of the dance floor, a furniture arrangement replicated in many of the higher end Athenian nightclubs, like Danza in Psiri, or Destijl, one of the trendy summer clubs by the sea in Glyfada.

The feel of the place was familiar, something like a circuit party in the United States, or like any of the large gay parties in Amsterdam, London, or Berlin.
Although the tracks were recognizable, it was not just the music that gave the impression that we were not at a typical Athenian gay bar. The size of the space was also strikingly different from most of the Athenian bars hosting a gay clientele. Not only was there a defined dance floor, it was large. There was also something different about the people. The crumpled loose white shirts that seemed to me ubiquitous in Athenian bars were nowhere to be seen. Instead, most of these men chose clothing that clung to their bodies, tank tops and muscle shirts, some army pants. There were visible tattoos, many carrying the tribal themes that had become popularized by gay porn actors in the United States over the 1990’s. The difference was not flaunted, but discernable; it was as if this crowd knew itself to be different from those that I had seen in other Athenian spaces marked as gay.

Vallianatos himself was talking with a clump of guys at the end of the bar near the foot of the stairs. I could not help but think that this spot was exactly where one would expect to find him in that bar. He was in the middle of the scene, but still near the main entrance to the club, capable of keeping an eye on arrivals and departures while mingling with the crowd. As I greeted him and introduced my friend, I saw that Vallianatos had donned a special look for the night as well. His normally combed hair was shock upright with gel. A slightly faded tattoo of a rose just poked out of his sleeve. Not wanting to keep him, we retired to a couch near the back of the room, and watched the scene.

Shortly after sitting down, a little before two in the morning, a quick headcount yielded something like eighty in attendance, all men. Nearly an hour later, around one hundred. A large number of people, but still far too few not to be dwarfed
by the size of the space. By the time I had done the second headcount, my friend was
ready to leave, as was I. Part of the reason that leaving sounded like such a good idea
was that we had not seen anyone that we knew beyond each other and Vallianatos.
For his part, Vallianatos seemed surprised that we were leaving so early. Indeed,
people were still trickling into the club. As we went up the steps, Maria Cyber came
in with her girlfriend, Natalia. Though other women may have come after I left, they
were the only women I saw in attendance.

This was not the only event to which Vallianatos invited me during my stay in
Greece. For the duration of the 2004 Olympics, he was planning a series of daily
parties to be called “Gaymes.” They would rotate from bar to bar, giving partygoers
a different destination every night, and in the process ensure each bar at least one
good night of revenue during what promised to be the tourist event of the year.
Hearsay and email on my return to the United States indicates that the parties went
well.

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Vallianatos is recognized by many as a journalist, one of the multitude of titles
at his disposal, and one he tends to use when he appears on television. For many
years, he had a television talk show, and interviewed a wide range of guests. Perhaps
because of that experience, perhaps because of his other jobs – which have included
advising political clients from a consultancy housed in a sleekly modern steel, glass,
and concrete building in Kolonaki – he has a polished appearance on the small screen.
Dressed in a crisp yet modest suit and tie, and projecting calm mastery of
information, he commands the ear of the audience in such a way that he can pause in
his speech and no one thinks to seize the moment to interrupt him. He is, as Faubion has noted, a self-made man, an orator, an embodiment of a certain ideal of Greek masculinity.

The press calls upon Vallianatos frequently to speak when sexuality enters the public discourse. When not called upon to be a spokesperson, he has even created the opportunity, and then occupied that position himself, aided by the recognition he already has. For example, he was a key organizer of and spokesperson for a “kiss-in” held in 2003 to protest the Εθνικό Συμβούλιο Ράδιο-Τηλεόρασης (Ethniko Sunvoulio Radio-Tileorasis, National Committee on Television and Radio or ESR) decision to fine the television station MEGA for airing an episode of a soap opera “Κλείσε τα Μάτια” (Kleise ta Mátia, Close Your Eyes) featuring a kiss between two male characters. Although many other activists were present for that event, his were the quotations picked up by the press. Even though he no longer holds any elected office in any of the specifically lesbian or gay organizations in Athens, he is often referred to in the press as “εκπρόσωπος των ομοφυλόφιλων” (ekprósos ton omofilófilon, homosexuals’ representative), or even occasionally as “πρόεδρος των ομοφυλόφιλων” (próedros ton omofilófilon, president of the homosexuals).

Although Vallianatos attends meetings of many gay and lesbian organizations, his formal membership is limited and the extent of his participation is strictly strategic. He could be described as entering a given organization just long enough to test the waters, to see the direction and the strength of the current, and departing. He could also be described as getting involved in the beginnings of things to give them a shape, a texture, and then backing off, allowing others to continue the work.
It is a pattern of interventions befitting the character that Faubion has described as the “sovereign tactician” (238, *inter alia*). Take, for example, the National Board that led to the creation of KEEL; Vallianatos was on the board from the beginning, although he rarely attended subsequent meetings unless they were of some particular importance. In the Polychromo Forum, he was regularly present at initial meetings, championing a vision of those meetings as an open and egalitarian space of conversation with no formal structure of power. His attendance waned as it became clear that this was indeed the form the Forum would take. In another example, when Amnesty International moved in 2003 to revive its Department of Sexual Identity (Τμήμα Ομοφυλοφιλίας και Σεξουαλικής Ταυτότητας, *Tmína Omofilofilías kai Sexualikís Tautótítas*, also known as TOST), through joint meetings with members of LOA and POP, Vallianatos was present at initial meetings. As time went on and the work of the meetings became more stabilized (and admittedly, less dynamic), Vallianatos receded. When POP went through its division resulting in POP and OLKE, Vallinatos maintained a distance from the fray, but eventually took on an advisory role to OLKE. At the time of the research, the only unambiguous membership he had in any activist organization that deals with sexuality to any extent was with the Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM), where he was Chairman. He is also the person within GHM to whom all inquiries about sexuality are directed.

As a sovereign tactician, Vallianatos is thus a man accustomed, if not to arbitrage, then to having many cards in his deck. When I asked him for a current email address at one point, he handed me three different business cards, all with physical addresses in different parts of Athens, and each card double-sided, one in
Greek and the other in English. One card was for GHM, another for C&C International, and one for Public Affairs Management. These last two cards identified Vallianatos as a “communications consultant” (σύμβουλος επικοινωνίας, súmvoulos epikoinonías).

The strategic flexibility that marks his activist career also marks Vallianatos’ media career. Faubion has already discussed in some detail the May 1987 issue of AMFI, the first under Vallianatos’ editorship. His analysis focuses on the editorial philosophy of the magazine under Vallianatos, stressing the orientation of the periodical to the “liberation of homosexual desire” rather than the liberation of any specific identity or group of people, a position Faubion marks as “queer before its time” (personal communication 2002; see also Faubion 1993: 237). After several issues under Vallianatos, the publication was taken over in 1988 by a new organization, EOK, created by former members of the first organization in Greece, AKOE.

In that same year, in May 1988, Vallianatos had moved on from AMFI to found another magazine, GAY. Perhaps this move was only the logical culmination of his thinking at the time; Faubion writes that during his editorship of AMFI, Vallianatos thought “another notion, another term, far more ideal [than homosexual]: the English ‘gay’” (Faubion 1993: 237). Structured in much the same way that AMFI had been under his editorship, GAY was to be a monthly magazine of current affairs (επικαιρότητας, epikairotitas). Along with some fifteen other collaborators and contributors, Vangelis Giannelos was credited as Content Supervisor, and his choices do not differ much from those seen in AMFI. The art of Keith Haring, poetry by Jean
Genet, an article on Jimmy Sommerville – whether by Vallianatos’ hand or Giannelos’, GAY maintained an international perspective on all things sexual. The fourth issue, and final to my knowledge, came out in September 1989. Still calling itself a monthly publication, the list of collaborators had shrunk dramatically. Giannelos’ absence from the masthead was conspicuous. Reflecting on the late 1980’s over dinner one summer night in 2002, Vallianatos framed it as a transitional time, where he and Giannelos went in different directions, and Vallianatos saw fit to leave gay activism alone for a while.

**Voice Two: Paola**

I first heard about the fundraising party when Paola, the president of the recently formed SATTE announced it as an upcoming event at the Polychromo Forum of October 2003. Since the previous Forum, relations between SATTE and the other activist groups had been strained due to the perceived lack of response to Paola’s recent overnight incarceration. In particular, SATTE was upset that other activists had not risen to condemn the online commentaries from the editor of DEON, Paul Sofianos, doubting the legitimacy of Paola’s claim to have been innocently distributing a broadsheet titled Τρανσέξουαλ Βήμα (Transsexual Vima, Transsexual Tribune) the night that the police detained her. For SATTE to announce a fundraising party at that time seemed calculated, but fortuitous nonetheless; political winds, if not actual sympathies, were clearly on their side. Details of the upcoming event remained sketchy at the time, however.

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5 It should be noted that To Βήμα (To Vima) is also the name of one of the most respected mainstream Greek daily newspapers.
Two weeks later, on October 15, the fundraiser was announced again at a meeting of the also recently formed POP, a group formed from those who felt that the monthly Polychromo Forum meetings were a good start, but that more needed to be done. One of the people who had recently begun attending POP meetings was Marina Galánou, who was at the time also the General Secretary for SATTE. Before the meeting, Marina spoke with everyone individually, and made certain to give them a flyer for the event, telling each one that she expected to see them there. Some of us bought tickets on the spot. During the meeting, she arranged a large stack of flyers on the table in the center of the group. The flyers featured an inverted triangle with a striped flag fluttering before it, the rainbow of colors easily imagined even though the flyer itself was printed in black and white. Several days later, Marina sent reminder emails. SATTE clearly meant for everyone to come.

The party, a χοροεσπερίδα (xoroesperida, dancing party), was to be held at Koukles, a well-known trans bar and stéki in Koukaki, on a block surrounded by auto-repair shops about five minutes by foot from the metro at Syngrou-Fix. Despite, or perhaps because of its reputation as a stéki, Koukles boasts a diverse clientele. Many nights, the prospect of seeing travesti up close, or even a drag show, attracts a number of áσχετοι (ásxetoi, literally “unrelated” or “irrelevant,” used as a nominative for those who are not seen as truly part of the gay milieu). I do not imply that the bar’s regulars are necessarily gay, trans, or even σκέτοι (skétoi, usually “pure” or “unadulterated,” but in this case, a nominative for “obvious,” as in “obviously gay”; despite the similarities of pronunciation, it is unrelated to ásxetoi).

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6 The name of the bar translates as “baby dolls” (κούκλες).
Some Athenians, however, have reservations about the quality of the crowd that *Koukles* attracts, and see the neighborhood as dangerous. They also suspect that when the performers are not working on stage, they are often working the streets.

The crowd for the party, though, was to be somewhat more controlled than normal nights. Admission would be by ticket only, sold in advance and at the door. Like many clubs seeking to ensure some profit per person who enters, *Koukles* normally charges a cover at the door, for which the customer receives a slip of paper, stamped with a unique number and a date, and exchangeable at the bar towards one drink up to the amount of the cover. Covers at most bars normally range from five to seven euros, though ordering a drink cheaper than the cover charge does not mean that you still have credit. For the Friday night of the party, the tickets were twenty euros each, securing one drink, access to a buffet, and the right to view the evening’s entertainment.

On the night of the party, October 22, I showed up at 10:30, the starting time printed on the flyer and the tickets. I was early, of course, and after chatting with the two girls at the door, they gave me a drink slip and pointed me toward the bar. Once past the entry vestibule, the club itself is shaped like a lopsided doughnut. The hole in the middle of the doughnut is occupied by a cubby hole open on two sides, one for the DJ *cum* lighting operator to enter, and one for the DJ to see onto the stage – a slightly raised, wooden platform in the corner by the main entrance, backed with a shimmering of finely sliced mylar curtains. On the part of the doughnut farthest from the entry way is the L-shaped bar and the bathrooms. The lopsided part of the
doughnut is a heavily mirrored yet somehow dimly lit corner, the most suitable place in the bar for quiet conversations.

A handful of the usual suspects had already arrived. A group from POP was already there, as were two folks I knew through POEK, including a young *travesti* named Michele. Between the six of us, we virtually had the run of the bar, including the small but tasty buffet, housed on a table in front of the DJ booth. The only other people were running between the back rooms and the entry vestibule, glittering and feathery garments clutched in their hands. They would occasionally step behind the bar between trips to serve drinks. More people arrived over the next hour, including another group of POP attendees, one of whom was also a member of ACT UP, and some of the women who I recognized as being in LOA. Shortly before midnight, Marina and Paola entered together, Marina in an evening gown and Paola in a black power suit. Vallianatos soon appeared, accompanied by a quiet, muscular man whom I did not meet. No other activists were to be seen, though other people did drift in, all unfamiliar. (I wondered if Paola and Marina would excuse the absent activists on account of their having had a preparatory meeting for the next Forum earlier that night; I myself had just enough time to grab a bite to eat on the way to the fundraiser from that meeting.) I am unsure how many people attended. The shape of the club made a headcount difficult, but by the time the show started, the front half of the club was packed solid, and new arrivals were forced to stand by the door. My efforts at an accurate headcount during the show were also kindly thwarted by Michelle, who at one point took my chin in her hand and pointed my face to the stage, saying “The show’s over there, sweetheart.”
The show itself, following a standard drag format (see Newton 1972), was structured mostly around lip-sync numbers performed in costume of various degrees of camp. Some outfits were meant to be silly, others sexy. These numbers were interspersed with vamping sets by the emcee, who expertly teased and joked with the audience until she got the signal that the next act was in place. This particular show was not just drag, but also included several strip-teases by male dancers of varying talent. One dancer, with whom Vallianatos had been chatting earlier, was introduced to the audience only as Tzannetos. When he made his entrance in a cylindrical cage that slowly revealed his body as it lowered from the ceiling to the stage, murmurs among the crowd confirmed that several audience members were able to supply his missing last name on their own: Tsapatsaris. Some years earlier, in 2001, Tsapatsaris had achieved a measure of notoriety because of a trial that tested the legitimacy of Paragraph 347 of the Greek Penal Code, criminalizing male-male prostitution. He was eventually exonerated, as the judge ruled that the use of 347 was discriminatory on the basis of gender (see Appendix for more details). Whatever he had been doing since that trial, Tsapatsaris had evidently been taking care of himself; he was one of the more talented dancers at the fundraiser that night.

As the show ended at around two in the morning, the emcee called for a round of applause for the organizers, Paola and Marina, and invited people to stay as long as they liked. Once the club lights came up, however, people were clearly ready to go. Paola and Marina moved through the crowd, thanking people who were leaving. They seemed pleased, but were clearly ready to go themselves.

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Regardless of the extent to which Paola has made a living off of her body, she has clearly made her reputation that way. Paola, the name chosen by the person recognized by the Greek state only as Pavlos Reveniotis, is one of a short list of travesti who have become famous across Greece and beyond – a list including Betty (from the early days of AKOE), Paloma (not to be confused with Paola), and Tzeni Xeiloudaki. For each of them, access to and control of mass media was a critical part of that fame. Indeed, Paola’s initial fame depended greatly on images of her body, images which she controlled to attain strict ideals of feminine beauty, a posture clearly coded to match and to lure the desires of heterosexual men. These days, having left behind the age of posing herself as paradigmatic sexual object, her public appearance is more relaxed, though still highly sexualized. Though less rigorous now about her appearance, she has a deep knowledge of how to deploy the social power coded in the feminized sartorial repertoire, as witnessed by her black power suit at the SATTE fundraiser.

Paola’s most recognized production is the periodical Τo Κράξιμο (To Kráximo).7 Like AMFI, it was available at kiosks around Athens. Begun as a broadsheet in 1981, it originally sold for 25 drachmas. It had transformed into a bound magazine by the eighth issue in 1988, selling for 300 drachmas, the same price at which AMFI was sold. The fourteenth and final issue sold in 1994 for 950

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7 The title literally translates as “bird call,” or “scream” (Faubion 1993: 238). It is also related to the verb κράζεω (krázo), which is used colloquially to describe chastising or tongue lashing, in the sense of “giving someone what for,” or “telling someone off.”
drachmas. The content of the publication was consistently provocative, highly sexual, and clearly shunned any attempt at bourgeois respectability. Rather, it was literally a scream in printed form, a personal vendetta against hypocritical judicial and social systems that, even as they desired and made a place for prostitution, made both the conditions of that labor and the people who performed it less than human. To judge by the images in the publication, one of the few forces to temper the anger behind that scream lay in the beauty of young men. As the publication matured, however, it gradually acquired an international perspective more like that of AMFI. Foreign news became a staple item as the periodical grew in size. Collaborators eventually came to include an American, David Turner, and his Greek partner, Thodoris Antonopoulos. Both Turner and Antonopoulos brought with them a gaze fixed firmly beyond the borders of Greece.

Yet it is Paola’s initial sexual revolutionary spirit that animates the original surtitle of the broadsheet: “every occupation with profit as its aim is prostitution” (as translated by Faubion 1993: 239). It was a phrase that she held on to for some time, at least for the issues up to the seventh, from which Faubion draws his data. Other aspects of the periodical, however, were not so stable over time. The subtitle on which Faubion remarks – “a periodical of revolutionary homosexual expression” – was arrived at after multiple transformations. The subtitle of the third issue, for example, from July 1982, reads inventively: εφημεριδικό αυτοέκφρασης και

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8 Note that although the thirteenth and the fourteenth issues are both dated for Winter 1993 on the issues themselves, this is a misprint; issue fourteen is supposed to correspond to Winter 1994. A chronology of Kraximo is available online, at http://www.geocities.com/kraximo, written by journalist and former contributor Thodoris Antonopoulos.
κοινωνικής κριτικής (efimeriodikό autoékfrasis kai koinonikís kritikís, news-magazine of self-expression and social critique). Here, befitting a language inflected by kaliarndá, her demand for unrestricted self-expression is enacted by the nonce word efimeriodikό – a conjoining of efimerída (newspaper) and periodikó (magazine, journal).

A more revealing semiotic alteration, however, comes in the issues produced after Faubion’s departure from the field. In these issues, Paola drops her self-description: εκδότης η εκδηδομένη τραβεστί Παόλα (ekdóttis: i ekdidoméni travesti Paola, publisher: the prostitute travesti Paola). In its place is a simple subtitle that recalls the preferences Vallianatos voiced to Faubion in the mid 1980’s: gay ékdoση (gay ékdoσi, gay publication; her subtitle retains “gay” in the English orthography). It is difficult to determine now, in 2005, the degree to which a shift to “gay” over a decade ago was a philosophical one, or driven by her sense of the market, or some other factor.

Reflecting on those years today, Paola sees Kraximo as something clearly of the past, though worth preserving. During early 2004, there was a proposal floated by the staff of a new Greek LGBT periodical, Antivirus, to locate copies of all the old periodicals, including Kraximo, and scan them, creating a permanent and easily accessible archive of the movement’s history. Paola seemed excited about the idea. She lamented that she herself no longer had copies of all of the issues, and it would be good to retrieve that history. Even though all fourteen issues are described on the web site mentioned above, their full contents are not available there. However, Paola was able to bring issues six through fourteen to a December 2003 preparatory
meeting for the Polychromo Forum. To my knowledge, a full digital archive of all fourteen issues has yet to be created.

Since the *Kraximo* years, Paola’s media presence has abated. Today, it consists largely of sporadic interviews in other Greek LGBT publications, the website mentioned above, an occasional television appearance, and the publication of the multi-lingual *Greek Gay Guide*. Now in its eighth edition, the *Greek Gay Guide* is available at kiosks around Athens. I first heard of the *Guide* in the summer of 2001, when I saw a flyer pasted to a lamp post in Omonoa, one of the central squares of Athens. After showing the flyer to a friend, he was able to direct me to the one kiosk in Omonoa where I was able to purchase a copy of the seventh edition, dated 2000, for five thousand drachmas, around thirteen dollars at the time. It is written in two languages, Greek and English, and features a well-known Tom of Finland drawing on the front, embossed in suggestive areas. Among its few advertisements is a full page announcement of new projects forthcoming from Paola and Kraximo Publications. There is also a short introductory essay for each language section. The English version is significantly different from the Greek, providing a much more detailed history of lesbian and gay organizations in Greece. This difference in substance might be explained by suggesting that a Greek audience is more likely to be familiar with the details of Greek activism. Such an elaborate history in Greek would be an unnecessary waste of editorial space. Alternatively, and perhaps more persuasively, a Greek audience is more likely to have already committed to one version or another of the history of Greek activism. No narrative about that history would be likely to

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9 The original title is in English.
change their perceptions, particularly coming from someone within the movement who is seen as having an interest in how that history is perceived. Non-Greeks and tourists, on the other hand, are perhaps more pliable in this respect, more susceptible to being shaped regarding their beliefs about Greek activism and activists.

Regardless, the next publication from Paola of which I am aware came in 2004, the eighth edition of the *Greek Gay Guide*, again available at kiosks in Athens, this time for sixteen euros. While visiting Paola at her house to give her copies of some photographs I had taken of her at a recent protest march, she gave me a copy of the 2004 *Guide*. Written in English, Italian and Greek, it is much more expansive than the seventh edition, with many more advertisements, including the sponsorship of Diesel clothing, and a number of the more successful bars of that time: Lambda, Play my Music, and Sodade. Moreover, there is a brief essay at the end written only in Greek, but titled in English: “Loren Cameron: female-to-male transexuality” [sic]. This essay is followed by a short glossary of Greek terms to know. Intended perhaps more for amusement than for edification or actual use, the derivation of the words listed is nevertheless heavily marked by kaliarndá. Also of note, thanks are given to Panagiotis Hatzistefanou for his assistance in constructing the glossary. An experienced journalist, he had just the previous year become the regular columnist for the lesbian and gay page in *Time Out Athens*, the local franchise of the chain of international city life-style guides.

Not all collaborators on the eighth edition remained in Paola’s good graces, however. Michalis Drakakis, credited as the managing editor of the 2004 *Guide*, was also the author of an article in the *Athens Voice* (2004) with the following title:
“Γυαλικό Ελληνικό Gay Lobby;” *(Yparxei Elliniko Gay Lobby; Is There a Greek Gay Lobby?)*. His title is a provocation designed to set up his negative conclusion: “In a country like Greece, if there were a serious gay organization of a western type...” The article caused an uproar among the activists, many of whom wondered aloud who this person could be, this person they did not know, yet who saw fit to write about them. Many were insulted by his depiction of them, and were curious to learn from where he had gotten his information. Vangelis Giannelos was particularly upset, claiming gross journalistic negligence for getting the facts wrong.

True, there were several glaring historical errors in Drakakis’s depiction; EOK, for example, was founded in 1988, not in the 1990’s, as Drakakis had claimed. Concerning his grasp of public perception of the activists, however, Drakakis’s depiction was not too far from the mark, even among the activists themselves. It was as if the activists quietly understood that he was in some basic respects correct, but nevertheless closed ranks against him on the grounds of factual error. As far as his source of information, however, it did not take a lot of research to find that the Michalis Drakakis who blindsided them in the article was the same Michalis Drakakis who had worked with Paola on the 2004 *Guide*. Perhaps the timing was coincidental, but as people were gathering for a preparatory meeting of the Polychromo Forum at the offices of SATTE shortly after the *Athens Voice* article had come out, Paola complained bitterly that she would never work again with Drakakis, because he had taken advantage of her. His mismanagement of the production of the *Guide* had lost
her a considerable amount of money. She was sure, though, that the money had not
gone completely to waste. She accused Drakakis of being a κλέφτης (klefis, thief).

Voice Three: Vangelis Giannelos

At a meeting held in the combined house and office of Vangelis Giannelos –
professional internet service provider and, at that time, President of EOK for the
previous sixteen years – EOK was planning a fundraiser to be held at Lamda, one of
the longest running bars in Athens frequented primarily by gay men, as a casual
observer could note on any given night of the week. At this meeting, as in most other
EOK meetings, Giannelos was moderator of the discussion. Reports were heard from
people who have taken on individual responsibilities for the fundraiser. The
responsibilities were divided into securing the space and the time, arranging for the
event tickets and the distribution of profit between the bar and the organization,
publicizing the party, creation of fliers, posting emails to list-serves, and arranging for
a crowd-drawing act or personality. Many of these responsibilities were taken on by
Giannelos himself, particularly when money was involved. Conversations that
required a group decision were conducted in a round robin, with everyone encouraged
to speak, including anthropologists.

Also present at some of these meetings was Giannis Dalaris, EOK member,
and one of the owners of Lamda. The agenda for the meeting also included an update
on the status of a new set of offices for EOK, housed in a building that Dalaris owns.

I thought often that continual use of Giannelos’ office and house as meeting space is a

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10 Herzfeld has documented how theft and accusations thereof are used in the
construction and elaboration of friendship ties among Cretan shepherds (1985). In
Paola’s case, however, her accusation of thievery was clearly not intended to express
or instantiate a social tie, but to abjure one.
drain on him, both as host, and as organizer. It is a sacrifice he occasionally points to
when his service to the gay community is questioned, or his authority. Indeed, his
language is often of personal sacrifices: of money, time, and personal space.
Although the new offices seemed to remain at the planning level for the duration of
my fieldwork, EOK did meet in locations other than Giannelos’ office/house. One of
these locations was *Enudreío*,¹¹ a café across the street from Lamda, owned and
operated by the sister of Giannis Dalaris. Occasionally, EOK members would meet
together at various cafés around Athens, such as *Archángello, Ráges*, or the
occasional FloCafe. Although meetings outside of Giannelos’ house were mostly
non-official, business would always be discussed at least in passing, and sometimes
argued over heatedly.

When the night of the fundraiser at Lamda came, the fliers were up in Lamda,
and presumably had been distributed the night before in the streets outside some other
bars in the Gazi neighborhood. The nine o’clock start time was sufficiently early in
the evening that no one was really there yet when I showed up at quarter after nine.
This condition lasted for some hours, broken by the occasional arrival of a member
with a guest or two in tow. By the time I left, there were around thirty people in the
bar. I heard tell the next day that the bar eventually did have a good crowd at around
three in the morning, long after I had left, and too close to the normal peak hour of the
bar to determine if they had come specifically for the fundraiser, or just for the bar. I
wondered if it frustrated EOK members to recall that just a few months earlier,

¹¹ The name of the bar means “aquarium,” a name well-suited to the original
centerpiece of the café’s décor, a wall of falling water. Sadly, the wall was removed,
but the name remains.
Lamda had been packed with nearly two hundred people who sat for three hours, from eight until eleven at night, listening to heated discussion about the aftermath of the arrests at Spices.

Over the next days, what I did not hear were numbers. I did not hear about the attendance. I did not hear about the take at the door. I did not hear about the gross amount taken in by EOK, nor did I hear a complete number for expenses. Some of the component numbers were spoken of circumspectly, like the cut rate price on the flyers that was garnered for the organization because they were printed by a friend of a member.

There was much internal debate after the fundraiser, though. Why had it not gone well? Why was no money made? Perhaps the flyer was at fault, since it did not in the end reflect the debate about representation and appropriate letters of the alphabet (LGBT) that had featured so strongly in the preparation meetings. Perhaps the timing was at fault, since the take from the door was apparently only supposed to be split between the bar and EOK during a certain time frame. Perhaps the advertising strategy was at fault, since most of the people who came to the event were members and their friends and lovers. Whatever the explanation for the perceived lack of success, the story about the party circulated later in formats that offered explanations ranging from people’s feelings about Giannelos to the suspicion that women had felt alienated by the choice of venue, even though many of the first people there were women. Some people said that EOK just did not know what they were doing, and that the failed fundraiser was yet another sign alongside all the others that point to the need for a change of leadership in the Greek LGBT movement.
Giannelos has a distinct media presence. To most Greeks, he is best known through his television appearances whenever sexual orientation becomes an issue in the mainstream media, as in the events following the police raid on the bar Spices. He is frequently called on by the press to speak in his capacity as the President of EOK. When on the small screen, the best word for his appearance would be "discrete." He exudes an aura of the average, next-door, normal kind of guy. His clothing in the studio is usually just what he wears for his daily business: a button down shirt, usually a muted fall color or a simple plaid, and more often than not, blue jeans. Granted, on some occasions he is forced to get across town on short notice to appear on a given news or talk show, and would not have time to change clothes if he wanted. However, I do not ever recall seeing him in a suit and tie over the time I was in Greece. Sartorially then, he conveys a message of simplicity, of practicality and lack of pretension. The degree to which this effect is calculated is uncertain.

His discretion extends beyond clothing to his gender affect. Both in person and on television, it is clear that he desires to present himself as a man (ἀνδρός, ándras) who is serious (σοβαρός, sovarós) and above all logical. He makes no secret of his lack of love for the Orthodox Church, and has been vigorous in his efforts to question the authority of the clergy and their teachings. Indeed, the entrance to the chat rooms of www.gay.gr, a web page connected to EOK and one which Giannelos designed himself, warns fanatic Orthodox Christians to keep out. He describes himself not as a Christian, but as a Twelve Gods believer. More specifically, he is a follower of Apollo, perhaps the ultimate god of rationality and order.
Beyond television, and beyond EOK web pages, Giannelos earns his living from the media. His company, NYX Internet, is headquartered in the same apartment flat as his home. The buzzer for his flat does not read Giannelos, but NYX. As a business specializing in creating web pages for other companies and providing internet services, Giannelos is also strategically positioned to provide EOK with the information and communication support needed to run an activist organization. It also makes him indispensable personally. A great deal of responsibility is concentrated in his hands, even though others are involved. He has at various points been solely responsible for the maintenance of EOK’s communications, membership roles, meeting space, and public relations. As the creator of both EOK’s official web page, www.eok.gr, and the more general page for public use, www.gay.gr, he charts traffic on the servers, controls access to chat rooms, and approves the content of the pages.

For a significant period of time, almost a year, Giannelos was also providing the server space for the now defunct forum@eok.gr, the first mailing list of activist organizations and interested individuals formed out of the Polychromo Forum. It is worth noting that he himself was never a member of the list. Nor was he the moderator of that list; that job was given to Sotiria Theohari, then a graduate student in California. At the time of my fieldwork, this arrangement seemed odd, but in retrospect, it has a clear logic. Due to the highly politicized nature of forum@eok.gr, and given the number of organizations and individuals involved in the list, it would have been imprudent for Giannelos to put himself into the position of arbitrating potential disputes between members. His personal absence from the list was also
strategic. Other members of EOK were enrolled individually, such as Irene Petropoulou. Hence, though not officially present, Giannelos had easy access to whatever information circulated there. Because I knew him to be the host of the mailing list, it was also to Giannelos that I first came in my search to join forum@eok.gr.

Giannelos’s involvement with EOK has also given him media presence in other ways. For some time, he could be heard on the weekly lesbian and gay radio show housed at 94.1 FM, Rádio Iráklio, a station also known as “Epikoinonia FM” (Επικοινωνία FM, Communication FM) along with his co-host, Irene Petropoulou. The show itself was started by EOK in 1993, and after a brief stint under the name “A Light in the Night,” was eventually re-christened Ρόζ Πάνθερες (Roz Pántheres, Pink Panthers), a name that summons in queer colors the perhaps conflicting images of a bumbling inspector and a suave cartoon cat, though more likely intended to invoke the militancy and organizational clout of various Panthers elsewhere and of other shades: Black and Grey. Also, during the 1990’s, EOK helped to start a new magazine, DEON, now run exclusively by Paul Sofianos. Thus, Giannelos’ media experience spans not only a great number of years, but also a diverse range of media formats, including print, radio, internet, and television.

**Voice Four: Maria Cyber**

I heard about Maria from almost the first days that I was in Athens. The stories that circulated about her were consistent in two respects. First, she arranged parties on a regular basis, via a group known as the Cyberdykes. Second, she was famously sex positive, with no compunctions about talking sex at any given moment,
and a reputation for putting things bluntly, for talking ὅσαν μάγκα (san mánga, like a
tough guy). She remained something of a mythic figure for me until I introduced
myself to her at Lamda, at the second gathering of what would become the
Polychromo Forum. Then, as in all our subsequent meetings, her clothes were always
loose, comfortable and informal – uniformly jeans, overalls or pants. To term her
clothes masculine would be an exaggeration, however; she leaves no doubt that she is
a woman. Yet she is not a woman who would appear in advertisements for the
makeup counter at Hondos Center (a Greek shopping chain rather like Dillard’s in the
United States). Her style of speech, her style of dress, and her style of femininity all
put her in tune with the counter-cultural atmosphere that marked the late night
denizens of the radio station in Irakleio. During her radio show, she was partial to
playing UK garage, Eminem, Scissor Sisters, Boy George, and Depeche Mode; in
general, she avoids playing Greek music.

Though I never went to a single party she organized, I would occasionally get
text messages on my cell phone, many of them advertising a party at Ἀρώμα
Γυναικών (Aróma Gunaikón, Scent of a Woman) a bar in Exarchia. I had heard in the
past that she had put together parties at Lizard, a bar upstairs from the café Kirki in
Thisio. Indeed, all of the parties that she had put together were directed at women.
The flyers had even featured photographs of her girlfriends. Despite the invitations, I
felt that as a gay man I might be welcome on some levels, but also that I would be out
of place in the women’s eyes, and spoil their scene.

Rather than go to her parties, then, I saw her most often at the radio station
under the Demos (Townhall) of Neo Irakleio on Thursday nights at 11, after the long
metro ride up from the center of the city. I did not go every week, and more often than not I would just show up unannounced. In fact, people would almost always drop by randomly, usually young women. Although Maria often had news to read, song dedications to announce, or a story to tell, she always made time to talk to the people coming through the studio, and would frequently talk about new arrivals on the air. With the drinks and snacks that she would bring to the studio, the two hour show often enough ended up being more like a party than anything else.

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The radio show was not, however, the beginning of Maria’s involvement in gay and lesbian activist media. The first involvement I was able to document came from 1997, during the creation of an informational flyer about AIDS. The text for the flyer was designed by KEEL, the Center for the Control of Special Diseases, and had been forwarded to EOK for the creation of the flyer itself, mostly through the person of Panagiotis Damaskos, Director of the Office of Psychosocial Support at KEEL and a member of EOK. At that time, Maria was taken on as a graphic designer for the flyer. It was later on that she acquired the moniker Cyberdyke. Once introduced to EOK, however, Maria became a member, and began co-hosting the radio show for a while with Giannelos and Sofianos. She eventually took over the hosting of the show entirely.12 In the beginning, this was an ideal solution for EOK. Eventually, Maria had been doing the show for so long that it became identified with her, more than

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12 Another woman by the name of Margarita Mastroianni, a member of EOK from 1993, had also been the radio show host for a while after the time when Giannelos and Petropoulos were co-hosts. I do not know why Mastroianni stopped; I also never met her in the twenty-six months I was in Greece, nor was she spoken of outside of stories about the radio show.
with EOK. She did little to dispel that impression, a fact that would come to complicate her relationship with Giannelos.

Reinforcing this perception that the show is hers alone, it has occasionally been advertised without reference to EOK at all, as in the summer 2002 issue of DEON (see pages 33, 45, 53). Recall that Sofianos, too, had been a host of the show, alongside Maria. He would know the history of the show just as well as she or any other EOK member. Maria Cyberdyke is also credited in that same issue of DEON as both a photographer and member of the editorial team. In a different publication, the Greek Gay Guide 2004 published by Paola, the radio show is given an almost glowing description, but is clearly listed as belonging to EOK (see page 50).

Compare this entry to the one on the very next page, where EOK is described as “small NGO, which was founded to protect against the homophobia and discrimination faced by people in Greece. After five years, however, it has produced little or no results for the community which, in theory, it represents” (51). Maria Cyber was also credited as a researcher and copy writer for that edition of the guide.

That slide in identification understandably led to conflicts between Maria and EOK. One of the more superficial, though indicative points of friction was that EOK meetings were scheduled for Thursday evenings, the same day as the radio show. For Maria, making both was difficult; even by car, the commutes between her house, Exarchia and Neo Irakleio can run upwards of forty-five minutes at that time of day. Nevertheless, one Thursday evening in May of 2003, Maria appeared at an EOK meeting held at the café Enudreio, perhaps because she had in effect been summoned to justify her apparent lack of participation in EOK. It was clear, however, that the
summons had little to do with her meeting attendance, and was more a reminder that the radio show belonged to EOK, not to her personally. The café Enudreio was a curious choice for that meeting. Not only is it clearly not the private, sheltered setting of Giannelos’s house, it is also on a corner facing a busy thoroughfare, with two enormous glass walls facing the streets. In the dusk of summer evenings, the well-lit interior is completely visible from the outside. Perhaps this choice was strategic on Giannelos’s part, intended to restrain emotions during the meeting by setting it in a neutral theatre open to the gaze of strangers. At first, the discussion circled around why Maria was not coming to meetings. Maria suggested different days of the week that might work for her. Yet as her offers were dismissed, Maria chose to take the initiative. She portrayed the summons and the meeting as gross disrespect to her, personally. She related a detailed history of her efforts to promote both the radio show and EOK, and rebuked anyone who dared interrupt her as she spoke. It was an insult to her, personally, that the organization saw fit to issue ultimatums after all she had done for it. She then walked out of the meeting, saying she had to leave to make it in time to the radio station. She remained on the sidewalk outside for several minutes, however, chain smoking as one of the EOK members tried to calm her down and get her to come back inside.

Only two days later, that conflict reappeared in a different form, this time over song dedications and on-air “shout outs” by cell phone text messaging during the radio show. Soliciting text messages (also known as SMS) to a dedicated line that provides a service – usually small data files – constitutes a common business format in Greece. Television advertisements run in all viewing slots, featuring pop music
ring tones that cell phone users can order for their phone by sending a message to a four-digit number. Television reality game shows offer viewers a means of voting on contestants based on the same business model. Late at night, certain music video channels also offer a chat and match-making service via the SMS format (some of which, intriguingly, are vague as to the gender sought, or explicitly searching for same-sex liaisons). The cost of such SMS messages can range upwards of several euros, depending on the service requested. Typically, the proceeds of each sale are divided between the cell phone service provider, the SMS operating company, and the provider of the service for which the end user is paying. Given the popularity and ubiquity of such SMS services, it is highly unlikely that users do not already know they are being charged a special rate for each time they call.

At that next EOK meeting, two days after the episode at Enudreio, Maria sent an email thirty minutes before to say she would not be able to attend. The agenda for that meeting included a new item: discussion of the SMS line advertised by Maria on the radio show, 4522. Although the cost per call was known – exactly 1 euro – it never became clear how profits were divided. Nor did anyone mention how long the SMS line had been in operation. It was as if the existence of the line had just been discovered. Moreover, no one questioned whether there was evidence that Maria herself rented the SMS line. Nevertheless, after the scene at Enudreio, the prospect that Maria Cyber might be making money off of the 4522 SMS line became disconcerting to members of EOK, and particularly Giannelos. Accordingly, the argument was made that callers were unaware that they were being charged when they chose to express their feelings for someone by calling in a song dedication.
Maria was positioned as taking advantage of unsuspecting callers, operating selfishly for profit. There were proposals that EOK demand the SMS line be dropped, or that Maria take on a co-host (a proposal that seemed to have little to do with protecting the money of unsuspecting callers). It was suggested, and then retracted as too divisive, that failure to comply should result in her expulsion from EOK. It was also announced at the meeting that conversations had taken place with the radio station administration, which had no problem with Maria.

In the end, however, that controversy died down, possibly due to the lull in activism that always comes with the onset of summer, as Athenians escape their city for vacations in villages and on the islands. Maria retained her position as sole host of the show. She was even present at a meeting of EOK where there was talk of restructuring the group. More interestingly, when the ESR issued a five thousand euro fine to the radio station for Maria Cyber's language on the program in January 2005, Giannelos was among the first to defend her publicly, including an on-line petition calling for the dismissal of Laskaridis from the chair of the ESR.

However, Maria's latest venture, Proud Productions (www.proud.gr), takes her in a very different direction from graphic design, radio, or SMS lines. From her new office, a small apartment on the top floor of a building overlooking the Syngrou-Fix metro station, she is the executive manager of a two-person company specializing in what her English-only business card describes as "Greek LGBT Promotions." The other side of that card features a bold rainbow stripe. In the middle of a busy afternoon, squeezed between phone calls and a lunch with Vallianatos, Maria Cyber (the "dyke" now clipped entirely from her moniker) took some time to describe to me
her next big project: a gay tourist city map, timed to come out just before the 2004 Olympic Games.

**Voice Five: Paul Sofianos**

The event for which Paul Sofianos is most widely known is Mr. Gay Greece. The first time around, it was held on Mykonos during the tourist season of 2002. I had heard about it for some time before it happened, through friends, websites, and various other media formats. Sofianos even organized a television appearance with two of the contestants, although it was difficult to determine if either the host of the afternoon gossip show or the telephone callers took the idea of a gay male beauty contest at all seriously. Almost lost in the excitement of live homosexuals in the studio was the fact that the contest was also to be a charity fundraiser for the Κέντρο Ζωής (Kéntro Zoís; though Greeks usually call it by the two word name meaning “Center for Life,” the charity’s own English literature translates their name as Center for Inspirational Living). Several weeks before the event, through Akis Potamianos, a friend who had previously worked with Sofianos soliciting advertising sales for the magazine *DEON*, I was able to get an introduction to Sofianos. In my capacity as a freelance journalist writing for the *Texas Triangle*, I asked Sofianos for a press pass to attend the event, which he granted.

At the time of the fieldwork, I was under the impression that Mr. Gay Greece was an invention entirely of Sofianos’s own. However, it turned out that it is patterned after similar contests held in several European countries, such as Mr. Gay UK, Mr. Gay France, and Mr. Gay Benelux. Winners of one country will often travel to participate as hosts, emcees, or docents in competitions held in other countries.
The winners and runners-up often receive modeling contracts as well. As far as I can determine, there is no single parent company to which all competitions must pay for rights to a franchise. However, the capital and credit required to put on the events suggests that models and contestants are not the only objects or people circulating between individual Mr. Gay competitions.

On the appointed weekend in early September, I took the boat from Pireaus to Mykonos by myself, and stayed with two friends who I had met the previous summer. The event filled the whole weekend. On the first day of public events, there was a warm-up party, starting at the bar Ikaros, located at the top of an appropriately precipitous flight of steps on the first floor of a building that housed the bar Pierro’s on the ground floor underneath. This first evening was to culminate in a grand presentation of the contestants to the public and segue into a parade through the χώρα (hóra, usually “country” or “area,” but on islands the term signifies the main town after which the island is named). Waiting for the presentation to begin, I chatted with various people as we watched Sofianos scurrying around the bar and up and down the steps, making final preparations. Manos, a contestant who I had met by chance nearly a month earlier on a rocky beach south of Athens called Limanakia, was surprised when I wondered aloud why the event was not being held in Athens. “You know better than that,” he replied in smooth English. “It’s easier on Mykonos.” The rest of the time, we talked about his recent trip to London, and his experience of the large dance clubs there. Sebastian, another contestant and a Russian by birth, was the ex-boyfriend of a mutual acquaintance. Despite the relaxed air communicated by his loose, crumpled white shirt and wrap-around sunshades, he was nervously checking
the thinning crowd below when he was not busy socializing with one of the other contestants. He cut a very different figure in the bar, both from the calm but quiet man who had been on television promoting the event not two weeks ago, and from the slightly awkward but congenial man who had showed pictures of himself on the Mr. Gay Greece website to a group of friends in his ex-boyfriend’s apartment. Perhaps he had some other reason to be nervous; I put his nerves to the fact that it was an hour past the advertised starting time of the parade. That impression was confirmed for me by two drag queens who, while taking a break at the bar from taunting the crowd below, confided that they had no idea what they were really supposed to be doing.

Eventually, however, the presentation began, and to the cheers of the remaining crowd, the contestants set off. It ended up being less of a parade and more of a conga line weaving through the narrow streets. Though a few people did join in who were not directly involved in the event, the parade never reached the level of involvement at, say, Απόκριες (Apokries, the Carnival connected to Orthodox Easter), and certainly not the size of the annual November 17th street protests in Athens. Waving colorful elongated balloons and following the four-to-the-floor dance beat crackling from a boom box on the shoulders of the parade leader, the ten contestants, Sofianos and the two drag queens chanted, “Hey Hey Mr. Gay Greece” in English as the conga line wove past tavernas, high-end jewelry shops, ice cream parlors and hotels. Trailing behind the parade, I saw that most people remained at the sidelines as the parade passed, some cheering, others twisting in their chairs to look on with some confusion, still others elbowing their neighbors and commenting. Some
of the commentary was clearly audible, even over the crackling boom box. “Εἶναι ολοί Ἑλληνες;” (Einai oloi Ellines?, Are they all Greek?); “Δεν εἶναι” (Den einai, They’re not); “Mister Gay Greece? What’s that?” – this last comment from a girl evidently in a group of English speaking tourists. For the most part, the tourist-engorged population seemed amused, at best. Some groups of men, however, seemed to ignore the line of dancing men waving balloons, and pressed on politely against the flow of the conga line. Though it is not reliable to judge by appearances, I might have expected them to be a little more interested in the parade, if only to look at the men in it. Later that night, I would write in my field notes that these determined men were “clearly not identifying (that’s a tricky observation – careful there).”

The next evening was the actual contest, held in the Fruit Garden of the Elysium Hotel. I met a good number of people there: a trio of American friends who had been coming for ten years; two female tour guides from Manchester who had been coming for two years; a group of eight men from New York City and Norway; two guys from London who had been coming for six years; another female tour guide from Dusseldorf. Sofianos’s co-host, Amanda Lear, got a rousing response when she welcomed the crowd in both Italian and French. My best guess is that some 600 people were in attendance; official numbers were never released. Yet, Sofianos’s welcome to the crowd in Greek received only meager applause. The only Greek that I met that night was Giannis, the videographer, who told me that a DVD of the event would be released sometime before Christmas.

Contestants number two, Manos (the guy I met on the beach), and number eight, Kostas, were the favorites from the beginning. The audience response to their
talent numbers (dance and song, respectively) only solidified their position, which
they maintained throughout the fashion modeling, the swimsuit competition, and the
judges’ questioning. Indeed, the judges’ panel, which included Vangelis Giannelos
and Irene Petropoulou, was just as impressed, and gave first place to Manos
Velentakis. Kostas Kountos received second place, a fact that was to resurface later
when he became a contestant on the reality show talent search, Fame Story.

The second Mr. Gay Greece, held in 2003, did not fare so well. I again
attended as a reporter for the Texas Triangle, and made sure to send a copy of the
article to Sofianos afterwards. Here is the text of that article:

**Hard Times: Mr Gay Greece 2003**

On the evening of September 28th, the LGBT scene in Athens saw something of a
small miracle: Mr Gay Greece 2003. Billed as the “biggest gay event of the year,”
this second incarnation of the gay male beauty contest relocated from the island of
Mykonos to the club Budha Live in the capital, Athens.

Unfortunately, the second incarnation did not live up to the first. That does not
dampen its importance, however, especially given the recent conditions of LGBT life
in Greece.

The organizer and promoter of Mr Gay Greece 2003, Paul Sofianos, enjoyed a great
success with the first Mr Gay Greece in 2002. That event attracted some 600 people,
mostly international tourists, to watch ten contestants vie for the title at the Elysium
Hotel on Mykonos. The success of Mr Gay Greece 2002 demonstrated that it was
possible to mount such an openly gay event in Greece. The only question that
remained was how to do it again.

In the planning of Mr Gay Greece 2003, the relocation to Athens created several
advantages. Foremost, it made it easier for more people to come; Mykonos is not the
most affordable of places in Greece. In any event, tourists who go to Mykonos are
often obliged to pass through Athens on their way into or out of Greece.

Most important, however, an openly gay event of that size would be a first in Athens.

Sofianos was able to parlay the success of the first competition to secure the
cooperation of several businesses, including Hellenic Tours and On Stage Events, a
Belgian promotion company whose credits include Mr Gay Benelux and Mr Gay
Belgium. Other local businesses supplied the prizes, or sold tickets for the event,
including a range of well-known bars in Athens such as Lamda, Play My Music, Kazarma, and Blue Train.

The preparations for Mr Gay Greece 2003 far surpassed those of the previous year. Aside from the contestants competing for the title, the evening was slated to include a raft of international talent. Among the more famous names was Niles Thomas, a singer who has performed at Pride events in Los Angeles and San Francisco, and whose songs will appear on the upcoming season of Queer as Folk. Also scheduled to appear were porn stars Marc Anthony and Mark Dalton, a Texas native. These entertainers were to be rounded out by twelve dancers from the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Sweden.

As the event grew larger, so did the price. One email advertisement sent a week before the event put the total bill near 50,000 euros ($56,000). Accordingly, tickets were priced at 65 euros per person.

On the night of the contest, problems appeared on all sides. Of the contestants that had been scheduled, only four actually appeared at the event. As Sofianos explained a few days later, “it became very difficult for some of the guys to actually appear on the day of the show. They feared being on the news.” Further, neither of the promised porn stars ever appeared. The worst setback, however, was ticket sales. An unofficial head count put the audience at 120. Official attendance numbers were still unavailable at press time.

Not all was lost. Hosts Gogo Garyfallou, of the Greek television series “The Wall,” and Kostas Kountos, the runner up in Mr Gay Greece 2002, were adept and playful, keeping the audience engaged. Neil Thomas adapted himself skillfully to the house, moving amongst the audience during his numbers.

The contestants also put forward great energy. During the interview section of the competition, Kostas Vrahatis shone out particularly. In reply to the judges’ question “What do you hope to get out of your participation in this competition, aside from the title?” Vrahatis said, “I hope that my being who I am here today will give those who are not here right now the courage to be here next time.”

It was an answer that evidently sat well with the judges, as Vrahatis was awarded the grand prize, including trips to several Greek islands. Alexandros Pappas won runner up.

Vrahatis’s reply also pointed to the 50,000 euro question of the evening: in a city of over 4 million, why were there only around 120 people at the contest? The steep drop in attendance sends at least three signals. First, the ticket price was probably too high for many people to consider attending. Second, assuming the need for tourist attendees, the event may have been poorly timed, scheduled too close to the end of the tourist season. Third, the move to Athens may have been overly hasty; Mykonos’s reputation as a gay island may still outweigh other considerations in building an audience.
What remains to be explained, regardless of the ticket price or location, is why so many lesbian and gay Greeks might not want to come to events like Mr Gay Greece.

While they do not provide a complete explanation, recent events in Greece likely play some role in this year’s attendance drop. After the first contest, in late February 2003, a police raid on a gay bar resulted in the suicide of one of the arrested while he was being held in jail. The raid and the subsequent suicide became fodder for homophobia in the media.

Positively, these events spurred a series of mass meetings of LGBT activists, meetings that are scheduled to continue this fall. Worryingly, however, the raid may have reinforced the sense that lesbians and gays should keep as low a profile as possible, including not attending openly gay events. Given these circumstances, some attendees felt that Mr Gay Greece 2003 amounted to a political act, although its organizers may not see it that way.

In any event, the courage that Vrahatis mentioned seems to be exactly what is needed now. Indeed, when asked about plans for next year, Sofianos did not appear fazed at all. “It’s too far away to think about that yet,” he said, “but we’re busy putting together another big party at the Budha Live for December 1, World AIDS Day.”

More courage to them.

The second Mr. Gay Greece was thus a failure, but an important one, for two reasons. First, of the 120 heads that I counted unofficially, the vast majority were activists, friends and journalists. No one I asked had paid for their ticket: a clear economic failure. Politically, however, it was a success; Sofianos attracted a range of Greeks to the 2003 event, when hardly any Greeks had come to the 2002 incarnation. Second, his business model depended on an unrealistic number of people attending the event in Athens because their costs were reduced by proximity – no boat tickets, and no hotel bills for the locals. While this was a social failure, in that Sofianos misread both what people would be willing to pay, and whether proximity would be any kind of incentive beyond the initial price, the 2003 event remains, again, a political success. He was able to mount the event in Athens itself. Political successes and economic failures aside, the next year, Mr. Gay Greece 2004 was back on
Mykonos, cleanly within the boundaries of the tourist season, and well attended by all reports. Furthermore, the contestants did not back out on him at the last minute. The upcoming 2005 contest will no longer be limited in any way to Greece, either; Sofianos is expanding it to involve the entire Mediterranean basin.

Sofianos' promotional efforts extend beyond Mr. Gay Greece, as well. Like Vallianatos, he organizes events at a variety of bars and clubs. Sofianos has hosted release parties of DEON at Play My Music and Lambda. Also, one of the first times that I had heard about the bar Spices was through an invitation from Sofianos to attend his birthday party there, via a text message sent to my cell phone. The next time Spices appeared on my radar, however, it had just been raided by the police.

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In fact, bar parties organized by Sofianos were almost always timed to coincide with the release of the latest edition of DEON, one of the enterprises arranged under the legal entity of Paul Sofianos Creations. Other enterprises under that umbrella include a modeling agency (DEONmodels), the Gay Greek Portal web site (www.gaygreece.gr), the Mr Gay Greece contest (mr.gaygreece.gr) and a promotions and web design company (www.paulsofianos.net). From the beginning, Sofianos has been a central figure in DEON, and he has groomed it over almost a decade into its current form. It would be an overstatement, however, to say that he started it by himself. Sofianos tells me the first stirrings for the magazine began in 1996. Though wholly owned by Paul Sofianos Creations, in daily practice it was a

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13 Provocatively, the name of the magazine means "necessary," or that which is required. It is an element in several polite phrases of greeting, as in "give my respects." It is also the root word in δεοντολογία (deontologia), the word that translates both "ethics" and "etiquette."
joint cooperative effort between Sofianos, EOK, and Σύμπραξη κατά της Ὀμοφοβίας (Sympreksi katá tis Omofilofóvias, Cooperation against Homophobia), a group based in Thessaloniki and connected to EOK organizationally. Partial funding for the magazine was secured from the Council of Europe through the program “All Different, All Equal,” more than likely via the connections of Giannelos had through ILGA-Europe, of which EOK has been an on again, off again member. The exact proportion of income maintained between funding from the Council of Europe and funding from local advertising remains unclear.

In the beginning, the staffing of the magazine included several members of EOK. Vangelis Giannelos served as Chief Editor; he also provided internet news items. Panagiotis Damaskos served as copy editor and occasional contributor. Irene Petropoulou was a contributor. DEON’s internet presence was hosted on EOK’s web page, and stored on the servers at NYX, the internet service provider owned by Giannelos. NYX also had a full page ad on the inside back cover of DEON. The second issue of DEON, published in July 1997, offers another glimpse into the intersections of activism and the press. There is a page long set of biographical paragraphs for various Greek activists, including Giannelos, Petropoulou, Mastrogianni, and Manthos Peponas, a lawyer who would later come to be the foundation of the revived AKOE and editor of AMFI.

Later, there came a parting of the ways, at least between the money from the Council of Europe and the fledgling publication. Driven by the economics of printing costs, the format of DEON shifted entirely to the web by 1998. There are signs of other changes as well. The fourth issue was hosted at a new address, www.gay.gr, a
page differentiated from the official EOK website, though still on NYX servers. Evidently, cooperation between EOK members and DEON continued, judging by contributions from Irene Petropoulou and Panagiotis Damaskos.

However, all this was to change in the summer of 2002. The website for DEON, or more precisely “DEON Media Navigator,” remains to this day at www.deon.gr, an address and server owned entirely by Paul Sofianos Creations. But in the summer of 2002, DEON print emerged on the scene. Including a gay guide to Greece with maps of Athens and Mykonos, printed in English and in Greek, the reborn magazine frames itself as a lifestyle source. The guide itself is linked to a website, www.gaygreece.gr, an address also owned by Sofianos. Perhaps not surprisingly, all of the vendors who provided the prizes for Mr. Gay Greece 2002 also have advertisements in the first issue of DEON print. Despite the continued cooperation of Irene Petropoulou, all economic and production ties to EOK and NYX had been severed.

Since the reemergence of DEON in magazine format (unsurprisingly, no one calls it DEON print, despite the official title change), Sofianos has managed to produce it regularly every six months, following a business model quite similar to that of free publications in the United States. Advertisers are also often the sites of distribution, although that is not necessarily the case. The articles, by such contributors as Maria Cyber and Irene Petropoulou, range through reviews of bands like Chumawumba to a survey of a decade of film focused on women’s erotic relationships. Almost invariably, the covers also feature male flesh. Without fail, the contents feature male models with interviews and some photos that, unlike To
Kráximo, push but never quite break the limit of full frontal male nudity. Some models are internationally known porn stars such as Trent Foster and Mark Dalton, while others are perhaps recruited locally through Sofianos’ own modeling agency.

Talking with men who have seen DEON, many regard it as without substance, useful only for knowing where the latest bars are. As for the “soft porn” that DEON provides, many men compare it unfavorably to another, more established periodical on sale at many kiosks in Athens, LOOK. Though both periodicals share an advertising base in the video shops, DEON differs from LOOK in that it presents itself as a proudly gay lifestyle magazine. LOOK is just about sex, and does not contain any attempt at political discourse; DEON’s editorials urge its readers to become consumers politicized with respect to their sexual identity, and to patronize only those businesses that honor their sexuality.

It would be naïve to view that politicized stance as entirely about community service, however. Sofianos has in the past been one of the louder voices to denounce businesses that do not call themselves lesbian or gay, yet are known to have a lesbian or gay clientele. His complaints are particularly vocal if a business refuses to be listed in the bar guide in DEON, or to take out advertising. It seems less than charitable to say that his complaints stem entirely from self-interest. Nevertheless, his stake in the social outcome of that debate is quite clear. His livelihood depends upon the network of businesses owned under Paul Sofianos Creations, and the success of that conglomerate depends on his ability to maintain a sufficiently large base of advertisers willing to be listed in a gay lifestyle periodical.
In addition to the websites, the magazine, and his promotional companies, Sofianos also sends out regular emails to those who elect to subscribe to them through any of the various websites. These emails keep a general level of awareness and buzz factor afloat for upcoming events, and are clearly framed as being informational. For some time, these emails were even tagged with a large banner that read “It’s not spam, it’s information!” [Δέν είναι spam, είναι ενημέρωσή!, Den einai spam, einai enimerwsi/]. The tag line has since been dropped, perhaps for fostering the very perception it was designed to avert. Tag line or no, these emails are effectively also miniature editions of the print magazine, as regular advertisers in the print magazine are listed in a box at the bottom of the email with click-through links.

Through websites, parties, email, and the periodical, Sofianos manages to reach an audience of diverse behaviors, one that is on line, one that is in the bars, and those willing to seek out the magazine. As much as he values his advertiser base, he also recognizes that the list of individual contacts he has built up through his businesses is a valuable commodity, economically and politically. His emails come with disclaimers and disclosure statements that cite the Greek law on the protection of personal information. Though guarded in conversation about how much traffic his sites generate, he is no doubt able to provide convincing arguments to advertisers. He also realizes the space he can occupy as a mover of gay opinion in Greece. He argues that he was the one really responsible for getting people together to meet at Lamda in the first days after the raid on Spices. Further, as the Polychromo Forum shifted from Lambda to the Polytechneio, he initially advertised the meeting times through his email lists. Those first meetings were very well attended. However, Sofianos
gradually dropped those announcements. It is difficult to assess conclusively whether this shift in his advertising caused the corresponding drop in Forum attendance over time. For his part, Sofianos rarely appears at the Forum meetings. He prefers to think of himself more as a businessman, and less as an activist.

**Themes and Variations**

In the classical tradition of Western music, a polyphonic composition of voices that enter at different times and different registers but repeat the same theme is called a canon. The art of composition in the canon is finding themes that blend harmoniously. If Johann Sebastian Bach provides the exemplars of the canon for high Western art music, the pedestrian counterpart is found in the form of putting children’s songs into a round, like “Row Row Row Your Boat.”

An additional level of complexity is involved in the form of the fugue. The fugue is structured very much like the canon, with the exception that the different voices not only repeat the theme, but do so with variations. The theme may be slowed, quickened, inverted, reversed, notes transposed, and portions of the theme may be clipped and magnified. It is possible for the theme to be transformed to the extent that the relation between the variation and the original is vague. The fugue extends the form of the canon to press polyphony beyond the two or three parts that characterize the inventions of J. S. Bach. The height of the fugue as a compositional form arrives when the counterpoint can be maintained and balanced with four, five, even six different voices.

All of this makes the fugue a useful metaphor for understanding what I have called the old guard of Greek activism. Yet the metaphor is apt only up to a point, an
inevitable failure that recalls specific insights into social theory. It is to be hoped that
this failure does not summon too strongly another meaning attached to fugue: the
disturbed state of consciousness where affected individuals appear to be entirely
conscious of their actions, of which they recall nothing upon recovering their wits.

In some ways, these five voices of the old guard may be thought of as a canon.
There is a central theme repeated in each case: all five voices engage in the
organization of a community recognized through a socio-sexual identity, using mass
participation events, institution building, and mass media formats. Vallianatos brings
together gay men who like to party in what could be called a “Western circuit
format,” and has used mass media to articulate a philosophy on which that social
scene can be built. Equally, Paola has worked to unify travesti and transsexuals
through SATTE, capitalizing on the recognition she achieved through To Kráximo.
Giannelos, due to his position in EOK, intervenes in larger media circles in defense of
the Greek LGBT community, projecting an image of responsibility and decency. For
her part, Maria Cyber positions the radio show as a way to showcase the various
happenings of LGBT life in Greece. Paul Sofianos uses the editorial platform of
DEON to encourage people to express a social identity through politicized collective
consumption behaviors.

Yet already, any pretense at a clean repetition of the theme is broken down.
Vallianatos’s media productions of the past and the present are not organized around
any purely “gay” identity like the one that characterized the Cruising party,
“Western” and “circuit-like” though it was, and as exclusively gay as it turned out to
be. He is also the only one to have run a nightclub. Further, Vallianatos is distinct
from the rest in the social location of his activism. Operating in the realm of high politics and consultation, he moves in a different sphere from the rest. Thus it is no accident that each time I began in the United States to find a way into the Greek LGBT world, all roads led to Vallianatos.

Paola is unique not only in having been, but in *proclaiming* herself to have been a prostitute. Her activism thus began on personal grounds, on a self-consciously revolutionary footing, and moved very publicly from those personal grounds to a broader community interest. She is distinct from the rest in her willingness to press beyond the barriers of public decency, to not only expose, but to revel in the symbolic source of the social disquiet regarding her and others’ socio-sexual identity: full-frontal male nudity in *To Kráximo* separates that publication from the other Greek LGBT media so far discussed, surpassing even *DEON* (but not *LOOK*) in its explicit depictions.

Like Vallianatos, Giannelos projects a certain kind of masculinity, but does so in a different register. His is the conservative brand of gay as normal, the kind of man one might want to take home to meet the parents. Though many people in Greece are just as opposed to the Orthodox Church as Giannelos, some of these five voices included, he further distinguishes himself as being a follower of the Twelve Gods. He is also unique in the way he brings his religious convictions into his LGBT social activism, warning Christians away from the chat rooms of www.gay.gr.

Also like Vallianatos, Maria recognizes the value of a regular social scene for the strength of a community, and systematically promotes that scene. She is firmly committed to her activist identity, much like the previous three voices. She is
something of a loner, however, a wild-card. Her allegiances are not to any one organization. Part of what makes her distinct from many other lesbian activists in Athens is that she is also a businesswoman; Proud Productions sets her apart from other lesbian activists.

Sofianos, for his part, makes no pretense about his interests. Although he will occasionally deploy the rhetoric of being activist, he is a businessman, first and foremost. He is a purveyor of a lifestyle of liberation and personal choice, a lifestyle which he sees as requiring the cooperation of a large number of economic forces. He also makes no pretense of desiring to be liked by others. Of the five voices, he is the one least concerned with being thought of as an altruist.

If not a canon, then, a fugue, a theme repeated with extensive variations. Some common points run through those variations, however, and deserve greater attention. The first of these is the problem that began this chapter, that of charges of self-interest, or sumafronta. Returning to the kinds of critiques that began this chapter, one of the claims consistent across both activists and non-activists was that, beyond any kind of promotion of the commonweal, these five voices were also engaged in clear self-promotion, if not exclusively so. How to make sense of these claims? To return to the suggestion that these claims are motivated by jealousy or competition, it is true that many of the younger or less experienced activists would emphasize how the status quo suits the personal interests of the old guard. Vallianatos, the political manipulator, is reluctant to hand over power to a new generation; Paola tries to hold on to her past glory through SATTE; Giannelos is president of EOK for too many years; Cyber tries to use the radio show to make
herself the chief lesbian; Sofianos, as the self-appointed arbiter of style, tries to convert his media presence into social influence. (These are not my assertions; these claims are reported speech.) However, competition plays little role in the way that non-activists relate to these five voices. Further, though one could argue that envy of social prestige still figures in the complaints of non-activists, the argument feels stretched, partially because the very language of the complaints has more to do with the ethical character of the activists. The common complaint reflects something rather like the hubris of archaic tragedy — “Ποιος εἶναι αυτός; Μεγάλη ιδέα του εαυτοῦ του δὲν ἔχει;” (Poios eînai autós? Mégalí idéa tou eautoû tou den éhei?, Who is he? Doesn’t he think a lot of himself?) — as if to say, “Isn’t he overripe for a fall from grace?”

A second area of complaint about self-interest, distinct from accusations of an appetite for personal power, is the appetite for money. This complaint is also consistent across activists and non-activists, although activists have much more specific data to arm their accusations. Vallianatos walked away from Factory with ill-gotten gains; To Kráximo was just Paola’s way to promote herself as a prostitute in order to turn more tricks; Giannelos uses EOK to skim money off the European Union (!); Maria Cyber bilks young lovers, one song dedication at a time; Sofianos is greedy and over charges for his events, but he is at least somewhat transparent about it. (Again, these are not my assertions; this is reported speech.) This suspicion of private profit at the expense of the collective is shared amongst activists and non-activists alike. Among the activists, however, one might suspect a certain amount of strategic deployment of these narratives of financial greed. The SMS line became an
issue after Maria’s explosion in Enudreio; Paola lambasted Drakakis after the article came out. Then again, these two events could both be accidents of timing, and not too much should be read into them.

Thus there are two, interlocking categories of sumféronta: social power and financial gain. This arrangement should seem all too familiar to readers of Bourdieu and other commentators on the connection between symbolic and material capital. Our five voices are supposed to be engaged in work for the community, for the common good. They therefore ought not to be engaged in amassing personal power or in personal profiteering. Thus, these critiques of self-interest articulate an ideal, a hegemonic vision of what an activist should be. To avoid charges of self-interest, an activist should always be a volunteer (εθελοντής, etheloní), a person who sacrifices of the self for the good of the community. A volunteer is, by definition, not paid. A volunteer also has a defensive tactic not available to the paid activist. I spoke with one Greek activist who, though seasoned in other forms of organizing, was relatively new to the LGBT scene. She reported to me that although getting paid would be nice, being a volunteer is safer. If someone does not like what you are doing, she says, you can always tell them that they are being ungrateful for your sacrifice. Being paid makes you accountable in a way that giving your time does not. This defensive posture of self-sacrifice is visible several times in the voices heard above. Giannelos cites his sacrifice of personal money, time, and space for the good of the community. Maria emphasized the personal energy she has voluntarily put into the promotion of the radio show and EOK. Paola let it be known that she lost money on the 2004 Guide, but better that for the community than the Guide not existing at all.
Yet, there is a logic to and an incentive for the creation of full-time, paid activist positions. Our five voices still have to make a living for themselves. Their resources are limited, just like everyone else. With only twenty-four hours in a day, both the temptation and the opportunity exist to blend the work of the commonweal and the work of sustaining the self. To get the job done right, some quietly argue, that blending may actually be necessary. However, every conversation that I had with activists about the creation of full-time paid positions in activism was filled with caution. Everyone realized it to be a tricky proposition.

To be sure, attention to *sumféronta* is also often necessary. No one I spoke with during my fieldwork disagreed with the idea that one would always at some point have to look out for one’s own self-interest. Ideals of masculinity are also highly connected to being able to provide for one’s own (see Faubion 1993). Thus, what should not be forgotten here is that engaging in these critiques of self-interest also replicates and re-enacts a structure of values. For when activists critique other activists, it serves their own purposes. One could say that rival activists are brought down by successful critique; one could also say that activism as a whole is made more trustworthy and effective by eliminating or limiting elements that divert energy from the common goals. When non-activists critique activists, it also serves their own purposes. Again, unscrupulous activists will lose their public base of support; it is in non-activists’ self-interest to be wary of the self-interests of those who claim to serve them. The critique of *sumféronta* is, in this respect, a self-reinforcing cycle, perpetuating a system that values self-interest even as it restrains it.
To focus only on these personal aspects of self-interest, however, would be to miss the deeper significance of these practices on a larger social scale for Greek society. In the ethnography of Hellenic societies, *sumféronta* are also always linked to political power at the local level, patron-client relations, and thus political power at the national and international level (see Campbell, Peristiany, Loizos, and Herzfeld). *Sumféronta* are the interpretive tool for divining the political future from the everyday interactions of the powerful and the weak. This chain of connection – of personal interest to personal promotion to political power – thus forms a potent subtext for all accusations of self-interest, and explains a good deal of the anxiety provoked by the combination of mass participation events with mass media control. Suspicion of that chain is the first step to knowledge of it, and knowledge of these relations of power is the only way to navigate them safely. It is a kind of paranoia made social.

Here, another theme unites several of our five voices of the old guard. Three of them have run for political office. In 1998, both Vallianatos and Giannelos ran for public offices in Athens. Vallianatos stood to represent the *A’ diamérisma* (first district, the core of the city); Giannelos ran for *Dimotikós Súmvoulos* (City Council). Neither of them won the election. However, they ran their election on a gay platform, running a nation-wide campaign based around the gay vote. The flyer for that campaign featured the English phrase “THE GAY VOTE / VOTE GAY” on the front of the flyer. The structure of the flyer itself is a curved, six-stripe rainbow flag. The back of the flyer features a quotation from the director Ana Kokkinos, who would soon release the movie *Head On.* That quotation reads: “We approach the end of the millennium. We cannot be satisfied with these absurd, one-dimensional
representations of ourselves" (Πλησιάσουμε στο τέλος της χιλιετίας. Δεν μπορούμε ν’ αρκετούμε σ’ αυτές τις εξωφρενικές μονοδιάστατες απεικονίσεις του εαυτού μας). Aside from Vallianatos and Giannelos, two well-known figures of LGBT activism in Thessaloniki were also advertised on the flyer: Nikos Xatzitifon (affiliated with the organization Súmpraksi) and Maria Betchava. For her part, Paola also stood for office with the Alternative Green party in 1990. As her web site reports,14 her candidacy for local elections in Athens was even covered by Ta Nea (March 30, 1990), which emphasized the support she received from the party despite internal divisions. Her campaign was not explicitly directed at gay voters. To the contrary, it was about her ability to serve the agenda of the Greens. Nevertheless, she did not win her election.

It would be tempting to say that these elections only serve to support the suspicions voiced about the self-promoting intentions of the old guard. By promoting events and their involvement in mass media, it could seem as if they were only really interested in amassing enough of a constituency to sustain an election and gain political power. If that is the case, these three are by no means the only ones to play for political power through organizing an LGBT community. Younger activists, who were careful to cite their own list of credentials as specifically gay activists, ran in local Athenian elections under the banner of the Αντικαπιταλιστική Συμμαχία (Antikapitalistiki Summazia, Anti-capitalist Alliance) in March 2004. Among them was Vyronas Lukiardopoulos, a member of POEK, a organization connected in turn to SEK, a far-left party. Decrying the absence of support from politicians like European Parliamentary Representative Anna Karamanou during events like the

police raid on Spices or the fine from the ESR for the kiss on *Kleise ta Mátia*,
Lukiardopoulos and his co-candidates claimed: “Χτίζουμε το κίνημα μας με τις
dικές μας πλάτες, δε χρειάζομαστε ούτε προστάτες ούτε σωτίρες”
(*Xtízoume to kínimá mas me tis dikés mas plátes, de xreiazómaste oúte prostátes oúte sotiřes*, We are building our movement on our own, we do not need either patrons or
saviors). Much like Vallianatos, Giannelos and Paola, Lukiardopoulos did not win
either.

The outcomes of these elections aside, it remains to be explained why these
figures would engage in such a volatile and potentially damaging mixture of media,
mass organization, personal power and politics, knowing that people are likely to cast
aspersions on the purity of their intentions. All of these figures, young and old alike,
must know that in order to promote anything – be it a product, a dance party, a
lifestyle, a publication, a political party, or a philosophy of community – the person
of the promoter will inevitably also be promoted. That reality leaves promoters open
to charges of personal interest. Further, they know that anyone who can bring
together a mass of people has political power. To run for office is to make a very
public claim to having at least some measure of political power, and to risk being
proven wrong. Clearly, in the case of Vallianatos, Giannelos and Lukiardopoulos, the
overt bid was not just to demonstrate any kind of personal power, but also to
demonstrate the existence of a gay voting bloc. Alternatively, the campaigns may
have been geared precisely to probe just how coherent such a bloc might be. Paola’s
campaign, conversely – and ironically, given the reputation she had built for herself –
was a bid to demonstrate precisely the *irrelevance* of her socio-sexual identity to her capacity to serve the public interest.

In talking about political power within these LGBT communities then (if we allow that we may speak about these doubted collectives), we are not just describing something about LGBT politics, but about national politics, or rather, about the tenor of the national consciousness regarding issues of representation, electoral politics, the machinations of public power, and the process of democracy. I would not claim that the critique of *sumféronta* is performed in a universal and consistent way by all people across Greece at all times. However, it remains a hegemonic (because valued) system of interpretation of human action. Looking at the micro-politics of LGBT organization and the political importance sourced to claims on *sumféronta*, that perspective is sufficiently repeated across the political landscape of Greece to deserve analytical attention.

All this, because the questions that preoccupy the activists amongst themselves are basic questions for the theorization of democracy in general. They are in effect a State writ small. How to create continuity over time in a movement (State) without becoming dependent on a single unifying personality (dictatorship)? How to create an institutional memory (preserve a culture, preserve a nation)? How to hold the activists (politicians) accountable who do the work of organizing a community? How to have a sense that the people who lead a community actually reflect the wishes of the people they claim to represent? Greek LGBT activists are engaged by precisely those kinds of questions, and the ways in which they have answered them – both amongst themselves and in elections – provides a window into how they think
democracy ought to work. As such, they are a barometer of the way that Greece as a whole might think about democracy, data of no small importance to organizations like the EU and NATO.

Maintaining the focus at this level of abstraction, this is the level at which I would suggest that the Greek LGBT movements are a mirror and indicator of the broader engagement in Greece with the position of Greek society with respect to the rest of the world. Much has already been said of the long-standing conversation of Greece’s position with respect to the East and the West (Herzfeld, for one). There have even been indications that the balance of persuasion in that engagement is leaning toward the West, particularly with membership in the European Union and the subsequent shift in national policy. However, the explanation of that shift in terms of international politics is not sufficient. More must be said of the local situations in which individuals and small groups of people make decisions on a daily basis that, in the headier days of grand narrative social science, might be summed together to create a composite mood, be that national, the ethnic, the regional.

Provisionally, I suggest that the answers sought for the question “Wither Greece?” can be found among the Greek LGBT activists. Again provisionally, I suggest that those answers are to be found in the standards by which the Greek activists choose to judge themselves. Earlier, I referred to some of these standards through the elsewhere against which the Greek activists compare themselves. Tellingly, in the case of these five voices of the old guard, these elsewhere are uniformly North American and Western European. This is a point to which we will return later, after having gained a better sense of which elsewhere are appealing to voices outside the
old guard. For now, however, let it be noted that all appeals to elsewhere are already in a sense compromised by timing; given the political conditions of LGBT movements in the United States in 2004, it seems somewhat odd to choose that country for exemplars. This, too, is a point to which we will return. It will suffice for now to say that by examining the kinds of places chosen as points of reference for one “part” of Greece, in LGBT activism, we can learn something about what are legitimate points of reference for the discussion of the direction of Greece as a “whole.”

To narrow the focus somewhat, it is also necessary to see the LGBT activists in the context of other connections between mass media and mass organization (political parties, for example). Noted for its contentiousness and almost extreme diversity, the national mass-media market of Greece boasts numerous daily newspapers, all of which, it is assumed, are politically aligned, and under relatively tight editorial control for consistency of message. It is also generally assumed that the direction of that editorial control rests almost entirely with a single person at the top of the paper. Papers are thus identified as belonging somehow to their editors. For example: *Eleftherotupía* belongs to Tegkopoulos, and is seen as a liberal but not leftist paper, though it qualifies itself as *adésmevti* (unaffiliated politically); *Ta Néa* belongs to Lambrakis, who is seen as socially and fiscally conservative. The parallels with the LGBT scene are not coincidental. *AMFI* became Vallianatos’s for a while; EOK’s websites express Giannelos’s personal opinions on the Church; the radio show is Maria’s; *To Kráximo* is identified as Paola’s just as *DEON* is as Sofianos’s. Not an unusual model, by any stretch of the imagination – think of Rupert Murdoch in
British politics, or Ted Turner in United States politics— but one exercised to an informatively consistent degree. When talking with several members of POEK over coffee one afternoon about the history of political parties and the media in Greece, one of them opined that democracy in Greece works “too well.” There are too many voices available, he mused, all clamoring that they have the true vision. It becomes easy to see this proliferation of mass-media as only so much personal aggrandizement. We wondered together if the same could be true of the fractious LGBT communities.

A fugue then, but a harmonious one? As so many other activists and non-activists see it, it is a cacophony of voices, all clamoring that they have the true vision, yet each vision sounding eerily familiar, if only for the fact that each voice haunts the lives of the others. Vallianatos and Paola used to hang out on stoops in Omonoia late at night; Paola and Giannelos have fought quite publicly about the way that EOK has treated travesti over the years; Maria Cyber and Sofianos have collaborated on many projects together; Paola and Maria have disagreed on the proper definition of gay versus transvestite versus travesti versus transsexual; Giannelos and Maria and Sofianos were all hosts of the radio show together. The examples are without end. From the outside, it could seem like a clique, a small coterie of people seeking only moments of public recognition, a shifting sea of convenient alliances.

It could seem that way. At the same time, it could seem like a lively improvisation of democracy, a passionate conversation about how to build a constituency to achieve a common goal. The passions of that debate are fueled by the recognition that the stakes of representation are high. The success of the movement
hangs on who will become the public voice, on which people will be seen by others as the representatives of the imagined whole. It can be a tiring conversation, a convoluted and never-ending polyphony, and it bores some potential voices so much that they see no point in participating.

Here, then, is where the metaphor of the fugue finally fails. The fugue, like all models and all social theories, seems to promise an image of coherency where there may well be none, and more damning, a sense that harmony is the desirable goal, when it may not be what is happening, nor what is needed. The five voices detailed here are by no means the complete picture, as said before. Nor are they necessarily in tune with each other. Thus, the figure of the fugue is only temporary, a ladder to be thrown away once we have climbed it. With this theoretical and historical background, then, the next chapter shifts the focus to younger voices, or perhaps just different ones. It remains to be seen whether their efforts will yield just more of the same, or whether they will be able to create the changes of which they dream.
The Vanguard: New Assemblages?

The preceding chapter risks leaving several false impressions. The most dangerous of these is overly reinforcing a patron-centered vision of activism, where the five voices detailed above would be the only agents of any importance involved in Greek activism around socio-sexual identities and practices. Though praiseworthy on their own, their efforts have depended on the close cooperation and peripheral involvement of, without exaggeration, hundreds of other people. For example, as discussed in the earlier chapter on AIDS activism, the membership of AKOE in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s far exceeded the handful of voices detailed in the preceding chapter. One of the projects ongoing from this dissertation is a historical and archival examination of these lesser known activists, to better grasp the impact that socio-sexual activism had on Greek society and culture as a whole.¹ For now, the present chapter is limited to documenting how some activist formations that might be thought of as “new” have roots in earlier groups and efforts. This sense of continuity through reassemblage is perhaps best illustrated in the history and development of the group OLKE, to which this chapter will shortly turn.

A second misimpression is that all queer news media produced in Greece are economically small operations owned and run by lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender individuals with a primary interest in activism. For some time, the only exception to this rule was the soft porn magazine LOOK, mentioned earlier in comparison with DEON. Though it has been successfully marketed on a monthly

¹ One important resource for this project is a book by Loukas Theodorakopoulos, “AMFI” kai Apeleftherosi [‘AMFI’ and Liberation], first issued from Colorful Planet Publications nearly a year after fieldwork ended.
basis for many years to men interested in sex with men, *LOOK* is not part of any queer publishing empire, but is rather one revenue stream among many for the company TIME OUT Publications, housed at the time of my fieldwork in a high-rent glassed corner office building at Alexandras Avenue 57. Their other revenue streams appeal to more traditional subjects, such as the magazine Νύφη (Νύφη, Bride), the cover of which was often boldly advertised on the side of their building. Just by looking at the building and their foyer, however, it was impossible to determine that this same company also produced *LOOK*.

A third misimpression, perhaps reinforced by the publication structure of *LOOK*, is that a clean divide exists between queer media and mainstream media in Greece. While this divide may have existed in the past, that has been changed in complicated ways by the introduction of the weekly city guide magazine *TimeOut* (not to be confused with TIME OUT Publications). It is to the social shifts signaled by this magazine that we now turn.

*TimeOut: Athens*

The London-based TimeOut Group is an umbrella organization including an international franchise of city guides produced locally in a variety of cosmopolitan centers: London, New York, Paris, Tel Aviv, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Capetown, Beijing, and most recently, Chicago. *TimeOut* was started in 1968 by Londoner Tony Elliott, who at the age of 21, borrowed around £70 from his aunt to put out a folded single broadsheet. In 2004-2005, according to the *Sunday Times*, the company is expected to clear £3.4 million profit on a projected £40 million in sales. At 58 years old,

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2 http://www.timesonline.co.uk/richlist/person/0,,34045.00.html
Elliott’s personal wealth is estimated at £90 million ($135 million). In another indication of the scale of the TimeOut Group, international distribution of their guides occurs through a partnership with Penguin Publications. In his other pursuits, Elliott has served on the Board of Directors for the British Film Institute. In 2005, he is also serving as Chair of the Human Rights Watch Council London Committee; *TimeOut: London* is also a sponsor for the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival Benefit to be held in London, March 2005. A similar film festival takes place in New York City, sponsored by *TimeOut* franchise there. Whether or not that commitment to human rights extends to sexual minorities, the parent company’s business sensibilities clearly recognize a value in marketing to lesbians and gays. One of the TimeOut Group’s many annual publications is a slick *Gay Guide to London*.

The launch of *TimeOut: Athens* began in 2002. After a period of heavy television and radio advertising from December 2002 through February of 2003, the first weekly issue came out February 20, coincidentally the same week as the police raid on Spices. Since then, it has been published every Thursday, and features reviews of local events, nightlife, movies, theater, art, clubs, restaurants. It also features a separate listing of bars and clubs catering to a gay and lesbian clientele. *TimeOut* is hardly the first city guide to do this in the Athenian market. *Athinórama* and *Exodos* have similar lists in their guides, and have done so for years. However, *TimeOut: Athens* distinguishes itself from these two other guides by including a gay and lesbian editorial column, a page-long feature. Such a column inside a mainstream publication was a first for the Athenian market.
The Athenian franchise is owned by Antis (Andy) Hatzikostis, and has its offices on the third floor of Lukavitou 2. I went there about six weeks after the magazine’s debut, looking for back copies of the gay and lesbian column that I had missed. Though located in fashionable Kolonaki, just off of Akademies, the foyer of the office was not the sleek waiting room I had expected. It was dominated by a random heap of old issues of the magazine, and a small desk at which were seated two young women drinking coffee from plastic cups. When they asked what they could do for me, I explained that I was looking for back issues of the magazine. They were baffled as to why I would want anything that, to them, was clearly out of date and therefore useless. I explained that I was looking to compile a complete collection of the gay and lesbian columns for a research project. Their only reply was to indicate the heap, and watch me dig through it while they sipped their coffees. Despite its size, the heap was not forthcoming.

Unlike Elliott, Hatzikostis was not widely known for being a strong defender of human rights, let alone specific support for sexual or gender identity rights. The inclusion of a gay and lesbian column in the magazine does not offer conclusive evidence, either. It is possible that the publication details of the Athenian franchise are controlled through the licensing agreement with the parent company. Indeed, either Hatzikostis or the Athenian TimeOut staff might have objected to a gay and lesbian column, yet been forced to include it. It is also possible that they very much wanted the column. Perhaps, however, its presence in the magazine was simply a non-issue for them. For all of these possibilities, it cannot have escaped their attention that this column would be unique in the Greek media market.
Given that unique status, the magazine likely considered the initial choice of columnist to be a decision worth deliberation, perhaps even in consultation with lesbian and gay community members. However, the first *TimeOut* columnist, Irini Heirdari, was virtually unknown to Athenian lesbian and gay activists. It is hard to assess where the activists’ objections to her were primarily grounded: her unfamiliarity, or the general revolutionary mood inaugurated by the recent police raid on Spices. Regardless, both factors influenced the reception of her columns among the activists.

Still, the specific objections that activists raised are revealing. Perhaps most damning, some activists noted bitterly that the only time that the raid on Spices was referred to in her column was in a sidebar to the March 6-13 issue. She never mentioned the suicide. She also qualified the charges against the men as “especially serious,” without any sense of questioning their validity. To her credit, she did point out in the same column that the fuss over darkrooms seemed out of place in a Europe where many gay bars in most major cities had them. Gay darkrooms seemed, in her view, part of the landscape of cosmopolitan Europe. Other columns of hers were perceived to be simply in poor taste, particularly the March 13-19 editorial, where Heirdari reminisced on a morning spent in an art gallery that featured paintings of muscular male nudes. She imagined buying a canvas, bringing home a perfect man, as it were, only to hear her friends’ retort: “Τσ τσ τσ, κουκλίτσα μου, γιατί πάντα πέφτεις πάνω σε γκέι;” (*Ts ts ts, kouklitsa mou, giatí panta péfteis pano se gkei*; tisk tisk tisk, my girl, why do you always fall for gays?). It insulted many activists that Heirdari seemed to expect to be taken seriously as a gay and lesbian
columnist while presenting herself as a straight woman blundering about in a gay
demimonde. Moreover, in the sidebar for the same issue, she further demonstrated
just how far removed from any gay and lesbian scene she actually was. Under the
title “Σαν βγεις στον πιγαιμό για τα lesbian στέκια” (San vgeis ston pigaimó
gia ta lesbian stékia, As if you went on a journey to the lesbian haunts), Heirdari
offered up a list of useful terms, like “diesel” and “lipstick dyke”. Further down the
list, however, were the terms “femme,” “transgender,” and “lesbian sic,” rather than
“femme”, “transgender,” and “lesbian chic.” Spelling was not her only perceived
lapse. Nor was a certain air of providing a tawdry tour through the exotic.

Transgender was, in her estimation, “η γυναίκα που αλλάξε το φύλο της για να
γίνει άντρας” (i guinaika pou allakse to Fulton tis gia na giniei antras, the woman who
changes her gender to become a man), and not a state in which a variety of gendered
bodies might be located, whatever the history of their biological structure. A more
generous reader might have argued that her limitation of the definition of transgender
to female-to-male was understandable, given that the glossary on offer is supposed to
have come from a journey to where the lesbians are. The confusion of gender identity
and sexual orientation aside, none of the activists who talked about that column
seemed inclined to be so forgiving. One activist quipped that Heirdari’s only
qualifications for the job were obviously limited to having two or three gay friends,
who were unfortunately not very connected themselves.

Yet the column clearly indicates that Heirdari herself was not entirely
unconnected. Quite apart from any explicit instructions she might have gotten,
whether from London or from Hatzikostis, she had to have considered the possibility
that Greek LGBT audiences would be watching her every move. As the magazine progressed, her columns do give a sense that she was increasingly paying attention to various facets of lesbian and gay life in Greece. In issue four, under a sidebar item titled “Factory,” she writes that “Ten years later the Factory group strikes again. Cruising is opening.” (Several months later, Vallianatos did put on the party Cruising at Bossa Nostra Noir, as described earlier.) In issue five, the sidebar features gay travel, and among other web pages, directs readers to www.gaygreece.gr, owned by Paul Sofianos.

These nods to established figures were not enough to set the activists at ease. By the time her sixth column had come out, her removal had already been set in motion, an ouster at least partially orchestrated by EOK. At an EOK meeting on March 29th, 2003, one of the members read out a letter she had drafted to TimeOut, in Greek and in English³, reflecting the various complaints that had surfaced among the activists present at the Polychromo Forum. The mood of the letter centered on the feeling that Heirdari’s column insulted the gay community (προσβάλει την γκέι κοινότητα, prosvalei tin gkei koinotita). The main argument was that Heirdari should have no right to represent the lesbian and gay community without knowing it well. As the letter was discussed, another EOK member questioned whether it made sense to direct the critique at Heirdari herself, since the letter was not so much about her as a person, as about her column’s lack of legitimate content. The implication was that Heirdari could, in effect, be properly trained. The argument carried, and the letter was redrafted to focus on the column. It was to be sent to the main offices in

³ At the meeting where the letter was discussed, I was asked to proofread the English draft, and did so.
London in English, and to the local offices, in Greek. There was talk of a meeting with the local offices, but I do not know if that meeting ever took place. As discussion of the letter wound to a close, there was some speculation that Heirdari must have gotten her column material from Paul Sofianos and Maria Cyber, two figures not then in good graces with EOK. Their evidence for this connection included Heirdari’s inclusion of www.gaygreece.gr. Whether or not it counted against Heirdari to have Sofianos and Cyber as a source of information, the unsaid complaint was that Heirdari had made no attempt to contact EOK directly, an organization with sixteen years of experience to offer her.

After that March 29 meeting, Heirdari’s column in issue seven took a turn for the better in an interview with a recognized writer, artist and art critic, Konstantinos Evangelatos, focusing on the question “υπάρχει γκέι Τέχνη στην Ελλάδα;” (upárhei gki Tēhnì sthn Elláda; is there gay art in Greece?). The next week saw the full editorial dedicated to the bar Sodade, with a sidebar mostly about Kazarma. No one seemed to find either of these columns objectionable. Then at the next EOK meeting, on April 12, it was announced that a fax had been received on April 10 from Peter Fiennes, the Managing Director of City Guides for the TimeOut Group. In the fax, he thanked the members of EOK for their letter, and reported that he would be in contact with the Athens franchise. The members of EOK seemed pleased, and waited to see what might transpire.

Issue nine came out on April 17, featuring a review of places to go on Mykonos. The sidebar to that issue mentioned the Polychromo Forum for the first time, as an “ομπρέλα” (ompréla, umbrella) group of gay and lesbian organizations.
Heirdari even provided contact information for ACT-UP, Antivirus, POEK, Σύνθεση, Synthesis, an Athenian HIV/AIDS organization connected to Luo Kalovynas), and Σύναπση Κατά της Ομοφοβίας (Σύναπση Κατά της Ομοφοβίας, Cooperation against Homophobia, a group from Thessaloniki). Unfortunately for Heirdari, it was too little, too late. It is difficult to infer the exact order of events within TimeOut after the transmission of the fax to EOK. Issue eleven did not carry the gay and lesbian column, although Heirdari was still listed as the columnist in the masthead. The absence of the column yielded several interpretations. It was possible that Heirdari would be back in the swing of things after retooling the column. Alternately, the column might be dropped altogether.

As it turned out, Heirdari was never heard from again. A new columnist appeared for the twelfth issue: Panagiotis Hatzistefanou. An accomplished journalist, he was also a known entity to the activists. Paola credits him for helping with the glossary of slang in her 2004 Gay Guide. He was also well acquainted with Paul Sofianos. With Heirdari’s departure, it seemed that the activists, and particularly EOK, had achieved a victory. They had taken a diplomatic course, intervened effectively both internationally and locally, and could take some credit for persuading the magazine to voluntarily adopt a new columnist who they found both more articulate and better informed about the issues that mattered to them. Exactly how the magazine located Hatzistefanou remains unclear. Perhaps Heirdari, faced with the reaction from Fiennes’s office in London, turned to Sofianos looking for a replacement.
Regardless of how he got the job, Hatzistefanou presented an entirely different figure from Heirdari. He made a point of appearing at the Polychromo Forum on occasion, and seemed otherwise well-connected, not only to the activists, but to the various bar owners. Also unlike Heirdari, Hatzistefanou conscientiously featured one-on-one interviews with various activists in his columns. He editorialized on issues like gay marketing, internalized homophobia, and current events, like the fine levied by the ESR against MEGA for the kiss on Kleíse ta Mátia, and gay weddings in the United States. His columns were self-consciously political, and purposefully politicizing. He urged the bar owners to respect and proudly embrace their gay and lesbian clientele, writing “δεν δαγκώνεις το χέρι που σε ταΐζει” (den dagkóneis to héri pou se taízei, you do not bite the hand that feeds you).4

During Hatzistefanou’s tenure as the gay and lesbian columnist, TimeOut: Athens also took on a more proactive stance regarding human rights. In December 2003, the Άγριμα Μείζων Ελληνισμού (Idryma Meízono Ellinismou, Foundation of Greater Hellenism) hosted the Third Annual Festival of Art for Human Rights. Although the primary organizer was the group Open Horizons, the event was also supported by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Health and Welfare. TimeOut: Athens numbered among the corporate sponsors. Significantly, the second to last day of the Festival featured presentations from Evangelia Blami of Δεσφίς κ σε Δράς (Lesbikes se Drási, Lesbians in Action, or

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LSD)\(^5\), Dimitris Tsambrounis of POP, and Konstantinos Kampourakis, President of ACT-UP – Greece.

In the sixty-seventh issue, published June 10, 2004, the byline on the column changed abruptly from Panagiotis Hatzistefanou to Luo Kalovynnas. Kalovynnas was then and continues to be a key figure in the organization *Súntesi*. He had in previous years also been involved with *Kéntro Zoís*. At the time he took on the *TimeOut* column, he was also Chief Editor of 10%, a free magazine begun in 2003 by *Súntesi* with funding from KEEL and various advertisers.\(^6\) The transition at *TimeOut* was seamlessly managed. This time around, there was no absent column. On the day that Kalovynnas’s first *TimeOut* column appeared, he clearly signaled the transfer to as wide an audience as possible. An email message was sent out, both to the closed mailing list for activists, forum@eok.gr, and to the open mailing list for the general public, omofylofilia@groups.queernet.org. That email described the new column as a cooperation between *TimeOut* and the editorial team of 10% (even though the byline would remain in Kalovynnas’s name for the remainder of my fieldwork). He was also

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\(^5\) LSD is a group split off from LOA, since some women saw LOA as too focused on 1970’s feminist strategies of consciousness raising and support group formation. LSD is centered around Vlami. She herself is credited in the program only as a member of LSD, although she was also a member of POP at the time. Her choice of representation was intentional, in a bid to promote both lesbian visibility and cooperation between groups.

\(^6\) The source of the magazine’s title is the mythic percentage of the general population that “is homosexual.” As for the production of the magazine itself, it is slick and sexy, but not in the same explicitly sexual style of *To Kráximo* or *DEON*. As a free magazine, it relies on much the same distribution network of businesses as *DEON*. Importantly, however, 10% did launch a campaign to acquire subscribers by post, at the rate of 40 euros for six issues. Preemptively answering the question raised by the solicitation, the advertisement for subscribers also states that the money raised through subscriptions will go only to the upkeep of 10% and to the activities of *Súntesi*. (10%, issue 4, June/July 2004, p. 49.)
very clear to state that the idea came from *TimeOut*, not from himself or from *Synthesi*. The issue of 10% for June and July also carried a quarter-page, inside-edge advertisement announcing the new relationship between *TimeOut* and 10%.

Similarly, each *TimeOut* column under Kalovynas also contained a small bar stating that the column was a cooperative effort with 10%. That small bar eventually included the web site for the magazine, [www.10percent.gr](http://www.10percent.gr). Writing in 10%, Kalovynas described the cooperation with *TimeOut* as “πρωτότυπη” (*prototupi*, original, without precedent).

Shortly after the transfer, however, rumors began to circulate about exactly why Hatzistefanou had stopped writing the column. Some said that he had gotten a better offer at another magazine, and had voluntarily left. It was also said that his politicized attitude toward the bars had caught up with him, and that one of the offending bar owners had brought a lawsuit against *TimeOut* because of Hatzistefanou’s columns. According to that tale, the bar owner had offered to drop the suit, on the condition that Hatzistefanou leave the magazine. Adding some credence to the rumor, the issue of *TimeOut* that carried the last column from Hatzistefanou also carried a blind item in the first few pages of the magazine. That blind item echoed the politicized stance Hatzistefanou was known for:

Ενώ η Αθήνα ζεί ένα ιδιότυπο gay revolution, στο κομμάτι τουλάχιστο της διασκέδασης οι ιδεοληψίες καλά κρατούν. Μετρήσαμε πρόχειρα δέκα μαγαζιά μόνο στο Γκάζι, κάποια όμως απ’ αυτά δεν θα τα βρείτε στα ευρετήρια, γιατί αποποιούνται τον τίτλο του gay. Αντιθέτως, υπάρχει μια δεκτικότητα ως προς τον όρο “gay friendly,” αλλά εκεί προκύπτει εύλογα το ερώτημα: Τι είναι όλα τ’άλλα; Unfriendly; Το μόνο σύγουρα friendly, πάντως, σ’ αυτή την ιστορία είναι το πορτοφόλι της gay πελατείας...
While Athens enjoys a singular gay revolution, certain obsessions have a death grip, at least in the bar industry. We counted roughly ten bars in Gazi alone, some of which you will not find in our nightlife guide, however, because they refuse to be called gay. To the contrary, there is an acceptability about the term “gay friendly,” but that begs the question: What are all the other bars? Unfriendly? The only sure friendly thing in this story, regardless, is the wallet of the gay clientele...

The copy of the blind item is not credited to any author, and can only be taken as the stance of the magazine in general. Such small items also go easily unnoticed.

Despite the blind item, none of the rumors surrounding Hatzistefanou’s departure could be substantiated and they eventually died down.

For his part, Kalovynnas and his editorial staff placed a respectful distance between themselves and the bars. At least for the remainder of the time I was in the field, never once in their columns did they explicitly take a politicized stance toward the bars in the same way that Hatzistefanou did. However, the column did retain the disclaimer that was first initiated in issue twenty-four, fairly early in Hatzistefanou’s term as columnist, and was reprinted regularly on the Gay and Lesbian column page.

That disclaimer reads:

Συμβουλή προς τους αναγνώστες. Διευκρινίζεται ότι κριτήριο για την παρουσίαση χώρων στις Gay & Lesbian σελίδες του περιοδικού δεν αποτελεί ο προσδιορισμός/χαρακτηρισμός τους ως “gay & lesbian χώρων.” Η όποια αναφορά σε συγκεκριμένους χώρους γίνεται μετά από δημοσιογραφική αξιολόγηση και αποτελεί πρόταση του TimeOut Athens προς το gay & lesbian αναγνωστικό του κοινό.

[Warning to our readers: We should clarify here that the criterion for the presentation of places in the Gay and Lesbian pages of this magazine does not depend upon their description or characterization as “gay and lesbian places.” Whatever reference is made to specific

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places occurs after journalistic evaluation, and constitutes a suggestion by *TimeOut: Athens* to its gay and lesbian readership.

**A Novel Assemblage of the Foreign and the Local?**

The gay and lesbian column in *TimeOut: Athens* thus came to represent something clearly innovative, at least for the editorial staff of 10%. Assuming that we may take that assessment as something more than a boast—something that extends beyond the self-aggrandizement charged in the familiar complaints that inform the fugue of the old guard—just where does the originality lie? It does not lie simply in the existence of a weekly gay and lesbian column. That would discount the work of Hatzistefanou before him, and even that of Heirdari. It would also discount a host of prior Greek LGBT media ventures, among them those discussed in the previous chapter.

Part of the claim to innovation has to do with the framing of the cooperation as between queer and mainstream media. It arguably reflects an advanced version of mainstreaming for sexual minorities in Greece. But even this blending of queer and Greek mainstream is not without precedent. The radio show hosted by Maria Cyber had already occupied a similar structural position for years. The radio station that hosts the show, *Epikoinonía FM*, straddles the borders of the mainstream and the culturally subversive. The gay and lesbian radio show was scheduled for a late night slot. *TimeOut* holds an analogous position culturally to that of the radio station. The magazine functions by cultivating the sense that it brings to light the newest and most interesting parts of the city. The gay and lesbian column fits into *TimeOut* much as the radio show fits into the station. Rather than late at night, it was put in the back of a magazine, between the arts section and the horoscope. Aside from the precedent of
the radio show, there are countless articles and interviews from gay journalists of all
stripes – Gregory Vallianatos and Thodoris Antonopoulos come to mind most readily,
although there are others – who have been featured in the popular media.

Thus, not even the cooperation of queer media makers with mainstream media
was entirely original. Yet one aspect that does make the cooperation of *TimeOut* and
10% particularly powerful is that the format is very portable and regularly printed.
Although a radio show has the advantage of being of low cost to consume, it must be
recorded to be portable, to be consumed at leisure. Whether consumed via recording
or not, someone is forced to tune in at the appointed hour. Although television shows
may have advantages in size of market share, they too must be recorded. Moreover,
printed occasional pieces are difficult to catch consistently. There is a distinct
advantage to a printed medium that appears every week at the neighborhood kiosk.
The format of the magazine holds an even greater advantage for those who might not
wish their precise reasons for buying it to be known. It is still a general purpose
weekly, full of information that anyone would want to know who is curious about the
city. It does not advertise itself, either through marketing or through its appearance,
as a specifically gay and lesbian product.

At the very least, the claim to originality presupposes a more fundamental
claim that the column reaches a significantly large mainstream audience with
information about different LGBT social scenes and how to get in touch with the
various LGBT activists and organizations, both through the content of the column and
the content of the web site for 10%. The evaluation of that fundamental claim in turn
depends on the answers to a great many questions, beginning with the size of the
market share for *TimeOut*. I did not obtain official circulation numbers while in the field, and have not been able to secure such numbers since. Whatever numbers I might have been given, however, market share is difficult to ascertain with any degree of verifiability.\(^8\) At the risk of relying too heavily on anecdotal inference, some parameters can be set. Setting the low end of the scale, the magazine survived the first year in circulation and remains in print as of this writing. That survival permits the assumption either that the original business plan had an extremely generous allowance of time to bring the magazine up to profitability, or that the magazine has already achieved profitability, indicating a sufficiently large market share for survival. Setting the high end of the scale, it is not as if everyone has shifted from *Athinórama* and *Exodos* to *TimeOut*. It did not disappear from the kiosks every Thursday. The best assumption seems to be that its market share lies somewhere between these two abstract points. Still, estimating the number of people who purchase *TimeOut* is hardly the most important problem. There is no guarantee that any randomly selected reader would bother to look at the gay and lesbian column. Nor is there any guarantee as to the degree of second and third hand consumption of the column as it is passed through informal friendship networks. The readers’

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\(^8\) From my experience working as a distribution manager for a local LGBT press outlet in Houston, Texas, even professional auditing and verification services are unable to accurately measure the real readership of any periodical. The only statistic that can be collected with any verifiability is the difference between the number of issues delivered to distribution sites, and the number of issues that remain at the end of the circulation period. This number is liable to forgery by any number of agents, from those who deliver the media, to those who sell the media. Forgery aside, measuring the first-hand consumption does not provide any insight as to second-hand consumption, or to on-site consumption where the reader never removes the periodical from the distribution point, a practice I witnessed with free gay periodicals in both Houston and Athens. For *TimeOut*, however, these concerns are to some extent mitigated by the business model of sale through kiosks.
reaction to the column is even less predictable. All that can be said is that the
existence of the column provides an opportunity for the curious to learn more.

A similar operation should be performed with the questions “Who reads
_TimeOut?_” and “Who do people imagine as the readership of _TimeOut_?” Rather than
asking about the percentage of the readership that “is gay” or “is straight,” the more
productive line of questioning for this project would be about the symbolic capital
associated with purchasing _TimeOut: Athens_. What do Greeks believe it
communicates about the purchaser? Part of the appeal of the format, as noted before,
was that the structure of the magazine – as a general interest periodical containing
(concealing?) a specific interest column – allows individuals to purchase it with the
perception (illusion?) that no one would have reason to suspect them of a non-
normative socio-sexual identity simply for buying the magazine. This hidden yet
public consumption is also part of how the claim to originality gains its power; the
column functions as a broadcast that _might_ reach those unreachable by previous
LGBT media formats. Given the uniqueness of the Gay and Lesbian column,
however, it is not inconceivable that, as its presence becomes more widely known,
_TimeOut_ as a whole could come to be identified _socially_ as a symbol of non-
normative sexual identification. That is to say, in much the same way that
assumptions are made about individuals’ political beliefs according to the newspapers
they purchase – for example, only conservatives read _Ta Nέa_ – assumptions might be
made about someone’s socio-sexual identity only on the basis of buying _TimeOut_.
Although this possibility exists in the abstract, I cannot as yet report observing any
such assumptions about the readership of _TimeOut_. Further, if the symbolic link were
already so tightly drawn, both Athinórama and Exodos might also garner a significant level of suspicion, simply for having a listing for “gay bars.” Consider also the case of men who have sex with men but do not identify themselves as gay or bisexual, and the case of the women described in Kirtsoglou’s study, who celebrate erotic relations with other women in the context of a tightly knit paréa (usually a group of friends, but see discussion of OLKE below), but actively distance themselves from any identity as lesbians. Presumably, the Gay and Lesbian column (not to mention TimeOut as a whole) is targeted at them just as much as anyone else. Given the column’s explicit identification as “gay and lesbian,” they would most likely see the column as not being about them. They might even distance themselves from TimeOut altogether. If any generalizations can be made about who would find a symbolic connection between TimeOut and a socio-sexual identity, it seems likely that these two groups would be among them.

One area where TimeOut is objectively different from its two competitors, however, is in its symbolic marking as “foreign.” On a simplistic level, the title remains in English, as does the rendering of the name of the city name, “Athens.” The remainder of the magazine’s orthography is mostly Greek, peppered with English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. Yet this linguistic marking of foreignness does not separate it entirely from the field of its competitors. The title of Exodos, though it mirrors the Greek word in its spelling, is printed in English orthography. In their content, both Athinórama and Exodos deploy a linguistic potpourri similar to that of TimeOut. For all this, the foreignness of TimeOut is most evident at the organizational level. The Athenian magazine is a franchise of an
international brand. At the same time, the local ownership of the franchise places the foreignness of the magazine under some degree of erasure. That is to say, symbolically, it is possible for the reader to ignore the foreign chain of ownership that structures *TimeOut*. Just flipping through the pages, it is possible to remain unaware of the organizational difference of the magazine. It does not appear so different from *Athínórama* and *Exodos* in content, save for the gay and lesbian column. Yet both *Athínórama* and *Exodos* are locally owned and produced. They are ultimately answerable not to foreigners, but to Greeks – Anni Iliopoulou and Giorgos Dragonas, respectively. Thus, the foreignness of *TimeOut* is analytically labile. Though organizationally more directly attached to the realm of European cosmopolitanism, it remains at the symbolic level largely Greek.

This distinctive yet erased foreignness raises the question of whether the “foreignness” of *TimeOut* played a role in the development of the Gay and Lesbian column. This possibility should not be dismissed out of hand; other publications from the TimeOut Group have been marked for their appeal to a lesbian and gay clientele. However, it seems premature to assume that “foreignness” explains the development entirely. As alluded to earlier, it is difficult to assess whether the London offices required the Greek franchise to have the Gay and Lesbian column in the first place. The “foreignness” of *TimeOut* may well have played a role in facilitating the initial introduction of the column. The owner of the franchise, Hatzikostis, may have decided independently to run such a column, precisely as a bid for winning market share (although the lack of planning in the initial choice of columnist renders this possibility somewhat more remote). Regardless of how the column got there,
however, its persistence through two transitions reflects a level of commitment on the part of the local franchise. At either point in time, Hatzikostis could have simply allowed the column to die.

Consider those two transitions more closely. On the one hand, in the shifting of the column from Heirdari to Hatzistefanou, the “foreignness” of TimeOut clearly mattered. It was precisely that “foreignness” that the EOK activists exploited to make their complaints effective. They did not address themselves only to the foreign offices of the magazine, they also addressed the local Greek owners of the franchise. Their two-pronged bid for change in TimeOut was premised not only on the structure of the organization – approaching both those locally responsible and their superiors, independent of geography – but also on their sense that the progress made by lesbian and gay activists elsewhere in Europe would work to their favor. Writing to the London office made two distinct kinds of sense. In the transition from Hatzistefanou to Kalovyrnas, on the other hand, the “foreignness” of TimeOut was essentially irrelevant. Even if the rumors of lawsuits and backroom deals are to be trusted, it was a case of the local franchise maintaining the integrity of its product, and finding a replacement for the gay and lesbian columnist.

Thus, in some instances, but clearly not in others, the “foreignness” of TimeOut has mattered. Yet to say that foreignness matters is not to say that a similar chain of events could not have played out with an “entirely Greek” magazine, should such a publication even exist. If Athinórama or Exodos had taken the initiative to hire a Heirdari to write a gay and lesbian column, the activists in the Polychromo Forum and in EOK would likely have reacted in just the same way. Only then, there might
have been a question of whether a replacement columnist would have been found, or of whether the column would have been allowed quietly to die.

Perhaps that persistence is part of what makes the *TimeOut* column truly original, a truly new assemblage. The transition from an outsider to a journalist to a committed activist required more than a willing hand to fill the page each week. It also required the commitment of the publisher. While it is true to say that the change from Heirdari to Hatzistefanou signaled a victory for EOK, it must be recognized that the local franchise of *TimeOut* may well have been receptive to EOK's proposals from the beginning, with no need of intervention from the presumably "more" gay friendly London office. Still, once EOK won the battle, as it were, the Gay and Lesbian column literally became something else. It was no longer just a page buried in an otherwise ordinary city guide. It began to belong not to the magazine so much as to the communities to which it claimed to speak, or at least to the activists who read it. It sutured mainstream Greece to a parallel universe of lesbian, gay and transgender lives. Though it would be unfair to say that no exclusively Greek magazine could have performed the trick, it is accurate to say that a foreign-connected one did it. As for the future of the column, it is still an open question what it will mean for 10% as a magazine, for *Sánthesi* as an organization, and for Luo Kalovyrnas as a person. Will his voice merge over time with the fugue of the five voices? Will people insist on hearing him that way, even if he is trying to sing a different tune? Will this launch *Sánthesi* into national prominence? Does this give 10% a competitive edge over other magazines that were launched around the same time, like *Antivirus*? Will the publicity garnered for 10% through the *TimeOut*
column anger or please the underwriters at KEEL? Who will step up to write the
column when Kalovynnas and the editorial staff of 10% step down? Perhaps most
important of all, will the publisher still be committed to keeping the column?

A Politics of Transliteration\(^9\)

If the history of the *TimeOut* column is instructive in any way, it should at
least serve as a warning for those who would attempt to represent others in Greece.
You should expect those you represent to be watching, even if you represent them
only inadvertently. You should also expect them to respond vigorously to anything
with which they disagree. While it is true that the ability to speak in the name of
others is no simple matter wherever you might be, the ethnography of Hellenic
societies should make even the most cautious brokers of gossip think deeply on the
possible consequences of their representational acts. Writing about his own efforts at
representing and interpreting Greeks and Greek society, Faubion phrases the warning
more optimistically: “I would not consider *Modern Greek Lessons* a complete failure
even if my Greek colleagues uniformly disparaged it. I would consider it a complete
failure only if they were entirely, and blithely, to ignore it” (1993: 20). Campbell,
Loizos, Herzfeld, Cowan, Danforth – like Faubion, each of these ethnographers of
Greece has noted episodes where the attempt by one party to represent another
decides the fate of the personal relationships involved.

Recognizing this arrangement, I offer here a final narrative: the genesis of the
organization known as OLKE. With the myriad histories and the evanescent political
alignments involved, any one telling is already compromised, from one perspective or

\(^9\) This phrase comes from the poem “Twelve Aspects of God” by Olga Broumas
(1999).
another. For that reason, I ought to be clear from the outset as to my purposes and the argument that I wish to make. I am not interested in forging any absolute Truth of how OLKE came to be, although I will discuss many things that were taken to be true by certain actors along the way. I am not interested in simply restaging the drama for its own sake, although as drama goes, there was enough to make it inescapable. I am not interested in building or destroying the reputation of any individual or organization, although any telling of how OLKE came to exist can, unavoidably, be used by those interested in such ends. Nor am I interested in adjudicating what ought to have happened or how people ought to have behaved, although I was often enough invited and even dared to do just that during fieldwork. Just as often, I tried my best not to do so.

I am interested here in dispelling the misimpression that the work of LGBT activism in Greece has been taken up successfully only by a handful of people. I am interested in analyzing some of the patterns of social organization among the activists, with one eye fixed on the goals that the activists themselves articulate, and another fixed on the social effects of the practices they engage. I am also interested in parsing the social and cultural elements supporting the experiment in organizational structure which OLKE has undertaken. In a setting where most activist organizations had, willingly or not, become socially identified with singular personalities, the group that would become OLKE took a much deliberated turn away from organizational models that they saw as encouraging the fragmentation of communities and the concentration of real political power in the hands of a few. They worked to achieve an organizational format that would function without a
presidency. And yet, it would be a mistake to imply that this goal was clearly articulated from the beginning. Decoding and recoding, deterritorialization and reterritorialization, lines of flight and becomings – these are the languages that are persuasive here. The end product of a new organization was not necessarily envisioned, nor even visible at all, at the time to which we might now look back and call an origin. The origin of OLKE lies in an attenuated, intermittent series of encounters, many years in the making. OLKE is organized in the same way as the Polychromo Forum. They are packs, assemblages of particles merging and diverging at different speeds and velocities, where the significance of any one particle is not inherent or internal to it, but is structured by its position relative to other particles in the pack.

The Omáda Drásis

The stirrings of something new appeared in the Polychromo Forum on March 26, 2003. A slender man rose toward the middle of the meeting. He said that he had to leave early, but he wanted to pass around a piece of paper to collect the names, phone numbers and emails of those individuals who would be interested in meeting beyond the Forum to learn more, or to get more involved. That man was Dimitris Tsambrounis, a civil engineer by profession. Later, I would learn that he had been somewhat involved in lesbian and gay social circles during his years abroad in Germany, but that he had never been previously involved in LGBT activism in Greece. He had a passion to see things change in Greece, perhaps even an impatience. Tsambrounis’s invitation clearly struck a sympathetic chord in that fourth meeting of the Forum. Various speakers had articulated their sense of
frustration that a month had passed since the raid on Spices, yet little seemed to be happening. One the one hand, two different press releases had been drafted; Vallianatos, Sofianos and Giannelos had appeared on television and radio shows. On the other hand, some complained that the Forum seemed to be evolving into a form of (presumably ineffective) group therapy. That sentiment translated for some into signing up for Tsambrounis’s meeting. Others, like myself, signed up out of sheer curiosity for what might happen there. Still others were less than sympathetic, and expressed reservations about this call for additional meetings. One voice was particularly aligned with that argument: Giannelos. If a new organization was to be formed, he argued, then it should openly call itself a new group. Tsambrounis responded that his was not a call for a new organization, but only an invitation for those who had the appetite to come together in a “small circle” (στενός κύκλος, stenos kúklos) to be an ad hoc workgroup (άτυπη ομάδα, átupi omáda).

The first meeting of this átupi omáda was held on April 2, 2003, at the house of Luo Kalovyrnas, the same Kalovyrnas who would a little over a year later come to hold the byline for the column in TimeOut. In all, thirteen people appeared for the first meeting, twelve men and one woman. In addition to Kalovyrnas and Tsambrounis, those in attendance offered a wide range of skills, networks and organizational backgrounds. Their number included a one-time member of AKOE, a film director, an interior designer, an archaeologist, two members of ACT-UP, a member of the Youth arm of the political party Synaspismos,10 and an English tutor

10 Synaspismos is a progressive party of the left cobbled together from fractious constituencies. Its name might best be rendered “The Coalition Party,” although it
who was formerly employed by *DEON* magazine as an advertising salesman, and who had also volunteered in the organization of a Pride event some years previously. The tenor of the meeting confirmed the sentiments voiced in the Forum. There was a consensus that not enough was being done by the organizations (EOK received specific mention), and that the Forum itself seemed equally likely to stagnate as to move forward. The sense was that the group of people assembled might be able to function like a mass-media immediate response team, an ομάδα δράσης (*omáda drásis*, action group) that could quickly send press releases and letters of protest whenever homophobic material appeared in the mass media. The group agreed to draft a press release of their own, different in tone from the two drafted by Vallianatos and Giannelos. Although there was some dissent to this opinion, the majority of the group felt that these other two releases both sounded too much like manifestoes. The third release was drafted, and it was agreed that it would be offered up to the various organizations for their signatures. Several other potential projects for the group were aired, like establishing a telephone help line, and a gay youth shelter (*ξενώνας*, *ksenónas*). In all these potential projects, discussion inevitably turned to the point that some form of enduring organizational support would be necessary, and more importantly, financial backing. As the plans became increasingly elaborate, one participant observed with evident irony that the meeting was supposedly not about creating a new organization. Given the group consensus that so little had been accomplished by those organizations as existed, it cannot be

carries a strong connotation of mutual defense from the root *αυνίδα* (*aspída*) meaning “shield.”
entirely dismissed that any insistence on *not* meeting to found a new organization was perhaps only so much polite misdirection.¹¹

A week later, on April 10, the newly named yet still informal *omáda drásis* met again, this time at Tsambrounis’s house. Sixteen people came that evening, including almost all of those who were at the first meeting. Among the fresh faces were Gregory Vallianatos and Panagiotis Damaskos, Director of Psychosocial Support Services at KEEL and at that time a member of EOK. Many of the same topics were broached as before, but with some significant shifts. Foremost, there was a new mass-media intervention to be made. Several people in the group had heard a radio advertisement placed by a furniture store, Factory Outlet, on the radio station Galaxy. In that ad, a woman threatened her male companion that, if he did not take her to the sale at Factory Outlet, “Θα βγάζω βρόμα πως είσαι γκέι” (*Tha vgázo bróma pos eisai gkéi*, I’ll spread dirt that you’re gay). They constructed a plan to place coordinated phone calls to the furniture store, the radio station, and the advertising company that created the campaign. While a call was placed to the radio station to gather the correct information,¹² discussion in the group continued on to other subjects, in particular, the identity of this group of people who had just now drawn up a second media intervention in as many meetings. The positions in the

¹¹ The analysis of such misdirection is the core of Erving Goffman’s classic 1969 essay, “Strategic Interaction.”
¹² At one point during the planning of the phone campaign, when plans seems almost finalized and they had not yet mentioned how they would generate a sufficient number of callers, I wondered aloud if they would inform Maria Cyber to spread the word. The gay and lesbian radio show was to be on air in a few hours, and it seemed reasonable that she might be able to spread the information to a broad population more efficiently. That call was made, although it is unclear if her announcements translated into calls to the offending furniture store.
conversation were varied. Some saw the group’s existence as auxiliary to the organizations, arguing that “we’re here to help the organizations.” Others wondered if there was not some validity to Giannelos’s concern that this informal group was inevitably headed toward becoming a formal organization. Still others wondered if, effectively, the relationship between the formal organizations and any informal omáda drásis would not always be conflicted. By not becoming members of one established organization or another, they were sending a signal of non-support whether they intended it or not. A fourth concern was whether it made sense to keep the group open to anyone who wanted to drop by, or if it might be wiser to make the meetings private, open only to a set of invited people, especially given the growing sense that the informal action group was moving inexorably towards some more formal organization. Vallinatos was of the opinion that even working as individuals, the actions being taken so far were positive steps, implying that there was no need to rush toward formalization. By the time the meeting had drawn to a close, however, the omáda drásis had proposed a series of specialized sub-groups working on various themes, including mass media, a help line, a youth shelter, and a secretariat to take notes on the proceedings of the group. As the meeting ended, the outlines of an organization were emerging.

Two days later, at the April 12 meeting of EOK, Damaskos reported on the proceedings of the still informal omáda drásis. By the time of his report to the EOK meeting, Factory Outlet had already agreed to pull the ad from the air by Monday, April 14. Apparently, they had received calls from at least twenty different people, exceeding the number of people present at the meeting of the omáda drásis itself.
Damaskos also reported on the variety of working groups that had been planned. Giannelos took this development as proof that his initial suspicions were justified. He wondered aloud if this ad hoc group might not really be an all too thinly veiled attack on EOK and other established organizations. He wondered why this group of people that obviously wanted to become an organization was so afraid to just say so in public and be done with it.

The most damning news Giannelos had to report, however, was that he had been given to understand that accusations were being made that “η EOK τρωει λαεφτα” (i EOK tróei leftá, EOK ‘eats’ money). “Eating” is here a metaphor for stealing, swindling, and sneaking resources away from others. Herzfeld (1985) has linked the metaphor to a non-naïve performance of the need to survive, such that phrases like “everyone needs to eat” and “otherwise we would go hungry” justify or rationalize clever theft. In his Cretan examples, the objects of theft tend to be sheep, although the same metaphor is also used of money and other resources. In the idiom of Herzfeld’s Glendiot interlocutors, “he eats well” is an idiom of success, an expression capable of being tinged with both envy and grudging admiration. Giannelos’ use of the idiom, however, was in a different register, where “eating” is received as an accusation of entirely pejorative and unethical dimensions. His report of this accusation shifted immediately into a long narrative of the economic sacrifices both he and others had made for the survival of EOK as an organization for the good of the lesbian and gay community. Although it never was clarified how he was given to understand that accusations were being made against EOK, and moreover, whether those accusations had any direct association with those involved in the omáda drásis,
the nascent non-organization was now completely suspect in his eyes. Its existence constituted a direct challenge to EOK – an organization whose very name implied that it stood for a unified and singular homosexual community of Greece in her entirety. Indeed, EOK was the only organization recognized at that time by the International Lesbian and Gay Association. The implied argument was that if those who attended the omáda drásis really wanted only to do good work, they might have done so by becoming members of EOK. Their independent action was thus a sign of disrespect for the work that EOK had done since its founding in 1988.

Subsequent EOK meetings saw continued questioning of the motivations behind the omáda drásis. For its part, the informal action group gained both strength and numbers from its success with the radio ad and continued meeting, moving from house to house. With the momentum of success, however, came increased pressure to resolve the tensions created with the formal organizations by maintaining a nominally informal status. The omáda drásis faced pressing questions of representation – Who has the right to speak for an informal group? – and internal organization – How make and follow group decisions when the composition of the group changes each time?

Invariably, the language of those debates turned to that of membership, of who is a μέλος (mélás, member) and who is not. As an ad hoc group, it was frequently pointed out by those in attendance that the omáda drásis did not and could not have formal members. The ramifications of this point were argued extensively, and are no doubt familiar (perhaps painfully) to those who have participated in the construction of a social organization from scratch. Some argued that the concept of membership itself did not make sense for an open work group to which anyone might
contribute. Yet for work to proceed at all, there was a need to make decisions.

Unanimous decisions were seen as cumbersome, and difficult to achieve consistently.\textsuperscript{13} Voting by simple majority was seen as a quick way to move forward. To vote, however, there needed to be a criterion for who was eligible. Some argued that establishing membership criteria was a necessary step unless the group was willing to achieve unanimous decisions every time. Another suggestion was that only those who had already attended at least one previous meeting could vote.

These debates on the representational structure of the \textit{omáda drásis} were substantially debates about democratic process, though writ small. Although they never explicitly summoned Greek history rhetorically in these debates, the fears articulated in the \textit{omáda drásis} should not be read in isolation from Greece’s history of plebiscites under martial law during the 1970’s junta, nor from other militarily established governments of previous generations, such as the pre-World War II dictatorship of Metaxas. Equally unarticulated, the fears of the \textit{omáda drásis} also echoed concurrent questions resounding in the corridors of Brussels, where Spain and Poland were then engaged in heated diplomacy over the virtues and vices of proportional representation and double majority voting in the constitutional convention of the European Union. In all three instances – the European Union, the Greek nation-state, and the \textit{omáda drásis} – the energy of the debate was focused by the awareness that decisions reached at that time would have far-reaching

\textsuperscript{13} A similar set of concerns with representational process and the difficulty of unanimous decision making have been noted in the development of the Mattachine Society in the United States under Harry Hay, who drew many of his own organizational insights from his experiences as a member of the United States Communist Party (see D’Emilio 1983, Timmons 1990).
implications for future balances of political power. The proposed standard of having attended at least one previous meeting in order to vote was promoted as a way of protecting against a sudden onslaught of interlopers (from an “outside” yet to be formally constituted) who might not share the vision that animated the omáda drásis. That unifying vision, however, was predicated (at least rhetorically) on an openness to input and assistance from all corners – a position developed in opposition to the perceived position of the established membership-based organizations like EOK. Such openness was desired also precisely for that perceived opposition. Membership was thus at best ambiguous, and at worst the slippery slope to organizational introversion and stagnation.

One question was never raised, however. No one ever suggested that members of other organizations could not participate in the omáda drásis. Perhaps this is because, as mentioned earlier, the vast majority of those in attendance were circulating between multiple groups, just as I was. Beyond Panagiotis Damaskos, and Hermia the InfoSharer, one other EOK member dropped by a meeting of the omáda drásis. Moreover, two members of ACT-UP who frequented the omáda drásis also happened to be attending EOK meetings on occasion. Pointedly, they were present under the aegis of continued cooperation between EOK and ACT-UP, without foregrounding their parallel attendance at the omáda drásis (of which they could not technically be members, after all), although no one was ignorant of their presence in meetings of all three groups. Much as with Vallianatos’ multiple business cards,

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14 I should note here that I was never granted permission to attend a formal meeting of ACT-UP, despite repeated requests to different members. The one public meeting
individual activists saw advantages to attending multiple organizations. The language of membership was crucial in this landscape of multiple meetings, as formal membership was taken as an indication of where an individual's primary loyalties might (ought to visibly?) lay. Thus, the physical presence in a group by individuals recognized as formal members of a different group served at least three purposes. First, it allows individual activists to triangulate the shifting alliances and moods of their fellow activists; it is an act of social arbitrage, where the valuable resource up for trade is the eyewitness account. Second, it allows an organization composed of many members to have feelers in different sectors of the social landscape: not just one finger on the pulse, but several, precisely because "the pulse" of the various activist groups is not imagined as unitary in the slightest. Perhaps most importantly, it also serves as a not so subtle reminder to other activists that they stand in relation with each other, whether that relationship is of support, observation, suspicion, or any combination of these and other qualities. On yet another, more Machiavellian level, attendance at multiple groups recalls the conscious self-positioning of Cypriots in relation to political parties, as documented by Peter Loizos (1975). Rather than placing their futures in thrall to just one political party by cultivating relationships with only one patron, many residents of "Kalo" hedged their bets, as it were, and maintained at least cordial relationships with functionaries and representatives of opposed political parties. In this way, they could guarantee that their personal fortunes had at least some measure of independence from shifts in political power.

they had advertised was cancelled on the day it was to take place, due to scheduling conflicts as I was informed.
This strategy of maintaining multiple inter-group ties and monitoring those maintained by others is extremely labor intensive for the activists, requiring upwards of five meetings a week beyond whatever other commitments individuals may have to rest, work, family, lovers and friends. When formal meetings easily last three or four hours, and are often followed by informal social engagements like dinner, coffee or drinks – gatherings where it is often assumed that “things really happen” (εκεί γίνονται πράματα, ekei ginontai pramata) – the time invested weekly just to maintain close contact with two or three groups can easily reach forty hours. Not surprisingly, this combination of formal and informal meetings between activists dominated and often monopolized many of the activists’ social lives. The sheer time commitment involved in keeping in touch with the shifting activist realm rivals that of a full-time job. Indeed, this tension between paying jobs and activist commitments underlies one of the more delicate and cautiously pursued conversations among the activists: real progress seemed to entail some form of professionalization, yet earning money personally from activism was looked on with great suspicion, although often it was suspicion alloyed with a trace of envy.

Protovoulia Omofilofilon Politón

As the carousel of meetings continued, two events loomed on the horizon. Summer was nearing, a time when people expect (or perhaps hope for) formal social schedules like activist meetings to be suspended until autumn by competing travel opportunities and obligations. In the omáda drásis, the arrival of the summer of 2003 imparted a sense of urgency, and fueled a group consensus that something needed to be solidified before vacations took away the group’s momentum. That sense of
urgency was magnified and focused to a specific date by the also impending Anti-Racism Festival (ARF). In its eighth year, that annual event had become the most regular public showcase for the various LGBT and HIV/AIDS organizations in Athens. The omáda drásis saw the ARF as an opportunity to capitalize on their successes and to make a public debut. To go public, though, they needed to present themselves as something more attractive than a mere informal gathering of people. A new subgroup was created, focused on the creation of a booth for the ARF, complete with a banner, an informational flyer, and t-shirts to sell in order to start a nest egg for the group. Further, the name was changed again, this time to Πρωτοβουλία Ομοφυλόφιλων Πολιτών (Protovoulía Omofilófilon Politón, the Homosexual Citizens’ Initiative, or POP for short). EOK, while not planning a booth, was slated to participate in a panel discussion of homophobia, described earlier in chapter four. Word had it that ACT-UP was planning a booth, as were LOA, POEK, and KXPKB.

Planning for the ARF at the newly christened POP began a month before the event. Among the tasks assigned to the ARF subgroup was the design of a set of possible logos for the group. The subgroup saw a need for innovative ways to express the group’s identity. The rainbow flag was seen as overused, tired and

\[15\] LOA (also phrased occasionally as OLA) was another group which I asked to attend, but to which I was never permitted access, despite requests made through several different members. The topic was apparently discussed several times, but it was communicated to me that some members did not feel comfortable opening up the all-female space to a male. It was suggested at one point that a special meeting of LOA be convened such that members uncomfortable with a male presence could opt out, and I would be allowed to make a presentation on my work and partake in a discussion group afterwards. No such meeting was ever scheduled. They may have felt that, given the previous involvement of several female researchers – among them Evi Boukli and Venetia Kantsa – there was no need to allow an additional intrusion.
outmoded. Moreover, although it was never expressed by any participant in the subgroup, or any Greek activist to my knowledge, there is also some weight to the argument that, in the Greek context, the symbol of the rainbow-colored flag is itself already too heavily claimed by the very active anti-war and anti-capitalist movements, thus diluting if not precluding the attachment of any specifically gay symbolism. The differences in the flags, while easily distinguishable, are perhaps too subtle to scan well in mass gatherings. Specifically, the gay pride flag designed by Gilbert Baker has been standardized to six colors, whereas the Peace flag includes an additional sky blue stripe and the order of the stripes themselves is sometimes different. Whether or not this sense of the compromised symbolism of the rainbow flag played a role in the subgroup’s creative process, the symbol that was eventually chosen was that of a stylized pair of cherries, joined at the stem. The intended symbolism was the joining of two of the same.\(^\text{16}\) The t-shirt and the banner for the booth both featured the slogan, τα δικά μας φρούτα κάνουν ώριμες επιλογές (ta diká mas froúta kánoun órimes epilogés, our fruits make mature choices). Here, the adjective órimes plays on the sense of fruit being ripe, at the right stage of development. The noun it modifies, epilogés, perhaps inadvertently worked to position POP in the camp of sexual orientation as choice. Although POP never held a formal debate to decide the point as a matter of policy, several of those in POP individually profess that they experience their sexual orientation as something inborn to them, with no element of choice. Perhaps unintentionally, the motto could also be taken as addressing only the narrow population of POP participants, rather than the

\(^{16}\) Though perhaps unintended, the symbolism was also taken as an endorsement of monogamy and long-term relationships.
homosexual population as a whole. Thus the motto was interpreted as a sly jab at other organizations: POP behaves maturely, despite being a new-born organization, whereas other organizations do not. It was a reading that generated some amusement in light of Giannelos's recent fight with Paola in the Polychromo Forum.

As material plans for the ARF went forward, POP was also struggling to resolve the political realities of how to present itself as a new organization. A key question in the development of the identity of the group was the extent to which it was desirable to cooperate with other groups and individuals, and if so, which ones. One participant in the help line subgroup, who was also a member of ACT-UP, declared that if POP cooperated with any other group at all, he would have no more to do with it. He argued that cooperation with another group at such an early stage would rob POP of its autonomy, and give the wrong impression προς τὰ ἄξω (pros ta ekso, literally "toward the outside," meaning people outside of POP, the outside that had as yet to be formally constituted). No one asked him if this would also preclude cooperation with ACT-UP. Other voices agreed that cooperation in general was a tricky theme, but rather than supporting a policy of blanket refusal, they seemed more willing to consider potential relationships on a case by case basis. One such possible relationship that provoked heated debate within POP was a proposal from Paul Sofianos that the fledgling group provide space at their ARF booth to distribute the latest edition of DEON. Several of those present thought cooperation with Sofianos a poor idea at that time, arguing that he really did not need their help in promoting his already highly visible magazine. There had also recently been a disagreement between Sofianos and SATTE over some remarks Sofianos had made
about the legitimacy of Paola's recent arrest. With an ongoing fight between
Sofianos and SATTE, POP did not want to get caught up in the fray. Others argued
that there was no reason to close doors so early in POP's development. A vote was
called, despite the absence at the time of a formally established process. Out of
twelve people voting, those against the cooperation won by a single vote, with one
abstention (λευκό, levkó, technically meaning "blank", whereas abstention is signified
more directly by the verb ἀπέχω, apécho) from the discussion moderator. For one
person who voted, it was their first time at a POP meeting. The only person present
in that meeting who did not vote in any way was the anthropologist.

Despite the lack of formal structure, and although the debate was impassioned
and the margin as close as possible, the DEON vote passed uncontested. It is only
one of many votes that were taken before the structure and procedures of the group
had been formalized. The debates about membership and who counted as a member
of POP had not been resolved, yet when work needed to be done, informal methods
trumped formal structure. Still, there was a sense that eventually a permanent
solution had to be undertaken. The tool proposed as the solution for this and other
problems (particularly the handling of group finances) was the establishment of a
καταστατικό (katastatikó, charter). In the same meeting where they had just voted
on whether or not to cooperate with Sofianos, and just two days before the group was
to make its debut at the ARF, POP began debate over a charter that was not to reach a
resolution until April 2004. They debated the correct number of people for a quorum
(ἀπαρτία, apartía), whether members could be involved in more than one subgroup,
how the subgroups were to be coordinated, what they would do when new people
wanted to become members of POP, how the process for ejecting miscreant members ought to work. In the midst of this discussion, one participant raised not even a murmur of dissent when he opined “<number> paidía, eímas te móno mia paréa” (re paidía, eímasti móno mia paréa).

His is an observation that requires some unpacking, for the word paréa indexes a complicated concept under-examined in the ethnography of Greece. Although paréa is usually taken to signify “company” or “a group of friends,” his observation might best be translated as “hey you all, we are really only a loose collection of people.” He was clearly not deploying it in the coyly sexual way used on late night television commercials where suggestively clad women ask the presumably male viewers “Θες paréa;” (Thes paréa; Do you want company?).

Neither was he deploying it in the manner that waiters or bartenders count and group their custom: “Αυτές για την μεγάλη paréa πίσω” (Autes gia tin megali paréa piso, These [beers] go to the big group in back). Nor was he using it in the common sense of κάνουμε paréa (kánonume paréa), signifying a leisurely activity of passing time as company that roughly translates “hanging out,” as among friends. Neither would the participants in POP have taken him to be describing them literally as friends. While some of them were already friends, or had just recently started to become so, many of them had never interacted with each other before until Tsambrounis’s invitation brought them together. More importantly, frictions both during POP meetings and at less formal gatherings had made it clear that several participants had no interest in becoming friends, but only at best συνεργάτες (sunergátes collaborators, coworkers). All the same, the participants at POP did
recognize that by saying that they were only a *paréa*, he was pointing out that the very terms by which they were relating to one another were not those of professionalism or other strictly formalized relationships, but the informal terms of friendship. Though not in truth friends, the social and cultural basis for their interactions was the common fiction that they should treat each other as if they were.

Elisabet Kirtsoglou (2003), by contrast, takes *paréa* as an unproblematic term for a group of friends, using it as the nominalization for the group of suburban women she studied. Their drinking and carousing, their overlapping erotic relationships, and their sense of a chosen family\(^\text{17}\) form for her the social and cultural grounds for the use of the term *paréa*. These foundations of group identity also ground a disjuncture she observes between *paréa* and the political. “The *paréa* does not regard [erotic] relationships as being a danger to the community’s political vigour, probably because activism is not part of the group’s agenda in the first place” (2003: 82). While illuminating, it is not enough here to note that Kirtsoglou points to the desired distance the *paréa* in her study maintains from activism, whereas the POP participant points to the undesired distance between POP’s goal of activism and their actual status as *paréa*. It is important to see the *grounds* on which the disjuncture is desirable among Kirtsoglou’s subjects: the fact of their having erotic relationships amongst themselves.\(^\text{18}\) It is as if erotic relationships among those who are committed

\(^{17}\) Significantly, Kirtsoglou cites Weston (1991) in this regard.

\(^{18}\) Though divorced from the political, Kirtsoglou also argues that the actions of the *paréa* in her study reflect a process ubiquitous in Greek society, the elaboration “of differences within Greek society … rather than a unique case in an otherwise homogenous cultural framework” (2003:86). She thus invites us to imagine a Greece populated with *parées* similar in structure to the one she studies, bonded together through some common difference. Among these, one might wish to locate the *parées*
to a political project would constitute a potential conflict of interest, particularly should the erotic relationship sour. Significantly, none of those present in that POP meeting had ever pursued erotic relations between them, to my knowledge.¹⁹

Moreover, the POP participant also used the term paréa to express a limitation; they are only a collection of people. The implication is that they aspire to be something more than “just friends,” and not in any erotic or even platonically romantic sense. The aspiration to be an effective social movement is thus distinguished, at least at an ideological level, both from the language of friendship, and from the language of erotic relations.

And yet, the social practices by which POP came to be – the daily, informal activities through which human relationships were built and the substantive work of POP was accomplished – were invariably practices always already heavily linked to the logic of friendship, of φιλία (filía, friendship) and paréa, particularly practices of commensality. This connection of paréa to commensality is central to the work of Evthymios Papataxiarchis (1991) on friendship among men, particularly in relation to κέρασμα (kérasma, treating) in the cultural space of the male-centered café, the καφενείο (kafeneío). Although the majority of his language centers on filía

¹⁹ Inter-activist romantic relationships were unusual. There was one well-known long-term romance, between Irini Petropoulou and Hermia the InfoSharer. They eventually did break up, though they remain friends. This is not to say that activists were never flirtatious amongst themselves, nor is it to imply that those desires they might have had for each other never went unconsummated. What I do want to convey, however, is that such relationships rose to the level of social facts with exceeding rarity. In the vast majority of cases where I was acquainted with activists’ significant others, they uniformly expressed a lack of interest in activism themselves.
(friendship), his observations, particularly of commensality, are equally applicable to
paréa, once the concession is made that even though both terms describe social
relationships, filía often specifies a dyadic relationship, while paréa carries a more
collective sense, perhaps including dyads, but conceived in a broader network of
social relations. Filía is, in some senses, more intimate than paréa.

Still, the most salient aspect of Papataxiarchis’s analysis of friendship and
commensality is the texture of the relationship as focused on feelings of sincerity,
expression, lack of calculation, spontaneity, and deep affection. The friendships that
Papataxiarchis describes in the context of kafeneío commensality are diametrically
opposed to the kind of sociality fostered in a patron-client system, where the
language of friendship is also used, but in reference to relationships that are at base
calculated, to social ties that are fraught with suspicion. At least, this is the ideology
of the “friendships of the heart” that Papataxiarchis describes. And yet, this very
space of commensality – of informal gatherings “outside” the of activist meetings –
was also assumed to be the space where “things happen.”

The activists were all too aware of how their modes of interacting with each
other moved in parallel to modes of expressing friendship. Friends, it is assumed,
visit each other’s houses. The fact that so many meetings took place in private
residences brought friendship and practices of φιλοξενία (filoksenía, hospitality)
immediately to the foreground. Offering personal space for a group meeting was
never taken as a sign of friendship, however. Friends, it is assumed, go out for coffee
together, and are seen together in public. Witness the continual invitations to extend
their social time beyond the confines of the formal meeting spaces into public spaces.
Invitations to drink, dine, to have coffee, to go to art openings, even to run errands together – all of these informal settings were spaces where, whether or not any “work” was really performed (or any gossip was exchanged), it was socially perceived and collectively assumed that “work” (gossip) of some sort would be performed.

The ubiquity of that perception also made it a tool of supreme ethnographic utility. As Herzfeld observed of the inhabitants of Rethemnos, “I was told that groceries should be wrapped so that people would not see what we were going to eat at home. In a small community, the most disconnected fragment of information may be the thin end of a prying wedge” (1991:38). By the same token, the community of activists working on issues connected to socio-sexual identity in Greece is quite small. To be seen arriving at a meeting in the company of someone could be easily read as signifying a kind of alliance with that person. It is precisely because of this possibility that one activist, not many weeks after we had met, rejected my invitation to meet him before a meeting of POP and arrive together. It is not just that my invitation was declined; it was dismissed with a very specific reason: “Όχι, δεν θα πάμε μαζί. Τι σχέση έχω μαζί σου;” (Όξι, den tha páme mazi. Ti skhesi éxo mazi sou; No we will not go together. What relationship do I have to you?).

Though abrupt, his statement reflected a logic of deriving social meaning from physical proximity that I already deployed as an ethnographic method. Almost from the beginning, my notes of the Polychromo Forum and other meetings contained rough seating charts with notes of who arrived and left together at what times. A simple attendance roster would elide a potentially important realm of information:
who tended to sit next to whom, and how that arrangement changed over time. To facilitate this form of data collection in the Forum, I tended to sit at the edge in whatever room the Forum was held, towards the front. This position afforded something of an excuse to remain turned towards the room at an angle that would allow me to identify most faces, without being embarrassingly obvious about my reasons for doing so.20

Thus the comment “eímate móno mia paréa” cut to the heart of the problem for the would-be organization. It was a rare moment that indexed the instabilities in the project they had undertaken by pointing directly to the social and cultural tools they employed in that undertaking. They were a group of people who were not necessarily friends but were behaving in many respects as though they were. Though they had called themselves an omáda drásis, they had not yet become an ὀργάνωσι (orgánosi, organization). Their collective identity was premised on their initiative (protovoulía), not as friends, but as πολίτες/πολίτισσες (politéis/politéisses, citizens) who identify as homosexuals, to do something different. Their ability to form an organization and the longevity of that organization rested on either eliminating that tension, or keeping it in check.

Internal tensions aside, the debut of POP at the Anti-Racism Festival went off well, with a booth, the t-shirts, and an informational flyer in place. POP’s presence in the panel discussion of homophobia was also articulate and well-received. There was no overt criticism of the group’s debut at the ARF, even from those who had

20 Once again, this is strategic interaction as framed by Goffman (1969). Success in fieldwork involves finding socially acceptable explanations to cover over the prying wedges that form the reality of ethnographic labor.
previously questioned the group’s motivations. Despite this relative success, internal
instabilities and dissatisfactions began to show more openly at the POP meeting
directly following the ARF. The subgroup that had worked on the Festival spoke
about the difficulties they experienced. Working as a subgroup required them to
second guess the wishes of the ολομέλεια (oloméleia)\textsuperscript{21} more often than was
comfortable for them. They often felt as if they were forced to work in a knowledge
vacuum. There were various other small critical comments, about the size of the
letters on the booth, the size of the flyer, and the amount of text on it.

Tensions did not reach their highest, however, until the remaining subgroups
began their reports. The subgroup in charge of the telephone help line was up first,
and they reported an astonishing amount of progress. Not only had they completed
research on the cost of operating the line, they had found a partner organization to run
it, and claimed to have submitted paperwork to a government agency requesting
funding for the project. All of this information constituted a shocking development
for many of those in attendance. The ARF subgroup seemed particularly dismayed,
as they had just spent almost a month agonizing over what the rest of the organization
would think of their efforts, while the help line subgroup seemed to charge ahead
without a second thought. What was perhaps the most galling was that the
cooperative relationship set out by the help line subgroup was presented as a \textit{fait}

\textsuperscript{21} Usually taken as “plenary”, \textit{oloméleia} breaks down literally to “all members.” First
introduced when of the debates over membership under the new form of POP, the use
of the word was illuminating. It seemed to indicate a transitional phase between the
\textit{omáda drásis} that lacked members and some future organization that would have
them. It pointed to an abstract collective, rather than an enumerable list of specific
members. It also introduced the concept of membership without requiring reference
to what the criteria for the membership might be.
accompli, when no one outside of the help line subgroup had ever been given the opportunity to decide whether that relationship was one they wanted to embrace. Ironically, the proposed cooperative relationship was with ACT-UP, and had apparently been brokered by the same individual who, in the debate about cooperation with Sofianos, had threatened to withdraw from POP entirely if it were to cooperate with other groups.

The questions from the rest of the group came quickly. “How could POP make an application to the government for funding if it was not yet even legally recognized entity?” The help line subgroup answered that the application was under the aegis of ACT-UP, which is legally recognized. “What relationship would POP and ACT-UP have?” POP would man the line, ACT-UP would take care of the funding. “Was not the task of the subgroup only to research the issue, and not to make decisions and commitments without the input of the whole group?” The process is just at the stage of a προσχέδιο (proskheido, plan), and POP is not yet legally committed. “Why did the help line subgroup not even call a single other person in POP to consult in the issue?” The information is being brought to the group now, they replied. Then one participant shouted out that the oloméleia ought to have been consulted before any document went to the government, and the discussion broke down into a jumble of cross-connected arguments. It was at that moment that the two-person help line subgroup rose to talk separately in another room. When they returned, they announced that if their efforts were not to the group’s liking, they would gladly stop, and would equally gladly withdraw from POP. This threat caused yet another round of chaotic cross-talk, broken only when the meeting moderator
suggested that perhaps it was best to let the topic rest, and to move on to reports from
the other subgroups, including the discussion of arranging a meeting specifically to
talk about the charter. With the arrival of summer, however, it was determined that
only one more formal meeting would be scheduled. The agenda for the meeting
would include the help line, the charter, and how to handle new members. Although
the help line episode was not spoken of again explicitly, it was not forgotten. It was
clear that a division had been drawn within POP. The two help line collaborators
came to be seen by some as dangerous and unreliable. For their part, the two help
line collaborators came to resent certain other POP participants, particularly those
whom they saw as power hungry. Tsambrounis was most often the target of these
suspicions, particularly since he was, after all, the one who had invited everyone into
this process.

As these internal divisions grew, an interim *katatastikó* was determined at the
next meeting, mirroring much of the *de facto* form that had evolved since the original
days of the *omáda drásis*. The most significant change was that the language of
membership was incorporated. The subgroups would continue, but would be
specified into work groups and a secretariat. To address the problems that had
emerged about communication between the subgroups and the group as a whole, the
subgroups were to be supplemented by a *súntoniostikó órgano* (*suntonistikó órgano*,
coordinating group, or SO). In many respects, the description of the SO was very
much like a provisional *dioikitikó sumvoulío* (*dioikitikó sumvoulio*, or DS), the
organizational equivalent of a board of governors. It would be able to take certain
decisions without consulting the *oloméleia*, and so resolve the issue of the work
groups acting without guidance. The SO would also be able to meet more frequently, since it involved fewer people than the whole organization. The SO was to be composed of one member of each work group, one member of the secretariat, and two additional members elected from the general membership. Despite the day-to-day decision-making power of the SO, the *oloméleia* was to remain the body of highest authority. The right of membership in POP, and thus the right to vote, was granted to all those who had attended two consecutive meetings of the collective membership. The quorum was set at eleven. Important decisions in the *oloméleia* required a four-fifths majority of eligible members present, and other decisions by simple majority.

However, by the time POP resumed meetings in September 2003, the schism over the help line, together with the summer break, had seriously weakened the momentum of the organization. Moreover, many of the members who had been active in the spring found their lives to be differently structured by the fall. Not a few members found that work obligations drew them away from POP (perhaps conveniently, given the drama). Despite the stability offered under the new charter, meetings of the *oloméleia* grew fewer and farther apart. From the resumption of meetings in September 2003 up to and including what many members took to be the final meeting of POP on April 2, 2004, the *oloméleia* was called to meet five times. The same number of meetings had taken place in the five weeks leading up to the Anti-Racism Festival. Moreover, according to the letter of its charter, POP achieved a quorum in only three of those meetings. This formal detail was overlooked.

For all that, the members who formed the concentrated core of POP were very engaged and committed. The size of the group had the functional effect of keeping it
well-coordinated and agile, although the internal division caused by the help line episode festered. POP served twice as moderator for the Polychromo Forum. POP members Evangelia Vlami and Dimitris Tsambrounis gave presentations on human rights in December 2003 at the Ίδρυμα Μετώνος Ελληνισμού. POP members cooperated with members of Σύνθεση, LOA, POEK, and SATTE in distributing condoms on World AIDS Day, December 1, 2003. In October 2003, POP began a carefully orchestrated cooperation with LOA, SATTE and the Greek chapter of Amnesty International (Διεθνής Αμνηστία, Διεθνής Αμνηστία, hereafter DA) to revive DA’s quiescent Τομέας Ομοφιλιών και Σεξουαλικής Ταυτότητας (Division of Sexual Identity) or TOST, which had last been active during the 2001 trial of Tzanetos Tsapatsaris and Yasser Hamada for prostitution under Article 347 of the Greek Penal Code.²² Perhaps most significantly, POP ceased to meet in the houses of its members, and found something of an official organizational base, sharing the newly rented γραφείο (grafeio)²³ of SATTE. They had access to meet in the room as

²² Gregory Vallianatos played a significant role in facilitating the cooperation of POP, LOA, SATTE and DA. Having played a significant role in the first incarnation of TOST during the 2001 trial, he was well-aware of the power that DA could bring as an internationally recognized organization. What was required were people willing to push TOST to continue producing; through occasional one-on-one meetings with POP members and through the Polychromo Forum, Vallianatos was also aware that POP, among other organizations, was both willing and capable. For a more detailed history of that trial, see the Appendix.

²³ Although grafeio usually translates as office, the space was more of a meeting hall equipped with a desk, lots of folding chairs, a small refrigerator and a coffeepot. Nonetheless, SATTE’s office became an important crossing-ground for many organizations outside the space of the Forum. SATTE’s hospitality also elegantly served the purpose of tracking the various goings on in the “LGB” portions of LGBT activism in Athens; rather than running from meeting to meeting, SATTE invited the meetings to come to them.
often as they pleased, so long as they paid the power bill and their meetings did not overlap with those of SATTE.

Still, with the reduced number of active members and an enlarging raft of projects, POP was under considerable organizational strain. Too few people were trying to do too many things. Moreover, they were engaged in this labor as volunteers, introducing the additional instability that members who felt their work was not recognized or respected might easily leave, just as the help line had threatened to do. Indeed, the two members of the help line were not the only ones to place that threat. By December 2003, the group agreed on the need to bring more people into the organization, and that the current charter, though it had been serviceable in a temporary way, should be allowed to expire in February 2004. The group began to explore its options quietly, with most of the organizational work being done in closed meetings of the SO. By April 2004, the SO called for a meeting of the oloμέλεια to establish the new charter for the organization. That new charter would be crafted with the goal of obtaining a legal identity, and consequently, a new name.

Some organizational aspects of POP would be retained, however. In particular, the formal lack of a presidency occupied by a single person was an aspect that POP members universally supported. The members saw this position as creating the structural basis of stagnation in LGBT activism in Greece. A singular office of power, they argued, creates a structural tendency to divert energy from constructive pursuits into competition for “the chair” (καρέκλα, karékla), a position to which an office holder might cling against the interests of the organization and the greater community. Their argument mirrors a broader dissatisfaction with the fossilization of
power in the hands of a few political families, such as those of Papandreou and Karamanlis. Yet in the case of Papandreou, Karamanlis, and the national parties, there is a sense that the common man, the individual citizen, is so far removed politically from these prime families of Greece that he has little recourse. In the significantly smaller community of LGBT activists, however, change seems easier. However, such an aversion to power – particularly power formalized and centralized in the hands of a single person or office – does not connect well with the requirements for recognition as a legal entity in Greece, or elsewhere, for that matter. Such recognition occurs only by the terms of the State. As Jane Cowan has cogently analyzed in the case of the Macedonian minority in Greece (2001), the requirements of state recognition can often countermand and even reshape the will of those seeking the fruits that recognition offers.\(^{24}\) Thus the goal of legal recognition mandated one of two options for POP. The first path was to take the legal route of incorporating as an \(\varepsilon\tau\alpha\rho\varepsilon\iota\alpha\) (\(\varepsilon\tau\alpha\rho\varepsilon\iota\alpha\), company). EOK had taken this path in the late 1980’s under difficult conditions. The magazine AMFI was under legal attack. AKOE was hemorrhaging members. The form of an \(\varepsilon\tau\alpha\rho\varepsilon\iota\alpha\) required but a handful of people – enough to hold the basic offices of President, Vice-President, and Treasurer – in order to function as a legal entity and maintain financial accounts in the name of the organization. For POP, however, this path was less than appealing. Not only did it mirror the history of EOK, a symbolic parallel that POP members were anxious to avoid, it locked POP into accepting the position of the presidency as a structural reality of the new organization. The second option was to take the legal route of

\(^{24}\) The reader is referred to the discussion of recognition in chapter one.
becoming a μη κερδοσκοπικό σωματείο (min kerdoskopikó somateío, non-profit body), a specific kind of not-for-profit organization provided for under Greek law that enjoys some of the same financial benefits as etaireías (the ability to hold bank accounts in the name of the organization, for example). POP found an example of this structure in the form of SATTE. Such somateía can also legally accept funding from a variety of sources. In the charter proposed for the new form of POP, those funding sources were three: dues from their members; gifts from third parties of any nature, including government bodies and corporations; and most importantly, income from political actions of the somateío. This provision meant that the new organization would be able legally to engage in fundraising of almost any sort. However, like an etaireía, the legal structure of the somateío requires a slate of officers. Unlike an etaireía, the structure of those offices is not as strict; once legally extant, the somateío has a great deal of liberty in the ordering of its internal affairs. The trade-off for this structural flexibility is that to become legally registered, somateía must gather the signatures of twenty-one members, far more than the three required for an etaireía. Even then, the language of the charter must be set up in advance so as to allow for the kinds of flexibility that the would-be non-profit requires. For that crucial legal counsel, POP availed itself of the services of Spuros Apergis. Apergis is a member of Amnesty International. More specifically, he is the discussion facilitator of TOST.

On April 2, POP met at the SATTE office to set up the details for a final meeting of POP, on April 17, where the oloméleia would edit and either formally adopt or vote down the charter that had been drawn up with the help of the lawyer
Apergis. One of the first issues discussed was the order of the agenda for the April 17 meeting. It was decided on a vote of six to four that the name of the new group would be the first item on the agenda. That decision would be followed by the article-by-article discussion of the draft charter. The potential list of names for the organization was itself a point of careful discussion. Marina Galánou, Vice-President of SATTE and POP member, voiced that, whatever name the group should choose for its new form, it should not have any reference to transsexuals, transvestites, travesti or any transgender categories. It was one thing for the mission statement of the organization to be inclusive, she argued, but another for the name to make a claim about universal representation (and encroach upon SATTE) by including the “T.” Her point was well-received. More precisely, her point was academic, as none of the proposed new names had any such reference. The remainder of the meeting was spent double checking the list of people who had attended previous meetings, whether of the omáda drásis or of POP. This final charter meeting aimed to be an inclusive, new beginning for an organization that hoped to capitalize on the experience gathered from over twenty-five years of activism. To drive the point home that this was also to be a commitment by the participants of this charter convention, would be members of the new organization were required to pay ten euros for the right to vote, taken as dues toward the new organizational form.

OLKE

On April 17, 2004, the charter meeting convened at SATTE as planned. Several people were late, however. One member of the help line group arrived slightly late, and explained that his counterpart in the work group would arrive soon.
The group decided to continue, as all members had been informed that the meeting would start on time. As scheduled on the agenda, the name of the organization was the first vote. There were originally three options: Ομοφυλοφιλική και Λεσβιακή Κοινότητα Ελλάδας – Δράση Τώρα (Omoofilofilikí kai Lesviákí Koinótita Elládas – Drási Tóra, Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece – Action Now); Πολύχρωμες Πολιτείες – Λεσβίες, Ομοφυλόφιλοι, Αμφισεξουαλικοί/ές Ελλάδας (Polúchromoi/es Politéies/isses – Lesvías, Omofoilófoi, Amfisexoualikoí/és Elládas, Rainbow Citizens – Lesbians, Homosexuals, Bisexuals of Greece); Ομοφυλόφιλοι Λεσβίες Ελλάδας (Omofoilófoi Lesbíes Elládas, Homosexuals/Lesbians of Greece). As the votes went, it was the first of these names that won the majority of votes. A second vote was called to drop the final phrase, and passed, yielding the name Omoofilofilikí kai Lesviákí Koinótita Elládas, or OLKE.

There were still reservations, and not all votes were cast in favor of the new name. There were no abstentions, however. Some wondered whether the final “Elládas” would not be taken as a bid to be the superior group, somehow representing all of Greece. Another observed that in any case, a shorter name was better than any long one, since the full name of the organization had to fit on the σφραγίδα (sfragída, a seal or official stamp). At that point, Marina Galánou arrived, and shortly after, the other half of the help line group. However, as soon as he walked in the door and sat down, he announced he could not stay, and left abruptly. Although he did not explain his departure, it is possible that he felt slighted when he recognized that the meeting had started without him.
After his dramatic exit, the remainder of the meeting ran much as planned: a line-by-line appraisal and approval or revision of the draft charter. The most belabored discussion came with the choice of the language in the charter describing the structure of the presidency. As a somateío, it was legally required for the organization to have an office of president. The draft charter provided three different solutions for that requirement, all of which presumably had been approved by legal counsel. In the course of discussion, the first option came to be called the "presidential model." It set out an office where the president of the board of governors (DS) had the usual set of powers to call meetings, represent the somateío, sign paperwork, and in all respects, function as the legal and public face of the organization. The second model became known as the non-presidential model. In it, the person with the highest vote tally from the annual election among the membership would run the first meeting of the DS. From then on, however, the remaining members of the DS would rotate the responsibilities of the president amongst them all (with the exception of the Secretary and the Treasurer), in much the same way that the SO had worked for POP. In this second model, there was no single legal representative; any member of the DS would, in theory, be able to represent the group. The third model was a blend of these two, locating the legal and public face of the group in the person with the highest vote tally, but maintaining the powers of the presidency as a circulating responsibility amongst the members of the DS.

As the vote turned out, the third option won narrowly, on a three-way split of three to three to four, with one abstention. The argument supporting the blended model was twofold. Unlike the first model, it maintained the anti-karékla sentiment
of the group by distributing functional powers of the presidency amongst many members of the DS, thus diffusing the potential for a single person to run the entire organization. Unlike the second model, it did not seem to foster confusion in the public dealings of the group. By keeping the image of the group consistent “pros ta ekso,” it would also more clearly satisfy the requirements of the law; the second model, though it could technically point to a person who won the highest tally of votes as the president, might not be able to argue convincingly that this person held any real office.

By the time the meeting drew to a close, over six hours had passed. It was at that point, after long hours of discussion and many votes, that the charter was formally adopted. Then the remaining member of the help line work group rose to make what turned out to be a parting speech. He thanked everyone for the experience of working with them over the last months, but stated that he would not be able to continue with the new organization, για συναισθηματικούς λόγους (gia sunaisthimatikoús lógoús, for emotional reasons). He pointed out that he had not voted on anything having to do with the charter of the new organization. After his speech, he left, and the remaining activists turned to the last items on the agenda. The members of the new organization elected a temporary DS from their number. The next crucial step was to ascertain how many signatures they still needed to complete the paperwork for registering the somateio, and how many promised signatures were outstanding from members unable to attend. Though only fifteen signatures were

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25 While this statement is true – each time his turn came to vote on some aspect of the charter, he declared “apéxo” (I abstain) – he did participate in each vote on the name of the new organization.
available at that meeting, there seemed to be no problem for obtaining enough to
surpass the required twenty-one.\textsuperscript{26} The next OLKE meeting was scheduled for May
14 at the offices of SATTE, safely after the upcoming Πανόραμα (Panorama, the
Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in Thessaloniki, then in its sixth year) and two days
after the upcoming Polychromo Forum. Thus ended the last meeting of POP.

Or so the members of OLKE thought. In the weeks that followed, an intense
struggle developed between the members of OLKE and the one member of the help
line subgroup of POP who could not continue for emotional reasons. Although the
precise order of events is muddied by successive retellings, the argument revolved
around a series of late night phone calls where the help line subgroup member, who
had been part of the SO of POP, complained to the members of OLKE that he found
himself shut out of the POP email accounts. OLKE members, deeming POP defunct,
had changed the passwords. The fight escalated into angry phone calls and
recriminations. OLKE argued that POP no longer existed, as it had turned itself into
OLKE. The help line member argued that OLKE was a renegade splinter of POP.
POP, in his estimation, very much continued to exist, and OLKE had unfairly shut
down POP's infrastructure.

As the weeks passed after the charter convention, OLKE members presented a
calm and united face as they went about their business, deflecting most questions by
stating simply that POP had decided to become OLKE, and that was the end of the

\textsuperscript{26} Towards the end of my fieldwork, I asked a member of OLKE for a copy of the list
of signatures of those who had founded OLKE. I was told that would not be
advisable, since several signatories had agreed only on condition of secrecy. While
this did raise suspicions as to who would want to protect their identity so much,
especially on a document that would be filed with the government, it raised a deeper
suspicion that perhaps not all twenty-one signatures were yet in place.
discussion. Giannelos, however, was enraged by the existence of the new group. At
the preparatory meeting for the Polychromo Forum held in the offices of SATTE, he
argued that the name was a deliberate attack on EOK, not just on account of the
implicit claim to be the sole representative group of the community, but also for the
nearly identical sequence of letters in the acronym. Moreover, he argued that the
similarity in names was a brazen attempt by OLKE to take credit for the years of
work that EOK had performed for the community. Giannelos insisted there could be
no cooperation between two such groups. Other activists tried to intervene, to call for
at least a civil dialogue between the two groups, no matter what their differences
might be. OLKE seemed willing enough to talk, but not to change the name.
Giannelos, however, found no room for compromise. The átupi omáda had become
POP; that was a predictable yet forgettable affront. For POP to become OLKE,
however, was nothing less than an unconscionable and public attack on the then
seventeen year record of EOK.

The stage was thus set for high political theater at the Polychromo Forum, to
be held at the Anexártito Stéki, on May 12. At the previous Forum, before the charter
convention that produced OLKE, it was decided that the proedréio of the May Forum
would be held by SATTE. As the groups entered, the geography of seating was only
too revealing of the alliances at hand. At the front desk, facing the assembly, sat the
help line member of POP, next to Marina Galánou. The agenda for the meeting listed
him as Secretary of POP. In the front, EOK and AKOE. In the middle of the room,
KXPKB and OLKE, taking up several rows. The back of the assembly was
constituted mostly by members of POEK and LOA. For their parts, Paola and
Thodoris Antonopoulos moved around, but hung out mostly by the coffee stand, set off in a corner behind the desk where Marina sat. Heightening the emotional tension of the room, the Secretary of POP was wearing the bright orange version of the POP t-shirt that had been crafted for the Anti-Racism Festival the previous year. So was one other person: the POP member who had volunteered to be the group’s Treasurer. He was sitting up front near Giannelos. The other half of the help line work group did not appear.

Between the elevation of POP to the presiding table and the re-emergence of the t-shirts that had not been seen since the Anti-Racism Festival of 2003, it was clear that some were intent on making a production. In his report for EOK, Giannelos surprisingly did not mention his disagreement with OLKE at all, although the agenda listed it as one of the items EOK wished to raise. In the time allotted to POP, although the agenda listed a report of a mainstream press interview, the Secretary presented his version of events surrounding the division of OLKE from POP and the illegitimate closure of POP’s communications infrastructure. He demanded reinstatement of the email access and a public apology from OLKE. When invited to reply by Marina, Panagiotis Damaskos (former EOK member, now of OLKE) replied that OLKE would defer its reply until it was OLKE’s turn to hold the floor. By the time their turn had come, almost a fourth of the activists in attendance had already left; the headcount had dropped from a high of forty to thirty-one. Several OLKE members – among them Evangelia Vlami, Dimitris Tsambounis, and Panagiotis Damaskos – took turns to set out their position that POP had dissolved itself and become OLKE. Once they finished their presentation, the atmosphere took on a
weight of heavily feigned politeness. The Secretary of POP insisted that an apology was necessary. Giannelos, with the Treasurer of POP sitting near by, refrained from most comments, but clearly took POP’s side. These positions were not surprising at all to members of OLKE, or indeed most of the activists in attendance. At another point in the discussion, Marina Galánou opined that perhaps OLKE’s name was ill-chosen, as it implied that OLKE somehow represented all of Greece. It was not a surprise in the context of the meeting; POP’s location at the presiding table had already communicated SATTE’s position. For members of OLKE, however, the substance of the statement was a disappointing shock. Marina had been present at the meeting where the list of potential names was debated, and she had taken an active part in that debate. True to her advice, none of the potential names contained any reference to transgender identities. To the OLKE members, it was a betrayal, not only because Marina had voiced in public a critique that OLKE had already considered internally, but because she did so from a position of power and, moreover, from a position of trust.

Despite all of the drama, as the Forum ended and people milled up and out of the stéki and into the sodium-lit street, everyone behaved as if nothing had really happened. They were talking about anything and everything else. Perhaps the obviousness of the drama made it unnecessary to talk about it afterwards. Perhaps that same obviousness made it unwise to talk about it publicly, lest one’s words be misunderstood, whether by intended conversation partners or by eavesdroppers. Talking with various activists over the next weeks, the clash of POP and OLKE was further pushed into the background by the return of summer and a renewed sense of
urgency to bring various hanging projects to some form of completion. Nor should it be discounted that the diversion of conversation topics to upcoming events is often a socially graceful way to deflect inquiries away from difficult, or perhaps merely unenlightening, episodes of the past. As with the previous year, the arrival of the Anti-Racism Festival promised another opportunity for the activists to engage with the public. POP did not make an appearance at this event. Rather, POP broadcast an email as widely as possible, stating that POP continued to exist, and would issue further announcements as developments took place. There is a website for this current incarnation of POP as well: http://clubs.pathfinder.gr/P_O_P. A short time later, another email was sent from POP in a wide distribution pattern. That email announced that, until further notice, the actions of POP were suspended.

For its part, OLKE did hold its May 14 meeting at SATTE, despite the public slight from Marina. From then on, however, its meetings took place in the Stéki Metanastón, in Exarchia. OLKE staffed a booth and helped to organize a well-attended talk at the 2004 Anti-Racist Festival. As for relations between EOK and OLKE, they took on a civil veneer, though skirmishes were discernable: on the same night that OLKE had chosen to stage an evening fundraiser at the bar Troll marking the anniversary of the Stonewall riots in 1969, EOK spoke of staging an evening event at Lamda dedicated to Loukas Theodorakopoulos. As of this writing, OLKE continues its activities.
And Afterwards...

Of necessity, this dissertation can only offer an opening to the range of narratives that could be constructed out of the fieldwork. Many activist organizations and activists are not represented here to the same extent as others. Often, but not always, the extent of that representation mirrors the extent to which they allowed me into their lives. Any omission here, however, does not diminish the importance of any group or individual, nor is it intended as a slight. Moreover, as should be evident from the way that these narratives have been presented, the histories of these groups and individuals are all interconnected, not to say incestuous, and draw on similar sets of assumptions, resources, and pools of talent. To tell a history of one organization, such as OLKE, is inevitably to tell a history involving many others.

Something more ought to be said about these histories. Their presentation here should not be mistaken for stories to be understood under the classic narrative structure of beginnings, climaxes and denouements.¹ That illusion is an artifact of the telling here, of the instantiation of history into language. As argued elsewhere in this dissertation, I, the broker-anthropologist, entered into a complex field of relationships already in motion, and began following those relationships as a rhizome. Anthropologists are always already late to the scene. My choices of narrative beginnings were also arbitrary, underwritten by concerns and needs that always exceed the content of the histories themselves. So too with endings. Anthropologists cannot avoid leaving the scene too early, though they may well overstay their welcome. As this dissertation closes, the relationships it describes have moved on in

¹ My thanks to James Faubion for pushing me to draw out this point.
time, and no ending here can represent that passage justly. Nor is this text merely a collection of histories about that set of relationships. This dissertation or pieces of it may, in time, circulate among the activists in a variety of forms, may constitute yet another elsewhere upon which agents in those relationships might draw. At least, it is my hope that those who were so generous as to let me into their lives will find something of use to them here.

Underneath all of this lies the frustration of leaving the field, yet maintaining intermittent contact with it through emails, phone calls, the post and mass media representations of it. Not that being in the field is or ever could be an experience of total contact and complete understanding. The feeling of looking upon the fieldwork experience as a place now elsewhere underscores the partiality of both experiences. These physical and psychic reminders of continuation make their way into present ethnographic representations of things past, and alter the meaning of them, shifting the imagination of the anthropologist. The five voices presented as the old guard in this dissertation provide useful examples. Vallianatos continues to have an active presence in Greek LGBT activism, particularly as an advisor to OLKE (although it is unclear if he is technically a member of it). As this writing drew to a close, news reached me that he had been beaten physically by a lawyer, Alexis Kougias. Giannelos continues to serve as president of EOK as of this writing. Paola continues to serve as president of SATTE as well, although there was a bitter falling out between her and Marina Galánou. For her part, Marina has founded a publishing house, Πολύχρωμος Πλανήτης (Políchromos Planítis, Colorful Planet, in the translation she provides) in cooperation with the member of the POP help line work
group who had previously worked in advertising sales for *DEON*. Paola claims Marina stole the idea from her. Sofianos continues to produce the Mr. Gay Greece pageant, except that for the summer of 2005, it will be called Mr. Gay Mediterranean, reflecting both a more regional ambition and a more secure sense of accomplishment.² Maria Cyber has also faced many difficulties. In the course of the writing of this dissertation, emails and various other reports indicated that the ESR fined the radio station *Epikoinónia* FM, apparently for Maria Cyber’s use of language on the gay and lesbian radio show. The attack by the ESR rallied many of the activists to support the radio show, including Giannelos. In the end, however, it appears the station itself pulled its support, and the show was cancelled.

Among the new activists, POEK continues to provide an LGBT presence in the regular street protests of Athens, and to remind Athenians that activism takes place elsewhere in Greece, such as Thessaloniki and Kavala. OLKE, too, continues to hold events at the *Stéki Metanástón*, and has enjoyed several well-publicized successes (see below). AKOE remains, signified from afar by the occasional appearances of Manthos Peponas on the public email list, omofylofilia@groups.quernet.org, the governance of which intriguingly has changed. As the final pages of this dissertation were being written, Sotiria Theohari announced on the mailing list that she had departed from the managing group amicably, no doubt with a memory of scuffles that had taken place before over her

² Additional irony arrives by reading Sofianos’s Mediterranean ambitions through a juxtaposition of David Gilmore’s analysis of the Mediterranean (1982) and Borneman’s and Fowler’s analysis of Europeanization (1997). While on the geographic and symbolic levels, Sofianos’s new contest seems to evoke the characteristics that Gilmore discusses, on the social, economic and structural levels, it draws rather more upon the processes at work in Borneman and Fowler.
decisions (as with my enrollment in the list), and no doubt to forestall rumors that another such scuffle had taken place. Hermia the InfoSharer continues on as moderator, forwarding queer news from around the globe. She also continues to be the most public member of the lesbian group Sapphides. The somewhat more prominent lesbian organization, LOA, continues to announce regular events, most recently for an open discussion with an LGBT activist from Portugal. The AIDS activists also continue their work. ACT-UP has most recently sent out press releases marking March 17 as the International Day of Remembrance for the victims of HIV/AIDS. TimeOut and Sýnthesi still cooperate, although the web pages for TimeOut Athens unfortunately do not give the content of the column. The Athens-based magazine Antivirus also endures, now bolstered by the addition of Vitaminí O, through its cooperation with Thessaloniki-based Sümpraksi. A new magazine has joined the ranks of LGBT publications: AfterShave.

As for other noteworthy events connected to the mass media, Kathimerini caused a stir when it issued a report in February 2005 on homosexuality in Greece, including an extended interview with a priest. Mirroring events in the United States and Europe, there was also much discussion of same-sex marriage, particularly with the declaration in late February 2005 from the Εθνική Επιτροπή Ανθρώπινων Δικαιωμάτων (Ethnikí Epitropí Anthrópinon Dikaiomátou, National Board of Human Rights) in favor of recognizing same-sex relationships, publicized in Eleftherotypia. The work leading up to that announcement can be traced back to October 2003 and the revival of TOST at DA in cooperation with LOA, POP (which would become OLKE), and SATTE. When the proposal to recognize same-sex relations was put
before the Board, it was Amnesty International and OLKE that made the joint presentation.

November 2004 also saw a peculiar outburst of news with the release of the Oliver Stone film, *Alexander the Great*. A group of Greek lawyers threatened publicly to sue Stone and the distribution company over the film, claiming that it defamed the Greek nation. They argued that the film should have a disclaimer attached at the beginning, stating that all representations were fictional. Although neither Stone nor the movie studio, Warner Brothers, responded openly to the threat, the Greek distribution arm of Time Warner apparently offered the lawyers a private screening, after which no more was heard of the affair. It would seem that the lawyers had issued their threat without having seen the film.

In addition to the good news, there have been disturbing signs, at least to this researcher. Specifically, there are indications that the continuation of the Polychromo Forum is seriously in question. Although some argue that it has outlasted its utility, I disagree. Others, disheartened or disgusted by the way the Forum can become the hostage of high political theater, have decided that it is not worth attending. No real work gets accomplished, they complain. Yet others see the existence of that social space as necessary, as fostering an otherwise absent level of social connection among the activists, and as offering the potential to reach out to newcomers. Marianella Kloka, one of those involved with KXPKB and *Antivirus*, was at the forefront of a campaign to reorganize the event and to revive its flagging attendance. Through connections first forged through EOK, the Forum has found a new home in the theater Argo, where *Boston Marriage* was staged. The proposal from Kloka, and
supported by a range of activists, was to commit to continuing the Forum at least for a period of several months, and to turn it into a two-part event in the hope that the structural alteration would bring in new energy, and discourage unnecessary public posturing. The first half would be a structured discussion on a specific theme of general interest, and the second half would include reports from the various organizations as to what they had accomplished in the previous month. The retooled Forum would be advertised as widely as possible, no longer relying on word of mouth or emails between the activists themselves, as had mostly been the case before. Email traffic concerning the Forum has been slim since these plans were advertised, however. Given that the Forum was one of the organizational features so central to the fieldwork and to this dissertation, it would be sad to see it go. There is much work to be done, and much that an organizational form like the Forum is well suited to do, but the future of how that work will be accomplished remains to be seen.

These indications of the potential collapse of the Forum bring me to a final theoretical meditation on social movements and their practices. Marshall Sahlins, writing of the encounter between Captain Cook and the Hawaiians, sets up an explanation of cultural change over time as shifts in the meaning of established practices. “The values acquired in practice return to structure as new relationships between its categories” (1981:50). Sherry Ortner, writing in turn about a variety of theorists of practice, finds Sahlins’s model to be persuasive, and yet lacking. “The route leading back from practice to structure” is “too smooth,” she finds (1994[1984]:400). For our purposes here, however, her more salient concern has to do with agents’ considered attempts to create specific change over time, or what
might more succinctly be called activism. Ortner writes that “actors’ intentions are accorded central place in the model [of practice proposed by Sahlins], yet major social change does not for the most part come about as an intended consequence of action. Change is largely a by-product, an unintended consequence of action, however rational action may have been” (1994[1984]:401, emphasis hers). It should also be noted that the kinds of change that Sahlins describes seem to be mostly interventions from outside the cultural system, disruptions from elsewhere. This tendency owes much to the kind of example that he chose: Captain Cook and the Hawaiians, where the Hawaiians clearly did not go out in search of Captain Cook. Ortner would have Sahlins’s account give more room for intentional change, presumably by agents acting from within a socio-cultural system. Fieldwork with the Greek LGBT activists demonstrates at least one specification of her critique, especially given the activists’ tendency to seek out useful elsewheres, while continuing to engage in practices of the familiar. Theorization of cultural and social change, rather than being limited to a conception of intervention from without, must also account for agitation from within that purposefully references things thought of as outside. This perspective has been present in the work of Roland Moore, particularly in his analysis of alcohol consumption patterns in Arachova (1995), and in the work of Susan Buck-Morss, in her analysis of the formation of the tourist industry in Mirtos, Crete (1988). It should be equally applied to the case of social movements.

Significantly, Ortner’s assessment of practice has social movements and activism very much in mind. She situates the anthropology of the 1970’s in the
context of the emergence of “the counterculture, then the antiwar movement, and then, just a bit later, the women’s movement” (1994[1984]:382). Aside from noting her doubtless unintended truncation of the history of the women’s movement, we might also hasten to correct her exclusion of a significant elsewhere for Greek LGBT activists: the gay and lesbian liberation movement that arose in the United States from the structural precursors of the Mattachine Society (see D’Emilio 1983). What is more jarring than these elisions is her evident pessimism regarding activism, a point to which we shall later return. Ortner closes her essay with the following observation:

Once, practice had the romantic aura of voluntarism – “man,” as the saying went, “makes himself.” Now practice has qualities related to the hard times of today: pragmatism, maximization of advantage, “every man,” as the saying goes, “for himself.” Such a view seems natural in the context of the failure of many of the social movements of the sixties and seventies, and in the context of a disastrous economy and a heated up nuclear threat. Yet however realistic it may appear at the moment, such a view is as skewed as voluntarism itself. A lot of work remains to be done. (1994[1984]:403).

In setting up both the voluntarist and the pragmatist views of practice as skewed, Ortner partially recapitulates the movement of her argument over agency and structure: neither view is an adequate descriptor of the social or the cultural over time. Both perspectives are impermanent, ephemeral. Nevertheless, her description of the pragmatist view retains some resonance today, and not just with the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century – grave talk of a nuclear-powered axis of evil, and a world economy that by some measures and for some people seems to perform as it ought, yet by other measures and for many people seems to promise inevitable structural disasters. More central to our concerns here, there is also a resonance with
the sensibilities of Greek LGBT activism – a pragmatism, a maximization of advantage. The activist groups discussed above do consciously consider the ways in which their existing conditions might be re-wrought, re-arranged, and re-associated to create, if not the best possible outcomes, at least better ones. This is a pragmatism aimed at a collective good, a Realpolitik with a streak of social idealism at its center. This same sensibility marks the preferred languages of critique among activists. The unscrupulous, they say, turn that pragmatism and maximization of advantage not to the collective good, but toward individual advancement.

To turn now to another level on which both the voluntarist and the pragmatist views are skewed, and thus to complete the motion of Ortner's argument – both the voluntarist and pragmatist views she laments depend on a sense of human agency unrestrained, one unstructured either by the social or by the webs of cultural meaning within which we move. Both the romantically self-made man and Machiavelli's Prince must needs dream with the fragments of their actual lives. Similarly, the Greek LGBT activists, for their part, must and do work with the resources at their disposal – a reliance on networks of informal relationships and friendship, a tendency to read group interactions through the lens of patron-client relations, and a command of symbolic, geographic, and historical elsewhere. As this dissertation has demonstrated, however, in their reach to places elsewhere, the activists grasp with varying degrees of awareness of what they grasp. No matter how carefully they consider that grasp, they remain to some extent necessarily unaware of the ways in which the connections they forge may draw along other meanings, may induce other people to see visions unintended and even counterproductive to the goals which made
the grasp seem rational in the first place. This argument goes some way toward addressing Ortner’s concern for unintended change as a result of the most rational of actions.

This dissertation has repeated this master argument in many different forms. The activists’ reliance on practices of friendship to organize fundraising events brings the contradictions of reciprocity and the gift into the financial heart of an organization. The deployment of a language of racism to describe the societal treatment of homosexual desire brings a range of contradicting claims and counter-claims to bear on the kinds of identity that conceptions of race and sexual desire might constitute. The symbolic ambiguity of embodied gender practices as cues of socio-sexual identities brings the libidinal economy of homosexual desire to collide with the social identity of the homosexual. The activist reliance on the trope of patron-client relations to navigate structures of social power tends to bring those same terms to bear on activist collective efforts themselves, leading to a culture of suspicion that, while valorized and pragmatic under many circumstances, may also undermine goals of collectivity. Again, to return to the language of Sahlins, Ortner, and other theorists of practice, social and cultural contestation over the meaning of practices over time can shift the ways in which those practices are perceived, and can thus in turn rearrange what social scientists have called the structural, the foundational. As the saying goes, “what is thought of as real becomes real in its consequences.” Thus, it does matter how the Greek LGBT activists imagine the movement, and their place in it.
The importance of understanding how the activists imagine themselves can be seen by returning to various points in the history of OLKE provided in the previous chapter. Throughout its emergence, it promised something new to the scene of LGBT activism in Greece, and not just a new name. It eventually promised a different kind of organization, an alternative space. It is a mistake to say that this promise was clearly visible from the beginning. Any impression that this is so is a side-effect of the reconstruction of events offered here, a side-effect enabled only through hindsight. The only reason it is reasonable or important at all to provide a narrative of a civil engineer circulating a piece of paper at a meeting is because it retrospectively takes on the character of a point of entry. We cannot accurately say, despite the warnings issued by Giannelos, that OLKE was envisioned as a whole from its beginnings, like Athena sprung full-formed from the head of Zeus. While I cannot underwrite a hydraulic view of the social, the formation of the omáda drásis was spoken of as tapping into a collective imagination full of discontent with the status quo, a discontent which Giannelos imagined all too clearly. Yet it would equally be a mistake to concentrate too much on Giannelos. The discontent did not rest only upon him or his person, although we cannot discount that some are and continue to be disaffected of him personally. Many of the same emotions and suspicions have been directed at one time or another at Vallianatos, Sofianos, Maria, and Paola. That broad, social imagination was not filled with discontent on the account of one man alone, nor on the account of merely five voices. Rather, it was filled by generations of activists and non-activists who came to see through comparisons elsewhere that the paths taken in Greece were not the only possible paths.
Nor was that discontented collective imagination revealed in a single instant, in a fit of sudden disenchantment occasioned by a jail cell suicide. Instead, that imagination was fueled by the activists' own daily repetition of socially grounded practices that allowed them to get any work done at all. Witness the fundraisers of EOK, SATTE, and OLKE. Each organization enjoys overlapping networks of social relationships via its individual members, and thus a diverse range of resources at its disposal to bring together an event. The utility of these networks is one of the insights offered through the language of resource management in theories of new social movements. As argued earlier, identity-oriented theories of social movements are also relevant here. However, I would argue that they are relevant in an unexpected way.

The proper question is *which* identities are actually employed in each instance where these three organizations expend resources in order to gather funds. The assumption of identity-oriented theories of social movements would be that it is a sexual identity, or a gender identity, since EOK, SATTE and OLKE are all, in the end, self-consciously constructed for the purpose of championing the rights of members of these specified identity groups. Yet, just as the history of OLKE shows membership to be a symbolically ambiguous category for the activists themselves, "membership" in a socio-sexual identity group is symbolically ambiguous as well. The assumption that the salient identity in the construction of a fundraiser is a socio-sexual one is mistaken. The salient identity is much narrower than that, precisely because of the tools on which the activists rely to accomplish their goals. Although the activists may create an event with the intention of gathering not only their close
friends, but people new to them, their modes of organization depend very much on pre-existing structures of friendship and alliance. In these fundraisers, the salient identity that characterizes those in attendance is not primarily socio-sexual identity, as the activists would wish. Rather, it is "friends of the activists," or those who wish to be seen as occupying that space. The selection of this social identity is reinforced by the ways in which events are planned, promoted, and discussed afterwards. It is the friends of the activists who are called upon to print flyers cheaply, and to accompany the activists while distributing flyers. It is friends who the activists personally invite to the events, and who form the majority of the attendees at any given event.

Moreover, the social circles of many activists are in important ways focused on other activists, given the scale of the time commitments required just to remain abreast of the inter-group politics. Importantly, the claim here is not that the social worlds of the activists are entirely turned inward on themselves. They are not. It is a much longer chain of causation, reaching back to the informal terms of engaging activist work successfully. Reliance on informal structures of friendship tends to turn activists' attention inwards to other activists.

Thus we return to the misimpression with which the last chapter began, that five voices might be the only important figures sustaining a net of activist work over time. If anything, the emergence of OLKE as an organization illustrates that the network of activists reaches into innumerable pasts and experiences, even in the foundation of something clearly and unmistakably new. The voices that merged to make up this new pack called OLKE drew on histories of multiple political parties of the left, on AKOE, on EOK, on ACT-UP, on LOA and LSD, on DEON, and on
Stonewall, on ILGA, on Amnesty International. OLKE is an assemblage *par excellence*, drawing on a potent mix of elsewheres. Yet even then, OLKE imagined the fundraiser it held at Troll in much the same way as EOK imagined the fundraiser it held at Lamda. Significantly, the social results were approximately the same: both fundraisers were attended primarily by other activists and their friends. Given the difference in the price of admission for the fundraisers, however – twenty euros as opposed to seven – OLKE made out considerably better economically than EOK. Although it had hoped for better, OLKE did not consider its fundraiser a failure. EOK, however, did.

Thus returns the question of Ortner’s pessimism towards the social movements of the sixties and seventies in the United States, and in turn, the question of the pessimism which has characterized many Greek activists’ assessments of the movement in Greece. At the risk of coming off as a naïve apologist, both are pessimisms I cannot share. If by failure, Ortner and the Greek LGBT activists mean that some long-term goals have not been met, then no movement could ever claim to be such a success. No social movement has yet put itself out of business by affecting each and every one of the changes it desires. The measurement of success by concrete goals such as membership numbers is also misguided. While such indicators may in fact point to forms of power for a social movement – the ability to raise money and the ability to network widely, for example – they ignore the work that a small group of dedicated individuals can accomplish.

It becomes a question of interrogating the terms of failure. Ortner presumably deems many movements of the sixties and seventies to be failures because they had
ceased to be vibrant by the time of her 1984 article. It would be hard, however to say that the anti-war movement was a failure; it played a crucial role in shaping the consciousness of a nation. Nor could the same be said of second-wave feminism; Ortner herself owes a portion of her career to the successes of that movement. As for the counterculture movement, it functions for many social movements today as a temporal elsewhere: those who protest the Iraq war and the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund do so in tropes that draw directly upon the cultural and social forms that characterized the counterculture movement. As has been argued earlier, through the utilization of the form of the stéki, the Greek LGBT activists themselves draw on the legacy of the Greek counterculture movement.

In the Greek case, the evidence of success is ample. One of the most basic criteria, as noted wryly by James Faubion, is whether your efforts attract notice at all. Were the Greek state to blithely ignore the existence of various LGBT activist organizations, that would be a clear form of failure on the part of the activists. However, they are not being ignored. The ESR fine on the radio station is, in at least one way, a positive sign. One does not take the time to silence a voice of no importance. The appearance before the National Board of Human Rights and the Board’s subsequent pronouncement is a success of a different kind: a slow, careful, methodically prepared and staged success where the internal politics of the Board were weighed, and where established organizations were brought into an effective alliance. The regular appearances of POEK and other organizations in street marches demonstrates a third kind of success. While not exclusively LGBT events, these marches are not intended to be that. Rather the opposite point is being made. Against
\[\text{\gamma\kappa\epsilon\tau\omicron\omicron\omicron\iota\omicron\eta\omicron} \text{(}\text{\gamma\kappa\epsilon\tau\omicron\omicron\omicron\iota\omicron\iota\omicron\iota}\text{, ghettoization)}, \text{these marches do show, at least symbolically, that LGBT concerns can be fit into a broader network of social justice issues in Greece, and that they are not rejected by that coalition. Granted, POEK forges those connections through a radically leftist, anti-capitalist and anti-war philosophy that links the oppression of homosexuality to the generally oppressive character of a global neo-liberal capitalist culture. This formula is not one which all of the activists feel comfortable embracing. Yet POEK is there, regularly, in the streets.}

Perhaps, however, the most powerful sign of success are the linkages that are forming between Greek LGBT activists and activists elsewhere. ILGA-Europe continues to play a vital role, still mediated largely through EOK and the person of Giannelos, yet available otherwise to all who visit ILGA’s web sites. Amnesty International and the Greek Helsinki Monitor are also poised as influential voices, with the re-establishment of TOST and the continued presence of Vallianatos, respectively. On a more finely grained level, OLKE members maintain ties to the German organization ERMIS, to the movement in Sweden, and to Turkish activist groups. For their part, participants in KXPKB also take part in a global network of activists known as The Humanists; for example, the staff of \textit{Antivirus} has gone on outreach expeditions to Uganda. Moreover, KXPKB members were instrumental in assembling leaders from a variety of immigrant communities in Athens in order to form a working group to inform immigrant workers about their rights under the European Union directives regulating job discrimination. Through their efforts, a
pamphlet was published in multiple languages, and distributed directly by immigrant
community leaders.

From the *TimeOut* column to the Anti-Racism Festival, from the street
marches to the meetings of the Forum, from small gatherings in houses to
presentations before government bodies, the Greek LGBT movement is very much
alive, vibrant, and moving forward. With the connections they are forging to activists
and movements beyond Greece, the Greek movements are themselves becoming
elsewheres upon which non-Greek LGBT activists might draw.

I can think of no greater reason for optimism than that.
Appendix: The Trial of Tsapatsaris and Hamada

In 1993, the European Human Rights Foundation released a report entitled “Homosexuality: A European Community Issue.” Praised by organizations like Amnesty International and the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), this report argued for a project of social justice on a European scale to alter law and policy to end discrimination against homosexuals. This was not a revolutionary report. It was the latest in a series of non-binding resolutions, reports, and recommendations to come out of the various branches of the European Community. The issue had been raised as early as 1955, and major statements came out of the European Parliament in 1984 and 1994. Each of these statements linked the struggle to end discrimination against homosexuals to arguments of universal human rights. To that end, organizations like ILGA and Amnesty view the European Union as one of the most efficient routes to achieving social justice in all of the member states. The strategy is straightforward: pass a binding law through the European Council, secure the support of the European Court of Justice, and then, fifteen individual battles would be won in a single top-down victory that would be replicated each time another nation acceded to the Union.

In 1997, such a victory became significantly more possible. While the European Parliament resolutions of 1984 and 1994 were basically non-binding statements of intent, the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam did something quite novel. Article 13 of that treaty gave the European Council the authority to enact legislation.

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1 This appendix is a slightly revised version of a conference paper, “Greece and the European Union: A Queer Justice,” delivered at the meetings of the Society for the Anthropology of North America, Windsor, Ontario, May 4th 2002.
addressing sexual orientation discrimination in the member states. What makes Article 13 so promising is that, unlike the European Parliament, which can only *recommend* policy to the European Commission, the European Council actually installs those policies. Thus, while most have seen the Treaty of Amsterdam as a minor document recognized more for enabling the creation of the EU passport and the eastward expansion of the Union (McCormick 1999: 84), Article 13 of that treaty quietly gave the EU the legal teeth to become a powerful force in queer social justice. In this respect, Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam may represent one of the most significant achievements for queer social justice in the 1990’s, especially after its ratification in 1999.

While not diminishing the fact that Article 13 is a positive step, it should be emphasized that it only *may* represent such an achievement. This concern has already been rehearsed by a variety of commentators. For example, Wayne Morgan, an international gay and lesbian rights lawyer, notes that even if the European Council has the authority to pass such legislation, this is no guarantee that it will be able to muster the political will to do so (2001: 210). This doubt can only be reinforced by recent rulings from the European Court of Justice. In the same year the Treaty of Amsterdam was drafted, the European Court of Justice ruled against Lisa Grant, a British lesbian who claimed, in *Grant v South West Trains*, that South West Trains discriminated against her in the provision of travel concessions. She argued that South West Trains discriminated on the basis of gender since, had she been a man, South West Trains would have given travel concessions to her female partner, Jill Percey. Significantly, the judges of the European Court rejected the plaintiff’s
argument that existing EU protections against gender discrimination applied to the case. Further, in the opinion of the Court, “in the present state of the law within the Community, stable relationships between two persons of the same sex are not regarded as equivalent to marriages or stable relationships outside marriage between two persons of the opposite sex” (Batsiolas 1998). This atmosphere of mixed signals does not bode well for placing queer social justice legislation on the European Council agenda any time soon.

More importantly, however, I would argue that the most serious problems would begin only after the passage of any such legislation, as it is carried out in the individual member states. Consider here the example of Greece. Greece officially joined the European Community in 1981, under the argument that membership in the EC would strengthen democratic institutions and support economic stability in the Balkans. Since its accession to the EC, Greece has reaped enormous benefits from membership, including agriculture and industry subsidies, infrastructure improvement grants, and exponential development in the tourism industry (due in no small part to the labors of Greek national Christos Papoutsis, EU Minister of Tourism from 1995 to 2000). With this flow of money, popular support for the EU in Greece remains high across all social and economic classes, especially after the hardships of World War II occupation, a brutal civil war, and a military dictatorship that fell only seven years before Greece officially joined the European Community.

However, Greek convergence with EU regulations has not been all smooth progress. As political scientist Calliope Spanou has argued (1998), there is reason to doubt that all states function with the same social and cultural assumptions of
bureaucratic procedure, efficiency, and transparency. She argues for the importance of understanding “informal practices” of administration in Greece, a phrase she uses to refer to Greece’s enduring patron-client systems and heavy dependency on public sector employment. She argues these informal practices create dissonance between the administrative cultures of Greece and the EU, dissonance that accounts for many of Greece’s difficulties in complying with EU law. For example, Greece was the only nation that failed to make the first deadline for conforming to requirements for European Monetary Union, although it did eventually adopt the single currency in January 2002, a year behind schedule (cf. Markou et al. 2001: 223). Similarly, EU analyst John McCormick ranks Greece among the worst in timely compliance with EU regulations, and attributes this lapse to the Greek government being “poorly organized and under-equipped” (McCormick 1999: 137).

However, tensions in bureaucratic culture would apply to the Greek implementation of any law from the EU. These tensions would become more complicated if that legislation were specifically to cover sexual orientation discrimination. It is here that would be legislators and activists for social justice must attend not only to policy directives and human rights discourses, but also to the social and cultural contexts that affect the play of these discourses in the individual member states. To expose some of the social and cultural aspects relevant to sexual orientation and human rights in the Greek context, I want to take a brief detour to a recent trial in Greece.

On October 12, 2001, eight men were tried in Athens under Article 347 of the Greek Penal Code. Although some of these men were also charged with criminal
drug use and supply, it was the offenses covered under Article 347 that created the most sensationalism in the Greek press. Article 347 itself translates: “1) Sodomy between men, committed through abuse of a relationship of dependency based on employment, or sodomy by an adult committed through the seduction of a person under seventeen years of age, or sodomy for financial gain, shall be punishable by imprisonment for not less than three months. 2) One who commits sodomy under paragraph 1 as his profession shall be subject to the same punishment.” Note that the law makes no mention of women. Indeed, women’s heterosexual prostitution is legally recognized in Greece; further, the Penal Code makes no mention at all of women’s same-sex contact.

The so-called “pink scandal” began when two men in their mid-twenties – Tzannetos Tsapatsaris of Kalamata, Greece, and Yasser Hamada, an Egyptian then living in Athens – approached the Athenian police with a series of allegations in January of 1999. Tsapatsaris and Hamada alleged that a businessman named Dimitris Kostopoulos ran a prostitution ring out of his offices in Patissia, a posh suburb of Athens. According to the two youths, Kostopoulos received a fee for arranging liaisons between the two youths and several men in exchange for a combination of drugs and money. Those men included a young fashion designer named Konstantinos Kaspiris, the shipping magnate Giannis Mavris, and the popular singers Giorgos Mazonakis and Dimitris Kokotas. By the time the pre-trial investigation was done, the well-known fashion designer Philemon was also implicated, and the alleged pimp Kostopoulos himself had filed complaints against Tsapatsaris and Hamada that resulted in the two youths being charged with both prostitution and drug offenses.
Both the Orthodox Church and leaders of the lesbian and gay movement, such as Gregory Vallianatos, took advantage of the scandal to stake out their positions on homosexuality in the mainstream media. An Athenian representative of Amnesty International entered the fray in July 2001, sending an open letter to the Greek Minister of Justice, Professor Mihailis Stathopoulos. Amnesty urged the Minister to drop the charges under Article 347, arguing “All people have a fundamental right not to be discriminated against on the basis of sex, which includes sexual orientation. Men are discriminated against under Greek legislation, because in certain circumstances homosexual acts between men are criminalized, while those between women are not.” Note that Amnesty’s argument depends on a “fundamental” human right, focused on gender discrimination – men and women are treated differently under Greek law. Their argument is not based on sexual orientation per se, though gender is assumed to cover it.

Although the Minister of Justice made no response, Amnesty’s argument seems not to have been in vain. When the case came to trial, the defense attorneys for the eight men made a similar, but significantly different argument – their argument focused on gender discrimination to the exclusion of sexual orientation. The defense made it a case of inconsistent legal distinctions between female prostitutes and male prostitutes; human rights discourses played no role in their arguments. And the defense won. In the end, the eight men were acquitted of the sodomy charges; the drug charges were dismissed as the prosecution had bungled the evidence procedures. In the recommendation of the presiding judges, Article 347 was to be struck down on
the grounds of inconsistency based on gender (again, with no mention of sexual orientation). As yet, however, the exact status of the law remains unclear.

I suggest that several features of this trial point to complications in the strategy of effecting social justice in Europe through human rights discourses from Brussels. The first feature is that the legal issue in the trial was not sodomy precisely, or human rights, but was rather same-sex prostitution, specifically “sodomy for financial gain.” Significantly, it worked to the benefit of the defense that article 347 was specifically about prostitution. Since the issue could be cast purely as one of inconsistent treatment of different kinds of prostitutes (read “genders”) and not one of different sexual orientations, the defense did not have to fight explicitly against the social and cultural stigma placed on homosexuality in the Greek context. When I interviewed Gregory Vallianatos some months after the trial, he confirmed that this strategy of “side-stepping the moral issue” was intentional on the part of the defense; he himself suspected that the defense won the case because they were able to reframe the issue to the exclusion of sexual orientation.

This detail raises the further question of what the defense would have had to fight if they did not side step sexual orientation. Vallianatos argues that this approach would have conceded the terms of the debate to be essentially about the moral character of homosexuality, handing an advantage to those who follow the position of the Greek Orthodox Church. Behind that position is a whole array of cultural assumptions about whether men who do not act fully as men qualify fully as human beings. Here, acting fully as a man includes always assuming the “active” or “energetic” role. Although Greek men like Vallianatos have fought with some
measure of success to disassociate "homosexuality" from the passive and denigrated pousistis who "surrenders [himself] without a fight" (Faubion 1993: 223), this connection between the homosexual and the not quite human pousistis still operates in Greek society. In this context, an argument for the protection of sexual orientation under the umbrella of human rights would need first to secure the full humanity of homosexuals.

Another feature of this trial is that "side-stepping the moral issue" actually enabled queer social justice in a way that runs counter to the logic suggested by the top-down rights-based strategy emanating from Brussels. Granted, the Greek state has by no means made the same sorts of statements favoring the protection of lesbians and gays as has the European Parliament. Yet without any EU laws in place to force the Greek judiciary to overturn Article 347, the Greek courts have done so, on the basis of an argument of gender discrimination, the same argument rejected by the European Court of Justice in the trial referred to earlier, Grant vs South West Trains.

In this context, it is too difficult to say what would happen in Greece should Brussels come to explicitly ban discrimination on sexual orientation through the discourse of human rights. There are bureaucratic complications to the implementation and enforcement of any law, complications that are perhaps exacerbated by the relationship between the Greek state and the EU. Moreover, Greek social and cultural norms regarding sexuality and the conception of the human being complicate any easy commitment to the rhetoric of including sexual orientation under the umbrella of human rights discourse. All the same, as the outcome of the "pink scandal" shows, it is not as though these complications are reasons for complete
pessimism in the Greek struggle for queer social justice. Reservation does seem
justified, however, if the terms of regional struggles for social justice begin to ignore
the local.
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