

## SIGNIFYING SELF IN PLURAL CULTURAL CONTEXTS: SUBJECTIVITY, POWER AND INDIVIDUAL AGENCY IN NORTH-WESTERN GREEK MACEDONIA

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This article [1] discusses processes of identification and categorisation during social situations related to dance in the district of Florina, a border region in north-western Greek Macedonia. More specifically, it draws upon the narratives, actions and interpretations of several individuals involved in the practice of dance to examine the ways they construct and experience their identity. The Florina district acquired its geographical status and political importance as a border region of the Greek State in 1913 when the territorial boundaries of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Albania, Romania and Turkey were fixed. Until that time it was part of the Ottoman Empire.

The coexistence in the area until the early 20th century of different religious and linguistic communities; [2] the emergence of nationalist movements in the late 19th century and their major impact on geopolitics as well as on the ways people perceived personal and collective identities; [3] the devastating consequences for the region of historical events in the course of the 20th century; the various inward and outward migrations that brought together culturally diverse populations, in certain cases forcibly, all have played their part in creating conditions for disputes among the local populations and between them and the Greek State.

Florinotes tend in their oral and written accounts to distinguish themselves by referring to population categories through designations which suggest ever-existing groups. *Dopioi*, *Pontioi*, *Vlachs*, and *Arvanites* are the most known. Parallel to them, locals use the term *prosfiges* [refugees]. [4] This category usually includes the *Pontioi* (populations from the Black Sea Coastal region), the *Thrakioties* (from the European part of Turkey) and the *Mikrasiates* (from Asia Minor) who settled in the Florina region in the 1920s. Yet, there are further subdivisions within the *Mikrasiates* and *Pontioi* groups with regard to their place of origin. [5]

As they describe themselves and are described by others in the region, there are two other categories of refugees. These are the *Vorioipiroties* (populations from the city and the outskirts of Korça, today in central-eastern Albania) who settled in the region in the second decade of the 20th century and *Monastiriotes* [6] (populations from the city and the surrounding villages of Bitola, today in the southern part of FYROM). Further differentiations exist

in the *Monastiriotes* category between those that declare *Vlachs* from the city of Bitola and those that declare *Dopioi* or Slav-speakers from the same area. [7]

The disputed category is that of the *Dopioi*. [8] The term stems back to political and economic conflicts over land use in the 1920s, between newly settled refugees and the existing inhabitants. During the process of nation building, state policy-makers, in their effort to homogenize the 'nation,' perceived the *Dopioi*, due to the various Slavic dialects they spoke and the choices of some of them to identify with the Bulgarians during WW I and II, as "potential identifiers with the neighbouring states" (Cowan and Brown 2000:11). Suppression of their cultural expressions, as happened during the Metaxas dictatorship (1936–1940), transformed their difference into a marginalised and stigmatised 'identity' based on political and cultural criteria.

This process both distinguished them from and opposed them to the other putative categories of local society, and created a sense of community among those who felt they belonged to the same 'culture.' The overwhelming majority identify themselves as Greeks and more recently as '*Dopioi Ellines Makedones*' (local Greek Macedonians) in contrast to those *Dopioi* who identify themselves as 'national Macedonians.' This last category consists of *Dopioi* who claim to be members of the Macedonian national minority; a separate category which they claim has always existed in the region.

All these terms organise certain political and social relations within the local society. Individuals, whole villages and groups of villages are ascribed to these categories. *Dopioi* are supposed to constitute the majority of the inhabitants. The appropriation and exploitation of these terms are manifested in the fact that they comprise persons and populations with different places of origin, historical and cultural backgrounds to whom certain cultural characteristics are attached. In addition, these categorisations exclude or ignore those that are the offspring of mixed marriages between members of the supposed categories, or between other Greeks who reside in the region but do not come from there.

Dance constitutes a central component of many public events, annual and private celebrations in the Florina region and is accorded recognition as an element of the national culture and a symbol of national identity. Local

dances were appropriated as signs of regional variation within the Greek national culture and used by the Greek state, mainly after the 1950s, as a means of stressing commonality and consolidating the national identity. Although this was not always a conscious and deliberately planned policy it led to the manipulation of culture for nationalistic and political purposes. [9]

Cultural associations and their dance troupes emphasised and performed what had been established as 'Hellenic' dances or 'Hellenic' features of the local dances. [10] However, the meanings of dances were multiple and ambiguous. They were associated with national (Greeks versus separatists) and regional (Floriniotes versus the inhabitants of other prefectures) differences, political divisions (right- versus left-wingers), population category distinctions (*Dopioi* versus *Pontioi*), intra-regional (plains versus highland villages, or villages versus town) and intra-category (one *Dopioi* versus another *Dopioi* village) contrasts, as well as pleasurable ties and expression of solidarity with kin, neighbours, and fellow-villagers of any population category.

With the rise of the Macedonian minority discourse, in the 1990s, participation in dancing became politicised in a new, more manifest way. A political movement, later transformed into a political party named Rainbow, [11] and private institutions, whose members belonged to the disputed population category of *Dopioi* claimed to represent the 'Macedonian people,' a national minority which differed from other population categories in the region due to its distinctive cultural characteristics. [12] In contesting claims of national homogeneity, activists and members of the political movements constructed their own versions of national identity. They used the same means, that is, local dances, music and costumes, as well as others that did not originate in the region and were deliberately imported, to create difference as symbols of commonality or distinction.

These actions generated counter-movements which promoted the state's views and led to a period of extremely intense disputes between social groups in the region. The organisation of rituals that had a standardised and repetitive nature was used as efficient means through which all agents involved aimed to socialise the participants to the values and expectations of a 'culture'. [13] Dances were caught up in the polarisation of the two discourses, Greek nationals versus Macedonian nationals. Where and what one danced, with whom and how he/she danced it were interpreted as expressions of national and political affiliations. This had many consequences for the individuals in the region who participated in the various dance events. Individuals seemed unable to escape one of two options: either to perceive themselves as members of the Greek national community or to adopt the alternative minority discourse in order to re-negotiate their identity (Manos 2002).

Those identified with the Greek project promoted the Greek state's version of national culture. Others who felt excluded or oppressed by the Greek national project were offered new opportunities for negotiating their position and status within the nation-state. Some of them identified themselves as Macedonians in the national sense and pursued recognition of a distinctive Macedonian identity and culture. Others were forced to choose between exclusive identities and contingent qualities. Still others wanted only to assert their right to practise their culture apart from any national connotations.

Nevertheless, these interpretations were not completely pre-determined but contextual and shifting. People could take advantage of the multiple associations of dancing and use the ambiguity of symbols related to dance in order to justify and defend their or other peoples' choices and actions. Not all dancers could be exposed to the same degree of criticism. In many cases, peoples' actions expressed different viewpoints based on their autobiographical reminiscences, fortunes of their family, the official view on history and the current economic and socio-political context. Participation in specific dances and dance events could be seen as a public claim to and a marker of identity. However at the same time individuals who did this might not be expressing a fixed, unitary and mutually exclusive identity but a 'statement' that is contingent, contextually-defined and apparently 'contradicted' by identity statements expressed in dance and music in another context by the same or other individuals.

In this article, I will direct my attention to specific individuals who are related to the practice of dance. My purpose is to give a sense of the more complex identities and affiliations of individuals, which may shift over time. [14] I explore the way individuals understand and position themselves in their social context and the ways they articulate these positions, as expressed in their stories about past experiences and statements on current events and political issues. I have opted for coherent accounts of five persons [15] in order to display a small sample of the range of opinions and perceptions on issues related to dance, culture and identity. The individuals chosen vary in terms of sex and age. They are three men and two women aged from the late twenties to the late seventies. All of them except the older woman consider themselves as belonging to the *Dopioi* category. The older woman is supposed to belong to the *Arvanites* category.

I argue for the need to challenge the collective and uniform dimension of identity not only of the national but of the local population categories as well. That the majority of *Dopioi* in the context of Greek Macedonia and more specifically in that of the Florina region consider their Greekness indisputable is a certainty. It is equally true that there are some who see themselves as national Macedo-

nians. However in my opinion, a large proportion of them, as well as members of other population categories, deal with the issue of identity in ways that escape the frameworks of both national and minority discourses. Despite the struggle with two hegemonic discourses of difference, the constitution of individual identity can encompass elements of various notions of belonging which have been exclusively attributed to the existing population categories.

The articulation of alternative individual identities through various modes of processing personal experiences has been a very frequent practice in response to the imposition of totalising national ideologies by various agents since the end of the 19th century. The specific perceptions of local social reality described here represent examples that have been neglected by existing anthropological accounts or have not been sufficiently studied. They demonstrate that individuals are aware, though not always, as we will see in Kiriakos's case, willing and able to reflect on and respond to the public, polarised and dichotomous meanings that have now developed around dancing. The examples also show that boundaries between the supposedly incompatible identities of population categories are blurred and the notion of the naturalness of fixed, mutually exclusive identities, claimed by its promoters, is rejected.

### Kiriakos

The case of Kiriakos is an example of a person who got involved in the 'hot arena' of local cultural politics and had a harsh experience of the consequences of dealing with the dominant discourses of difference. In his early thirties, Kiriakos became the chairman of the newly established cultural association in his village. The dance troupe was the very first section they created. He employed various means with the aim of gaining a place for his association in the local scene. Following the usual pattern of cultural activity, he mainly organised dance events in the village and participated with the dance troupe at other events in the region. He also became a member of an associations group, which organised the three key events in his experience. [16] It was precisely this kind of commitment which, together with the impact of the events, generated various comments against him by members of his own family, co-villagers and others.

In the account that follows, I will describe the interaction that took place between him and me within a period of four months. I will focus on encounters, incidents and statements relevant to my account. Although his family comes from a village, he grew up in the town of Florina. During my fieldwork, he lived with his wife and little daughter and worked in a town very close to his village. We first met on June 30 1999 at his village's *panigiri* [17]

which was organised by the cultural association a month after its establishment. This was his first event as the new chairman.

Although he was pre-occupied with trying to supervise and solve any problems that would appear during the event he came to talk to me. He was very proud that they had organised it because it was only a month previously that they had created the association and it was many years since the last *panigiri* had taken place in the village. In the next few weeks we met again at various cultural activities which took place in the region. He seemed to be satisfied with the association and especially with the benefits he thought it would bring to the young dancers. Talking to me about his initial thoughts on the association, he said

We founded the association in order to bring the village out of oblivion and to help the youth to gain experiences, which they would never otherwise have the chance to have. In addition to this, to develop a stronger village representation would help us to oppose any claims against the village by NEC [National Electricity Company], which was evacuating villages for its new electricity units. [18] I worked hard to convince the village to help us and I have made it although the *panigiri* contributed a lot to this success. We first organised a dance troupe; we intended to have other activities as well like photographic exhibitions, lectures and excursions so that 'the youth could go out of the village.' The members of the troupe were very happy with all the performances and the experiences they had. They were enthusiastic about the fact that they were participating in these activities as part of a group. In that way, they acquired a group identity through a dance troupe, which was watched and recognised by others.

It seemed to me that Kiriakos had tried somehow to keep himself away from any actions that would associate him with either the one or the other discourse. During our meeting at the wedding revival his association participated in, [19] he was very much concerned with the fact that he had borrowed costumes from the one of the associations who were actively promoting Rainbow's objectives. He did not consider the costumes as part of the local culture. He was concerned about it and said to me during the event

They are so striking. You don't need to be acquainted with this costume in order to recognise it. We will become objects of ridicule. They will stick a stamp and an identity on us. But on the other hand, if you do not to take part in activities, very few people will know about you.

He also felt the need to explain this to the troupe dancers. He told them that:

We don't identify at all with the costumes you wear. First of all and most basic, they are not ours. Not even from this place. You have to know where you stand in some

things; to know what to say if someone teases you. We couldn't borrow any other costume. But we have to participate in activities so we had to put these on.

Wanting to be more efficient as a chairman he was thinking of proposing the creation of an associations' union whereby those included would offer both dancers and costumes. In this way, he meant that their objectives would be better fulfilled. In order to adopt a politically correct view on culture, they ought to agree to dance only the commonly accepted dances and have a costume which would represent everyone, one which would have signs, as he said, from all; that is, one that signified each group's cultural background. That would entail a basic agreement on what would be danced in order to avoid any conflicts and misinterpretation.

Local cultural politics in the Florina region is a central stage for the intersection of varied political interests not always apparent to those involved. Kiriakos found himself to be a victim of such interests. The announcement of his association as a co-organiser of the book presentation and the flute competition entailed a great deal of politics. I met him and his wife on the 15th of August, the day on which the flute competition was taking place. I greeted them and asked why they were not at the flute competition they had organised. "Oh, in Skopiá" [20] he said. "No in Skopós," I corrected him. I realised from this mistake that he was not informed about the events, because nobody who comes from the region would mix the two villages' names despite their similarity. I then asked him why he had not come to the book presentation and he said he had not been informed about it.

He said he was feeling very disappointed and confused. Problems had been created in the village in relation to his activity and the association's performances. Negative comments and thoughtless remarks and characterisations of him by his relatives had cut him to the heart. I asked to meet him in order to talk about these issues. We made an appointment for a few days later.

I realised from the first moment of the subsequent discussion that he was very upset. His manner of talking expressed feelings of concern and insecurity. "There is a lot of discussion about me. I do not know yet who were those that talked about me." I asked him if the book presentation and the flute competition had anything to do with this. [21] He asked me what happened at those activities and I said that I only attended the first. I briefly described who talked and what was said at the book presentation. He got more upset and complained that I had not told him about it in our meeting in Florina. He was furious.

I did not know about the presentation. I will publicly deny on the radio our association's participation and will disassociate myself and the association from the group of associations. I did not even know about the flute competition.

He then told me about a discussion he had had with his affinal uncle, a Greek who came from central Greece but lived permanently in Canada.

I described the activities of the association to him. My uncle got angry about what he had heard and categorised me as an *aftonomistis*. [22] He came to the village telling all our relatives not to support me and to be careful about what I did. He upset all our relatives and made us argue with each other about the objectives of the association and the activities with the other associations.

Then I asked him how the group of associations had been formed. He said that it was proposed and encouraged by a local doctor, [23] a member of the socialist party, who had told them that by organising activities as a group, they would be able to get access to subsidies. But, as he said, he did not know it would end up like this. He got angry with the other associations that his association's participation without primarily informing them about it. "I lacked the experience to understand what is going on with these issues."

The agendas of the associations, the politicians who patronise them and single individuals with their own ideas compose, in this case, the complex network of actors involved in these incidents. The outcome was devastating for Kiriakos, who felt threatened. Recounting the family's history in order to find an explanation or to defend himself was the next stage of our discussion. Because various degrees of loyalty and different realities have to co-exist, the past has to some extent been re-defined. His family was mixed politically, including right- and left-wingers, who had gone through a lot in the past. Some of his uncles had been exiled in Makronisos because they were accused of being communists. Somebody from the village had spread false rumours about his father. He concluded that a lot of people had suffered because of the villagers, who always collaborated with those who were in power and acted against their own relatives and co-villagers.

Our next meeting took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August. Kiriakos was devastated. I was late and he said he had 5 glasses of whisky while he was waiting for me. This was the most critical point of the dramatic experience he was going through. He felt completely insecure. Although he attributed no particular political meaning to what he said and did, his actions had been understood and categorised as either the nationalist or minority discourse. They were criticised and he was stigmatised. Let us see how he narrated these issues.

I will talk to you from my heart. I felt threatened from all sides. Some people have called my boss and asked him to dismiss me. I found out that people in the village had accused me of acting against the State. I trust nobody. I feel hate for those who are involved in this situation. I am not sure if I can trust even you. Neither do I trust

anybody from the other associations. I have to be cautious with them because I do not know their motives. During the free dancing in the wedding revival, I danced dances with songs in Slavic, as you did, but I was almost stigmatised while you did not have this problem. I even had problems during the *panigiri* because of announcing the dances in *Dopia*. But this is the right and I couldn't say it differently. I was also accused because the troupe performing at Amindeo in the beginning of August danced with melodies which were not Greek. However, during a dance feast in Lofoi the members of the troupe walked out when political songs in Slavic against Greece were sung because they disapproved of this attitude. I plan to write a letter of protest in consultation with a lawyer so that I cannot be persecuted by anybody. I was very romantic at the beginning of my involvement but now I have learned a lot from it.

I was overwhelmed with sadness and disappointment after this meeting. I was thinking that the game of the manipulation of national sentiments had always existed in the region and that most of the people translated all actions according to the dominant ideological doctrines without really being able to transcend them. At other times lives had been lost; now reputations were sullied.

Kiriakos' experience shows how every single person, independently of the degree of his/her involvement in public social life, starts to reflect on such events and develop a mechanism of manipulating ideas, symbols and behaviours. One soon realises that one has to be flexible and capable of presenting oneself accordingly. A socially accepted identity depends on the specific social context and situation in which one finds oneself.

I met Kiriakos again at the beginning of October. He was much calmer than on previous times. His relatives had revealed to him who had talked about him in the village. "Some accused me of trying to 'hellenise' the village and others of being an *aftonomistis*. In the latter case, it was someone who during the village's *panigiri* had wanted to dance a dance with a song in Slavic. I do not care." Kiriakos concluded, "I have learned the rules of the game. Everything I now do will be after deep thought and consideration."

### Savvas

Savvas is a 27-year-old man and the dance teacher of his village's dance troupe. His association became widely known as the organiser of the village's *panigiri*, an event broadly seen as a demonstration of the existence of an oppressed Macedonian minority in the region. Savvas played a leading part in the early 1990s as the first dancer and instructor of the troupe. Most people would characterise him as a national Macedonian.

He studied for two years at the History and Archaeology School of the University of Thessalonica and then broke off his studies to do compulsory military service. Now he works as a manual worker at the new electricity unit outside of his village. He is satisfied with the work and the money although he works 10 hours per day, 6 days a week. Our first contact took place during the village's *panigiri* in July 1999. Among other things he stressed that, "we must disengage ourselves from politics. If not, we have no chance." His statement surprised me. I told him I would very much like to talk with him about these issues and he accepted. Although we met in many subsequent dance events that took place in the region, we first talked at the end of August.

Savvas grew up in a family "with contradictions," as he says. "My father and half of our relatives are right-wingers and the other half left-wingers." His family spoke *Dopia*, which he calls *Makedonika* [Macedonian]. His mother tongue is Greek. As he says, "it may be that our mother tongue is theoretically the other one but in my consciousness I learned to call the table *trapezi* [the Greek word] and not *masa* [the Slavic word]." Savvas addresses an array of issues in his accounts. He talks about dance and politics, his activity within the association, his persecution during his military service due to his active involvement in the Macedonian conflict, his sense of belonging and the need for a new approach to issues of identity in the region. He is very critical of the political use of culture as it occurs through dancing.

Getting involved with politics is inescapable when one is actively participating in a dance troupe. Savvas reflected on this, expressing his disagreement with those who take advantage of culture. He used an example of a relative of his to demonstrate the way people are divided into opposing sides.

Dance is a means to practice politics and propaganda. This is how it is here, on both sides. I don't like anybody who comes and tells us we need help and pretends to help us. This is a pure instrument of politics. Because of such people we then argue against each other. I have a cousin who is the chairman of the other association in the village. His mother and my father are siblings. He tells me sometimes, "I will not dance *Poustseno* [24] and the like." And indeed he doesn't dance *Poustseno* or anything else. He does not want to be identified as *aftonomistis*. We are together at work and one evening when we left together he put a tape in with songs from *Aidonia* [25] [Nightingales] and started clapping his hands.

In a moment of introspection, Savvas reflected on his previous activity as a leading member of an association which is believed to be governed and run by the Rainbow party. He also recounted that he was persecuted for his activity. A notion of self-criticism is evident in his words.

I have been stigmatized for my activity. When I joined the army I first went to a training camp in Peloponnes. The husband of my cousin-in-law was a member of the socialist party and was arranging for my transfer close to Florina. For a person like me, who is a member of a family with 4 children, it is very unusual to have a second transfer. You only have one and remain there until the end of your service. I came to a camp close to Florina, stayed for 20 days and was transferred to an island near Turkey. I was supposed to stay 2 months there and remained 12 and ended my service. I expected this kind of treatment.

But I have made mistakes as well. I have believed in persons about whom now I say how could this be possible. I don't mean the persons themselves but their actions, their beliefs. Until four years ago I was the first to offer myself for everything.

He then turned to his own activity within the association. Superficial or politically driven accounts about the region fail to see the internal conflicts and contradictions that arise from the different standpoints people have. Savvas disagreed with the ways that members of the association's board who were Rainbow activists used the troupe to promote the party's political agenda. He described events which illustrate the political objectives of certain agents, and the way he challenged those ideas and actions:

When I finished my military service and returned to the village, I heard of some outrageous things they did with the dance troupe. We had big arguments. Imagine that I was quoted as their good example! They went on a trip to Sweden and the newspapers wrote about it. And they presented themselves as coming from Greece but with a Macedonian flag. I started shouting and they accused me that I once got money from the association. Yes, they had given money to me once while I was in the army.

Another moment, four or five years ago, scenes from the association's dance feast were shown on the state television channel in Skopje. I was very annoyed. I do not want to dance and have someone else use this for his own goals. This is a basic democratic principle. So we decided that we would not allow cameras during the association's feasts.

Savvas condemned the nationalist practices and sentiments expressed by certain persons to whose category he supposedly belongs. But he was also restrained by the social context he lived in. Like every person in the region who did not conform with the ideas of the two dominant discourses, he has had to deal with criticism by the group he is deemed to belong to.

I have to deal with people who criticise me. I told them I will teach the dancers Greek dances. They reacted again to this. They said, "If they want Greek dances they should go to the other association of the village." I said, "What

are you talking about? You will draw boundaries around your child and you expect it to talk about the human rights that you now speak of? Isn't it you who accuses the fascists? I am in the association and the domain of tradition and culture since 1983. Tell me when Rainbow was established and you started to be aware of these issues? You, the Great Macedonians who now give loyalty certificates."

In searching for an identity, Savvas provided an account of a person who is struggling to find a place for himself in a social context that is often presented as simply divided into two opposing and mutually exclusive sides. He questioned notions of belonging and ideas imposed by nationalist policies such as that of the homeland and national symbols such as the flag. He certainly did not see himself as part of either of the two national categories. He felt connected with the place where he was born and grew up.

Who are you with? Us or the others? And who is us and who are the others? I don't know. I have thought about this a lot of times. I was talking with a friend when I was studying in Thessaloniki about what we are and what we are not. What are our ideals? Guys like me don't really have a homeland. I regard myself as happy that I am different. I don't belong either to the one or the other side. I am connected with my place but not with the idea of homeland. I am a Macedonian from Florina. Neither from there nor from here. Nationalism limits your ability to understand persons and situations. I voted for Rainbow. Rainbow as a party doesn't make any territorial claims but as national Macedonians they do have. They want to change the border and go to the other side. And I ask, "What flag are we going to have?" We will take one with blue, white, yellow and red. I do not belong anywhere finally.

We were discussing once in Thessaloniki what we would do if there were a war between Macedonia and Greece. This is still a fundamental question for me. We don't want to be with Greece. The others, we don't really know. We finally decided we would stay in our houses. What should I do?, I asked myself. Kill my *Pontios* neighbour though we grew up together? At least, I should try to save myself. When I was in the army the commander called me and I told him, I am not ashamed to tell you that I am neither separatist nor nothing. I don't believe in armies and flags. A flag is for me a commercial symbol. I am a citizen of the world. Neither of Macedonia nor Greece.

Savvas stressed the need for a new approach to the issue, a new form of contact between people. The youth were for him the primary target group for the introduction of his ideas: it is necessary to let the youth think and give them space to decide and act. He argued for the de-politicisation of culture and the choice to stay outside the politics of culture.

Efforts must be made between the people that will give the youth information. Don't let anybody say his bull shit from this and from the other side. I try to promote in the village the de-politicisation of dance and they keep on at me not to do it. There are young people in our villages who consciously don't want to participate in politics. We need to help them understand why they argue. If they will understand they will not argue. They just don't see the problem. We will probably be able to see that we don't argue about the same thing and we only think we argue.

### Kir-Andreas

Kir-Andreas who lives in the town of Florina is a 70-year-old musician. He is one of the most prestigious representatives of a very famous family of musicians in the region. He is retired and occasionally plays music at weddings and dance troupe performances. His family comes from a village in the plain of Florina, which comprises *Dopioi*, *Pontioi* and *Tsiganoi* [26] in its population. His parents moved to Florina where he was born in the early 1930s. In local terms, he could be characterised as a *Dopios* although he himself never uses this term as a self-designation.

I conducted two biographic interviews and further discussions during my fieldwork. The material that is presented is based on my overall knowledge about him and the interviews during my fieldwork. In my account, I present the way he perceived the supposed differences within and between the population categories in the region, his own experiences playing music during the 1940s and the years that followed, and incidents he recounted from that time.

His perception of the *Dopioi* category reveals internal differences based on cultural criteria. He brought to light a new contrast between villages in the plain and those on the mountains. He also mentioned differences in ways of speaking and dress, which were considered impediments to marriage between villages, attributed to the *Dopioi*.

The *Dopia* villages in the plain did not give brides to the mountain villages. For example, a woman to go from *Idrusa* to *Kalliniki*? No. Their way of speaking did not match with each other. We speak differently, in *Proti* they speak differently, in *Kalliniki* differently, in *Meliti* differently. We call the spoon *lazitsa* and in Kelli they call it *bulela*. Our neighbour from Kratero calls the towel *riza* while we say *krpa*. They call the stove *kobe* and we call it *coba*. Their dresses as well were different.

As regards the relations between the categories, he thought that the situation was not very bad even before the war. He saw a difference in the recent decades when intermarriages have increased and are now considered as a very natural phenomenon. He gave an example from his own family to show me this. At the same time, he used

politically loaded terms such as 'Bugarka' [27] and 'Turk' [28] which are used by members of the categories against each other.

There were not great problems between *Dopioi* and *Pontioi* and the others before the war. *Arvanites*, in particular, had good relations with the *Dopioi*. But it was not as it is now. Do you know how many sons-in-law I have? One is Vlach. At that time, it was inconceivable for a Vlach to marry a *Dopia* [female, singular]. I have a daughter-in-law who is *Pontia* [female, singular]. My other son-in-law is *Kiutachialis* [male, singular]. We used to call them 'Turks.' Are you serious? A 'Bugarka' to marry to a 'Turk'? My older brother got married in 1957 to a *Thrakiotissa* [female, singular]. Not only that. A friend of mine who is *Pontios* [male, singular] married an *Arvanitissa* [female, singular]. The two extremes.

Turning to the political situation in the last decades, kir-Andreas saw the events in his account in terms of a succession of power holders. They tried to establish their power by persecuting their political opponents.

A whole life through, the prisons were full. In the previous years it was the Bulgarians; now it is the Macedonians. During the Civil War [1944–49] [29] it was the communists that had the power. After them the supporters of the king arrested the communists. One was coming after the other.

He seemed not to identify himself with any one of them. The reasons for this become evident in the incidents he described concerning members of his family. They all were victims of the exercise of power. Kir-Andreas placed the initial point for the emergence of that policy in the Metaxas dictatorship. He pointed out the State's role in imposing notions of national homogeneity. He recounted an incident in which a member of his family experienced exclusion, persecution, and disappointment. Yet he began by calling himself Greek, maybe as a strategy to avoid any criticism that he was accusing the State and its instruments.

It is our fault, the Greeks' fault. It all started in the Metaxas time. We did not have problems before. During the Metaxas period people started going to prison, to be arrested for language. But nobody knew Greek. Neither my grandmother nor my mother. My uncle Pantelis was playing a melody in a coffee shop during the Metaxas time. A rural constable split on him. He was arrested and beaten by policemen. Can he forget this and be a friend of Greece?

The action of the rural constable highlights that although it is the state structures that create the framework for the exercise of power, it is individuals that interpret and exploit it. The role of individual agency is illustrated in the next passage as well, where kir-Andreas moved on to the decade 1940–1950, describing the arrest of his father at

the end of the Civil War on the basis of information given to the police by one of his neighbours.

In the late 1940s there were some people in our neighbourhood who were supposed to have been recruited by the police. People were accused by them of being Bulgarians and were sent to prison. They did this to show the police they were doing their job. In 1949, my father was sitting at the door of his little store. A policeman came and arrested him and two others from our neighbourhood. We did not know why they took him. They put them in prison. They even did not give them food. Then they interrogated them. As we heard afterwards, one of those I mentioned before had informed against him. This guy was collaborating with the Germans when they were here, and the Bulgarians and the Greeks when they came.

In the post-war period, kir-Andreas was in the army and experienced the consequences of the previous turbulent decade. The dances of the region were called 'Bulgarian' by the central state authorities and kir-Andreas, together with local musicians and dancers, were denied the state's help in organising a tour abroad. "Do you know what they replied to us? We can't present these Bulgarian dances in public." People that came from the areas that were the bases of the left wing forces were stigmatised. That posed further dilemmas to feelings of national belonging.

I joined the army in 1952. During our basic training we were practising shooting. In these cases, two soldiers warn the people by standing with two red flags at the two edges of the shooting ground. One of those two came from the region of Kastoria. Before the shooting, the captain talked to us about the flag. He said, "The flag you hold is heroic." And the guy from Kastoria asked, "The red?" "Come here," the captain told him. He beat him so hard that blood did not stop running. "Where are you from? Kastoria? Keep quiet you dirty Bulgarians. I will all load you on a ship and send you to exile right away." Who could say anything? How could we then fight for the country?

How can a person overcome fear and insecurity and deal with the dilemmas that are very often posed by changing political conditions? One has to find ways to overcome these problems 'cleverly' and painlessly. This is especially true in the case of a musician, who very often finds himself at the center of deeply politicised situations in which he is forced to do his job, that is, play what he is asked to play. Kir-Andreas cited some of these situations.

I was always concerned not to play something which could be seen as either communist or nationalist. I was playing once in a village and a policeman came there and told me not to play *Gaida*. Then I started to play a song from Ipiros that was as slow as *Gaida* so that the people could dance it as *Gaida*. At another time, I was playing at

a wedding and three different persons asked me to play three different songs. One asked for the Pavlos Melas [30] song, the second for the Sun of the Eagle [31] and the third for U borba. [32] I said I do not play any of them and asked the father-in-law to sort things out. He told them he did not want any political songs because he did not want to spoil the wedding. Imagine: one of them was the best man. At the time Nea Dimokratia [33] was in power, I was asked to play the Samiotissa. [34] When PASOK [35] came to power they asked for the Sun [36] instead of the Samiotissa.

In the final passage, kir-Andreas narrated an incident that took place during another wedding, this time in Canada in the 1960s. He went there for a short period to work as a musician at various dance occasions. Very important issues are addressed in this account such as the role of individual agency, ways of strategising, and perceptions and actions that do not fit stereotypical notions of collective identities. An instrumental element is evident in kir-Andreas' actions. He admitted he manipulated his cultural background in a strategic way to obtain access to situations from which he could benefit by earning money. The incident also demonstrates the fact that very often individuals do not follow the dominant patterns of belonging. Although the main person in the incident seemed to stand against anything related to Greece, at the most important moment of the ritual where he had to dance he asked for music that was identified as Greek. It then becomes interesting to see kir-Andreas' reaction. He was very cautious about what he was going to play since he did not want to be accused of not doing his job. On the other side, he was puzzled in his effort to interpret the incident. He saw it as a contradiction in his behaviour, derived from past experiences and policies that had led people to argue with each other.

I was in Canada in the 1960s. There was a bus driver there who had left Greece because he was sent into exile. He was working there as a shoemaker. I had heard his son would have a wedding. In Canada, they have two churches, St Klime for the *Makedontsi* and St George for the Greeks. I went first to the Greek church. Somebody from Papayianni welcomed me and asked me if I wanted to register with their association. I told him I would only be staying for three months. After that, I went to the other church. There, another guy asked me there if I would register. I told him I would because I knew about the wedding and I wanted to play there. I finally did not register but I went to play at the wedding.

The man from Florina remembered me. Talking about the feast he asked me in Macedonian "*Ne ke slusnam Grtska pesna. Ako ne, ne ki gi zemas parite ke begas.*" [I won't hear any Greek song. If not, you won't get your money and you will have to leave]. I told him "All right."

The dancing started after the dinner. The bride and the groom danced a waltz first. After that, they would dance traditional dances together with their parents. I thought about what to play in order not to be misinterpreted. I played them the Paloma. After that, it was the turn of the father-in-law to dance. I leaned towards him and asked him what he wanted to dance. He said, “*Edno kal-amatano*.” I told him, “*Grtska e taa*” [That is Greek]. “*Abe sam taa snam da igram*,” he said [This is the only dance I know].

You see? At the same time, I hate something and I love it. People were misguided and divided by the beating and the exile and came to hate each other.

### Froso

Froso is a 40-year-old woman and lives in her husband's village. In local terms, she is *Dopia*. She got married before her twenties and has lived since then in the village. When she first heard about her husband's village she did not know where it was located; but she likes it now. She played a leading part in the establishment of the village's cultural association although she did not participate in the council. She is the instructor of the dance troupe. Froso's memories from her first years of marriage in Thira, a village around 15 km away from her own, revealed the differences that existed within the *Dopia* villages, as well as the peoples' perceptions of patterns of behaviour identified as 'Greek.'

I grew up with my grandmother who did not speak Greek and so I learned *Dopia* first. During my first years in my husband's village, although I spoke *Dopia*, I couldn't understand enough what my parents-in-law were saying because they spoke differently. So, I spoke Greek. For this reason I was teased by my affinal relatives and told “You are too Greek.” But in later years, I learned the *Dopia* spoken in the village.

The process of learning to speak *Dopia* was different for her 16-year-old son however. Like every teenager, he participated in many dance events where he was introduced to speaking through listening to the Slavic songs sung by local bands.

I did not teach it to my children but they listened to me and my husband speaking it. My son was complaining that he did not understand. As he grew up he started to learn it by going to every *panigiri* and listening to tapes from the local bands. Then he started asking us to tell him more and to correct him.

The importance of the youth's participation in the activities of an association in order to gain experience and become socialised were the main reasons she worked hard for the establishment of the village's association although she did not come from the village. She said that it was very

important for the youth. She insisted that their association had to participate in as many activities as possible. She gathered the young dancers and prepared the troupe for the first performance they made, in the village's annual celebration of its patron saint. Describing the way she worked with the dance troupe, she said

I don't have any experience in teaching dances. At the beginning I only taught them by counting the steps. Then they asked me to dance with the music and they spontaneously expressed themselves and 'the feet danced by themselves.' The only one that knew how to dance was my daughter who watched me dancing at home. Of course, the teenagers were very stressed but they did well.

Froso seemed to be unaware of the dance discourse in the region and the potential political significance of the theatrical presentation of the dances. In her effort to introduce an innovative element she was thinking about presenting dances that did not originate in the region.

I have a friend in Skopje from whom I expect a video-tape in order to select dances and elicit the way they are danced, and then teach them to the troupe. I want to present something new. I will give the dance a different name and that will be something novel.

However, she was aware of the functioning of local cultural politics. Relations of clientelism with politicians and everyone with political and economic power who might help are important. She wondered how she could get access to subsidies in order to have dresses manufactured for the troupe. She said she knew she had to establish contacts and acquaintances, although she was concerned that the local MP and current representative of the PASOK wouldn't want to meet them because they supported another future candidate of the same party.

In relation to issues of identity, Froso was seeing her children develop a sense of belonging based on elements which she couldn't incorporate or express because they have been stigmatised or rejected. Experiencing the current socio-political context created in the region since the 1990s, she seemed to be in the process of building a new form of subjectivity, which considered itself part of the *Dopioi* category and attempted to acknowledge various realities without challenging the dominance of the Greek national project. It strove however to occupy an equal position in relation to the other categories and get equal treatment from the State.

Everybody has to have the freedom to express him or herself the way one had been accustomed to do. Just like the *Pontios*, the *Arvanitis* and the Vlach dance and sing freely, in the same way must the *Dopios* do these things freely.

But she differentiated herself from those who promote an ideology against the Greek state. She further asserted that if the state had not followed a repressive policy

towards the *Dopioi* and had let the language be spoken freely *Dopia* would not have been preserved.

Those who created the problems with Macedonia were very few and could mislead many others. They were also based on language and this is the way they “do their job.” If people could speak freely the language would become extinct. The past has also contributed to the problem.

According to her, language and dancing must not be mixed with politics.

But I do not want to mix culture with politics. I love to express myself in the way I am and what I learned to be without any other connotations. Politics is one thing and cultural issues another. Dance is joy and entertainment and should not be used to divide people.

### Yiayia Anastasia

Yiayia Anastasia was born in 1924 and raised in the village of Kato Idrusa, or Kotori [37] as she often calls it. The majority of its population consists of villagers who see themselves as *Dopioi* and the rest as *Arvanites*. In these terms, she is an *Arvanitissa*. She moved to the town of Florina in her mid-twenties during the Civil War. Her mother tongue is *Arvanitika* but she speaks *Dopia* and Greek equally well. When she plays with her great-grandchildren she sings them songs in Greek, *Arvanitika* and *Dopia* and she tells them to learn to dance *Beratse* and *Poustseno*.

Her views and perceptions of the years she lived in the village and her account of the relations between the two categories did not reveal a view of two opposing groups. On the contrary, she saw the community in terms of conducting a common life in the same social environment, participating in the same social events, going to school together and protecting each other in dangerous and tough periods for the village such as World War II and the Civil War.

My account is based on my overall knowledge about her as well as on two biographic interviews I conducted during my fieldwork. In the stories and incidents she described, I try to trace her views on the relations between the categories, the degree of contact through dance events and common celebrations and her memories of the village during the critical periods of the Metaxas dictatorship and the decade 1940–1950.

Recalling the years when she was a little girl, she said about the contact between the two categories

Earlier, I remember it very vaguely because I was very young, we had two distinct churches. We had St. Dimitrius and they had St. Nicholas. But after a while we all became the same. We, the kids, exchanged bread with each other at school. They ate a lot of corn bread and we had wheat bread. They made it very tasty and they

ate ours, which they did not have. They also had strong livestock and we paid some of them to plough our fields. But we did not argue with each other. We lived together. We did not talk against each other or do anything against each other. And we did not marry each other, no, that did not take place. That started from the 1940s onwards.

She presented two different examples from her extended family in which persons attempted to break the social norms. The first example concerned an *Arvanitis* and a *Dopia* who were in love but whose kin did not let them marry each other, and the second was about another *Arvanitis* who married a *Dopia*.

The brother of my father loved Maro very much. He was madly in love with her. But they couldn't get married. Everybody had objected to it. They did not let her marry him, neither did they let him marry her. She then got married to someone else and left for Bulgaria. My uncle married an *Arvanitissa*. But he still had his mind on her. He visited us recently from Australia and he said he wanted to go to Bulgaria to see Maro. Now, look at this bad thing. To love each other and not be able to marry.

The only one who had a *Dopia* bride was another uncle of mine. He was first married to another woman who died at forty-two. Then he married a *Dopia* and there were no problems. Previously they did not marry each other. But from the war onwards we became one thing.

In the 1940s, both categories seem to have begun to establish kin relations with each other. Yiayia Anastasia described being a bridesmaid at a wedding held in the village in 1946 where she also sang the wedding songs in *Dopia*. Alexandra, the bride and her ‘blood sister,’ was *Dopia*.

I was the bridesmaid at Aunt Alexandra's wedding. We were very close. We were *stavradelfes* [blood sisters]. Her mother put me in this position. I followed her and stepped wherever she stepped. And behind me there were others who were singing in *Dopia*. I sang with them too. They played very sad songs and we all cried.

In relation to other public occasions where the whole village gathered, she described big religious feasts at Christmas, Easter and August 15th that took place in the central square. People arrived there when they heard the sound of the music. The two first dances she mentioned are attributed to the *Dopioi* and the others to the *Arvanites*.

They danced *Poustseno*, *Gaida*, *Beratse*, *Mentris*. Some elders were saying in *Dopia*, “*Gaidata sakam*” [I want the *Gaida*].

She also mentioned the school as a place for learning and performing dancing. Her description reflected an important distinction. She explicitly differentiated between the dances she learned at school, which were related to Greece, and those she danced in the village. It seems that even during that period, identification with the

State was not pre-given and school was definitely used as a means for the consolidation of national identity.

At school we were taught the Greek things, the Greek islands, everything Greek. We did demonstrations of co-ordinated gymnastic exercises. We learned the Greek dances, *Kalamatianos*, *Tsamikos*; but not our own dances like *Poustseno* or *Beratse*. These we danced during the village's feasts.

The most difficult time for the village and especially for the *Dopioi*, she remembered, was the Metaxas period. People "were afraid because police persecuted them." While she was talking about this she asked me to turn the tape recorder off. Although she was talking to her grandson, she couldn't overcome the fear very often expressed by people of her age that anything that is recorded is a documented evidence that can be used for any purpose. She described an incident in which one can see the role of certain state representatives in the application of state policy and its impact on people. But most importantly, one can see the ways in which the villagers dealt with it.

During the Metaxas period, I was already going to the housekeeping school in Florina. One day, the Prefect visited the village. It was Sunday and I was there too. The local musicians played some music. Then he gave a speech. I remember that he was saying to us not to speak Bulgarian, not to do this, not to do that. He was shouting, fuming at the people. Everybody was afraid of him. He said, "If I hear you speak Bulgarian, you see that tree over there?" Its like I see him now. "This is where I will hang you." And he pointed at it with his fingers. The whole village was very scared. But we the young girls did not care. We continued speaking it. Who could hear us? If we saw anybody we just stopped talking.

The 1940–1950 decade was equally difficult. Many *Dopioi* from the village were happy with the Bulgarian presence in the region. Others collaborated with them. A celebration was organised on the occasion of the Ilinden uprising. [38]

It was difficult when the Bulgarians came. Many of ours [co-villagers] in the village got involved in the Bulgarian propaganda. When the Greeks came they left and joined the left-wing armed forces. While the Germans were here, the partisans had killed a Bulgarian in Tropeuchos. [39] Some of the partisans were wounded and were carried to the village. There was blood on the road. Bulgarian troops came and gathered the whole village. The husband of my cousin Pandora was a partisan. He was not in the village and the problem was what we should say about her. We agreed to say she was the wife of my uncle. When they came close to us they asked us, "*Ruski, Ruski?*" ["Russians, Russians?"] because we were blond. "No," we told them. Then, they asked about Pandora and we said that Taskos was her husband. They spoke to us in Bulgar-

ian. "*So ste? Ruski?*" ["What are you? Russians?"]. We responded, of course, "*Ne sme Ruski. Od tuka sme*" ["We are not Russians, we come from here"]. Nobody from the village said anything though they all knew that they were not married.

Yiayia Anastasia closed her account with one incident in which the solidarity expressed by her co-villagers, who in both cases were *Dopioi*, saved her father's life.

When the Germans left, the State appointed my father as the village's mayor. But although it was the Civil War, we supported each other. Some of the left-wingers wanted to arrest my father but one of their high-ranking officers who came from our village said "If you kill him I will withdraw from the group." That person left Greece in 1947. After the war, we went to Bitola to see him.

### Conclusion

The objective of the paper has been to show that belonging is a matter of negotiation and political manipulation related to the power dynamics that prevail at certain periods. Examining the construction of identity at the individual level, I demonstrated that individuals consciously reject subject positions and identities assigned to them and shift from one possible position to another. Within these contexts, social actors make choices and develop strategies through which they accept, manipulate or contest symbols and change their meanings circumstantially or permanently. In this process, they draw on local, national and transnational discourses and use cultural institutions as vehicles for promoting their agendas.

Regarding the accounts of the five individuals presented in the paper, Kiriakos' case demonstrates the deeply political character of local cultural activities. It also illustrates the struggle between the individual and the hegemony of both national and minority discourses. He found himself in the middle of them, and with the intervention of other contingent factors he experienced in an extremely emotional way an identity crisis. As a result of this process, he learned that fluidity of strategies and situational use of ambiguous symbols are the most effective tactics for maneuvering in the local context. Savvas having been actively involved in the Macedonian conflict from a position that promoted Rainbow's political agenda has shifted his views towards a distancing from of all exclusive identities and their respective restricting qualities. Dealing with questions about his personal sense of belonging, he has adopted a new approach: he wishes to establish new relationships in which identity and difference are never predetermined but always negotiable.

Kir-Andreas' and yiayia Anastasia's accounts demonstrate that neither the boundedness of the *Dopioi* as a consistent category nor the clear-cut distinction

between population categories is valid; they depend on each person's experiences and multiple other factors. In addition, they exhibit the individual's capacity to manipulate and use for their own ends dominant symbols and ideologies. Froso, like Savvas, exemplifies a new type of subjectivity that emerged after the boisterous 1990 decade as a manifestation of deeper social changes in the region. She dismisses any kind of action that strives to implant a new socio-political order. She seems to be concerned with improving the terms of the state policy and de-stigmatising the category she belongs to. She also claims her right to practice 'culture' instead of politics of culture.

Individuals do not want to identify themselves in exclusive and absolute terms with any one of the national categories imposed on them by various totalising projects. Although such projects pose the dichotomies 'we and they' in the first place, it is the social actors who act within this cultural logic, adopting more fluid strategies in order to adapt to the social environment they live in. In the light of their current interests, they draw on various practices to work out how to organise their social relations. They operate in unpredictable political situations by appropriating symbols and practices, which do not have a closed and entirely coherent set of meanings but are polyvalent and fluid. Focusing on the ability of individuals to create the meaning of personal and collective identities reveals that belonging is a matter of negotiation and political manipulation related to power structures existing in society. This process has its own limits which are posed by the wider context of local and national life in which the region is embedded.

#### ENDNOTES

1 The ethnographic material presented in this paper was gathered during fieldwork carried out in the Florina region from September 1998 to April 2000.

2 Local accounts from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century mention that residents of the region invariably spoke an array of languages. Population movements, cultural interaction, economic transactions and multiple affiliations were also dominant patterns in the region during the Ottoman period.

3 Nation was imposed as the most significant category of belonging. Until that time, religion, primarily, together family status, residence in a certain village and membership of a certain socio-economic class were other aspects of differentiation among the population.

4 These terms prevail in anthropological accounts and other studies about the region. Yet, there are further categorisations that are neglected or even ignored by these analyses. By failing to acknowledge the existence of sub-groups and the various intra-category cultural differentia-

tions these works contribute to the essentialisation of these populations.

5 The *Kioutachialides* are a subgroup of the *Mikrasiates*. Regarding the *Pontioi* group, as *Karslides* refer to themselves those who reside in the villages around the city of Florina. Yet, they differentiate themselves from the *Kafkasioi*, other *Pontioi* in the same area and those who live in the southern part of the district.

6 According to the records of the Florina city council, 450 families of Monastiriotes were settled in the city of Florina until 1930 (Iliadou-Tachou 1995:74).

7 11 groups reported are represented in the local society with cultural associations, which, despite the decline of their activity over the last years, remain active and through their events reproduce the sense of community and the common origin of their members.

8 In the last years, they are also referred to as 'bilinguals,' 'Slav-speakers' and 'Slavophones.' I use the term *Dopioi*, which is used by the locals in their interactions.

9 State representatives appointed by the state, locally elected politicians and members of the local elite contributed to the creation of dance troupes, the teaching of dances and the organisation of activities in which dances were performed on stage.

10 That is, step patterns and forms of dance performance that were thought to include only elements representative of the national culture and were 'refined' and 'purified' of elements thought to resemble those of neighbouring countries.

11 For more information on Rainbow see its web site <http://www.florina.org>, for an analysis of the 'minority discourse' of the Rainbow party's official periodical *Zora* ('Dawn') until 1997. See Chotzidis (1997), for an analysis of the political use of the minority rights discourse on behalf of the Rainbow see Cowan (2001, 2003).

12 As stated in the party's political manifesto, "[the] immediate political objective in terms of developing national culture [was] the systematic participation of Rainbow members in manifestations and cultural clubs—particularly in places where the Macedonian song [had] positive impact in terms of national self-perception" (Nova *Zora* 1997:5).

13 There was a considerable proliferation of public occasions where organised dance troupes performed.

14 The construction of individual identities although initially pointed out (Gounaris, Michailidis and Agelopoulos 1997) and recently stressed (Cowan and Brown 2000) as a fundamental element in the study of identity formation processes in Macedonia remains, to a large extent, an unfulfilled quest. Loring Danforth (1995) has provided a rich and in-depth analysis of the construction of national identities at the individual level among transnational diaspora communities. In the only paper published so far

that deals explicitly with the identity of individuals in the Florina region, Piero Vereni (2000) analyses the complicated attempts of a Slavic-speaking villager from the Florina region to justify the choices he made in identifying himself as a 'Greek Macedonian.'

15 Pseudonyms, except yiayia Anastasia, have been used for persons' names.

16 The events were organised by six private cultural associations in the summer of 1999. All of them were located in villages around the town of Florina that are considered to belong to the population category of *Dopioi*. Moreover, some of the associations were actively promoting Rainbow's political agenda. The first event was a revival of a traditional wedding ceremony. The second was a book presentation written in Greek but entitled in the Slavic language; its title was "*Makedontseto*" [The Macedonian boy]. The third, a flute competition despite the fact that it was announced as a co-organisation of the cultural associations, was already an established event held every year in the same landscape and organised by the writer of the *Makedontseto*.

17 *Panigiri* is called the celebration of the village's patron saint. It is one of the most, if not the most, important days in the village's communal life.

18 At the time, NEC was expanding its activities in the region regarding the exploitation of lignite and production of electricity.

19 More than sixty male and female dance troupe members dressed in costumes performed as the members and friends of the supposed families involved in the wedding. The re-enactment included visits to the houses of the best man and the bride for the performance of certain dances and customs. The event finished with the choreographed presentation of local dances by the participating dance troupes.

20 Skopiá, with the emphasis on a, is the name of a village 2 km away from the town of Florina.

21 Both events were attended by Rainbow activists and received with suspicion by a great part of the local population.

22 The term *aftonomistes* (separatists) is used by Florinotes to refer to the Rainbow activists and those who see themselves as members of the Macedonian minority in the region of Florina and implies that one of their objectives is the separation of part of the Greek Macedonia and its unification with FYROM.

23 He was speculated to be a candidate of the socialist governing party in the next national elections, which would take place in April 2000, that is, 9 months later.

24 Probably the most popular dance of the region.

25 Aidonia is the name of a famous local music band, which sings songs in Slavic.

26 The term refers to Gypsies.

27 'Bugarka' means 'Bulgarian woman' in *Dopia*. The terms 'Voulgaroi' [Bulgarians] in Greek and 'Bugari' [Bulgarians], 'Bugar' [male singular] and 'Bugarka' [female singular] in *Dopia*, were in use to refer to the *Dopioi* category. The terms have negative political connotations because they highlight the collaboration and the identification of part of the the *Dopioi* with the Bulgarian forces in certain periods in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the rise of the Macedonian minority discourse in the 1990s, those of the *Dopioi* who see themselves as national Macedonians have strongly denounced these terms since they challenge the claims on the existence of the minority. From those negatively disposed to the existence of the minority, it is elders that mostly use the term Bulgarians while the rest have adopted the terms *aftonomistes* or Macedonians.

28 Turk is the term attributed by the *Dopioi* and *Arvanites* to some of the refugees who settled in the region in the 1920s coming from certain parts of Turkey and speaking Turkish.

29 The region suffered during the Civil War from the conflict between right- and left-wingers. In order to promote control of the region, the Greek Communist Party supported the idea of Macedonia as an independent state and created guerrilla forces consisting exclusively of *Dopioi*, who were referred to as *Slavomakedones*. Schools, newspapers, collective dance events and drama performances promoted the use of the Slavic language and the creation of a Macedonian national identity. This move was supported by the Yugoslav Socialist Republic of Macedonia, which had been established in 1944. With the defeat of the Greek Communist forces in 1949, thousands of *Dopioi*, known as 'political refugees,' left the Florina region and Greece for Yugoslavia and other countries in Eastern Europe.

30 Pavlos Melas is considered the most prominent hero of modern Greek history and the period of the Macedonian Struggle (1904–1908). He was a Greek army officer, son of an influential Athenian family, that had long been committed to the annexation of Macedonia into Greece and its realisation. He was appointed commander-in-chief of the Greek bands of guerrilla fighters in the areas of Kastoria and Bitola in August 1904 and was killed there by Turkish troops in September of the same year.

31 The Sun of the Eagle is a song related to King of Greece.

32 "U borba" is a Slavic expression and means 'join the battle.' It refers to a song introduced during the Civil War by the Slav-speaking partisan groups created in north-western Greek Macedonia and supported by the Greek Communist Party.

33 The right-wing party.

34 Samiotissa is the name of a very famous and popular song that refers to a beautiful woman who comes from the

Greek island of Samos. It is danced with the step pattern known as *Sirtos*. The song has acquired the status of a national song and dance.

35 The socialist party.

36 The 'Sun' refers to a song identified with the Greek Socialist party and its ideology. It was widely used in its electoral campaigns throughout the 1980s.

37 The term Kotori is the previous name of the village. The complete name was Dolno Kotori or Kato Idrousa today. The names were changed by the Greek state in the 1920s.

38 On this day in 1903, the Ilinden uprising against the Turkish occupation took place in Ottoman Macedonia. The event is celebrated in FYROM national history as the highest expression of the liberating desires of the Macedonian people.

39 This is the village next to Kato Idrousa towards the town of Florina.

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