

A CASE STUDY OF LOCALITY
IN GREEK-AMERICAN DIASPORA: CRETANS

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By

İPEK AKIN
106605009

ISTANBUL BILGI UNIVERSITY
SOCIAL SCIENCES INSTITUTE
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS MASTER'S PROGRAMME

THESIS SUPERVISOR:
ASST. PROF. DR. ILAY ROMAIN ÖRS

A CASE STUDY OF LOCALITY IN GREEK-AMERICAN DIASPORA: CRETANS
AMERİKA'DAKİ YUNAN DİASPORASI'NDA ÖRNEK İNCELEME: GİRİTLİLER

Asst. Prof. Dr. İlay Romain Örs :.....
Prof. Dr. Ayhan Kaya :.....
Asst. Prof. Dr. Harry Z. Tzimitras :.....

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- 1) Diaspora teorileri
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- 4) Girit kültürü
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- 1) Diaspora theories
- 2) Diasporic consciousness
- 3) Greek-Americans
- 4) Cretan culture
- 5) Cretan-Americans

Özet

Diaspora grupları, her diaspora grubunun kendine özgü özelliklerini vurgulayan bazı temel yapısal, örgütsel ve davranışsal modeller tarafından karakterize edilir. Bu modellerin oluşumunda ‘kültür’ ve ‘kimlik’ bileşenleri önemli bir role sahiptir. Diaspora topluluklarında, grup kültür ve kimliğini şekillendiren temel belirleyiciler etnik köken ve ulus olmuştur. Bununla birlikte, diaspora grubunun bağlı olduğu anavatanın spesifik tarihsel ve coğrafi şartlarına bağlı olarak, ulusal öğelerin yanında yerel öğeler de söz konusu grubun kültür ve kimliğinin şekillenmesinde etkili olabilir.

Yunanistan’ın parçalanmış coğrafyasında, sözlü şiir geleneği, müziği ve dansı, mutfağı, geleneksel kostümleri, efsaneleri ve kahramanları gibi güçlü yerel öğelerinin yanı sıra, yerlileri tarafından gurur kaynağı olarak algılanan, Yunan ulusal birliğinin sağlanmasına bulunduğu önemli katkı ile Girit, dikkat çekici bir örnek olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Bu yerel öğelerin etkisi, Giritliler için, kendilerini ulusal kimliklerinden ziyade yerel kimlikle tanımlama bilincini güçlendirmektedir. Bunun yanı sıra, Girit halkının kendine özgü kültürel özellikleri kendini sadece Girit Adası’nda değil, ayrıca anavatan olarak kabul edilen adadan uzakta yaşayan diğer Giritliler arasında da göstermektedir.

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, diaspora topluluğu üyeleri arasındaki kültürel bilinci incelerken özelde yerelliğe odaklanmaktır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, Giritli-Amerikalılar örnek çalışma grubu olarak seçilmiştir. Yine bu doğrultuda, Giritli-Amerikalıların diaspora grup bilincinin oluşumunda etkili olan kültürel öğeler ve anavatanı belli bir ulus-devlet olan bu

modern diaspora grubunun ya da daha net bir ifadeyle Yunan-Amerikalıların bir alt grubu olan bu topluluğun yerel kültürlerini nasıl sergiledikleri ortaya konulacaktır.

Giritli-Amerikalıların bir diaspora alt grubu olarak kabul edildiği çalışmada, alt grup, diaspora toplulukları içinde kendilerini etnik, dini veya bölgesel kökene göre tanımlayan daha küçük grupları ifade etmek amacıyla kullanılmaktadır. Giritli-Amerikalılar, bir diaspora alt grubu olarak ele alınırken bölgeye özgü kültürel özelliklere odaklanılmaktadır.

Abstract

Diaspora groups are characterized by common structural, organizational and behavioral patterns that emphasize each diaspora group's distinctiveness. These patterns are predominantly determined by the constituents of culture and identity. In diasporic communities, the main determinants in shaping the culture and identity of the group have been ethnicity and nation. Nevertheless, as well as national elements, local elements may also be influential in shaping culture and identity of the diaspora group in question, depending upon the specific historical and geographical circumstances of the diaspora group's homeland.

Within the fragmented geography of Greece, Crete has been an outstanding example with its strong local cultural elements such as oral poem tradition, music, dance, cuisine, costumes, legends and heroes as well as its considerable support to national unity which is perceived by Cretans a source of pride. For Cretans, the influence of these local elements strengthens the conscious of identifying themselves with their local identity rather than national one and the

authentic cultural characteristics among Cretan people are not only manifested on the island but also among other Cretans living far from the island of Crete which is accepted as the homeland.

The main aim of this study is to focus on locality while analyzing cultural consciousness among diaspora community members. For this purpose, Cretan-Americans are selected as a case study group and the cultural elements that have been influential in the formation of diasporic group consciousness and the practice of the local culture among members of this state-linked, contemporary diaspora group or more precisely a ‘subgroup’ of Greek-Americans are presented.

In the study, Cretan-Americans are recognized as a diaspora subgroup and the term subgroup is used as meaning to smaller groups within diaspora communities that might identify themselves according to ethnic, religious or regional categorizations. Cretan-Americans are addressed as a subgroup from a perspective that focuses on regional cultural characteristics.

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Introduction

The main aim of this study is to focus on locality while analyzing cultural consciousness among diaspora group members. The term locality hereby and throughout the study is not used as the contrary of the global, instead it refers to being peculiar to a specific region as acknowledging this region within the borders of a larger environment of a nation-state. However, the term local is not positioned in a way opposed to national; rather it is used as a sub-element constituting the latter. In accordance with the aim of the study, Cretan-Americans are selected as a case study group within Greek-American diaspora. Thus, throughout the study the local cultural elements that have been influential in the formation of diasporic group consciousness and the practice of the local culture among members of this state-linked, contemporary diaspora group or more precisely a subgroup of Greek-Americans are presented.

For diaspora communities, either as a place of eventual return or as an imagined place, the homeland has been the main determinant in defining diaspora group's consciousness as the source of culture and identity of the group. In diaspora cases, the main determinants in shaping the culture and identity of the group which also draw a line between them and others have been ethnicity and nation. Nevertheless, as well as national elements, local elements may also be influential in shaping culture and identity of the diaspora group in question, depending upon the specific historical and geographical circumstances of the diaspora group's homeland. In this aspect, Greece constitutes a good example both historically and geographically.

In terms of culture, within the fragmented geography of Greece, locality comes into prominence as an inevitable fact. One of the most significant reasons of this has been the role of the contribution of the local elements of different regions in the formation of the Greek national identity process in the 19th century. The appropriation of local folklores¹ in that process in order to create the national identity has led to intertwining of the national and the local inadvertently.

Herein, Crete has been an outstanding example with its strong local elements such as oral poem tradition, music, dance, cuisine, costumes, legends and heroes as well as its considerable support to national unity which is perceived by Cretans as a source of pride. For Cretans, the influence of these local elements strengthens the conscious of identifying themselves with their local identity rather than national one and the authentic cultural characteristics among Cretan people are not only manifested on the island but also among other Cretans living far from Crete.

In the study, Cretan-Americans are recognized as a diaspora subgroup and the term subgroup is used as meaning to smaller groups within diaspora communities that might identify themselves according to ethnic, religious or regional categorizations. Cretan-Americans are addressed as a subgroup from a perspective that focuses on regional cultural characteristics which are mainly denominated throughout the study as local cultural elements of the island.

¹ Folklore is used in a meaning embracing traditional narratives, folk and hero tales, ballads and songs, place legends, traditional customs, local customs, games, superstitious practices, folk-speech, popular sayings, proverbs, riddles etc., For further information see, G.L Gomme, "The Science of Folk-Lore", The Folk-Lore Journal, Vol. 3, No.1, 1885, pp.1-16.

In order to draw a general framework about the subgroup in question it would be appropriate to briefly examine the group according to dimensions such as connection to homeland, relationship with the hostland, interrelationship within the diasporic group and interdependence to the larger community, Greek-American diaspora. When we look at the group's connection to homeland, it would not be wrong to say that Cretan-Americans are more inclined to identify their homelands as specifically Crete rather than Greece yet which does not include a connotation disclaiming Greek national identity. To be precise, a strong sense of connection to homeland is maintained through cultural practices that are characterized by local tendencies more than the national one. As well as having strong relations with the island of Crete, Cretan-Americans also draw a harmonious portrait in their relations with the hostland as a part of Greek-American diaspora. One last dimension to be mentioned is the group's relationship with the other subgroups of Greek-Americans both in USA and around the world. In terms of getting organized and establishing relations with the other groups, Cretan-Americans exhibit a successful example; they have created powerful relationship networks not only in USA but also around the world via associations and publications in a way sustaining their local culture. Considering these characteristics of Cretans in the homeland and as a subgroup in diaspora, as mentioned above the study focuses on locality while analyzing cultural consciousness among diaspora community members particularly concentrating on Cretans living in USA.

In respect with the aim of the study, the thesis is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter I try to make a clarification of the term diaspora which has been used in many different ways in order to describe various migrating groups and has gained a controversial

characteristic due to its multiple usages. There is a need for such a clarification in an attempt to introduce in which way I perceive the term diaspora and from which perspective I will discuss the subject.

To do that, I begin with the definition of the term that used to be related to victim tradition or traumatic experiences in the old times and I present how the definition of the term has gained wider meanings throughout history. William Safran's comprehensive definition in his essay "Diaspora in Modern Societies Myths of Homeland and Return" cover many diaspora groups of our times and constitutes a good starting point which is also relevant to my subject. Cretan-Americans as the examined group in this study, as Safran states in his definition, maintain a memory, vision or myth about their homeland and their group's consciousness is mainly defined by the continuing relationship with the homeland.²

While making the clarification of the term diaspora, since the cultural, linguistic, religious, historical ties with the place of origin are perceived by diaspora members in a different way, I also regard putting the difference between migrant and diaspora communities as necessary.

In the following part I present a general theoretical framework about diaspora theories. I begin with a classification based on historical categorization and continue with a classification regarding the existence of a recognized state for the diaspora group. Then I choose to focus on different approaches which I think can be applicable to the group I try to examine in this study; Vertovec's multifaceted categorization that approaches to the term by

² Safran, William, 1991, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return" Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies, Vol.1, No. 1, pp.83-99.

its multiple meanings and Butler's classification which enables us to make a comparison among diaspora groups on the basis of the relations of the diaspora group with its homeland, hostland and with the members of the same diaspora group living in different countries.

Since in this study I examine a specific diaspora group in terms of culture and identity, the following part focuses on the significance of culture for understanding the diasporic consciousness among diaspora group members. For this purpose, I start by examining the relationship between culture and identity, and then on the basis of boundary theories, I emphasize on cultural boundaries in order to explain the distinctiveness of diaspora groups which create 'diasporic consciousness'.

As mentioned before, related to the cultural structure of the homeland, in some specific cases, local characteristics peculiar to a specific region may come into prominence as one of the main identifiers in diasporic consciousness. Accordingly, in the second chapter, I discuss Greek national identity formation process which I think sets a good example of the intertwining of national and the local elements. In the following part descending to particulars I examine how Cretan folkloric elements were appropriated for the national identity construction during the formation of the Greek nation state in the 19th century.

In the third chapter, before focusing on Cretan-Americans as the case group of this study, I draw a portrait of Greek diaspora in general and Greek-Americans in particular by focusing on Greek-American community life in a chronological perspective and I speak of the diasporic associations which I regard as essential vehicles in diasporic consciousness.

In the next part, I examine selected topics from Cretan culture which are still being practiced by Cretan diaspora members in USA and in other countries. Finally, I focus on the role of vehicles that are influential in maintaining diasporic consciousness and try to display a portrait of the cultural practices which are performed via these vehicles.

Before ending, I feel the need to mention that in the last chapter since there has not been an opportunity to do a field study; Cretan-American diaspora is examined mainly through diasporic organizations' activities, diasporic publications. Apart from existing published literature, U.S. demographic survey databases, the web sites of the associations, online periodicals of Cretans and the interviews held with the authorities in the organizations constitute the main source of information.

As mentioned in the first chapter of the study, culture and identity part; culture is perceived "as a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."³ Thus while trying to set forth the distinguished cultural characteristics of Cretans in diaspora than the other subgroups of Greek-Americans, selected rituals such as music, cuisine, dances and costumes are analyzed as the main symbolic forms and the practices of the culture of the group in question. Since the limitation of resources due to geographical reasons, the study was mainly based on analysis of texts and rituals; observations of practices were made through selected mechanisms and topics rather than a comprehensive field research.

³ Geertz Clifford, 1993, The interpretation of cultures: selected essays, Fontana Press, p.89.

When viewed from this aspect, the questions of ‘How do the Cretans in USA differ from other subgroups of Greek-Americans?’ and ‘As a subgroup of Greek Americans, do Cretans living all around the world possess the same characteristics?’ could not be totally covered.

For a fully developed analysis of these questions, this study should be extended by a field research in a way comprehending other subgroups of Greek-Americans in USA or by selecting two host countries where Cretans relatively constitute large part of Greek-American diaspora in order to be able to make an adequate comparison to demonstrate the similarities between these two groups under different circumstances. As well as being a complementary element for the study, doing a field research would carry the study one step further. Since, as a part of field research, participant observation method which enables to have a close and intimate familiarity with sub cultural groups would have been maintained in order to study the Cretans in USA as a subgroup of Greek-Americans. Participant observation could have provided an opportunity to focus on the cultural practices of Cretan-Americans through an intensive involvement with the group in their natural environment. Another significant part of field research would have been survey research through questionnaires or statistical surveys in order to gather data about thoughts and behaviours of Cretans and other subgroups of Greek-Americans in USA which would all in the end facilitate demonstrating the similarities and contrasts between different subgroups belonging to same main diaspora group. Notwithstanding, I assume that this study is a preliminary piece of work that focuses on locality through the culture of a not much accentuated group as diaspora; Cretans, and which is at the same time a topic open to improvement.

Chapter 1

'Diaspora' in theory

Throughout the history, the term diaspora has been used in many different ways in order to describe different immigrant groups. The meaning of the term has gained a controversial characteristic due to its multiple usages in the course of time. The classical form of diaspora had actually been related to forced movements, exile and a sense of inability to return.⁴ However, in the 20th century this perception of the term has become inadequate for numerous immigrant groups who had been immigrated due to economic inequalities, the rise of poverty and for better social and economic conditions.

In this sense, the academic interest in the notion of diaspora could be considered in two periods; the pre-1990 period in which there had been little interest in the term and the academics had mainly concerned with Jewish and African experience and the post-1990 period in which there have been a significant increase in written work and diversification in terms of groups who name themselves 'diaspora'.⁵

This diversification has led to some problems such as ambiguity and incoherency with the meaning of the term and the difficulty of definition and classification is brought along by the attributed meanings. Despite this difficulty, in our times, a certain number of characteristics for diaspora groups are established among scholars.

⁴ Kalra, Virinder, Raminder, K. Kalhon and John Hutynuk, 2005, *Diaspora and Hybridity*, London: Sage Publications, p. 10.

⁵ Cohen, Phil, 1999, "Rethinking Diasporama", *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol.33, No.1, pp. 3-22 cited in *Ibid.*, p. 8.

The Cretan-Americans which are going to be addressed in this study as a sub-group of Greek-American diaspora, possess unique characteristics as well as several characteristics in common with many other diaspora groups. Before analyzing, how and under which circumstances have these characteristics been shaped, a clarification of the definition and the scope of the term is needed. For a better understanding, looking through the origins and evolution of the term in progress of time will be useful.

1.1. Defining the term diaspora

The word diaspora is derived from the Greek word *speiro* and the proposition *dia* which means to sow over.⁶ In the Archaic period Greeks used the definition to describe the colonization of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean⁷ and it is believed that the term first appeared in the Greek translation of the book of ‘Deuteronomy in the Old Testament’, with reference to the situation of the Jewish people.⁸

“The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 586 BC led to the enslavement and displacement of the key military, civil and religious leaders of Judah and their exile in Babylon. This fate was held to be predicted in Deuteronomy (28:58-68) where God had warned that anybody who disobeyed his law would be scattered to all ends of

⁶ Cohen, Robin, 2004, “Diaspora”, in N.J.Smelser and P.B.Baltes (eds.), International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, p.3642.

⁷ Cohen, Robin, 1996, “Diasporas and the nation-state: from victims to challengers”, International Affairs, Vol. 72, No. 3, p. 507.

⁸ Sheffer, Gabriel, 2003, Diaspora Politics at Home Abroad, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 9.

the earth. There they would ‘find no peace’, while they would additionally suffer ‘an unquiet mind, dim eyes and a failing appetite.’⁹

The Jewish experience has become integrated with the words “enslavement, exile and displacement”¹⁰ and for long time, the meaning of the diaspora was accepted as a kind of victim tradition referring to the traumatic Jewish history. Though the term diaspora has evolved and comprehended through the time, the association of the term with loss or exile or as a kind of suffering led the Jewish experience to be perceived as the prototype diasporic experience.¹¹

Until 1993, in the dictionaries, the term was used only to refer “the Jews living outside Palestine of modern Israel”, for the first time in its history the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* added that the term also refers to “the situation of people living outside their traditional homeland.”¹²

Beginning from the 1980s, this victim tradition meaning of diaspora began to transform and has gained wider meanings which are also recognized by scholars and journalists. Thus, in recent times, the concept has gained a meaning comprehending other dispersed minorities and migrant groups, such as ethnic or national groups who had not been forcibly displaced.¹³ These groups of people which could be called non-victim diasporas, that settle abroad for better social and economic conditions like Greek-Americans in USA that are

⁹ Cohen, 2004, p. 3642.

¹⁰ Cohen, 1996, p. 508.

¹¹ Kalra, Kalthon and Hutynuk, p. 9.

¹² Sheffer, p. 9.

¹³ Ohliger, Rainer and Rainer Münz, 2003, “Diasporas and Ethnic Migrants in Twentieth-Century Europe: A Comparative Perspective”, in R.Ohliger and R.Münz (eds.), Diasporas and Ethnic Migrants Germany, Israel, and Post-Soviet Successor States in Comparative Perspective, London: Frank Cass Publishers, p. 4

going to be handled in this study, began to establish a diasporic identity albeit having no traumatic history.¹⁴

Cohen considers four other ethnic groups as having a traumatic experience similar to Jewish one: Africans who were exposed to mass slavery, Armenians who were subjected to mass displacement, Irish people who were exposed to famine and finally Palestinians whose homeland were occupied by Jewish people.¹⁵

Accordingly, in the editorial preface of the important journal, *Diaspora*, Khachig Tölölian writes, “the term that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community.”¹⁶

When the criteria which form a diaspora are considered, different conclusions could be derived since the term is not stable and has undergone transformation depending on time and different historical circumstances. Nevertheless, William Safran’s definition for diaspora in his essay “Diaspora in Modern Societies Myths of Homeland and Return” is quite relevant. He defines diaspora as follows:

“... “expatriate minority communities” (1) that are dispersed from an original “center” to at least two “peripheral” places; (2) that maintain a ‘memory, vision or myth about their original homeland’, (3) that “believe they are not- and perhaps cannot be- fully accepted by their host country’; (4) that see the ancestral home as a place of

¹⁴ For a detailed information about these groups see Fludernik, Monika, 2003, “The Diasporic Imaginary: Postcolonial Reconfigurations in the Context of Multiculturalism”, in Monika Fludernik (ed.), Diaspora and Multiculturalism Common Traditions and New Developments, Amsterdam: Rodopi Editions, pp. xi-xxvii.

¹⁵ Cohen, 1996, pp. 512-513.

¹⁶ Clifford, James, 1994, “Diasporas”, Cultural Anthropology, 9(3), p. 303.

eventual return, when the time is right; (5) that are committed to the maintenance or restoration of this homeland; and (6) of which the group's consciousness and solidarity are 'importantly defined' by this continuing relationship with the homeland."¹⁷

On the other hand, another significant criterion emphasized by Richard Marienstras is the "time" factor which decides whether a minority meets all or some of the criteria described, having insured its survival and adaptation.¹⁸ Diaspora is considered as different from casual travel or a temporary sojourn since these travels are about settling down, about putting roots elsewhere¹⁹ and include maintaining communities and having collective homes away from homeland.²⁰ Butler also defines "the construction of homeland" as an essential characteristic to diaspora groups which distinguishes them from nomads.²¹

The difference between migrant and diaspora cases should be set forth at this point for the sake of the argument. While in diaspora cases, cultural, linguistic, religious, historical ties with the place of origin remain strong, in migration cases, at least in theory, immigration from a country involves a one-way ticket, assimilation to the host country, the adoption of a local citizenship and language.²² In addition, ethno-national character of diaspora groups, which could be understood in the broadest sense as a group of people bound together because of

¹⁷ Safran, William, 1991, "Diasporas in modern societies: myths of the homeland and return", Diaspora: a journal of transnational studies, 1:1, pp. 83-84, quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 304-305

¹⁸ Cited in Cohen, 1996, p. 516.

¹⁹ Brah, Avtar, 1996, Cartographies of diaspora contesting identities, London: Routledge, p. 182.

²⁰ Clifford, p. 308.

²¹ Butler, Kim, 2001, "Defining diaspora, Refining a discourse", Diaspora: a journal of transnational studies, 10:2, p. 204.

²² Cohen, 2004, p. 3643.

perceived shared characteristics such as phenotype, historical experience, religion or geography²³ gains importance as another significant distinctive feature of diasporas.

The applicability of all the above mentioned characteristics could be questionable for all diaspora groups for different reasons. For instance, not all diasporas sustain an ideology of return;²⁴ in many cases the existence of the issue of return and related sense of connection to the homeland replaces the specific orientation toward physical return.²⁵ Nonetheless, most diaspora scholars agree upon main basic characteristics of diaspora; first one, scattering more than one destination thus creating internal networks; a characteristic that makes diaspora different from other type of migrations, second one, a relationship to an imagined or an actual homeland providing the foundation from which diasporic identity may develop, and third one, self-awareness of the group's identity which is vital for the survival of the community culturally.²⁶

The characteristics such as 'a history of dispersal', 'having myths and memories of the homeland', 'alienation in the host country', 'continuing support of the homeland' and 'a collective identity' defined by this relationship are worthwhile, for being valid for the most of the diaspora groups and for being significant in order to have a better understanding of the topic of this study.

As the discrepancy on the matter of the defining characteristics of diaspora goes on, there emerges the question of which immigrant groups should be regarded as diasporas. Safran uses the term diaspora in order to describe different categories of people such as

²³ Butler, p. 208.

²⁴ Brah, p.197.

²⁵ Butler, p. 205.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 192.

Cubans and Mexicans in the United States, Pakistanis in Britain, Maghrebis in France, Turks in Germany, the Chinese in South-East Asia, Greeks, Poles, Palestinians, blacks in North America and the Caribbean, Indians, Armenians, Corsicans in Marseilles as well as Belgians living in communal enclaves in Wallonia as diaspora communities.²⁷

In the 21st century, in which borders have been gradually disappearing, also it has been hard to define exact features of diaspora groups since many communities defend that they own diasporic features or practices. Therefore, the scope of the term is open to expansion and the meaning of the term is at stake. The breakaway of the definition of diaspora from the traumatic Jewish experience and the changed meanings of the contemporary concept are considered by many as a new and exciting way of understanding cultural difference, identity politics and the proclaimed dissolution of the nation-state.²⁸

Thus, before focusing on the cultural dimension of the diaspora as the main aim of the study, as mentioned in the beginning, a brief history about the implications of the term and to draw a general framework about the definition of the term from different perspectives will be helpful.

1.2. Classification of Diasporas: A general theoretical framework

There have been different classification types of the term ‘diaspora’ depending upon different criteria. This part aims to present a general theoretical framework about these classifications by dealing with different approaches.

²⁷ Safran, William, 1991, “Diasporas in modern societies: myths of the homeland and return”, *Diaspora: a journal of transnational studies*, 1:1, p. 83, cited in Cohen, 1996, p. 514.

²⁸ Cohen, 1996, p. 508.

First of all, a classification based on historical categorization; secondly a division regarding the homeland status of diasporas will be presented. In addition to these, classifications from different perspectives; the categorization of Cohen who prefers to approach the term diaspora as a descriptive tool,²⁹ of Vertovec who touches upon the multiple meanings of the term³⁰ and of Butler who tries to set a framework for comparative diaspora studies are going to be emphasized.

According to some scholars current diaspora phenomenon can be traced back to the middle of the 19th century and the emergence of ethno-national diasporas is regarded as a modern phenomenon.³¹ However, since the ancient times, groups of people have been immigrating depending on shifting ‘push and pull factors’ - the attractive conditions in the host countries and hard social, political or economic circumstances at the homelands- which are still significant motivations for migrations in our times.³² In parallel with this view, ‘great migrations’ period³³ in ancient history constitutes a reference point for the creation of diasporas in which expansion of groups of people to distant territories occurred.

Jews, Greeks and Armenian diasporas are considered as prominent examples of ancient diasporas, sharing common features which create the distinctive existence of each one such as shared language, a sense of solidarity among group members, rejection of strangers, local folkloristic habits and traditions, the myths and legends about their ancestors, the

²⁹ Kalra, Kalthon and Hutynuk, p. 3.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 13.

³¹ Sheffer, p. 32.

³² Ibid., p. 51.

³³ Ibid., p. 34.

inclination to create and preserve cohesive entities, determination to maintain a common identity.³⁴

The late 20th century diasporas which are called ‘contemporary diasporas’ take such ancient diasporas as a point of departure rather than as ‘models’³⁵, or as in Safran’s description as the ‘ideal types’.³⁶ The contemporary diasporas are different in character with issues like, migration, adaptation or political strategies in both discourse and experience.³⁷ Instead of victim tradition, as mentioned before, the late 20th century diasporas are associated with terms like refugee, immigrant, migrant or asylum-seeker leading to expansion of the scope of the definition of the term. Herein, it should be pointed out that a diaspora has an institutionalized political commitment to its homeland, and in that way it resembles communities of exiles and refugees, however it differs from them in terms of intergenerational continuity and the role of its organizations in other aspects of the host society.³⁸ Another point that is mentioned by Butler about ancient diasporas is that, instead of refugees and wage workers, in antiquity, diasporas were more likely to consist of conquering armies.³⁹ Thus in contemporary diasporas, modern economic and social conjunctures and the mobility of the labor emerge as the other important factors.

Diasporas are also classified in regard to their homeland status as state-linked and stateless diasporas.⁴⁰ While the state-linked diasporas include ethno-national diasporas with a

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 49-50.

³⁵ Brah, p. 181.

³⁶ Cited in Ibid., p. 181.

³⁷ Butler, p. 210.

³⁸ Amersfoort van Hans, 2004, “Gabriel Sheffer and the Diaspora experience”, Diaspora: a journal of transnational studies, 13:2, p. 366.

³⁹ Butler, p. 211.

⁴⁰ Sheffer, p. 73.

homeland and host country, stateless diasporas include ethnic groups as the Palestinians, Kurds, Tibetans and Sikhs whom could not have been succeeded to establish their independent nation-states.⁴¹

As mentioned above, the diaspora-homeland relationship may differ depending on different diaspora groups and may vary from “physical return, to expression of emotional attachment artistically, to the reinterpretation of homeland cultures in diaspora”.⁴² Brah defines home at the same time as “a mythic place of desire, a place of no return even the chance of visiting that territory exists, and as the lived experience of a locality in diasporic imagination”.⁴³ Even in the situations in which diasporas do not possess a homeland existing in the form of a nation-state, the connectedness to the place imagined as the homeland, constitutes one of the most significant factors in diasporic identity consciousness. The sense of connectedness to the homeland which had helped the ancient diasporas to survive under traumatic and hard conditions⁴⁴ still has an important role among contemporary diaspora group members as the determinant for the survival of their cultural identity and the symbol of their distinction in their host countries.

In Cohen’s classification, the term diaspora is used as a descriptive tool, and is categorized in five different forms as: African and Armenian as victim diasporas, Indians as labor diasporas, Chinese and Lebanese as trade diasporas, British as the imperial diaspora and finally the Caribbean as cultural diaspora.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 74.

⁴² Butler, p. 205.

⁴³ Brah, p. 192.

⁴⁴ Sheffer, p. 55.

⁴⁵ Kalra, p. 12.

It would be more appropriate to approach Cohen's classification in two different ways. First of all, apart from victim tradition, due to the new attributed meanings to the term, his classification is worthwhile in order to comprehend the contemporary diasporas. On the other hand, his categorization can be considered as problematic since creating meta-narratives and neglecting the other factors which have been influential in the formation of a given diaspora community.

As revealed in the classification of Cohen, instead of categorization of peoples, Vertovec approaches the subject of diaspora by paying attention to the multiple meanings of diaspora that have been generated through ethnographic work⁴⁶ and classifies diaspora in four different groups: the first one is the "diaspora as social form", referring to transnational social organizations; a collective identity and attachment to homeland, the second one is "diaspora as consciousness" meaning the arouse of difference as cultures travel and interact, the third is "diaspora as modes of cultural production", referring to the preserving of unique cultural values in the host country, and the last one that is modified by Cohen and Vertovec, "diasporas as political orientation" which is mainly interested in the political effect of the diaspora groups in the host countries.⁴⁷

For many, Vertovec's distinction between the social and cultural forms, provides a useful set of categories for organizing literature in the subject of diaspora and have been found successful for conceptualizing diaspora in analytical terms.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

⁴⁷ Cohen, 1999, p. 3644.

⁴⁸ Kalra, p. 13.

As well as Vertovec's well-rounded classification, for a better comparative approach to the study of diasporas, Butler offers to examine four dimensions of the diaspora groups: the reasons for and conditions of relocation, relationship with the homeland, relationship with the hostland and interrelationships within the diasporic group.⁴⁹ According to Butler, these dimensions allow us to identify any single social formation as diaspora and make it comparable to others.⁵⁰ For instance, Butler's classification provides us a broader framework to compare two different diaspora groups such as "trade diaspora" and "cultural diaspora" as categorized in Cohen's classification, without referring to the characteristics in their given names and bring out the other characteristics that have been influential in the formation of these diaspora groups.

The fact that the definitions and classifications that are set out in here are open to change and a contemporary diaspora group may have characteristics that can be found in different classifications at the same time, makes it hard to fit a specific contemporary diaspora group into a constructed framework above. However, since the topic of this study mainly focuses on the cultural elements that have been influential in the formation of diasporic consciousness of a state-linked, contemporary diaspora group Cretan-Americans, Vertovec's multifaceted classification will be the main guide theoretically. Besides, Butler's four dimensional classification serves not only as a helpful framework to comprehend diaspora group's relations with its homeland and host country but also helps us to understand the role of diasporic organizations in maintaining the diasporic consciousness of the examined group by looking at the interrelationships within the group.

⁴⁹ Butler, p. 209.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.209.

1. 3. The significance of culture in diaspora

1. 3. 1. Culture and identity

Culture and identity are intertwined concepts that are closely related to the formation of ‘diasporic consciousness’. Before dealing with ‘diasporic consciousness’, it would be more appropriate to touch upon how these two concepts are defined in theory and in what ways they are related to each other.

The concept of culture which has a long and puzzling history has never been detached from the ongoing events throughout the world. The scholars from different disciplines who attempted to define culture have not been able to come to an agreement on a specific definition. Robert Borofsky articulates this case with these words:

“Culture, then, is not a set term-some natural phenomena that one can consensually describe (as tends to happen with hydrogen atoms, hamsters, and humans). Culture is what various people conceive it to be, and, as these definitions make clear, different people perceive it in different ways for different ends. This point leads to another: The cultural concept has probably never been defined in terms that all anthropologists, now and/or in the past, concur on.”⁵¹

As Borofsky points out the main difficulty with the definition of the concept is its subjective character which has led to either overgeneralization or oversimplification of the content of the term.

For long time, one of the most influential definitions of culture in anthropology had been the one presented by E. B. Tylor. In 1871, Tylor had defined culture as the complex

⁵¹ Borofsky, Robert, 2001, “When: a conversation about culture”, American Anthropologist, Vol. 103, No. 2, p. 433.

whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits that were acquired by man within a society, and in his definition, culture was actually assumed as the name of all things and events peculiar to human species and as possession of men transmittable from one individual, group or generation to other by social inheritance mechanisms.⁵²

In the 19th century, the term “culture” began to be used in three specific ways in various European traditions:

“(i) ... a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development ...; (ii) ... a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general ...; (iii) ... the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity.”⁵³

Raymond Williams mentions that the term in general is used to indicate the ‘whole way of life’ of distinct groups of people⁵⁴ and perceives culture as a signifying system through which a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored.⁵⁵ Mitchell, reinterprets these meanings and grounds the idea of culture into a broader theoretical framework as follows:

First of all, he gives the name culture to the actual, often unexamined patterns and differentiations of a people; secondly processes by which these patterns developed are interpreted as 'culture makes cultures'; the markers of differentiation between different people

⁵² Tylor, B., Edward, 1913, Primitive Culture, p.5-6 cited in White, A., Leslie, 1959, “The Concept of Culture”, American Anthropologist, Vol. 61, No. 2, p. 227.

⁵³ Williams, R, 1983, Keywords, London: Fontana Press, p. 90, cited in Mitchell Don, 1995, “There's No Such Thing as Culture: Towards a Reconceptualization of the Idea of Culture in Geography”, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 104.

⁵⁴ Williams, Raymond, 1981, The Sociology of Culture, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 11.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

groups mean that “individuals are part of a culture”; the representation way of all these processes, patterns and markers can be named as “cultural activity”; finally, hierarchical orderings of these activities, productions, ways of life signify “comparing cultures”.⁵⁶

Another remarkable explanation of the concept that is relevant to the subject of this study is the German perception of culture or “Kultur” which had actually meant civilization in the beginning, and then turned to into a concept linked to ethnicity and nation, meaning the culture of a particular ethnic nation, “national culture”.⁵⁷ Though the words “culture” (Kultur) and “civilization” (Zivilisation) had overlapping usages, by the beginning of the 20th century the two terms began to be used in contrast meanings; while “Zivilisation” was used to refer external trappings, artifacts and amenities of highly industrialized societies, “Kultur” used to refer positively valorized habits, attitudes and properties.⁵⁸ Undoubtedly, in the formation of the definition of culture in German case, the historical circumstances and rivalry with Britain and especially France had been influential. Though the ‘superiority among cultures’ which had prevailed the German perception of culture is out of the subject of the study, this perception is worth mentioning for the emphasis made on ethnicity and nation.

Until the beginning of the 20th century in German and Anglo-American traditions culture could not have gained its modern anthropological connotations. In the 20th century, the racist and hegemonic connotations of culture have started to be rejected. In this sense mentioning about Boas is crucial. The idea of culture which saw human groups in hierarchical terms was inverted with Boas who focused on the history of cultures and showed that

⁵⁶ Mitchell, pp. 104-105

⁵⁷ Tai, Eika, 2003, “Rethinking Culture, National Culture, and Japanese Culture”, Japanese Language and Literature, Special Issue: Sociocultural Issues in Teaching Japanese: Critical Approaches, Vol. 37, No. 1, p. 5.

⁵⁸ Geuss, Raymond, 1996, “Kultur, Bildung, Geist”, History and Theory, Vol. 35, No. 2, p. 153.

behaviors of all men regardless of race was determined by habitual behavior patterns what is in other words called enculturative processes.⁵⁹ Boas used the term culture in plural and for him cultures were unique and separate identities and should be studied as a whole including the customs, language, social systems, and even psychological factors.⁶⁰ Boas was significant for acquiring a new perspective to the perception of culture in anthropology.

In addition to above mentioned definitions of culture, Friedman points out two different usages of culture; the first one 'generic culture' referring to qualities specific to human behaviour and their organization into meaningful schemes with an attempt to understand the distinctive characteristics of humans from other biologically determined species, while the second usage "differential culture" is composed of the attribution of social behavioral and representational properties to a given population mainly rooted in nationalism and ethnicity, resulting in identification of "otherness".⁶¹

The concept of 'otherness' actually comes out as the opposite construct of those who identify themselves the 'same' on the basis of notions like ethnicity and nation. The concept of identity which originally means "sameness", and in psychology "selfsameness", is used in social anthropology mostly in the context of "ethnic identity" referring to the sameness of the self with the others, that is to a consciousness of sharing certain characteristics e.g. language, culture within a group.⁶² With regard to the "differential culture" and identity concept in anthropology, "collective identity" signifies the "we-ness" of a group emphasizing the

⁵⁹ Stocking W., George, 1966, "Franz Boas and the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective", American Anthropologist, Vol.68, p. 867-868.

⁶⁰ Helm, A., Asa, 2001, "Franz Boas and Bronislaw Malinowsky: A Contrast, Comparison and Analysis", Lambda Alpha Journal, Vol. 31, p. 42.

⁶¹ Friedman, Jonathan, 1994, Cultural Identity and Global Process, London: Sage Publications, p. 72

⁶² Sökefeld, Martin, 1999, "Debating Self, Identity, and Culture in Anthropology", Current Anthropology, Vol. 40, No. 4, p. 417.

similarities and shared characteristics of the members of the same group that were named in the early literature, as “natural” or “essential” qualities emerging from physiological traits, psychological predispositions, regional features or structural locations.⁶³

At the same time, identity of a group can be perceived as historically constructed through an interplay with an “other” that can be either external or internal, meaning that within any group of people, identity may have both positive and negative aspects, and that there can be multiple individual perceptions and definitions of what constitutes the group’s identity and tradition.⁶⁴ Within this context, as well as the elements of ethnicity and nation, local elements embedded in the national culture may also emanate as one of the determinants of the perceived group’s identity.

In the same vein, in the contemporary popular usage of the term, culture is also perceived as an essentially symbolic and cognitive construct, which is set forth by Clifford Geertz as the publicly accessible text of a people, a symbolic program inscribed in the time and space of social life and their true essence.⁶⁵ Geertz perceives nation as a political abstraction and names it as a system of symbols rather than the main identifier of the culture. Thus, within the borders of a nation, geographically, linguistically, politically and culturally distinguished many groups can be found.

For Geertz, culture should be perceived as the ‘webs of meaning’ within which people live, meaning encoded in symbolic forms such as language, artifacts, etiquette, rituals,

⁶³ Cerulo, A. Karen, 1997, “Identity Construction: New Issues New Directions”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 23, p. 386.

⁶⁴ Wagner, Roy, 1981, *The Invention of Culture*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, pp. 35-40 cited in Madianou, Gefou, Dimitra, 1999, “Cultural Polyphony and Identity Formation: Negotiating Tradition in Attica”, *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 414.

⁶⁵ Friedman, p. 68.

calendars, etc. and that must be understood through acts of interpretation analogous to the work of literary critics.⁶⁶ Geertz's perception of culture which is attached to a particular group limited in a specific location is useful in order to have a profound understanding about regional cultural differences which are mainly assumed as 'local' in this study.

Essentially, the invention of the authentic local cultures are perceived as place holders for their opposites such as the modern, mass-produced, etc. and the local has become the resistance to dominant culture.⁶⁷ A significant point in here that has to be mentioned is that in the concept of "local knowledge" which is defined by Geertz, there is also the problem of differentiating what belongs inside and what is outside, what is local and what is larger than local.⁶⁸ Besides, all local cultures are under the risk of being unneutral since the appropriation of local cultures for larger-than-local interests of the state could be seen.

Considering these concerns, in this study local culture is assumed as neutral in a way that maintains the preservation of cultural boundaries over change and creating a preference for solidarity among group members. Though, the topic of this study, Cretan local culture preserves its peculiarity and manifests a resistance in that way, the appropriation of Cretan local culture during the formation of the Modern Greek national identity is perceived as contributive rather than resistant.

⁶⁶ Ortner, Sherry B., (ed.), 1999, The Fate of A Culture: Geertz and Beyond, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999, cited in Magoullick, Mary, The Dynamics of Culture available at <http://www.faculty.de.gcsu.edu/~mmagouli/culture.htm>

⁶⁷ Shuman Amy, 1993, "Dismantling Local Culture", Western Folklore, Vol. 52, No. 2/4, pp. 346-350.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.349.

Before examining the interconnection of the local and the national on the basis of Cretan case in the next chapter, in the following pages, taking into consideration the local as well as the national, the formation of the ‘diasporic consciousness’ will be presented.

1.3.2. Diasporic consciousness

Diaspora groups are characterized by common structural, organizational and behavioral patterns that emphasize each diaspora group’s distinctiveness. These patterns are predominantly determined by the constituents of culture and identity. In diaspora cases, the main determinants in shaping the culture and identity of the group have been ethnicity and nation. Nevertheless, as well as national elements, local elements may also be influential in shaping culture and identity of the diaspora group in question, depending upon the specific historical and geographical circumstances of the diaspora group’s homeland. The designation of distinctiveness of the diaspora group is manifested through borders that function for separation as ‘self’ and the ‘other’.

The boundary theories have been playing a fundamental role in explaining and comprehending differences in social sciences. Boundaries that are used for physical and symbolic separation are created by the distinctions between people, groups and things.⁶⁹ These markers of difference could be based on criteria such as ethnicity, class, gender, race, profession, culture, and are closely related to social and collective identities. Among those differentiating boundaries, the cultural ones will be the main concern of this study in order to

⁶⁹ Epstein, C.F, 1992, Tinker-bells and pinups: the construction and reconstruction of gender boundaries at work, in Michèle Lamont and Marcel Fournier (eds.), *Cultivating Differences Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality*, Chicago:University of Chicago Press, p. 232.

present how diasporic consciousness is constituted by maintaining the continuity of a group's norms, traditions and values.

The first point that should be mentioned is the distinction between symbolic and social boundaries. Symbolic boundaries are defined as conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space, while social boundaries are objectified forms of symbolic boundaries in cases of inequality in the distribution of material and/or non-material resources or social opportunities.⁷⁰ It has also been added that symbolic boundaries are the necessary but insufficient condition for the existence of social boundaries and they can be realized under constraining situations.⁷¹ Migrant, refugee or diaspora cases are convenient for the emerge of the objectification of symbolic boundaries as the social ones due to discrete characteristics of the members of these groups from the majority of the host society.

In boundary theory, the term 'culture' has a wide scope of content that reaches from ethnic food and leisure activities⁷² to fundamental beliefs and ideas regarding the existence.⁷³ Emphasizing the culture, Kopytoff points out the symbolic inventories of a society⁷⁴ which are expressions of a group's desire to "concentrate themselves, separate themselves" from

⁷⁰ Lamont, Michele and Virag Molnar, 2002, "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences", Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 28, p.168

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 168-169.

⁷² Alba Richard and Nee, Victor, 2003, Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, cited in Korteweg, Anna and Gökçe Yurdakul, 2009, "Islam, gender, and immigrant integration: boundary drawing in discourses on honour killing in the Netherlands and Germany", Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol. 32, No. 2, p. 220.

⁷³ Zolberg, Aristide, R. and Long, Littwoon, 1999, 'Why Islam is like Spanish: cultural incorporation in Europe and the United States', Politics & Society, Vol. 27, No. 1, cited in Ibid., p. 220.

⁷⁴ Kopytoff, Igor, 1986, "The cultural biography of things commoditization as process", in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), The Social Life of Things Commodities in Cultural Perspective, Cambridge University Press, p. 73.

others.⁷⁵ These symbols and practices may include modes of dress, livelihood, language, cuisine, music, ritual, religious belief and all other symbolic content that can separate one group from another.⁷⁶

In the same vein, Barth draws attention to the two different types of cultural contents that create dichotomies:

“(i) overt signals or signs – diacritical features that people look for and exhibit to show identity, often such features as dress, language, house-form, or general style of life, and (ii) basic value orientations: the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged.”⁷⁷

He also adds that belonging to an ethnic group implies being a certain kind of person, and at the same time, having that basic identity implies a claim to be judged and to judge, by the standards of that identity.⁷⁸

The symbolic inventories or the cultural contents that create dichotomies which are attributed by ethnic communities create the distinction between a group’s members and those of other groups, and the difference between ‘self’ and ‘other’ takes the form of a boundary drawn between one’s own group’s cultural identity symbols and those of other groups,

⁷⁵ Mauss, Marcel, 1969, “La Civilisation: Eléments et formes”, in *Oeuvres*, Paris: Minuit, pp. 2:456-479, 471-472, cited in Michèle Lamont and Marcel Fournier (eds.), *Cultivating Differences Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Harrison, Simon, 1999, “Cultural Boundaries”, *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 15, No. 15, p. 10.

⁷⁷ Barth, Fredrik, 1969, “Introduction” in Fredrik Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, p. 14.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

forming cultural boundaries.⁷⁹ These cultural boundaries are manifested explicitly in diaspora cases.

Diaspora members have a sense of belonging to the same ethno-national family, have common ancestors, collective history linked to a specific homeland and they share cultural, social values, and traditions, they have loyalty for their nation which reside in the homeland.⁸⁰ In diasporic discourses, homeland is not simply left behind; instead it is accepted as the place of attachment which actually cultivates the diasporic consciousness.⁸¹

The dichotomization of others as strangers brings along the recognition of limitations on shared understandings, differences in criteria for judgment of values, and ethnic groups only resist as significant units if they possess marked difference in behaviour such as resisting cultural differences.⁸² Among the members of diaspora, more than physical and geographical boundaries, cultural, psychological and social virtual boundaries gain importance.⁸³ Thus, awareness of sharing the same identity and practicing the same cultural traits make the group members feel more attached to the community creating a diasporic consciousness, and differentiates the diaspora group both from the other minority groups such as migrants and refugees, and the host society. Diasporic consciousness does not just imply the recognition of the historical and cultural connection to the homeland but also recognition of the unique community existing between members of the diaspora group.⁸⁴ This consciousness is realized

⁷⁹ Harrison, p. 10.

⁸⁰ Sheffer, pp. 11-12.

⁸¹ Cohen, 1994, p. 311.

⁸² Barth, p. 15.

⁸³ Sheffer, pp. 11-12.

⁸⁴ Butler, p. 208.

through “boundary-maintenance”, in other words, the preservation of the distinctive identity vis-à-vis other societies.⁸⁵

Since the cultural practices and symbols are capable of being transmitted, circulated and accumulated like objects, in order to protect its cultural identity, a group should control its cultural boundaries or in other words the flow of the “practices and symbols” into and out of its own culture.⁸⁶ Cohen mentions that, the cultural boundaries which distinguish the group from the others are depicted as under threat and the change in these boundaries, means a loss of “way of life”; part of what is meant the loss of sense of self⁸⁷ for the group members. As well as the loss of distinctive identity can emanate through the replacement of one’s local culture by alien ones, it may also emanate through the appropriation of one’s culture by foreign ones or through the combination of both of these processes.⁸⁸

In diaspora case, where at least two distinguishing cultural identities – the identity of the host country and diaspora group- come across, the potential risk for dispersal and loss of diaspora group’s cultural identity increases. In many cases this mentioned risk makes diaspora group members feel more attached to their cultural traits.

Thus, the symbolic inventories or to put it another way the distinctive features make diaspora group members feel themselves belonging to a specific national and/or local cultural identity. In order to keep this sense of belonging, diaspora members organize and act within diasporic organizations which may serve as one of the best tools for boundary-maintenance. These organizations not only provide an opportunity to keep the contact with the homeland,

⁸⁵ Brubaker, Rogers, 2005, “The ‘diaspora’ diaspora”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, p. 6.

⁸⁶ Harrison, p. 13.

⁸⁷ Cohen, P. Anthony, 1985, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, Routledge, p. 109.

⁸⁸ Harrison, p. 14.

but also assemble the diaspora members under the same roof by organizing events on special days peculiar to their own cultures.⁸⁹ With this aspect, diasporas are considered as “distinctive transnational communities” that are held together by active solidarity and dense social relationships, cutting across the state boundaries and linking members in different states.⁹⁰

In what has preceded, the main goal has been to explain the role of culture and identity in the formation of diasporic consciousness. While doing so, as mentioned before we come up with ethnicity and nation as the indispensable constituents of this process. However, as well as macro dimensions of national identity, micro ones should also be analyzed,⁹¹ thus in certain cases local identity of a community within a nation may come into prominence in determining group’s identity perception. Greek national identity formation sets a good example of these two dimensions. As Herzfeld puts it, when the formal state-sponsored discourse and local, ‘intimate’ discourse about Greek national identity is compared, the territorial boundaries and symbolic boundaries of the nation are not exactly compatible.⁹² In order to show this incompatibility, the following part of the study will focus on the local elements that have been influential in the Greek identity formation.

⁸⁹ The Cretan diaspora example will be discussed in the last part of the study.

⁹⁰ Brubaker, p. 6

⁹¹ Lightfoot, K.G, A. Martinez, 1995, “Frontiers and boundaries in archeological perspective” Ann. Rev. Anthropology, Vol .24, pp. 471- 492, Wilson T.M, Donnan H, (eds.), 1998, Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, cited in Lamont and Molnar, p. 183.

⁹² Lamont and Molnar, p. 183.

Chapter 2

The interplay of the ‘local’ and the ‘national’ in Greek identity formation

In psychological terms, identity formation is the development process of an individual’s personality in a continual and unique way.⁹³ As mentioned in the previous part, collective identity which signifies the ‘we-ness’ of a group is also formed in the same way, however with a single difference, the continuity and the uniqueness of the collective identity is constructed in opposition to an external or internal “other”, as it may well be seen in the processes of national identity formation.

Bearing in mind the long history of civilizations, acknowledged as ancestors of Greeks in history, and the influence of this history in identification of ‘Greekness’ in our times, this part will focus on the reemergence of Greek cultural identity, and how this identity is shaped with the establishment of the Greek nation-state in the 19th century. In order to examine this cultural identity thoroughly, Greek national identity formation process and the influence of the local folklores on this process should be scrutinized. No doubt the formation of Greek national identity is a topic of study on its own; however the specific aim here is to display how local folklore comes into prominence in that process, and how it is used to create the national while intertwining with it inadvertently.

Harvey argues that it is not possible to understand a particular place without considering its interrelationship to and interdependence on larger spaces such as nation, just

⁹³ Strickland, Bonnie, R. and Gale, Cengage, (eds.) 2001, “Identity/Identity Formation”, *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, available at <http://www.enotes.com/gale-psychology-encyclopedia/identity-identity-formation>

as how such a larger space as national identity requires investigation of the places that constitute them.⁹⁴ I regard setting forth the interactions and modes of interplay between the local folklore and national identity as essential since Crete with its folklore has played an important role as a prominent region in the formation of modern Greek identity.

By presenting this relation, it will be easier to understand how the diaspora people of that island practice their local culture away from their homeland sometimes in a way that transcends their national identity. For this purpose, the following part will begin with construction of Greek national identity in Modern Greece and the effect of local folklore on this formation, and finally will focus on Cretan case.

2.1. Greek identity formation and local folklore

Some cultural identities are defined in contrast to more than one cultural “alter”⁹⁵; the Greek national identity formation constitutes a familiar example with that case. These two cultural alters have been the European West and the Ottoman East in the Greek case. Greek nationalism was an aspect of the incorporation of Greece into an expanding West, into a world of modern Western values and at the same time, it was a product of its separation from the Ottoman Empire.⁹⁶

Accordingly, the Greek national identity formation process was torn between the predominance of two main theses the “Hellenic” and the “Romeic” ones; while the first one

⁹⁴ Harvey, David, 1996 , Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference, Malden, Mass: Blackwell, p. 316 cited in Ball, L., Eric, 2003, “Greek Food After *Mousaka*: Cookbooks, “Local” Culture, and the Cretan Diet”, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 21, p. 2.

⁹⁵ Harrison, p.12.

⁹⁶ Friedman, p.122.

referred to a resurrection of everything Classical as a response to the European image of Classical Greece, a reverence for the ancient past; the latter referred to the self-designation of the Greeks as “Romii” appropriating the Byzantine (East Roman) Empire.⁹⁷

Thus, the construct of Modern Greece can be perceived as a complex project, which has attempted to bring together these two competing universes, that of its ancient past ancestors and that of its medieval Orthodox Christian ones by trying to reconcile their mutually exclusive ideologies, worldviews and integrating them into a viable coherent image of Greekness.⁹⁸

The main underpinnings to realize this project has been the history, linguistics and folklore as the substantial elements in national identity formation processes. Language and local folklore had been the necessary means for the construction of historical and cultural continuity from classical Hellenism to the 19th century Modern Greece. Thus, the language had to be modified in a similar direction with the ideology of the emerging state and the local folklore had to be interpreted in a way legitimizing that complex project.

Özkırımlı and Sofos argue that, in designing the past in accordance with the present concerns; nationalism selects, reconfigures and recreates older traditions and identities.⁹⁹ Along the same line, Friedman mentions that the construction of a past is a project that selectively organizes events in a relation of continuity with a contemporary subject, creating

⁹⁷ Herzfeld, Michael, 1986, Ours Once More Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece, Pella: New York, pp. 19-20.

⁹⁸ Özkırımlı, Umut and Sofos, A.Spyros, 2008, Tormented by History Nationalism in Turkey and Greece, Hurst&Company: London, p. 55.

⁹⁹ Özkırımlı and Sofos, p. 10.

an appropriated representation of a life leading up to the present¹⁰⁰ and in the Greek case, a past is defined by outsiders is used to create a viable cultural identity in the present.¹⁰¹

In accordance with the goal of creating a viable cultural identity in the present, Hobsbawm points out the ‘inventible’ character of tradition and defines it as follows:

“ ‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.”¹⁰²

The local folklore of the different regions of Greece offered a great opportunity to establish such continuity with a suitable historic past. National structure is essentially composed of different regional attitudes of mind, opinions, political beliefs and social customs and traditions of people, and also partial historical backgrounds which bind these regions to the nation-state. These regional differences have come into prominence much more in a state with a fragmented geography like Greece.

Emphasizing these regional differences, Gefou argues that local identity is constructed and practiced primarily from the inside, it demonstrates how local people experience and represent a sense of commitment to a particular place.¹⁰³ In Greek case, local commitment to

¹⁰⁰ Friedman, p.118

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁰² Hobsbawm, Eric, 1983, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions”, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge University Press, p. 1.

¹⁰³ Gefou, p. 413.

a particular place has gone beyond its borders and has served for the purpose of the formation of the nation by establishing bonds between the interrupted past and desirable present.

Herzfeld mentions that, the folklore studies of various regions were set in competition with each other to determine which of them best approximates pure Hellenism¹⁰⁴ and local authors vied to represent their respective homelands as the best exemplars of the classical Greek spirit, while they were in opposition to each other, they played by a single, unifying set of rules through which they expressed their collective subordination to the national idea.¹⁰⁵

As well as other European nascent nations, Greeks used their folklore to validate both their national identity and their cultural status as Europeans and folklore studies played a significant role in creating a national consciousness in the formation of the state.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, besides the political leaders and military, Greek folklorists have also been crucial in understanding the ideological development of Greece in its first decades of independence and also complexities of Modern Greek culture we still encounter today.¹⁰⁷

Herzfeld points out that Greeks from many parts of the country had been interested in the folkloric research and adds that a patriotic writing which could bring together the grand ideals with cultural experience was created through folklore, or in Greek; “laographia” composed of the words “laos” meaning people and “grafo” meaning write, emphasizing the distinctive local characteristics of people.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Herzfeld, 1986, p. 23

¹⁰⁵ Herzfeld, Michael, 2003, “Localism and the Logic of Nationalistic Folklore: Cretan Reflections”, Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 45, No. 2, p 285.

¹⁰⁶ Herzfeld, 1986, pp. 11-12.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰⁸ Herzfeld, 1986, p. 13.

Though *laographia* has manifested itself predominantly in literature, mainly in poetry and folksongs, it could also be considered from a wider perspective. As Peckham argues, in one way, practices such as geography, literature and folklore could be defined as the institutions promoting the ideal of the nation's unity; in another way the purpose was to give expression to the people's unique character which had always existed sometimes in non-verbal forms such as customs and traditions.¹⁰⁹

Similarly, by emphasizing the non-verbal forms of folklore 'folk' is defined as, a group of people sharing common experiences, attitudes, interests, ideas, skills and aims, and in general, folklore has been accepted as "a function of shared identity" by folklorists who have emphasized the social base of folklore.¹¹⁰

With its wider meaning, local folklore which has played a significant role in the formation of national identity also manifests itself away from homeland, in Greek diaspora. A research of Robert Georges made among Greek-Americans in Tarpon Springs, Florida reveals that folklore has survived the transference from the mother country to the new world.¹¹¹ Another significant result that research has set forth has been the influence of community based mechanisms such as language, church, newspapers, associations in keeping the boundary maintenance of the group.¹¹²

As mentioned above, in Greek case while local folklore has been a function of shared identity and has been fostering the Greek national identity by serving for the construction of

¹⁰⁹ Peckham, Shannan, Robert, 2001, National Histories Natural States Nationalism and the Politics of Place in Greece, I.B. Tauris: London, p. 20.

¹¹⁰ Stern, Stephen, 1977, "Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity", Western Folklore, Studies in Folklore and Ethnicity, Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 9.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Greek national culture, it was also strengthening itself in a distinctive way by keeping its authenticity. Cretan identity, which had been one of the prominent components in the construction of Greek national identity and culture in the 19th century, had also been a regarding example for maintaining its authenticity. The typical profile of the island is not only manifested on Crete but also all around the world to which Cretan diaspora has been scattered. Thus, by keeping national, ‘super ordinate’ identity of Greekness, Cretan diaspora has also been practicing its local culture in a way which differentiates them from other Greeks.

In the simplest term, it is possible to see this Cretan authenticity in diaspora, in the way they celebrate weddings, festivals and make funerals, even jokes and anecdotes which are all regarded as the elements carrying on the folklore. When viewed from this aspect, there are many Cretan diasporic associations, publications, websites, and conferences focusing on specifically local culture, all around the world, from USA to Australia which aim to protect and carry on Cretan culture in different ways which will also be a topic of this study in the following pages.

2. 1. Cretan Case

Crete, the largest of the Greek islands and the center of the oldest European and Greek civilizations -the Minoans- constitutes one of the most significant parts of the cultural heritage of Greek nation-state with its complex history and authenticity. The well geographical position of Crete in the Mediterranean which had attracted many civilizations has been one of the most significant factors in creating this complex history.

Crete has hosted many different civilizations for a long time period dating back till B.C.E. The history of the island which has been nourished by the diversified characteristics of these civilizations can be perceived as one of the prominent reasons of the island's complex and specific cultural structure.

The history of Crete which has begun with the Minoan civilization approximately 2000 B.C. has continued with Mycenaean civilization around 1375 B.C. and followed by Classical and Hellenic Greeks period, then replaced by Romans. The island remained under Byzantine control until 1204, which then stayed under control of Venetians whom had left the remnants of Renaissance on the island, and then the island was conquered by the Ottoman Empire.

Within the fragmented geography of Greece, the islands were perceived as the last bastions of the uncontaminated culture for preserving particular physical and cultural habits and functioned as places (*topoi*) for resolving the problematic relations between local knowledge and national unity.¹¹³ Peckham argues that, the island functions as a symbol of close community and as a synecdoche of society as a whole, while at the same time, its insularity symbolizes its rooted, pure and original culture¹¹⁴ making the island 'a site of double identity'.¹¹⁵

Crete has been an outstanding example in that case with its authentic culture as separate to that of the mainland and its considerable support in the formation of national unity. The specific characteristics of the island are manifested through mainly Cretan dialect and

¹¹³ Peckham, p. 99.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 105.

¹¹⁵ Bongie, Chris, 1998, Islands and exiles: the Creole identities of post-colonial literature, CA:Stanford University Press, p. 18, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 101.

subsequently in different fields of local folklore such as poems, music, dance, cuisine, costumes, legends and heroes as well as its well-known strong family bonds and blood feuds.

Greek oral tradition was perceived as a local reflection of Greek character, spirit or civilization; in one way the oral traditions were in conflict with the Greek modern national identity and culture formation process since being local, oral and tradition oriented. However in another way, localized expressive culture could also be used as means for maintaining Hellenic cultural continuity and provide national cohesion by constituting historical, linguistic and moral evidence.¹¹⁶

In this respect, the Cretan folk couplets *mantinades* and apart from expressive poem tradition, the local heroes of the island, later on who have gained reputation as national heroes are worth-stressing.

The Cretan *mantinada* (plural form *mantinades*) is a verse form in Cretan dialect composed of rhyming couplets in which different kind of emotions i.e. sorrow, joy, hope, desire, love, anger, revenge, nostalgia can be expressed. *Mantinades* were also appropriated for debating ideological issues, celebrating regional historical figures and events, and played at festivals with one of the traditional instruments of Crete, the *lyre*.

Herein, it is good to refer a few *mantinades* in order to display how Cretans use *mantinades* to express themselves and their history. The below *mantinada* mentions how one should feel special and should be proud of being Cretan and how *mantinades* are significant for a Cretan person:

¹¹⁶ Ball, L., Eric, 2002, "Where are the Folk?The Cretan *Mantinada* as Placed Literature", Journal of Folklore Research, Vol.39, p. 148.

“Χαίρομαι που’ μαι Κρητικός κι όπου σταθώ το λέω.
Με μαντινάδες τραγουδώ, με μαντινάδες κλαίω.
I’m glad to be Cretan, my word I do keep.
With *mantinades* I sing, with *mantinades* I weep.”¹¹⁷

The following one mentions how *mantinades* are used to tell Crete’s complex and at times
tragic history:

“Στην Κρήτη πάει η λεβεντιά και η αντρειοσύνη αντάμα
Και μαντινάδα γίνεται το γέλιο και το κλάμα.
In Crete all men are brave without fears
And *mantinades* express both laughter and tears.”¹¹⁸

Another compelling one reveals how Cretans practice their traditions even when they are far
from their homelands:

“Της Κρήτης την παράδοση με ευλάβεια στηρίζω
Και όπου σταθώ και όπου διαβώ μια Κρήτη ζωγραφίζω
The tradition of Crete I support with respect.
Wherever I go, a Crete I project.”¹¹⁹

Cretans perceive *mantinades* as a distinguishing characteristic of their own particular
Cretan identity and the majority of the *mantinades* have been produced, distributed and
consumed by those who identify themselves as Cretans.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Samatas, Yannis, “Mantinades in Crete”, available at, <http://www.explorecrete.com/cretan-music/mantinades.html>, 25
April 2010.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ball, 2002, p.164.

The folk couplets are not only found in Crete but also islands like Karpathos, Kasos and even in Cyprus which are called as *tsatista*. However, Cretans differ from the other islanders in the way that they still continue to produce *mantinades*, especially in the villages while in other parts of Greece very few ones are made up. Besides when we look at the origins of *mantinada* we see that it was originated from Crete in the 15th century.¹²¹

During the construction of the nation-state, the Ottoman period on Crete was perceived as disrupting the ancient Greek cultural elements that have been carried for long years. On the other hand, the Venetians period on the island which lasted until 1644 was remembered in a bad way due to the religious oppression felt even greater than the Ottoman period. Cretan oral tradition was not limited to *mantinades*, these negative memories of Cretans were also reflected in a series of popular sayings which could also serve well as a type of folkloric material in the formation of national unity by remembering these periods as vicious.

One example of these sayings referring to Venetians is, “Your neighbour is a Frank; you have a bad neighbour,” there are also examples in a way contrasting Ottomans and Venetians, with a view making each of them the best of a bad lot, “Better is the Turkish sword than the law of Venetian,” and, “Better is the slaughter to the Turk than meat to the Venetian.”¹²²

These years were considered as the years breaking off the link with the Hellenic period which has been the essential element in the formation of Greek nation state. Thus, there was a need for appropriating cultural homogeneity of the island in a way serving for the purpose of

¹²¹ Samantis, Ibid.

¹²² Dawkins, R.M, 1930, “Folk-Memory in Crete”, *Folklore*, Vol.41, No.1, p.30.

national unity, which led to a selective interpretation of Cretan complex history and culture. For Cretans their local traditions have been much more related to ancient Greek ancestry and in a way putting behind the influence of the Ottoman and Venetian periods on the island, they would like to be perceived as the pure Hellenes more than anyone else as Voulgaris puts it:

“...a more impressive glory is exhibited in Crete, where it is preserved pure and untainted in the soul, in thought, in speech, in dress, in dance, in song in the house and in the village throughout the Great Island that is the bearer of fine brave men”.¹²³

This selective approach for the purpose of forming a nation state in consistence with ancient Greece has demonstrated itself as bringing together folkloric materials that could provide historical continuity with the Hellenic period and thus strengthen desired national solidarity. In parallel with this view, when considered from political aspect, Crete localism has not been against national unity and national state.

One other worth emphasizing characteristic of the island related to this topic is the designed national image of the local heroes. The guerilla fighters of Crete called *kleftes* - who had struggled against Turks supposedly for national independence, however in practice were often for personal and local autonomy- have been celebrated in many songs as heroes.¹²⁴

Though sometimes these locals resisted the central government authorities, rather than standing against national government, these local fighters have become national heroes instead. The main reason under the adoption of this reputation has been the fear of undesirable

¹²³ Papadakis, F.Dimitrios, 1975, *Kritikos Ghamos: Laografhikes Notes*, Athens: Knossos, cited in Herzfeld, 2003, p.284.

¹²⁴ Herzfeld, 2003, p.287.

image in the eyes of Western states that have perceived Greece as the cradle of European civilization and main source of their cultural heritage.

Hence such kind of local factious movements had to be justified as fighting for a much more divine purpose such as maintaining the unity of the Greek nation against the invader 'Turks' on the island, which in turn made Crete as one of the most nationalist regions of Greece.

Up to this point, I tried to make a portrait of how two prominent elements in Cretan culture; the local oral poem tradition and the local hero term have been appropriated for providing national solidarity. These two elements can be appreciated as two strong cultural representative examples in order to give opinion about profoundness of Cretan cultural identity. When it is considered with other local elements like Cretan dialect, dance, music, cuisine, costumes, legends it will be adequate to understand how the local identity of a community within a nation may come into prominence in determining group's identity perception in a way transcending national identity.

As it has been mentioned earlier, folklore is perceived as a vehicle for the maintenance of social cohesion among ethnic groups allowing the group member to align him/herself with certain ethnic networks and as a means of psychological adjustment to the problems created by being dislocated.¹²⁵ The conscious of identifying themselves with their local identity rather than national one is more dominant not only for Cretans living on the island but also among those living far from the homeland.

¹²⁵ Stern, p. 22.

For this reason, in the minds of Cretans living away from the island, the term *patridha* which means ‘homeland’ or ‘motherland’ connotes Crete, or their villages rather than Greece and they try to keep their traditions alive even when they are far away from their homes.

Stavros Simantiris, Chairman of the World Council of Cretans, puts it as follows with these words:

“It is said that there are two faces of Greece: the one we locals know about and that of the diaspora. Crete is not confined in the limits of the island but also exists and will exist in the heart and memories of Cretans that live all over the world: America, Canada, Australia, Germany, Belgium, etc..... Crete is far away –geographically- for them but at the same time so close to their hearts.”¹²⁶

With an attempt to present this situation, the following part will focus on Cretan-Americans, how they define and express themselves as a sub-group of Greek-American diaspora respectively.

¹²⁶ Vlachaki, Katerina, “Interview with Stavros Simantiris”, *Stigmes*, Issue.97, available at <http://www.stigmes.gr/br/brpages/articles/simantiris.htm>.

Chapter 3

An example of locality among Greek-American diaspora:

Cretan-Americans

3.1. Greek Diaspora: A general overview

Greek diaspora is accepted as one of the oldest diasporas with Jews and they have a long history beginning from the ancient times till today. The exodus of Greeks was in a form of colonization from the eighth to fifth century B.C. followed by scattering of thousands of Greeks initiated by military campaigns or long term occupations of Greece.¹²⁷ During the Hellenistic era (352-160 B.C.), the Roman conquest of the Greek world (160 B.C. to 350 A.D.), and the fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Empire (1453-1821), the scattering of Greeks took the form of diaspora. After the Greek War of Independence, the trend of migration continued with the establishment of the new state in 1830.

Thucydides mentions that as early as the fifth century B.C. Greek communities were scattered throughout the Mediterranean and the city states of ancient Greece established colonies in almost every part of their known world.¹²⁸ During Byzantine times, Greek world was moved to Asia Minor, away from the main centers of Hellenic civilization which led adherence to the Orthodox Christian religion.¹²⁹ Under the Ottoman rule, Greeks settled in and outside the empire, they moved in large numbers to Romania, along the coast of the Black

¹²⁷ Tamis, Myrodis Anastasios, *Greeks in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.2, 22 May 2007, http://assets.cambridge.org/052154/7431/excerpt/0521547431_excerpt.htm

¹²⁸ Broome, J. Benjamin, *Exploring the Greek Mosaic: A Guide to Intercultural Communication in Greece*, USA, Intercultural Press, 1996, p.27.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Sea, many of them settled in Russian and Habsburg Empire, and the others were in the major cities of Ottoman Empire.¹³⁰ Greek merchants who had a crucial importance in Ottoman commercial life established a mercantile empire in the eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans, North Africa, and as far away as India.¹³¹

As well as the problem of defining diasporas in our times, definition of Greek diaspora in modern times is also a common problem. Essentially the problem derives from the establishment of the Greek nation state as whether to categorize the communities which have stayed out of the borders of the current nation state as diasporas. When considered from this point of view, for instance Greek community in present-day Turkey and Greek community in the southern Albania are groups which pose such kind of a problem. According to Clogg, these groups including the Greek Cypriots, basically the last remnants of the Greek East that have remained outside the borders of the nation state, after the Asia Minor in 1922 do not constitute a part of Greek diaspora and the Greek diaspora has been formed by the migrations especially in the 18th century.¹³² From this point of view, the examined group in this study, Cretan-Americans are also a diaspora group that has started to migrate especially in the last period of 1800s.

In the last two centuries, Greek migration went on with increasing numbers. The Greek diaspora played an important role in the establishment of the Greek nation state in 1830 by reinforcing national identity. After the establishment of the nation state, the migration trend went on and many Greeks migrated to USA, Canada, Australia, England, Germany and

¹³⁰ 23 May 2007, http://www.gogreece.com/learn/history/Greek_Diaspora.html

¹³¹ Broome, p.27.

¹³² Clogg, Richard, 1999, "The Greek Diaspora: the Historical Context", in Richard Clogg (ed.), The Greek Diaspora in the Twentieth Century, St. Martin's Press, p.8

other countries. In the 20th century, for Greeks, the Second World War (1939-1945) and The Greek Civil War (1946-1949) have been two significant factors for leaving the homeland Greece.

Today, the population of Greeks living outside the territories of Greece and Cyprus is estimated to be between 4- 4.5 million people.¹³³ Greeks living in USA constitute the largest part of this population. The immigration to the USA that began almost in the 1870s due to the negative economic conditions in the homeland continued for many years which then categorized under different periods and will be pointed out in the following part of the study.

Many of the Greeks who immigrated to the USA and other countries were largely provincial people; however in these countries they mostly took part in urban life as tradesmen or worked as coalminers, railway workers or factory workers. Those who had left the country for a quest for opportunities that were not available at home contributed to their country economically; workers sent money to their families and the ones who turned to homeland set up businesses in the mainland.¹³⁴ Not only they had an effect in commercial life but also they helped to support communities in Greece by founding schools and other public institutions.¹³⁵

As it may well be understood from those that are given above until here, the topic diaspora is a very comprehensive subject that can be discussed from many different perspectives. In this regard, herein I feel a need to make it clear how the topic will be addressed. By all means these kind of economic contributions of diaspora members are incontrovertible and it may well deserve to be a topic of on its own as well as political and

¹³³ Tamis, Ibid.

¹³⁴ Broome, p.29.

¹³⁵ 23 May 2007, http://www.gogreece.com/learn/history/Greek_Diaspora.html

religious aspects of diasporas. However in this study, as mentioned a few times earlier the main focus is on culture and identity and how localism is influential in expression of a group's traditions, values and customs sometimes in a way transcending national identity consciousness.

Therefore rather than economical, political and religious viewpoints, the social community life and cultural practices of Greek-Americans and as a sub-group of it, Cretan-Americans are tried to be examined respectively. More than the Greek-American identity in general, the emphasized topic will be how local identity is expressed dominantly among Cretan-Americans who feel themselves belonging to one of the regions of Greece with the prominent cultural elements.

While doing this, Greek-Americans and as a part of this group Cretan-Americans are taken as state-linked diaspora groups who immigrated after the establishment of Greek nation state. In order to show how local culture and identity are expressed among the group members, referring to Vertovec's classification, the term diaspora is hypothesized as "diaspora as consciousness" and "diaspora as modes of cultural production" meaning the preservation of cultural values in the host country.

Following Barth and Kopytoff, the modes of cultural production in the group, will be given as symbolic inventories of a group, meaning the traditions, norms and values of the group that include livelihood, dress, language, cuisine, rituals, music and/or any other symbolic content that separate the group from the others.

As Cohen states, homeland is not simply left behind for diaspora groups and as the place of attachment, it cultivates the diasporic consciousness of the group. In our times, the relations between the homeland and diaspora members are enabled much easier by the improvement in technology. This also facilitates the relationship of diaspora groups from the same homeland but living in different countries. Thus, the interaction among groups provides the opportunity to keep the cultural memories and values related to the homeland alive.

Accordingly, taking Butler's framework for comparative diaspora studies as the reference point, the given diaspora group's relationship with the homeland and interrelationship within the diasporic group will be introduced by focusing on diasporic associations, organizations and publications' role in contributing to diasporic consciousness through maintaining the protection of cultural boundaries.

3.2. Greek-American Community

Today, Greeks that have immigrated to the USA constitute one of the larger diaspora groups and estimated number of Greek-Americans is about 1,350,000 according to U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2008.¹³⁶ However, approximately 3 million Americans in USA claim Greek descent.¹³⁷

When Greeks migration to USA is examined in retrospect we might consider the activities of American missionaries in 1820s and 1830s and the representatives of Greek-

¹³⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2008 available at http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-parsed=true&-ds_name=ACS_2008_1YR_G00_&-lang=en&-caller=geoselect&-format

¹³⁷ U.S. Department of State, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3395.htm>

owned firms during the mid 19th century as the starting point, nevertheless as Saloutos points out, the main initiator of the migrations had been Greeks that came from islands, Peloponnesus and the mainland during the late 19th and early 20th century.¹³⁸

Moskos' classification of the migration trends to the New World provides a brief framework to comprehend the history of Greek-Americans. He analyzes Greek migration to the USA in 7 different periods: *Early migration* that began in the 1870s, *the Great wave* between 1900 and 1917, *the Last Exodus* that began in the following years of First World War, *the Closed Door Period* in which only the brides of immigrants that had already settled in USA arrived, *the Postwar Migration* in which the doors were opened again, *New Wave period* during the years 1966-79 in which the entrance laws for the relatives of the persons already immigrated to the USA had been made easier and finally *Declining Migration period* which had been going on until 1980 with low numbers of Greeks migrating to the USA mainly because of the improved conditions in the homeland.¹³⁹

The first Greeks arrived to the USA started forming colonies in New York City, the metropolitan areas of the upper Mississippi Valley; mainly Chicago and San Francisco in the West.¹⁴⁰ Today the states that have the largest number of Greeks are New York, California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Florida, Michigan and Maryland.¹⁴¹

As mentioned before though many of the Greeks arrived to the USA were provincial, many of them settled in urban areas and took part in business life as small entrepreneurs. They

¹³⁸ Saloutos, Theodore, 1964, *The Greeks in the United States*, Harvard University Press, p.23.

¹³⁹ Moskos, Charles, 1999, "The Greeks in the United States", in Richard Clogg (ed.), *The Greek Diaspora in the Twentieth Century*, St.Martin's Press, p.103

¹⁴⁰ Saloutos, p. 45.

¹⁴¹ Moskos, p. 106.

also shared the American work ethic and desire for success and they were perceived as hard-working and family-oriented. This paved the way for Greek-Americans to become one of the celebrated ethnic groups and even to be described as sharing the ‘achievement syndrome’.

Rosen explains achievement syndrome as the individual’s psychological and cultural orientation towards achievement which is defined by three important factors: the psychological one; the achievement motivation moving the individual to excel and the two cultural ones; value orientations and educational-vocational aspiration levels directing behavior towards high status goals.¹⁴²

The Greeks and Jews have attained middle class status more rapidly than most of their fellow immigrants and both of the diaspora groups were quicker to develop effective community organizations than were other immigrants who had not previously faced the problem of adapting as minority groups.¹⁴³

Schultz mentions that one aspect of Greek-American identity can be shown as ‘their achievements’ under which their sharpened cleverness, hard work, wealth and education are included.¹⁴⁴ As well as this hardworking and strived for success image, for the first generation of Greek-Americans it can be said that language, religion, homeland traditions, endogamous marriages had been the main indicators of Greek identification.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Rosen, Bernard, C., 1956, “The Achievement Syndrome: A Psychocultural Dimension of Social Stratification”, American Sociological Review, Vol.21, pp.203-211 cited in Bernard C. Rosen, 1959, “Race, Ethnicity, and the Achievement Syndrome”, American Sociological Review, Vol. 24, No.1, p. 48.

¹⁴³ Rosen, 1959, pp.47-48.

¹⁴⁴ Schultz, Sandra, L., 1981, “Greeks in America and Greece: The 42-cent Difference”, Phylon (1960-), Vol. 42, No. 4, p.383.

¹⁴⁵ Stycos, M. J., 1948, “The Spartan Greeks of Bridgetown: Community and Cohesion”, Common Ground, 8:24-34, cited in Alice Scourby, 1980, “Three Generations of Greek-Americans: A Study in Ethnicity”, International Migration Review, Vol.14, No.1, p. 44.

Saloutos mentions that no other group had preserved their loyalties to homeland as Greeks. One another significant point he draws attention is that the immigrants believed that there was no break between the civilizations of the ancient and modern Greece and they wanted to preserve the individuality of their culture.¹⁴⁶

The main elements holding the diaspora group together have been their bonds to their villages and the church; the village by gathering them under the same organizations and the church through celebration of religious days. Diaspora members could find the opportunity to exhibit their local cuisine, music and dance usually performed in traditional dresses on the events held by these organizations or by church on special days.

Apart from the organizations and the church, community newspapers, Greek language schools, Greek coffee shops -where they found opportunity to discuss, to play card games, to play instruments and to listen to music and dance- have been the most significant socialization vehicles for diaspora members.

In the first years of Greek diaspora in USA, the localism and provincialism of Greek migrants were reflected through local societies (*topika somateia*) which were associations founded by people coming from the same region.

Saloutos argues that these organizations were almost representing every village of Greece with array of banners, lengthy constitutions and high-sounding names and referring to the Greek publication *Hellinikos Astir*, he also adds that about one hundred societies existed as early as 1907 and thirty of them were only in New York.¹⁴⁷ Moskos mentions that these

¹⁴⁶ Saloutos, p.73

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p.73

local organizations stayed strong through the 1950s and also made a rise with a second-generation leadership in the 1960s.¹⁴⁸

With the Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924, USA left open-door policy of immigration and quotas were established. The yearly quota of foreigners allowed into the country was started to be cut in 1921 and Greek-Americans were also affected by the assimilation policies of USA between the years 1920-1960.

The first immigrant national level organization, American Hellenic Educational and Progressive Association (AHEPA) was founded in that period for helping Greek immigrants and the American born enter into the American mainstream by following rules of a monocultural assimilation.¹⁴⁹ According to AHEPA, the loss of the Greek language and homeland traditions was natural; one member of the association summarizes this thought as follows:

“The only Greek things were religion and dances. You met people your age who had the same goals. To become American. You become American by giving up your parents’ ways... By giving up the Old World ways. We ran away from being Greek. We married non-Greek blonde women...We made a conscious effort to forget Greece...”¹⁵⁰

More than representation of the Greek culture and identity as the other local organizations, AHEPA with the church had undertaken the role of political representation of the Greek-Americans. Though AHEPA carried out the role of assimilating Greek identity

¹⁴⁸ Moskos, p.113.

¹⁴⁹ Karpathakis Anna, 1999, “Home Society Politics and Immigrant Political Incorporation: The Case of Greek Immigrants in New York City, *International Migration Review*, Vol.33, No.1, p.62

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.62.

under the name of adapting to the American society, today when we observe the mission of the association, promoting Hellenism, education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, and family and individual excellence are what we come across.¹⁵¹

With the beginning of the “so-called revival of ethnicity” period in the 60s as well as the other communities Greeks also returned to their cultural roots giving rise to Hellenism and traditions in each community strengthened again.¹⁵² Many of the diasporic organizations have been the safeguards of cultural roots by providing opportunity for continuity of cultural practices.

The activities of aforesaid local organizations were characterized by mutual aid, charity and humanitarianism.¹⁵³ Rather than obtaining political goals in the host country, as the vehicles continuing the Old World customs and values in a way keeping the cultural boundary maintenance of the group, these organizations have been essential elements in Greek-American diaspora community life.

Furthermore, the formation of the local organizations in the first years of the migration can be considered as one of the most important signifiers of the strength of local diasporic consciousness over the national one. Though not that strict, fragmentation among Greek-American diaspora organizations based on regional differences is still a common phenomenon.

Today, many *topika somateia* clubs represent the local regional homeland of Greeks in USA. There are also umbrella organizations such as the Pan-Pontian Federation of USA-

¹⁵¹ “AHEPA’s important mission” available at AHEPA official web site <http://ahepa.org/dotnetnuke/About/Mission.aspx>

¹⁵² Kiotreff Alexander, 2007, “The Story of Greek Migration to America”, dir. Iliou Maria, synopsis of The Journey: The Greek American Dream, Wide Management.

¹⁵³ Saloutos, p.76.

Canada, Pan-Icarian Brotherhood, the Pan-Laconian Federation of the USA, the Pan-Arcadian Federation of America etc. which comprehend many small local organizations that are from the same region. Pan-Cretan Association of America that aims to unite people who originate from Crete that is going to be handled in the following part is also one of them.

Before closing this part, reminding once again that I consider Greek community life in terms of their cultural practices rather than economical, political or religious aspects, I would like to draw a brief portrait of these kind of cultural practices that keep diasporic consciousness alive which are held usually via local or umbrella organizations mentioned above.

Holidays and celebrations, cuisine, traditional dances and music and also traditional costumes are considered as important elements for expressing Greek-American identity. Even sometimes practiced in their own local styles by people coming from different regions or villages of Greece, music and dance are perceived as an expression of the national character and appreciated by all Greek-Americans. Marilyn Rouvelas states this in *A Guide to Greek Traditions and Customs in America* as follows:

"To the uninitiated, the music invites images of intriguing places, food and people. For the Greeks, the sounds and rhythms express their very essence: their dreams, sorrows and joys. Add dancing and nothing more need to be said."¹⁵⁴

The traditional music and dance are usually performed at special days where Greek-Americans gather together in the events held by diasporic associations. Christmas Day, Easter Day, and New Year's Day are some of the special days celebrated by Greek-Americans. Last

¹⁵⁴ Jurgens, Jane, Greek-Americans Overview available at <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Du-Ha/Greek-Americans.html>

but not least are the national holidays like the Greek Independence Day on March 25, Greeks' struggle of independence from the Ottoman Empire that began in 1821. The local organizations also make celebrations on special days of the region or the village. Traditional wedding ceremonies, funerals and baptisms are other common occasions where Greek-Americans come together.

Greeks' traditional costumes are in various styles some are dating back to ancient times and usually men's costumes are less colorful than the women's. The national costume is called *foustanela* which derives its name from the pleated white skirt made by triangular shaped pieces of cloth and the skirt consists of 400 pleats symbolizing the years in which Greece had been under Ottoman rule.¹⁵⁵ This national costume is usually worn at the celebration of Greek Independence Day. There also many other local costumes symbolizing different regions of Greece, i.e. *vraka* represents the Aegean islands or *karagouna* a popular female costume in Central Greece.¹⁵⁶

Another significant element of Greek-American culture is the Greek cuisine and Greek-American restaurants are very popular in USA. The Greek cuisine has both eastern and western influences since the country has been ruled by Ottomans for long time, and also Greek islands have their own kind of cuisines and cooking styles depending on their own historical circumstances. Nevertheless, the primary ingredients of the Greek cuisine have been

¹⁵⁵ Regional Costumes of Greece available at <http://www.greekprideri.com/costume.html>

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

olive oil, grains and wine.¹⁵⁷ The most popular food items are *souvlakia*, *Greek salad*, *moussaka*, *gyros*, *dolmades*, *spanakopita*.

On most Greek tables olives, cheese such as feta, tomato, lemon wedges along with bread are found and also garlic is one of the most commonly used herbs.¹⁵⁸ The Greek cuisine traditions are not only presented on special celebrations when diaspora group members come together but also performed in daily lives of Greek-American families.

The press has also been other vehicle that contributed to diasporic consciousness among Greek-Americans. Since the 1970s the newspaper *National Herald* has been the one which reflects the mainstream values of diaspora group members published both in English and Greek with the motto of ‘Bringing News to the Generations of Greek-Americans’. The Greek-language *Proini* and *Nea Yorki* which then changed its name to *Greek American Review* for symbolizing its increasingly English content are the ones published in New York. *Greek American Monthly* in Pittsburgh, *The Greek Star* and *The Greek Press* in Chicago, *Hellenic Journal* in San Francisco, the leading magazine *Odyssey* with the motto ‘The World of Greece’ appear as the other prominent community news channels among many others.¹⁵⁹ There are also publications of local communities distributed worldwide for the diaspora groups identifying themselves with their local identity i.e. region or village.

Insofar, I tried to put a brief summary of social and cultural community life of Greek-Americans. While doing this, almost in every cultural practice or element it was possible to see the differences which reveal diasporic consciousness based on local or regional identities.

¹⁵⁷ Practically Edible, Food Encyclopedia, available at <http://www.practicallyedible.com/edible.nsf/pages/greek>

¹⁵⁸ Jurgens, Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Moskos, 1999, pp.114-115.

The next part will focus on selected topics from Cretan culture and will go on diasporic organizations and publications' role in keeping diasporic consciousness and finally how Cretans practice their distinctive cultural characteristics via these tools will be displayed.

3.3. Cretan Culture: Selected Topics

Within Greek national culture, the unique characteristics of Crete are manifested through mainly Cretan dialect and subsequently in different fields of local folklore such as poems, music, dance, cuisine, costumes, legends and heroes as well as its well-known strong family bonds and vendettas. In this part I will examine some of these topics which I assume as the prominent symbols of this local culture and which are still influential in diasporic consciousness and being practiced even when far away from the island.

3.3.1. Cretan Cuisine

Food and cooking styles have been accepted as topics of examination in order to understand the culture of a given community. Food consumption and production of a community mainly depends on the geographical conditions of that place. It would not be wrong to say that Crete has been one of the few places around the world that the advantages offered by geography were turned into such great benefit for those living on that territory.

Because of its unique presence as well as the other folkloric cultural elements of Crete, cuisine also played a role in the formation of national Greek identity. As Ball mentions, continuity with the Cretans' oldest cultural ancestors was established also with food ways and Cretan cuisine was perceived as the superlative example of Greek tradition since appearing as

the oldest indigenous tradition.¹⁶⁰ The Cretan cuisine was also appropriated in order to prove a national identity having links with the Ancient Greek which at the same time raised its significance. Notwithstanding, it can be said that Cretans have a strong sense of regional distinctiveness and local patriotism through their cuisine.

The high nutrition qualities of Cretan cuisine have been discovered quite earlier in 1948 when the Greek government called researchers of the Rockefeller foundation in an attempt to improve the nutritional habits of the people of the island since the quality of life in Crete seemed low after the Second World War.¹⁶¹

The researchers came up with very interesting results concerning the quality of Cretan cuisine. The research which lasted for twenty years revealed that the rumours claiming Cretans to enjoy a long life and face less health problems i.e. heart attack and/or cancer compared to other European populations¹⁶² were proved to be a living fact. The richness of the island in fruit and vegetable production, in combination with the virgin olive oil, which is the main ingredient of the Cretan nutrition promoted Cretan cuisine to be one of the most impressively healthy yet delicious and tasty, nutritive models for a balanced and healthy life.

It would be useful though to explain shortly why the Cretan cuisine is considered to be the best Mediterranean diet example of modern times before we talk about the Cretans and their exaggerated love and ceremonial preservation of their cuisine's rituals. Starting with the characteristics of the 'blessed' gourmet pyramid; seasonal and drained fruits, vegetables, legumes, endemic wild grasses, aromatic plants are only some of the daily consumed products,

¹⁶⁰ Ball, 2003, p.13.

¹⁶¹ http://www.cretan-nutrition.gr/wp/?page_id=52&lang=el

¹⁶² http://www.cretan-nutrition.gr/wp/?page_id=52&lang=el

which are extendedly cultivated in Crete. The generosity of the Cretan land in accordance with the use of olive oil, having suffered zero chemical treatments, and with the low consumption of red meat are definitely the most important factors which led Cretan food habits to the top of the world cuisine and made Cretans to be proud for one more reason.

According to a common Cretan expression, ‘That one who eats olive oil and bread, and oily pastries is invincible to the arrows of death’.¹⁶³ From the last sentence, it is easily understandable that olive oil gets the most credits for the maintenance of good health that Cretan Diet can provide to its followers.

Modern dietary scientists show with their suggestions of a more healthy way of life, based on virgin olive oil, and inspired of course, after the impressive results of long researches on Cretan Cuisine, from an experiment of thousands of years, and which is called Cretan way of life. However, the researchers also revealed that apart from the above healthy nutritional schedule, the secret for the long life of Cretans is the lack of stress on the island of Crete.

Having mentioned the most significant elements of the Cretan cuisine, the description of a few Cretan food celebrities would give a more vivid picture to our aim. One of the most famous Cretan recipes that followed Cretan Diaspora and adored by non-Cretans all over the world, is the well-known *tacos*. Delicious round rusks, that is served with rubbed tomatoes, white goat cheese, and aromatic plants on the top, escorted by a smooth rain of pure olive oil. Strongly traditional dish, which still continues to take place, especially in the marriage tables, is *gamopilafo*, and it means the marriage rice. This recipe includes the happiness of getting

¹⁶³ <http://www.nah.gr/en/visitor/cretan-cooker/cretan-diet.html>

married as well is a deeply ceremonial dish, and it is made of rice which has boiled in water, within it previously goat meat has been cooked.

Sweets are an extremely interesting part of Cretan cuisine, and although someone is expecting to hear recipes for Cretan desserts with great sugar amounts, soon it will be clear that the traditional Cretan pastry, the only sweetening it needs is honey.

Among the most popular and rich in taste sweets, are *mitzithropitakia*, an excellent combination of the salty goat cheese called *mitzithra*, trapped into homemade dough and fried in olive oil, and Cretan honey, covering gently the small, hot pies, adding the sweet nuance of the creation.

Apart from eating, drinking has always been an important issue, as it goes along with the first. Cretans, who have a very old wine culture, they considered to be ‘tough drinkers’, showing great preference to red wine. Since and during the second century A.D., Crete was a well known trade centre, exporting wine all over the Mediterranean, while during Venetian rule from 12th to the 16th century, Cretan wine became well-known, especially the wine variety called *Malvazia*.¹⁶⁴

The production and consumption of wine is still a living tradition for Cretans, which actually has taken the place of a sweet gourmet routine in their lives. And it is also, one of the greatest elements, which almost defines the significance of the Cretan diet for a healthy life, as it is commonly accepted that wine, especially red, when consumed within certain limits, can be the best friend for the heart. That is why, according to many researches, Cretans,

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.nah.gr/en/visitor/wine/wine.html>

compared to Greeks with origins from different parts of Greece, display a better heart 'performance'.

Not only wine has a separate place on the Cretan table, but also, *tsikoudia* an extremely strong drink which is served usually in shots is important. After centuries of evolution of the distillation techniques and equipment, and its use for the distillation of various fluids, the first distillation of *tsikoudia*, has taken place officially in 1920 in Crete.¹⁶⁵ Since then, it has begun to be distilled in copper cauldrons (called *rakokazana*) from the beginning of October, until the end of November.¹⁶⁶ The whole process is a celebration, where Cretan families enjoy drinking from this strong drink, and according to folklore narratives proving their braveness.

It is argued that the window into the culture of a nation is through the cuisine, as both of them, culture and cuisine go hand by hand, and the more we know about what a population eats, the more we can learn about them.¹⁶⁷ Cretans perceive themselves as just like their food; natural like the products of their land; pure like their olive oil, and friendly like the taste of their wine. Cretans are also proud of their cuisine which is perceptible from the quote of a famous Greek chef: "You can find the highest cuisine in the world in a simple dish in a mountain village of Crete".¹⁶⁸

And sometimes, despite the distance that keeps away some Cretans from their mother land, the same distance, does not seem capable enough of keeping them away from their cuisine culture with the same success. The traditional cuisine practice of Cretans is carried

¹⁶⁵ <http://stigmes.gr/br/>

¹⁶⁶ <http://stigmes.gr/br/>

¹⁶⁷ http://stigmes.gr/br/brpages/articles/med_diet.htm

¹⁶⁸ http://www.singlesincrete.com/index.php/Cretan_Cuisine_at_the_Mistral/1/165

among diaspora members both in their daily lives and also special days, dance nights or other kind of celebrations.

3.3.2. Cretan Music

In Greek diasporic communities musical language is acknowledged as a symbol of their relationship with the homeland; however the musical language of diaspora is chosen and re-built on the basis of specific needs and circumstances.¹⁶⁹

Cretans also perceive their musical traditions as a part of their local identity and they practice these traditions even when they are away from the homeland. The platforms where they find opportunity to practice their music not only satisfy diaspora members' needs and maintain their musical culture heritage alive but also strengthen the interaction among diaspora members.

Besides these platforms, diasporic publications and organizations which provide a diasporic network are also significant. These publications and organizations not only form a bridge for the members of the group with the homeland but also with the other diasporic groups coming from the same origin, so that they serve as vehicles connecting group members with the place of origin keeping homeland memories alive and also maintain a network for solidarity and relationship among people coming from the same motherland.

Recently, diasporic networks may even involve musicians and communities coming from different countries of a wider 'region' of the world, and sharing 'common historical

¹⁶⁹ Magrini, Tullia, "Repertoires and identities of a musician from Crete", *EOL Symposium on Mediterranean Musicians*, available at <http://www.umbc.edu/eol/3/magrini/3life.htm>

experiences of dispossession, displacement, adaptation and so forth'.¹⁷⁰ While these interactions maintain an ideal connection with the homeland by keeping memories and traditions alive; at the same time it becomes a reproduction of the local identity in new ways.

Nettl argues that music have a particular, unique role in associating a society's present with its past¹⁷¹ and 'Music does point the way toward origins and beginnings' says Bohlman giving Crete as an example that is linking the present reality of the island to a remote past.¹⁷²

Cretan music is defined as 'wild and unpredicted, unlike the disciplined *bouzouki* music of Greek mainland' by the Cretans.¹⁷³ The traditional music of Crete reflects the complex history of the island. It has a complex structure since the island was inhabited by many different civilizations in the past; a combination of these interactions has come into the picture.

In addition Cretan music is also considered as the most archaic and genuine Greek and European music by Cretans, because it was generated in prehistoric times. The oldest known written musical piece is from 200 B.C., which is a part of Orestes tragedy, written by Euripides two centuries before.¹⁷⁴ Plato's 'Law' and 'Minos', Euripides' 'Cretes', Sophocles' 'Deadalus', Herodotus' 'Historia', also Aristotle, Isocrates, Thukydidies, Plutarch, Diodorus

¹⁷⁰ Clifford, 1994, p.309.

¹⁷¹ Nettl, Bruno, 1996, "Relating the Present to the Past: Thoughts on the Study of Musical Change and Culture Change in Ethnomusicology," *Music & Anthropology* cited in Magrini available at <http://www.umbc.edu/eol/3/magrini/3life.htm>

¹⁷² Bohlman, Philip, "Music, Myth, and History in the Mediterranean: Diaspora and the Return to Modernity", *EOL Symposium on Mediterranean Musicians*, available at <http://www.umbc.edu/eol/3/bohlman/index.html>

¹⁷³ <http://www.sfakia-crete.com/sfakia-crete/crete-music.html>

¹⁷⁴ <http://www.sfakia-crete.com/sfakia-crete/crete-music.html>

from Sicily, Srayon and more others are all claimed to have made references about Cretan music, while they are admiring the pre-Hellenic Minoan civilization.¹⁷⁵

There are several types of traditional songs performed in Crete and also among Cretans living away from the island. Most popular ones among them are *mantinades*, *rizitika*, *erotokriti*, *amanes*, and *tabachaniotika*.

Mantinades is a common type of folk poetry consisting of rhyming couplets which has also been an influential folk element in the appropriation of local folklore during the formation of Greek national identity. On the other hand, *rizitika* are the rebel songs, *erotokritos* is a rhymed adventurous love poem consisting of 10010 lines composed about four centuries ago, which gives it name to the folk songs, these songs based on this poem are known as *erotokriti*, *amanes* is another type stressing an emotion beyond a verbal articulation with the voice *aman*.¹⁷⁶

The *tabachaniotika* are also a part of Cretan musical repertory which belong to a wide family of music merging Greek and Turkish elements as an outcome of Greek-Turkish cultural syncretism during the period of Ottoman domination.

As well as the traditional songs, traditional instruments of Crete which accompany them are at the core of Cretans' social and family events. Thus, musical instruments can be considered as not only simply the means to entertainment but also extensions of their physical being. On most social occasions Cretans dance and sing in a way embodying the old traditions in a form with the belief that soul can find expression through music and dance. The *lyre*, *lute*,

¹⁷⁵ <http://www.cretamusic.gr/www.cretamusic.gr/ukframe.html>

¹⁷⁶ <http://www.sfakia-crete.com/sfakia-crete/crete-music.html>

violin and *mandolin* are the main instruments in Cretan music today. Certainly, partial history of Crete has been a significant factor in determining these instruments as touchstones of Cretan music life.

For instance, lyre which is the most popular instrument on the island and among the Cretans of diaspora was introduced to Crete in antiquity, though this instrument is found in the other parts of Greece, it is played in quite a different way by Cretans such as lute which is also tuned in a different way from the other parts of Greece.¹⁷⁷ The Cretan lyre can be defined as the voice of Cretan music and it carries and accentuates the strength of *mantinades*.

The violin also used to be a very popular musical instrument in Eastern and Western Crete, however in the period between 1960 and 1970 it gave its popularity to the lyre. The mandolin which has been very popular in Mediterranean basin appeared in Crete during Venetian occupation and today it is still played usually at different social events especially at family gatherings.¹⁷⁸ Apart from these prominent instruments there are also instruments like the *boulgari*, *askobandoura*, the *sphyrohabiolo* or *thiaboli* which very few old people can play and one of the ancient drum like instrument *tabor* which can be found in museums now.

Among Cretan Americans, the traditional instruments are used at especially organized musical or dance nights and in many occasions Cretan singers also perform traditional songs. There are also courses organized to teach Cretan youth playing traditional instruments and dances.

¹⁷⁷ “Information about Cretan traditional Instruments from the Masters of the Cretan Musical Tradition” available at www.cretansmusic.gr

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

3.3.3. Cretan Dances

As well as the most other components of Cretan culture, Cretan dances are also deeply related to the complex history of the island dating back till ancient times and perceived by Cretans as a way of expressing their emotions i.e. happiness, disappointment, sadness or love. There are various Cretan dances in many variations and some of them are only performed in certain regions of villages of the island. Nevertheless, the dances can be categorized in four main groups.

Kastrinos, the most popular one which takes its name from Great Castle (*Kastro*) today known as Heraklion is considered as most masculine, most impressive dance of the island. The dance is characterized by fast rhythm and small steps. Another most popular dance is the *Pentozalis* which means five steps is a traditional war dance representing revolution, heroism and hope.¹⁷⁹ It is performed in a quick and energetic way.

Syrtos or also known as *Chaniotikos* is a dance from Chania region characterized by small, regular, rhythmical steps. It is interpreted as an expression of a secret decision for life and death, love and secret wishes as the dancers express their sad or happy story through simple creeping steps.¹⁸⁰

Sousta is another type of dance which has a long history dating back to ancient times. It is believed to be derived from ancient Cretan martial dance; however, its current name comes from the time of the Venetian domination from the Italian word *susta* that means

¹⁷⁹ http://www.cretamusic.gr/www.cretamusic.gr/pentozalis_uk.html

¹⁸⁰ http://www.cretamusic.gr/www.cretamusic.gr/sirtos_uk.html

lamina (spring), since the body during the dance reminds of it.¹⁸¹ The dance which is performed in couples, in the older times gave the opportunity for man in love to express his sentiments to a woman, and it is still accepted as one of the most erotic love dances of the island.

Herzfeld has a significant point about the interpretation of Cretan dances as a symbol against a common enemy deriving from *pentozalis* and *sytros* dances. He criticizes the interpretation of Romanias who argues that 'sytros' (shuffling) was named thus because the warriors dragged the whole people off to the revolution and who explains *pentozalis* (five steps) as; the revolution would make five steps, the Turks would strike against it, stopped it and it made a pause.¹⁸² According to Herzfeld, the meanings of the dances are turned into a referential national text representing a local conflict as a national one and making Cretans patriotic. This is also a very illustrative point as it displays how local folklore of Crete is appropriated for national identity, at the same time it is strengthening the local identity of the island and making Cretans to be proud of their glorious history.

The Cretan-Americans who are also proud of this history exhibit these dances with local costumes in local events and also in events which are held by the umbrella organization such as the National Convention held in every two years, during these events Cretan music is performed by Cretan musicians and Cretan-American children dance with their traditional costumes.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ <http://www.grecian.net/music/dances.htm>

¹⁸² Romanias, Alekos, 1965, *I Levendoyenna: Ithografika Kritis*, Athens, Difros, p.69 cited in Herzfeld, 2003, p.299

¹⁸³ Interview held with the General Secretary of the Pan Cretan Association of America, Erasmia Vlastos Novotory, 04.04.2009.

3.3.4. Cretan Costumes

Traditional costumes of the island are mostly used in festivals, parades organized at national days or performances that include local dances but not used in daily lives of Cretans. As is the case with the local music of the island costumes are received as tools that reflect gloom, joy, sorrow or happiness of the people of the island.

The official costume of the island is *Sfakiani* from the area of Sfakia which used to be the most famous women clothing later accepted as the official one. *Anogiani* is another woman costume which was designed later in the 17th century and worn in Anogia in the region Mylopotamos.

The *vra*ka which is a kind of baggy trousers, *stivania* the high boots and *the sariki* a crocheted black scarf used to be the traditional costumes of men which as whole usually were in black or dark blue in color.¹⁸⁴ The Cretan men also used to wear the black kerchiefs having knots around it which were symbolising the tears of Crete as a way of showing the mourning for the people lost in Arkadi. There are also regional differences among the costumes in the island, for instance, while in the Western region the *vra*ka of the men are tighter and shorter than the Eastern and center parts or instead of *sariki* sometimes *fez* used to be worn, or the colors of the jackets of men could differ representing different villages or regions.

¹⁸⁴ <http://www.nah.gr/en/prefecture-of-heraklion/costume/costume.html>

Besides the costumes, Cretan knife is the irreplaceable accessory of the traditional Cretan man costume and accepted as the reminding symbol of successive battles for freedom and the revolutions against the conquerors.¹⁸⁵

Traditional costumes of the island are usually worn at local or national historical event celebration days such as the March 25th Greek Independence Day. All local organizations that are members of Pan Cretan Association of America participate the parades held in different cities with their traditional costumes.¹⁸⁶ Apart from that, the traditional costumes are also indispensable parts of Cretan dance nights held by organizations.

3.4. Keeping local diasporic consciousness among Cretan-Americans

3.4.1. The role of associations

The essential networks that are established among diaspora groups can be summarized as follows: cultural, educational, communication and media and finally business and enterprises.¹⁸⁷ Since my focus is on Cretan culture and its practice away from the island; cultural, communication and media networks are the ones which are relevant for this study.

As well as contributing to keep memories and traditions of the homeland alive, the establishment and expansion of cultural diasporic associations can be appreciated since they serve as vehicles where diaspora group members come together and strengthen their bonds

¹⁸⁵ Stoïou, Glykeria, "I am a Cretan Knife, Weapon of Honor and Gallantry", *Stigmes*, Issue 109, available at <http://stigmes.gr/br/brpages/articles/kritiko%20maxairi.htm>

¹⁸⁶ Interview held with the General Secretary of the Pan Cretan Association of America, Erasmia Vlastos Novotory, 04.04.2009.

¹⁸⁷ Christakis, Michalis G., 1997, "Networks of Greek Diaspora and the Use of Modern Technology", *2nd International Conference Hellenism in the 21st Century*, 1-3 August, Melbourne, available at <http://avoca.vicnet.net.au/~hsfau/Christakis1t.html>

both with the homeland and with the other members. The networks of these associations not only connect the diaspora group members living in the same host country but also the people from the same origin living in different host countries.

As Kaya argues by referring to Clifford, the improvement in technologies strengthens transnational connections and creates a 'multi-local diaspora culture' among multiple diaspora communities which means for them a cultural boundary rather than a geographical one that is linked to the homeland.¹⁸⁸ By means of modern technologies of transportation, communication i.e. internet, telephones, faxes, TV, radio, tape, the distances are reduced and two-way traffic between diaspora communities and homeland is increased.¹⁸⁹

Since there have been many local organizations in Greek-American diaspora group based on local places of origin in the homeland, technological improvements led to an increase in communication among these organizations and paved the way for establishing networks. The umbrella organizations' communication with the local organizations increased and the distribution of diasporic publications was facilitated.

Cretan-Americans as a subgroup of Greek-American diaspora are also affected positively from these technological advances. The communication of the umbrella organization, Pan Cretan Association of America with the other local organizations in the country and with Cretan diasporic associations in other countries became easier. This led to creation of a powerful network among them. Besides, the publication of the association which I will discuss in the following part has become able to reach all the Cretans around the world.

¹⁸⁸ Kaya, Ayhan, 2001, Sicher in Kreuzberg: Constructing Diasporas: Turkish Hip-Hop Youth in Berlin, Transaction Publishers, p.81.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p.81.

As a common phenomenon of Greek-American diaspora in the late 1910s and 1920s many different Cretan associations were organized like many Greeks coming from different regions did. ‘Omonia’ in New York City, ‘Minos’ in Chicopee, ‘Arkadi’ in Pittsburgh, ‘Mutual Benefit’ in Cleveland, ‘Psilorites’ in Detroit, ‘Cretan Fraternity’ in Chicago, ‘Minos’ in Salt Lake City, ‘Epimenides’ in San Francisco were some among others that aimed to give support, comfort, and the sense of belonging to their members. Social events and celebrations were held by each organization. However, they felt the need to get in touch with other Cretan clubs where friends and relatives could be found.

With this goal, on April 7, 1929 a meeting was held to find means for creating a National Federation of all the Cretan clubs in America and the meeting ended with the resolution to create a working committee which would contact all the other clubs to set a place and a time for a meeting of representatives to draw up a constitution and to elect a President and a board.¹⁹⁰ On October 10, 1929, the umbrella organization Pancretan Association of America was established with a constitution. From its beginning until today the Pancretan Association of America which is composed of 74 chapters - each chapter representing a local organization in different parts of America- has continuously supported culture, education, church and philanthropy.

Examining the cultural activities held by the association will help us to understand how the association contributes to protection of boundary maintenance by preserving the distinctive identity of the group with regard to other societies and also how it strengthens

¹⁹⁰ <http://www.pancretan.org/history.php>

diasporic consciousness by maintaining connectedness for the group members to the place of origin.

The Pancretan Association of America perceives itself as the only steward of Cretan culture in USA and aims to enjoy, preserve, and pass this culture to the next generations. It would not be wrong to say that the association serves as the main and the most comprehensive vehicle for perpetuating Cretan cultural practices.

In the chapters of the association Cretan dances and music are taught to the youth. Every two years a national convention is held in which Cretan cultural practices take place including dance performances of the youth groups from different chapters, music, poetry, art, literature, handicraft, theater and others. Apart from these in seven geographic districts of the association cultural events which last for a few days take place. Celebrations are an essential part of cultural activities, historical events like Greek Independence Day on 25th of March, and locally significant days like the Battle of Crete on 20th of May, the 28th of October and commemorating the deaths of Arcadi on November 9th.

Visits and camps for youth in Crete to discover the place of origin and establishment of a Cretan culture endowment fund for promoting the teaching and continuity of Cretan culture and traditions in America are the other significant undertakings of the association.¹⁹¹

Pancretan Youth Association which was founded in 1948 as a branch of the Pancretan Association of America is composed of twenty youth chapters and has the main goal of keeping alive the sacred traditions, history and heritage of their ancestral homeland, the island

¹⁹¹ For a detailed information about cultural achievements of the association see <http://www.pancretan.org/history.php>

of Crete. The association gathers young adults sharing the same ideals and heritage, provides scholarships for university level students, offers summer study and travel programs in Crete, organizes conferences for young Cretans and helps to strengthen the building of cultural ties to Crete.

In addition to the activities held by this association there are also activities of the local organizations which actually constitute certain parts of the activities of Pancretan Association of America. Cretan's Association Minos-Crete is one of them which was founded in 1918 by Cretans living in Chicopee that used to be known as 'Criticopolis' (Cretan City) because of the large number of Cretans living in the area.¹⁹²

Cretan's Association Minos-Crete organizes dance parties, district conferences and provides scholarships to the young members and contributes to the activities of Pancretan Association of America. The association mentions that they will continue to celebrate their strong culture and background and in order to have a successful future; they perceive developing and transcending their values and their culture to the youth as a must.¹⁹³

The Cretan Association of Omonia which is another chapter of Pancretan Association of America was founded in November 25, 1918 as a mutual aid, philanthropic, progressive and educational organization with the intention of the preservation of Cretans' identity as Cretans and of Cretan descent.¹⁹⁴ When we look at the activities of the organization they are very similar to its copartners; dance groups, concerts of Cretan singers, celebration of local

¹⁹² <http://www.minos-crete.com/history/History.htm>

¹⁹³ <http://www.minos-crete.com/history/History.htm>

¹⁹⁴ <http://www.nycretans.org>

days, participation to the parade for the Greek Independence Day in New York, celebration of religious days such as the Thanksgiving Day and Christmas are some of them.

The Cretan Association of Greater Washington DC Nikos Kazantzakis is another one that was established actually in 1938 but after a period of inactivity reestablished again in January 14, 1965. As the other ones, the mission of the organization is presented as cultivating and maintaining the continuous interest in past and present Cretan culture and traditions and developing local and national relationships with groups of similar purpose.¹⁹⁵ Musical evenings, dance nights and celebrating New Year cutting of *Vassilopita*, the traditional Greek New Year Cake having its name from *Aghios Vassilis* known as *Santa Claus* are some examples of the events held by the organization.

A relatively new local organization, Cretan Association of Greater Houston Texas was founded in March 28, 2004 aiming to promote Cretan culture and heritage in its own area.¹⁹⁶ The other leading missions of the association is listed as to preserve the rich Cretan culture in the Greater Area of Houston by teaching their traditions to young and by conducting cultural events to expose it to the public and to strengthen the sentiment of love and devotion for Crete and Greece.¹⁹⁷

Samaria Chapter of Atlanta is also a new one founded in 2003 and has a mission in the same axis with the other local organizations; to preserve cultural treasures of the island with respect and love and to pass this heritage to future generations.¹⁹⁸ Cretan *Glandi* which is a kind of a festival that celebrates Cretan culture, display of documentaries topics related to the

¹⁹⁵ <http://www.cretanassociation.com/Welcome.html>

¹⁹⁶ <http://www.cretansofhouston.org>

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.cretansofhouston.org/first.html>

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.samaria-atlanta.org>

Cretan history such as Battle of Crete, district conventions are some of the activities held by the organization.

It is possible to extend this list with many other Cretan-American local organizations however as it may well be seen from the examples I have given till now, all of the local organizations converge around the same goal; to preserve their local identity without rejecting Greek identity and hereby to contribute preserving Greek national identity. As argued before, Butler offers to examine the immigrant groups' relationship with the homeland, relationship with the hostland and interrelationships within the diasporic group in order to make it comparable to others.

From this aspect, as a diasporic group Cretan-Americans exhibit a successful example; they have powerful relationship networks both with the homeland and in the group. They maintain Cretan culture both in USA and around the world via their own associations and publications. In this sense Cretan local identity is much more dominant in identifying the group's diasporic consciousness than Greek national identity. Nevertheless this dominance does not appear as a rejection of Greek national identity; on the contrary as the Cretan identity constitutes a significant part of the national one, the group members perceive it as a source of pride for contributing the maintenance of their national identity. Besides, as a part of Greek-American diaspora they portray a harmonious profile both with the hostland and with other subgroups by gathering under umbrella associations.

In the next part I focus on publications and social media which I perceive as other influential tools in keeping diasporic consciousness.

3.4.2. Publications and Social Media

The official publication of Pan Cretan Association of America, *Khrth* (Crete) is the leading Cretan diaspora magazine and has been published for more than 80 years. *Khrth* has also been a communication link among four generations of Cretan-Americans. Besides being one of the main news feed for Cretan-Americans, the column ‘Chapter Profile’ is dedicated every month to a different chapter member of the Pan Cretan Association of America, and ‘People’ column profiles many distinguished Cretan-Americans and their contribution to society. The magazine also provides opportunity for interactive communication with its readers by receiving their opinions, comments and articles. One another note-worthy feature of the magazine is that it keeps the traditions of the island in the columns in which folk poetry *mantinades*, Cretan jokes and Cretan food recipes take place. The magazine has more than 3.300 paid subscribers and estimated number of the readers of the magazine is 16.700.¹⁹⁹

In order to present a sample issue, when we go through the pages of the March 2010 issue of the magazine, significant historical events of the island, Cretan celebrities that are living in USA, dance and chorus competition announcements, the announcement of theatrical comedy play of young Cretan-Americans about Cretan traditions are some of the contents that draw attention. There is also a part combined of photos of all different Cretan local associations founded in different cities of USA. In the association chapter profile each month a different local association’s portrait is given.

‘Calendar of events’ is also another significant section thus it presents three months’ events in each city such as “Kritiki Filoxenia” annual dance, Youth Annual Dinner Dances of

¹⁹⁹ <http://www.pancretan.org/magazine.php>

different chapter of the association, Greek Independence Day parades in Chicago, Baltimore, Detroit, New York, etc.

The magazine is also a vehicle for advertisements related to Crete, for instance the announcement of University of Crete's Ancient and Modern Greek language summer courses aiming to gather Cretan youth living in different places of world is one of them. There are also advertisements of DVDs, CDs and books related to Cretan culture with the motto 'A special gift of culture, a must for every household', i.e. Narrated Historical Journey Through the Island Crete, The Dances of Crete, The Church of Crete DVDs are some of the materials that aim to reconnect Cretan-Americans with their origins and to keep the Old Word traditions alive.

Stigmes which means moments, is another significant publication for both Cretans living on the island and those living away. It is actually a regional magazine published every two months in the island of Crete but distributed all over the world for Cretans who are living away from the homeland. The magazine is considered as in terms of standing and with more than 10000 copies of circulation as the most important local periodical in Greece.²⁰⁰

The magazine which was also honored as the 'Best Regional Magazine in Greece' is introduced in its web site as follows:

"Whether you are Cretan living abroad and would like to indulge in your nostalgia, a Cretan fanatic in love with its unique culture and history, or a soon-to-be visitor of this island, STIGMES has all the information for you. From Crete's extraordinary history to current events, enchanting tales and folklore to practical tourist recommendations,

²⁰⁰ <http://stigmes.gr/br>

STIGMES should not only be seen as an outstanding publication, but also as a splendid symbol of Cretan pride.”²⁰¹

As mentioned above the magazine aims to carry on unique culture of Crete with various parts of the magazine, each of them focusing on a different general topic about Cretan culture such as, history, archaeology, arts and literature, the famous Cretans, Cretan wine, diet and recipes of Crete.

By means of the technological advancements, both of the magazines are able to reach to Cretans living all around the world and as well as hardcopies, they are also able to send the digital copies of their publications to subscribers.

As well as published and online publication facilities, social media has also emerged as one of the most functional communication tools lately. In recent years communication through internet had an unprecedented increase and the social media term has appeared as one of the most common type of interaction among people. Social media is used to describe the type of media that is based on conversation and interaction between people online in other words, the sharing of digital words, photos, sounds, videos via internet. The biggest advantage of these tools is that they can reach very large groups of people very easily. Social media can take many different forms such as forums, web blogs, social blogs, social networking sites etc. Social media which provide an opportunity by connecting friends, employees, relatives also a useful tool for diaspora group members who are living in different countries. With social

²⁰¹ <http://stigmes.gr/br>

media tools they can communicate with their compatriots, share materials that reflect their origin of identity and experiences and can keep memories related to the homeland alive.

When we look for social media examples like one of the most popular social networking web sites *Facebook* we may find many fan pages related to Crete.²⁰² For instance, ‘I love Crete’ is a fan club that has more than 64.000 fans from all around the world sharing traditional Cretan poems *mantinades*, music, videos, photos and information about places in Crete. Another one is the fan club of Crete which has more than 30000 fans from all around the world, presents the island of Crete for touristic purposes and also gives opportunity for sharing experiences. Cretan Music fan page is another example that aims to increase the reputation of Cretan music, singers and traditional instruments and has more than 6000 fans. Though these pages are not specific for Cretan-American diaspora group, I assume that they are good examples for linking the young generations of Cretan-Americans’ to Cretans from all around the world and reminding the traditional culture of the island.

In social networking sites like *Facebook* there are also pages specific to diaspora groups for instance a page for the introduction of a book launch ‘The Cretans of Oceania from the 19th Century’ that promotes a publication about Greeks of Cretan origin in Australia and New Zealand released by Pan Cretan Association of Melbourne. In addition to the presentation of the book on an online social platform, this sharing opportunity also contributes to the diasporic consciousness of all Cretans living in different places. The Cretan-American publication of *Khrth* which aims to be popular among all Cretans around the world has also a fan page in this social networking site with more than 700 fans. Apart from the social

²⁰² For detailed information about pages see www.facebook.com

networking sites there are also many social blogs and forums related to Crete in which many Cretans or Cretan lovers can share their experiences online.

Conclusion

In diaspora cases, the awareness of sharing the same identity and practicing the same cultural traits make the group members feel more attached to the community creating a diasporic consciousness. In this sense diasporic consciousness is a social construct constituted by maintaining the continuity of a group's norms, traditions and values. As well as the historical and cultural connection to the homeland, the peculiarity of the diaspora community is also implied in diasporic consciousness. This consciousness is realized through cultural boundary maintenance which means preservation of the group's own cultural identity symbols.

Though ethnicity and nation have mostly been the main factors identifying the cultural identity symbols, in some specific cases locality may appear as an influential factor. From this aspect, the fragmented geography and history of Greece makes locality to come into prominence as an identifier. One of the main reasons of this has been the role of the contribution of the local elements of different regions in the formation of the Greek national identity process in the 19th century.

During the formation of the Modern Greek state, the appropriation of local folklores in order to create the national identity has led to intertwining of the national and the local inadvertently. The Greek national identity formation process was torn between the predominance of two main theses the Hellenic and the Romeic ones; thus leading to establish a link between the Ancient and Modern Greece. Language and local folklore served as the means for the construction of historical and cultural continuity from classical Hellenism to the 19th century Modern Greece. While doing that, local folklores of the different regions of

Greece offered a great opportunity to establish such continuity with a suitable historic past. In the Greek case while local folklore has been “a function of shared identity” and has fostered the Greek national identity by serving for the construction of Greek national culture, it was also strengthening itself in a distinctive way by keeping its authenticity.

Crete has been an outstanding example with its strong local elements such as oral poem tradition, music, dance, cuisine, costumes, legends and heroes as well as its considerable support to national unity which is perceived by Cretans as a source of pride. For Cretans, the influence of these local elements strengthens the conscious of identifying themselves with their local identity rather than national one. In this sense the Cretan local cultural practices as the symbols are not only manifested on the island but also all around the world to which Cretan diaspora has been scattered. Thus, by keeping national, ‘super ordinate’ identity of Greekness, Cretan-Americans have also been practicing their authentic local culture in a way which makes them a subgroup of Greek-Americans.

As Barth and Kopytoff mention the symbolic inventories of a group, meaning the traditions, norms and values of the group that include livelihood, dress, language, cuisine, rituals, music and/or any other symbolic content that separate the group from the others are defined by Cretans in local terms rather than the national. In the mind of Cretans living away from the island, the term *patridha* which means ‘homeland’ or ‘motherland’ connotes Crete, or their villages rather than Greece.

As Cohen states, in our times, the relations between the homeland and diaspora members are enabled much easier by the improvements in technologies leading to an increasing connectedness. These improvements also facilitated the relationship of diaspora

groups from the same homeland but living in different countries. Thus, recently, the interaction among groups provides the opportunity to keep the cultural memories and values related to the homeland alive.

In order to analyze a diaspora group and make a comparative study, Butler argues that not only the diaspora group's relationship with the homeland but also interrelationship within the diasporic group should be examined. From this aspect, as a diasporic group Cretan-Americans exhibit a successful example; they have powerful relationship networks both with the homeland and in the group. Furthermore, it is possible to see authentic Cretan culture in diaspora through examining the events held by Cretan diasporic associations or by following their publications. As it may well be understood from the number of Cretan-American associations and their strong network Cretans carry on their local culture from USA to Australia in a very successful way. These associations with the publications function well as diasporic tools to maintain boundary maintenance of the group.

When considered from these aspects, Cretan local identity seems more dominant in identifying the group's diasporic consciousness than Greek national identity. Nevertheless this dominance does not appear as a rejection of Greek national identity; on the contrary as the Cretan identity constitutes a significant part of the national one, the group members perceive it as a source of pride for contributing the maintenance of their national identity.

When I asked the Vice President of World Council of Cretans, Manolis Petrakis in an interview, 'Why do you think being Cretan is carrying such an importance?', once again, he

proved this pride and how he attributes importance to being Cretan with these words:

“Because we are special people.”²⁰³

²⁰³ Interview held with The Vice President of World Council of Cretans, Manolis Petrakis, 01.10.2008,

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