

# **Returning from Sweden to Northern Greece**

*What did the emigrants of the 1960's  
bring back to Greece?*

# The Gavra Village

- The population Exchange in the 1920's
- Resettled Caucasian Turkish-speakers
- A new Village in the 1920's and 1930's
- Tobacco growing – self-sufficiency
- War, Resistance (1941-1944)
- Civil War (1946-1949)
- Communist hegemony in the Village
- Surveillance, Repression, Self-organizarion

# Greene, Thessaloniki, Gavra

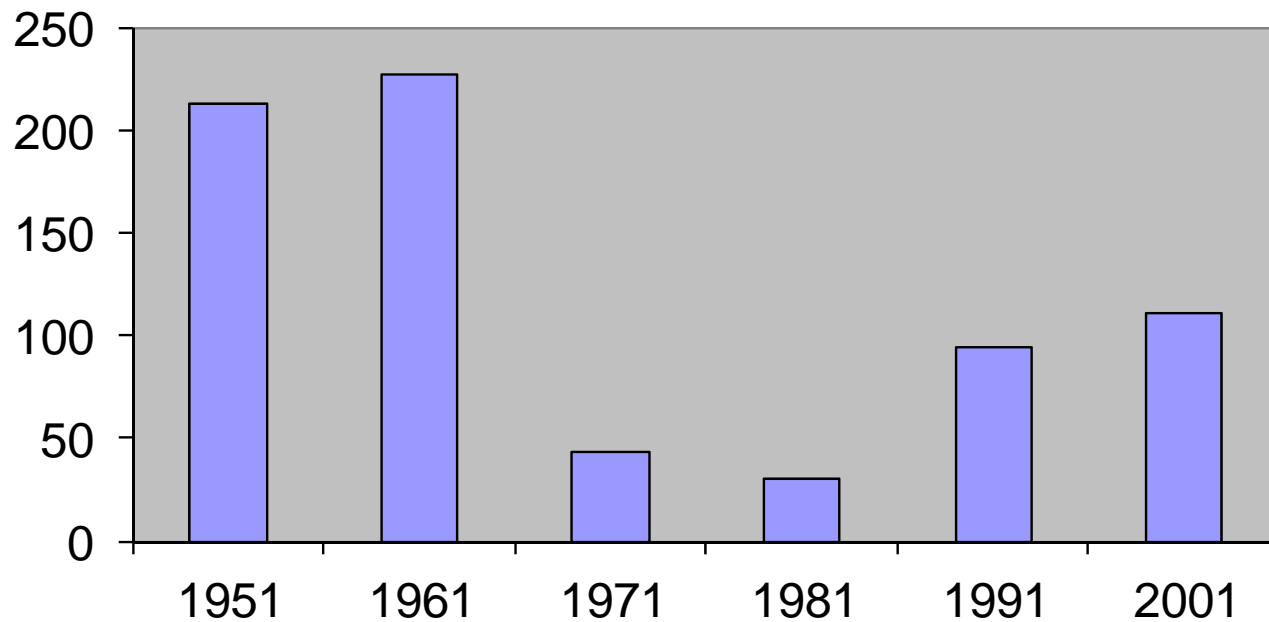


# The Early 1960's - Emigration fever

- Poverty, Repression and Harassments
- " A window suddenly opened..." (1963)
- Passport without loyalty declaration
- A Few to Germany.... But...
- Bridgeheads in Sweden
- Massive emigration 1963-66 to Sweden
- Siblings, Cousins, Neighbours
- Young Families

# Population in Gavra 1951-2001

Figure 1. Inhabitants in Gavra 1951-2001



# From Tobacco Farmers to Workers

- They became industrial workers
- They lived in small communities
- Unskilled work in low-wage industries
- In declining sectors
- They were "needed" and "welcome" both at work and in the local communities

# Strategies

- Work in order to save in order to return
- Both men and women worked full-time
- Accepted shift work and overtime
- Living simple and buying cheap – to save as much as possible
- Educating the children – in Sweden or in Greece

# Isolation versus Integration

- Living a Greek everyday life in "a village cocoon"
- Active in Greek political organisations

## **Integrating forces**

- Mainly through work
- Unions, and politics (1967!)
- Housing, neighbours
- The health and welfare services



# What did the Gavra villagers bring back to Greece?

- (1) Economic resources (their savings - and pension rights)
  - Setting up business in Greek cities (Thessaloniki)
  - Investing in city apartments
  - Building a new house in Gavra

## (2) New habits, *habitus*, political identity

*Longterm effects of the first meeting with Swedish officials*

- The welcoming railway official in 1964 (the contrast to uniformed Greek officials)
- The helpful local police officer (immigration control)
- Employment service official (blank work permits when vacationing in Gavra)

# Traces of the emigration (1975)



# Photos from a tour in the Village

# A Garden in Gavra





# Modern Greek House Swedish style Garden





# The Lawnmover



# Smoking forbidden!





# Leaving your shoes...



# Modern and Rational vs Personalised and Traditional

*Effects of adaption to Swedish mores after  
returning to Greece*

**Formal equality as a new yardstick  
not personalised, privileged access**

- Queuing in shops and banks
- Selective access to public officials,
- And also with doctors...

# Experiences of less authoritarian public services

- Health services (better quality, more dialogue)
- Welfare services (Housing, social insurance offices – pensions)

# ”A Fair Deal”

## At the micro-level of Work:

- *“I’m working hard, I know my rights, and don’t accept to sent around to the hopeless jobs. When I protested I got a fair treatment” (1970)*
- *“I’m a good worker and I’m respected as such”*

# Fair deal at the Macro-level

- *“Sweden needed us and we needed jobs and income”.*
- *“It was in Sweden that I became a political subject and understood what it was to be a citizen.”*
- the Swedish state *“ was not only Theirs (i.e. the Others) but that is was also Ours”...*
- *“The state is also you and me.”*

# Accepted as a Citizen

- Swedish public services contrasted with their memory of Greece in the early 1960's
- Less distance between officials and citizens
- Absence of structural political-economic discrimination (jobs, surveillance etc)
- But not only a rosy picture ....