

Returning from Sweden to Northern Greece

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

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DRAFT VERSION! Comments welcome.

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1. Background and setting

1.1. Emigration from Greece in the 1960's

Greece experienced a massive emigration during the 1960s. This emigration was part of larger labour migration from the south of Europe to the central and northern parts of the continent. Several hundreds of thousands of Greeks emigrated from the late 1950's to the end of the 1960's. Most of them left for Germany. Smaller groups went to England, Sweden, Holland, Belgium, Denmark and other countries. Large groups also emigrated to USA, Canada and Australia, following the trail of earlier emigration flows.

A traditional emigration area in Greece was the northern province of Macedonia. A large number had left Macedonia – then part of the Ottoman Empire - for the US before the First World War. After the First World War and the ensuing wars and conflicts with the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, and the population exchange in the early 1920s between Greece and Turkey, Macedonia was repopulated. The number of peasant smallholdings increased again. Small plots of land were distributed to the newly arrived immigrants from Pongos and Minor Asia in general. There were also Greeks coming from Caucasus (incl. Georgia and Armenia) who left their homes and plots for Greece. Many of them resettled in villages, small towns and cities in the northern part of Greece (esp. in the central parts of Macedonia) in the first half of the 1920's.

Forty years later – in the late 1950's and early 1960's - Macedonia faced a new large emigration, especially from its small villages. The tobacco growing small farmers found it harder and harder to survive economically. From many counties, such as the Kilkis and Serres counties, massive numbers left for northern Europe in a short period of time. The economic pressures in tobacco farming, the need for manual workers in Northern Europe and the political

¹ This paper is built on the arguments and empirical analysis in our recent book, *Gavra. Historien om en by och dess invånare*. (Gavra - The history of a Village and its inhabitants). This book was published in 2012 (Arkiv förlag, Lund) in Swedish. Greek and English editions are planned. A number of research reports –and many photos - from the Gavra project can be found on the following homepage: www.gavraprojektet.se

possibility to leave Greece combined in specific “window of opportunity”, mainly during the middle of the 1960s (1963-67).

1.2. The Gavra Village

Gavra, the village we have investigated in our research project, was reconstituted as Greek village for a small group of kin and neighbours arriving from a Greek village in the Tsinskaros area in Georgia. They arrived, through different routes, in Greece 1920-23 and began to settle in the village from 1923-24.

Until the early years of the 1920s, this Village housed Turkish labourers that were working the land for a large Ottoman estate, a *tsiflika*. Table 1 gives us the population figures for this Village. The inhabitants in 1920 are all Turkish land labourers, who had to leave the village during the population exchange program in 1924-24. From the mid 1920s this became a completely new village. The inhabitants and even the name of the village changed.

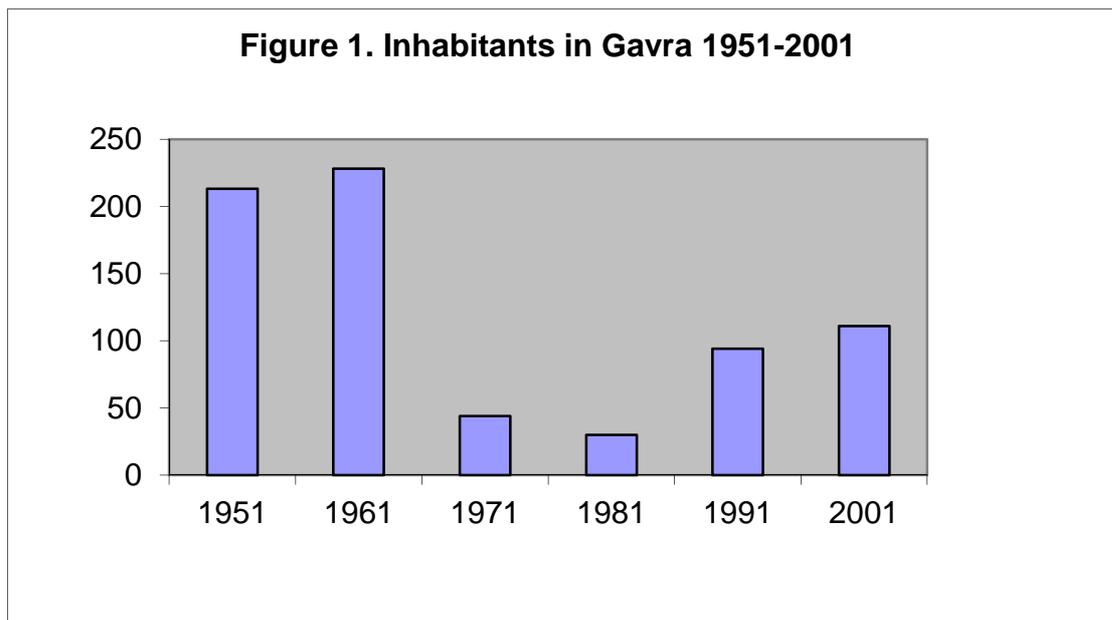
In this Village each family received rather a few small plots of land, equally distributed between the thirty-two families. As a consequence of the final distribution of land in 1935-36 the size of the plots for each family was adapted to the size of the family, i.e. a larger family meant a larger plot.

We have population figures for this village from the beginning of the 20th century until today (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number of inhabitants in the Village 1904-2001

<i>Year</i>	<i>1904</i>	<i>1913</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>1928</i>	<i>1940</i>	<i>1951</i>	<i>1961</i>	<i>1971</i>	<i>1981</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>2001</i>
<i>Inhabitants</i>	190	187	166	110	262	213	228	44	30	94	111

In 1928 the village had 110 inhabitants, all recently resettled Greeks from Georgia. Thirty-two families had originally settled in the Village. Then, during the 1930s, came a period of dramatic expansion - many children were born. In the 1940s came the German occupation, Resistance and the Civil War, which led to the drop to the 1951 figure. However, the most dramatic fall in the population came in the 1960s. *In a few years time, the migration wave swept away 80% of the village population.* Most of the emigrants of the 1960’s left for Sweden, usually groups that settled in the same villages, thus keeping close contact between siblings, cousins and neighbours from Gavra.



After the mid 1980s the population in the village slowly began to recover. From the 1990s more and more villagers returned. Some got early retirement in Sweden, or had reached retirement age, some spent the summer period in the Village. Some of the former internal migrants have also returned to the village.

1.3. Emigration from Gavra -- internal and external migration.

In the village history, the departure of a number of young men to Eastern Europe after the end of the Civil War can be seen as a first wave of emigration.

A second wave of emigration, the *movement from rural to urban areas*, slowly developed during the 1950s. Villagers migrated out of the village to other parts of Greece, mostly to Thessalonica. There are cases of young men who started to train as carpenters, others who moved to become involved in building sector, but also in the transport and service sectors. During the late 1950s and then onwards this became a “natural” move. Leaving the village for the city is a transition basic to all modernising and industrialising societies. Thessalonica grew rapidly in size from the 1950’s onwards – and thus gave rise to an expanding building sector, a sector where some of the villagers could find work.

A third stream of emigrants went to Germany, the country that received the majority of the Greek emigrants in the post-war period, esp. during the 1950s and the 1960s. Some of these later emigrated to Sweden.

Then, as a fourth destination, came Sweden, mainly to the belt of small industrial communities in Southern Sweden. This was a major, quite compressed wave of emigration. *In few years almost half of the villagers left for Sweden.*

For a graphical representation of these four major emigration flows, see table 2.

Table 2. Four emigration flows from the Village (stylized pattern)

<i>Emigration to</i>	1949	1950-55	1955-59	1960-63	1964-70
Eastern Bloc	12	-	-	-	-
Thessalonica area		few	some	Some more	some
Germany	--	--	A few	A few	-
Sweden	--	---	---	--	Many

Sources: The Village Population List (Basic data list 2004), survey data (from 2004), interview data from key informants in the village (2003); data from life history interviews (1999-2008)

There were two major *push* effects in the Village. First, the increasingly hopeless situation for the tobacco growers, due to their hard work and the low price of the product. The second was the effect of economic and political hopelessness due to the political orientation and history of the Village (strong presence of the Greek left, esp. the left resistance (EAM-ELAS) and later the Communist organisations (Democratic Army and the Communist Party, KKE, and later the united left party, EDA).

1.4. The Exodus from Gavra in the 1960's

During the 1960s most young men and women left the Village. A few left to find work in Germany, the country that already was, and in this decade would become the main immigrant country for emigrating Greek workers. In 1962 and 1963 a few young men from a nearby village came to Sweden. They had a number of relatives in Gavra and they came to function as a bridgehead for the following wave of emigration from Gavra

Gavra was politically a left village, with a history going back to the Resistance (1941-44) and the Civil war (1946-1949). Many of villagers had family links to the resistance movement and to the Civil War, in the form of close relatives that had fought in the wars, some of whom had died. A few had followed the defeated forces of the Left to the Eastern countries (Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria and the USSR). Some had been deported to the “Islands” in the fifties;

some – in fact the majority - had experienced police surveillance and being regarded as not fully trusted citizens. They had difficulties in getting passports, and they were systematically barred from any form of public employment. They also had difficulties in many other aspects of everyday life. This included the prospect of getting a loan for buying a tractor (since this necessitated a driver's licence, which in turn depended on the written permit from the police).

This situation changed with the advent of the Centre union government, led by Giorgio Papandreou, in 1963. Then it became possible to get a passport without signing a loyalty statement, i.e. renouncing their earlier or existing political affiliations and beliefs. In an intensive wave of emigration a large group of the Village left for Sweden, esp. in the years 1964- 66. (See Figure 1 above)

In the first half of 1967 a major political shift in Greece – the military coup in April 1967 and the coming of the Military Junta – made the political history of Gavra to a major problem for its villagers. Once again it became difficult to emigrate. Some of the villagers were once again sent to jail or transferred to the Islands.

2. Emigrating from the Village of Gavra to Sweden

The Greek migration to Sweden was in an important way different from the Greek migration to countries such as Canada, USA and Australia. In these countries the emigrants headed for the large metropolitan cities, already from the beginning. This is characteristic for a large group of those who emigrated from the central Macedonian small villages in the 1960s, which of course is the situation for the villagers we are studying.

In the case of the emigration to Sweden this was a classic labour migration in the last phase of industrial expansion in Northern Europe. This migration filled gaps in employment in those industries and those communities that the Swedish workers had begun to leave, that is hard manual work, often based on shift work (such as the paper and pulp mills) and in mature, soon declining industries. These industries and factories were historically paying rather low wages, had rather tough working conditions (shift work) and were mainly located in local labour markets with rather few employment alternatives. Most of the villagers left these smaller communities and moved to medium-sized towns. One reason was to get a better paid job; another was to give their children better chances in terms of a good education.

2.1. *Why emigrate to Sweden?*

In our interviews we can find two main reasons why most of the villagers that left the village choose to come to Sweden and not to Germany. First and most important, there were already a few men, known to and related by family ties to the villagers, who had gone to Sweden and found work there. They came from another village in the Kilkis County, Zacharato, a village where others from their original Georgian village and extended families had settled in the 1920's. These few persons who were already in Sweden acted as a bridgehead, as contact persons, that could help their relatives and other villagers to find jobs in Southern Sweden. Most of villagers left in groups – groups of relatives, siblings and cousins mostly – and found jobs at large industries in small places (villages and small cities), where their relatives and contacts could direct them.

There was also a more general perception of how the German society treated their immigrants. One villager said in our interview that it was known in the Village that

“... in some German cities and factories, men and women, incl. husbands and wives, were housed separately, in collective dormitories.”

Sweden was on the other hand open for family immigration. Since most of the villagers were already married when they emigrated this perception of how Germany treated their immigrants this led them to prefer Sweden². Furthermore, in Sweden the immigrants were perceived as “immigrants” (*“invandrare”*) rather than as “Guest workers” (*“Gastarbeiter”*)³

2.2. A “structural fit” between the Greek “push” and the Swedish “pull” factors

A structural aspect should also be mentioned. The economic push out of a declining and failing Greek agriculture, incl. its tobacco industry, coincided in time with a large and growing demand for new sources of labour in Sweden. At exactly that point in time, the lifting of the political lid, in terms of access to passports, opened up for a large outward flow of migration from Greece, esp. from villages like the one we are studying.

There was thus a “structural fit” between the Greek “push” and the Swedish “pull” factors. The sudden possibility of leaving the village and the prior existence of key contact persons already living in Sweden explains why most of the emigrants from this village came to a few selected villages and factories in

² Here we will have a table on age and marital status among the Village immigrants.

³ Cf. the even more telling Danish concept *“fremmedarbejdere”* (“foreign workers”).

Southern Sweden during the few years between 1964 and 1966. Thus a large proportion of the villagers emigrated to Sweden within a few years, mainly between 1964 and 1966.

23. Point of entry and kind of job

The villagers that arrived in Sweden followed the trail of the first emigrants and arrived in a couple of small cities and industrial communities, often with one large and dominant employer. The factories were paper mills, a porcelain factory, glass works, wood floor makers, chemical industry, a factory producing metal chains as well as a textile factory. The immigrants found employment as manual workers in large factories in small communities. Most of these jobs were rather routinised, unskilled or at best semiskilled positions as manual workers in mature industries. Some of the villagers stayed in these jobs and communities where they originally arrived for quite a long time, a small group even during their whole active period in Sweden. But most of the immigrants, from this Village and from other parts of Northern Greece, moved, by and by, from the small communities to larger cities in southern Sweden or to Stockholm and Uppsala. Some of them set up their businesses, such as restaurants, while the majority continued as manual workers.

Many of the Greek workers arriving in the 1960s had more than one job after their arrival in Sweden. Some had extra jobs as cleaners, jobs not only for the women but for the family as whole. In the 1980s some of the villagers were working as cleaners full-time. Several routes led to this station in the job career. Many industries and factories that had employed the villagers when they arrived were mature industries and gradually began to reduce their personnel. At the same time these firms began to demand more from their employees in terms of formal education, knowledge of the Swedish language etc. The cleaning jobs demanded hard work, time flexibility and endurance, but did not demand specific knowledge of the Swedish language or formal education. For many immigrant workers, including the Greek villagers, with a low level of formal education this was an employment possibility. In this sector many of the firms were small. Some cleaners worked as self-employed. Different members of the family could work together in these jobs - a number of children to the Greek immigrants have this experience. This work had an advantage for those immigrants who wanted to save money in order to be able to return to Greece and their village at the end of their work career in Sweden and/or after their early retirement – it was not bound by the 40-hour week schedule.

2.4. *Two typical life trajectories among the Gavra villagers who emigrated to Sweden*

We find *two typical life trajectories* among the villagers that emigrated to Sweden,⁴ A first group of emigrants spent a number of years in Sweden with the intention of returning to Greece to start a new kind of life here. Their plan was to accumulate savings during a period as a manual worker in Sweden, working hard, accepting overtime and extra shifts, in order to set up a small business after having returned to Greece, A small but important group among the villagers fits quite well into this ideal type. Arriving in 1963-65 many had planned to stay in Sweden six-seven years. As a consequence of the military coup in 1967, and since most of the villagers were known as leftists, the return was postponed until the mid 1970's

Secondly you have the large majority who come to stay in Sweden for most or the whole of their active life. This group continued in their working class jobs. They usually moved from small communities to larger cities, between different sectors, often trying to get better jobs, higher salaries and/or a higher yearly income (cf. the cleaning jobs mentioned above).

There is a small group of those who stayed in Sweden, who tried to set up their own businesses. A few have succeeded in establishing their own businesses (e.g. restaurants) while others tried for a shorter period (with restaurants, shops, bingo halls etc) but returned to a life as manual worker.

3. Transformations of the emigrants in their exile.

3.1. *Living as Greeks in a transplanted village community*

In order to grasp the potential impact of the Swedish society on this group of immigrants we should notice that almost all of them were already married when they arrived in Sweden. Many young couples later brought their parents, often a grandmother, to Sweden, both in order to take care of them/her, but also getting help in taking care of the children, since both parents worked.

Furthermore, *they were living their everyday lives in the context of a transplanted village community*, surrounded by close relatives and other villagers as well a Greeks from other parts of Greece. Gives this micro-social protective layer, a “village cocoon”, the ways they perceived, handled and

⁴ There are also a few cases where emigrants returned very quickly (incl. one who saved enough in two years time to buy a larger herd of sheep and goats; he returned to his farm in the village just after two years).

adapted to the new circumstances and expectations became a complex mix of individual and group processes.

3.2. Adapting, integrating, changing?

Their relation to Swedish society and Swedish everyday life is analytically complex to analyse. The individual family's relation to Swedish society and its institutional features was on the one hand managed on an individual level - you went to hospital as an individual. But on the other hand their experiences took place within a largely shared perspective and interpretation of what to expect and how to evaluate what happened in their meetings (and confrontations) with key institutions in Swedish society. This was shared with others from the same family group, or other villagers.

However, due the multiple modes of interacting with the public institutions, neighbours, work colleagues, the plant managers, the healthcare and school personnel, the police and the labour market authorities and other public institutions, such as the local authorities, housing estates, as well as with trade unions and the political parties they adapted and changed, both with regard to their daily habits, their view of the State through their absorption of Swedish daily life. And the social and ideological values of the Swedish welfare society had a lasting impact.

How can observe, analyse and theorise these changes? Let us begin by walking around in the village?

3.3. Traces of Sweden in the Village. Ethnographic notes on the village today⁵

When we arrive to the Village we see large number of new, well-built houses in the Modern Greek style. Most houses are white, the shape and layout is rectangular. Most houses have two levels and the houses have roofs in red tiles. The houses are well kept and so are the gardens.

⁵ But also traces of the Caucasian origin and the communist heritages. When you walk through the village you can sometimes here discussions going on in Turkish, especially if one of the older inhabitants of the village is involved. The first generation of the villagers came from Georgia and most in the first generation had Turkish as their mother tongue, although they ethnically were Greek and Orthodox. If you continue walking up the hill on the fringe of the village you find the village cemetery. On a number of tombstones you find the portraits of the deceased engraved on the black stone, a trace of the Georgian ancestry of the villagers. In the cemetery you also find the traces of the Occupation and the Civil War in the dates of death for large number of young and middle-aged villagers, now buried there. You will also find a defiant tombstone, with the red star, the communist and leftwing symbol, on the grave. This bears witness to the political tradition in the village.



The grass lawns are well kept and well trimmed and cut, green and neat. There are many flower beds in the garden, mixed with fruit trees and a large plot for vegetables. Sometimes there are hens and chickens in the backyard. To a Swedish eye this looks very familiar – the gardens remind you of a well-kept and orderly village in Southern Sweden. Our Greek colleagues are struck by the well-kept niceness of the gardens and the village - for them this is clearly a village of returned emigrants from Northern Europe.



The village “kafeineo”, housed in the old school building just opposite the church is run by the Cultural association of the village (in practice by a family in the village). The village café has the same kind of menus available as most Greek village cafés, as well as the same group of customers and the same kind of social life. However, one of the two rooms in the café is reserved for non-smokers, in an old tobacco-growing village, in the tobacco-growing Northern Macedonian heartland. The chairman of the village cultural association took the initiative to introduce this innovation – he had spent 35 years in Sweden. This initiative led to intensive discussions and some level of tension between different groups in the village.



Other traces of influence from the years of emigration meet you when you enter the houses. You are, as in small Swedish villages and cities, expected to take off your shoes and use the slippers available or walk in your socks. More often than not the furniture came from Scandinavia. On the mantel pieces you will find objects of glass and other knick-knacks reminding you of time spent in the glass-blowing district in Southern Sweden. If you walk around in the village in the afternoon and early evenings you will, as our Greek colleagues did, notice that a number of men – and women – will be dressed in the leisure gear, typical

of working-class housing areas and camping sites in Sweden as well as couples making long walks together in the evening.

Leaving your shoes outside the entrance door is a common practice in a Swedish setting, while it is clearly aberrant in Greece, This was seen as a peculiar and irritating “Swedish habit” by Gavra villagers that had stayed in Greece.



Are there other traces of their life as immigrants, as Greeks living for many decades in Sweden, more significant than those that we can notice as casual visitor to the village? Can we find other aspects in which these Greek villagers were influenced by their life as Greek immigrants in Sweden? Yes, we can. Let us now turn to the interviews and the life histories we have done with a number of the villagers.

3.4. Key aspects of the impact of Swedish society on the Gavra villagers

In order to understand the impact that Swedish society have had on the social and political identities and perceptions among the Villagers, we have to understand that these changes have occurred in spite of their usually low and marginal social positions in the Swedish society. Their perception of Swedish society has its basis in a specific social location – their situation at work, in work

that was hard, often unhealthy, in many cases in the form of shift or night work, in industries paying rather low wages. They shared this social location with most of the immigrants from Southern Europe that were recruited to the Northern Europe in the 1960's.⁶

Their point of primary reference when they arrived in Sweden was the concrete experience of Greece in the fifties and early sixties. This included not only the political and economic repression and marginal status but also the Greek mode of bureaucratic operation in the early 1960's, with its snubs, disdain and arrogance shown this group of politically distrusted and rather poor peasants.

When they came into contact with the service-oriented part of the Swedish welfare system they found that there were officials that wanted to, and could, help them. These were officials and professionals in hospitals, social services, social security offices, labour market offices etc, as well as managers and personal officers in companies.

One of the villagers arrived at railway station in the middle of the night. He knew no one in the city – he could not reach his contact. He was taken care of by the uniformed railway official who was responsible for the station. He ordered a taxi for him to the address of his contact person, When he was not there he was offered a room in the house of this official. A service-oriented man in uniform...For a man used to routine harassments of the local police and other officials in Greece that was something quite new, almost shocking. That memory was still very living in the mind of this man, 35 years after that first night in Sweden. That kind of welcoming acceptance is present in many interviews.

In a number of interviews we find that their experience with this kind of public officials had an important impact on how they came to perceive the Swedish State and its welfare services. It was evident in many of our interviews with villager that this experience over time became their new standard of comparison and judgement. This became evident in how they perceived and interpreted their dealings with Greek agencies after their return to Greece in the 1990s.

Some of the villagers say that they came to experience that the Swedish state

*“...was not only Theirs (i.e. the Others) but that is was also Ours”...
“The state is also you and me.”*

⁶ Cf. Thomell 1972/2002 for an analysis of the Greeks in the Lessebo paper and pulp mill; for the more general patterns, see Castles & Kosack 1985, Piore,1981, Persson 1974 etc.

This coincides with the *popular-inclusive* aspect of the Swedish state, a typical aspect of the three Scandinavian states⁷.

This perception of the local representatives of the Swedish public sector – and they had to report regularly as immigrants. This was a glaring contrast to their formative experiences of the Greek state, and the harassments of the police in the village and in the neighbouring city of Kilkis. This could include regular beatings after political demonstrations as well as other kinds of routine harassments as late as in the early 1960s.⁸

This aspect of public bureaucracies was reinforced by a selective recruitment, to the new jobs created to deal with immigration issues. Many of these new positions were filled with people who were not negative to the immigrants, rather the reverse. We have e.g. the case with a close and cooperative relation between one of the immigrants and an official in the regional labour market board. There is also the employee at the local immigration bureau who also acted as an interpreter as well as an activist in the solidarity movement after the Coup in Greece in 1967. These are not unique cases – we find that kind of public officials in regions and many communities where the immigrant Greek workers were living.

3.2. Transformation of the emigrants – political identity and perception of a modern citizenship

What kind of effects has this long exposure to Swedish society, its factories, housing areas and ways of the organising consumption, functioning of welfare system etc had on the Greek immigrants?. In our survey and in our life history interviews we find a number of observations that the villagers have made.

But we have to be careful in choosing which changes to focus on and which observations to analyse. Methodologically it's difficult to distinguish between changes that are instances of general historical and social changes in modern societies (more intensive forms of work, changes in the structure as well as generosity of the welfare arrangements etc.). It is problematic to compare their evaluations of the Swedish system of today (or yesterday) with their memories of the Greek society and welfare system of the early 1960's.

In this paper we will therefore focus on two sets of observations and situations.

⁷ Cf. Therborn 1989, *Borgarklass och byråkrati i Sverige : anteckningar om en solskenshistoria* (Arkiv förlag, Lund)

⁸ Numerous examples are given in Olofsson & Thomell 2012, ch. 8.

3.2.1. Arriving in Sweden

First, we will use observations and interview data describing critical instances from the time when villagers had just arrived in Sweden, i.e. the contrast between the Greek and Swedish settings in the early 1960's. The first example here are important differences in the way *they were treated as political subjects* by the Greek compared to the Swedish State authorities. These became clear, and have stayed clear, in the memories, when they noticed the differences when they just arrived in Sweden.

One of the villagers said that it was when he experienced the Swedish state that he understood what it was to be citizen. *“It was in Sweden that I became a political subject and understood what it was to be a citizen.”*

3.2.2. Returning to Greece

A second set of observations and situations are appropriate to consider in or analysis of the long term impact of Swedish society on the minds, habits, perceptions and *habitus* among the villagers that were exposed to and living in Sweden for a long time. Here we will focus on cases where the villagers react upon the ways they are treated by officials in governmental agencies, including the bureaucratic machinery of local government. They talk about their reactions to the treatment they get as customers in banks and in the waiting rooms of physicians. This has occurred when they have returned to Greece and resettled there.

3.2.2.1. The early returnees

Some of the villagers went back to Greece after the mid 1970s and the fall of the Military Junta. This small but important group followed a classic migration career; first a period of hard work in the foreign country, saving as much as possible, and then returning home to set up a small business. This group mainly moved to the large city of Thessalonica and the surrounding area. Most of these “early returnees” used their savings to set up small businesses – bought a bus, started a textile factory, went into the building sector etc.

One villager returned in the late 1970s and set up a small and successful textile firm in Thessaloniki. He had saved enough money to buy a couple of embroidery machines. But it was not only cash that he brought back from Småland, the entrepreneurial heart of Southern Sweden. He had also observed that the Swedish owners, the bosses and the managers, were present on the work floor of their factories, and, when necessary, took part in the work processes. This closeness to production and the lack of social distance between the owner

and his workers was something that he emphasizes as something he had learnt while working in Sweden

The basic resource that they brought with them from their period in Sweden was of course their savings, money that they could invest in Greece. While in Sweden they earned modest Swedish working class wages. Overtime, extra jobs and the incomes of both spouses in the household made a savings strategy possible. Data on the Greek immigrants compared to their Swedish twins (the groups were similar in terms of age, county, education and job) show that Greek men have a somewhat lower yearly income than Swedish men, while Greek women have a larger income than Swedish women (more Greek women than Swedish worked fulltime in the 1960's and 1970's).

3,3, Saving in order to return to Gavra

From the mid 1970s several villagers gradually began to return to their village during their vacations. They began to repair their old houses, and to build new houses on their plots. Today the village is characterised by a very high standard of housing, with large, well-built houses in the Modern Greek style, adapted to the climate and the location. The gardens of the village show the impact of northern European habits, e.g. in the way they are kept and their mix of lawns, flowerbeds and vegetable plots.

Most of the villagers who stayed for three to four decades in Sweden saved in order to build a new modern house in the village or to buy a house (or flat) in Thessalonica. A number have moved back to Greece for good (although quite a few keep a foot in Sweden, because children and grandchildren live there). A large number spend half the year in Greece (summer) and the rest in Sweden (winter). Those who still work come to the Village during the holiday period.

Having built a modern, spacious house in the village signifies another key life goal for the emigrants, securing for themselves a decent life in their retirement. Most of the emigrants have succeeded in attaining this goal, at least in the basic sense of having a good house during their old age. On the average, the families that emigrated to Sweden own two housing units (usually a flat in the Thessalonica area and a house in the village).

The Gavra families living in Sweden spent as little as possible - thus earning like Swedes, but spending like Greek. Saving in order to return – that was the strategy. This mentality was noted by those villagers who moved to the large city of Thessaloniki. In the words of one sharp-eyed villager, the “Swedes” had stayed within the confines of village life – they had not learnt the ways of modern urban life, isolated as they had been in the Swedish context, too

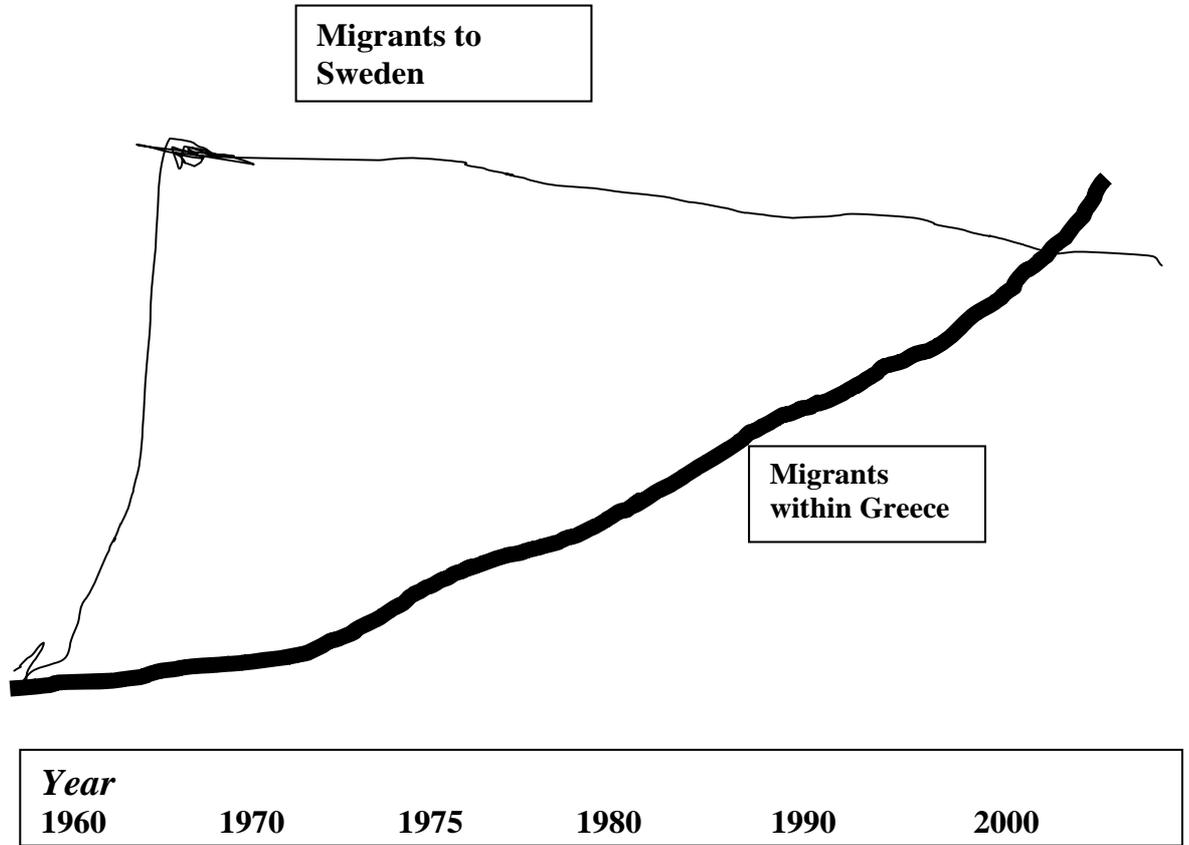
focussed on saving. They did not have “*their hands in the pocket*”. i.e. ready to entertain friends and colleagues in the café etc.,

3,4, The incomes gap between Gavra and Sweden

Their incomes rose dramatically when they began working in Sweden, compared to their declining income from tobacco farming in the village. The gap between the Swedish and Greek incomes and its changes over time is shown in figure 2, which illustrates the stylized income trajectories of those who emigrated to Sweden and those who left for the Greek cities. This graph intends to show two different *patterns* of the income trajectory,

This dramatic difference between the income levels in the mid 1970's is illustrated by the presence of the Swedish Volvo car in the village setting as it was in 1975, notwithstanding the basic savings strategy within the diaspora in Sweden

Figure 2. Stylized Income trajectories for two groups of migrants



Comment: The income trajectories are shown as lines, although there is a large spread within each group. Among the emigrants to Sweden some became successful entrepreneurs and started their own business. Some experienced work injuries and have got sickness pension and their work career ended in early retirement.

The spread in income development among those who migrated to Thessaloniki is probably substantial.

4. Tentative conclusion

Our interpretation of the examples given above by villagers who have resettled in the Village is the following. Their long exposure to generalised rationalised bureaucratic treatment has made it increasingly difficult for them to accept the more personalised, traditionally clientelist treatment in the still traditionally organised Greek system of bureaucratic performance. Their reaction applies as well to personalised, clientelist treatment in the delivery of services in the private sector⁹. Exposure to a relatively transparent and efficient system of organising service delivery seems to have transformed their expectations as well evaluations of what is just and reasonable.¹⁰ This change can be found in the interviews with returned villagers but as well in the judgement of the emigrants as being “too negative” about the Greek system among those who have stayed in Greece all their life.

4.1. A fair deal – reciprocity at work

There is in several of our interviews and the life histories we have been told, indications of a much more fundamental and basic social mechanism at work. In quite few instances villagers tell us that they for the first time had experienced that they “got a fair deal”, that there was some kind of balance between what they gave and what they got. We have to bear in mind two sets of conditions when we evaluate this sense of the “fair deal”, or in more theoretical terms, experiences of *reciprocity*. In Greece they had been both very poor and were also socio-politically marginalised. Although they worked in hard, tiring and poorly paid jobs in Sweden they were met as workers. Even if they were seen as immigrants, they but they were met with greater respect than had been the case in Greece.

A number of the villagers interpreted this in terms of reciprocity. First there was *reciprocity on the societal level*

⁹ Since these villagers have only recently come back to Greece they do not have the personal connections needed to use and exploit these connections to their advantage. They also belong to social groups that in general do not have the contacts necessary to exploit the clientelist machinery. But we think that their reactions against these traditional systems contain more than just the lack of possibilities.

¹⁰ Interviews with those who have returned to the Village show that when they refer to the way things operate in Sweden does not made them more popular in their relations with Greek authorities and bureaucracies.

“Sweden needed us and we needed jobs and income”.

There was also *reciprocity at the micro-level* by their foremen and managers. One villager concluded:

“I’m a good worker and I’m respected as such”

In an interview with a villager in 1970 we met the following argument

“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”

.
For many of the villagers the experience of some basic reciprocity, on both the societal level, and in the employment relationship, was new, and had consequences for their perception of what to expect from employers as well as the State¹¹.

¹¹ . Of course this does not apply to all villagers. This will developed later.

Appendix 1. A short description of the Gavra Project – problems, sources, methods

During the 1960's Greece experienced a massive emigration. From the village of Gavra a large part of the villagers left for Sweden, while others moved to Greek cities, mostly to Thessalonica. In this research project we want to follow the two migration streams from the village. We want to know

- If and how the life-courses differ between those villagers who left for Sweden and those who stayed in Greece
- Which impact these two kinds of migration had on the children in the “second generation” – in terms of education, job career, family pattern etc

In the project we will use *four major sources of data*:

1. We will use the large *Immigration database* in Växjö that has data on all emigrants in Sweden in 1970. Here we find data on all Greek immigrants in Sweden - data on jobs, incomes, family situation etc up till 2000. We also have data on the children of the Greek immigrants.

2. We have conducted a *survey* covering all households in the Village (husband and wife) in the migrating generation (those born 1925-50). We have got 106 interviews about 55% of the relevant villagers, The interviews focus on the job career, geographical mobility, family situation, incl. data on the education and job careers of the children. This part of the project was done in co-operation with scholars at the Aristotle University in Thessalonica.

3. We have done a series of systematic *life-history interviews with villagers*, both among those who migrated to Sweden and those who stayed in Greece. We have done more than 20. Some were follow-ups of interviews done in 1970.

4. We have done a postal survey *with the “second generation”*, both among those who grew up in Sweden and those who grew up in Greece, as well as some life history interviews-

In this way we have been able to link different sources of data, to do a systematic analysis of life trajectories through the use of biographically oriented life histories. This is how the Greek Village project have made use of the data on the Greek immigrants in Sweden and what has happened to them – and their children - over a time span of more than 35 years.

5. We have published a number of research reports, all published on the homepage of the project: www.gavraprojektet.se, as well as a monograph (in Swedish), Gunnar Olofsson and Thomas Thomnell, *Gavra . Historien om en grekisk by och dess invånare* (Arkiv, Lund, 2012)