Writing the next Chapters of our Books

Every-day resistances by Greek women in Sweden

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Master’s Programme
Gender Studies – Intersectionality and Change

Master’s thesis 15 (30) ECTS credits

LIU-TEMA G/GSIC1-A-16/003-SE
**Abstract**

This work is dedicated to exploring the possibilities of everyday knowledges and practices to re-address the issue of resistance, problematize the existing notions and create re-articulations. In what follows, I am investigating the main intersections of discrimination in the experience of the latest wave of Greek women migrants in Sweden in order to single out and analyze the ways and tools of their everyday resistance and re-existence. Grounded in the geo-politics and body-politics of knowledge this research begins with challenging the Greek crisis and migration to transgress all-encompassing categories such as “crisis” “migrant”, “woman”, “everyday”, “resistance” and at the same time propose alternative ways and tropes to comprehend and handle their content.

In order to reconfigure everyday resistance and expose the marginal layers between “obedience” and “disobedience”, I will unlearn and relearn the Greek history, decolonize the Greek identity, and at last reaffirm the experiential knowing through being, a knowledge that has been durably repressed.

**Number of pages: 89**

**Keywords:** resistance, everyday, migrant, women, decolonial, feminism, border thinking, intersectionality
Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank all the interviewed women for their trust, our discussions and co-problematizing, where they showed me different ways of perception in question of our migration and survival in Sweden. Another considerable part of this work is owed to Madina Tlostanova, who generously invested her time to supervise it. I will never forget our precious discussions where she inspired me to think and write independently, even in the parts where I draw from her research and employ her concepts. Another acknowledgement is to my mother, who was very supportive during the entire process: Στη μαμά μου Μαρία.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION**

**RESEARCH TOOLS**

Everyday stories and research questions - intersecting objectives 2
Epistemological and methodological frameworks 5
Researching, thinking, writing – methods and ethics 13

**LITERATURE SURVEY**

Introduction 16
Literature review: women’s migration and/or everyday resistance 17
Summary 21

– MAIN STUDY –

**THE GREEK MIGRATION GEO- AND BIO- GRAPHICALLY**

Introduction – what is new? 22
The Eurozone crisis in the debt zone 24
Reading the crisis through a postcolonial lens 26
Eurocentric classicism in the marginal South: another colonialism? 30
Synthesizing a critique from a certain “place” in colonial difference 32
Conclusions 37

**INTERVIEWS ANALYSIS**

“Who” is “migrant”? 39
Introducing the grammar of reaction to institutional oppression 44
Resistant remembering and the act of disidentification 49
Six-months English - in which world? 55
Resisting from the vantage point of the inter-self – γνωρμίες 63
Create the water for the fish – opening spaces for our “knowledges” 69

**CODA**

74

**REFERENCES**

78

**APPENDIX A**

86

**APPENDIX B**

88
Introduction

Today, certain social issues, such as immigration, social exclusion, “right-wing”, neoliberalism and their opposites, equality, integration, “left-wing”, the welfare state and so on, occupy almost every political agenda in crisis-ridden Europe. As all these, along with their premises and consequences, generate and organize the current “European heat”, numerous theories and possible solutions have so far been proposed. The crises continue. As we will see in this research, most of the current turbulence is interlinked with a fundamental lack of options that is our limitation to anchored categories. To be more specific, when one has to choose some of the existing solutions, s/he might realize that in most cases they are mutually exclusive, coming in binary pairs, like the following: e.g. “profit or social welfare”, “left or right”, “nation-state or migrants”, “man or woman”, “us or them” and so on. For this reason, I argue that, while it appears that there are many different theories and solutions to current problems, it always turns out to be a single option; one has to select one of the two. It could be even put as “ο θάνατός σου η ζωή μου” (your death is my life), if we employ a rough proposition to interpret these single faceted options or the problem at stake.

Even though it seems that this study examines largely familiar issues – e.g. crisis, immigration, gender, and resistance, at the same time it does not. Once a good friend advised me that I have to isolate the part of the sentence after the conjunctive “but”, if I want to see what one really argues. That being said, I am concerned with the contemporary European problems, but in other ways. In the area of social research the task here is aligned with “the problem of formulating social problems” (Lewis 2011: 69) or similarly in the area of gender studies, the problem of formulating feminist problems (Anthias & Yuval-Davis 1983: 72). Accordingly, in the following chapters, by interrogating the presumed constructions “crisis”, “migrant”, “woman”, “everyday” and “resistance”, by asking, for instance, when, where and for what reason they consist a problem, I will introduce other ways to see and handle them. Just think that Greece will be understood more third world than first and it becomes more apparent; when reading this thesis one does not question if acceptance can be seen as resistance, but how resistant is the acceptance.
Everyday stories and research questions - intersecting objectives

This work is dedicated to exploring the possibilities of everyday knowledges and practices to re-address the issue of resistance, problematize the existing notions and engender re-articulations. I am going to investigate the main intersections of discrimination in the experience of the latest wave of Greek women migrants in Sweden in order to single out and analyze the ways and tools of their everyday resistance and re-existence.

While the basis of this work is located in the academic context, the research question and the problems explored here are not inspired exclusively in and by academia. The perception of everyday resistance as survival as well as the formulation of the main research questions occurred in the interstice between the academic praxis and the everyday life. More specifically, my thinking has been affected by the problems from the area of gender studies and at the same time, the everyday knowledge that is “simply” being or living. To show the strange encounter of these different knowledges, I will narrate how this inquiry came to matter.

A great body of gender and feminist studies literature is sharply critical vis-à-vis research that is dislodged from the experience of its subject, namely the issue of “god trick” (Haraway 1988). According to Donna Haraway, when one is researching as though s/he was a neutral observer, some god that could be everywhere, gets rather tricked by the very same objectivity that s/he attempts (1988). To escape these tricks and succeed with our projects, we have been encouraged in gender studies to research from our positionalities, to think and explore as situated subjects. But, while reading and reflecting on my forthcoming thesis, the desired intimacy between experience and research hardly was inspired from any of my situated positions. In the matter of gender equality, my insight into attitudes vis-à-vis gender in Greece or “gendered” environments, such as some of my previous workplaces, appeared neither “gender-equal”, nor new in comparison with my current program in Sweden. On the top of that, former academic knowledge would not inspire an “authentic” gender and/or
feminist research question, since my bachelor study’s subjects and methods of inquiry were mostly under a positivistic school of thought. Altogether, both university and life knowledge were subordinated to the new scholarly experience, despite the fact that the studying environment was quite friendly and welcoming of every student’s ideas.

Nonetheless, the insight into migration along with the day-to-day survival in the Swedish society, better than any academic process, inspired my actual critical thinking and awareness of contemporary problems. Undeniably, the work of feminist scholars that I was studying informed my perspective, but I would like to reflect on how exactly the migrant woman entered and affected the academic context. I am “white”, “European”, from Greece, which is widely seen as the cradle of democracy and European light. When I was at school or at the university and the issue of race was discussed, it was understood as the others’ problem, probably due to the believed privileged position of my country. In this manner, I would not consider race as a problem in my life without the event of my migration to Sweden. Here, all at once, I understood that I was subjected to a different sort of racism, one that was forcing me to consider my position in the world, “teaching” me that I was inferior. In most cases, to maintain myself in the new society, I had to be silent, to accept this position or at least admit that it would not change – is this a realization of my inferiority? I am not convinced yet.

How does a white woman distinguish this sort of discrimination as racial without considering it a matter of class, ethnicity, cultural difference and gender? Further, I had developed a certain knowledge so as to trace intricate technologies of discriminatory practices, such as the mediation of racism through gender equality and the exercise of violence under the pretext of the freedom of one's opinion.

While I was anxiously looking for a plausible research problem, one day my partner asked me, “Why don't you do something on the problems that you have seen here? I am Swedish and I did not know that the system works so bad. Maybe many other Swedes are interested to see this.” This was the peculiar instant when the everyday context and the academic background intersected. A space was opened to fit knowledges of many different sorts, as I was inspired to speak from my intersecting
locations – the knowledges grounded in the everyday experience that I had previously underestimated.

Being supported by the vast literature on migration, the issue of integration in politics and once again, my own experience, my hypothesis formulates as follows: when somebody becomes a migrant (not a tourist or from business class) to a perceivably more developed society they face issues associated to oppression. In this line, I am interested to see, what are the experiences of other women from Greece? Have they been discriminated against or felt bad like me and what do they think? And more importantly, since they are still here in Sweden like I am, how do they survive? How do they overcome obstacles and how does their “being” in this country continue? What do Greek women do or think to resist barriers and solve problems in the Swedish society? These are the research questions that this project is based on and departs from.

Apart from aims that affect me as a person, like to open a dialogue with other women through this research and find opportunities to learn more about the intersecting layers of my identity (e.g. since I am not that “white”, what am I?), the objective, after all, is to see the possibilities of everyday survival to counteract oppression. I am writing this dissertation regardless of the recognition of my “social positioning” in the Swedish society, and this is a good reason to attempt a rereading of resistance and explore its possibilities. Grounded in every-day practice these instances of resistance cannot be understood separately from the body “who” survives and I consider seriously the problem of the subordination of every-day knowledge(s) in the academic sphere. Last but not least, my experience as a migrant woman in Sweden is not the sole aspect of my reality. Current migration is closely connected to the hard times in Greece or the so-called “Greek crisis”. When public vote and democratic means have been subjected to European austerity, social movements, and spontaneous demonstrations are believed to have failed, what do people do and how do they survive?
Epistemological and methodological frameworks

*I am where I think.*

*(Walter Mignolo 2012)*

Having previously problematized that certain presuppositions for the production of knowledge privilege certain strands at the expense of everyday knowledges and experiences, the overarching epistemic framework in this project is the “decolonial epistemic turn” (Tlostanova 2010). Apprehended as decolonizing Western epistemology and/or “the natural principles on which knowledge is built, in disciplinary formations as well as in ideological discourses in the public sphere” (Mignolo 2011: 22), this epistemic turn is not expressed by single categories (e.g. decolonial epistemology). In contrast with the abstract Western universality and its all-encompassing ideas (e.g. epistemology), the decolonial “pluriversality” reinstates “the experiential nature of knowledge and the origin of all theory in the human life-world and experience”; the epistemic decolonial turn thus, focuses on “the co-existence of many interacting and intersecting non-abstract universals grounded in the geopolitics and body politics of knowledge” (Tlostanova 2015a, italics mine). Despite his positioning in the growing over the last decade collective “modernity/coloniality/decoloniality”, Walter Mignolo, decolonial thinker originally from Argentina, does not regard his perspective as representative (Mignolo 2011: 24). Closely, I do not speak for the “decolonial turn”, nor do I master it, since in this thesis intellectual property is not connotative of knowledge. Whence, I build the epistemology chapter on a writer-reader relationship summarized and disclosed by this sentence: “I am not saying what is right for you, but I am showing what is right for me”.

That being said, I will introduce the “decolonial option” by Walter Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova, feminist writer and decolonial thinker from Russia, (Mignolo 2011; Tlostanova 2010; Tlostanova & Mignolo 2009a) as the perspective from where the principles of epistemology are called into question. Subsequently, I will show the methodological input by feminist philosopher and decolonial thinker from Argentina, María Lugones, namely “toward a decolonial feminism” (Lugones 2010; Tlostanova
All these organize and compose the epistemological and methodological frameworks in this inquiry.

The epistemic proposition that I follow in order to describe the praxis of knowing, is aligned with the "decolonial turn" of epistemology or "decolonial option" or "decolonial thinking", in more particular, what Walter Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova have demonstrated (Tlostanova 2010; Tlostanova & Mignolo 2009a). Far from being a theory in any academic discipline, decolonial option, like other existing options against subordination and abuse, places in the forefront a specific problem that is to decolonize knowledge and build decolonial futures (Tlostanova & Mignolo 2009a). Mignolo reframes the decolonial approach like one process that is "double-faceted": (a) delink from modern Western epistemology and (b) build decolonial epistemologies; providing we have delinked from Western epistemology, the path to decolonial epistemologies is paved (Mignolo 2011).

When and where is this delinking realized? When the notion “coloniality of power”, conceived by Anibal Quijano (Quijano 2000), is theoretically and analytically disclosed (Mignolo 2011: 23, 2012: 16, 17). In brief, “coloniality of power” is the current global structure of power, historically emerging in 1492, “together with the formation of the Atlantic circuit and the well known ‘discovery’ of Americas that led to the genocide of the indigenous people and the African slave trade organized by the Western Christian states of Europe” (Tlostanova 2010: 20). Its diachronic operation is showed by Nelson Maldonado-Torres: ‘Coloniality is [...] the set of long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism but continue to exist long after colonialism [...] as modern subjects we breathe coloniality every day' (Tlostanova 2010: 23). Epistemology-wise, coloniality of power is the "energy" and the "machinery" that transforms difference into "value" and "hierarchy": primitives, barbarians, underdeveloped etc. (Mignolo 2002, 2012). All these are "fundamental differences" invented by "the classification of the planet in the modern/colonial imaginary" or otherwise the "colonial difference" (Mignolo 2002: 68, 2012: 12, 13, 17). At stake here, is that the "colonial difference" is not simply descriptive of global inequalities, it rather constitutes a locus of enunciation (Mignolo 2002). This is better illustrated, if we think that coloniality of power in itself did not originate in the Eurocentric modernity; it was rather enunciated from the “exteriority (that) is not the
outside, but the outside (knowledge from the South) built from the inside (knowledge from the North) in the process of building itself as inside (coloniality of power) (Mignolo 2011: 26, my understanding in the parentheses). Decolonial thinking is situated in the border, in the internal exteriority or in the slash that is set between modernity/coloniality¹.

With regards to epistemology, border thinking is enabled by turning the focus from the known to the knower and/or from the enunciated to the enunciation, which I call an “epistemic maneuver”, articulated by Mignolo here:

> The basic assumption is that the knower is always implicated, geo- and body-politically, in the known, although modern epistemology (e.g. the hubris of the zero point) managed to conceal both and created the figure of the detached observer, a neutral seeker of truth and objectivity who at the same time controls the disciplinary rules and puts himself or herself in a privileged position to evaluate and dictate. (2009: 4)

“Zero point epistemology configured by the theo- and ego-politics of knowledge” is at odds with “border thinking configured by the geo- and body-politics of knowledge” (Mignolo & Tlostanova 2006). According to Mignolo and Tlostanova:

> The interconnections between geo-historical locations (in the modern/colonial order of things) and epistemology, on the one hand, and body-racial and gender epistemic configurations on the other, sustain ‘the inverted displacement’ we describe here as geo-politics and body-politics of knowledge. (2006: 211)

Border thinking is the inversion of zero point epistemology (i.e. global designs establishing the white western man as the subject of knowledge) with a geo-politic (i.e. local colonial or imperial histories) and body-politic (i.e. racialized bodies by the colonial/modern hierarchal classifications) of knowledge. While the Western epistemology misappropriates knowledge, as it happened with the case of the ancient Greek philosophy, decolonial thinking is based on different genealogies and histories of thought. For instance, Mignolo and Tlostanova link border thinking with the African-American sociologist and border thinker, W.E.B. Du Bois, who conceived “double consciousness” (Du Bois 1995/1904) and Gloria Anzaldúa, the Chicana

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¹ In the section “Synthesizing a critique from a certain ‘place’ in the colonial difference”, I develop the concept “modernity/coloniality” and how precisely modernity and coloniality come to be seen as one. I also show how the Greek paradigm instantiates several past and contemporary aspects of the coloniality of power.
feminist philosopher – and border thinker who conceptualized the “thinking” in the borderlands (Anzaldúa 1987). In the latter we read, “To survive the Borderlands you must live sin fronteras be a crossroads” (Anzaldúa 1987: 217), that is, the body does not just inhabit geographical frontiers but it is itself the border and thus thinks border-wise.

At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes. (Anzaldúa 1987)

Being on both shores at once cannot be comprehended through a “monotopic hermeneutic” ascribed to the one “shore” (North) or the other “shore” (South), (Mignolo 2012), for this hermeneutic reacts with double consciousness in a conflictual way, aiming to correct it by establishing a single consciousness, either that of “eagle” or that of the “serpent”. A “pluritopic hermeneutic” lies in the colonial difference (Mignolo 2012) and border thinking that is double consciousness and double consciousness that is border thinking (Mignolo & Tlostanova 2006), are conceived by and march through a “pluritopic hermeneutics” (Tlostanova & Mignolo 2009b).

Having outlined the basics of the epistemic and methodological framework of this research, I will accordingly introduce the knower – the “I” of this work. From that point and forth, I will proceed with the feminist methodology and specifically the intersectional analysis perceived from decolonial angles.

I am a woman from Greece dwelling in the verges of Greek indigenous (traditional in modern terms) and cultural knowledge(s) (simple ways of living, religious, pagan, erotic, localized, collective, Eastern, Mediterranean) and the Western knowledge (secular, modern, individual, nationalist, universal, high living standards). As a Greek language teacher, I am dwelling in-between the official Greek language (including the ancient Greek that is imposed by the school curriculum) that I am teaching and the everyday Greek languages that I speak, one full of “disemias”, other with Turkish words, an intense body language, a street language, a singing language, all of them necessary for my survival. To provide some instances, the street one has helped me to

2 Disemia is a linguistic phenomenon, when the words have double, sometimes contradictory meanings, at once. For example the sentence, “Θα μπορούσες να με βοηθήσεις λίγο;” can be translated as both “can you help me for a while?” and “can you give me little (amount) help?”.
understand and keep myself in environments where oppression is very thoroughly concealed, while the appropriation of official – academic – Greek language, has been a shield to block sexual harassment and send it back to the perpetrator.

My multiple “consciousness” is not sighted in the European woman versus Greek woman that is the expected binary schema if we think of the geopolitical position of Greece in Europe. It is rather sighted in the Eastern, spiritual, multiethnic, Eastern Mediterranean, tempered, olive Greek versus Hellenic-Greek, patriot, secularized, purified, rational, pseudo-white, to name just a few of my identities. Greece is a borderland (Kalantidou 2014) and the Greek womanhood, as many anthropologists have argued, is a poetics (Halkias 2004). The Greek womanhood or subjecthood are multiple, associated to the larger metaphor of “Greekness” that builds on the ambiguity which renders Greek identity something to achieve: “who” is “Greek” is always in constant negotiation and contestation. All these will be shown in the next parts of this dissertation, where historical and geopolitical issues are raised.

When it comes to feminism, I am not aligned with the egalitarian Western feminism that suppresses the Greek woman, rendering her a submissive wife or a petty woman (γυναικούλα) living in her traditional roles and prejudices. Additionally, I am not modeling a specific feminist jacket to fit the Greek woman into, for it goes against my principles of knowledge and more importantly, it is impossible: there is no category or unity to fully comprehend the multiple “Greek woman”. From the perspective of the “knower”, as it was just presented, I am aligned with the genealogy of women of color in the U.S., who coined intersectionality and in more specific the works, “But Some of us are brave: All the women are white, all the blacks are men: black women’s studies” by Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell-Scott and Barbara Smith (1982), “Black Feminist Thought” by Patricia Hill Collins (2000) and “Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color” by Kimberle Crenshaw (1991). The latter introduces the notion of intersectionality in the “Stanford Law Review” with the central aim to point to the absence of the black woman from the legal discourse, since her experience in gender and race intersections, was a distinct experience of violence, by no means similar to the white woman (gender) or the black man (race) (Crenshaw 1991). It has been misunderstood that many intersecting axis of power produce more oppression and the women are more
vulnerable. This has occurred because gender, race, class, ethnicity and so on, are seen as categories, no matter how refined and thoroughly developed are the models. The slip is primarily epistemic and methodological, for to “see” categories separately, seized from us or in other words from our geo-historical instances and body biographies, equates to theorizing from the hubris of the zero point. Hence, no “quantity” or “quality”, no “god trick” or “situatedness” is at hand here, but the geo- and body- politics of knowledge. Decolonial feminism is interrelated with intersectionality at the level of the enunciated – as they are both dealing with multiple histories of discrimination, othering and marginalization (Tlostanova 2015b). However, the two diverge at the level of the enunciation – the geopolitics and the body-politics of knowledge, being, perception and thinking that are linked with agents, experiences, and memories, which were denied the right to act as epistemic subjects (2015b).

To provide an instance of how this can be understood and how these “agents” have been denied knowledge and being, I am drawing from Maríá Lugones and her conceptualization of the “coloniality of gender”, a different articulation for “the modern/colonial gender system”, which complicates Quijano’s model of coloniality of power and makes gender a theoretical vantage point to view the colonial world system (Lugones 2016). Reframing gender in her article “Notes toward a decolonial feminism”, Lugones considers it a category that cuts across all the manifestations and modes of social being (2010). During the first modernity (1492 till the European Enlightenment), she tells us, a gender framework grounded at sexual dimorphism was imposed to the colonized people in the Americas: “hermaphrodites, sodomites, viragos, by forcibly turning their bodies into aberrations of male perfection” (Lugones 2010: 743-744). These people, while violently suspended to a sex distribution of females and males, would not be ascribed to one of the two “genders” without becoming “civilized” according to the humanity patterns of the bourgeois man and woman. But this would definitely not be accomplished, for the civilization mission, as Lugones reveals, aimed to the damnation of the colonized or, in other words, the colonizers would always restrain them by virtue of an impossible humanity and gender (2010). In this respect, she demonstrates that the bourgeois woman (1b) was the human inversion of the bourgeois man (1a) and the colonized male was not human from the position of the man colonizer (2) (Lugones 2010, the parentheses mine).
However, the case of the colonized females was very different, since they were not human \(^{(1b)}\) from the position of “women” and they were never understood as lacking humanity because of their being not men-like \(^{(2)}\) or inversions of the colonized males \(^{(2b)}\). The colonized female remains absent \((x)\). As I see it, Lugones introduces the racialization of gender, that is, how people come into race through the gender criterion and not through the color of their skin. For her, “the gender system is not just hierarchical but racially differentiated, and the racial differentiation denies humanity and thus, gender to the colonized” \((2010: 748)\).

In spite of the scope restrictions in my project and the different geography and biography from where I think – by no means do I argue that the Greek woman has been excluded from humanity to a similar degree – I would like to discuss certain points in concern with the intersectional approach. Lugones at some point proposes:

But if we are going to make an-other construction of the self in relation, we need to bracket the dichotomous human/non-human, colonial, gender system that is constituted by the hierarchical dichotomy man/woman for European colonials the non-gendered, non-human colonized. \((2010: 749)\)

In agreement, my first note is the methodological consideration for an intersectional analysis that embraces with “different” or sometimes “contradictory” moves, like setting gender into “brackets”, is more likely to gain than lose in analytical scope. By way of that, considering resistance as complex as oppression, this "bracketing" might open the intersectional approach to understanding resistance, in more complicated ways beyond oppositions vis-à-vis oppressions (e.g. gender, race, age vs sexism, racism, agism so on), to attempt "multiple readings". Not only an argument by decolonial scholars, this is also evident in many cases of fieldwork when researchers impose the category of gender on the women that they study. Another note draws from Tlostanova's concluding argument that:

Even if we cannot escape the dependence on Western grants and NGOs, we can still maintain and cultivate a certain degree of freedom and self-reflection, a conscious rejection of the dominant ego-politics of knowledge and an attempt to build a geo-and body-politics of an other gendered border thinking. \((2010: 204)\)

This suggestion is aligned with the idea that we all “breathe” coloniality/modernity. In my perspective, to think “decolonially” and radicalize existing ideas does not mean to seize from the histories and genealogies of thought that articulated these ideas.
Phenomenally and provincially my methodological framework appears more concentrated on decolonial than feminist perspectives, but this is not the case. Quite the contrary, since without the feminist methodology, I would not be able to facilitate this research, to compose questions, to conduct interviews with women, to raise certain issues; remain critical to my own pre-assumptions and also sensitive to power relations. In this project decolonial option and feminist methodologies are supportive to each other in a distinct transdisciplinary sense, an encompassing one that does not oblige knowledges to compete with each other.
Researching, thinking, writing – methods and ethics

When it comes to feminist methodology, in a more general sense the “embodiment” and “emotion” related to subjugation have facilitated a critical questioning of male dominated strands of thought, even in cases that the latter appear critical to modernity (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002). Having this in mind, in the first chapters I examine and delineate the profile of the recent Greek migration through decolonial angles, analyzing certain geo-historical and biographical sceneries. There I employ the feminist version of “close reading”, a retrospective method to interpret and analyze written materials (Lukić & Espinoza 2011), in this project varying from articles in newspapers and popular politics to more radical studies. Based on the assertion that “it is a racially marked body in a geo-historically marked space that feels the urge or get the call to speak, to articulate” (Mignolo 2009: 2), I practice close readings from my intersecting multiple positions (Lukić & Espinoza 2011: 108) such as the gender studies student, the researcher, the migrant, the Greek woman Other. This method provides me with the opportunity to read carefully, not altering the texts’ content according to my political goals and at the same time considering the particularity and embodiment of my lenses – other readers see different meanings and obtain different understandings.

Moving to the interviews part, the feminist roughly socio-anthropological methods of interviewing and researching “others” were in the center of the entire process. With the aim to question the power of the researcher and also destabilize the privileges of academic knowledge, I did not select “subjects” or “interviewees” or “informants”. Within my small network in Sweden, I asked Greek women (six in total), with whom I had previously met in various every-day environments (i.e. university, Greek community, Swedish language school), if they would like to assist me in exploring different ways of solving problems and surviving in the new country. I designed the interviews and the questions in such way, that the women were not expected to narrate their personal stories, because the purpose was to investigate every-day experiences in difficult situations and possible resistances and not to juxtapose

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3 The structure is divided into three sections: 1. anonymity and consent; 2. description of the aims of the inquiry (Appendix A), engagement of the person in the subjects and space for further reflections (e.g. whether or not it was clear or well-put) (see the questions at the end of Appendix A); 3. a. introductory and background questions, b. main questions on “resistances” and c. open questions and feedback (Appendix B).
migration narratives. I believe that the interview questions were formulated quite openly in terms of bias and in accord with the points of this research (Gayle 2003: 87). Furthermore, I followed the patterns of the participatory model articulated by Letherby Gayle, whereby the researcher is “responsive to the language and concepts used by the respondent” and also “opens and gives something of himself/herself” (Gayle 2003: 83-84). Thus, I tried to stimulate the persons’ interest in the subject of every-day resistance, without inserting certain political ideas in the context; for example, when it was necessary for me to explain or take a position in order to facilitate the discussion, I promoted the contingency of my statements, so as to maintain an open dialogue where the women could express different or oppositional views. To some extent I managed to engage at least some of them:

“P”: If you have discussed with some other ladies, women or girls, a more completed insight might be shaped, a broader opinion (on these issues) …
Eftyhia: Well, this research is concerned with personal experiences of women, so everything is quite subjective and diverse. For example, someone said that […] So, do not really expect that from this research we will retrieve one conclusion. However, we might retrieve a conclusion for the fact that we cannot retrieve one conclusion.
“P”: Yeah. Got it!

When it comes to the interviews analysis is important to clarify that I might see the different issues from my multiple consciousness or border thinking, while the women might not be interested in these approaches or have better ones. These ethical considerations are inspired by the ethics of decolonial research, located in the webpage by the network "Decoloniality Europe" (Decoloniality Europe 2013). Even though we (I and the Greek women that I spoke with) are not members of this movement and our resistances are unofficial and not organized, decolonial ethics has been very supportive to avoid the slippages of translations between and among my interpretations and the ideas of the persons in the interviews. Following these principles throughout the analysis, I have kept my own positions and argumentations distinct by seeing the persons less as informants and more as referents. For example, I was drawing and quoting from their knowledges and concepts like I did with the authors’ ideas and thus, their words have not been merely integrated – the women have been someone different than interviewees in the whole process. Moreover, I was constructing imaginary dialogues with each and every one of them so as to respond to ethical problems: “How do you find this idea or that part of the Greek history?” The
themes that I analyzed were selected in accordance with the preferences of the women – what was the “problem” at issue or what they cared more about was quite clear from their own evaluations, reflections and even from their linguistic and facial expressions. It is at least inconsistent for me, to claim that one facilitates participation and democratic dialogue and later picks the “data” on grounds of personal preference. In sum, the central idea is that apart from the development of this particular study, I think that the knowledges of the interviewed women introduce new interesting agendas in many areas of study and in politics.

Last but not least, it was the feminist writing that facilitated these processes altogether. Here, I am referring specifically to the writing that comes and is inspired from subjected positions – in Anzaldúa the "colonial wound" (1987), which is of a therapeutic kind, helping the scholar to reinstate her subjugated knowledges and positionings. The "disidentificatory" writing, as Nina Lykke argues, is a tool for intersectional feminist writing, for it practices an in-between identifying with different positions, delinking from "monocategorical standpoints" and "one-dimensional ontologies" (Lykke 2014). All these are captured in this sentence:

To speak and write in the name of disidentification can be described as a carving out of positions of enunciation, where foreclosed and/or denied aspects of your intersectionally situated and embodied identity can unfold, and this process of undoing and constructing new positions is to be considered passionately pleasurable and cathartic. (2014: 42)

By rethinking and reforming my Greek identity from decolonial feminist aspects, I disidentify with the Greek Europeanized woman, mother of the Greek nation and I identify with the Greek Anatolian woman or the indigenous woman in the Greek mainland; repressed in history, but still present in the streets of Athens.
LITERATURE SURVEY

Introduction

By way of previous research, the vast literature concerning migration renders delimitation a necessary task. From the previous sections we can see that the problems that this thesis explores are not focused on migration as such, and thus there is a number of issues related to migration, which is left outside the scope of my interest here. This refers to the differentiation between the permanent and temporary labor migration (Fogel 2015), to the ways it is understood in domestic policies, and to the general attitudes towards groups of migrants (Kalogeraki 2012). Consequently, my review embraces studies aiming to look at the experiences of migrant women with a focus on oppression/resistance in individual levels of analysis.

On the contrary, the literature of resistance is narrower, particularly when it comes to unorganized forms, beyond political activism (e.g. social movements, NGO’s, organized communities, labor unions, art activism and so on), this area of research is certainly nebulous. Having conducted extensive literature reviews within social sciences from the year 2000 onwards, Johansson and Vinthagen conclude that “coherent analytical frameworks” are missing, thus research on "everyday" resistance is still searching for “its basic grammar” (Johansson & Vinthagen 2016: 419, 418). This means that there is a considerable variety of methodologies and understandings of "everyday resistance" rendering both terms primarily into question. Thereupon, my reading of previous studies will be an exploration of what has been said about women (not necessarily migrant) who somehow need(ed) to overcome challenges.

Finally, since this thesis combines elements from the aforementioned areas I will attempt a critical presentation of previous research that either handles women's migration experience with some certain sensitivity so that the focus is not solely on oppression, or examines in direct everyday instances of women's “resistance”, “agency”, “reaction”, “response”, “challenging” and other similar terms.


**Literature review: women’s migration and/or everyday resistance**

In the first place, with regards to migrant women and their mobilizations great attention is paid to structural and institutional change. In a comparative study, the authors understand “structural precarity” (various structural exclusions) as intersecting and in constant relation to resistance (individual or collective agency) (Parcet & Gleeson 2016). They discuss on projects that explore resistance in an “everyday” level, such as breadwinning, that their approach is “inward-looking” and “survival”, thus not adequate to challenge broader structural exclusions (Paret & Gleeson 2016: 12). In their perspective, “individual agency” is seen in situations whereby the persons react to illegal offenses (Paret & Gleeson 2016). Even so, it is not clearly shown how these acts can challenge “structural precarity”. How do individuals-immigrants bring changes in the society at large? By being rooted in their own identities and values and then shifting to those of others (born-natives), Ralston could have answered while examining the “multidimensional citizenship” exercised by Asian immigrant women (Ralston 2006). The emphasis is on “agency”. Asian women “reconstruct their ethnocultural consciousness” in everyday activities, while they challenge oppressive systems through their participation in organizations (Ralston 2006). By and large, when structural exclusions demand a more official (e.g law reforms), organized (collective) resistance, “everyday resistances” are seen in response to personal matters and the distinction between “resistance” and “agency” is not always the easiest task.

Other research emphasizes both individual and collective levels of resistance. The “real life dynamics” possibilities to broaden existing perspectives on social stigmatization are taken into account by a study in the Netherlands (Roggeband & Eijberts 2015). Roggeband and Eijberts employ an intersectional approach, sensitive to “intra-group” and “inter-group” differences, to explore responses to stigmatization by Muslim women. Although the authors consider education, generation and gender intersections, the “responses” of women to “stigma” are analyzed through predetermined categories (2015: 135) and in my view, this occludes the investigation of “real life dimensions”. Characteristic in this case is the handling of an “alternative strategy” by women that went beyond the prefixed “response taxonomy” (2015: 146 - 147). This strategy actualized through gatherings, whereby women shared experiences
of subordination, expanded their social networks and learned from each other (2015). Roggeband and Eijberts distinguish them theoretically as “safe spaces” (2015), while they almost leave unexplored their potentiality to counteract stigmatization. How can we see that “real life resistances” matter if our methods do not capture the unpredictability of the every-day context?

Some other studies give special attention to every-day instants in order to investigate the interplay of power and resistance. “The spaces of everyday life are central to understanding the intricate workings of power and resistance” according to Ehrkamp, who, with the aim to deconstruct the romanticism of resistance, interrogates the hegemonic discourses that locate migrant women in passivity (2012). The shift from public to private and reversely adds to the analysis of gender, as resistances of migrant women are shaping differently in the various spaces, either affirming or confronting “hegemonic rules and norms” and “the patriarchal practices of their families and of other migrants” (Ehrkamp 2012: 26, 32). However, these are seen only from a gender aspect overlooking other axes of oppression and finally leaving the host society out in a sense, the study addresses patriarchy in the culture of origin, which reinforces cultural stereotypes.

In a quite different work, Mählk interviews women researchers with migrant backgrounds in Sweden (Mählk 2013). She is concerned with the manifold entanglements of migration history, gender, and race, reflected in the women’s views vis-à-vis the concept of “good researcher” (2013). “Inequality regimes” in the Swedish academia (e.g. the implications of “color blindness”) are seen through “the meanings attached to differently colored bodies” (2013). Resistance is “situated” according to Mählk, as for example a woman attributes the oppression to “instrumentalism” within which academia has better eyes for those “who conform” (2013: 72). In this mindset, she finds affiliations with researchers, who challenge “the western canon of mainstream social science”, not necessarily them having migrant backgrounds (2013: 72). Then the author sees resistance as a “reaching out” and concludes that “to what extent they could resist within the system” is dependent on sources (e.g. how and where they publish) (2013). This gives me the impression that the idea of “resistance” is not challenging the exclusionary systems, for “instrumentalism” is mediated – I suppose – through the privilege of authorship. In
spite of the retrospective analytical framework of intersectionality and the many layers of oppression, the analytic of “resistance” is less complicated.

Other works in the area of migrant women “agency” or “resistance” maintain a focus that accounts for more than one dimensions of women's experience. For instance, Pantea questions the assumed emancipatory nature of migration by shifting her focus from discriminations in the host society to constructions in the homeland and she more engages with women's own appreciation of the respective issues. The interviewed Roma women value differently discrimination according to their social status, cultural constructs and their connection with communities in their homeland. They “have to walk a blurred line between community-specific obligations to share and the more individualistic need to fulfill their potential or to earn a living” (Pantea 2012: 1264). Unlike the other studies that I reviewed, Pantea is not addressing “resistance” explicitly, but still, she is highly concerned with women's agency; her notion “walking through blurred lines” provides a good insight into multidimensional levels of experience from where resistance can be explored. Furthermore, the monolithic perspectives that see migration attached to resistance are questioned by a study in urban Bolivia (Bastia 2011). Aiming to see whether and under which circumstances migration experience is emancipatory, Bastia does not examine the intersections of gender, class, and ethnicity in isolation from other important factors: the history of the place of origin and the accompanied societal changes, in relation to the new conditions in women's lives. In consequence and with reference to the group of women in her research, she suggests ”tracing change further back than just the situation before international migration suggests that change was already well under way” (Bastia 2011: 1526). Although this approach accounts for larger societal changes and macro-structures, I think it provides some useful methodological considerations.

Before closing this section, I would like to briefly present some studies that are concerned with theoretical approaches to resistance. To start with, Johansson and Vinthagen develop a suggestive analytical framework for “everyday resistance” and they support it through various examples and areas from the academia. To do so they question “how is it (resistance) situated in certain time, space and relations and how it engages with different actors, techniques, and discourses” (Johansson & Vinthagen
Their work as a whole gives the picture of “everyday resistance” as an undoing and at the same time re-doing hegemonic structures. They analyze the Bears, “a subculture within the gay community that celebrates the big and hairy gay body […]” and their undoing of the “dominant gay discourse” or “genital/phallus-centered sexuality” on a day-to-day level (Johansson & Vinthagen 2016). The main point is that Bears “embodying positions of marginal masculinity as well as hegemonic positions of masculinity”, are “complicit with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, while simultaneously resist it” (Johansson & Vinthagen 2016). Even if I agree that resistance is not success or failure, I would like to see more explicitly how it is motivated by dominant positions. The authors might introduce the concept of ‘third Space’ by Homi K. Bhabha (1994) and Edward Soja (1996), “an in-between space that dissolves dualism” (Johansson & Vinthagen 2016: 426), but this is not adequately illustrated by the examples that they provide. For me thus, when and where the “third space” emerges and what resistance it enacts, remains a question.

The last study I am reading is quite critical to resistance as such, for the term has different ramifications for non-Western women (Bilge 2010). In general, Bilge positions herself against the liberal humanist ideas that create the construct “subordination vs. resistance”, because this monolithic idea suppresses further the Muslim woman (2010). She examines other works regarding the concept of veil and she proposes the removal of the term resistance and its replacement with an agency from the perspective of Muslim women and not from the repressing Western emancipatory ideas that conflate wearing of veil with “false consciousness” (2010). According to Bilge, postcolonial researchers have provided retrospective analysis of the interplays between indigenous patriarchy and Western hegemony, but women’s agency is attached to emancipatory resistance – a single configuration that obscures the multiple aspects of women’s reality, such as the socializing functions of veil and the religious “desire to submit to God” (2010). Instead, Bilge proposes the employment of intersectionality combined with the poststructuralist critique “that there is no ontological priority of agency to context”, by focusing “on specific contexts and articulated social formations from which different forms of agency and subject positions arise” (2010: 23). This is a thorough understanding and I assume that Bilge sees certain terms in her language that can support the English term agency. When it comes to the Greek case, as long as there is no equivalent term – the word
αυτενέργεια (self-action) is very unusual – in the Greek language, one cannot use the term "agency" in the fieldwork.

Summary

All in all, the above review is indicative of the diversity among researchers’ comprehensions of the every-day resistance and the various methodological issues. There is no single generally accepted understanding of the concept, hence resistance is balancing between personal activity and everyday agency, survival, open reactions or straightforward oppositions to oppressive systems, strategic handling of citizenship and legal reforms. Setting this differently, while there is no doubt if a woman is a migrant woman, it seems that the authors struggle with the multiple analytical levels, the fluidity, and unpredictability – all the elements of everyday life. Even so, there is a common issue, which I call for the moment “resistance objectives”. In my perspective, most studies take for granted what women aim for (or what they are not interested in) or it is confused with the researchers’ visions for social change. I will keep this in my notes as an overarching concern, especially in relation to the initial idea of this chapter that every-day resistance is a non-bounded field, hardly explored in comparison with other areas of study.
THE GREEK MIGRATION GEO- AND BIO-GRAPHICALLY

Introduction – what is new?

The labor migration of Greek people, characterized by high multidimensionality and complexity, occupies a significant part of the whole Greek modern history. From the 19th to the 21st century (from the rebellion against the Ottoman rule and the establishment of the Greek state in 1828 until today), various migratory waves were usually comprised of poor people, who would flee poverty, political instability and precariousness in the following periods of crisis. The wave of 1950-1975 for instance, generated a 10% reduction in the population of the mainland, creating a diaspora of more than 5.000.000 Greeks in 140 countries (General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad 2009). Constantly present in history, emigration is placed among the events that have shaped the nation’s memory and as I will demonstrate below it has been now reactivated.

From 2010 onwards, the year that marked the beginning of the deep crisis in Greece or more precisely the government’s debt-crisis, labor migration has accelerated anew. It is estimated that, since then, more than 200.000 Greeks have moved to countries with more opportunities (Smith 2015). Here, one might say that this is just one of the many instances of economic difficulty and mobility throughout the history of the Greek nation, nothing really new to argue. I am more concerned though with a qualitative distinction between the current and former waves that lies in the question “who is migrating?” – not “how many”, and therefore deserves better attention. This divergence can be observed in mainstream politics, where we read, for example, that in contrast with past migration enacted by poorly educated Greeks, today’s movement is linked with “high education” and “professional competence” (ΚΕΘΕΑ Αριάδνη 2009). Henceforth, the underway wave is often referred to as “brain drain”, a category consisting of migrants, who, although they could contribute much to their homeland with their skills, the move to better countries to escape the bad conditions (Amvrazi 2016).
Being one of these people to flee from the hardships of the crisis – in my case, these translate directly to permanent unemployment or occasional employment with a considerably low wage accompanied by unpaid work – I have moved to Sweden. Albeit I am quite educated, the category \textit{brain drain} provokes some sort of unease in me, so I account for other aspects. First of all, unlike past examples, the latest movement of professionals contributes to the growth of the host society at the expense of the home country’s economy, ergo enlarges the development gap (Labrianidis 2014). Tellingly, the \textit{brain drain} has a negative side. Besides, considering the previous question “who” is migrating (?) and despite the heterogeneity of the migrant group, recent works reveal that most of the Greek migrants come from “better-off families” (upper and middle classes) (Labrianidis 2014: 325). Certainly, mobility these days is further enabled by the double investment of capital and scientific/professional merit.

Leaving the statistics aside, I would like to look into the nuances of \textit{brain drain}: how the category is conceptualized and particularly when somebody’s “brain” is “drained” – by someone or something, as the syntax implies. While the financial element is the technological and capital benefits for the host countries that “absorb” additional human capital (Labrianidis 2014: 316), the ideological/conceptual element is the integration (drain) of the skilled, educated, capable etc. persons (brain). Figuratively, \textit{brain drain} in itself is somehow inclusive of the unskilled, uneducated, incapable, not-integrated others, for they are necessary to the realization of those with capacities. As the different categories of people are mutually constituted, \textit{brain drain} is more comprehensive than it seems. To put it simply, behind the showcase we find the people who are not able to migrate and integrate in more economically stable countries, the Greeks remaining in Greece or the rest of the population.

This can be illustrated with a short glance at popular politics, like in the following argumentation found in a famous Greek newspaper (Kathimerini). Nowadays, “the better” Greeks leave the country at a ten times faster rate (Қασιμάτης 2015). Κασιμάτης argues that they are undoubtedly the best because they have the required skills for professional opportunities in markets that are more competitive (2015). Moreover, these people have the substantive skills: the courage first of all, […] and
whatever is needed […] in order to claim the dignity that they deserve in other places (2015, translation mine). Then the author compares those capable of migrating with the people who stay in the country; the former see their selves in the world, but the latter are “inward-looking” and shiftless, even if they are aware of their deficiencies (2015). Adjusting this to the brain drain scheme, the talented, competent and open-minded, are more likely to be “drained” and integrated in prosperous markets and societies. Even though popular politics is not the area of my focus, such examples vibrantly tell us that the entrance to the more developed countries is associated with certain virtues and, as I previously showed, a sort of privilege. If that is the case, “brain drain”, “young professionals’ migration” and the like are far from neutral.

No matter how careful we are with the discriminatory leakages of the terms for our migration, the linguistic analysis uncovers a limited problematic, which does not provide any specific interpretations. The interplay of privilege and discrimination is rather old, but in the case of recent Greek history, everything is perceived through and within the economic crisis. This appreciation obscures other aspects, such as the racism we have been confronted with lately. Then I might ask instead, why didn’t our fellow Europeans show empathy to our problem? Why do some persons occasionally meet the standards of foreign markets, despite the majority of Greeks being highly educated? Regardless of our location in the “developed world”, why do the borders remain impenetrable? Aiming to obtain a broad and at the same time retrospective understanding, I will discuss how Greece and the Greeks are seen since the crisis started.

**The Eurozone crisis in the debt zone**

During the recent years, there are worries that the scope of the crisis is larger than it seems since it is interlinked with issues beyond finance. But in order to explore them, we first need to demarcate the Greek debt crisis by looking into the economic doctrine. Indeed, the international crisis of 2008 is highly complex and all the theories and opinions by different experts comprise an enormous library. Through my non-specialized eyes, the financial nonsense(s) with the world capital disappearing and returning – let me say – in magical ways create more and more stories. Therefore, I will not narrate “The story” of the Greek crisis; I will rather tell a story of the events, which from 2008 onwards unfolded as follows.
According to Βαρουφάκης, Πατόκος, Τσερκέζης & Κουτσοπέτρος, the financial crisis started from the U.S. in 2008 and then transferred into Europe (2011). At that juncture, while some states managed to keep their debts under control, Greece’s was inflated damaging the credibility of the country in the international markets (Βαρουφάκης, Πατόκος, Τσερκέζης & Κουτσοπέτρος 2011). The continuous degradation by the international rating agencies made the government bonds to be seen as “junk” and fear was spread that the Euro was under threat by the failure of the Greek economy; in May 2010 the Greek government asked for help from its European partners (2011: 43-44). The help was designed by the European Union (EU) and the European Central Bank, resulting in aid was a huge loan under the terms of a rescue agreement between the funders, the Eurozone states and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), also known as “Troika”, and the borrower Greek state (2011). The first Memorandum of Understanding inclusive of structural changes was signed (2011).

Until today three more loans have been assigned to Greece putting three memorandums into effect. In a financial/social perspective, the memorandums’ austerity has boosted unemployment and impoverished the society. The heavy taxation penalized low-income groups and in 2012 one-third of the population were unwaged; Greece soon became the country with the highest rate of poverty risk and social exclusion in the Eurozone (Oxfam 2013). Certainly, the people did not tolerate the austerity – e.g. “The Indignants” (originally from the Spanish “Indignados”) was a big spontaneous mobilization that lasted for sixty days, expanding from the central square of Syntagma in Athens to squares in other cities (Leontidou 2014). Kostas Douzinas (Greek intellectual and critical law professor) sees this as a great “multitude” and informal solidarity, which transformed into “a people” that elected the radical left party Syriza (Douzinas 2014).

Even so, as the economic situation deteriorated a new loan was in its offset. Regardless of the bailout referendum with the Greeks voting 60% - 40% against the forthcoming austerity terms, the third memorandum was enforced. With the aim to measure how “poor” the poor are, a recent survey reveals that 15% of the respondents (17.6% of them were children and 24.4% youth 18-29) survive extreme poverty
Almost everybody agrees that all the financial and political issues drive the society in the wrong direction (2016).

Giving us a pause for thought, the story of the crisis in Greece discloses that every democratic action has been suspended to a clear disregard. Having witnessed the events, I have observed that every resistant response, be it demonstration or vote, has been accompanied by more austerity. During an academic debate on the Greek crisis in 2010, Balibar critically describes the memorandum as “purely technocratic measures which amount to a kind of dictatorial process were imposed without the slightest element of democratic discussion, both within the country and outside the country” (Lapavitsas 2010). Indeed, the external direct management of Greece is currently holding the people in a prison of debt. Neither a certainty nor an exaggeration, I read a similar argumentation in Douzinas’ prolog, that is, “German economists and industrialists have started arguing that ‘special economic zones’ with tax breaks and no protection for the workers should be introduced. […] A special zone is a euphemism for an economic ghetto or company town” (Douzinas 2013).

Characterized as “prison of debt” or “economic ghetto” or some other metaphor for the exercised restriction of freedom, at issue here is the plain disregard of those in the “zone”. As long as foreign political and military interferences have been constant since the establishment of the Greek state, the Greek people use every-day phrases, such as “The outside” (οι έξω), in order to quickly refer to those who make decisions. Arguably, those in charge of making laws are at the same time in the position to disregard: “The outside”.

Considering all these assaults on the people’s rights and their imposed impoverishment, from the national we move to the pan-European level. What is lying in all this negligence and absence of democratic processes? Why are the people’s voices ignored when the contemporary EU society claims equality and freedom? Let me expose some broader historical and socio-political views on the European crisis.

**Reading the crisis through a postcolonial lens**

To explore the above questions, I shall draw from the analytical framework of
postcolonial studies. Since the 1980’s, it is considered a theory and methodology for the study of the nature of Euro-American nations’ domination and exploitation of cultures, countries, and regions, such as South America, Asia, Africa, Canada, Australia and others (Nayar 2015: 122-124). Through this prism, postcolonialism “provides a critical commentary that serves the act of cultural resistance to the dominion of Euro-American epistemic and interpretive schemes” (2015). Standing on the part of the formerly colonized or the oppressed, it seeks to study the nature of the subjects in the interplay of oppression and dominance (2015). Apart from discursive critiques, interrelated with theoretical frameworks from poststructuralism, postmodernism, Marxism and feminism, postcolonialism examines materialist conditions of exploitation engaged in by the contemporary world system (2015). Precisely here, I see the relevance of a postcolonial analysis for a critical interpretation of the current crisis.

In his recent synthesis of postcolonial views on the Eurozone crisis, Mikelis explains that “the movements of the EU can be deciphered as forms of asymmetric ignorance and violence exerted from a core of states of such a society over its peripheries” (2016: 5). This stems from the fact that the EU project was founded on the basis of Eurocentrism, the prevailing logic that posits a European world center (Mikelis 2016: 5). Eventually, the EU policies and standards are not apt to support peripheral countries, hence the current cruelty and negligence and even though the severity of the economic and social problems make the Greek situation distinct, these unequal practices have been affecting the whole European South. Due to their weak economies that have some common characteristics, the Southern countries are often suspended to hard criticism and on the top of that they are assigned to a specific group: Portugal, Italy, Greece & Spain or simply “the PIGS”. As we read in the “Independent”, PIGS are the countries that, “for too long had binged on cheap debt and booming construction sectors and allowed citizens’ benefits to go well beyond the means of their governments” (Dawber 2015).

However, the PIGS membership is not appointed with sole thanks to finances, when we consider that the aforementioned countries form the South of Europe. First, this

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4 Meanwhile, having faced its own financial challenge, Ireland has been joining the group; therefore sometimes we find the term PIIGS instead of PIGS.
category is comparatively older than the PIGS, and second, like other European peripheries (e.g. the Eastern countries) it is not facticity but a conception. In other words, there is no geological element, such as a peninsula, or other neutral aspect indicative of the distinction and in consequence, the geographical imaginaries unfold in accord the colonial concept of core and periphery, thus reflect hierarchy (Mikelis 2016). The two categories – PIGS regarding finances and the European South regarding geo-historical sides – have been thoroughly propagated by international media and official political agencies. In 2010 the European South was pictured as a threat to the Eurozone and the European project at large (Dawber 2015). The infamous PIGS were not just the scapegoats of the Euro-crisis, but also the deviant EU member-countries.

This propaganda resulted in stigmatization against the Southern countries and their citizens. As Leontidou exposes, the crisis “engulfs broader cultural transformations, which includes a fierce offensive against Southern cultures and ways of life” (2014). Drawing the notion of “Orientalism” from Edward Said, she ascribes this offensive to “quasi-Orientalist discourses” (Leontidou 2014). These are bodies of knowledge (i.e. ideas, beliefs, stereotypes) about the East, which are sensible only within the Western world and – paradoxically enough – are unlikely to offer an understanding of the Orient (2014: 554). Concerned with the crisis and mobilizations in the Greek cities, Leontidou suggests that “Quasi-orientalism” proliferates as an attack from the Northern European elites, the media, the Troika, to the Greek Government that stigmatizes the people (2014). That being said, in both media and academy, the profligacy of the state is interrelated with a corrupt, lazy and greedy culture. As Batsis points, while in all countries the private interests have been mixing in public policies, the corruption in Greece is exceptionally discussed as a major economic determinant (Lapavitsas 2010). The difference lies in the personalization of the processes: “in the eyes of the “good white Europeans”, it looks like being dirty” (Lapavitsas 2010). Greece is understood as a special case, through a politics of blame with a characteristic irony and zero interest in internal debates and alternative voices (Mikelis 2016).

Prior to any conclusions, I would like to insert a specific discussion on the emergence of neocolonialism in the Europe of crisis and the EU in particular. In a postcolonial
vein, such views have been elaborately expressed by many scholars, who discuss the manifestation and organization of the EU as a derivative of imperialist systems (Mikelis 2016). They claim that the colonial legacy of Europe is not only practiced to its external relations, but it is also reflected in the EU’s inner processes. In the light of the Eurozone crisis especially:

the EU does not emerge as an anti-colonial entity but might do possibly as a neocolonial one, insofar as it transforms certain states to debt colonies and reproduces the colonial dependence and the dominance of a superior Northern core towards an inferior Southern periphery, not unlike other historical cases. (2016: 12)

The notion of “debt colony” is not adopted only by Greek scholars, but also by other authors, who investigate specific parallels between new colonialism and the enforced memorandums in Greece. Through the ever-rising debt the generated surplus returns to the Troika institutions in the form of interest payments on the debt; this is the means to wealth extraction (Rasmus 2015). Furthermore, political decisions cannot be made without approval by the loaners, who have their own representatives in the Greek parliament in order to monitor legislative actions; the country is directly managed (2015). Last but not least, the interventionist policies and privatization drives in the European South have considerably untied protective environmental and social policies, making the way smoother for multinational extractive businesses (Argenti & Knight 2015: 783-784). In Greece, such businesses have recently initiated renewable energy exports that harness the local economies and the citizens, who perceive the renewable energy as colonial, reanimating stories of previous occupation and famine (2015: 782, 798).

While I am moving to another part of the background of the latest wave of migration, I understand the current crisis with the memorandum enforcement and its aftermath, as encapsulated in the annihilation of an entire generation. Since 2009, many people from this generation have been fleeing unemployment and poverty, but they have not yet fled other aspects, nonetheless. Although some intellectuals send implicit signals that this situation is not unprecedented; although some others discuss more explicitly the appearance of neocolonial practices and legacies in the patterns of older

5 Characteristically, Bratsis stresses that “the idea that corruption and clientelism are the sources of the crisis […] goes back to the old colonialist idea that the cause of poverty in the south is because the people are not hardworking enough, not civilized enough, and corrupt in general” (Lapavitsas 2010); and also in Leontidou we read that the Western World is “our world which was crypto colonial even before the crisis” (2014).
colonialisms; most of the views are partial, showing only a few symptoms. Who are the Northern power elites for example? Did they invent discourses for the South for their expansionary politics or they just reinforced pre-existing ones? If they pre-existed, when did these discourses emerge? What can be suggested for the crisis and the neocolonial forces in Europe? We need to draw broader conclusions that are more meaningful to our post-migration lives.

**Eurocentric classicism in the marginal South: another colonialism?**

In order to indicate the anterior marginal position of Greece and at the same time attempt some quick answers to the above issues, I will connect the previous critical points – neocolonialism, quasi-Orientalism, “routinization” of racism and the marginality of European South, with some historical events.

To begin with, Italian decolonial thinker Roberto Dainotto, professor of Italian language and literature, interrogates the formation of the prevalent modern theory of Europe that inaugurated in the 18th and 19th centuries (2006).\(^6\) Constructing a critical genealogy of Eurocentrism, his study “Europe (in Theory)” interprets the antithetical entity of the European South that is understood today as Europe and at the same time non-Europe (Dainotto 2006). While “Europe” had been understood via the oppositional scheme of the civilized and organized West versus the barbarian and chaotic East since the ancient times, during the epoch of Eurocentrism, when modern theories of Europe were formulated, a reference shift was engendered (Dainotto 2011: 41-45). For commercial purposes and for the re-centralization of the power in Europe – the latter had been disempowered because of the growing attention to the colonies (2006: 65-66, 2011: 45-46), Europe had to reorganize under a new definition, in order to appear self-completed – without looking to the Orient (2006: 53 – 54). This “supplementary and modern genesis”, the Eurocentric scientific theorization of Europe as a totality, represented a system so self-sufficient that was apt to engulf its “Other” (2006: 53,2011: 46-47). At that juncture, Eurocentric modernity suppressed its internal differences, by finding the “backwardness” and “deficiency of Europeaness” in its South (2006: 54-59); or in a broader sense “the negativity of South was the necessary condition for all the Eurocentric Theories of Europe” (2011: 41-45).

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\(^6\) With regards to epistemology, I have discussed the concept of “decolonial thinking” in the chapter “Epistemological and methodological frameworks”. Below, I will analyze the notion “colonial difference” in relevance with the past and current Greek problems.
As Orientalism prepared the ground for Southernism, it could not provide Europe its very own past – this task was exclusively assigned to the South (2000: 381-382). In his book, Dainotto quickly mentions that the testimony of the characteristic Southern vice (his focus is on Southern Italy) basically ensued from “the southbound Grand Tour” (2006: 70). To advance their social status with cultural sophistication, European bourgeois (Dainotto 2000) and anthropologists, attracted by the cult of antiquity (the classical learning revival by the European Enlightenment) made Greece a famous travel destination (Panayotopoulos 2009). In consequence, this activity marked the contemporary land as “a stone theater of frozen time” and also established the Eurocentric model of history as civilizational progression (2009: 185).

This kind of sophisticated exploration did not give so much to Greece as to the Western civilization. First, if we accept that “Greek” was equivalent to “Orthodox” in the Ottoman Empire, it was the Enlightenment and its coinage of Ancient Hellas that carried secularism, which resulted in the alternation of ethnic identity (Kitromilides 2012; Panayotopoulos 2009). Since the late 18th century the German philologists, doing the ideological work for the European world hegemony generated cultural eugenics and the neoclassical model in Greek culture (Herzfeld 2002). The racial kinship, therefore, was granted to the people inhabiting Greece, who, being compared to imaginary ancestors, were more likely to disappoint (Leontis 1996). As if Greek thinkers had not been studying the classical texts, the West imposed itself as “the repository of antiquity’s legacy” (Panayotopoulos 2009: 185). On the top of that, the 19th century folklore and the 20th century anthropology insisted on making the imagined classicism observable in a real place and Greece became a topos where the past could be sighted; the contemporaneous land was repressed into a preserved un-modern world (Leontis 1996), while Europe was seen its modern perfection or telos (Dainotto 2006).

Similarly, Michael Herzfeld, professor of social science and history of anthropology,

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7 Even though it had begun from the 16th century, the Grand Tour is associated with aristocratic British travelers who, during the 18th century, were traveling to the South of Europe for the purpose of personal fulfillment through pleasure and education. The Grand Tour apart from preceding today's tourism also constituted an important source of descriptive and imaginative literature and art (Black 2004).
elaborating his critique of the processes at work in the cultural construction of the Greek modern identity, tells us that in spite of its recognition as birthplace of civilization, ancient Greece does not have any practical significance in the intellectual genealogy of anthropological thought (2002: 900-901). Although it was partly employed by the project of Eurocentrism, the knowledge of the ancients was registered as antiquated or arbitrary (Dainotto 2006). In the 18th century, the intellectuals, who carried the project of *European modernity* aiming at the centralization of power in the nation-states of Northern Europe, could not care less about Aristotle (Dainotto 2006).

All in all, if we attend to the historical in/exclusions of the European South, we observe many contradictions in the developed world that extend our agendas with new issues. The ambivalence in the country, such as the equivocal presentation of the nation, as premodern/ancient and modern/contemporary, Western, Eastern, Orthodox, and Hellenic, has been interpreted within the disciplines of anthropology and art in the framework of concealed colonialisms (Herzfeld 2002; Panayotopoulos 2009). Another remark is the generally recognized, historical and cultural impact of European hegemonies on the construction of contemporary knowledge and identity in European South and specifically in Greece (Dainotto 2006: 1-8; Herzfeld 2002: 912-914; Leontis 1996: 130-131; Panayotopoulos 2009: 188). These examples altogether, give some further answers to the European intellectuals, who “could not believe how modern Greeks ‘descendants of the founders of philosophy and democracy’ could deteriorate to such a degree” (Douzinas 2013). Perhaps many of us could not believe it either – could we?

**Synthesizing a critique from a certain “place” in colonial difference**

To show what is for some intellectuals “unbelievable”, I am re-reading the modern history of the Greek state. There are certain views that reveal the colonization of “Greeks” by “other Greeks” (Kalantidou 2014) and in order to explain this paradox, it is enough to argue that the latter were educated in Western universities, speaking and writing in a sort of purist Greek language, which was alien to the former (Bien 2005). The educated Greeks-colonizers, namely the Phanariots, a powerful elite living in diaspora, had been early espoused Eurocentric ideas that the West rescued the light of
Hellenes from the Ottoman shadow and so on, thus like the Europeans they were convinced that Hellenes-Greeks had to rediscover their great culture from Europe (Bien 2005; Kitromilides 2012). Historians also indicate that the Greek Enlightenment was not invented or supported by the indigenous people (Kitromilides 2012), thus the nation’s freedom that preconditioned seizure from the Ottoman Empire was not everyone’s desire (Doumanis 2012). Initiated much earlier than the liberation of the nation, the project of Greek Enlightenment through secularization and education, worked for the Phanariots to establish a concealed colonization of the indigenous people (Bien 2005; Kalantidou 2014; Kitromilides 2012). Their commercial expansionist plans were competing the Ottomans and it can be suggested that modernization served its carriers, particularly their interests in power (Kalantidou 2014). Not surprisingly, the Greek Independence that was mediated with the support of the European Great Powers brought new colonizers, additional exploitation, and also many loans issued by Western funders to the Greek peasant and indigenous people (Doumanis 2012; Kalantidou 2014).

To connect with the present conditions, Dainotto sees Eurocentrism as a crucial category for an understanding of “the dialectical inclusion and exclusion of the south – its historical necessity for the formation of a parochial universalism and its liminality in any modern theory of European identity” (2006: 4-5, italics mine). The Greek paradigm vibrantly illustrates how the South of Europe has been necessary for the European history – as this was initiated by the universities of the North, yet suppressed in other areas of knowledge, such as social sciences. The critical cross-readings that I employed in this chapter, reveal the economic and political dependence, the cultural importation of Eurocentric classical and modern models, the practical absence of ancient Greek knowledge in modern sciences and the subordination of the Eastern religious and cultural identities to modernization, all indicative of the hidden negative side of Greece’s incorporation in the West and its reinvention as the origin of “Europe”.

With regards to these elements it becomes clearer that the crisis did not bring a negative social reality anew. Geographically – and imaginary – included in Europe,

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8 The Europeanization of Greece, while it was considered part of the Ottoman Empire, needs further investigation, as Dainotto suggests, it might be “the most obvious symptom to subordinate the Orient into a European principle” (2000: 380).
politically in the EU, economically in the Eurozone, militarily in NATO and conceptually the cradle of Western civilization, Greece is not considered a subaltern country. However, the foreign intervention has been always present, since before the Greek rebellion of 1821 and the establishment of the Greek modern nation-state. Herzfeld uses the term “crypto-colony” to illustrate the exchange of nominal independence in 1830 with financial and cultural dependence (2002: 900-901). Distinct is the approach by a Greek design psychologist and researcher in Australia, Eleni Kalantidou, who rearticulates the role of the nation/state in the Greek political scene especially the conditions for its establishment and its clientele functions throughout modern history (Kalantidou 2014). In my understanding at least, the implicit remark is that the state has been the central mechanism through which colonial forces have imposed their control on the former indigenous people and the later Greek population (2014). Similarly, other scholars see that the country has been subjected to an ongoing tutelage and colonialism: financial, ideological and even military (Argenti & Knight 2015). Expressing his view on the photovoltaic plantations in Thessaly, a farmer states:

There are two hundred years of family history in fighting for that land you see, fighting against occupiers – Turkish, German, British. But now it is owned by foreign invaders again […]. My family has won back their land before and my children will have to do it again. (Argenti & Knight 2015: 790)

Then another farmer says:

This [photovoltaic] program is offered to me by the government as a way to survive. But I know that they are capitalizing on me, they are making money out of my situation . . . We risk becoming the tsifliki of northern Europe as they occupy our land for cheap energy […] and let the governments of Europe exploit me as my ancestors were exploited by four hundred years of slavery to the Turks. (Argenti & Knight 2015: 791)

The people recall historical events such as the later Ottoman period, the British rule in some regions and also the German occupation during World War II, in order to reify the EU austerity (Argenti & Knight 2015). According to Argenti and Knight these discourses of international conspiracy and interference, of foreign tutelage and intervention create metanarratives of crisis, which goes hand in hand with the imposed austerity (2015). Instead, I would rather argue that the EU-imposed austerity activates the awaken memory of colonialism; in decolonial terms the “colonial wound” (Anzaldúa 1987: 22-23).
As Walter Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova present, while postcolonial studies emerged in the United States (U.S.) at the moment of the development of women studies, ethnic studies, Chicano/Latino/a studies, African-American Studies, Queer Studies, Asian-American Studies, etc. the decolonial thinking advances from the “open wound of the global coloniality” (Tlostanova & Mignolo 2009a). The decolonial option is a perspective developed in the Third World during 1970's (Asia, Africa, and Latin America) (2009a). Colonialism is a historical event that ended with the revolutions by the colonized peoples (for example the colonialism by the Ottomans ended in 1830) and it is different from “coloniality” (Mignolo 2002).

Anibal Quijano, a Peruvian sociologist, and humanist thinker, tells us that the modern world-system formed since the colonization of the America in 1492 and “has in common three central elements that affect the quotidien life of the totality of the global population: the coloniality of power, capitalism, and Eurocentrism” (Quijano 2000). As Tlostanova reads Quijano, coloniality of power or the colonial matrix of power is a global structure that “manifests itself with the formation of race, the control of labor, the control of subjectivity (including gender) and the control of knowledge (Tlostanova 2010: 20). Moreover, Quijano explains how European culture has monopolized modernity⁹ and rationality (Eurocentrism) (2000). The former belongs to the European civilization started from the Greco-Roman ancient times imposed its universality (2000: 543-544), while the second is based on the European philosophy that the subject is the bearer of “reason”, while the object is marked by “nature” (Quijano 2007: 172-173). For Quijano, “The very idea of Europe was establishing itself precisely in relation to the rest of the world being colonized” the world that could be nothing else than “objects of knowledge or/and domination practices” (2007: 173-174).

All things considered, we arrive in two basic theses. First, the concept of “modernity” is only the Western civilization’s modernity that unfolded together with the modern world system (a spatial articulation of power), which coincided with capitalism (Mignolo 2002). Second, the coloniality of power established the Western-Northern

⁹ It is very important to note here that Quijano and decolonial thinkers in more general indicate that modernity unfolded in the 16th century together with capitalism and the Atlantic commercial circuit; this contrasts what is generally accepted that modernity started from the 18th century (Mignolo 2002: 58).
European zones as the hegemonic center of the world (Quijano 2000). The two theses are summarized into the conceptualization of modernity as colonial from its very beginning (2000: 548). Hence, colonization constitutes modernity, being its darker side (Mignolo 2002) or otherwise, coloniality and modernity are the two sides of the same coin (Tlostanova 2010); we are still living in the same regime (Mignolo 2002; Tlostanova 2010).

As pointed previously, the global colonial/modern world system started from the 16th century onwards is encompassing all peoples and cultures. According to Walter Mignolo, from the moment the coloniality of power is shown we are engaged in colonial difference (2012). This intuition is “the difference between center and periphery, between the Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism and knowledge production by those who participated in building the modern/colonial world and those who have been left out of the discussion” (Mignolo 2002: 63). Contrastingly to the uniformity sighted in Western “global designs”, the colonial difference is sighted in different local histories and thus it is an open category (2012). From the many peripheries of Europe different views are generated: for Dainotto the European South is an “internal Other” different from other Souths in the “Global South” (2000); Todorova, a historian from Bulgaria, shows that the Balkans is imaginary cast as Europe’s incomplete self (1997: 18); Mignolo & Tlostanova indicate that the Russian Empire is a secondary one, looking to its Asian colonies with superiority and to the West with inferiority (2006).

If we think that the ancient Greek philosophy and Hellenic civilization was appropriated and re-coded by the West (Mignolo 2002; Tlostanova 2010), the Greek Enlightenment, secularization, nationalism and modernization, are comprehended as projects grounded in coloniality of power, designed to establish new colonial legacies and controls in the Greek mainland. At some point, we need to remain critical, as Kitromilides asserts that some parts of the traditional faith in the Eastern Church were not contradictory to the element of atomization in Western Enlightenment and thereby secularization was not seen with hostility in Greece (2012). It is as though the Greeks volunteered to their Europeanization and radical detachment from the East. In my view, though, this is quite not true, especially if we look at the “aid” and interference of the Great European Powers (Great Britain, France, Russia) in the Greek and
In Greece of our times with the crisis and austerity, the decolonial option is full of potentials for the people. Previously I created some entry points that I now call “traces” of the colonial matrix of power: (a) the control of labor directly through the memorandums (b) the control of subjectivity through the imposed Europeanization and developmentalism, (c) the control of knowledge via Enlightenment and nationalism and finally, (d) the classification of race with the insertion of racial eugenics and the invention of the degenerated “races” of the indigenous people. Many times, we have joined the colonial side arguing ourselves that we deserved the aids from the West, engraving potential openings for other economies and futures. If I am to explain this, having experienced the events since 2010, it is the “routinization” of racism, which usually appears in terms of culture, that registers the austerity as salvation or naturalizes punishment: we have been lazy, corrupt, disorganized, Orient, Southern, not fully human and now we get the “aid” we deserve.

In sum, the applicability of the concept of coloniality of power and wider the decolonial thought serves two objectives: the development of a critical understanding of the crisis and the radical rejection of the austerity regime as coloniality’s product. There are “locales which have specifically refused to receive orders and recommendations from the IMF, the White House, or the European Union” (Tlostanova & Mignolo 2009a: 139). Why could not Greeks be one of them?

Conclusions

In this specific part, my presentation started with the interrogation of the Greek migration as “brain drain”, specifically the argument that only some can be “mobile”, while for others the borders are closed even in cases when they are nominally open. After that, I constructed the background of the crisis in economic, political and social perspectives, which I directly filtered through contemporary postcolonial views on the emergence of neo-colonialism in Europe. In the following section, by opening up to the fields of history and culture, in accord with Dainotto’s decolonial insight from the
European South, I presented the ambivalence that has accompanied Greece during its modern history and at the same time I tried to wipe off some historical sand from the “Greek” eyes. Subsequently, I discussed the decolonial perspective and some of the reasons why I see it applicable and useful not only for understanding but also trespassing the crisis. Needless to say, Greek migration is part of this problem and especially from the moment that we do not leave our friends and families for pleasure and civilization like the bourgeoisie travellers. All of our issues and resistances in the host society are interlinked with many elements of the historical and political frame that I sketched in the previous chapters.

While I could have discussed the decolonial perspective and the colonial matrix of power at the beginning of my presentation (the main theoretical framework that informs my views) and after that support it by drawing connections with the Greek instance, I purposely chose the reverse route. That being so, the above sections are structurally and conceptually based on my migration experience itself that was realized though similar stages: it unravelled from the illusion that I am a “European” to the awareness of my enforced migration by the crisis, which was encompassing of more aspects than finance, to the interrogation of the Western developmental discourse and the “Europeaness” of Greece and in more general its belonging to the West and finally, the suspicion that the austerity measures basically serve colonial interests. Within a life and academic circumstance a certain reflective period begun and arrived almost naturally to decolonial thinking; I wish my analysis reflected this long journey.
“Who” is a “migrant”? 

At a transnational level, scholars have usually understood the migration of women as a strategic trip toward global justice, a seeking for better jobs and an opportunity to achieve modernity and inclusion in global citizenship (Bastia 2011). When the focus turns to the individual level, however, migration can be an opposition to oppressive systems and situations in the country of origin (2011). This suggests that we (the group of migrant women) have the opportunity to find resources, better conditions and also justice, as for instance, to disentangle from the sexist discourses and patriarchal institutions in Greece. Nevertheless, concerned with the heterogeneity of women’s migration and also gendered norms and cultural or religious pressures in the receiving country, Marchetti and Salih discuss that gender dynamics, better unravel through a specific examination of different stages, comprising the stage of “individual migrants whose migration choices are influenced by their personal histories and households” (Marchetti & Salih 2015). 

Even though our migration is an actual event – we took off from Greece so to speak - I would like to reconsider the role of the category “migration” for, as the following story says, it obscures the every-day dynamics: Imagine a company of Greeks at a café in Sweden. Everyone else, disturbed by their loud and lively voices, is staring at them, through the corner of their eyes. Few discussions later and you realize that they talk about migrants as if they are not migrant themselves: just a couple of Greek students in Sweden. And let us now observe the pronouns of my sentences; I speak as if we (“I” and them) were coming from different worlds (!). Problematizing the category “migrant” is so useful as to disclose other interpretations and concepts that I will develop in the following lines.

My own migration experience made me soon realize that I was wrong to assume that all EU citizens are equal under the EU laws. For this reason, I am connecting here with Mignolo, specifically, his interpretation of “global citizenship” that manifests in the colonial and imperial difference and thus, it only applies to a small elite (Mignolo 2006). Here is what Mignolo says:
People move to find better living conditions [...]. Fair enough. However, better living conditions are also a *myth* and an *illusion* for immigrants from a lesser country in the global distribution of wealth, who largely would have difficulties enjoying the privileges of the nationals of the better country. (2006: 317, italics mine)

I believe that this statement can precisely describe my experience in Sweden when I felt for the first time the impossibility, the fact that I could not – and perhaps still cannot – have the commodities and rights enjoyed by other EU citizens. Here, the reader might expect some examples to justify this claim, but I would rather not offer them and I have a reason for this choice. Audre Lorde states that the effort to teach what is oppression drains the energy from the task to redefine yourself and bring change (Lorde 1980). I find it quite true as to explain oppression on such a basic level, inevitably absorbs the energy from the task to see the practices of resistance. I deliberately avoid focusing on oppression and victimhood and offer to shift to more positive life-affirming alternatives. Therefore, I continue with my previous argument that even though we are all Greeks some persons enjoy privileges that I cannot identify with, and from this, I conclude that migration is understood and experienced very differently. Then I find it necessary to ask the women that I discussed with how they see it: “Do you see yourself as part of the Greek migration, which begun with the crisis - what do you think?”

Within their backgrounds, women have their own perceptions of migration and they associate with the latest movements at different points and in varying degrees. For example, “G” says that as it is today in Greece young people are “thirsty” for a better life and quite similarly “X” believes that they want to claim “something better”. On the other hand, “N” is less determined whether to stay or not in Sweden and she does in order to not situate herself in the wave of migrant Greeks. Yet she also recognizes that “when you leave, you do it with the hope to live and have the things that you should have; those that it is right to have at your (young) age”. Rather than prioritizing the rights of younger people at the expense of the older generations, I believe that the key here is the current obliteration of youth in Greece. This is the actual group of people with whom “G”, “X” and “N” relate, such as their friends, their peers and so on, people with whom they have cognitively constructed certain
connections in diverse communities or in the community of young Greek people at large.

Differently than the other women “P” states that: “There was and still is a certain stream of migration, perhaps a bit broader than the good brain leaves”. When I ask her what she means by that, she gives the example of some people, who were informed by their relatives in Sweden that the Swedish society is better structured and on these grounds, they made their decisions. I think that “P” speaks more relatively: “The reasons that they come (in Sweden) for, are not solely professional and of course they are not only the “good brains”. There are much more people that are unemployed”. In contrast, for “M” “indeed the brains of the country are forced to migrate” and there she argues that the people of our generation are overqualified and they cannot find employment in their domains in Greece. Nonetheless, she also recognizes that nowadays employment becomes harder to find in more general, “basically due to the large immigration to Europe”. Is it necessary to construct one category encompassing of all these perspectives? And also, where, when and for what reason should we see migration as a social problem?

The reconceptualization of the world system by decolonial thinkers offers a different angle to international migration. Manuela Boatcă, a postsocialist researcher of decoloniality and world-system analysis, with Julia Roth, develop the concept “coloniality of citizenship” in the framework of the “modern/colonial gender system” as it is formulated by Maríá Lugones (Boatcă & Roth 2015).

10 Rooted back in feudalism, when property heritage sustained the various dynasties and held the European empires together, the concept of citizenship proliferates from the later imperial chronicle when heritage was preserving colonization (Boatcă & Roth 2015). During the second phase of colonialism (here by the French and the German) the colonial system was sustained by the restraint of citizenship to non-Western people (2015). As Shahar argues, allocating political membership at birth, citizenship works

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10 Allow me here to cite Lugones and specifically her articulation of “the modern/colonial gender system”, which complicates Quijano’s model of coloniality of power and makes gender a theoretical vantage point to view the colonial world system (Lugones 2016). I am also aware that my presentation of the “coloniality of citizenship” by Boatcă and Roth, does not comprise the constitution of gender. The reason why I choose this is that the content of the interviews does not include a gender problematic and thus, I have decided to be consistent with the main body of my analysis and not read gender forcibly into all possible social, cultural and political models.
like the conservatory for states’ wealth in the hands of the “heirs of membership titles”, the national citizens (Boatcă & Roth 2015). If we link this to world inequality, we will observe that citizenship, central factor to the gap between poor and rich countries today, consists in a birth-right privilege in wealthy states, while for people from poorer states this kind of privileged citizenship becomes a life goal (2015). Consequently, international migration becomes something synonymous to a claim of the property of citizenship (2015).

To connect with the Greek scene, the perspective of crisis that I elaborated in the previous section in terms of failure in the relentless development of modernization/Westernization, together with the turbulent historical, political and economic background, provide me theoretically with solid reasons and points to frame the latest migration into coloniality of citizenship. Beyond monolithic categories (e.g. brain drain), in accordance with the length of our staying in Sweden and the ways of our involvement in the society (e.g. studies or employment), we are closer to or farther from the aim of the “good” citizenship, and therefore in many cases we see migration as a claim to the life that we deserve. Situated in the realm of coloniality of citizenship (Boatcă & Roth 2015), neither a radical movement, nor a business, our migration is entangled with history, and with the bodily dimensions of our realities, which shape our beliefs:

“N”: Of course the migration wave exists on the grounds that in Greece “nothing moves”. Not only “nothing moves”, but there is no room for hope. That is “they” to tell you, “You know what? You will go through five difficult years, but directly after you should know that there will be a recovery”. They have removed from you, I think, the right to this thought that someday the situation will become better.

Like “N”, some of us find in migration opportunities to claim our rights and reaffirm our thoughts for better futures; at the same time some others appear a bit skeptical:

Eftychia: In general, some people, perhaps from outside, discuss on a new wave of Greek migration or a new generation of migrants.
“A”: Yes.
Eftychia: It has started with the deep crisis in Greece. Do you consider yourself a part of this? If you could tell me a bit what is your opinion?
“A”: Hmmm… I think that I would place myself into this for, as I already said, the crisis led me to leave. If I could work in my domain in Greece, I wouldn’t go. So, I think, yes, because of the crisis, of course, the people started leaving and I was one of them. If we consider that crisis is the main element in all this, then yes.
What other elements apart from the Greek crisis can one see?
Introducing the grammar of reaction to institutional oppression

As this chapter begins I would like to share a few entry points, consistent with my views on how women contravene racism that is organized around macro-structures in the host society. Discussing the history of Black women’s resistance to multiple dejordaries, King challenges the monolithic and additive models for the intersections of racism, sexism, and classism through the articulation of “multiple consciousness” (1988). In contrast with the belief that resistance is better facilitated from higher classes, the Black women’s multiple consciousness, sustained in the confrontation with multiple oppressions, is the precise consciousness from where women’s resistance is encouraged and inspired (King 1988). Although King is concerned with social movements, hence organized forms of resistance, her idea that “the basis for a feminist ideology is rooted in our reality” (1988) allows me to reflect on the possibilities for resistance mediated by a multiple consciousness vis-à-vis multiple oppressions experienced on a daily basis.

Another point of my focus is the question of racism, which should be taken seriously, especially and as long as “racism operates in a way which places different women in different relationships to structures of power and authority in society” (Bhavnani & Coulson 2005). In their analysis, Bhavhani and Coulson illustrate this in many cases, as for example when the British state, pretexting equality, expels the whole migrant family, if one of the family members moves back to the home country. Conceptualized in the patterns of Quijano’s colonial matrix of power, coloniality of citizenship is not exempted from racial classification since – as Boatcă and Roth demonstrate – for different “kinds of” migrants the states create or remove barriers, and these practices attest to the commodification of citizenship and a specific racism (2015). Namely, “institutional racism” has been reported when, for example, investors-migrants buy citizenship and at the same time, married couples are suspended to embarrassing marriage controls, especially in case one of the persons does not hold a European passport (Boatcă and Roth 2015: 202 - 203).

To present what some of the women figured out, to react to citizenship and employment restrictions by the Swedish systems, I am aligned with this
understanding of racism. Now I can add to this analysis two instances when women were caught in the net of systemic closures and suppressions.

Issued by the tax agency, the “personnummer” is an identification number, which provides the right to “be” in the Swedish society. “N” described it as an issue that she had during her stay in Sweden, since it was basic in order to “live as citizen” and the fact that she could not have it was at least “mentally” – as she characterizes it – one of the most difficult things, because she realised that the situation was other than “come Greeks to give you jobs” – then she felt disappointed and puzzled. The more interesting part, at least for me, arrives when I asked her if that particular thing was an obstacle. She elaborated on that as well:

When employment is at stake […], it is a vicious circle, because whomever we were asking (for information) they were replying that “in order to find a job you need a personal number” and personal number you were obtaining only through job; hence, it is a circle that is rotten. Do you get it? You must have had the personal number, but they did not give it to you because they did not accept you to work, for in order to get employed you needed a personal number.

In Greece, “vicious circle” is an ordinary expression, which is not used just to point a self-fulfilling argument but to demonstrate the inescapability of a situation; when you cannot come up with any logical solution to counteract a problem. Postmodern feminist theories have critically examined modernity’s rationality in relation to women, for example, Shildrick criticizes this strand of thought because in her perspective women’s ability for rational thought has always been questioned, thus women are excluded by it (1994: 108). Maybe a good point for other women, but I would suggest that this is quite exclusionary to Greek women since “rationality” is taught to everybody through the Greek educational system, for which this knowledge is something foundational. Not only the students struggle to “attain” Aristotle’s logic at school, but also at the private coaching school (φροντιστήριο), where they study in the afternoon and which is funded directly by the Greek family. Either in discriminatory or emancipatory contexts, I would propose that when it comes to Greek women, rationality deserves a different focus.

When employment becomes the condition for citizenship and citizenship the condition for employment, how does one survive? Phenomenally at least, to argue on
an impossibility is more admittance than change or emancipation from oppression, like “N” did not try to change her life, to claim her right.

Nevertheless, the idea that it is the same “law” – the conditions for personal number acquisition –, which brings barriers to some people (migrant A) and at the same time grants privileges to other people (native or migrant B), is the key notion that allows for a more complicated understanding. I argue here that “N” uses this oppressive experience creatively to dismantle the very conditions of that system from within, in terms of pointing to the hidden sentence that makes the system irrational – “a vicious circle”. The missing sentence is the hidden racism. In her words, I see what Mignolo shows that it is not enough to change the content of the “conversation” and we would rather change its terms, by turning our focus to the knower (Mignolo 2009: 4). Considering that this is not an academic context, I think that “N” explains for me the insanity of the systemic racism and she further develops the concept of “rotten circle”.

These articulations are outcomes of her mentally and bodily reworking of the system from within. To recast this, “N” mentally/bodily survives the systemic racism, without reacting to it in a corrective way; she rather creates knowledge for it and does not leave it to make theory for her or to tell her “who” she is. Importantly, throughout our conversation she tells me that after some time in Sweden the lack of personal number was not a real issue – “it was OK”.

Moving on to the case of “M”, quite differently from “N”, she had to stay a longer period and get more involved in the society, so it is rather necessary for her to get the personal number. On the website of the Swedish tax agency we can see how the personal number is obtainable by students - EU citizens (Skatteverket n.d.). In spite of the fact that already from the first application, “M” meets the requirements and her documents cover every specification, there has been something “wrong” with her insurance:

The paper “says” that it was covering me in the entire world, but they answered that it is not stated anywhere that it covers me in Sweden! […] I contacted the agency in Greece and they adjusted it […] Despite all this (work) they rejected me again.

Her insurance is a private one and she does not have the “European Health Insurance Card” (European Commission n.d.). “M” comments that the problem with her being
continuously rejected was “racism”, and she also says that when this occurred, she was well aware that the crisis in Greece had some role to play. From her everyday exchanges with peers, she knows that other Greek students have been sorting out similar “issues” by trying their “luck” in different tax agencies, while at the same time she has been rejected everywhere. Her case is somewhat special. What activity, what ideology or theory can help us comprehend such an exceptional case? I suggest border thinking.

Roberto Dainotto shows that the colonial difference of the global South is reflected in the European South, asserting the latter as an “extraordinary exception” in the universal European law (2011). At least conceptually, the South is a sign of imperfection, deficiency and pathology of Europe and therefore the southerner, part of this pathology, becomes a universal exception from the norm or just “nomos” (2011).

Aiming to complicate my analysis rather than reducing it to Dainotto’s argumentation, from the conceptual border of South and North I can point to the analytical misdirection to consider the case of “M” as special or exceptional. My point is that European health cards, similarly to the previous example of European passports, create a nice condition for their carriers, in order for them to cross the colonial difference between North and South and construct better eyes through which the Southerners are seen. Regarding Dainotto’s nuances of European South (2011), the European Health Insurance Card and other European documents make a nice exception for the southern holders, while for the southern non-holders the nomos (rule) applies.

Some friends of “M” tell her that all this is “discrimination”. Then she should react somehow, that for me translates to “M” needing to find a way to cross the colonial difference of North and South:

Eftyhia: So, you “used” the law in order to react and claim your rights?
“M”: I did not use the law. It was something like a threat: “I will go to the law if you do not reconsider because I will claim from the law (the court) my rights as European citizen”.

47
She sends this special threat in the form of an official letter and the personal number arrives within two days. Undoubtedly, she reacts and gets what she wants. But do you think that the tax agencies become less racist or sexist or nationalist or “Greeksist”? No. She acts within the same agency that disregards her and she creates there a possibility; she opens a space that previously did not exist.

Before the end of this part, let me stress that I am not blind to differences and local histories and as Dainotto pinpoints, “not all souths are the same in the global South” (Dainotto 2011). Maybe “M” has accommodated the European identity in many other ways and more permanently built a place for her identity to fit in the Swedish society or it might be my desire to decolonize the Greek identity that encourages this reading. What I would like to underline here, is that with regards to liberation the instances from the arena of survival, when people think and react creatively to the systemic violence, should not be conceived as isolated examples but as inspirations.

In the following sections, I will show how the coloniality of gender and/or being castrates every-day knowledges, hiding them from the horizon of humanity. What can we now retrieve for the grammar of the everyday resistance? If “being” equates to “re-existing”, resistance is manifested in the creativity that is necessary for our survival (Tlostanova 2010). Regarding this creativity, I would like to quote Tlostanova, in more particular the practice of “tricksterism” by Soviet Uzbek women:

This is another face of the Soviet colonial tricksterism where the Soviet and the colonial merge in a peculiar way and where a balancing on the verge of resistance and acting around the power structures to avoid their policing becomes possible. (2010:145-146)

Thinking of “M” and especially the way she claims European citizenship, I am not convinced whether she identifies with the “European” or accommodates it to restate her presence in Sweden and open a space for her “being” in the new society: the space that does not exist before one obtains the personal number.
Resistant remembering and the act of disidentification

*Salvation means to be redeemed from all saviors*  
(Νίκος Καζαντζάκης 2015, translation mine)

In his article written with the aim of restoring solidarity among Europeans, to reinstate democracy in Greece and the entire Europe, Žižek opposes the technocrats and bankers claiming that the EU-IMF program of fiscal austerity and structural reform destroys rather than saves Greece (2012). Today, four years after the publication of this article, my feelings about it are controversial. To put it simply, on the one hand, I see that there is an author that makes public the violence faced by the Greek people and at the same time I am told that we are in need of salvation. Prior to any further elaboration, I want to present a story, which could be partially manifested in the version of crisis where “Greeks are presented as humanitarian victims in need of help as if a war or natural catastrophe had hit the country” (Žižek 2012). Nonetheless, I find in “X” ’s story a very inspiring response.

When it comes to this idea of “natural disaster”, “X” talked about her view that:

The media was responsible because they were presenting images with people that were begging. It is not that these things do not exist, but when they present us in this way they do not show the correct picture. The representative picture at least.

To be more specific, she refers to the summer of 2015. During this period I was in Greece as well. The EU blackmailing under the name “Grexit” was preparing the ground for the third memorandum enforcement. Working on the basis that the bold historical presence of poverty is etched in the Greek collective memory, the media rendered famine an everyday fear. The mainstreaming of terror was amplified by the capital controls and as a result, some people were emptying the grocery stores for food supplies and some others were queuing for hours at the withdrawal machines for “cash supplies”. However, there were many others, whom the cameras did not capture. For instance, in Athens, I met with young people, who were disappointed but surely not terrified, and in Amorgos, a small rocky Greek island, I met some natives untouched by the news.
That period of June and July in 2015, “X” was in Sweden and in response to other peoples’ conduct toward her, was arguing that nothing was really “bad” as they were describing it:

“X”: The environment (the people) was treating me a little bit like “I am sorry” - all the time. [...] And I was answering that “OK. It is bad, but it is not so tragic”. I was trying to… to stand with some pride. You got it...

The “I am sorry” ways of others to approach her were taking place almost on a daily basis in her working environment and besides, ironic comments and “Grexit” jokes were sometimes following. There were also occasions when friends offered her support in the form of direct financial aid. In our interview, “X” might discuss these acts as coming from good will (not an evil one) but she also talks about her discomfort:

“X”: I do not consider that I needed financial help. On the grounds of the way they were offering it, because I knew... Do you understand this? [...] to talk to me constantly about this thing.
Eftychia: So you were responding again “Ok. It is not really bad”.
“X”: Yes. When “the other” sees me and tells me “Oh! I am sorry!” (she answers in English) “Don’t be sorry. There is no reason to be sorry”. Why sorry? It is nothing.

While I understand her well and I further imagine what her silences and pauses might mean, I want to focus on how “X” reacts to these, what is her card to undergo all these pressures. Does she construct a delusion that “it is not really bad” and Greek people do not survive hard times at all? No, since in a later part of the discussion, she evaluated the situation, that even though she was felt momentarily “bad” for her “origin”, she believes that indeed it is not really bad for the Greeks because we know from the Greek history that we have been through harder times. Then I added to this that we are a “troubled laós” (“peoples”) and she agreed: “Yes, we have surely had harder times and the history has shown that we have “worked through”. This is it.” Neither illusionary nor with a nationalistic pride, this memory of the history of Greek “laós” is a well-built shelter to protect us from hegemonic discourses.

Give me a moment to clarify, what I mean by saying “laóς”, for the word has been abused by politicians’ demagogy and the modern project of nationalism. If we look in a dictionary, “laós” (λαός) is the noun that we use to refer to “peoples”. Stemming
from the ancient Greek language its conception has remained almost unaltered; it means (a) “a people”, the body of inhabitants living in a certain place and having civilization, history, arts, ethics and customs in common and also (b) “the people”, a part of the population, who do not participate in the management of society, in comparison with the state institutions and its mechanisms or other forms of government (Λαός n.d.). Moreover, when we refer to the populations or nations, inhabitants of countries or entire continents, we use the plural form laē: “λαοί της Ασίας” translates to “Asia’s peoples”. The word “laē” is understood very differently than the English humans (άνθρωποι) or population (πληθυσμός), because it is rather closer to the meaning of the people who shape communities, nations and countries in different parts of the world and they live “simple” (not simplistic or simplified, but those who live simply or simply live). Consequently and for me at least, the word laός is not comprehensive of people, who are involved in the exercise of power, for example, elites or aristocrats in the past and technocrats and the “bankers” today.

Now that I showed what we mean when we say laός, with regards to “Χ” and her arguments on “our” historically evident subsisting of turmoil, I will provide a representational instance of hardship that the Greek laόs have experienced. Actually, I am concerned with the 20\textsuperscript{th} century Greek – Turk war, which was inspired by radical nationalism, in the service of imperial forces who were opted to settle control of the Ottoman Empire (Doumanis 2012). As Doumanis demonstrates, while multiethnicty constituted the essence of the Ottoman Empire, the Western imaginary conceived it as decadence, the “Babel-like” society in the “Near East” (Doumanis 2012: 18-19). The nation-states’ (e.g. France, Great Britain, Germany) expansionist politics for the control over multiethnic empires, such as the Ottoman and the Russian, attests to this comprehension (Doumanis 2012). In full consistency with these politics, the project of Greek nationalism had been inaugurated by the Phanariots (a powerful diaspora of Greek elite) and entailed the cultivation of national consciousness on the grounds of Enlightenment Hellenism and the secularization of the Orthodox Church on the grounds of the nation-state (Kitromilidis 2010). As Doumanis argues, “communities were compelled to focus on their differences by ten years of relentless violence perpetrated by agencies (states, politicians, paramilitaries) that were determined to create nations as homogenous cultural spaces” (Doumanis 2012: 132). Hence, the Greek - Turk war was not cultural, it was rather political. The laē paid its price, with
deadly fanaticism, bloody economy and loans, and the uprooting of populations. While it was promoted as a reunion of Greeks, the refugees, “Eastern Greeks”, were treated as the “other” by the indigenous Greeks in the role of the colonizer and their culture was seen as “low” (Kalantidou 2014: 53). Arguably, they were having better time before the “Freedom” (Doumanis 2012).

This narration of Greek laós history is aligned with Stratis Doukas’ frontispiece ‘Dedicated to the common ordeals of laé’, opening the fifth edition of his well-known book “A prisoner’s of war story” (Doumanis 2012: 134, italics mine) which I studied at the last grade of high school. Apart from the course in literature, this historical angle of laós was formed in me by my mother’s notion, that “the Greek laós is a tortured laós”. When she said this, I wrongly assumed that she was referring to a small part of the population, the poor, rural people that she probably identified with and I hope that now I have obtained a better understanding of her idea, so as to develop it further by choosing a decolonial path.

These articulations of laós enable us to dislocate the Greek history from the European in the process of “learning to unlearn” the Western locally based global designs (Tlostanova & Mignolo 2012: 30, 218). Based on Western colonial practices, these designs conflated the Greek local history with the European, establishing an imaginary of the linear progression of the Western civilization. According to Mignolo’s conceptualization of the colonization of space and time, in the 16th century the “spatial colonial difference” (between the European civilized colonizer and the colonized) was manifested in the assertion that the barbarians did not have history, while in the 18th century the Enlightenment, reconfiguring them as primitive or traditional, it placed them in earlier stages of “history” (Mignolo 2007: 471-472). The racial kinship with Hellenes and historical continuity from ancient Hellenism 11 through the rediscovery of Greek humanism, was transferred by the Greek elites in order to dispose the Ottoman “barbarism” and place their own control on the indigenous (Bien 2005: 224; Kalantidou 2014: 39, 42). Consequently, I propose that the Western linear model of Greek history suppresses the Greek laós and, to

11 I have developed these in the chapter “Eurocentric classicism in the marginal South: another colonialism?”
paraphrase Mignolo, the history of the Greek nation state has been built on already existing *temporal and spatial colonial differences* and the local histories of the indigenous ‘peoples’ were expelled from the modern history of Greece (2007).

Now we can better understand “why” we do not really “know” or we only speculate what are the components of that “Ariadne’s thread to keep the Greeks united under any circumstances” as Kalantidou figuratively describes (2014). However, Halkias states that:

> The Greeks actively *remember*, the personal histories of their families’ experiences through the World Wars, civil war, and population relocations are relayed from generation to generation and constitute an important part of the socialization of new members of the family. (Halkias 2004)

I see this *remembering* as accommodating an unofficial historical resisting. A hundred years ago nostalgia for the life in the Asia Minor was the form of resistance of the refugees to acculturation and other subordinations (Doumanis 2012). Today, as long as these differences are more diluted by the modern/colonial global designs, it would be objectionable to claim that “X” survives through nostalgia. But the conception of Greek laόs and their survival is very inspiring and consists in a *remembering*, that is oppositional to the doctrine of the West. It is a “historicizing” of survival that is employed for a resistant comprehension of the present crisis, against the grain of the Western discourses of catastrophe.

This aligns with the fact that during our discussion “X” states: “I believe that it was worse for them here. I think that they took it worse than they took it in Greece”. Following the principle that somebody creates knowledge in a specific time and place and for certain reasons (Mignolo 2009), I think that “X” ‘s enunciation neither can be located on the outside (looking from the “European”) nor inside. She might say that she had “to stand with some pride”, but in this context, this precisely means to react in a way to the intimidation through the pettiness and philanthropy practiced by others toward her. I am now thinking through the feminist concept of “disidentification”, a suggestive notion for an activism that does not assimilate to dominant ideologies so to unified signifiers and single categories, such as “European”, “Turk”, “Greek”, “woman” and so on (Lykke 2014; Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert & Koobak 2016). It is
an inviting concept to those who “disidentify” with the Western universals, while they feel the necessity to be in groups and to “identify”, to not think from total isolation or open offense (Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert & Koobak 2016). It is a creative feminist tool that allows for thinking and writing from one's intersecting experiences including those of subordination (Lykke 2014). That being said, I believe that “X” practices a remembering of the laós history that is sited in a grid of disidentifications: she dis-identifies with the victim, the patriot, the humanitarian, the European, the cultural token.

Finally, when Žižek suggests that the Greeks need solidarity from all Europeans, for the struggle to rehabilitate democracy is common, I am carefully differentiating myself from his proposition “Save us from the saviors” (2012) by asking: “who” will save “whom” from the saviors? When I think of our discussion with “X”, I believe that the local histories of laé have the potential to provide us with good answers. Through the resistant processes of remembering and disidentifying that are supplementary to each other, we can apply these histories and resist prevailing ideologies like “X” does both oppose the racism enacted in discourses of victimhood and delink from the Greek nationalistic discourses of modernity.
Six-months English – in which “world”?

This section is focused on the interview with “G”, who was speaking like a χείμαρρος, a river with a small bed that during the fall floods and the waters take unpredicted routes. To distinguish what was the central “topic” of our conversations, I contemplated her effort to help me see a very important issue, with several implications to her life in Sweden and how she responds to it: the English language.

To begin with, “G” studies English in a six-month period (she only has few private lessons in writing and reading) in Greece. Directly after, she migrates to Sweden with her partner and they seek employment. Being very experienced in her field, in approximately four-five months she gets hired at an English-speaking school and so, she teaches in English. Additionally, before and after work “G” devotedly practices her English and from this information, we can assume that she steadily improves. However, English becomes such a problem at her work that seriously affects her personal life and thoughts, “G”:

I was entering the classroom, speaking English in whatever way I could; I was making mistakes, I knew that I was, I knew that the kids were getting them – because they are not stupid – but I was trying. When I was returning home or even on the train, I was crying to vent, then I was reading books to practice and improve. It was me, who had deficiencies. The others were not responsible for this. I was reading every morning articles and newspapers in English to practice […]

Although she offers good explanations and vibrant examples, it has been challenging for me to comprehend her hardship entirely, to grasp the multiple dimensions of her experience. For example, couldn’t she share with her colleagues that she needed support or at least discuss with them and see what they think? “G” gives us several examples of the others’ attitudes:

They did not provide me with a mentor. When I went to the school (for the first time), I was supposed to have a mentor and three meetings were already booked. S/he was never there (at the meeting place). Never for some reason…

And later “G” remembers: “That guy stepped a bit on me in order to climb the ladder”. Reflecting on these narratives we might see how the individualistic environment had a certain impact, thus it is not all of a sudden that she looks more inwards and understands the “whole thing” as her fault to work at the school without “knowing” English. Her presence there is seen a mistake, if we follow her thoughts.
that, “I learned English mainly through writing and reading, my speaking was awful and I went to teach in an English school. I plunged directly into the deep waters regarding the language”. Because of this “lacking” “G” feels less employed than the people who “have” better English, like she is working somehow inappropriately until her English improves. In real, we know that not only does she pass an interview as other candidates, but also she makes a great leap in such a short time, teaching in an English-speaking environment in Sweden, while others in Greece study English for years. While “G” prioritizes it differently, every positive element is subordinated to this special lack; what for me – and perhaps for the reader – reveals a genuine daring, it is invisible for her.

Beyond simplistic ideas, like different individuals perceive language competence differently, I will construct a critical insight of the different appreciations in Greece. In many cases there, to learn a language equates to attain a certain amount of courses and obtain certificates. So basic is this specific “mastering” that the lack of it might render a young person without these “qualifications” virtually unemployed, before s/he even tries to look for jobs. In this respect, when “G” says that she does not risk sharing her “real story” because in the eyes of the management she would turn into “incompetent” and “unprofessional”, we can see this implicit unemployment. If she tells it, she will not be employed to the same degree as other employees – it seems as if somebody virtually fires her.

As everyone knows in the Greek society, this unwritten “rule” constructs the learning of English language synonymous to the possession of an internationally recognized certificate and affirms the commercialization of Education. Prolonging the school day, φροντιστήρια (private coaching schools) function on the grounds of public school’s “unreliability” to provide students with the “elaborate” and “systematic” education for a bright professional future. Further, the equivalent state diplomas, gained through public exams and less costly practices, are considered minor or supplementary. It is important here to note that this was not always a common practice. As more and more young people were attending φροντιστήρια and collecting language certificates, this “possession” of knowledge became canonical, reaching the point that, all families were compelled to pay for many courses, with the English language course always on top of their priority. At least as I see it, παραπαιδεία (para-
education) is quite analogous to para-economy (e.g. black market), since both of them exist and operate in similar parasitic ways, despite the former being considered more legal than the latter. Degrading the public school, φροντιστήριο is the business entity assigned as an organic component of the Greek Education.

Now we can better understand why “G” thinks that a six-month learning is not enough in terms of professionalism, yet I think there is something more to it. “G”:

I was telling to myself, “What are you doing here? You are not a teacher. You do not have ideas. Where are your ideas?” – I did not have ideas Efthyia. Nothing. Void. So, I was thinking that I was not a teacher, I wanted to quit, but my self was insisting: “To quit is something impossible for you! You will not have food”. “B” (her partner) was unemployed.

I have already problematized how the austerity regime in Greece terrorizes and erases essential work rights from people, but from the interview, I know that “G” was employed in many schools, so I cannot be sure how much she has been affected. In parallel, I am careful to not naturalize the situations by arguing, for example, that thinking of the crisis, she reasonably feels “scared” or that it is the shock by the experience of migration, which equates to considerable life change. For a while, I would rather leave the migration and the crisis aside and focus deeper into the issue of language mastering that adheres to the possession of knowledge.

Once more, I will draw from Greek history, when the institution of education was undergoing the project of radical nationalization of Greece or otherwise “the transition from the traditional Ottoman Greek culture to the ideology and sense of identity of the modern Greek community” (Kitromilides 1983). Kitromilides shows that the educational system shaped the notion of womanhood in modern Greece (1983) – before this womanhood was multiple and unbounded. Based on the “Rousseauistic morality”, which precluded sublimation for the female nature by a carefully planned socialization and subordination to the perfect male, the official Greek Education suppressed the indigenous woman (1983). This information allows us to ask – not just “what” education was envisaged for women (1984: 45) but rather, why was a particular education for women introduced?
In the course of the 19th century, the male intellectuals were responsible for the direction and content of women’s *embourgeoisement* in the elite society (Bakalaki 1994). Investigating the education of Greek women in the 19th century, Bakalaki illustrates that the folk illiterate woman was stigmatized by a symbolic backwardness and barbarity, while the urban woman’s “parroting” of French language and European manners was characteristic to Education’s superficial imitation (Bakalaki 1994). Besides, in Kalantidou we read that the educational system was designed to train only bureaucrats in the cities, reinforcing the control of the indigenous merchants and the labor exploitation of rural populations by the “educated” Europeanized elites (Kalantidou 2014).

Now, if we consider these events together with the general absence of women from the Greek historiography (Αβδελά 1997; Παπαταξιάρχης 1997) and assert that the history of gender in Greece lies in the urban upper-class women’s activities, who accommodated Western feminism (Αβδελά 2006; Avdella & Psarra 2005; Bakalaki 1994; Kitromilides 1983), we draw two crucial conclusions. Firstly, it seems that while the urban Greek woman was subordinated by the educational system, the rural woman was totally absent because she was lacking “womanhood”. This argumentative aligns with Lugones’ “coloniality of gender” (and being) and her conceptualization of patriarchy as the light side of modernity/coloniality. To attain a thorough overview of the institution of Education in relation to the oppression of Greek women, it is necessary to comprehend gender as racialized (Lugones 2010).

According to Bakalaki:

> The discourse for education of women, then, constitutes privileged grounds for exploring the ways in which the emergent elite in Greece perceived and signified its affinities with “Europe” went about the “civilizing” mission, the cultural *embourgeoisement* of the rest of the population. (Bakalaki 1994: 79, italics mine)

A rereading from the perspective of the gender colonial/modern system (Lugones 2016) removes the quotation marks from the words “Europe” and “civilizing”, shifting the focus to the project of acculturation and religious conversion of the indigenous people. At this point, I have arrived at the second conclusion, that the

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12 In the chapter “Epistemological and Methodological Frameworks” I have extensively discussed this concept.
primary role of the Educational system, since the establishment of the “modern” Greek state, can be ascribed to a sort of a civilizing mission. Again, I would like to highlight that I am not blind to the essential differences among the different “Souths”; the civilizing mission that I conceptualize here is by no means equal to the unimagined cruelty in Latin America during the first colonialism. Nevertheless, I believe that the Greek historical paradigm of Education can offer a ground to develop further some parts from the historical instance of Latin America:

The civilizing transformation justified the colonization of memory and thus of one’s sense of self, intersubjective relations, and relation to the spirit world, to land, to the very fabric of one’s conception of reality, identity, social, ecological, and cosmological organization. (Lugones 2011: 74)

The Greek laós – and here the Greek women in specific, have paid and still pay the high price of radical modernization and nationalism. Through secularization and education the undiluted for hundreds of years ethnic consciousness was eradicated (Kalantidou 2014).

Once a student and currently a teacher of Greek language I have experienced that not only in languages but in a more general sense, learning is much regarded as possessing or mastering knowledge and in line with the modern/colonial gender system, to master knowledge in many cases translates to master humanity. Let us only think that there is a common expression “become human” that derives from the traditional order by the parents to their kids “educate yourself to become human” (να μορφωθείς να γίνεις ἄνθρωπος). In consequence, I argue that as the years went by and the criteria for the “human” were further modernized, every generation in Greece had remained in a previous stage. As a result, all parents’ aim for their children was to achieve a better position in society and a better life than theirs, one stage higher than what they had achieved for themselves. The present picture reveals the majority of families making bloody economy or obtaining loans from private banks in order to invest every euro in φοροντιστήρια fees or pay for higher education. Apart from the subordination of students from low-income families, this has resulted in everybody having a plethora of certificates in their possession and thus their value in the labor market dropped vertically.

Discussing the Greek migration “Μ”, another interviewee, states:
I consider that indeed the “brains” of the country are forced to migrate, as long as all of us at once found ourselves possessing degrees (bachelors), master or even post-doctoral degrees, because of the antagonism in the labor market in Greece. For this reason when we come abroad people say that we are overqualified. I include myself in this group, like the youngest people (παιδιά) of our generation, as the system in Greece imposed, we have so many “qualifications” […] Surely the situation has started to become more and more difficult, though, as they say, “many of you have gathered (here in Sweden)”

To the point that “we have many gathered” recently, our competencies and diplomas lose their value. But have they ever been so effective to designate us Europeans or have we always been quite behind in the classification like others not-fully-human across the colonial/imperial difference (Mignolo 2012)? In this sense, the possession of an English “paper” certifies officially that one has gained a better place in the ranking of humanity and the inefficiency of a six-month-period of learning or unofficial training becomes almost naturally rejected.

Coming back to “G”, she says:

When I went there I did not understand them when they were speaking […] I had to enter the deep waters […] There was another Greek woman, who was very “τσαούσα” (vigorous, daring) and she was telling me, “Don’t be afraid they do not know here, we know better”. At the start this was giving me some relief that I had a person to talk to in my language, share issues with each other and συμπάσχει (“co-feel” the pain) with me; to tell me “Yes, this is how it is, as you feel it”, in order for me to not feel insane.

Later she adds that she felt insane, especially when she realized that some people were once “scanning” her, but in another instance, she excuses this “scanning”:

I could not share with them that I left my country because of the tragic situation; I had the fear inside me that they would take advantage of me because they would have in mind ‘this Greek woman is starving, so let’s “bury” her in work.

Indeed, the lack of the possession of English worked in a suppressive way with regards to both professional and personal aspects. Even though “G” identifies with the womanhood of her Greek colleague, clarifying that in Greece she was more reactionary and argumentative, this “lacking” locks her into a negative Greek reality.
When I ask her how all this turned better or what she did in specific instants, she does not provide me with any particular answer, for example, she reflects on the possibility of what would happen if she talked to her colleagues:

Eftyhia: After that day did you try to leave somehow from this situation?
“G”: [...] all this period I tried listening to others speaking English so that I can speak better. I was aware of I was making mistakes when speaking. I did not talk to anybody there about my real story. This might have been a bit wrong. On the other hand, I was afraid because – as I told you – I was in great need of this job and I could not risk saying that I studied English for six months. This would be unprofessional and this would make me incompetent. This “six-month-English” would not give me confidence.

“G” switches between her memory of thoughts and evaluations synchronous to the difficult moments she had, and those synchronous to our dialogue: “Every-day. Crying, book in English… […] big fear, stress and patience day-by-day”. If I am to summarize the elements indicative of “solutions”, she upgraded her English, she had relaxing vacations and her supervisor approached her with sympathy. One could retrieve that she adopted in the new conditions and the “life just went on”. But still, how all this is realized?

As “G” shifts through feelings, ideas, opinions, speculations, and also dimensions, I want to elaborate an understanding that is consistent with the multidimensionality that she presents. At this point, I believe that “G” ’s survival cannot be fully captured by an analytic of intersections of gender, class, ethnicity, nationality and so on. Therefore, I am drawing once more from María Lugones and specifically her notion of “world” to describe something “to be inhabited at present by some flesh and blood people” (1987: 9). Be it a “real” society described by its dominant culture, one’s own construction or the world that constructs its inhabitants without them comprehending it, the category of the world is suggestive and negotiable. For Lugones, those who are “outsiders” from the mainstream (the dominant) construction of life, inhabit more than one “worlds” and they are traveling between the “worlds”, a “traveling” essential to their survival (1987: 11). Therefore, to depict the multilayered oppression in “G” ’s story, around which her survival is organized, I will adopt this specific concept world, which pinpoints the dynamic nature of “G” ’s experience, sensibility and identification.
To apply this, first I argue that during the days in school, “G” inhabits entangled, constructed “worlds” and her resistance could be seen when she travels between them. Second, I organize the “worlds” in schematic pairs of constructions-in-effect – identifications, where I distinguish “G” ’s identifications by using single quotation marks: (a) the acquiring of language requires thorough study – ‘unprofessional’ and pre-modern, (b) the work rights are not respected and the need should be hidden from the exploitative boss – ‘afraid’ and ‘dishonest’, (c) συνάδελφος (co-workers) συμπάσχουν (co-feel the pain) and understand each other – ‘relieved’ and ‘not-insane’, (d) breadwinning is a highly recognized virtue in the community – ‘honest’, (e) “the environment does not feel συναδελφικό (collaborative)” – ‘isolated’ and ‘non-creative’, (f) the sovereign subject must ensure good self-command and communication – ‘insane’, ‘not-integrated’, ‘scanned’, and (g) learning English in six months is positively recognized – “competent” and ‘integrated’.

All these notions of world and self-identifications, partly hers and mine, are constructed by dominant ideologies and communal Greek values. What matters here is that “G” travels through many “worlds” and manages old oppressive systems, new discriminations, and radical life changes. From the world where one, not mastering knowledge is not fully professional, woman or subject, where deficiency and dependency are something shameful, she travels to the world, whereby colleagues with individualistic attitudes do not share worries and experiences. Then, she visits the world inhabited by co-workers supporting and sharing with each other, another world with better work rights and the world with “six-month-English” being recognized as an achievement and personal competence.

“G” drifts between many “worlds”, feeling better in those, where her language skills are appreciated. Yet, she has not quitted practicing her English and the idea of “mastering it” is not expelled, as she tells us: “when the Easter arrived having made great progress in English I felt better”. All the “worlds” with all their available options are inhabited and experienced. At the end of this analysis, we can see the relevance of the configuration “world traveling” in what “G” herself evaluates: “Basically, I had the Greek reality in my head, I was afraid that one day the manager would call me to tell me that I am useless.”
Resisting from the vantage point of the inter-self – γνωριμίες

“Α”: I have in mind one solution for many “stuff”. Hmm... it is the γνωριμίες (acquaintanceships). Here (in Sweden). Let’s say the employment could have been a problem at the beginning, but I had a friend in the organization [...] So, she said something about me and this is the γνωριμία (acquaintanceship) that solved the problem. [...] Eftychia: Hence, to have a network.

“A”: To have persons by your side. If you do not have persons that know you, you feel a little bit alone. Whatever you might do... Yes. You do not have necessary supports.

For me, γνωριμίες means a network of familiar people, intended basically to bring better career prospects; each γνωριμία is one person. Due to my upbringing, either not skilled in this social area or indifferent, I haven’t built a stable or broad network of γνωριμίες. Further, having been approached by others only as a γνωριμία, I have felt that some people might fake that they like me and therefore they do not see me for “real”. But “real” in this case is my own construction, so we better see what “Α” thinks.

Literally, there are diverse attitudes in Greece regarding this subject and therefore I asked “Α” for explanations. Especially in the instance of her employment, I almost risked being arrogant, when I asked whether she thought that she would find employment without her γνωριμίες, but thankfully she was not offended and explained to me that:

In the beginning, I did not know how the system works here (in Sweden). I had applied for the position online, but I never got an answer. And then my friend told me to go to the building and leave my papers there. You know, the traditional way in Greece, which I (previously) considered not acceptable here because it is “Sweden”13, only via email... It was she whereupon and the thing that she told me that I went there [...] If someone did not tell me, “come here” ... (?) (How could “Α” have known?).

“A” developed this as well:

You learn more things that you do not know. Hence, they (people - γνωριμίες) help you with “stuff”, not exclusively to do something for you (a favor), like for you to find employment or help you… “stuff” that can be trivial, but when you do not know how it works, e.g. where you will find this or that “thing” …

13 Here “Sweden” is used in the same way it is stereotypically seen by the eyes of Greeks, a well-organized, meritocratic and developed society.
From “A” ’s perspective, unlike networking, γνωριμίες, operate in pedagogic modes, in terms of being in a group with familiar others, learning through and also helping each other, when it is needed. Interestingly, “A” told me that in more general terms, not only in Sweden, she asks and learns from γνωριμίες, before her own experience comes. Thus, her γνωριμίες are not located in a specific place or time, especially if we think that “A” sometimes “lets herself go” within the knowledges and experiences of others; she does not worry because she finds in γνωριμίες “all the necessary supports”.

Adamantia Pollis was a Greek-American human rights scholar and gender equality activist in New York. In an early work, she developed the concept of the “traditional” or “cultural” Greek “inter-self” that views him/herself as inter-individually defined by a reference group and she also discusses relevant contemporaneous political implications (Pollis 1965). This elaboration distinguishes the Greek “inter-self” from the Western notion of individual, for the former differently from the latter, cannot be enunciated in isolation, separately from the “familial others”, who constitute his/her “reference group” (1965). Western abstract values such as justice, equality, freedom and so on, are not understood out of their connection to persons or things (1965: 32). Although this perspective might enact some theoretical slippages, especially if we consider that it is developed almost by comparison to the Western notions of “self” and “individual”, in this particular section it is quite relevant and gains the trust of the informant that has experienced and felt most of the things in Pollis’ text: me.

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14 It is important to note here that this work is a bit outdated, for during the period of its composition in the 1960’s people’s comportment in many cases was shaped by local “traditions” less touched by modernization. On the one hand, such older critical projects can potentially stand well in contemporary projects critical of modernity, since they did not assume automatically that the European modernity is everybody’s modernity. One the other hand, while the problem of the universalization of the Western notion of “self” is almost explicit, Adamantia Pollis does not adopt the partiality as her epistemic angle, since it seems that in some cases she generalizes specific traditional conduced to a Greek reality. Overall, in appreciation of other of her works – e.g. a collaboration with Schwab, whereby the two authors point to the Western local basis of human rights and slightly develop a reference to colonial and imperial differences (1979: 8 - 12), I find her work on the Greek inter-self quite consistent with my project in terms of the problematic it raises.
To not go off astray with more theoretical discussions, the argument I am building is that “A”’s γνωριμίες cannot be understood by analogy to social networking. More closely nuanced by the traditional system of kinship, historically seen as the group’s safeguarding from outsiders’ invasions (1965: 33), I think that γνωριμίες can be partly – but quite interestingly, related to the outdated kinship of a family-clan. By virtue of this, as the family-clan attempted to have within its ranks both urban and rural dwellers (1965: 43), γνωριμίες are the dwellers that the “inter-self” relates to in an educational sense. I think that this idea, albeit it appears fragmentarily, is reflected on the existential value that “A” ascribes to γνωριμίες: in absence of these “necessary supports” you levitate; you are alone. From this perspective, γνωριμίες are neither Others’ knowledge(s) deployed by the individual, nor community knowledge(s) that compete with prevailing discourses. Rather, as the insight of γνωριμίες is located into a distinct group of familiar “knowers”, the concept and value of knowledge or what counts as knowledge so to speak, is conceived in relevance with or in relation to partial referents and not from universal abstracts.

With regards to all these, I will provide two examples. The first is that of “patronage” as a form of survival found in Kalantidou’s work. This tactic in the 19th century was a kind of peasants’ safeguarding from the exploitation by the state or namely the “alien” Western-educated officials (Kallantidou 2014: 43). The fact that from the peasants’ perspective the gap was “unbridgeable” (2014) is not assigned to other than the hegemonic groups’ viewpoints, but rather to the loyalties held in accord with the peasants’ reference groups (Pollis 1965: 38). The second instance draws from “the cultural embourgeoisement” imposed on Greek women in the frame of the official Education (Bakalaki 1994).15 The “parroting” of women as opposed to learning, was a reminder to the educated Greek men of their own failures to espouse the ideas and morals of the West (Bakalaki 1994). Through the concept of inter-self, women’s parroting was reminding of men’s parroting, for all of them shared some different hidden “realities” by virtue of their former reference groups. Exterior to their group-defined cultures and values, loyalties could not be borne on account of the former loyalties that would remain unfulfilled, causing the inter-self to collapse. Therefore, I understand parroting as “a process of reintegration coping with new conditions, which

15 I have developed these notions in the previous section under the title “Six month English in many worlds”.

65
modifies the view of the self but may leave the basic layer intact” (Pollis 1965: 38). Connecting the “inter-self” theory with Bakalaki, that the Greeks do not see themselves in opposition to others (1994), this proposition can be seen as the predicament for the existence of the inter-self. Despite this agreement, I still challenge the degree to which “Greeks view of themselves is (also) influenced by their sense that they live in the same world as “Europeans” (1994: 77). Hence, I would like to turn the argument of Bakalaki into the following question: Does this (sense of living in the same world as Europeans) enable the Greeks to put themselves in the shoes of others? (1994: 77).

What are the reference group values that define “A” ’s views of herself and affirm her ways to γνωριμίες? We cannot know, for my example of “γνωριμίες” is quite different. Perhaps, I do not see my inter-self defined by the value of γνωριμίες, but as I am Greek, in a more stereotypical sense I have seen many cases of “γνωριμίες” growing constantly like the person does.

Further, “A” discussed with me another solution, namely the application of standards (limits) to restrain the amount of extra work and time that she offers. At first I thought that she meant to set limits on the exploitation by the management, however for her this was not really the case:

I am not sure, I have not concluded yet, but I think that the Swedish do not have φιλότιμο (philotimo, there is no English translation), like we have it. When you do something extra the other will appreciate it, s/he will remind you that “The previous time…” … you will see it (the others’ appreciation). Here (in Sweden), I have not seen it. Surely, it can be my personal viewpoint or it can depend on the persons. It might be not valid in general…

Thus, φιλότιμο, dissimilarly to Pollis notion regarding traditional kinship systems (Pollis 1965), is a form of extra labor, beyond the standard definition of “extra” or “labor”, carrying a duty to a certain common goal – e.g. better working environment. In this sense, I remember that my mother was telling me “You do not have any φιλότιμο”, not because she expected me to do more housework, but more importantly because I did not recognize her labor. Another instance is found in the case, when someone does not want to help somebody from the beginning, but at the end, s/he does it. There it is said that “s/he was caught at his/hers φιλότιμο”, which means at the point s/he fulfilled a duty to something commonly good. On that account, in
absence of others’ appreciation of common goals “A”’s solution of regulating her “φιλότιμο”, might hint that she can fit the shoes of others. So far, so good, but let us check another example.

“A”:
I have given so much to the school, but they still do not want me […] I see some difference in how they treat other persons and how they treat me and Other persons. It is not only me (who experiences this). Of course, there is discrimination: Swedish, blondes in general, Swedish, British native speakers and all the Others.

Then “A” continues that despite the importance of language at her workplace, this is “something more” than that, as other people, who are not Swedish, have agreed:

Sometimes this makes me feel inferior, without it necessarily being true because I was born Greek. It is not that I should be inferior to the British that is a native speaker. For, I might be… or have more studies than him/her. […] This makes me sad. But I cannot do anything… Simply, I am not a native speaker and I will never be. Nothing changes.

At a glance, her admission that this cannot change is not a resistant practice. However, I see that she is aware of the practices and technologies mediated by some groups to exclude “Others”. Even though “A” has already demarcated the problem, I will move from the concept of discrimination to that of racism to designate a connection between race and accent by engaging in the discussion of the racial classification. In so doing, I refer to Fanon’s articulation of imperial languages cited by Mignolo:

“To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax […]], but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization . . . […] The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter – that is, he will come closer to being a real human being – in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language’. (Mignolo 2009: 7)

Mignolo comprehends Fanon’s approach, as pointing to take away the imperial/colonial idea from the human, so as to de-link the human from the imperial/colonial knowledge that invents the race classification (Mignolo 2009:7-8, 20) and I have shown throughout this study that the basis for such classifications is the idea of race (Mignolo 2002: 83; Quijano 2000). Here, despite the supposition that we carry the weight of the European civilization, the Southerners’ accent does not cross the European borders with much comfort (Dainotto 2006). If I understood
Mignolo correctly, with regards to inter-individuality defined by reference groups (Pollis 1965) his argument is that no matter how hard one tries to learn an imperial language, s/he will be always outside of the privileged reference group that invents the accent criterion for the establishment of racial ranking. Back to “A”, while φιλότιμο can be subjected to “minor” adjustments, her core values and loyalties remain intact. Being inter-group defined, she has the vantage point, the perspective from where she can see how partial values – here the accent, are employed to control other groups – the group of non-blonde Others in this instance. Thereby for “A”, the accent is occasionally important, but it is for sure not everybody’s truth, since it is located and constructed in certain reference groups. In contrast with me, who in a sense ascribed “exploitation” to an encompassing reality, she contextually distinguishes between the different instances. A partial value (e.g. φιλότιμο) of a reference group is negotiated and retrieved, for it is meaningless in a foreign context, whereas another value (e.g. accent) recognized in other specific groups is not an option but an imposition. As “A” does not attempt to convert the others to φιλότιμως, she might feel sad, however she does not accept the human ranking by the terms of accent as a core value: the very “basic pattern of one’s relationship to oneself and to the world around one remains unchanged” (Pollis 1965: 38). The configuration of the inter-self and its intact layers, adds an interesting aspect to the analysis of every-day resistances to invasions by dominant groups: in most instances “A” readjusts and reconsiders but to the extent her core values are not intimidated.

When I was a child my family had very few γνωριμίες. Differently, other families were staying in good touch through gifts, coffee invites, dinner or drink visits and κουβέντα (ordinary social discussion without a specific subject) – very much κουβέντα. Being the only child, I was always wishing my family had more γνωριμίες so that I could have much more παρέα (company) and also many children – or adolescents – to communicate and play with. To learn what παρέα exactly is, let me now move to the next interview.
Create the water for the fish – opening spaces for our “knowledges”

“P” learned Swedish and she has paid much attention to her accent, although she says “you do not have the same rights with someone, who is at the same level with you (in a meritocratic sense), but is also Swedish”. Despite the fact that it does not suit her, she has employed less intact forms of communication, such as the electronic post and tried to socialize. Certainly an effort to integrate in the society, still there are some specific things that are uprightly resisted. She revealed that “παρεξ” was the biggest issue to sort out, especially concerning her children:

A child who does not speak the Swedish language at school is 100% isolated. S/he cannot communicate. Even if s/he is little, I believe that there is no chance that s/he does not feel sad and isolated.

Furthering this assessment, she argues that the very problem is that the “Swedish society is structured as such” that all the population is under one “must” – and even so they handle every child as they do with all children, in one way and by no means do they consider a child’s specificities. In his article on the pluralism of truth, Panikkar problematizes the notion of “understanding”, by showing that it is perceived either as “standing under” superior ideas or “standing over”, standing with superiority over other ideas (Panikkar 1990: 8,9). When “P” “under-stands” the situations in Sweden, not only is she aware of her “standing under”, but she also raises a certain problematic:

“P”: The equality that is “that” (specific) absolutist equality is not always good. It is not only the word “equality”, one should see the “onwards” (ramifications) of equality. […] This country is the country of perfection and right, sophistication and so on, but I have seen some “holes” associated to (the) “equality”.

She illustrates this through various examples, whereby paradoxically she or her children were discriminated by “equality”. In the discussion of feminist border thinking, Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert and Koobak denote that without “pluritopic hermeneutics” inclusive of “a dialogic and experiential learning”, many phenomena such as feminist art, become “distorted” or “simplified” (2016: 7-8). In their article “pluritopic hermeneutics”, Tlostanova and Mignolo challenge the monotopic hermeneutics of Western modernity that implies a hierarchical classification of cultures (Tlostanova & Mignolo 2009b: 13). The distortion or erasing of difference is
true of many intersubjective situations when equality is formulated from the vantage point of the dominant societal group, while difference, which should be the right of all equal people in a society, is erased or devalued. “P” specifies the problem with “equality” which presupposes that everybody is same/equal, hence treats all as same/equal beings, while this entire idea seriously lacks in praxis. She also evaluates the failure of the system to abide by its own law: “we have equality only when it is good for us”, those who invent it and promote it.

Let me develop the problematic of “equality” by analogy with Western modernity (Tlostanova & Mignolo 2009b). As for all the people in the world, there is one modernity, there is one equality for all the people in the society and thereupon, like the culture that invented that modernity is “The culture”, the system that invented this equality is “The system”. From this perspective we can see that “equality” is something like the universal truth or rule with general application and secondly its specifications are determined by The system. Those excluded by The system, be it people from other countries and systems, do not participate in the dialogue for equality, they are “participated”; equality thus is The system’s “monology” (2009b: 17).

Keeping this in mind, I return to the Greek example of inter-self. To connect with the previous section, the inter-self does not abide by the principles of the European self. The notion of individuality precludes the inter-individuality from having enough space because the “inter-self” exists in-relation to the group of others that s/he is defined by. For example, privacy in Greece has not been taken seriously comparably to the safeguarding of the group’s integrity (Pollis 1965). Considering the theory of inter-self defined vis-à-vis reference groups, isolation becomes something more than negativity. Since the inter-self acts only in accordance with the group objectives, when isolation is not aligned with those, either something external forces the person to this mode or the group has expelled her/him. In Greece isolation is such a painful experience to the point that it is not culturally accepted. In many cases, when somebody lives like s/he is alone, the others see it as a problem and they try to help out, for example, they might try to find her/him some company. If this sounds abnormal to you or you think of it as discriminatory, then you are not “Greek”.
Quite often, we (she and her family) have been confronted with the difficulty of friendship. "Friendship" in more general, not only at the children's school but also mine [...] As such, friendship by no means would stabilize.

Apart from the concept of isolation, the attention she pays to these issues can be understood, only if we analyze the Greek thought of παρέα (company). For me at least, similarly to English, the Greek version of "can you keep me some company?" (μπορείς να μου κάνεις λίγη παρέα;) sounds like one asks a favor in the sense "can you help me?". The distinctions are clearer when the pronouns turn into plural "we" (εμείς), "you" (εσείς), "they" (αυτοί, αυτές, αυτά). When people say, "we make παρέα", it does not mean we keep company with each other, but we make together the "παρέα", we create it, and nobody owes the "παρέα" back to others. It is polite to say, "thank you for the παρέα", but the person does not feel that s/he owes a favor back, nevertheless. When we invite somebody to our παρέα, we share with her/him a common goal of the παρέα, that is, to feel good and have a good time, something like a "loyalty" that the stranger takes on with us. Likewise to the example of isolation, one might think that this is a dominating gesture, as the members of παρέα impose their will to the other people, but this is not quite true. If we make the new person-member in our παρέα feel bad, is there any chance for the common goal of "feel good" to be carried?

From this perspective "P" sees the παρέα as one of the core things after employment - she is "The breadwinner" in her family and also invests much time in finding "παρέα", first for her children and then herself. Regarding the children, she thinks that their παρέα is shaping as "first we play my game and then we play yours". It is inhuman for her (and her values), when the teachers are idle one meter away from a child who cries alone at the corner of the playground. Still, she does not personally blame them, for she believes that they do it because they treat all children "equally" like they are all the same, according to "The equality" – can you see the "monology" of "equality"? She also shows that other parents cannot understand her because of the different systems that they know: "There is the black, there is the white, but there are no in-between colors. And I don't say this with sole regard to children, but for the whole Sweden".
At least as I see it, “P” problematizes situations by not setting her focus so much to discrimination, as to the “monotopic hermeneutics” (Tlostanova & Mignolo 2009). In my comprehension, “pluritopic hermeneutics” starts at the moment when the “anthropos” having comprehended and encompassed the rule (namely the “imperial reason”) that excludes him/her, thinks from his/her own body and experience and overthrows the law of exclusion, thus opens spaces for a knowledge that has not been known for his/her being (2009: 17 - 18). We (“P” and “I”) have shown that “The equality”, is only for the “same” and excludes others, but this is not the main issue. “P” furthers the discussion that the supporters of this equality do not see its “onwards” (ramifications) in praxis, and she points to the limited “awareness of knowledge’s contingency” (Panikkar 1990: 12). She says that the teachers do not try to understand the children and they assume that all children should be treated equally, or that only one method applies to all migrant children. For there are certain universal preconditions for knowledge, there are certain pre-understandings (Pannikar 1990; Tlostanova & Mignolo 2009: 16-17; Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert & Koobak 2016: 7-8) for what is to be a migrant child or a woman and thus, “The equality” turns the society into a fenced plot.

Linking the cultural gravity and thus, the pain experienced by a Greek person in alienation, with the argument that “diatopic hermeneutics begins with the realization of pain arising from alienation and radical difference” (Tlostanova & Mignolo 2009b: 16), we can see that “P” ‘s oppositional creativity to a “monotopic hermeneutic”, in a certain degree introduces the discussion of “pluritopic hermeneutics”. Even though many might see it as backlash, after many efforts to open dialogues and create a space for herself and her family’s culture-knowledge in “The system”, she finally finds that space in the Greek affinity groups. This is not a dogmatist denial but rather a resistant practice against the grain of an “integration” that intrudes the basic values of άνθρωποι (anthropos in plural) and creates the experience of radical difference, as “P” says “like a fish out of its water”. It is prerogative for the fish to find the way to its water or even create water anew.

“P”: Your previous life, in your country, is not a life, which you delete, that is I feel here in Sweden in some way they want you to become one with them, one with the Swedish, but to delete your past. This thing cannot happen because with regards to your own signification it is not possible to delete this, for what you lived is not an
error, a wrong chapter. [...] It is a chapter from your own book. You cannot tear apart the former pages. For what reason…? This is it, isn’t it?

“Why cut the feet to fit Western shoes?” (Tlostanova 2010: 187). In the last two sections, I have shown that the “A” and “P” might buy shoes from the West, but they do not cut their feet in any case. The fact that the Greeks try to fit other shoes and “they do so constantly” (Bakalaki 1994: 77), relates to the colonial/modern world system and coincides with the control of knowledge, gender and being (Lugones 2016; Quijano 2000, 2007). Indeed, “A” and “P” find the slippages and the holes that reveal oppressive systems and they “guard” their integrity. The inter-self, defined by local reference groups, recognizes with and understands through the partial values of her group. I see this as the vantage point from where the counterfeit truth by abstract values, like in the example of “The equality”, can be questioned and further transgressed.

All these resistant thoughts and practices create spaces for the knowledge of the “Greek” “woman” “Other” that the Western imperial reason has so thoroughly suppressed.
Coda

When things come to an end, I am challenging the idea of “The end” for we (me and the other women) continue to be and resist in Sweden and elsewhere. From this point, I am writing some final remarks, while I expel “The end” stressor that these should be the most representative conclusions. I would like instead, to consider that all the previous chapters are inclusive of conclusions and they read quite autonomously. The purpose for this is primarily pedagogic: How would the reader see what is “unlearned” by this project and at the same time “relearned” (Tlostanova & Mignolo 2012), if s/he was running anxiously back and forth through the pages to find the terminologies? This is one final chapter.

Concerning the historical geo-graphic and bio-graphic perspectives, found in the first chapters and also in some parts of the interviews analysis, multiple remarks can be retrieved for many strands of knowledge – historical, political, social, cultural, artistic, anthropological, philosophical, economical and so on. The Greek laós has been constantly “tricked” throughout Greek history like they caught her/him at hers/his ϕιλότμο. By just saying that the laós does not owe anything to anybody and for any reason, I would like to narrate a λαϊκή ιστορία (laós story) that for me is pleasurable to read and thus, share:

Once upon a time there was a peculiar occupation, namely the “god-trickster”. The god-tricksters used to bury a Saints’ icon under a tree or next to a “drinking fountain”. When they fall asleep, they would watch in their dream the illustrated “Saint” becoming alive, lying and yelling to come out from the ground. After that dream they alarmed the entire village, and everybody, holding candles and setting incenses on fire, they got to that special spot in order to unbury “Him”/“Her” […]. Much later, on that specific spot the vilagers would build a small church dedicated to the “Saint” and the plates would get filled up with coins or other valuable offerings, while the “god-tricksters” became sanctified. (Βάρνα ης [1931] 1974: 86, translation mine)

Taken from the book “The True Apology of Socrates” this story problematizes the modern reason (Λόγος), the production of knowledge and its ethics. Βάρνα ης explicitly calls Socrates a “god-trickster” (Βάρνα ης 1974/1931) and when I think that the two could not have anything to fight over, I see that Βάρνα ης’ sends an implicit message to the people back in his time, criticizing how they handled the abstract Western ideas. The “laós knowledge” inventively discloses the narrative of
the West, particularly the way it planted ideas in Greece and elsewhere and also the aims and the ethic of this action. The “wealth accumulation” is a prevailing Eurocentric ethic and derives from modernity/coloniality (Tlostanova 2010). Still, thinking from a body and not from abstract morality, it is OK to be little “trickster” and plant a “Saint” – no actual harm in the village. But the planting of nations, surviving on the flesh of people, is a different kind of way to accumulate wealth, mediated by war; the war ethic is the darker ethic in the colonial/modern gender system (Lugones 2016; Tlostanova 2010).

The above narrative further suggests that we should start taking the knowledge of “peoples” more seriously, since it is “knowledges” that are not in need of the academy or other formal institutions. The latter in contrast have been in great need of the former. If I have made my point clear throughout this essay, we can see how the idea of “resistance” needs the women and their every-day knowledges – actions, reactions, stories, experiences, thoughts, evaluations, hypothesis, estimations, appreciations, strategies, values; the knowing-through-being. While the methodologies such as intersectionality and the constructions “gender”, “race”, “class”, “Same”, “Other”, including their radical questioning by decolonial or other options, are necessary for the scholar to survive and re-exist in the corporate university, we should not see them as rules applicable to all women. One might see here that I am proposing a schism between academia from “real life” or to not “scholarly” touch the “every-day” other forms of living. Is the scholar not a woman, is she not surviving every-day in the life arena, is she not black/yellow/orange/red/rainbow? The radicalization does not equate to aphorism as I have underlined in the beginning of this study.

Some researchers argue or investigate in ways that “resistance” of women is “something” that confirms or confronts existing hegemonies and, precisely at this point, we can see that some unconscious modes are attached to it. We need to be conscious of this “unconscious”, for it seems as though at these moments women cannot see to what they resist – it is unconsciously done. I understand this sort of resistance as enacting the epistemic and/or knowledge hierarchy researcher (1) - woman (2), which posits the researcher in his/her full academic methodical consciousness, while the woman resists in her arbitrary every-day unconscious. The problem of the disregard of the every-day knowledges is manifested in the fear of the
“Same” that the “Other” might know better; a very old problem generated by the coloniality of knowledge (Quijano 2007; Tlostanova & Mignolo 2009b). In studies with migrants, the researchers might be afraid that the migrant woman might know better, thus show to him/her what knowledge he/she is lacking\textsuperscript{16} – hence, when the woman undoes the hegemony and at the same time she does it, she is the researcher’s reflection. I was afraid to ask the question “Has it been hard or easy or between or something like that to be in Sweden?” or “Have you felt bad?” or “Did you face any problem?” – the possibility of an answer like “Not yet! Everything goes smoothly!” would show that my hypothesis is wrong and my knowledge inadequate. But what if one starts from the idea that “there is no safe place” (Mignolo 2012)? The area of every-day resistance is very challenging and we need to primarily think “intersectionality” – or think in the border – so as to see the intersections ανθρώπινα (anthropos-wise).

As this is the concluding chapter of my study, I shall now shortly juxtapose the results or otherwise, the answers to the research questions. The systemic violence and racial classifications that I revealed in many cases (namely the personal number, EU card, accent criterion, The equality, knowledge possession, philanthropy) confirm my primary hypothesis that the migrant women are confronted with barriers in the host society. Regarding resistance, the emphasis has been set on the moments when women consciously counteract inequalities, in contrast with previous studies that rely one way or another on unconscious practices. As I have articulated, like oppressions, resistances are multiple and thus, complicated, as the Greek women walk in-between subtle intersecting lines of power and oppression, acceptance/resistance and opposition/admission, whereby the slash, similarly to coloniality/modernity, is the place from where we can view their every-day resistances. Being members of different networks and social groups, some women can distinguish the forcibly imposed values by dominant groups, so that they will not sacrifice their own values (φιλότιμο). They do not cut their tongue to gain a British accent or tear apart the former chapters of their life book. Rather, they consciously travel to different “worlds” at their present – Greek worlds, Swedish worlds experienced from the body of “Greek woman - Other” and choose when and which worlds they construct. The

\textsuperscript{16} Here, I refer once more to the ethic of property in the sense of knowledge.
world, where the Greek laós has always been surviving, is well built with dis/identificatory techniques, thus resists former and current crises. Last but not least, Greek women disclose oppressive systems through brilliant illustrations.

By means of all these resisting practices, Greek women open spaces for their being in the Swedish society and their resisting is re-existing (Tlostanova 2010). In this dissertation I drew from certain decolonial angles to reconfigure the concept of everyday resistance as survival. This resistance is a concept that links resisting-through-being to thinking-through-being; an intersectional being and border thinking. As we are “Writing the next chapters of our books”, this resistance does not tell us “who” we are, but shows that we can be. As such, in this study, I have deliberately reaffirmed previously subordinated knowledges and repressed intersectional identities. This is definitely not The end.
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Appendix A

Interview preliminary session - (original notes translated to English)

Description of the purpose of the research – Stimulating some interest and setting the focus on practices of resistance

“When I had asked from you to help me out and discuss I had told you few things about what I am working with. My purpose is to look for ways that we figure out in order to go through difficult moments in our lives especially now that we have migrated or just moved if you want to a new place. I think that it is very interesting to see what means we use or what we think when we struggle or just live our lives. It can give inspiration to others to continue trying and walk further - you never know. Those ways to survive in the new land and manage can be I think can be many. They can be strategies or spontaneous decisions, or not even decisions, but just ideas or imaginary things. We might do or never do… - I cannot really know beforehand and I need you to tell me yours.

When I started thinking of my own ways and thoughts, I recalled some moments when I found solutions by myself or asked help from other people, sometimes I planned strategies or I just spoke myself out without thinking so much. There have been many ways. For example, I have felt embarrassed for some of my actions, because they were not polite or kind, some were sneaky or not at least not 100% by the law, still helpful for me. Some were funny almost ridiculous, but they worked. Some were a mess and a time loss. […] There might be some things that I did not realize the moment when I said or did them – you know, I was not thinking of doing them, but now I can recall them because they are at issue in this project. Some solutions that I thought I never tried out, they could have worked, but I will never know. […]

And I think how different all these things and ways can be for other people; and this I find very interesting and exciting!

So, to let you know how exactly you can help me I would like you to try to share with me from your experience in Sweden so far, those ways that helped you to overcome
issues, to go on and sort things out. They can be ways that you tried but they did not succeed so well, but you remember them as part of your effort and your struggle here. [...] Maybe the problems were your friends’ but were also concerned and you wanted the things to be different. [...] Those will concern the time of your life that you have spent here in Sweden.

So, my questions will be around these things, they will be more guiding the discussion and I do not want you to feel restricted to give very specific answers. I gave a quite large description, because I needed to explain a little bit better what I have in my head and what we are going to discuss.

I will be very happy if you have something to comment or if you want me to note down something or if you have something to ask.
Appendix B

Interview Main Session – Questions and Alternatives (original notes translated to English)

Before we discuss your ways to live or survive in Sweden, I would like to ask you few preliminary questions about your “moving” to Sweden.

1. When did you come to Sweden?
2. Can you possibly remember what you were thinking before you came, perhaps the reasons that you came here for?
3. People discuss about a new wave of Greek migration or a new generation of Greek migrants. Do you feel a part of it or not? Or to some or lesser extent? (If you want you can comment on that situation of people moving from Greece the later years and explain your views, how to you see it)

Now we go to the next part that is the main part and has to do with all the things that I talked about before.

4. From the moment you arrived here till the moment now that we are talking how you see the things here, easy, difficult, in between, so and so? Can you give me some sort examples?

5. Let’s move on to the more demanding situations. I would like you to try to think and remember some specific times that you needed to find some solution or ways to go on and transgress obstacles here. They can be more than one instance so feel free to recall things. I can wait if you want to think and remember […] Can you please narrate some of them and describe how you reacted, what ways you invented in order to sort the things out? What you chose to do or not do then? (To keep the flow of the discussion: Did you have the time to think of it or you just did it? What or how did you think that moment and you chose that thing? Why did you think it would work? Why you did not do it finally?)

6. (This question focuses to find more issues that the previous question did not inspire). Where there any moments or occasions, when or where you felt bad, uncomfortable, strange, afraid etc.? I am referring more now to every day events at
your exchange with other people, during your presence in different places, at work, at
the university, in other classes, grocery store, public services, the building where you
live, your neighborhood, restaurants, bars and so on. What you did or what you
thought? Can you describe again – like in the previous question, what you did, how
and why, or what you wanted to do better.

7. Is there anything else around these issues that keeps your head busy and you
would you like to share? Maybe we have not covered yet all of the things that you
thought and you would like to talk about. This is a quite open question and you can
say things that you forgot to say before, or if you want to explain better. You can also
bring totally new issues that you find relevant.

8. Do you have any feedback or something that you think it might be helpful for
me to know? If some question was difficult for example?