

The International
JOURNAL
of the HUMANITIES

Volume 5

The Internal Meaning of the Adverse Notional Conceptions
About the West and East in Greek Society and Culture and the
Adherence to Specific Cultural and National Stereotypes

George Stavrianos, Paraskevi Golia, Ifigenia Vamvakidou,
Argyris Kyridis, Christos Zagos

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE HUMANITIES
<http://www.Humanities-Journal.com>

First published in 2007 in Melbourne, Australia by Common Ground Publishing Pty Ltd
www.CommonGroundPublishing.com.

© 2007 (individual papers), the author(s)
© 2007 (selection and editorial matter) Common Ground

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of citations, quotations, diagrams, tables and maps.

All rights reserved. Apart from fair use for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the Copyright Act (Australia), no part of this work may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher. For permissions and other inquiries, please contact <cg-support@commongroundpublishing.com>.

ISSN: 1447-9508
Publisher Site: <http://www.Humanities-Journal.com>

The INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE HUMANITIES is a peer refereed journal. Full papers submitted for publication are refereed by Associate Editors through anonymous referee processes.

Typeset in Common Ground Markup Language using CGCreator multichannel typesetting system
<http://www.CommonGroundSoftware.com>.

The Internal Meaning of the Adverse Notional Conceptions About the West and East in Greek Society and Culture and the Adherence to Specific Cultural and National Stereotypes

George Stavrianos, University of Western Macedonia, Greece

Paraskevi Golia, University of West Macedonia, Greece

Ifigenia Vamvakidou, University of Western Macedonia, Greece

Argyris Kyridis, University of Western Macedonia, Greece

Christos Zagos, University of Western Macedonia, Greece

Abstract: The present research aims at exploring how the terms West-East are perceived by Greek University students. The research attempts to elucidate the students' perceptions about and attitudes towards the different semantic description of the specific terms in History as well as everyday life. The sample consists of 138 written texts produced by students attending Greek Universities. The content analysis of the texts under research reveals the stereotypical confusion about the historical, topological and cultural meaning of the terms in a Eurocentric view. The semiotic analysis highlights specific choice and use of notions and paradigms about the states that belong in the West-East. The results of the analysis demonstrate that national history teaching as well as the discourse of the media construct stereotypical perceptions about people and life in the West-East.

Keywords: East, West, Civilizations, Culture, Religion, Education

Introductory

IN THE 20TH century the epistemological thesis that the big narration practice can not be the foundation of the historical science did not mean also the end of history. The united and rational historical process of the previous century was replaced by a pluralism of narrations which is elevated concerning the experiences of many groups. In the scope of those changes the horizon of the historical studies broadens, not only as far as the inquiring groups are concerned, but also the questions that are posed by the historians (Iggers, 1999: 265-305). Nowadays, social sciences study not only political and social structures, but also the history of mentalities, the daily life, the material culture. The notion of historic place seems fickle because it is expanded or limited during time (Vaina, 1997).

Fundamental axes for the determination of the local historical facts and persons are the proximity to the space and time (modern), the attendance of subjects (indigenous and different) in the historical events and the changes, short or long term, that are in progress in the particular place. The meaning of locality is not considered between the narrow limits of the experienced space but infiltrates into the various historical data of the place (Vaina, 1997: 93-101).

In this historic field we try to comprehend the terms "East-West". P. Valery in 1957 has already proposed an expansion of the "European identity" to all populations, which have been affected by three impacts during the route of history (Arveler & Aymard, 2003: 16-22). He refers to the effect of *Rome, Christianity and Greece*, which determine the identity of Europeans as citizens and as groups as well, which are associated and influenced by economy, art, administration and other aspects of culture. P. Valery proves thoroughly the criteria of "European identity" that poses throughout the route in nations' history, and claims that even today Europe burdens much more than the rest of the Earth in the field of force and accurate knowledge; it is not Europe that exceeds, but the European spirit, whose masterly creation is America (Arveler & Aymard, 2000: 22). The connotative use of the term "Europe/West" is located in these opinions, which means the "spirit of acculturation" and thus it is diffused in populations.

The selection and the use of the terms "East-West" in social sciences are associated with the social and political context, and with the intervention of the researchers themselves. The history of Europe and of the Europeans has been comprehended as a history of the populations of West as opposed to the history of people, cultures, nationalities and minorities of East. In the 20th century the history of the geographical terms "West – East" is encountered with the so-



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE HUMANITIES,
VOLUME 5, 2007

<http://www.Humanities-Journal.com>, ISSN 1447-9508

© Common Ground, George Stavrianos, Paraskevi Golia, Ifigenia Vamvakidou, Argyris Kyridis, Christos Zagos, All Rights Reserved, Permissions: cg-support@commongroundpublishing.com

cial history, the oral history, people's and groups' histories that were suppressed until the beginning of 20th century. Emphasis is given today in the plural numbers of the grounds, the places, the persons, sexes, the races, the classes (Barthes, 1979: 196).

F. Braudel declares that the key - word of European/west history from 11th to 18th century is the word "freedom", which refers to multiple groups of persons. He also broadened the topological and cultural specification of Europe and the central nations/states to larger zones of economy, society, culture, like Mediterranean Sea. As Braudel says: "Mediterranean more than any other human environment narrates its own history incessantly; it is regenerated continuously by itself. What is the Mediterranean? It is a thousand of things together. Is not one only a seascape but innumerable sceneries? Is not only a sea but a succession of seas? It is not only a culture, but many cultures that are accumulated one to another. The travel in the Mediterranean is the discovery of the roman world in Lebanon, the prehistory in Sardinia, the Greek cities in Sicily, the Arabic presence in Spain, the Turkish Islam in Yugoslavia. It is a plunge in depths of centuries, to the buildings of the megalithic era in Malta, or to the pyramids in Egypt. The Mediterranean is a good reason for us to present "another" method of historical approach. Because the Sea, in the way that we can face it and love it, is for its most astonishing past, the most transparent of all the testimonies (Braudel, 1990: 9-11).

Methodologically the modern qualitative analysis argues that the language of description and interpretation of historical, social and political phenomena is mediated multiply (Iggers, 1999: 156). In the "archeology of knowledge" the analysis of lexicological contents defines either the semantic elements, which the speaking subjects provide in a certain period of time or the important structure that does not concern the verbal practice (Foucault, 1987: 76-77). In this research field the ideas and the notions of "East, West, Europe, Europeans, Europes" are approached as ideological and political implements. The systematic appearance and implementation of these terms are located in the nomenclature and in the semantics of language, although their comprehension requires the convergence and the intellectual process of the living experience with the intrinsic historical carriage. The significant proportion of the language (Benveniste, 1974) shows off the importance that words attain in the phrases, in the period of time and in the place that they refer to. The term "East and its use in the texts of historians has been promoted in the field of orientalism and civilization that characterizes the western thought, while the "exotic culture of Balkans" (Andreou et al, 2004: 55-74) has a positive meaning in the texts of travelers.

The semantic forms that we present are located in the constitutional axis of the terms "West - East" as the "center/west - region/east", the "metropolis/west - satellite/east". The metropolis means the developed European, capitalistic country, the center of economy and progress, while region implies the under-development, mainly in a rural level of culture. This definition of West - East leads the modern researchers to a genealogy of those notions so as the dynamism and the mobility of formulation's, reformulation's and reconstruction's procedures of the notions and the dominions as well to be described efficiently (Paschalides, 2001). The west-centrism/euro-centrism as an indication of the euro-centric perspective of history constitutes sovereign axis, but in the 20th century with the controversy of the authority of the western models of thought and speculation, the east-west field without shrinking exclusively in a society is for the first time attributed in the plural number and in compound/complex terms (Braudel, 2003: 51-59; Agrafiotis, 1987: 24-30; Agrafiotis, 1989: 87-103). However, the real comparison between the adversative dipolar form "eastern-western" with regard to the religious and political contexts of Islam and the monarchic regimes seems that it is maintained. Besides, in the history of Doctrines the schism "East - West" (1054) was an important fact, because it left its traces in the formation of Theology of two worlds, eastern and western tradition. The material that we derive from the modern historical research in Greece appears to determine the relation/opposition between East and West in many ways. B. Kremmydas (Scientific Symposium, 2003) describes the "revolution of 1921, that he asked the Greek to become like the Frankish" and places "the crisis in the relation between Europe and New Hellenism in 1850...". P. M. Kitromilides (ibidem) in the study of the "western sources of the anti-west argumentation" uses three representative examples from the 20th century, of I. Dragoumi, who derives arguments from his elder M. Barres for his criticism against the westernization of the Greek education, of F. Kontoglou, who is inspired by Pascal to support the revival of the aesthetic values of modern Greece and finally, of the cultural tense of neo-orthodoxy, that is based on the beauty-loving philology, as it was cultivated in West. Similarly other researchers locate three main anti-west streams: a) the Greek-centrism, as an ideology that underlines the relation between New Hellenism with the ancient Greek heritage, b) the eastern way of thinking, in which elected representatives of generation 1930 are placed among, and the ecclesiastical anti-west attitude, examining the church policy of State in the bounds of the Europeanization and c) the anti-enlightenment or the reaction to the innovation, "that survives until today, since it is at-

tuned with the post-modern plan of re-enchanting of the world” (Kafetzi, 2001).

The tactic of the Formal Greek State to reject the West by rediscovering Byzantium or the reconstitution of Eastern Empire, in periods which the state feels strengthened, is a quite common phenomenon in the Hellenic history: we mark that in 1914, the General Files of State and the Byzantine museum are founded in Greece. In the West, it also seems that we owe the arguments of anti-west attitude and the axiom as well, as St. Pematzoglou calls it, “that Greeks and Turks were and will remain enemies for ever. For the opinions of Korais and a number of scholars who followed him, molding the historical myth, thanks to them; first Volterus, who wrote, “I will always hate Turkish for their savagery”, and one century later, V. Hugo, with his dictum: each movement of Turkey is adverse to the culture” (Scientific Symposium, 2003). B. Panagiotopoulos says that the politic semantic comes from the dipolar significant West – East, defining USA/West as a threatening vision relegating us to the phrase of Constantine Karamanlis A’ “we belong to the West” with branded terms the two dipolar: Left – Right/ East – West.

However, the co-existence of the universal with the national-local in modern reality of globalization composes a dynamic, dialectic ration, resulting to the politicalization of the national-cultural identity and the formation of counterbalanced inclinations in a world “that we cannot accept a history – our history, shouting louder or silencing those who sing a different song than ours” (Postman, 2002: 139). We mark that the use of the terms “West – East”, as well as civilization/culture, after Huntington’s book about the conflict of civilizations, lost the orientation of Enlightenment, since the writer “moves in the frame of geopolitical perception of West (of USA) regarding to the world and advances into future analyses” (Stavrianos, 2005). Seldom the significances that literally determine the better elements of western culture, “such as the ideas for a meaningful History, a universal Civilization and the possibility of progress” have been disputed as much as today (Bookchin, 2005: 33). As M. Souliotis (2003) is marking everything about the “superior European culture” always cover the axiom that the right is the right of the most powerful, that the power of arms is walking with imposition or subjection, proportionately of the national symbolic prestige whose defining component is the language; the spread of the “foreign” terminology is the crowning and the result

of the activities that are being conducted on the social productive base.

Methodology and Sample of the Research

The research sample was comprised of 361 texts, produced by students, with the title: “*What is East and West?*” The vague formulation of the subject provides for the researchers’ basic objective, that is, to record the students’ viewpoints and attitudes concerning East and West. The specific age group was chosen on the premise that it could enable recording mostly the social aspects related to the subjects’ school age history, which, however, are likely to have been modified on account of the fact that the subjects study in a free/public educational institution. The sample was random non-stratified.

The students’ written texts were examined on the basis of *Quantitative and Qualitative Content Analysis*, which, according to Berelson (1971²) enables investigating views and perceptions of specific individuals or groups. A different view is offered by De Sola Pool (1959), who claims that such an analysis is ideal for studying meanings and semiotic relations involved in written or spoken speech. Later, Palmquist (1990) employs Content Analysis in written texts produced by students and teachers. The representatives of the French school, by employing the conventional thematic analysis, offer a different outlook to the specific method, remodeling both its methodology and potential. A basic principle of the analysis is identifying and collecting the units of the research material, which comprise a message (Moscovici, 1970; Mucchieli, 1988). In other words, the specific analysis groups the components of the research data into thematic categories in relation to their meaning, and subsequently calculates and analyzes them accordingly. Significantly, the analysis also enables investigating the absence of certain themes, since it is suggestive of the aspects that are investigated, always in relation to the research objectives. The themes were established as the analysis units and were analyzed in four basic categories, comprising subcategories, as ensued by the data (Lasswell & Leites, 1965; Veron, 1981; Bardin, 1977; Grawitz, 1981). The limited number of participants does not enable any generalizations and relevant conclusions; however, the analysis can be the basis for further discussions and research into the signifier and signified of homeland as an aspect of national identity.

Table 1: Distribution of the Subjects by Gender

Gender	N (%)
Male	173 (47,9)
Female	188 (52,1)
Total	361 (100)

Quantative and Qualitative Analysis of the Research Data

Table 2: Distribution of Statements by Thematic Category

Thematic	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1. Topological and chronological clarifications	1579	45,8
11. Glossary definition	800	23,2
111. Cardinal's points	162	4,7
112. Sunrise and sunset	281	8,2
113. Beginning and end (life or situation)	175	5,1
114. Orientation points	96	2,8
12. Geographical space (location in the map)	642	18,6
121. Location in the map	593	17,2
1221. Western countries	251	7,3
1222. Eastern countries	257	7,5
122. Advantages – disadvantages of space	47	1,4
13. Civilization's origin	42	1,2
131. Western civilization	13	0,4
132. Eastern civilization	23	0,7
14. The civilizations as continuities	93	2,7
2. The civilizations as societies	667	19,4
21. Western civilization	289	8,4
22. Eastern civilization	281	8,2
23. Balkan civilization	98	2,8
3. Cultures as collective mentalities	555	16,1
31. Religion	112	3,2
311. Western religions	29	0,8
312. Eastern religions	53	1,5
32. Way of life	406	11,8
321. Fashion	5	0,1
322. Nutrition	6	0,2
323. Culture	324	9,4
324. Residents' activities	47	1,4
33. Civilization's consorting	37	1,1

4. Civilizations as economies	646	18,7
41. Economic data	255	7,4
42. Technological progress	187	5,4
43. Demographic data	18	0,5
44. Political data	187	5,4
Total	3447	100,0

The analysis of the texts accentuated 3.447 reports, which were included in four (4) thematic categories. The following tables (t. 2) present the distribution of the reports in relation to the thematic category.

1st Thematic Category: Topological and Chronological Clarifications

In the first thematic category (1.579, 45,8%) we include the opinions, that try to clarify the terms East and West topologically and chronologically, and we classify them in four categories.

Lexical Definition

In this category the terms East and West are described in relation to the “cardinal points”, “the rotation of the Earth around the sun “the beginning or the expiry of a given situation respectively, the “orientation points”. Out of the total number of students, 162 (4,7%) conceive the terms East and West as “cardinal points” and they agree with the conviction that the two terms declare “direction”, that is to say “easterly or westwards”. 281 reports (8,7%) are related to the “sun’s route and the students use these terms “to define the duration of the day or to “refer to the Sun or “to another celestial body”, since “every morning the sun comes out from the East”, while “in the afternoon it is lost in the West”. All this process is nothing more than “the result of the daily rotation of the Earth”, provided that the two terms are referring to the appearance or disappearance of a celestial body under the horizon of the place where the observation is done”. Some students consider these terms as “those that make us think about”, they are “something beautiful”, “special” and mainly “romantic”. In this case, the importance is given in the terms that concern the Greek tourist stereotypes for the particular age of the social subjects: “East brings in mind one romantic morning in Chalkidiki”, “West refers in moments of sunset in the Santorini”.

The reports (175, 5,1%) that are related to the “beginning” and the “end” of situation or institution or even to the significance of “acne and “decline” are included in the subcategory *Beginning and End of life or situation*. More specifically, in the answers, East means “the new beginning”, “rebirth”, “hope”, “light”, while West means the “elderly” and the “death”. In a cultural context, East is defined as

“something that begins and flourishes”, “the outset or the flourish of a civilization”, while West as “something that finishes and is found in decline”, “the end of an epoch or a civilization”. Moreover, the subjects relied on religious and metaphysic context, support that “East defines the beginning of a new day”, “the birth of life”, “the beginning of the world and for this reason “the holy church looks to the east”. On the other hand, West is reported “as the end of the day or “the end of life” and thus, “the cemeteries look to the West”. Totally, it is pointed out that East means “flourish and West “decline”. Finally, 2, 8% of the subjects approach the terms as cartographic points “that are used for the geographic orientation of the person”, because “by looking a compass we can realize where East and West are’ and “in this way we are directed in a travel” and even more, “we do not lose our course”. That is to say, the two terms help the person “to determine geographically various localities”, “to place a point on the map”, a “country or anything other in the space”. In an effort to place our body in the space correctly oriented, it is reported that “East is always in our right hand, while West to the left one”.

Geographical Space (Location in the Map)

642 (18,6%) students conceive the two terms either as a point of reference to the whole world or as concrete national entities (as for example in Greece). 7,3% of students connect the term West with specific countries or teams of countries of the so-called “western world”, pointing out that the West “defines the total of the western countries”, the countries “inside the western hemisphere” and more generally “the total of the countries of Europe and America”. Many of the subjects define West ideologically: “United States of America are the basic representative of West”, the “prevailing America”, as they named it. The use of the geographic limits seems to be flexible and open, since West is defined alternatively as “the region that is extended from Western Europe up to northern America”, previously called as»the countries that are extended beyond Balkan and Russia”, or as the countries of “Western Europe and Northern America”, and “Australia as well”. Some reports persist in cartographic literal semantic: “West is the left part of the map”, while others with

the cities/capitals as semantic objects define West as centered by their cities such as “New York”, “London”, “Paris”, “Rome”, “Buenos Aires”, “Johannesburg”, “Brussels and “Athens”. These cities/centers seem to act in the students thought metonymically or even connotatively for the cultures and the populations that historically belong to those places. We note that the term *central* – *center* belongs to the geographical mono-cultural vocabulary of leading historiography, which includes the center, a leading center as national-state or/and more, but not the regions as places, as geopolitical communities, as spatio-temporal environments, as cultures (Bouzakis, 2002: 20).

Many subjects (7,5%) are focused on the geographic localization of the countries, that “begin from the Eastern Aegean and are extended up to the Indian river”, “the countries of the Eastern hemisphere”. The East is defined as “the total of countries that are located in the east of Europe”, more east of the Balkan Peninsula and Russia” and it includes “all the countries of Asia” and “mainly the Asiatic areas of the Far, Near and Middle East”. The Near East is defined as the part that is located near in the Eastern Mediterranean, “the Far East is the part that includes Eastern Asia”, while “the Middle East is the intermediary part of the two previous”. Moreover, it is pointed out that “the main representative of East is China”, while a series of other countries like “Japan”, “Korea”, “the countries of Indochina”, “Vermin”, “Thailand etc” are also reported. It appears that the students know the geographic and geopolitical semantics of the term, as this is used in social sciences today, as well as in the political speech.

As far as the subcategory Advantages – Disadvantages of space is concerned, the two terms are approached in a dipolar form: as “two opposite definitions”, as “two completely different worlds”, as semantics that “include explicit differences in multiple points”. C. Levi-Strauss claimed that “the binary oppositions constitute the base of the fundamental systems of classification in the cultures”. In this field, we wonder if the vocabulary and the grammar as constitutive elements of a concrete culture, but also as a field of battle between refuted interests, enlist politically and ideologically and/or repeat the use of concrete terms in daily communication. The reports about “East, as a beautiful and luminous place, though west as “a place ugly and full of dark” is in semantic confusion with the other categories.

Civilization's Origin

In this category the subjects attempt to describe the terms in the field of cultures that were presented historically in the respective areas. It seems that the general nouns West/East is mutated in concrete ad-

jectives for cultures, which are defined on a literal basis historically. The choice and the domination of the substantives, verbs, adjectives and other parts of the speech reveal each time the decay of the language, the encoding of the official language, the manufacture of fables, “because the fable is basically, named, provided that indeed the naming procedure is the first method of seducing” (Barthes, 1978). 13 reports (0,4%) are located about the origin of the western civilization and its roots. It is reported that West is “a culture by far newer than East” and is characterized by “important buildings”, “works of art and “sculptures”. Moreover, the western culture is “a civilization that is continuously developed”, having as starting line “Ancient Rome”. At the same time, the subcategory eastern civilization is associated to the birth (0,7%), “of an ancient civilization with a tradition of many thousands of years”. East is characterized as the “mother of all civilizations”, “cradles of bigger civilizations of antiquity and the “first “light” of humanity”. As points of this civilization are reported the “luxurious” and “magnificent” buildings, that “adorn these countries”. Moreover, it is pointed out that, on a contrary to the western culture, which is identified by Ancient Rome, “Byzantium” and the “capital of the eastern roman empire, Constantinople constitutes the basis for the eastern culture.

Civilizations as Continuity

In this category, the subjects (2,7%) approach the terms of “east and west” as terms with cultural particularities, and with obvious cultural continuity in the passage of centuries as well. The beginning of this deviation “should be sought in the Byzantine years”, “after the deviation of the roman state to eastern and western with two capitals; Istanbul and Rome, respectively”. According to the students this segregation is accompanied by “historical, cultural and social differences”. It is reported about the western culture that it “has its roots in the Hellenic-roman civilization”, while the modern western civilization “begins to be developed mainly after the Medieval” “beginning in 1789”. The “French revolution”, the “befalling Enlightenment and “the period of Renaissance”, which “brings important social and political changes” and during which “an explosion in the arts and letters is marked as well as the industrial revolution”, are reported as historical sections in the course of western civilization. On the other hand, the eastern civilization “has its roots in primeval civilizations of the region” following a “tradition of many thousands of years”. It is also reported that “the shift of the center of weight of the Byzantine state from the West to the East” and the “transport of the capital to a region of supremacy of

the Greek spirit” create “the starting line of an autonomous historical course of the Eastern part”. As a result of all these, the creation of a new political form becomes; that of “Byzantine empire”, “the beginning of the newer Eastern civilization”.

2nd Thematic Category: The Civilizations as Societies

Western Civilization

In this category, the students conceive the term “west through social correlations by approaching this way the various aspects of western society”. 289 reports mark that “West is the cultural space of Europe and USA”, “it is connected notionally with USA”, mainly, which constitute “the center of the western world” and “western culture”. At the same time, West refers to “a culture evolved and advanced”, “to societies of a western type”, to “societies of letters and culture”. Most students agree that “the western civilization is the civilization of the powerful and the civilized”. Today, the representatives of the western civilization are those who “define the future of the planet” that they order and “they bomb, considering “all the other civilizations inferior” and maybe this is the reason why “today the civilized West is responsible for most of the trials worldwide”. It is also pointed out that the societies of West “that are possessed from specific ideas and values”, are expressed through rationalism and positivism”. For West, “the elevation of logic and individuality had as consequence the extreme individualism”. Generally, students agree that West “means culture”, “development of civilization”, “equality of two sexes” and “civilized and social education” as well. Culturally, the term west “declares the urbanized countries” that “have adopted the so-called western way of life”. At the same time, the cinematographic semantic of West is referred as “horses”, “Western”, “too much gun powder”, “Indians”, “cow-boys”, “wild and dangerous situations”.

Eastern Civilization

In the Eastern culture, 281 (8,2%) students are reported by selecting positive and negatively semantics. In contradiction to the USA, which considered as the “center of western culture” by the students, it appears that as far as the Eastern civilization is concerning “China plays the corresponding role”. Inter others, it is reported that the civilization of East is a “civilization full of colors”, “oriental dances”, “animals”, “Turkish women”, and “sheikhs”. The students appreciate that “East means relaxation and happiness as well love and sociability”. On the other side, common conviction of many subjects constitutes the make that “the East is constituted by coun-

tries social and cultural “delayed”, countries with poor and “under-developed” civilization stigmatized “from the religious fanaticism”. Their civilization is characterized by “more general regression”, and by “the fear for new and modern”. The individual identity is being lived “only in the group” where everything is common, because “the collectivism is in effect” and “it is expressed as a form of servility in the person of head or god”. Logic does not possess a “distinguished position”, contrary to “traditions and fables” that possess master role, because the individual “is incorporated and subjugated in the family or in the race”. In the Eastern societies, regarding the place of women it is pointed out that “the oppression of women and their subjugation in the man dominate”, “woman is considered more inferior”, “the woman – thing” which is faced as a “machine of procreation” by society. The oriental way of life is described as a “fatalistic point of view”, “depended to prejudices and medieval perceptions” “with intense the soothing element and mystery” indicating the exotic and mythology about East, as it is recorded to the school history.

Balkan Civilization

In this category 98 (2,8%) reports are related with the Balkans as geographic limit between East and West: “they are the borders between Europe and Asia” “with Aegean Sea as the main border”, “a mixture of west-east civilization” with “adulterated characteristics of western type” and Greece is a country that is often characterized as “the east of West” or “the west of East”. In the Balkans, it is pointed out that “from the one we have a western way of clothing”, “entertainment”, “thought”, “behavior”, and “expression” as well, “products of the modern, western consuming capitalism”, which however “suit completely to the bargains and the popular markets that are realized at least a time the week in each small and big Balkan city”. Particular accent is given to the consorting of eastern – western codes: “in the Balkans, if one searches in any aspect of human social, political and cultural activity, will sure distinguish tendencies that prevail not only in the West, but also in the East”.

3st Thematic Category: Cultures as Collective Mentalities

Religion

In this category, the 3,2% consider that religious belief is capable to determine the community, since all theories of religions are unbreakably tied up with significances as “social cohesion”, “social solidarity”, “ideology” and “identity”. Or we accept the definition of Durkheim (1961), that considers the religion

as a social superstructure via which social solidarity is expressed and is strengthened, or that of Marx, who believed that religion is an ideological fantasy created for the promotion of interests of chief order, the students realize that religion has played a catalytic role in the modern world, resulting to the fact that a high percentage of individuals has the opportunity to approach terms as “East” and “West” based on merely religious semantics. In the subcategory western religions, (29, 0,8%) it is reported that in the West “the effect of Christianity is intense”, in its all aspects and doctrines, either of: Orthodox”, or of “Catholics”, or of “Protestants” and “societies are more deliberate”. On the contrary, countries of East are “the non Christian countries”, with theocratic regime”, where “Islamism”, “Buddhism”, “Hinduism” and “Taoism” is prevailed. It is pointed out that in the East “religion plays very important role in the daily life of the individual”, for this and the term East “is used for countries with religious tradition” and for populations that “are characterized by religious fanaticism”. So we distinguish the segregation between the terms East and West, which takes clearly inner-European and inner-Christian extents since it refers to the schism between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the western Catholic Church.

Way of Life

In the subcategory Fashion (5, 0,1%) it is reported that the matter of “clothing is one of the many differences of east and west”, since “from one part we have the western way of clothing” with “high fashion level” and from the other the one that prevails in the Eastern countries. Equivalent low is the percentage, (0,2%) that refers to the alimentary habits, underlining that contrary to the populations of west, “sousi”, “fougi”, “rice” and “pulses” are “characteristics of the eastern nations”. Moreover, students are referred to the daily civilization, pointing out that East is characterized by prejudices, manners and traditions”, while “people of West are open to new ideas and perceptions”. It is obvious that the two terms “determine different culture”, “reflect different civilization”, “different worlds”, “with diverse mentalities”, “conceptions”, “values”, “manners and costumes”. Moreover, it is recorded that “despite the two civilizations differences in values, ideals and beliefs, each one offers to humanity in its own field” and it is forecasted that “in the future the two cultures will be countervailed and their differences will be blunted”. We observe that only the 1,4% of the students is referred to the professional activities of the residents: “the residents of the western countries enjoy an easy life, concerning the material goods and they have the opportunity to educate themselves”, in

contrary to the persons of East that “for the most part are occupied with land cultivation” and “they work hard in order to earn the livelihood”, “as a result the bigger part of the population is educated insufficiently”.

Civilization’s Consorting

In this category, the elements of interaction and continuity are located between the civilizations of East and West. The East is defined as “a geographic region that follows with slow steps the growth of West” and “the western development”. Today, countries of East “strive so as to correspond in the new data”, “trying to reach the western countries standard”, “that very often “are models for these countries”. At the same time, students are pointing out that in many sectors the two civilizations “influence each other” and “have adopted elements a culture from the other”. Many reports point out the financial contexts of the interaction, and the way that “the multinational companies of West increase continuously their activities in the eastern countries taking advantage of the cheap workforce or the low standard of living of their residents”.

4 st Thematic Category : Civilizations as Economies

Economical Data

The students (7,4%) comment the two terms, giving particular gravity to the economical data, since “the economy is one of the factors that differentiate the terms West – East”. In the West “we meet more developed economically countries hence also eminently richer”, while in the East we have “countries with low economic background”. Thus, while “in West it exists bigger economic prosperity”, in the East is observed “lack of elementary goods for the bigger part of population”, that is to say “the world is poorer”, “under-developed”, “of low living standard”, “with less demands”, “slave of the riches”, while in the West “the countries are developed so “economically”, as and “industrially”, while the economy of East is based on the agriculture”, if we of course, exclude the few states that have the privilege of “black golden”, which, unfortunately, is exploited by the powers of West as well”. The students report that “in West exist developed and developing countries as well, meaning that, prosperity does not represent the entire western world”.

Technological Development

In this category the students’ opinions differentiate by far between them. So, a percentage from the students’ reports points out that West “is representative

of evolution and is, regard to the technological level, particularly developed”, while the countries of East are “technologically partially developed”, or even “under developed”. On the contrary in other reports prevails the opinion that “east and west rival intensely in the sector of technology” and “often come in juxtaposition on issues of technological development” or even the conviction that “the east is synonym of evolving technology”.

Demographic Data

With regard to the demographic data that prevail in East and West it is reported that Eastern countries are characterized “by rapid increase of population”, while it is marked that in the region of East “the bigger part of the world population is assembled” while the western world includes “smaller populations” without this, to be justified in the relation of sexes.

Political Data

According to the students, the difference of these two terms has “political bases”. It is observed frequent use of terms of the cold war “eastern and western block” and it is pointed out that “communism prevails in a high percentage in eastern countries” or that the political situation is controlled by “despotic and authoritarian regimes”, where “the army is always the main force”. Generally, seems that there is a prevalent view that “in East are the socialist countries of former USSR” while “in West, the liberal democracies of Europe and America”. At the same time, it is marked that in the communistic arrangements that prevailed in the east “the powers and the rights that were provided in the population were very little, while the freedom of expression and reason were inexistent elements». On the other hand, the political picture of West is characterized not only by “democracy”, but also by the “inhuman” “capitalistic system of organization”, “the nationally ideal” and “problems with the wars, due to the imperialistic policy”. West is engaged as synonym of the “political liberalization”, while East of the “authoritarian arrangements”.

Discussion

It appears that Greek students’ opinions include the Greek social and educational contexts, as the relation between West/Europe and the New-Hellenism is bi-directional with a lot of fluctuations. It appears that the students know not only the geographic, but also the geopolitical semantics of the term, as it is used in the social sciences and in the political speech nowadays. In addition, the subjects based on religious and metaphysical contexts, on land-planning limits,

and ideological codes define bipolarity and adversatively the terms East – West, while it is also observed a semantic regarding the modern picture of West as an aggressive, imperialistic force. The historical semantics that prevail in the students answers’ are focused on the Byzantine and roman semantic of school history, while the Enlightenment constitutes the section that defines “west as development of civilization”, “equality of two sexes” and the “cultural and social education”.

As it is elected in the students answers’ the words “West, western, westwards” and “East, eastern, easterly” belong to the geographic mono-semantic vocabulary of the west leading historiography of facts for the historic place. This includes the West as center, a leading center as national – state center or/and many centers, but does not include the region/East as places, as geopolitical cultures, as spatiotemporal environments, as cultures. On the contrary, the terms “history of populations of Mediterranean, of Europe, of Balkans” with declaration of many worlds in dialectic relation dispute the superiority of western culture, the united historic evolution of an extended narration. So, the historiography not only as local, but also as supranational unites worlds and cultures contrary to the national historiography. The multiplicity of the reports and loans from different geographic and cultural places in the social and daily social practices is not allow us to identify unilaterally either the term East or the term West according to tradition or contrary to modernity. Today, we live in a semantic system, where the terms international/national and its derivatives, are preferred by the terms international/ecumenical and their derivatives such as global, national, ethnic/universal, international, mundial. The terms “international” (it used from 1853 in Greece as output of international) and internationalism (from 1893) means the opposite of nationalism (1859), but also the “branded” semantic of communism. However, we know that globalization is not identified with the universality and the internationalism and does not contribute de facto in the equality and the freedom of workers. Today the influx of new participants in the West with special characteristics empowers the irrational fantastic social conscience of indigenous participants, since the cultured foreigner is transmuted to a plasmatic class “other”, as the sociologists point out (Kyridis & Andreou, 2005). The variation as dipolar or/and multidipolar shape is formatted as the dominating structure, but we observe that class variation defines the configuration of identity, even if it is covered by national, cul-

tured, globalized homogeneity. The modern political and social progresses in the West which has as its central axis the processes of globalization elect the unsolved problems of “national disorder, whose nature is vague” no

matter how much the philosopher of establishment and western liberal capitalism F. Fukuyama tries to justify scientifically the end of history as the end of equality.

References

- Agrafiotis, D. (1987). *Civilized discontinuities*. Athens: Ypsilon (in Greek).
- Agrafiotis, D. (1989). *Modernity, Depiction*. Athens: Ypsilon (in Greek).
- Andreou, A. et al (2004). *Aspects of ottoman and poster-ottoman Florina from the French cart-postal: Congress' Records, Florina 1912-1922*. Florina, 55-74 (in Greek).
- Arveler E., Aymard M. (2003). *The Europeans*. (Tr. P. Bourlakis). Athens : Savallas (in Greek).
- Barthes, R. (1978). *Leçon*. Paris: Seuil.
- Benveniste, E. (1974). *Problemes de linguistique generale*, vol.ii. Paris: Gallimard.
- Berelson, B. (1971²). *Content analysis in Communication Research*. New York: The Free Press.
- Bookchin, M. (2005). *History, civilization and progress, outline of a criticism of Modern Relativism*. (Tr. Th. Velissaris, G. Daremas). Ioannina: Isnafi.
- Bouzakis, S. (2002) *New Hellenic Education 1821-1998*. Athens: Gutenberg (in Greek).
- Braudel, F. (2002). *The Grammar of Civilizations*. (Tr. Ar. Alexakis). Athens: MIET (in Greek).
- Braudel, F., Aymard, M. & Coarelli, F. (eds). *The Mediterranean. The place and the history*. (Tr. E. Avdela & P. Benveniste). Athens: Alexandria (in Greek).
- De Sola Pool, I. (1959) *Trends in Content analysis*. Urbana University of Illinois Press.
- Durkheim, E. (1961). *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Collier Books.
- Foucault, M. (1987). *The archeology of knowledge*. (Tr. K. Papageorge). Athens: Exantas.
- Holsti, O. R. (1969). *Content analysis for the Social Science and the humanities*.
- Iggers, G. (1999). *The historiography in the twenty-century*. (Tr. P. Matalas). Athens: Nefeli (in Greek).
- Kafetzi, A. (2001). *Giannis Tsarouxis, Between East and West*. Athens: Ministry of civilization (in Greek).
- Kokkinos, G. (2003). *Science, Ideology, Identity*. Athens: Metaihmio (in Greek).
- Marc, Jean. (2006). *The issue of the European state*. (Tr. N. Zartamopoulos). Athens: Papazisis.
- Paschalidis, G. (2001). *The definition of culture and the civilization as regal practice: to a genealogy of the terms of culture and civilization*. In G. Paschalides, E. Hontolidou (eds). *Semiotics and civilization*. Thesalonici: Observer. v. I., 25-42.
- Postman, N. (2002). *The compass of the future*. (Tr. K. Metaxa). Athens: Kastaniotis.
- Scientific Symposium (2003). *Europe and New Hellenism*. Athens: Company of studies of neo-Hellenic Civilization and General Education. In: www.epohi.gr/theodosopoulou_antivest_culture
- Souliotis, M. (2003). *Partially national, partially christianic*. Vima (Greek newspaper), 19/10/2003.
- Stavrianos, G. (2005). *The civilization's dynamics: dialectic approaches*. Thessalonica: Thessalonica: Ant. Stamouli (in Greek).
- Vaina, M. (1997). *Theoretical context of the local history for the twenty first century*. Athens: Gutenberg (in Greek).
- Kiridis, A. & Andreou, A. (2005) (eds). *Aspects of Variation*. Athens: Gutenberg (in Greek).

About the Authors

Dr George Stavrianos
Dr in Literature

Dr Paraskevi Golia

Teacher of Primary Education. Graduate of Pedagogic Academy Florina in 1986 and of Pedagogic Department of Education of Florina, Aristotle University, in 1998. She attended Postgraduated Studies in Pedagogic- Humanities and Historical Studies at the same University. MS in faculty of Education, Pedagogic Department of Florina, Aristotle University Thessaloniki: "Ideological Direction of the Greek Students of Ex Soviet Union (1925-1937): A research in language school books". She is Dr in Educational Politics at the University of West Macedonia (Florina, Greece) and she is assistant in teaching Modern History. She has published several papers in Greek and European scientific journals about pedagogic. She had created also educational software in education.

Dr Ifigenia Vamvakidou

She has studied Modern History and Philosophy of History at the University of Salonica. She has obtained her Ph.D. in Modern History of Greece at the same University and attended Postgraduated Studies in Philosophy of History at the same University. She is currently an assistant professor at the University of West Macedonia (Florina, Greece), where she teaches Modern History, Cultural Studies and History of Art and Education. She

has published several papers in Greek and European scientific journals about intercultural teaching of history and History of Art. She is the writer of the book in greek: Thraces in 1821 and the artistic monuments as historical sources.

Argyris Kyridis
Professor of Sociology

Phd Christos Zagros
Phd Student