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**SCHOOL ADAPTATION OF
GREEK CHILDREN AFTER REMIGRATION
Age Differences in Multiple Domains**

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Since the early 1960s, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)¹ has been the main destination of an extensive labor migration from Mediterranean countries. Until 1990, more than 18 million people have entered Germany, by far the largest group of them being labor migrants. In the same time interval, there has also been a substantial return migration of about 13 million migrants and their family members (i.e., more than 73%) to their countries of origin.²

More than 6 million foreigners reside currently in the former FRG. Of these, about 1 million are school-age children, constituting about 12% of the school population. Children of migrant workers experience various social, psychological, and academic problems in German schools (Hopf, 1983; Rist, 1978). More than half of the migrant children of secondary school age attend the negative select school (*Hauptschule*, lower secondary school, leading to

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the labor market or to vocational training), and the percentage of migrant children attending either the positive select school (*Gymnasium*, upper secondary school; academic track) or technical schools (middle secondary school) is much smaller than the respective proportion of the local school population. Although Greek students (along with Yugoslavs and some other nationals) recently show considerable improvement in school success in some areas of the FRG (Hopf, 1987), the majority of foreign students still attain lower levels of achievement than their German peers.

Remigration to the home country constitutes a critical and difficult process for all members of migrant families. This study examines the psychosocial and academic adjustment of Greek remigrant children at two age levels. The majority of Greek remigrant families come from the FRG, followed by the other Western and former Eastern European countries, the United States, Australia, and Canada (Hopf, 1988). Because Greek remigrant students constitute a very heterogeneous group, we have selected the students coming from the FRG as the "remigrant group" of the present study. We regard this distinction as very important because students coming from various countries have experienced very different cultures, second languages, and school situations. This issue has been overlooked in several relevant studies where researchers describe remigrant students in Greece in general.

Over the past 30 years, Greek migration to and from the FRG has been significant. Of about 10 million inhabitants in Greece, more than 1 million (1,123,625 persons) migrated to Germany between 1960 and 1990. During the same time span, 954,115 Greeks remigrated to Greece; some of them later came to Germany for a second time. Taking double migration into account, it has been estimated that about 80% of Greek migrants have remigrated to Greece after having spent an average of about 15 to 20 years in Germany (Hopf, 1987, 1988, 1992).

Reviewing the relevant research literature on remigration in different countries, Kasimatis (1984) points out various problems regarding the groups studied; the methodology employed; the lack of data in the countries of origin; the emphasis on economic and demographic factors rather than on social, psychological, and cultural dimensions of the remigration process; and the difficulty in comparing data of different countries due to various differences within each country. She further states that although the decision to migrate is mainly based on economic factors, the decision to remigrate is usually related to social/psychological factors. Unger (1981) found the following reasons for remigration of Greek families who had remigrated from the FRG to Greece: (a) education of the children, 44%; (b) to rejoin children who were left behind in Greece, 15%; (c) health reasons of the wife or

husband, 15%; (d) homesickness (nostalgia), 9%; (e) family-related reasons in general (parents, wedding), 8%; and (f) achievement of migration goals, 4%.

Greek parents have high educational aspirations for their children, and they consider mother-tongue learning abroad as crucial for keeping their children rooted in the Greek culture and for facilitating a possible return to their home country. Research findings indicate that many Greek parents in the FRG want their children to have at least a secondary school diploma and Greek schooling (Bundesminister für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, 1981; Damanakis, 1978; Gerstenmaier & Hamburger, 1974; Savvidis, 1975). Regarding mother-tongue teaching, there are about 1,300 Greek teachers in the FRG, paid by the Greek government on an ongoing basis, and five different types of mother-tongue instruction for Greek students in the various states (Länder), which vary according to the number of lessons per week and the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1986; Tsiplitaris, 1982). About 30% of Greek students in the FRG do not attend any type of mother-tongue teaching.

The few existing relevant studies found remigrant students in Greece experiencing problems with the Greek language, the curriculum of the different courses, school homework, communication with the teachers, peer relationships, and social integration into the school system (Dikaiou, Sakka, Manavopoulos, Brikas, & Fatourou, 1984; Gotovos, Markou, & Fehring, 1987; Kiliari, 1986; Unger, 1986). Due to the methodological limitations of these studies, it is difficult to generalize the findings.

The aim of this study is to explore the adjustment patterns of Greek remigrant children (coming from the FRG) as compared to those of their peers in Greek public schools. In a review on the sojourner adjustment literature, Church (1982) states that the absence of baseline data or adequate control groups and the operationalization of the term adjustment constitute the basic methodological limitations of relevant studies. To overcome these limitations in the present study, the control group consists of all the classmates of the remigrant students in each classroom of the sample. It has been argued that a multiple approach leads to a better understanding of children's behavioral repertoire and psychosocial adaptation in school than that derived from a single perspective (Hatzichristou, 1987; Hatzichristou & Swain, 1988). In this study, therefore, a multiperspective evaluation of adjustment was used, which consists of several dimensions: The academic, social, and psychological/personal patterns of adjustment of remigrant children were assessed using the perspectives of teachers, peers, and self. The use of a multidimensional self-rating provided insightful information on children's feelings about various aspects of self-concept. In addition, age differences in the adjustment process were explored, including two age groups of students (elementary and

secondary school students). Data on the educational history, school performance, and language competence of remigrant students were also obtained.

Our hypotheses are that Greek remigrant children experience more academic and psychosocial difficulties than local children based on the perception of all raters (teachers, peers, and self) and that the age of return, the length of stay in Greece after remigration, and the language competence constitute critical factors related to the nature and severity of the children's difficulties.

METHOD

SAMPLE

The sample consisted of two age groups, elementary and secondary³ school students of public schools in towns and cities in northern Greece. The elementary school pupils ($n = 1,041$) were 10 to 12 years old ($M = 11.4$, $SD = .65$), attending the fifth and sixth grades of public schools. Of these pupils, 116 (11.1% of the sample) had lived abroad; 107 of them (92.2%) were born abroad and remigrated to Greece from various countries at different points of time. The majority of these students (66.7%) came from the former FRG.

The secondary school group ($n = 862$) consisted of 13- to 16-year-old students ($M = 14.3$, $SD = .91$) in public junior high schools (first, second, and third grades of the Greek *Gymnasio*) and high schools (first grade of the Greek *Lykio*). Of these students, 139 (16.1% of the sample) had lived abroad; 133 of them (95.7%) were born abroad and remigrated to Greece from different countries at different times. The largest percentage of students (83.5%) remigrated from the former FRG.

Of all remigrant students, the students who remigrated from the former FRG were selected as the target group of investigation because they constitute the majority of remigrant students and share common educational experiences in the host country. Of these students, only those who had spent at least 2 years in the German education system were selected for analysis. A median split procedure was performed to divide these return students into two groups based on the year of their return to Greece.

Elementary School—Groups Used in the Analysis

The early return group consisted of 26 students (14 males and 12 females) who had returned to Greece from 4 to 7 years before the time of data collection

and who had spent an average of 6.9 years in the FRG. All children were born in the FRG.

The late return group consisted of 25 students (15 males and 10 females) who had returned to Greece from 1 to 3 years before the time of data collection and who had spent an average of 9.1 years in the FRG. All children were born in FRG with the exception of six, who went to Germany at preschool age.

The control group consisted of 925 students (459 males and 466 females), all classmates of the remigrant students in the sample, who were born and raised in Greece.

While in the FRG, the majority of these remigrant students (87.5% of the early-return group and 82.6% of the late-return group) attended a German kindergarten only. At primary school age, the majority attended both Greek and German elementary schools. Upon return to Greece, only 40% of the late-return students attended special classes arranged for remigrant students (*frontistirikiaka tmimata*).

Secondary School (Gymnasio)—Groups Used in the Analysis

The early-return group consisted of 31 students (18 males and 13 females) who had returned to Greece from 4 to 9 years before the time of data collection and who had spent an average of 8.4 years in the FRG. All children were born in Germany with the exception of one who migrated to Germany at the age of 8.

The late-return group consisted of 32 students (15 males and 17 females) who had returned to Greece from 1 to 3 years before the time of data collection and who had spent an average of 11.9 years in the FRG. All children were born in Germany with the exception of two who migrated to Germany at the ages of 8 and 9.

The control group consisted of 721 students (383 males and 338 females), all classmates of the remigrant students in the sample, who were born and raised in Greece.

Regarding the educational history of remigrant students, about 90% of the early-return group and all late-return students attended elementary school in Germany (the majority of them both Greek and German). Secondary schools were not attended by early-return students because they were too young at the time of return. Of the late-return students, about one half attended the *Hauptschule*, one third the *Realschule* (middle secondary school) and only a few the *Gymnasium* or the *Gesamtschule* (comprehensive school) (reflecting the general figures of the overrepresentation of migrant children in the negative select schools in the FRG mentioned in the introduction). Only a few children attended the Greek *Gymnasio* (junior high school) in the FRG.

Upon their return to Greece, only a small group of late-return students attended special classes for remigrant students. A detailed description of the educational background of remigrant secondary school students can be found in a previous article (Hatzichristou & Hopf, 1992b).

INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Because the instruments were translated into Greek for the purpose of this research project, they were analyzed for their psychometric features, taking into consideration the distribution of single items and combined scores. The analyses of the instruments are described in detail in previous articles (Hatzichristou & Hopf, 1991, 1992a, 1992c). The classical factor solution method followed by varimax rotation was used for the factor analysis of the instruments, and indexes and scales to be used for group comparisons were determined. Missing cases in this phase of data analysis were excluded either listwise or pairwise. Reliabilities of scales were computed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Teacher rating. Teachers completed for each student in every class a revised and translated version of the Pupil Behavior Rating Scale (PBRs; Lambert & Bower, 1962) (11 attributes of school-related behavior; 5-point Likert-type scale). The three factors extracted by the factor analysis are similar to the factors found in American research and explain 75.4% and 70.7% of the variance for elementary and secondary school samples, respectively (Hatzichristou & Hopf, 1991). Factor 1 was labeled Classroom Adaptation (elementary school: $\alpha = .91$, secondary school: $\alpha = .92$) (items relevant to successful learning), Factor 2 was labeled Interpersonal Behavior (elementary school: $\alpha = .79$, secondary school: $\alpha = .86$) (interpersonal and social skills), and Factor 3 was labeled Intrapersonal Behavior (elementary school: $\alpha = .71$, secondary school: $\alpha = .71$) (intrapersonal and psychological items).

Achievement. Teachers were also asked to evaluate the general performance of each student on a 4-point scale. Achievement data on language, history, and mathematics courses were also obtained at the end of the academic year (elementary school: grades of A, B, or C; secondary school: grades of 1-20, where 10 = passing grade and 20 = excellent).

Peer nominations. Students in each classroom completed a questionnaire consisting of two sociometric questions and seven behavioral questions. They were asked to list three classmates whom they "like the most" (LM) and three whom they "like the least" (LL). The total number of LM and LL peer

nominations received by each student were tallied and standardized within each classroom to make the data comparable between classrooms of different sizes. Students were classified into five sociometric status groups (popular, rejected, neglected, controversial, and average). The sociometric status group classification was based on the criteria described by French and Waas (1985). Students were also asked to name two classmates who best fit each of seven behavioral descriptions (liked by peers and helps peers, leader, tries to be teacher's favorite, quarrels with peers, gets into trouble with the teacher, snobbish and arrogant, shy and sensitive) based on peer perceptual correlates of sociometric status and behavioral profiles (Coie, Dodge, & Coppotelli, 1982). The total number of first-choice nominations received by each student for each behavioral description were tallied and standardized within each class.

A factor analysis of the behavioral questions yielded three factors. For the elementary school group, these were the following: Factor 1, Popular/Prosocial Behavior ($\alpha = .66$); Factor 2, Antisocial/Aggressive Behavior ($\alpha = .67$); and Factor 3, Introverted Behavior (the factors explain 66.6% of the variance). For the secondary school group, the factors were as follows: Factor 1, Aggressive Behavior ($\alpha = .75$); Factor 2, Popular/Prosocial Behavior ($\alpha = .60$); and Factor 3, Nonaccepted Behavior ($\alpha = .67$) (the factors explain 67.7% of the variance) (Hatzichristou & Hopf, 1992a).

Self-rating. The students also completed a translated version of the Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ)⁴ (5-point Likert-type scale). The SDQ is a measure of self-concept based on Shavelson's multifaceted, hierarchical model of self-concept (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). The factor analysis of SDQ I for elementary school pupils (Marsh, Parker, & Smith, 1983) yielded eight factors, which explain 46.8% of the variance (Hatzichristou & Hopf, 1992c). The eight factors were labeled as follows: F1, Mathematics ($\alpha = .91$); F2, Physical Appearance/Self-Concept ($\alpha = .88$); F3, Interest in Learning and School Subjects ($\alpha = .87$); F4, Physical Abilities/Sports ($\alpha = .81$); F5, School Performance/Self-Concept ($\alpha = .78$); F6, Learning Ability ($\alpha = .80$); F7, Relationships With Parents ($\alpha = .64$); and F8, Relationships With Peers ($\alpha = .70$).

The SDQ II for secondary school students (Marsh & Barnes, 1982; Marsh, Parker, & Barnes, 1985) consists of 102 items (5-point Likert-type scale) after omission of the corresponding items of the "honesty" scale, which is irrelevant in the Greek educational setting. The factor analysis yielded 10 factors, which explain 42.9% of the variance (Hatzichristou & Hopf, 1992c). The 10 factors were labeled as follows: F1, Physical Abilities ($\alpha = .91$); F2, School Achievement/Verbal Competence ($\alpha = .85$); F3, Physical Appearance/

Self-Concept ($\alpha = .86$); F4, Mathematics ($\alpha = .89$); F5, Relations With Opposite Sex Peers ($\alpha = .82$); F6, General Self ($\alpha = .73$); F7, Relations With Parents ($\alpha = .75$); F8, Emotional Stability ($\alpha = .77$); F9, Academic Motivation ($\alpha = .77$); and F10, Relations With Same-Sex Peers ($\alpha = .67$).

Remigrant students were also asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding their length of stay in the FRG and Greece, the type of German school and grades attended, and the type of mother-tongue teaching and grades attended in Greek schools in the FRG.

RESULTS

The following independent variables were used in the analysis: student's gender, age, and grade in school. Analyses of variance were performed to explore the differences among the three groups (early return, late return, control) followed by planned contrasts according to our hypotheses. The interactions of different pairs of independent variables were also examined. Only significant results are reported.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Teacher Rating

Analyses of variance did not reveal any significant group effects for the teacher rating items and factors. The Group \times Grade interaction was found to be significant for the Classroom Adaptation factor of the teacher rating ($F = 3.25, p < .039$). Control and early-return students have more learning problems in fifth grade but show better classroom adaptation in sixth grade (the differences for early returnees are more extreme). For late-return students, the pattern is different. They show better classroom adaptation and more enthusiasm in fifth grade but have problems in sixth grade.

Achievement

Analyses of variance did not reveal any significant group effects for the teacher evaluations of students' performance and for the achievement variables. Planned contrasts between control and late-return groups ($t = 2.03, p < .042$) and between control and return students combined ($t = 2.19, p < .029$) revealed significant differences in favor of control students in history.

The Group \times Gender interactions were significant for achievement in history ($F = 4.39, p < .013$) and achievement in math ($F = 4.53, p < .011$).

Regarding history achievement, the interaction showed that although boys have fairly similar performance whether they have a migration history or not, girls show great differences: The later they come, the more difficulties they experience. In the area of math achievement, girls follow a pattern similar to history: The later they come, the worse grades they get. In contrast, late-return boys obtain better math grades than control boys.

The Group \times Grade interactions were significant for general performance ($F = 3.49, p < .031$) and math achievement ($F = 2.96, p < .05$). Regarding general performance, control students have similar performance in the two grades. Early returnees have the worse performance in the fifth grade and the best performance in the sixth grade. There is not much difference for late-return students and the trend is opposite, that is, they have higher achievement in the fifth grade and lower achievement in the sixth. Regarding math achievement, control students are rather stable, whereas early-return students show an improvement from fifth grade to sixth grade. Late-return students, on the contrary, show their worst performance in sixth grade.

Peer Rating

Analyses of variance did not reveal any significant group effects for the peer rating items and factors. Planned contrasts showed that control students were more frequently nominated as "trying to behave in a proper way to gain the teacher's approval" than were early-return students ($t = 3.05, p < .004$) and late-return students ($t = 4.84, p < .001$). Control students were also more frequently nominated as "quarreling often with the teachers" than were late-return students ($t = 4.68, p < .001$).

The Group \times Gender and the Group \times Grade interactions for the peer rating items and factors were not found to be significant. Based on χ^2 , remigrant students were not found to be differentially selected into the five sociometric groups.

Self-Rating

Planned contrasts revealed a significant difference in favor of early-return students regarding the Physical Abilities/Sports factor as compared to control students ($t = 1.89, p < .05$). When late-return and control students were compared, a significant difference was found in favor of control students regarding the Physical Appearance/Self-Concept factor ($t = 2.44, p < .015$).

The Group \times Gender and the Group \times Grade interactions for the self-rating factors were not found to be significant.

TABLE 1
Means of Teacher Rating Items, Secondary School

<i>Teacher Rating Item</i>	<i>Control Group</i>	<i>Early-Return Group</i>	<i>Late-Return Group</i>	<i>F</i>
Quarrels with others more often	4.15	4.18	4.04	n.s.
Difficulty in following directions	3.64 ^a	3.41	2.89 ^a	6.50**
Immature/inappropriate responses	4.27 ^a	4.14	3.85 ^a	3.56*
Shy/isolated	4.34	4.28	4.31	n.s.
Easily distracted	3.88 ^a	3.72	3.39 ^a	3.32*
Dangerous behavior	4.64	4.52	4.46	n.s.
Does not like school/no enthusiasm	3.88	3.75	3.81	n.s.
Difficulty in learning	3.70 ^a	3.59	3.00 ^a	5.21**
Sick or stays home when problems	4.55	4.66	4.35	n.s.
Unhappy/depressed	4.37	4.41	4.12	n.s.
Not obedient	4.56	4.59	4.39	n.s.
Factor 1, Classroom Adaptation	0.03 ^a	-0.14	-0.40 ^a	3.47*
Factor 2, Interpersonal Behavior	0.01	0.02	-0.16	n.s.
Factor 3, Intrapersonal Behavior	-0.01	0.06	-0.08	n.s.

NOTE: Scale: 1 = *always* to 5 = *never* (no problem).

a. Significant differences between the groups based on planned contrasts.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Teacher Rating

Analyses of variance revealed significant group effects for four teacher rating items and the Classroom Adaptation factor (see Table 1). Planned contrasts between the groups showed the late-return students ($t = -2.34, p < .019$) and all return students combined ($t = -2.27, p < .024$) have significantly more classroom adaptation difficulties than control students as evaluated by the teachers. The Group \times Gender interactions for the teacher rating items and factors were not found to be significant.

Achievement

ANOVAs showed significant group effects for all achievement variables (language, history, math) and the general teacher evaluation of students' performance (see Table 2). Planned contrasts showed that late-return students had significantly lower achievement in all variables than control and early-return students.

The Group \times Gender interactions for the achievement variables were not found to be significant. The Group \times Grade interactions were significant for

TABLE 2
Means of Achievement Variables, Secondary School

Achievement Variables	Control Group	Early-Return Group	Late-Return Group	F
General school performance ^c	2.54 ^a	2.38 ^b	2.08 ^{ab}	3.63*
Achievement in language ^d	14.05 ^a	13.58 ^b	11.65 ^{ab}	9.66**
Achievement in history ^d	15.26 ^a	14.20 ^b	12.19 ^{ab}	14.89**
Achievement in math ^d	14.12 ^a	13.52 ^b	12.09 ^{ab}	6.20**

a., b. Significant differences between the groups based on planned contrasts.

c. Scale: 1 = poor to 4 = excellent.

d. Grades: 1-20, where 10 = passing grade and 20 = excellent.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

achievement in language ($F = 2.23$, $p < .038$) and history ($F = 2.07$, $p < .05$). This effect is due to very good achievements of the early-return children in both subjects in Grade 10 (first grade of senior high school), a finding for which no interpretation can be offered.

Peer Rating

Analyses of variance revealed significant group effects only for the "shy and sensitive" item ($F = 2.91$, $p < .05$). Planned contrasts between the groups showed that control students were more frequently nominated as being shy/sensitive as compared to late-return students ($t = -3.91$, $p < .001$) and to return students combined ($t = -5.45$, $p < .001$). Control students were also more frequently nominated as being snobbish/arrogant as compared to return students combined ($t = -2.57$, $p < .011$).

The Group \times Gender interactions were found to be significant for the Aggressive Behavior factor ($F = 3.38$, $p < .034$). Although there is a small difference between the sexes in the control group, remigrant boys exhibit much more aggression than remigrant girls, and the later the return took place, the more aggression is reported by their peers. This is not true for girls, who exhibit similar behavior regardless of group membership.

The Group \times Grade interactions for the peer rating items and factors were not found to be significant. Based on χ^2 , remigrant students were not found to be differentially selected into the five sociometric groups.

Self-Rating

Analyses of variance revealed significant group effects for the School Achievement/Verbal Competence factor ($F = 7.83$, $p < .0004$) and the Physical Appearance/Self-Concept factor ($F = 2.97$, $p < .05$). Planned con-

trasts revealed a significant difference in favor of control students regarding the School Achievement/Verbal Competence factor as compared to late-return ($t = 3.76, p < .001$) and return students combined ($t = 3.36, p < .001$). The contrast between control and late-return students regarding the Physical Appearance/Self-Concept factor revealed a significant difference ($t = 2.03, p < .042$) in favor of late-return students.

The Group \times Gender and the Group \times Grade interactions for the self-rating factors were not found to be significant.

DISCUSSION

In elementary school, remigrant students' (both early and late return) classroom adaptation and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills do not differ from their local classmates, according to teachers' perceptions. No significant group differences were further found regarding the students' general performance and language and math achievement, except the lower achievement of late-return students in history. The lack of significant differences may be partly due to the strong tendency of elementary school teachers to give an A (best grade in the ABC scale) to most of the students and their tolerance for the expected difficulties of remigrant students.

Late-return students face more classroom adaptation and learning difficulties in the sixth grade, whereas control students have stronger learning difficulties in the fifth grade. Late-return girls in particular face more difficulties in history and math. Based on the curriculum in the Greek elementary schools, subjects taught in the fifth grade are more difficult and complicated and tasks are more demanding as compared to the fourth grade. In addition, more subject-specific (and more male) teachers are introduced in Grade 5. Thus students in general experience stronger academic difficulties in Grade 5. It seems possible that return students in the initial period of adjustment to the new school system are treated with more patience by the teachers and that their difficulties become more apparent at a later stage. For late-return girls, however, the new situation seems to be particularly difficult.

Although early-return students' academic and behavioral patterns do not differ significantly from those of their local peers in secondary school, in agreement with our hypothesis, late-return students are evaluated by their teachers as having more classroom adaptation and learning difficulties and lower achievement in all subjects assessed than local students. The difficulties are related to the year of return to Greece: The later the students return, the more difficulties they experience.

Late-return students in elementary school are perceived by their peers as less frequently exhibiting positive and negative behavior toward the teacher. No other group differences in peer perceptions regarding remigrant students' behavioral patterns were found. Thus remigrant students do not exhibit any distinct behavioral patterns that differentiate them from their local peers, a finding that reflects their efforts to adapt to the new school environment.

In secondary school, remigrant students are less frequently nominated by their peers as exhibiting intrapersonal behavior problems (shy/sensitive and snobbish/arrogant) as compared to local children. A gender difference was found regarding aggressive behavior. Remigrant boys—especially late return—exhibit aggressive behavior more frequently, a phenomenon possibly connected to their learning difficulties.

It is a very important finding that in both elementary and secondary school groups, remigrant students were not differentially selected into the five sociometric groups (popular, rejected, neglected, controversial, and average) in contrast with other groups of students with special needs in the Greek schools (e.g., students with learning disabilities, children from divorced families) who were found to be more often rejected by their peers (Hatzichristou, 1993; Hatzichristou & Hopf, 1993). This finding indicates that the remigrant students are well integrated into the classroom.

Regarding children's self-perceptions, early-return students in elementary school report better physical abilities and performance in sports as compared to their local peers. Their perceptions are probably connected to the various sports opportunities they had been offered while they were in the FRG. Late-return students in elementary school perceive themselves as having a worse physical appearance and demonstrate a less positive self-concept than their local classmates, which might be a sign of the anxiety they experience in their new, complex environment. In secondary school, in agreement with teachers' evaluation, late-return students themselves acknowledge their difficulties in school performance and verbal competence. They further perceive themselves as being more physically attractive and demonstrate a more positive self-concept than their local classmates. At both age levels, therefore, late-return students were found to differ from their local peers in their self-perceptions regarding physical appearance. Contrary to findings in other countries, it has been further found that various general self-concept items have high loadings in the Physical Appearance/Self-Concept factor, reflecting the societal stereotypes and standards (Hatzichristou & Hopf, 1992c). The differences, though, point into opposite directions for the two age groups and may be regarded as indicative of the different defense mechanisms children use to cope with their difficulties. Younger children report having worse physical characteristics than their local peers, whereas older children report

that they are physically more attractive, which may reflect a way of coping with their difficulties in their new environment.

In conclusion, school performance and adjustment of early-return students do not differ significantly from that of their local classmates. In contrast, late-return students, especially in secondary school, face problems in the achievement, learning, and language domain, which are related to the year of return to Greece. We need to point out, however, that these remigrant students from the FRG are competent speakers as far as oral language proficiency is concerned, and their difficulties are relative to the cognitive/academic aspects of language proficiency (Hatzichristou & Hopf, 1992b). The late-return students (at least the majority of them) are at risk for later school failure because it is our prediction that they will not be able to overcome their difficulties completely until they finish high school and will, therefore, have little chance for passing the highly selective entrance exams for Greek universities or vocational institutions. The majority of migrant students in German schools also has only scant prospects of successfully finishing school (Hopf, 1983), although the situation has recently improved. Thus most migrant students have a limited educational future in both host and home countries. Our results underscore the importance of remigrating at the right time—in the early elementary school years—if students are interested in successfully completing Greek secondary and tertiary education. This is relevant information for a high percentage of children because 84.9% of the Greek migrants in the FRG have returned to Greece.

It should be pointed out here that the low achievement of migrant students cannot be explained by their social class origin. Often it is argued that most labor migrants belong to lower social strata; therefore, lower than average achievements are to be expected as well in the target country of migration as in the home country. This argument might be true for many time periods, nations, and target countries of migration, but it is not valid for Greek labor migrants to Germany and return migrants to Greece. On the contrary, it has been demonstrated in a careful analysis that the labor migrants who went to Germany are a positive select group as compared to their counterparts at home as far as their educational level (especially general and vocational education and education aspiration for their children) is concerned (Hopf, 1987).⁵ Although the children of these migrants show lower achievements in German schools in general, under favorable conditions (e.g., stability of school careers, availability of all types of secondary schools in a region) their school success is—after some years of adaptation—equal or even higher than that of their German peers (Hopf, 1987).

Furthermore, a general classification of the Greek migrants according to their socioeconomic status (SES) has not been possible yet. Although in most

Western societies there is a strong correlation between SES of the parents and school achievement (and intelligence) of the children, this is not the case in Greece. Greek society is undergoing a very fast change process; it is nearly impossible to classify the occupations of the parents into social strata in a similar way as it is done in the United States or in Germany because dramatic changes in the meaning and significance of occupations occur within short time periods. For this reason, most studies in Greece have failed to replicate respective findings in Western societies. Other indicators of SES like midparent education (i.e., the average of the education indicators of mother and father) are nonpredictive either mainly because of the comparatively widespread analphabetism in the older generation. Furthermore, up to now it was not possible to obtain a valid assessment of the income of the population. Therefore, intercorrelations of the most common indicators of SES—occupational level, midparent education, income—today are still very low indeed in Greece as is their relation to educational variables. SES has not been a useful variable yet in Greece for educational research on children at school age (Hopf, 1987).

Our findings that remigrant (and migrant) children are at a disadvantage as far as their educational achievements are concerned can therefore be explained neither by lower SES of the parents nor by a negative selective migration process. Deficits in achievement are rather a consequence of the migration or remigration itself. Had these families stayed in Greece instead of migrating, their children would have scored above average in the schools at home and not below average in the schools of the target country as well as in the schools at home after remigration. As far as educational achievement is concerned, the “second generation,” that is, the children of the migrants, is the main group suffering from the disadvantages of the migration process.

On the other hand, and contrary to our hypotheses, according to the perceptions of all raters (teachers, peer, self) remigrant students do not seem to experience more severe interpersonal and intrapersonal problems than their local peers, indicating a rather smooth psychosocial adjustment. It is important to emphasize that Greek parents abroad make a great effort in developing the “Greek identity” of their children and bringing them up rooted in the values, standards, and traditions of Greek culture, as has been pointed out by other researchers as well (Flouris, Kassotakis, & Vamvoukas, 1990). We believe that the well-functioning Greek family, Greek communities, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the FRG, together with mother-tongue teaching, are the major factors contributing to the children’s adjustment.

Finally, we would like to note that remigrant students in Greek schools, which constitute the highest percentage of students with “special” needs in the Greek school population (11.1% of our elementary school sample and

16.1% of our secondary school sample) are a very heterogeneous group. This study focused on the remigrant students from the FRG, which represent by far the largest subgroup within the remigrant population. Further research should explore other subgroups of remigrant students.

NOTES

1. In this article, we are referring only to the former FRG consisting of the (old) Länder (states) before the unification with the five new Länder of the former GDR in October 1990. In the new Länder, there are very few foreigners, up to now. Therefore, an average over all 16 Länder would be misleading.

2. The numbers of migrant workers alone—Turkish, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Yugoslav—from 1953 (Italians and Yugoslavs) and 1960 (all others) until 1990 are 10,880,987 migrants and 8,538,924 remigrants. This corresponds to a return rate of 78.5%. The return rates of different nationals are deviating from the mean, the Turkish having the lowest and the Portuguese the highest remigration rate.

3. The Greek school system consists of a 6-year elementary school followed by a 3-year junior high school (Gymnasio) and a 3-year high school (Lykio). The first 9 years of school are compulsory.

4. The instruments used in this project differ from the most recent English versions in several ways. Comparisons with research based on the later versions of the instruments should be interpreted with caution.

5. This is true also for other labor migrants to the FRG like Yugoslavs (Künne, 1979) and Turks (Abadan-Unat & Kemiksiz, 1992).

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