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Civic Engagement among Greek University Students: "Passive-Passive-Smokers" and Cultural Power

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Abstract

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Keywords

University Students, Passive Smoking, Smoking Ban, Civic Engagement, Cultural Power, Semi-structured Interviews, Cultural Power

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This paper, about non-smokers' civic engagement (or lack thereof) in the context of public venues in Greece, aims to answer the following research questions: How do non-smokers deal with smokers when their cigarette proves annoying? To what extent do non-smokers stand up for their rights? What are the perceived constraints? Smokers' points of view are included as part of the context in which non-smokers act. Greek university students were interviewed by the author (25) and by two students trained in interviewing (6). Respondents were asked to express judgments and feelings about the smoking "regime" in public venues. Additionally, non-smokers were asked to describe instances of smoke annoyance, report what they do about it and express judgments and feelings. Cultural analysis was applied: data were coded, and codes were grouped into categories, highlighting key assumptions and values. Though in most public venues the smoking ban is massively violated, non-smokers seem to view smoking as "normal". For fear of being ignored, laughed at or insulted, they seldom ask smokers to refrain from smoking. Their (anticipated) emotions allow smokers to exert a kind of cultural power that prevents non-smokers from reacting. Thus, the latter become themselves vehicles of that power that oppresses them. Keywords: University Students, Passive Smoking, Smoking Ban, Civic Engagement, Cultural Power, Semi-structured Interviews, Cultural Analysis

When the Greek smoking ban in working places and enclosed public venues was passed in 2010, the Ministry of Health made an apparently superfluous statement: "The law about smoking will be implemented as provided" (Loverdos, 2010). In the previous decades other smoke-free laws had been voted without ever being implemented. Eventually, the 2010 law proved no exception. The authorities at all levels "have often turned a blind eye to the smoking problem" (Vardavas & Kafatos, 2006, p. 367) and even the present Alternate Health Minister himself violates the law, both within the Health Ministry and the Parliament (Dabilis, 2016).

This paper is about non-smokers' civic engagement (or lack thereof) in public venues under a no-smoking regime that is violated most of the time. Non-smokers report that they tend to put up with an unpleasant situation for fear of being ignored, laughed at or insulted, all of which would cause them some embarrassment (MinHealth, 2013). Dynamic forms of protest, often illegal, are frequent and socially accepted in Greece. In a relevant comparative study, Greek students scored significantly above the mean on civic engagement and scored the highest in expectation of engagement in *illegal* forms of protest (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schultz, 2001). So, I wondered why these non-smokers do not they stand up for their rights. Why is combativeness so notably absent from *this* field of social life? What are the perceived constraints? The paper provides an interpretation of students' reported behaviour and feelings in relation to the broader cultural context and the concept of cultural power. Usually viewed as cultural hegemony, cultural imperialism, and cultural colonialism between states and between ethnic groups (Jiemin, 2002), cultural power may also be exercised between individuals. It may then be defined as "specific, contextualized uses of symbols to construct cognitive coherence, social influence, and personal and collective identities" (Lull, 1997, p. 19).

Background to the Study

Compared to the other EU countries, elevated smoking rates have been registered in drinking/eating establishments in Greece (European Commission, 2015; WHO, 2013), in Greek hospitals (Faculty of the Harvard School of Public Health, 2011; Vardavas et al., 2009) and in educational establishments, from primary schools up to universities (Vardavas & Kafatos, 2007). The percentage of smokers among third-year-medical students, too, is high; the nursing school of Larisa ranks first (52.4%), followed by the School of Dentistry of Athens University (38.7%) and the Medical schools of Athens and Ioannina (30%) (Pappa-Soulounia, 2010). On the other hand, 10,000 university students signed a proposal for the protection from passive smoking to be recognized as a human right all over Europe (Paraviasi, 2013).

In an online survey carried out in 2014 in Greece on a random sample of 1,618 people (smokers, non-smokers, and former smokers), 41.8% of non- smokers and 58% of former smokers described themselves as tolerant of smokers, maybe due to a general image of smoking as taken-for-granted. Though aware that they harm people around them, smokers simply take advantage of this tolerance (Medialab, 2014).

Research on violation of smoke-free laws has focused mainly on smokers' points of view. What could non-smokers' role be in law implementation? Vardavas et al. (2011) carried out a cross-sectional study with 4,043 adults (2,037 smokers and 2,006 non-smokers) among the general population of Greece during April 2009; "Non-smokers reported that they would actively work for compliance with the law" (Vardavas et al., 2011). When it comes to groups of young people in public venues, to what extent do non-smokers' behaviour and attitudes express such "disposition to active work"?

The systematic violation of the smoking ban is an aspect of the problematic relationship between Greek citizens and laws. This paper aims (a) to contribute to the literature through a better understanding of non-smokers' reluctance to stand up for their rights and (b) to sensitize smokers and non-smokers alike to an issue which has implications for both health and democracy.

The Context of the Study

For the purpose of this paper, "behaviors, attitudes, and actions" associated with particular duties and rights can be taken as indicators of civic engagement (Gottlieb & Robinson, 2002). In the literature the concept is associated with forms of participation such as voting, membership in volunteering organizations, and participation in civil rights protests (Levine, 2011). Citizen engagement has been important for gaining and extending new rights, but also for claiming access to existing rights (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010). Non-smokers' attitudes and action (or lack of action) in relation to defending/ claiming their right to a smoke-free environment may be viewed as an aspect of civic engagement.

In a study of Greek political culture, youth aged 12-15[1] were asked about how citizens should express their disagreement with government choices. The option, "They should manifest in the street," scored 18.4% in 1982, 7.5% in 1990 and 16.5% in 2010. Over 3 decades, that form of participation (or civic engagement) showed first an increase and then a decrease that the author attributes to the crisis (Pantelidou-Malouta, 2015).

In 1999, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) studied youth civic engagement (CIVED) in 28 countries on national samples of 14-year-olds (grade 8). Civic engagement was measured through the degree to which respondents

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[1] The age 12-15 presents a high degree of stability in relation to adulthood. Their characteristics can be taken as indicators of a more general political culture (Pantelidou-Malouta, 2015).

anticipated their involvement in civic action, (e.g., participation in national elections) as likely in the near future of their adulthood (Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Husfeldt, & Nikolova, 2002; Torney-Purta, 2002). Greek students by two thirds or more expected to participate in legal, non-violent forms of protest (Torney-Purta et al., 2001, p. 125). They scored significantly above the mean on civic engagement and scored the highest in expectation of engagement in illegal forms of protest (p. 127), such as spraying slogans on walls, blocking traffic, and occupying buildings. Most interestingly, participants from most countries declared that they were unlikely to take part in illegal forms of protest. Among such forms of protest, painting slogans proved to be the most socially acceptable across countries (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). A more recent international study, to a large extent a replication of the CIVED study (Schultz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010), yielded similar results. Greece was one of the few countries with considerably higher country averages (Schultz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010) in anticipated participation in illegal forms of protest. The authors rightly suggested that each country's historical background and political system account for the scores (Schultz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). Therefore, I shall provide some background information about recent forms civic engagement in Greece.

Whereas occupations (of national roads, Ministries, Universities, and other public buildings) have a long history in Greece, recently the repertoire of forms of protest has expanded**.** In fact, many citizens have refused to pay for house taxes, hospital fees, electricity, bus tickets, and road tolls, also raising the bars and allowing other drivers to pass without paying. This type of activities, often framed as "rights claiming," has largely been endorsed by the so-called "Movement-I-Won't-Pay" and actively supported by left-wing parties, including Syriza (Daliani**,** 2013) that came to power in 2015. A couple of years ago, one of my colleagues caught a student spraying slogans on walls within our university. The youth explained that he was simply exerting his right to free expression (K. P., personal communication, September 16, 2016). No action was taken about the issue.

For decades, left-wing political forces have actively backed students' yearly occupations of schools and universities, advancing a wide range of claims: from obtaining abrogation of a law or withdrawal of a bill, to releasing some anti-establishment activist from jail (Georgakopoulos, 2015), to timely distribution of (free) schoolbooks, to the brand of chewing-gum sold in the school canteen (Margomenou, 2008). Defined as a "tradition of the Left" (Tsichlias, 2014, par. 1), such activities have have been praised by some (e.g., Roumeliotou, 2012) and have been condemned by others on grounds that they undemocratically deny thousands of students the right to attend lessons (Mandravelis, 2014). These forms of engagement have designated many political leaders, among them present Prime Minister A. Tsipras himself. On the assumption that this type of engagement enjoys popularity among voters, several left-wing candidates at recent elections had included participation in school/university occupation in their curriculum vita (e.g., Chatzisokratis, 2007; Tosonidou, 2007[2]), qua "certificate of merit."

When such dynamic forms of protest are frequent and socially "accepted" or at least tolerated in the name of supposed "rights," one would expect non-smokers to claim at least the basic right to a smoke-free environment that is already enshrined in the law.

This study explores the issue of non-smokers' civic engagement (or lack thereof) in the context of public venues. The questions of inquiry are the following: How do non-smokers deal with smokers when their cigarette proves annoying? To what extent do non-smokers stand up

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[2] From her CV: "Tosonidou, Despina, born 1970 in Athens, is a medical doctor, radiologist, NHS staff. She has been at the forefront of the large movement of student occupations in 1990-1991." Available at http://www.syn.gr/ekl2007/athina_A_20070916.pdf

for their rights? What are the perceived constraints? Smokers' points of view are also represented as it is part of the context in which non-smokers act.

Literature Overview:
Contextual and Interactional Perspectives on Non-smokers' Rights

Research about how non-smokers deal with smokers has measured the rate of tolerance of smoking in relation to demographic factors, for example, among Slovakian (Pavelekova & Peterkova, 2010) and Canadian respondents (Ross & Pèrez, 1998). Researchers constructed typologies of both smokers and non-smokers (e.g., Mecredy et al., 2011; Poland et al., 2000). Mainly focused on the individual, such studies have underplayed the contextual and social meaning of smoking and the way interaction influences people's choices (Poland et al., 2006). In this review, I shall focus on studies that take into account the social context. We can take "social context" to mean "the circumstances or events that form the environment within which something exists or takes place" and that "help make phenomena intelligible and meaningful (interpreting something in context, versus out of context)" (Poland et al., 2006, par. 5). Context includes social norms that define the degree of acceptability of smoking—an index subject to change. Thus, in several Anglo-Saxon societies, partly due to smoking restrictions, smoking has been denormalized. This means that it has been pushed out of what is considered a normal, desirable practice, towards being an abnormal practice, a filthy habit, "largely removed from human interaction" (Chapman & Freeman, 2008, p. 26). In these countries, smokers are increasingly viewed as selfish and thoughtless people, undesirable housemates, employer liabilities, and undereducated individuals who litter, pollute, and make excessive use of public services (Chapman & Freeman, 2008). Goffman's concept of stigma has also been used in this research (e.g., Bell, Salmon, Bowers, Bell, & Mccullough, 2010; Evans & Furst, 2015).

Among Gibson's non-smokers in the District of Columbia, USA, very few reported asking smokers not to smoke in their presence. Moreover, the majority of those who did "was supported by interpersonal or environmental cues" (Gibson 1994, p. 1082), such as ashtrays. By providing "strong cues that smoking is inappropriate," environmental cues make the environment "legible," thus encouraging non-smokers to react to violations (European Commission, 2015; Gibson, 1994). A study of self-reported interactions in smoke-free public places in Canada shows that "52% of never smokers and 40% of former smokers said that they would find it "somewhat difficult" or "very difficult" to ask someone not to smoke in a non-smoking area of a public place" (Poland et al., 2006). Non-smokers react in a variety of ways that range from involving the smoker (e.g., direct request), to non-verbal cues (such as voluntary coughing or fanning smoke away), to appealing to a third party, to simply moving away. Choice depends on anticipated time of exposure, being alone or in company, desire to avoid confrontation, anticipated smokers' reaction and previous experiences in approaching smokers. Contextual factors, too, such as signage indicating restrictions, affect non-smokers' "perceived rights" in that space (Poland et al., 2006, p. 331).

In the attempt to avoid bans on smoking, the tobacco industry suggested that potential conflicts over smoking in public places should be solved through "common courtesy": non-smokers are supposed to "mention annoyances in a pleasant and friendly manner" and smokers are expected to ask others, for example, "Do you mind if I smoke?" Relevant studies suggest that this approach is not very productive. First, neither smokers nor non-smokers adopt this strategy (e.g., Davis, Boyd, & Schoenborn, 1990; European Union, 1993). Second, almost half of non-smokers indicated that, if they were asked, they would consent to being exposed to second-hand smoke (Germain, Wakefield, & Durkin, 2007). At the same time, these studies document the importance of interactional factors.

In the 1950s and 1960s research findings on the relationships between (passive) smoking and health provided the public health sector with powerful arguments for the regulation of smoking in public places, while weakening tobacco industry arguments based on individual rights and individual choice. In some measure, those findings led to redefining passive smoking as a medical and scientific issue (Elliott, 2001; White, Oliffe, & Bottorff, 2013). However, Bell et al. (2010) point out how in UK and Canada, campaigns to restrict smoking were based less on scientific research than notion of "the rights of non-smokers not to be exposed to secondhand smoke" (p. 796). Oliver, Thomson, and Wilson (2014) have highlighted the weight of rights-related issues in people's discourse on smoking: smokers' rights to choose, non-smokers' rights (to breathe), more generally rights in society and associated issues of justice or equity.

Rather than a danger for health, Greek teenagers in Tamvakas and Amos' (2010) study perceived smoking as an irritation (something one ends by getting used to). Both smokers and non-smokers show a marked tendency to perceive the smoker's right as stronger than the non-smokers' right to a smoke-free environment (Tamvakas & Amos, 2010). They tend to believe that it is not smokers who have to take into account non-smokers: rather, it is the latter who have to protect themselves if they want to avoid exposure. Both smokers and non-smokers said that complaining would be "rude" and described people who did so as being "nerds" and "buzz kills" ("Who am I to tell him what do with his smoke?"). The authors conclude that "challenging this 'right' would not only go against social norms and practices but would be unlikely to be effective and might only cause trouble" (Tamvakas & Amos, 2010, par. 69).

A number of Greek studies mostly conducted in working places focus on the concept of assertiveness[3] and takes into account social factors. It was found that non-smokers' assertiveness intentions were related to annoyance from exposure to smoke at work, as well as social cognitions "such as attitudes, social norms, and self-efficacy" (Lazuras, Zlatev, Rodafinos, & Eiser, 2012, p. 57). It was also found that more than half of non-smokers claimed that they were "often or almost always" bothered by colleagues' smoke, but only one third of them reported asking co-workers not to smoke at work. Annoyance was mediated by social norms (e.g., the frequency of other colleagues acting assertively), perceived prevalence of smoking in the country and self-efficacy (Sivri, Lazuras, Rodafinos, & Eiser, 2013). In a similar study, the majority of Greek non-smokers reported being annoyed but only half of them had asked colleagues to put their cigarette out during the previous 30 days. The strongest predictor of non-smokers' assertiveness were past assertive behavior and their perception of other non-smokers' assertiveness; it is more likely for a non-smoker to be assertive when other non-smokers are also (or are perceived to be) assertive (Aspropoulos, Lazuras, Rodafinis, & Eiser, 2010). Perhaps anticipated regret of a quarrel with a colleague, and the potential damage to a relationship, weighs more than the regret of not acting assertively towards a person with whom one has to interact daily, now and in the future (Aspropoulos et al., 2010). In a similar way, colleagues' assertiveness was found to be an important factor among Dutch employees at work (Willemsen & de Vries, 1996).

A study of management of exposure to SHS in Canada suggests that under particular social circumstances, assertiveness is not perceived to be an option, for example, when the non-smoker is a man, particularly within groups of men. In fact, according to gender stereotypes, objecting to others' smoking would contradict the dominant image of "manliness." Non-smokers reported limiting exposure to SHS by avoiding smoky clubs or bars. In some cases,

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[3] "Assertiveness is defined as a form of communication in which needs or wishes are stated clearly with respect for oneself and the other person in the interaction. Assertive communication is distinguished from passive communication (in which needs or wishes go unstated) and aggressive communication (in which needs or wishes are stated in a hostile or demanding manner)" (Houldin, 2014, par. 4).

they confront smokers, ending up in conflict when the violator is a stranger (Hemsing, Graves, Poole, & Bottorff, 2012). The weight of power-related interactional factors emerges from a study of non-smokers in public places in Indonesia. Some participants reported repeatedly asking smokers to refrain from smoking in their presence, signage being crucial in making them feel more empowered claiming their rights. Others "expressed discomfort in speaking up for fear of angering smokers and triggering retaliation, such as provoking a fight" (Kaufman, Payne Merritt, & Rimbatmaja, 2014, par. 32) Resorting to humour makes it easier for them to express their discomfort. Participants feel more comfortable when speaking up if they know the smoker personally. Conversely, they feel uncomfortable doing so if the smoker is a boss or has a higher socio-economic status (Kaufman et al. 2014). Applying a social cognition model, Choo and Kim (2011) tried to "identify factors associated with the assertive behavior of non-smoking college students when they are exposed to second-hand smoke in Korea" (p. 1). Their survey showed that students' assertive behaviour was significantly related to social influence and self-efficacy (Choo & Kim, 2011).

Some of the studies combine a social and a cultural perspective. For example, Hemsing et al. (2012) have noticed participants' association between smoking and their idea of manliness; Tamvakas and Amos (2010) interpret their data through the concepts of pro-smoking culture and national identity. In this study, explicitly adopting a cultural perspective, I perform a cultural analysis in order to highlight key assumptions and values (Toner, 2000).

Method

A Qualitative Research Design

Describing and understanding social phenomena from the participants' points of view requires a qualitative approach. Since non-smokers' behaviour with focus on civic engagement is an under-researched topic, an exploratory design will allow me to "identify the boundaries" of the phenomenon and its most salient characteristics (van Wyck, 2012). An exploratory design should include a literature review, collection of data from people with relevant knowledge and an analysis of events and phenomena that stimulate the researcher. An exploratory study relies on the investigator's attention to "even the smallest possible information about the subject matter" and their sensitivity (Rwegoshora, 2006, p. 94).

The Sources of Information

Data were collected in the framework of a broader study among students of education at a University in Northern Greece, about their relationships to laws and regulations. I had sent a mail to all the students of my department in order to recruit participants according to age, gender, and other characteristics. When none volunteered to participate, I personally invited 17 students I already knew (convenience sampling). This proved a successful strategy because all of them accepted. Some of them also brought me in touch with friends willing to participate (snowball sampling), for a total of 31 students: 21 smokers and 10 non-smokers. All of them were students of education who often visited public venues in town with their *parea* (company, or informal body of friends). Some of them belonged to the same *parea*.

In order to support my interpretation of the data, I reconstructed the wider cultural context in which smoking interactions take place, for the participants' words and (reported) behaviour to be more understandable. To this purpose, I used articles from the printed and electronic press, collected over many years, mostly from newspaper *Kathimerini*, which I regularly monitor. Several of its contributors show great concern with law-abidance in Greece, supporting their analyses with facts and bibliographic references. Taking the move from timely

events in Greek society, these authors offer social-sciences-informed interpretations, often providing bibliographic information. Being Greeks, they represent an important point of reference for my own interpretations. To the same purpose, I have used notes of events and dialogues I happened to witness or hear in the business of living my everyday life. Most of the time I take an ethnographic stance, whether I am at the supermarket, in the street, at university or anywhere else.

Elaboration

The 31 semi-structured interviews were carried out by the author (25) and by two students trained in interviewing (6) and equipped with an interview guide. All respondents (21 smokers and 10 non-smokers) were asked to (a) describe the smoking "regime" they experience in public venues, (b) give a judgement, and (c) express feelings about it. Non-smokers were additionally asked to (a) describe situations in which they had felt annoyed due to the violation of the smoking ban, (b) report what they had done about it, and (c) express their judgement and feelings. Smokers' points of view have been used here for the purpose of building a context for non-smokers' words. The interviews were transcribed and the resulting texts constitute the data of the study.

A cultural analysis was carried out on the transcription. Cultural analysis tries to uncover "key assumptions, values, artefacts and symbols" (Toner, 2000, par. 3) that are at work within a group. Among other things, key assumptions concern the nature of human relationships and the "relative importance of the individual vs. the group" (par. 8), for example the concept of rights. Values "describe what 'ought' to be done, in the light of the basic assumptions" (par. 12), but they may also contribute to *creating* basic assumptions. Artefacts, which represent the most visible aspect of culture, spring from both basic assumptions and values. They include overt behaviour and material objects, which may take the status of symbols (e.g., the cigarette may "mean" manliness). Cultural analysis is useful in understanding why certain aspects of social life are resistant to change, for example, uncontrolled smoking, which the smoke-free law has been so far unable to regulate (Toner, 2000).

The elaboration starts with coding—an intermediate stage between data collection and real analysis (Saldaña, 2009). Coding consists of a classification of the material so that it becomes manageable and easier to describe. A code is a kind of label (either one word or a phrase) that is attributed to a "unit of meaning," either a single word, a sentence or a set of sentences. It names some of its basic properties (Silverman, 2001). Let us consider the statement "[I was afraid to speak up] because I believed that I would find myself in a difficult situation." Besides "anticipation" and "fear," this quotation was attributed the code "embarrassment." Like the title of a film, a code summarizes the substance of a data fragment. Following the same procedure, other units were coded as "shame." I repeatedly read the transcribed interviews (Saldaña, 2009), underlining key words/ phrases (e.g., "I believed that I would find myself in a difficult situation"), noting codes on the margin (e.g., "embarrassment") and later on, tentative categories (e.g., "feelings"). Like Devlin and Gray (2007) I did not count the frequency of answer but their range.

Codes and categories are two different things. Categories were derived from grouping codes on the basis of similarities and difference. Thus, "shame and "embarrassment" were grouped into the tentative category "feeling bad" that, later on, evolved into "moral emotions." After that, I performed a new literature review about this specific topic with a view to learn more about these emotions, understand better their role in group dynamic (Saldaña, 2009) and assess their importance in the particular cultural context.

Rigor and Trustworthiness

The more rigorous the research process, the more trustworthy the findings. In order to enhance rigor and trustworthiness I have described the process of data elaboration, supporting my findings with rich quotations from the interviews. Moreover, in this section, I provide information about myself in order to account for personal bias that may have implications for the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, a few words about my relationship to the participants, the town, and the country. Though I was not born a Greek, I am a full member in society. In my role as university teacher, I have taught many of the participants, though our academic relationship was over by the time they were interviewed. My position as a researcher can be described as an "active membership role." Middle way between complete and peripheral membership, this role involves participating "in core activities in much the same way as members', though without committing oneself to the members' goals and values" (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 35).

My position in relation to the field of inquiry should also be described and assessed. I daily experience what it feels like to be a non-smoker in a pro-smoking culture. Before I ask a smoker to put out her/his cigarette, I anticipate the most likely reactions and usually I give up. In all kinds of social settings, I daily abdicate my own rights. For years, I had been flirting with the idea of carrying out a study about smokers' violations. I never did, mainly for fear of producing a biased piece of research. Now that I dared, I am glad I did. I believe that my experience helps me identify with most of the participants' reported emotions and understand their hesitation in standing up for their rights. I am confident in the accuracy of my representation and interpretation of their experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). At the same time, my "active membership role" helps me maintain the necessary distance for the social interactions I observe. My findings may not be the *whole* picture but they certainly *are* part of the picture.

Organization of Results

In the findings section, headings correspond to categories. The categories about feelings and behavior come straight from the research questions, though it includes also eventual participants' spontaneous reference to feelings and behaviour. The category, "social relationships," instead, emerged during data elaboration, from codes such as "friends" and "*parea*," as parameters likely to influence participants' choice of a course of action. Regularities within and across interviews emerged, revealing patterns that suggested specific assumptions, norms, and values (Saldaña, 2009; Toner, 2000). By comparing categories I proceeded to the following stage of the analysis—that of concepts. For example, "cultural power" is the result of coding, categorization, and analytical thinking (Saldaña, 2009). Thus, the discussion is conducted at a higher level of abstraction, in the attempt to link the data to theory, my ethnographic-type observations, and the newspaper articles mentioned above. In this way, I reconstructed a context (necessarily partial) which allows for greater insights into participants' behaviour and experiences and makes their underlying logic understandable.

My local context does not require formal statement of a third-party approval for conducting this study. In order to comply with the ethics of research I refer to participants by names of phantasy. In one case, I have sacrificed interesting details from a participant's account as that might have betrayed her identity.

Findings

Non-Smokers and How They Feel

Some respondents reported not being especially annoyed by smoke. Lea declared that, unlike most non-smokers, she not only tolerates smoking but respects smokers' needs:

> *I can respect other people's need to have a cigarette together with coffee, when they go to a cafeteria to have a rest, to relax with friends. I am tolerant in this respect.* (Lea)

Lea's empathy with smokers, her "respect" and "tolerance" are far from an isolated case:

> *You might say, "I don't care, they could have done without their smoking habit." This is what a selfish person might say. But it's not that simple. Smokers, too, may want to sit leisurely, drinking coffee and having a cigarette. I don't know if you noticed, both having a drink and sipping coffee go together with a cigarette. Those who are addicted, if they don't smoke on such occasions, with their parea, relaxing and all that, they will get sick. Because I have talked to such people. I asked, "What happens to you?" And they told me "I get tremble, cold, headache, nerves......" Is the law moral in general? Is the law in question, let's say, morally right? Or does it oppress smokers? Because smokers suffer a series of side-effects, if they don't smoke. They have headaches, some get a temperature, others feel cold....* (Tereza)

Tereza, laughing, defined herself as the most flexible of non-smokers. Willing and apparently able to view the smoke-free law from the addicted smoker's perspective and distances herself from "selfish" people who cannot do the same. Unlike her, most respondents report annoyance, mainly because of the "*unbearable smell*" and because it "*causes all those harms to health.*" The annoyance may reach high levels: "In places that are closed or lack suitable ventilation I cannot protect myself. Actually, I often feel the need to get out of the shop to get pure oxygen, because the atmosphere is suffocating" (Tess). One respondent attributed his annoyance to the fact that he is not treated equally:

> *I've talked about it with smokers and we disagree. They say: "It is you, who come to a shop where people smoke." But it's not like that. We're equal, there's equality, I can't accept that they smoke in my presence, after so many years.* (Charis)

Charis admitted that he usually does not claim to be respected as a non-smoker. Without mentioning the term, he takes the perspective of rights. Other participants declare extremely annoyed, "*Most times I get irritated. Most times I get angry because they don't respect me and the fact that I don't want to smoke.*" Danae, too, reported feeling irritated, especially after the law came into force:

> *It's irritating. Let alone now that the law has been passed, and they go on smoking.* [Q. Why don't you complain to the owner?] *Because they're the same, all of them. In spite of the recently passed law, in all cafeterias the situation is the same. As far as smoking is concerned. Because in Greece we haven't learnt*

> *to <u>obey</u> laws. In other countries things are . . . safer, regulated by laws to a larger extent. We Greeks are a little . . . . careless. Indifferent.* (Danae)

Danae's contribution stands out for her resignation to a situation apparently out of her control. Only one student explicitly describes her annoyance in terms of rights being violated:

> "*Actually, I often feel the need to get out of the shop to get pure oxygen, because the atmosphere is suffocating. Eeeeeeee, yes. Many times I feel powerless. I feel that my rights with respect to non-smokers are abused*" (Tess). Aliki sounded very angry: "*I feel anger and rage, I feel indignant. Because, I say, when there is a smoke-free law, the one who lights a cigarette indoors is showing disdain?*" (Aliki). Therefore "*You feel powerless. Wherever you go, smoke is there, someone will certainly be smoking and this is annoying*" (Tess).

Angry, annoyed, indignant as they declared to be, usually these students patiently put up with an unpleasant and unfair situation.

Non-Smokers and What They Do

When the air in a coffee-shop feels too stuffy, one solution is leaving the shop for a while: "*[When it's like that], staying in the premises becomes rather unpleasant for me. There have been times when the smoke was so much inside that I said, 'Hey, guys, I go for a walk outside and I'll come back'*" (Orestis). Most times, though, people put up with the smoke because they do not feel like leaving the *parea*. Lea states that she continues to frequent the same smoky venues, in spite of her asthma, because she refuses to leave her *parea* and follows wherever they go.

Do non-smokers ever ask smokers to put out their cigarette? Sometimes they do, kindly. Two respondents report that on a couple of occasions their attempt was successful and the smoker put the cigarette out. However, most prefer not to mention annoyance:

> *I happened once to complain to a smoker, though I usually don't. I did because the girl sitting next to me had exceeded the limit* [sic] *and she was smoking in a very provocative and ostentatious way. Eeeeeee . . . It was annoying, because the smoke came straight on me. My clothes were smelling, my hair was smelling, therefore it was necessary for me to rebuke her. We were a large <u>parea</u>, all had got annoyed and no-one had come to the decision to talk to her. But this event is isolated. Usually, I won't complaint to my neighbour.* (Lea)

In this case, Lea complained because she could anticipate wide support from most/all members of the group. When non-smokers decide to express their annoyance, they usually do it "*in a way that is not so direct*" (i.e., through gestures, sneers, and sighs): "*I may give someone the evil eye but I won't tell them 'Look, there's a no-smoking sign.' I won't say that*" (Vasia). Explicit requests are usually voiced only with friends, with whom relationships are looser than with the *parea*. This is the way it looks from a male smoker's perspective:

> *We were out for coffee with my friends and there were some girls in the <u>parea</u>. One of them, who was sitting next to me, was waving her hand all the time—she was pretending to be fanning the smoke away. I ask her, "Does it annoy you?" And she says, "No, that's OK." She spoke ironically, of course. She was waving*

> *like a spastic.* [Q. How did you react;] *I swapped my seat with a friend, so that my smoke wouldn't go directly on her* (Livios, smoker)

Compromises such as "swapping up seats" may provide a partial way-out to that evening's problem, but do not contribute to modifying smokers' and non-smokers' behaviours. Such solutions hide the problem under the carpet: the following evening, the problem will be there again. Smokers seem to view the situation as inevitable: non-smokers are the ones who are expected to adapt, rather than the other way round:

> *The truth is that, from the moment that you decide to go to a cafeteria or an outdoors venue you cannot easily protect yourself. . . . And when the smoke comes onto you, of course your clothes, your hair and the rest will smell....* (Lea)

Fear, shame, (lack of) courage are often evoked by non-smokers to describe their feelings and explain why they do not take action:

> *I haven't complained to the smoker next to me. Though I many times thought to do so, I was afraid to speak up.* [Q. Why were you afraid?] *To be exact, maybe I felt ashamed, rather because I believed that I would find myself in a difficult situation. . . . Many times I couldn't stand the smoke produced by smokers sitting close to me, but I lacked the courage to tell them.* (Litsa)

This is one of the cases in which "shame" is explicitly mentioned as a possible reason for non-smokers' lack of action. Non-smokers usually are afraid of sounding annoying, of being ignored, laughed at, or insulted. "*I have complained sometimes. In the best of the cases, smokers will give smokers the evil eye*" (Vasia) or they will just laugh. Smokers may also react abruptly or invite them to leave the place: "*They may tell you 'if you are annoyed, you may leave.'* [Q Have you heard something like this?] *Yes.* [Q. Were they speaking to you?] *To the girl sitting next to me*" (Orestis). Thus, standing up for one's rights requires courage. Anticipating possible answers he might receive, Panayiotis prefers not to express his annoyance. He is afraid of the social sanctions:

> *If I complain, afterwards they will::: comment among them how uncool I am; "Oh, that bore, who::::: who's asking us not to smoke". No, I won't tell them. [. . .]I'll.... I'll just live with it, or I may leave the premises.* [Q. Why do you choose live with it?] *Because if I don't know the person, I won't have the courage to ask them to refrain from smoking. I don't know how they will react, if I speak up. One may get irritated, another may apologize to me and put out her/his cigarette.... But still another will say "I don't care, I'll do what I want." The fact is, that if someone tells me "I don't care," I'll get irritated and...... I prefer to avoid it. That's the Greek mentality. The Greek will do what they want, wherever they wants. They don't give a dime for rules.* (Panayiotis)

Panayiotis offers an interpretation (not the only one) in terms of "national character." The stereotype of the unruly Greek has a massive presence in everyday discourse and is sometimes cited with pride. The faulty logic of the argument is apparent in the fact that for every Greek smoker who "does what he/she wants" there is a Greek non-smoker who endures an unpleasant situation. Non-smokers' inaction, though, tends to be explained on an individual rather than a "national character" basis. Non-smokers' protests seem even more difficult when all are

smoking. Recalling a specific visit to a cafeteria, a female student said, "*Anywise, in the premises there were very many smokers. The atmosphere had become very suffocating. Therefore, what was the point of mentioning my annoyance to the smoker next to me? The whole shop was smoking. And I was smoking with them.*" Wild smoking is perceived as "an institution", as said Jason, just back from an Erasmus semester in France: "*I believe that indoors smoking regardless of prohibitions has ended up by being an institution for someone who has grown up in Greece. As a result, it doesn't cause impression nor annoyance.*" It is something like the normalization referred to in the literature. One female respondent showed embarrassed at having to admit her lack of action:

> *They smoke in the library hall as if it were the most natural thing in the world. Yes. Many times ashes fall down. Like cigarettes* [ironic tone]. *I don't agree.* [Q. Have you ever reproached someone for smoking right there?] *Never, no-one.* [awkward smile]

Given her lack of assertiveness, her irony sounds like a substitute for the action she didn't take. The question, "Have you ever reproached someone?", which confronts this participant with her responsibilities, results in an awkward smile.

Social Relationships

Several students who had spent a semester in some other country in the Erasmus programme in another European country spontaneously carried out a comparison: "*When I went out on Erasmus there was nothing like this. I mean, people smoking indoors.*"(Orestis). Asked whether that different approach influenced him, Orestis answered affirmatively: "*It influenced me quite a lot. Now I get more indignant.*" The influence, though, was not in the direction of greater "civic engagement." Orestis said he used to carry the enforcement telephone number with him (it used to be 1142), but he had never called, mainly out of fear of ruining relationships: "*Most times there'll be someone from my own <u>parea</u> smoking, indoors. Therefore, you can't accuse, betray your own friend. It's social relationships. If you do that, your relationship with that person will be over*" (Orestis). As Jason explains, "*The interpersonal relationships that connect non-smokers with smokers . . . are a decisive factor that represents an obstacle in a non-smoker's decision on whether to take action or not.*"

Some non-smokers have an interesting theory about why non-smokers fail to protest: "*The dominant view is that, inasmuch as smokers are very many, then OK, we'll go with the many. They will be the ones who'll decide what happens and what doesn't*" (Ourania). Manos, a smoker, calls it "minority complex":

> *Non-smokers can't do anything because, as non-smokers, they are a minority. We all know that the majority of people are smokers. Therefore these people have a "minority complex." . . . They don't reproach smokers. The minority complex makes them::::: dismiss that option. Though the smoke bothers them. In that moment the non-smoker may think: "If I now talk to the smokers, they'll tell me, why, we're 3 or 4 people smoking and you are alone." That is, the law-abiding non-smoker will be held accountable and will end up being treated like a culprit.* (Manos)

Citizen's duties are sometimes pointed out: "*When you see someone violating the smoke-free law, you should point it out. The fact that they aren't stealing or aren't killing doesn't mean this behaviour isn't illegal. The law has been passed and that's all. It's established.*" What this

student said is by no means taken for granted in Greek society: violations of the law should all have the same status. Instead, there is a tendency to divide violations into minor and major and to excuse the former.

Discussion

Only Rights and No Obligations

The non-smokers participants in the present study and in much research tend to show resignation. They seem to view smoking as "normal" and accept their exposition to SHS as a destiny. Their resignation clashes with research findings about Greek students' high score in civic engagement (see above). It also clashes with the combative behaviour that, encouraged by left wing politicians, prevails in social life. The Left regularly teaches young people that "they have only rights and no duties" (Danali, 2011, par. 2), without teaching them to grant their neighbour's analogous rights (Dimou, n.d.; see also Mandravelis, 2015b, Yiannaras, 2013). Though the radical Left had never governed until 2015, it has been ideologically hegemonic for decades (Mandravelis, 2012) and little by little its successful clichés have been adopted by other political environments (Voulgaris as cited in Mandravelis, 2015a): "Because, in the past, protesting was illegal in Greece, nowadays any violation is christened 'protest'" (Mandravelis, 2009, par. 3). In Greek society "[p]ractices of violence (occupations, vandalisms, bullying, gangster-like extortions) are called 'struggles'" (Yiannaras, 2010, par. 6). As a result, this peculiarly "fluid" concept of right (Mandravelis, 2008, par. 3) is rampant today (Pantelakis, 2015), representing a mainstream tendency of Greek society as a whole (Kedikoglou, 2012). This model of relationships among individuals has its counterpart in a widespread attitude towards other EU countries: "We have laboured to build the stereotype of a country that is different from all the others in Europe, a country that likes to have only rights and no duties as a member of the European family*"* (Papachelas, 2011, par. 3). Though frequently stigmatized (see Vokotopoulos, 2007)*,* especially by Greeks intellectuals who live abroad (see Patsopoulos, 2013), such behaviours and attitudes have revealed extremely resistant.

No matter what is established by law: groups/ categories who are stronger (e.g., those who shout louder, can occupy public buildings or, like farmers, can use tractors to block traffic on national roads) are the ones who establish the real "rules." On the background of this theory (and practice) of rights, it is easier to understand smokers' assertiveness in defending their supposed right to light a cigarette no matter where. It is also easier to understand non-smokers' lack of assertiveness in defending a right which is established by law. The concepts of minority ad majority can take us one step further.

Minority and Majority

Some respondents hypothesized that non-smokers do not protest because they feel they are a minority: "*Smokers will tell me 'We're 3 or 4 people smoking and you are alone'*." Data about non-smokers' percentage is inconsistent, ranging from 41.2% (MinHealth, 2013) to 60% of the population. Whereas smokers may really be the majority in many cafeterias at any given time, "there are misperceptions regarding smoking. . . . Students overestimate the number of smokers on campus and non-smokers may feel they are a minority" (Smoking prevention and education, n.d., par. 15). According to Thomas's theorem, what people believe as true is true in its consequences. Thus, smokers may violate the law because their supposed numerical predominance makes them feel stronger and thus less likely to be contrasted. However, as shown by the case of apartheid in South Africa, minority is not simply a numeric concept but rather a political one, reflecting power relationships. More than real figures, what matters here

is the prevailing assumption that smoking is the default behaviour, its "normalization." Smoking is perceived as "normal" and to a large extent, that is the source of smokers' power: "Though non-smokers are the majority, they have been made into a minority due to the most brazen law violation on the part of smokers' and shop-owners, who don't give a damn for the law" (Mr. Georgiadis and smoking, 2014, par. 3). Smoking habits among policy makers, famous people, physicians, nurses, and other health providing staff has played a major role in this normalization (Ebrahimi, Sahebihagh, Ghofranipour, & Sadegh Tabrizi, 2014).

Over the years I have made smoking behaviours into a common topic of conversation, wherever I am. Once, I was talking with a public prosecutor in town. Assuming that magistrates are powerful fellows, I was impressed when, commenting on the daily violations of the smoke-free law, he said: "You should be very careful when you reproach smokers. They may react badly." It seems reasonable to state that, regardless of their real numbers, smokers feel they are stronger, because they know that (a) café owners are on the side of smokers, (b) rule enforcers are not likely to sanction their behaviour, and (c) non-smokers will put up with it, also for fear of taking any action. Conversely, non-smokers feel they are a minority and this makes them unlikely to demand respect. Smokers' assertiveness may influence non-smokers ("*We're 3 or 4 people smoking and you are alone*"). Feeling that a battle with the majority has no chances to be won, minority members may give up fighting altogether: "Both smokers and non-smokers may feel embarrassed and defensive about their smoking status when they perceive themselves to be in a minority" (Lloyd & Lucas, 2014, p. 79). The behaviours of smokers and non-smokers may thus be viewed as complementary.

Moral Emotions and Social Bond

Non-smokers' annoyance at smoke in public venues is allegedly accompanied by a range of emotions. Reluctance to react is attributed to fear and shame. Non-smokers are afraid of being ignored, laughed at, or insulted, all of which would make them "feel bad." Anticipating reactions on the part of smokers, they often calculate that it is better to pretend that nothing happens and choose to put up with an unpleasant situation.

Shame and embarrassment have been defined as basic "moral emotions" (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007) or "social emotions" (Scheff, 2003, 2005). They spring from shared awareness. Defined as "the key component of social bonds," shared awareness (or intersubjective knowledge) rests on mutual mindreading and accurately taking the point of view of the other (Scheff, 2003). This competence allows people to foresee reactions to their behaviour. When they anticipate disapproval, they also anticipate feeling guilt (Tangney et al., 2007, p. 348), shame, and embarrassment. Whereas shame refers to doing something wrong, embarrassment refers to failure to perform up to certain public standards (Ege, 2010). Claiming non-smokers' rights is most likely to make the individual feel conspicuous. Since people tend to conform to social norms, "conspicuousness" may cause uneasiness (Tangney et al., 2007, p. 359). People tend to conform to social norms. By anticipating others' disapproval and their own uneasiness, people tend to avoid behaviours that are likely to be viewed as problematic. In this sense the (anticipated) feeling of uneasiness may connect individuals to "social organization, values and convention" (Scheff, 2003, pp. 3-4) and encourage conformity to "broadly accepted moral standards or to locally endorsed deviant acts" (Tangney et al., 2007, p. 360).

Moral emotions are crucial in preserving society, as they "guard the social bond" (Scheff, 2005, p. 2). In an essay on embarrassment, Goffman (1956, 1963) argues that social encounters are crucial in maintaining social order. Students going out together "create a little social system" in interaction (Goffman, 1963, p. 243; i.e., a "social encounter"). Given their social identities (smokers and non-smokers) and the setting (cafeteria) each student "will sense

what sort of conduct *ought* to be maintained as the appropriate thing" (p. 268). Student groups in leisure time are very variable in their composition, but still they may all the same function as a reference group and deeply affect individual behaviour: "The fluctuating configuration of those present is a most important reference group" (pp. 264-265). The uneasiness anticipated or felt by non-smokers shows that they share the value system that is at work in that particular setting. In case of (anticipated) failure "the individual becomes uneasy not because he is personally maladjusted but rather because he is not" (p. 270). In this sense "embarrassment is part of orderly behaviour" (p. 271).

In any society the principles of organization may come into conflict. Events like the ones described by non-smokers point to such conflict areas: "Instead of permitting the conflict to be expressed in an encounter, the individual places himself between the opposing principles. He sacrifices his identity for a moment, and sometimes the encounter, but the principles are preserved" (Goffman, 1956, p. 271). Regardless of whether individuals act or not *in order to* save the principles, anticipating unpleasant feelings causes them act in a way that does preserve the system. This preservation is thus the by-product of individuals' desire to behave up to the standards, to avoid being conspicuous, and to ruin relationships. What is preserved is a system consisting of contrasting principles: the legality enshrined in the law and the taken-for-grantedness of its systematic violation through "locally endorsed deviant acts" (Tangney et al., 2007, p. 360). Social norms are perpetuated through individuals' emotional reactions. Individuals tend to value behaving according to social norms: "If accommodating smoking is the norm, the smoker will not ask for permission to smoke and smokes whenever she/he wants to" (Poutvaara, Lars, & Siemers, 2007, p. 5). In an analogous way, non-smokers will hesitate to ask smokers to stop smoking. Doing something different would constitute violation of social norms and might cause feelings of guilt. Additionally, going away is considered rude and likely to cause feelings of guilt as well (Poutvaara et al., 2007).

Participating in a street protest or an occupation of buildings with many more people is much easier than standing up for non-smokers' rights in the "little social system" of a coffee-shop. A face-to-face protest against specific individuals is more difficult to bear than one addressed to anonymous entities such as the state, the government, or "the system."

Resignation

Several respondents showed resignation, as if putting up with undesired smoke was a destiny. A student condemns such passivity: "*Non-smokers don't react the way we would expect them to…. I'm one of the 'passive-passive-smokers'—passive in the sense of non-active. I may give someone the evil eye but I won't say 'look, there's a no-smoking sign'. I won't say that*" (Vasia). Other respondents point to similar attitude: "*Nothing holds in Greece,*" "*in Greece we haven't learnt to obey the law,*" "*here it's Greece.*" I daily hear people express disappointment by remarks like "What, do you expect *me* to change Greece?"» According to a female respondent, "*it is a question of mentality, we cannot acquire European culture.*" Such frequent comments, often voiced with sadness and resignation, always remind me of an old man who I once heard proudly affirm: "We, the Greeks—for us, getting into moulds is difficult." Especially on the background of the crisis, there is something tragic in this statement. Colombo (2008) argues that passivity suits more the subject than the citizen. The subjects accept their conditions as destiny. The subject's action is limited to whining and grumbling and, possibly, some sneaking, provided they can get their job done. The subject, though, cannot perform that "qualitative leap," from grumbling to the assumption of specific responsibilities, which is what defines the citizen (Colombo, 2008).

Cultural Power

Regardless of how civic engagement is officially defined, participants' social practices point to a different definition, in line with the dominant culture's key assumptions. Assertiveness is much more likely to be displayed, for example, by large groups of people in occupying a public building as a protest towards he authorities. The position of a non-smoker in a public venue, though, is much weaker. In a pro-smoking culture, the individual (vs. group) non-smoker is powerless by definition. Aware of their weak position, they cannot easily be assertive. A smoke-free law passed in Parliament is not enough to lead to a change in people's behaviour if the culture's key assumptions and values do not support that change.

A society in which laws are not implemented especially penalizes its "weaker" (in many ways) members. Such a society has a democratic deficit (Benincasa, 2016). The respondents' description reminds of what, according to Cypriot academics, is the case on Cyprus: "Because of the dominant culture, people are forced not to be assertive in their right to a smoke-free environment (otherwise, they are perceived as funny and ridiculous, or as the bad guys)." Dominant culture "*coerces* them to be passive smokers in restaurants, bars, clubs, even in football-grounds" (Ioannou, Papadopoulos, & Kapardis, 2008), my emphasis). But how can the dominant culture *coerce* people to do/not do anything? Like in Cyprus, in Greece, too, smokers have a kind of "cultural power," which realizes itself in specific interactions through symbolic communication. Smokers and non-smokers alike decide on their course of action during interaction, under the (conscious or not) effect of dominant cultural assumptions and values and the emotions that are generated as a result. Cultural power acts through the behaviours that actors themselves choose to adopt or reject:

> To conceptualize power in terms of symbols and cultural activity places much more emphasis on emotions and feelings, human expression, and communication. Symbolic and cultural power ought to be understood in ways that differ from traditional forms of power, which tend to be organized at levels that are much more distant and abstract. (Lull, 1997, p. 19)

The ideological hegemony of the Left in Greece, with its emphasis on class conflict, has obscured the multiple faces of power. Through Lull's definition we come close to Foucault's view of (a) power as residing in relationships between people and (b) the individual as both "the target and the vehicle of power" (Klitgård Sørensen, 2014). By choosing inaction, non-smokers become themselves vehicles of power: day by day, they construct, confirm, and perpetuate smokers' cultural power.

Limitations

What would this study look like if I had made different choices? For example, different participants (e.g., older, younger, medical student, students of law) might have led me to explore a different range or combination of concepts. If, in addition to interviews, I had *observed* participants in their leisure time, I might have noticed further patterns or even discover discrepancies between acts and words. More research is definitely needed on this topic, which is an issue of both health and democracy.

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