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Diaspora philanthropy and volunteerism as a contestable process: Tracing connections and disconnections between diaspora and homeland in the Greek education sector

by Antonis Kamaras and Marilena Anastasopoulou

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Diaspora philanthropy and volunteerism as a contestable process: Tracing connections and disconnections between diaspora and homeland in the Greek education sector

Kamaras Antonis
Coordinator in Greece, SEESOX Diaspora project
e-mail: antoniskamaras@gmail.com

Anastasopoulou Marilena
DPhil candidate, University of Oxford,
Researcher, SEESOX Diaspora project
e-mail: marilena.anastasopoulou@history.ox.ac.uk

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Abstract

This paper examines the factors influencing the transmission of social remittances from the diaspora to the homeland, focusing on interactions in the Greek education sector. Concretely, it explores homeland-diaspora interactions in one public and one private educational institution in Greece and the differences found therein. In addition, it explores how institutional developments in both the public and the private spheres shape and are shaped by diaspora engagement in the governance of those educational institutions, as well as the contestation surrounding diaspora philanthropy and volunteerism. The paper focuses on elite, first generation transnational members of the diaspora and is conceptually situated in the discussion of diaspora philanthropy and grounded in the theories of diaspora engagement. Methodologically it draws on ten qualitative interviews with key actors who have engaged in diverse capacities in the case studies of this research, namely, Athens College and the University of Athens as well as secondary data such as court proceedings and print media reports.

Keywords: diaspora philanthropy, volunteerism, social remittances, transnationalism, public and the private spheres, education.

Introduction

The ties between diasporas and their countries of origin in relation to transnational transfers of money, goods, ideas, and expertise has become the center of attention of diaspora scholars. Diasporas are often seen as actors whose transnational engagement has profound effects on processes of change in their homelands. The aforementioned involvement of diasporas in their countries of origin can also be seen through the notion of 'long distance nationalism', which refers to the influence that diasporas exert from abroad, especially in conflict-ridden nation states (Anderson, 2006; Cohen, 2008; Van Hear & Cohen, 2017).

Neither the migration of people nor the tradition of giving back to their homelands are new phenomena. However, over the past two decades there is an increasing interest by scholars, government leaders, policy makers, and international agencies in diaspora philanthropy. This growing interest can be seen in the light of the changing patterns of migration, including the increased rates of well-educated and

highly skilled migrants, the growth of remittances, the contribution of diaspora in national development, and the emerging importance of global philanthropy and civil society (Johnson, 2007).

Globalisation, coupled with the rapid improvements in transportation and communication, has increased the ability of migrants to maintain economic, cultural, political, and familial ties and to foster multiple identities over long distances, proliferating transnational activities and transnational communities (Portes, 2014; Vertovec, 2004).

In this context, the questions of when, why, and how homeland states and societies engage their diasporas with regards to philanthropic giving are paramount and remain challenging due to the involvement of various factors, multiple stages, and conflicting dynamics. Specifically, a homeland states' and society's position is significantly volatile, depending on factors such as: a) the unique characteristics of the members of diaspora; b) the nature of the regime of a homeland; c) external factors (the nature of the destination state regime, international norms) (Delano & Gamlen, 2015).

Considering this, and the rising importance of diaspora philanthropy and volunteerism, especially in the context of economic, political, and social crises, it comes into question what kind of dynamics influence transnational transmissions of money, goods, and ideas for the public benefit. It is in this context that we follow the proposed disaggregation of diaspora engagement, namely the household/extended family sphere, the known community sphere, and the imagined community, by Van Hear and Cohen (2017). Additionally, and as Delano and Gamlen highlight, comparative research is required in order to understand 'how different actors matter in the design and implementation of policies at different levels and in different moments', and thus going beyond the uniqueness of a specific policy and focusing 'on the commonalities and contrasts among cases' (Delano & Gamlen, 2015, p.177).

This paper analyses the contestation in the governance of educational institutions in Greece engendered by diaspora philanthropy and, in particular, diaspora volunteerism, enabled by law in state universities and a relevant institution's charter in the private non-profit, sector. Our two case studies are the National Kapodistrian University of Athens, from now on referred as University of Athens (which will also be referred by its Greek initials, EKPA, by some interviewees and press articles quoted and referenced in this paper), arguably Greece's most significant state university and Athens College, Greece's premier, private, non-tertiary (primary and secondary) educational institution. Thus, our investigation incorporates the comparative element by examining one state and one private, non-profit institution, while it also links the known community sphere with that of the imagined community - which is to say, institutions where personal affiliation and knowledge drive and structure diaspora engagement, the trajectories of which are nonetheless also shaped by public policies and/or contestation.

The research questions that we address are the following:

1. Which factors influence the transmission of social remittances from the diaspora to the homeland in the broader context of diaspora philanthropy and volunteerism?

2. What kind of dynamics are developed during this transmission in the public and the private spheres?

3. Do they lead to divergences or convergences between diaspora actors and their countries of origin across the public and the private spheres?

First, we introduce the literature and key concepts of our investigation of diaspora philanthropy, social remittances and transnationalism among first generation members of a diaspora. Second, a summary account describes the evolution of the contestation in the governance of the University of Athens and Athens College. Third, we examine the drivers and directions of these two contestations in governance based on interviews, court proceedings and print media reports. Fourth, we connect the literature and our key concepts with our examination of our two cases and thus situate the latter in the former.

Literature and key concepts

There is an increasing body of literature that investigates the impact of diaspora philanthropy on homelands by: a) addressing volunteerism that includes the provision of pro bono professional services and training to individuals and institutions (Newland, 2010:9; Schlenzka, 2009; Bene, 2013) or cross country charitable giving (Anheier & List, 2000); b) analysing diaspora engagement through the lens of transnationalism (Soysal, 1997; Van Hear & Cohen, 2017; Basch, Glick-Schiller & Blanc, 1994; Levitt, 1998; Smith, 1994; Orozco & Garcia-Zanello, 2009; Baubock & Faist, 2010) or through policy-oriented strategies (Johnson, 2007; de Haas, 2008); c) focusing on the influence of diasporas in conflict societies through the notion of 'long distance nationalism' (Van Hear & Cohen, 2017); d) exploring the particular norms and drivers of cohesion among diaspora communities (Roudometof, 2014; Durante, 2015); e) situating diaspora philanthropy in the broader migration – development nexus.

More specifically, some scholars focus on the role of development in both the public and the private sphere (Sulla, 2007) as well as in the governmental and the local level (Bene, 2013; Orozco, 2003). Others examine diaspora philanthropy as a tool for development aid in response to global crises (Espinosa, 2015), while yet another

category of scholars explores the influence of strategic diaspora philanthropy in relation to social transformation and development (Sidel, 2008).

In light of this debate, the examination of the impact of diaspora philanthropy on development is investigated through the transmitted remittances and capital, as well as through their mechanisms of transmission. Chikezie (2011) refers to the transmission of four types of diaspora capital: a) the 'financial capital', which is related to the transfer of monetary remittances; b) the 'intellectual capital' that concerns the transfer of knowledge and skills; c) the 'political capital' that demonstrates the influence of diaspora on their countries' of origin political spectrum through voting rights and lobbies; d) the 'social capital' which is the driving force behind diaspora's initiatives, and which includes the interpersonal relationships, shared understandings and relationships of reciprocity that members of the diaspora enjoy in their homeland. For many scholars, diaspora philanthropy is seen as a 'subset of remittances' (Flanigan, 2016:3). As far as their transmission is concerned, the role of the so-called 'philanthropic intermediates', which vary from hometown associations and family channels to religious organisations and professional associations, is examined by many researchers (Flanigan, 2016:5; Sidel, 2008, Levitt, 1998).

Some scholars assert that the direction of this transmission can be attributed to ancestry roots that link a diaspora community to a specific homeland: a) referring, as mentioned above, to three levels of engagement, the 'household', the 'known community', and the 'imagined community' (ethnic, national, religious), that comprise the affinity between diasporas and homeland (Van Hear & Cohen, 2017; Liberatore, 2015); b) tracing the ways (common culture, language, history) in which the diasporic emotional connection is embedded (Brinkerhoff, 2011); c) understanding diaspora philanthropy as an expression of membership of a particular diasporic identity (Nielsen & Riddle, 2010); d) or as a sense of obligation towards the country of origin that derives either from cultural norms or from a high standard of living (Brinkerhoff, 2011); e) underlining the shared ancestry experiences (Flanigan, 2016); f) tracing how traumatic historical memory reflects on diasporic and national memory (Huyssen, 2003).

The relationship between home and abroad can be challenged by various factors. Specifically, Brinkerhoff (2011) maintains that while small-scale philanthropic initiatives are usually accepted by the governments of the country of origin, large-scale, formal, and professionalised actions are perceived as a political threat to homelands. Similarly, other scholars explain that diasporas may also be seen as actors that support minority rights and increase the political competition of legitimacy or the competition for donor recourses (Brinkerhoff, 2011). This sense of competition coupled with a sense of patronage is also underlined by Oanda (2016); the latter also argues that the lack of political will in a homeland, as it is expressed by unclear policies and political and institutional barriers, significantly limits the diaspora's engagement. He concludes that this stance is also reflected at an individual level within societies.

Diaspora philanthropy

In this paper we adopt the definition of philanthropy by Johnson (2007: 6) as 'the private, voluntary transfer of resources for the benefit of the public'. Diaspora philanthropy typically features the following elements: a) 'charitable giving from individuals who reside outside their homeland; who b) maintain a sense of identity with their home country; c) give to causes or organisations in that country; and d) give for public benefit' (Johnson 2007:5). Diaspora philanthropy does not only entail transfer of monetary resources. Rather, in addition to money, 'goods, volunteer labour, knowledge and skills and other assets' are also included, and it is in this expanded framework that the paper will employ the term (Johnson, 2007:5).

Diaspora philanthropy is affected both by patterns of migration, by the policy framework in the country hosting a diaspora community and by the mores, either carried over via migration from the homeland or absorbed by the host environment, that structure and orient moral agency within a particular diaspora community or sub-segments of it (Jones, 2007). Trust and transparency of grantee organisations is bound to affect diaspora philanthropy's propensity as well as societal and state acceptance of grantee organisations' autonomy. Diaspora philanthropy is also bound to enhance the ability of third sector organisations to promote agendas, causes and practices not under control by the homeland state which can be profoundly political in nature (Jones, 2007). Such autonomy is compounded by the fact that diaspora philanthropists are often independent of their homeland states and thus not fearful of causing offence to state authorities and other powerful, homeland stakeholders by supporting philanthropically a particular course of action and/or organisation (Lessinger, 2003).

Even when host and homeland state characteristics are conducive to philanthropy, the literature has argued that there are significant constraints in terms of the reach and effectiveness of diaspora philanthropy and its ability to sustain a particular course of action over a long period of time. On the other hand, diaspora philanthropy can act as a catalyst by funding, and generally supporting, the implementation of policies that can then be adopted by the state, or by engaging in advocacy of reform, a process which is inevitably political, which if adopted can have very significant consequences indeed (Newland, Terazzas & Munster, 2010).

Social remittances

The debate on social remittances provides the larger conceptual context for the way diaspora engagement affects the homeland in a variety of domains (Levitt, 2013). Key factors shaping the flow of norms and practices from the diaspora community to the homeland include the elite status (or not) of diaspora members; the distance in norms and institutional performance between the host and the origin country; the macro

level global cultural, normative and policy flows that originate prior to social remittance transmission and which facilitate such transmission.

In terms of social capital, members of the diaspora either enjoying elite status prior to their migration or acquiring it in the host country are 'idea carriers…able to convince others to adopt the technical expertise and skills they introduced' (Levitt, 2013, p.937). Due to their elite status, "They either occupied social positions which allowed them to act upon their ideas themselves or they were able to influence those in a position to do so" (Levitt, 2013, p. 937). Importantly "macro level global flows precede and ease the way for social remittance transmission. Social remittance flows do not arise out of the blue…They are part and parcel of an ongoing process of cultural diffusion" (Levitt, 2013, p.937). Having said that, the distance in norms and cognition can also affect the efficacy of social remittances as "if the value structures and cognitive models migrants import are similar to prevailing norms then social remittances are likely to be assimilated more quickly" (Levitt, 2013, p.940).

Transnational volunteerism and the case of US Non-Resident Indians

The effectiveness of diaspora philanthropy, and of the social remittances it generates, is also determined by the nature of contemporary, transnational volunteerism. Diaspora volunteerism, "donations of time and energy" (Terrazas, 2010, p.163) are mediated through "a wide range of nonprofit and community based organisations including ethnic and community based groups, hometown associations, professional associations, alumni networks and religious organisations" (Terrazas, 2010, p.163). Volunteerism "is non-compulsory […] can occur informally or formally through organisations [and] is unpaid (Terrazas, 2010, p.165-66). In addition, Terrazas notes "compensation [...] cannot be 'significant', is largely symbolic and it is not contingent on market rates" (Terrazas, 2010, p.165-66).

Diaspora volunteers, compared with non-diaspora volunteers and paid technocrats offering their services in a particular country, "often have connections in the community, understand local needs, can easily enter and leave the country… [they can be] extraordinary committed individuals…motivated by genuine voluntary impulses, community ties and a deep understanding of on the ground needs" (Terrazas, 2010, p.168-69). Due to these reasons, diaspora volunteers are seen as offering high quality advice at very little or zero cost, the so called 'patriotic discount', in a way that is suitable to local conditions (Terrazas, 2010, p.8). The patriotic discount thesis is complemented by the investigated patterns of homeland engagement of skilled migrants themed as 'brain gain' and 'brain circulation' (Saxenian, 2005).

Within the transnational paradigm, an illuminating case study for the purposes of this paper's investigation is the experience of first-generation Indian migrants to the US, known in bureaucratic but also common parlance as NRIs (Non Resident Indians). The defining element of US NRIs is the achievement of high professional

status and of commensurate affluence within a generation – these are individuals who emigrated to the US from the 1960s onwards and were graduates of top Indian universities - allowing this cohort to interact in a business and philanthropic capacity with India (Lessinger, 1992). This single generation leap makes for an effectively transnational, as opposed to a classic first generation, diaspora community, i.e. a community that has both deep familiarity and the financial means to engage with the homeland.

Considering that US NRIs are "by and large people who lament India's technological and managerial backwardness and left because the country did not offer them enough scope" (Lessinger, 1992, p.67), it is inevitable that their philanthropic engagement with the homeland creates friction with resident stakeholders. This is particularly so in relation to the educational institutions that have been responsible for their own upward trajectory in the US (Lessinger, 2003). The most prominent US NRIs, highly accomplished in the IT and finance sectors, are graduates of the highly competitive Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). Approximately 30% of the alumni base of the IITs migrates. As alumni of these academic institutions, they have been dedicated to their alma maters through which they can mediate their loyalty and desire to contribute to their homeland. Invited by the Indian government to contribute to the modernisation and fundraising of their IITs, US NRIs came up with reform proposals in the direction of improving the IITs interaction with the market economy. These proposals caused uproar among the IITs faculty who insisted on a 'pure science' approach. Accusations of Indian-Americans being Trojan Horses of multinational enterprises bent on hijacking India's elite and suborning its academic establishment quickly followed suit.

The example of Indian transnationals contributes three intertwined elements to our investigation: the attainment of wealth and/or professional achievement by a transnational diaspora in a dynamic US environment within a generation; active homeland networks of these transnationals; and commitment to homeland educational institutions, a commitment which, as it involves major institutional change, cannot but generate friction with domestic stakeholders.

The two case studies: Athens College and the University of Athens

Athens College and the University of Athens are Greece's leading institutions in non-tertiary and tertiary education respectively. Athens College, which is composed of a primary and a secondary school division, is the school of choice for Athens' elite – indicatively, three out of the last five prime ministers of Greece attended the school, as well as the current leader of Greece's major opposition party , Kyriakos Mitsotakis – and leadership of the school is a prized social asset. The University of Athens, due to its history, size and location in the capital, is Greece's leading state university. As

such, it confers to the university's Rector national prominence as well as actual power over a sizeable organisation. Thus, the governance of both institutions is a matter of great interest to powerful, local stakeholders. The fate of both Athens College and the University of Athens can also engender the commitment of influential members of the diaspora who ascribe their success to the education they received from either one of these two institutions and/or believe that such institutions are of national consequence.

The Athens College

Athens College since its inception in 1925 has maintained strong diaspora links with its key founders, as well as many teachers and students, originating from the Greek Diaspora. Athens College also had a strong US orientation, which included founding faculty, the establishment of one of the two Governing Boards, the Board of Trustees in the city of New York (the other one being the Board of Directors located in Athens) and a charter with an explicit mandate to combine the best of US and Greek traditions in its educational mission (Palaiologos, 2016; Supreme Court of the State of New York 603770/2007).

Importantly, the Board of Trustees of Athens College demonstrates typical elite, transnational characteristics (Athens College, Board of Trustees-New York Office 2018). Ten of its fifteen members, as of February 2019, are Athens College graduates. Four out of these ten have had extensive interaction with leading members of the Greek business and/or policy making community. All fifteen members, with the two academics of the Board being professors at Princeton University, seem to be affluent or significantly wealthy, thus able to afford a transnational lifestyle. Fourteen out of fifteen members of the Board of Trustees are graduates of elite US universities. Most Trustees have been employed by leading US and international financial institutions and law firms. Thus, combined with their elite US education, they have attained career trajectories that are at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of success, as it is widely disseminated to the graduates of Athens College (Hellenic American Educational Foundation, 2017/2018)[1].

The antecedents of the governance contestation of Athens College originate in the challenge posed to the College's existence by the arrival of the socialist PASOK government in 1981 which, while in opposition, expressed its hostility towards private education. The PASOK government in the 1980s threatened to abolish Athens College,

[1] Typically the 2017-2018 annual report of Athens College in its self-evaluation of the performance of its graduates in gaining entry to universities abroad selects Harvard, Chicago and Yale as the first three US universities and Cambridge, Oxford, Imperial as the first three UK universities, see Hellenic American Educational Foundation, Annual Report 2017-2018, p.50 at https://www.haef.gr/-/media/files/haef/annualreports/annual-report-2017-2018.pdf?la=el

the College's status as the school of choice for Greece's elites being offensive to the party's egalitarian and populist principles. While not ultimately taking this extreme measure, the PASOK government imposed onerous restrictions and burdens on operations by freezing tuition, mandating faculty salary raises and providing to faculty civil service-like tenure.

Fending off these threats to the institution's existence necessitated intense engagement by the Athens-based Board of Directors with the Greek government while engendering a contentious relationship with the College's trade union, SELKA, which sought to maximise benefits to its members by a government heavily in favour of unions. Additionally, the government's intervention in the affairs of the College, as in the case of the abolition of the exam system, expanded the discretionary authority of the Board of Directors in the admission of policy cases (i.e. preferential treatment of alumni children in entry).

Thus, the management of local threats to the College's existence, and the parallel rise of local opportunities, in terms of the use of discretionary authority, tilted the power scales in favour of the Athens-based Board of Directors while widening the distance in terms of the understanding of the College's operations and goals between its two governing Boards. An additional factor of increasing prominence was the rising affluence of Greece in the 1990s and 2000s, which meant that the Board of Directors could fundraise for Athens College in Greece and not be as reliant on US donations as in the past.

At the invitation of Athens College President, Patricia Poiat, a division of Harvard University embarked on a fact finding mission and issued its report to the two Boards in August 1998 (Greyser, Stefanakis & Wagner, 1998). The blue ribbon nature of the report and its recommendations were, in principle, in alignment with the Athens College's mission to pursue educational excellence in a Greek setting by utilising US educational expertise. In practice, the Harvard report failed to act as a consensus bridge for the two Boards because the very thrust of its recommendations – clear division of responsibilities between the Boards and the President, operationalising fundraising, and delineating teaching ends with teaching means – inevitably would undercut the system of governance that had evolved since the 1980s, under Board of Directors leadership, and was, by contrast, in accord with the Board of Trustees' diagnosis of Athens College's perceived failings.

The institution of the President subsequently became the fulcrum of conflict of the two Boards. The President was appointed by the Board of Trustees and had to be a US national while having to interact day to day with the Board of Directors. The two Boards spiral of conflict involving the suitability and appointment of Athens College's President ultimately threatened the very existence of the dual governing structure of Athens College, between 1999 and 2003. Still, efforts at mediation between the two Boards eventually made progress leading to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2004, the main elements of which was for the

Board of Trustees, first, to accept greater input of the Board of Directors when selecting the President. Second, for the Board of Directors to affirm the Board of Trustees' role in the main strategic directions and governance principles of Athens College, such as meritocratic entry of students and selection of faculty, and a clear division between the executive role of the President and the roles of the non-executive members of the Board of Directors.

Relations turned for the worse once there was a new chairman of the Board of Directors in 2007 who demanded a 'clean slate' discussion between the two parties and asserted that the Trustees key role must be in fundraising and not in governance where, he argued, the Greek legal framework demanded sole responsibility by the Board of Directors. The Trustees, in turn, argued that it was impossible to fundraise effectively for Athens College considering the problematic aspects of its governance and in particular the decline of its meritocratic standards. Refusal on the part of the Board of Trustees to accept the Board of Directors terms led the latter to take legal action in the New York courts. The suit was sought for the relation of the Board of Trustees with Athens College to be severed and endowed funds under the Trustees control to be turned over to the Board of Directors in Athens.

The litigation, which lasted until the fall of 2016 was concluded by a decision of the Supreme Court of the State of New York which was substantially in favour of the Board of Trustees in New York and which ordered the two parties to sit again at the same table and find a way to jointly lead Athens College. Essentially, it was a court stamp of approval of the agreement that the two parties had reached on their own volition almost a decade prior.

The governance contestation of Athens College, as briefly sketched above, bears the main markers identified in the introductory section of diaspora philanthropy. In the Athens College case, such philanthropy takes the form of volunteerism for a Greek educational institution through Board of Trustees service, effected by transnational actors with formidable financial, intellectual and social resources at their disposal. The New York Trustees enlisted Harvard University educational expertise to their cause of reforming Athens College and proceeded to win a multi-year lawsuit in the State of New York court system. Through this conflict, Athens College unquestionably proved its ability to attract the attention and resources of its diaspora alumni. Equally important is the nature of the homeland regime which widens the distance between domestic and diaspora transnational stakeholders. PASOK's hostility to private education in the 1980s, and the unintended consequences of the response to that hostility by the Athens Board of Directors, is what engendered conflict between the two Boards. Yet, Athens College diaspora Trustees were also sufficiently networked, as well as acknowledged for their personal achievements in their homeland, to have the opportunity to pursue the court-mandated compromise with local stakeholders, as we will see below.

The University of Athens

Just like Athens College, the Diaspora's links to the University of Athens go back to the origins of the institution and in particular to the 1849 bequest of a Greek merchant from Tsarist Russia, Ioannis Dombolis. Donations up until the 1920s by diaspora donors were comparable or exceeded government funding of the University of Athens (Alivizatos, 2018). The diaspora's funding role declined afterwards, as diaspora communities faced decline or extinction by the arrival of the nation-state and the destruction of the Ottoman and Russian empires. In the post WWII era, just as in most other European countries, private benefactors became marginal for state universities as the government became the unchallenged funder of higher education.

It was a series of higher education reforms, implemented in the 2000s, that brought the diaspora back into play at the University of Athens and other state universities. First the reform implemented by the center right's New Democracy (ND) Minister of Education, Marietta Yannakou, brought into existence ADIP (The Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency), the state valuation and validation agency of higher education in 2006. Second, the reform implemented by the center left's PASOK Minister of Education, Anna Diamantopoulou, in 2011, which made Greece's academic diaspora a leading actor in the governance of state universities, the University of Athens included (see Hrisomalidis, H. 2017, for a review of these two reforms).

ADIP sought to facilitate state universities' participation in the EU-wide standard setting exercise known as the Bologna process. As the mission of ADIP mandated independent external evaluators of Greek state universities, this meant that for the first time in its recent history, Greek diaspora scholars, in their capacity as authoritative interpreters of standards of excellence defined by the EU's policy process in higher education, became a factor of consequence for the governance of the University of Athens. Importantly, both the Bologna process and the mission of ADIP have been met with continuous resistance by mainly far left wing faculty and student organisations at the University of Athens and elsewhere in the state university system (Lakasas, 2015).

The subsequent Diamantopoulou reforms of higher education passed in parliament in 2011, which were unique in the annals of educational changes in Greece because they had the support of the then leading opposition party ND, mandated the establishment of Institutions' Boards of state universities. These Boards were meant to fulfill the role of a governing board or board of trustees in terms of financial management, strategy setting and accountability supervision of the executive leadership of state universities. Boards were to be composed of a combination of elected internal members of the Boards by each university's faculty, and then external members chosen by those elected internal members; thus, eliminating the previously

dominant governance constellation of rectors elected not only by the faculty but also by administrative staff and students. Importantly, and just as the creation of ADIP was informed by an international process integral to Greece's EU membership, the Diamantopoulou reforms were drafted in close consultation with OECD which had codified what it understood as best governance in higher education among the developed countries community. Student activists attempted to physically disrupt the elections of these newly established Boards which were also opposed by a minority of far left wing faculty who relied on the previous governance system to exercise power and influence in state universities.[2] Eventually the vote for the Boards took place through the introduction of an e-voting process that could not be physically disrupted (Mastoras, 2012).

More than one hundred Greek scientists from abroad, mostly from the US where the Greek academic diaspora is highly prominent as well as numerous (Yuret, 2017, p.358-370) were chosen by the elected internal members of these Boards as external members (Lakasas, 2013). The University of Athens was typical in that regard as MIT Professor Dimitris Bertsimas was chosen as Board President and other Greek faculty of universities from abroad were also invited and did join the Board. These Board members at the University of Athens, but also at other universities, were Greek citizens most of them born and raised in Greece and were more often than not graduates of Greek state universities.

The University of Athens Institution's Board from the very beginning was enmeshed in conflict as far left-wing activists and faculty did not give up their previous fight to annul that aspect, among others, of the Diamantopoulou reforms. Its proceedings were violently disrupted by students in an ongoing effort to de facto eliminate it. The Board's attempt at financial and operational oversight, and of human resources management, also brought it into conflict with the Rector of the University of Athens (Lakasas, 2013). The need, under directions of the Ministry of Education, to separate non-essential from essential administrative staff, possibly leading to redundancies, further aggravated the Board and Rector relationship, leading the latter to sue the Board (Lakasas, 2018).

The fight was also moved to Parliament where the Boards' wings were first clipped by, among other measures, giving the authority to appoint deans from the Boards to the faculty via elections by a government composed of the two parties which had first voted for the Diamantopoulou reforms, PASOK and ND, and the social-democratic party DIMAR (Kindi, 2013). The opposition, far left SYRIZA party which had

[2] Center right student organisations have also taken advantage of the previous system in order to build clintelistic relations with office-seeking faculty. But they had never rationalised this strategy, unlike far left wing student organisations and factions which portrayed their involvement in the governance of state universities as part of a wider struggle, against neoliberalism and capitalism, which justified violence. For more on this issue see Grigoriadis, I.N. and Kamaras, A. 2012. 'Reform Paradoxes: academic freedom and governance in Greek and Turkish higher education' *Southeastern European and Black Sea Studies*, 82: 135-152.

led the resistance to the earlier Yannakou and Diamantopoulou reforms, participated in the physical disruption of student youth organisations in the operations of the University of Athens (Lakasas, 2014).

When in government in May 2015, SYRIZA, in order to avoid extensive parliamentary debate on the fate of the Institutions' Boards, passed an ordinance aimed at limiting the Boards responsibilities and power, particularly in the selection of university rectors (Lakasas, 2015). In November of the same year, the University of Athens' President, Professor Bertsimas, tendered his resignation from the Board.

As with Athens College, we see that the University of Athens, and state universities in general, have the power to attract the voluntary contributions of diaspora alumni to their governance. Again, as with Athens College, such diaspora alumni bring to bear to this voluntary contribution the formidable resources of elite, first generation members of the diaspora: peak professional distinction established in highly reputable institutions abroad, the financial capacity to operate transnationally, the networking in the homeland. Furthermore, diaspora academics are explicitly seen as idea carriers, specifically of governance structures of higher education dominant abroad, and transmitted to Greece's political establishment via membership in the EU and the OECD. Unlike at Athens College, the participation (or not) of diaspora academics in the governance of the University of Athens, and other state universities, is a matter of parliamentary legislation. Consequently, the outcome of this contest is ultimately not determined by the known community of the University of Athens, narrowly defined, composed of the institutions' governing bodies, its faculty, alumni and students. Rather, it is determined by national political developments. Different party and opposition constellations have first mandated this diaspora participation at state universities, then diluted it, then abolished it and might yet reinstate it, considering that this is the position, as of February 2019, of the leading opposition party ND and contender for government in Greece's 2019 general elections. That being said, the actions and disputes of the narrowly defined known community that is an institution like the University of Athens, do produce political consequences as well as costs and benefits. They are thus a factor, even if an indeterminate one, in the legislative process on which the diaspora's involvement in the governance of state universities is ultimately dependent upon.

Methodology and analysis

Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted in person from January to May 2018 in Athens and were anonymised. Through the lens of qualitative research, a non-probability and purposive sampling technique was used (Ploeg, 1999; Hair, et al., 2000), as well as judgment sampling (Hair, et al., 2000). We also applied snowball sampling in cases where the interviewees suggested fellow interviewees who were

considered important for the purposes of the analysis. Semi-structured interviews provide the researchers with the necessary flexibility to unpack complex themes and trace invisible links (Ploeg, 1999). Similarly, the use of purposive sampling gives researchers the opportunity to select a group that would fit the study's approach and purposes (Hair, et al., 2000). Although this type of sampling could be considered biased and unrepresentative, the initial aim for the selection is not the creation of a representative sample, but instead to facilitate targeted research.

We interviewed individuals who have engaged in diverse capacities with Athens College (an educator, an alumni association leader, journalists, a member of the Board of Trustees) and the University of Athens (former ministers of education, former internal and external members of the University of Athens' Institution's Board, journalists). The interviews were conducted in person (one interview conducted through Skype) in Greek, each lasting around 40 minutes on average. Interviews were either recorded and then transcribed, or taken down as notes in cases where the interviewees declined recording, in order to organise, code, and analyse the data. Particularly in the case of the Athens College, extensive court documents, where litigants articulated their version of events, and the adjudicating court assessed the credibility and veracity of their assertions, have also been utilised.

Tracing primarily the commonalities among the aforementioned cases, we have also explored how conditions, circumstances, and dominant narratives generate contestation in diaspora engagement, pervading both the public and the private spheres. The results are categorised on the basis of the patterns that have emerged from the interviews and the related press coverage and court documents into the following three thematic axes: a) 'Giving back' aimed at institutional and national transformation; b) governance contestation and its competing understandings; c) plans versus reputations.

'Giving back' aimed at institutional and national transformation

Both proponents and most opponents of the creation of the Institutions' Boards at State Universities, and the University of Athens in particular, understood the participation of diaspora academics to these Boards as motivated by the desire to contribute to the particular institution, the cause of university reform, and even the renaissance of the country. Numerous interviews in the Greek press of these members of the Greek academic diaspora, at the time, confirm this pattern of self-declared motivation (Papamathaiou, 2012; Mastoras, 2012; Mastoras et al. 2012, Mastoras, 2013).

Similarly, interviews relating to Athens College ascribed the motivation of the New York Board of Trustees, in their majority alumni of Athens College, ten out of a total of fifteen in early 2019, to their sentimental attachment to the institution and

their desire to recover what they considered to be its pre-1980s integrity and meritocracy.

For both Athens College and State Universities such as the University of Athens, alumni who became successful and elite members of diasporas often maintained feelings of loyalty and gratitude that, in turn, engendered the desire for active involvement in the alma mater's affairs. These individuals experienced personal success within institutional settings, that of host countries such as the US, which could efficiently utilise the high quality education they received in their homelands. These diaspora personalities, in turn, desired through their volunteer action to institutionalise their own personal experience in the host state back to the homeland: by strengthening homeland institutional capacity so that a) Greek educational institutions can generate in Greece the life chances made available to them in countries such as the US and; b) by enabling graduates of these institutions to make as much of a contribution to the welfare of the homeland as they have made to their host country.

Below are some indicative quotations from the interviews (emphasis added by authors):

> It is a side of their lives, contributing to the common good and giving back. ***You have a responsibility to help your school***, your alma mater, which is a part of your existence.
> (Former President of Alumni Association, Athens College)

> ***Athens College both represents a part of my homeland for me and is an institution that I owe a lot to,*** as it formed me into the person who I am today. I owe a giant debt of gratitude to it.
> (Member of the Board of Trustees, Athens College & former Member of the Institution's Board, University of Athens)

> ***I wanted to have a more direct relationship with my homeland and, based on my experience of what I have learned all these years here, I wanted to contribute something***. There was no other reason for me and nothing to gain by being on the Board of the institution of EKPA. (Member of the Board of Trustees of Athens College & former member of the Institution's Board, University of Athens)

> ***These people had no financial motive; they came because Greece is alive in each of them, in their hearts …*** (Former Minister of Education)

Governance contestation and its competing understandings

Homeland actors may consider diaspora engagement as a potential competitor for power, donor resources, and legitimacy, or even as a political threat. Diasporas can be negatively identified as the 'other', the identity of which is shaped through opposition with 'the self', this identification serving the political purpose of delegitimising and questioning the inherent efficacy of the diaspora's involvement. Such narratives of diaspora engagement provide the framework of diaspora involvement and, depending on their resonance among diverse constituencies, expand or restrict the realm of diaspora action (Liberatore, 2015).

Our interviewees give specificity to the above claims. The actors who oppose diaspora engagement interviewed for this paper perceive diaspora involvement, in the case of the University of Athens, as an attempt either by politicians or resident, institutional competitors to usurp their legitimate power and authority. These actors and participants believe that the University of Athens and other State Universities, notwithstanding problematic elements in their governance and operations, manage under their traditional, resident leaderships to fulfill their roles, including in terms of their extroversion and scholarly achievements and thus are in no need of exposure to international trends via a diaspora-led knowledge transmission process. They also believe that diaspora actors, due to geographical distance and unfamiliarity, are not in a position to comprehend and manage a Greek educational institution from which they are alienated. Moreover, this alien status is integral and is defined by an assertion of power over local institutions and stakeholders that bears resemblance to a colonising experience, according to some interviewees.

> One of the main problems [of the law creating the Institutions' Boards] in my opinion was that it undervalued the scientific production that took place here and thus dragged in an excessive way the centre of gravity abroad… the participation of diaspora academics is one thing and the creation through the selection of the six [internal members] of a colony whereby you come to transfer your lights, that creates tension (Former Minister of Education, B)

> These people, someone was from America, another one from France, how could they have the experience of what applies in the Greek university so that they could contribute to its functioning…from them there was patronising attitude absolutely…. (Former Rector of the University of Athens)

> The Greeks of abroad had formed a view from the outside but when you

> come inside you realise that you cannot transfer a foreign institutional framework to another society – every society has its own needs and problems. Some of them considered that their views would be easily implemented. They were used to having administrative officers around them, while in Greece they had to find the laws and understand them on their own. (Former internal member A, Institution's Board University of Athens)

By contrast, diaspora and pro-diaspora actors understand the local resistance to the diaspora's involvement as driven by powerful vested interests in Greece and by individuals who do not want to be accountable because they pursue personal and narrow sectoral aims. Although these diaspora actors, in the case of the University of Athens, understand resistance to the exercise of their role as essentially beyond ideology, they also note that they have been demonised by faculty and administrative staff as ideologically right wing and/or instruments of the creditors' will in Greece. Diaspora and pro-diaspora actors also see Athens College and the University of Athens as substantially failing and in need of comprehensive reforms.

> The central issue was that at Greek institutions, like Athens College and the University of Athens, parasitical networks were created and want to have neither supervision nor accountability. (Former internal member of the Institution's Board B, University of Athens)

> The trustees [had] felt that the values of meritocracy and excellence at the Athens College had been undermined, in a way resembling the Greek public sector, meaning that whoever had certain connections and the right political network could send his kids to the school. (Journalist A)

> From 1980 the school [Athens College] slowly sunk into the swamp of Greek clientelism. (Journalist B)

> Rectors were elected due to their patron-client relationships. His election can be parallelised to that of a mayor. (Former Minister of Education A)

> We shouldn't design education trying to gather more votes. We will never reach the point where we should already be as long as politics intervenes … In my opinion I could contribute to the rise in quality of teaching and research and mainly of the funding of EKPA and generally of the Greek university which, in my opinion, is in a terrible state …There were many others [at the University if Athens] … who saw us as instruments of enforcement of a rightwing policy... I don't perceive myself as rightwing nor

> did the institution [the University of Athens' Institution's Board] have a clear political direction. The accusation that we were an instrument of neoliberalism was clearly a prejudice. (Member of the Board of Trustees of Athens College, former Member of the Institution's Board, University of Athens)

This division between those who see diaspora engagement as harmful and those who see it as necessary for the satisfactory performance of Athens College and the University of Athens is driven in turn by two alternate visions of Greek reality. The first vision perceives Greek reality in unique, nearly immutable terms best managed, for the institutions' and ultimately the public's best interest by residents who possess the requisite legitimacy and knowledge. The second vision perceives Greek reality as contingent, a product of particular circumstances which has, furthermore, produced catastrophic institutional underperformance by enmeshing resident leaderships in conflicts of interest which they then develop personal incentives in reproducing. It is worth quoting at some length an interviewees' testimony which throws into sharp relief the contrast of these two visions:

> What they [opponents of the University of Athens' Institution's Board] invoke as the Greek reality is not a reality. They are actually referring to ideas that have been created by a previous stage of our society. They ascribe the so-called Greek reality to metaphysics or to a profound psychology of the Greeks. There are no such things. There are bad habits, and all habits can be broken. But many times we hide behind the Greek idiosyncrasy. They say that things in Greece are how they are. Are the things in Greece correct? They say it does not matter because this is the Greek reality. No, this is not how it is. Our society is always changing. (Member of the Board of Trustees of Athens College, former Member of the Institutions Board, University of Athens)

Crucially, these conflicting constructions of the diaspora's role in the governance and management of the University of Athens and Athens College reveal polar opposite understandings of the crucial issue of institutional fundraising. Diaspora and pro-diaspora actors believe that fundraising for the two institutions, from private donors, can only succeed if there is sufficient transparency and accountability; and thus the Boards must have the power and authority to deliver such transparency and accountability to prospective donors if they are to fulfill their fundraising function. Actors opposed to the diaspora's involvement in educational governance contend that fundraising should not confer power and authority to the diaspora actors, but rather – considering the ability and legitimacy of the resident leaderships of these two institutions – diaspora actors should pursue fundraising while

giving up claims to power and authority over the institutions they fundraise for. This follows from the understanding of those actors, who oppose the involvement of the diaspora, of what they see as the success of the University of Athens and Athens College, given inherent Greek constraints. This conviction leads them to castigate diaspora actors for their failure to achieve any meaningful success in fundraising for the two institutions[3].

Pro-diaspora actors and observers argue as follows:

> I think that we perceive the successful Greeks of our diaspora as a source of funds…There is no follow-up, and willingness does not exist to change the structures, the situation, the ways of operating so as to more closely resemble Western institutions and their operations, as we saw in the case of the College. We want to get the funds and use them as we wish. (Journalist A)

> The Board [of the University of Athens] came into contact for various projects …with foundations such as Niarchos, Onassis etc …and the impression we got was that all these [foundations] did not want to give money to a black hole, meaning to something that has no transparent management and would not know how these monies would be put to use. (Former internal Member of Institution's Board B, University of Athens)

Whereas actors who oppose the diaspora's involvement in the governance of the University of Athens note that:

> The members of the Board of EKPA, when they were selected, said 'we will take care of sources of funding, etc'. Did you see a single euro? Nothing came! (Former Rector, University of Athens)

> The Board did not play any role in funding, regrettably…. Nothing took place from the Board. (Former internal Member A, Institution's Board University of Athens)

[3] Despite the authors' efforts, members of the Board of Directors of Athens College did not volunteer to be interviewed, however their views on the perceived failure of the Board of Trustees to fundraise for Athens College is well-documented, and is nearly identical to that of diaspora opponents at the University of Athens, see: The Supreme Court of the State of New York. 2007. Plaintiff's Proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law , Hellenic American Educational Foundation against The Trustees of Athens College in Greece, Index No. 603770/07, p.10-11 and Minutes of the Annual Ordinary General Assembly, pp.15-16, In Supreme Court of the State of New York, Hellenic American Educational Foundation against The Trustees of Athens College in Greece, Verified Answer and Counterclaims of Defendant Trustees of Athens College in Greece, December 6, 2007, No: 603770.

Plans versus reputations

Diaspora and pro-diaspora actors in the interviews, and the related cited documentation, argue that both Athens College and the University of Athens suffered from institutional failure. To address such a failure diaspora and pro-diaspora actors offered a 'plan or plans'. The response of their opponents to be found in the interviews, but also in the texts generated by legal action they initiated, both at Athens College and at the University of Athens, was that these two institutions were not failing. Instead, local stakeholders who enjoyed positions of leadership at Athens College and the University of Athens, asserted that their reputations were unjustifiably maligned by diaspora and pro diaspora actors. As discussed above, local stakeholders see themselves as doing the best they can within the constraints that are unique to the local environment, while at the same time being quite successful at utilising the significant resources of this same environment to advance the missions of their institutions (Supreme Court of the State of New York, 2007; General Assembly of the Association Hellenic-American Educational Foundation, 2007; Minutes of the Annual Ordinary General Assembly, Verified Answer and Counterclaims of Defendant Trustees of Athens College in Greece, 2007).

In the case of Athens College, the Board of Trustees identified several key challenges in their various communications with the Board of Directors, as well as with the latter's General Assembly - some of these challenges have been articulated in a comprehensive manner by the Harvard Report (Supreme Court of the State of New York No: 603770, 2007). These were, according to the Board of Trustees, the increasing percentage of policy cases, namely of pupils entering Athens College by virtue of having parents who had graduated from the institution, undermining the meritocratic character of Athens College, the practice of private tutorials by Athens College faculty to Athens College pupils, and the micromanagement of the Board of Directors which blurred the line between executive and non-executive responsibility and rendered impossible the implementation of an institutional mission by the President of the College. In the case of the University of Athens, one of the main critiques of the Institution's Board to the Rector was his unwillingness to adhere to the Ministry of Education's order to identify among the administrative staff those who were non-essential in order to institute cutbacks in the institution's expenditure, in the context of Greece's fiscal crisis (Institution's Board 2013, Protocol Number 222).

In short, Athens University's Institution's Board requested, but did not receive, a plan identifying the university's core operational needs and how they could be addressed by the administrative staff's skills profile. The University of Athens Institution's Board requested this information so that it could respond to the requirement of its funder, the Ministry of Education, with the least damage possible to its operations; the idea being that, based on a comprehensive assessment of the

skills of administrative staff, no personnel with essential skills to university operations would lose their job. The University of Athens Rector responded with a defamation lawsuit against the Institution's Board and its members. A pillar of his case was his assertion and that of other university bodies, such as the University of Athens' senate, that not a single administrative staff is surplus to requirements (Suit at the Athens Court 2013). The suit in the State of New York courts by the Board of Directors against the Board of Trustees of Athens College, as well as documents made public by the discovery process of the court case, such as minutes of the General Assembly of the Board of Directors, claimed that the Board of Trustees defamed the Board of Directors in the wider Athens College community (Supreme Court of the State of New York, 2007; 2016).

There is no evidence that the Board of Directors attempted to critically qualify or integrate in the advocacy of its position a competing plan for the future of Athens College. Thus, the sustained critique and recommendations for the future included in the Harvard Report, which substantively is the Board of Trustees position on Athens College, was left unanswered by the Board of Directors (Supreme Court of the State of New York 2007; 2016). In particular, an advisory assignment executed during the court proceedings by McKinsey, the management consultancy company, for Athens College, did not seem to play any role in the proceedings. The University of Athens' Rector, in his lawsuit, endorses critiques of the redundancy plan of the administrative staff produced by other university officials. These critiques compare staffing levels at other Greek and non-Greek universities but do not substantiate whether current, actual administrative staff meet the operational needs of the University of Athens (Suit at the Athens Court, 2013). By contrast, in an open letter to the Minister of Education - submitted prior to the University of Athens' Rector's lawsuit and signed by seventeen University of Athens Faculty members, all occupying positions of seniority - it is pointed out that an approximately 400 administrative staff, out of a grand total of 1,316 University of Athens administrative staff, are not actually working at the University of Athens. This was due to a variety of reasons such as secondments to other state agencies, disciplinary proceedings, or even simply for being absent without leave.

Absent a riposte to the critiques they faced – i.e., an alternative plan featuring a substantiated set of recommended decisions in the context of an articulated strategy – the Athens College Board of Directors and the University of Athens Rector positions was essentially the same; namely that diaspora critics were driven by personal motivation hoping to wrest governance and control of the institutions.

The two lawsuits are not only symbolic actions aimed to advance the positions of the parties that have initiated them, they are also powerful deterrents for those sued, namely individual members of the Board of Trustees of Athens College and the Institution's Board of the University of Athens. After all, prior to the lawsuits, the diaspora actors active in the governance of these two institutions enjoyed near-

absolute freedom of action beholden only to their self-conceived and self-declared sense of what is right and proper for Athens College and the University of Athens. Whereas the lawsuits, by producing an array of possible financial penalties and reputational risks, to be faced either in the US or in Greece, arguably sought to make these diaspora actors give up on their effort to be agents of change in these two institutions and opt, instead, to abandon the fight.[4]

Synthesis and concluding remarks

At both the University of Athens and Athens College, diaspora actors combine the commitment of an alumni relationship with firsthand knowledge of the homeland and the financial ability to engage with it. These actors clearly demonstrate how their autonomy, from homeland power relations and career calculations, can be earned, as with the case of the US NRIs, in a dynamic, highly competitive, and meritocratic - at least for well-educated, first generation immigrants - host country such as the US. This combination of elite, first generation Greek-Americans and a dynamic US labour market created a cohort of transnational diaspora actors who are in possession of a formidable combination of host and homeland country features: career distinction, governance expertise and financial autonomy in the host country and networks, familiarity and institutional loyalty in the homeland country. Furthermore, these features become operationalised in a global environment of cheap travel costs, of zero or near zero communication costs, and of national discourses, conducted in print and social media, which in the age of the internet afford both influence and real-time information to diaspora actors, as they comment in such media extensively and access them with the same ease as homeland residents do.

Having said that, at both institutions we can hardly overstate the importance of institutional arrangements in facilitating the diaspora's philanthropic engagement. At the University of Athens such arrangements were the product of legislation passed in the Greek Parliament. In the case of Athens College, the diaspora's involvement was inscribed in the College's founding charter through the creation of the two boards, reflecting the founders' desire to combine elements of both Greek and US culture and educational practice. Regardless of the diverse origins of these institutional arrangements, once they were in place we see that in both a state and a private educational institution, diaspora actors would leverage their transnational existence

[4] In the opinion of the Court, the suit against Athens College's Board of Trustees targeted only those trustees that were deemed most vocal in their opposition to Board of Directors conduct and was aimed at compelling them to capitulate to the latter's wishes, see Supreme Court of the State of New York. 14th November 2016. Decision, Order and Judgment after nonjury trial, Hellenic American Educational Foundation against The Trustees of Athens College in Greece, Index No. 603770/07, p.28, Supreme Court of the State of New York. 2007, pp.32-35.

and make a very significant long-term commitment to what they considered desirous institutional reform.

It is precisely because these facilitating institutional arrangements enable the mobilisation of significant diaspora resources that local stakeholders have fought to abolish or neuter them: through the State of New York court system in the case of Athens College and through the Greek court system and parliamentary legislation in the case of the University of Athens. It is thus worth underlining that the 'length' of institutional distance, facilitating or obstructing social remittances from the diaspora to the homeland, is not a given but rather is itself an issue of high domestic contestation in which diaspora actors are often themselves active and influential participants.

As per our original social remittance thesis, our diaspora actors are not just acting on their individual behalf. Rather, they are the conduits of cultural diffusion which Greece, and Greek homeland actors, are open to, due to: the country's historical trajectory, as a member in the post WW II period of the developed West, its international memberships and commitments and its societal aspirations. In particular, the government reform that led to the foundation of the State Universities Institutions Boards, including that of the University of Athens, was deeply influenced by international best practice as identified by OECD, the 'rich countries' club to which Greece belongs to. OECD best practice codifies the type of professional experiences that Greek diaspora academics have been practitioners of, thus creating a fit between OECD-informed reforms and the volunteer input of these diaspora academics. In the case of Athens College, it is no coincidence that the Board of Trustees, when it wanted to crystallise the problems that, in its judgment, the Board of Directors were responsible for, it sought the advice and the rubber stamp of one of the most prestigious US academic institutions, Harvard University. A report bearing the imprimatur of Harvard University, a highly attractive higher education destination for an Athens College graduate, could not be easily dismissed by Greek stakeholders.

One important finding of the paper is the linkage of diaspora volunteerism with diaspora fundraising. Diaspora volunteers and their resident supporters and allies, be they Athens College Trustees or University of Athens members of the Institution's Board, argue that unless the proper plans and processes are set in place they will fail in their mission to raise funds from the wealthy diaspora for their respective institutions. Local stakeholders argue - on the basis that they discharge their responsibilities effectively, albeit within the limitations imposed by the Greek context, and that the plans and processes recommended by diaspora volunteers are unrealistic and/or counter-productive - that diaspora volunteers should still be able to fundraise and, if they fail to do so, then the only raison d'etre of their engagement becomes nullified.

However, access to funding might not be a relevant factor in determining the outcome of such disagreements, and it is worthwhile to further investigate why this

might be the case across different types of institutions. Notwithstanding the measure of financial independence gained by the Athens Board of Directors from the New York Board of Trustees, through successful fundraising among Greece's business community, the Directors submitted to the decision of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, replaced their chairman and jointly with the Trustees selected a new President for Athens College, Richard Jackson, in 2017. By contrast, Greece's massive fiscal crisis which led to the cutbacks to state universities of more than 40% had hit hard the University of Athens by the time the conflict with the Institution's Board gathered pace. Yet the promise that the Institution's Board would lead an effort to diversify the University of Athens' sources of revenue, via fundraising in the US and elsewhere, certainly did not deter the Board's antagonists, within the University of Athens, from fighting the Board.

Finally, and in terms of directions of further research, we should also incorporate in our understanding of the contribution of volunteerism not only the opportunity cost of the volunteers' engagement, i.e. not only in terms of the value of their services if these services were to be purchased at a market price. Rather, we should add the potential to catalyse fundraising by assisting in the evolution of educational institutions on the basis of norms and practices which are appealing to potential diaspora donors. In that context we should also examine the levels of interpenetration between different sub segments of a diaspora community. We should seek to determine the nature of the interaction between the elite first generation transnationals, with an alumni relationship to Athens College and/or the University of Athens and other Greek State Universities, with other Greek-Americans who are second, third or even fourth generation. We can then address the issue of how, and under what conditions, intense engagement by one segment of a diaspora community can bring on board other segments of that community, in a process which ultimately becomes constitutive of an active intergenerational diasporic community.

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The Greek Diaspora Project at SEESOX

Mission statement

The Greek Diaspora Project (GDP) was set up at SEESOX with the overall aim to serve as a nexus between academic research and policy, and to help identify ideas to maximise the developmental impact of the Greek diaspora on contemporary Greek politics, economy and society. The project studies the relationship between Greece and its diaspora within the context of the current economic crisis and beyond.

Project objectives

- Become the preeminent forum for debate between the wider diaspora scholarship and scholarship dedicated to the Greek diaspora;
- Relate Greece and its diaspora to other similar countries and conduct in-depth comparative studies;
- Be a port of call for anyone interested in contemporary aspects of the Greek diaspora, in terms of its library and archival resources, activities, institutional affiliations, policy relevant research;
- Analyse the new trends characterizing the current Greek diaspora in conjunction to the historical context, socio-economic change, varieties of cultural affinities;
- Assess the developmental impact of the diaspora on the Greek economy and identify policies that can maximize its contribution;
- Inform Greek public debate and Greek policy makers on the Greek diaspora, its evolution and the policy implications of actual and potential interactions between the diaspora and Greece;
- Secure funding and research opportunities for a young generation of scholars dedicated to the study of the Greek diaspora.

About SEESOX

South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX) is part of the European Studies Centre (ESC) at St Antony's College, Oxford. It focuses on the interdisciplinary study of the Balkans, Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. Drawing on the academic excellence of the University and an international network of associates, it conducts academic and policy relevant research on the current multifaceted transformations of the region. It follows closely regional phenomena and analyses the historical and intellectual influences which have shaped perceptions and actions in the region. In Oxford's best tradition, the SEESOX team is committed to understanding the present through the *longue durée* and reflecting on the future through high quality scholarship.

SEESOX | St Antony's College | University of Oxford | OX2 6JF | United Kingdom
Telephone: +44 1865 274537 | Email: Julie.adams@sant.ox.ac.uk
Join our mailing list: seesox@maillist.ox.ac.uk
seesoxdiaspora.org #seesoxdiaspora