# CHAPTER 9

## 'NAKED PIAZZA': MALE (HOMO)SEXUALITIES, MASCULINITIES AND CONSUMER CULTURES IN GREECE SINCE THE 1960s

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After the collapse of the dictatorship in 1974, Greek society witnessed the proliferation of new sociopolitical movements that had emerged in Western Europe several years earlier. One of them was the gay movement, the emergence of which is connected more with the broader liberty of political expression and the expansion of radical ideas after the collapse of the dictatorship rather than with the legitimacy of the Left (especially of Communist Party in Greece). Leftist parties, with the exception of the small Eurocommunist[1] party ('Communist party of Interior') and its youth 'Rigas Feraios', were reluctant – if not hostile – towards the newly emergent gay movement (AKOE) and homosexuality in general.[2] The emergence of a gay identity, movement and culture – i.e. gay bars – was linked with the broader changes that occurred in Greek society regarding the conceptualizations of homosexuality, sexuality and gender. The aim of this study is to explore these changes regarding male homosexuality and masculinity and to analyse how these shifts reflected on, but were also produced by, the new consumer practices regarding the gendered public space and the body. As Voulgaris argues, it seems that the shifts in male homosexuality and masculinity could be associated with the explosion of consumerist expectations and political claims regarding gender and sexuality after the fall of the dictatorship period (*Metapolitefsi*).[3] These expectations – along with the overall social and cultural modernization – were repressed by the 'Greek-Christian' cultural politics of dictatorship. The episode that Loukas Theodorakopoulos – a writer, spokesman for AKOE[4] and editor of its magazine *AMFI* – narrates in his book *Kaiadas* is indicative of the dictatorship's repression of new consumer practices regarding the male body and homosexuality.[5] *Kaiadas*[6] is a chronicle of the arrest of a company of homosexual men who gathered in the house of one celebrating his birthday. The arrest was followed by a public castigation – i.e. display of their names and photos in the daily newspapers, and a trial. During the interrogation the policemen wanted to check out who was 'homosexual' or not, and demanded the arrested men show them their underpants. If they wore a modern brief slip they were perceived by the policemen as 'effeminates', i.e. 'homosexuals'; if they wore the traditional underpants (*sovrako*) they were perceived as 'men', i.e. non-'homosexuals'.

Following the spatial and material turn in contemporary studies on space and material culture, I argue that space and gendered/sexual bodily appearance are not a container, an epiphenomenon of sexual relations between men and an inner gendered/sexual self.[7] As I will demonstrate, they play a considerable and active role in constituting the gendered/sexual self and the sexual desire, even orientation, towards men or women. References

made to mid-1970s' Greek society, along with the articulation of a new consumer culture and the emergence of different conceptualizations of sexuality and gender, are not to be interpreted as an argument for 'pure' masculinity being spoiled by a culture of commodification prior to widespread consumerism. Instead, my point of view is that different male (homo)sexualities and masculinities are shaped by different materialities. In addition, a moralistic, anti-materialistic approach to consumption that is widespread in social sciences[8] constitutes a basic part of the political ideology by which intellectuals – who lived with their homosexuality between the 1950s and the 1970s – have interpreted the shifts that occurred in Greek society. This ideology is partly suggested in the following verses from Dinos Christianopoulos' poem:

> [. . .] And yet, everything changed within a few years. The cafeteria rendered the parks useless. Television emptied out the movie houses. Females became a dime a dozen. Studs, lousy rich. Soldiers, kept men. We were knocked out by wheels, the efficiency apartment and dough. [. . .][9]

The poet himself is one of the prominent representatives of the old generation of Greek homosexual intellectuals. The writings of Christianopoulos and other intellectuals combined with my own research reveal that in Greece a widespread queer[10] cuture or, to use the conceptual category deployed by my interlocutors, a culture of *poniroi*, existed which was significantly different from the hegemonic, Western peception of contemporary gay culture. As the researchers of the new queer history put it, instead of turning to the past to discover the origins, to trace the history of a modern 'homosexual consciousness' as the early gay history did, we have to reconsider our categories of identity and desire which are of limited use in understanding this history.[11]

The following text is based on the research that I conducted on male homsexualities of the 1950s to 1970s, in order to better understand the contemporary masculinity, male homosociality and homosexuality[12] in the areas of Athens and Piraeus which were the main topics I researched for my doctoral dissertation.[13] Both my past and ongoing research is based on interviews with men who lived, or experienced their homosexuality, during the 1960s and 1970s in Athens. In this chapter I also use literary writings, testimonials, published interviews and a collection of photographs of the homosexual intellectuals mentioned above, not to confirm or enrich my 'data' but rather to better understand the perceptions of masculinities and male sexualities. In other words, these sources were valuable for revealing not so much the 'facts', the 'truth of correspondence' but rather the 'truth of unveiling' – i.e. the gendered/sexual imaginary.[14]

## Conceptualizations of gender and male sexuality from the 1950s to the 1970s

In Greek society of the 1950s–70s, the sexual behaviour and identity of a man – but also of a woman – was conceptualized based on the gender with which he or she identified,

and not on that of the sexual partner of choice.[15] More specifically, men were not broadly categorized as 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' but as 'masculine' and 'feminine' (*andras* i.e. man – *poustis/adelfi*).[16] A 'masculine' man could have sexual relations with either a 'feminine' man or a woman without being stigmatized. Moreover, many 'masculine' men had relationships with women. The gender identities of *andras* and *poustis/adelfi* are defined according to the 'masculine' or 'feminine' bodily appearance, performance and the sexual roles during intercourse: the one who penetrates is 'active' either with a man or with a woman and is regarded as *andras*, while the one who, like a woman, 'suffers', undergoes the penetration, is *poustis/adelfi*. The access of *andres*[17] to sexual relations with other men is connected with a masculine perception of male sexual desire. This is perceived as a 'natural' sexual need which is characteristic of the male physiology. More specifically, the male sexual organ is considered as the site of a sexual instinct which is called *kavla* in the 'male' slang.[18] In periods of sexual deprivation, *kavla* is becoming more intense and sometimes painful because of the hyper-concentration of sperm in the testicles. So, men need urgently to discharge by penetrating whomever, woman or man. Overall, in rural but also urban Greek sites, sexuality was perceived as a 'natural' action aimed at either reproduction or the satisfaction of the 'biological' needs of men. Tenderness and love were not considered essential, constitutive elements of the heterosexual couple, or of marriage.[19] Contrarily, men expressed publicly intense tenderness and sensuality to their homosocial partners through embraces, ambiguous looks and verbal expressions without these relationships being characterized or stigmatized as (homo)sexual or erotic in the modern, Western sense of the term, but, rather, as non-sexual – friendly.[20] Thus, by limiting their (hetero)sexual relations to just sexual activities, men could experience intense sentimentality and sensuality for individuals of the same sex. For some men this sensuality extended to erotic, sexual relationships that often were long term and were characterized by an intense, often vehement emotional devotion between two men. Despite the fact that these relations included homosex,[21] they were not perceived as erotic or (homo)sexual. In addition, the 'masculine' men who were the subjects of these relationships were not identified as *poustides/adelfes*[22] but as *andres* or rather as *poniroi*. *Poniros*,[23] a term generally used for the men having homosex, is a man with 'manly' appearance who 'understands', i.e. intuits, the implicit erotic character of an explicit non-sexual communication, a meeting between two men. In this way, a *poniros* 'understands' that another man is susceptible to his erotic advances and the reverse: the other man 'understands' that someone is making erotic advances and responds to them. *Poniros* refers only to men who present a manly appearance and not to the 'effeminate' ones, since the appearance of the latter would make male communication sexual. However, *poniros* can be active or passive but always 'masculine'. Therefore, the term includes *andres* and *adelfes* as well. The majority of *adelfes* were of a conventional masculine appearance since only a small portion of courageous queer men were 'effeminate' in appearance. It is important to note that 'effeminacy' had a different meaning from what we mean nowadays. As we will see in the following section, it seems that 'effeminacy' was not a lifetime performance due to an 'inclination' but was performed by the actors according to the sexual and social context.

## Class/gendered differences, male body and desire

During the first three postwar decades, Athens had the biggest growth of its population due to the migration of workers from rural areas. In the postwar period, the urban agglomeration of Athens represented the 43.3 per cent of the total Greek population with migrants populating 56 per cent of the city.[24] The majority of these migrants worked as specialized or unspecialized manual labourers (for example, as construction workers) and represented the 11.7 per cent of the migrant population.[25] According to David Close, half of the population in Athens and Thessaloniki was working class.[26] These ex-peasant workers were living in conditions of poverty. Even in 1974, 31 per cent of the households in Greece were living below the poverty line while in Athens, 57 per cent of the households had three or four people living in one room which was considered their home.[27]

Working-class men, especially construction workers, *betatzides*, peasants who visited, or were soldiers in Athens, known as *laika tekna* – i.e. young working-class studs – originated either from rural areas or Athens and were a significant portion of the men who participated in sexual encounters with other men. This participation was validated socially by their gendered/sexual performance as *andres* and their state of *kavla.*[28] Their 'physical' sexual needs could be satisfied or, better yet, relieved, only by *adelfes* because of the scarcity of premarital sexual encounters with women. The taboo loss of virginity for unmarried women was widespread in the villages[29] and was strong especially among the immigrants from rural areas and the working-class neighbourhoods of Athens, even in the early 1970s.[30]

The *adelfes*, the erotic partners of *andres,* were usually men who worked in sedentary white-collar occupations. This class difference was interpreted as a gender difference,[31] because the white-collar occupations were considered womanlike compared with physical labour.[32] In her study, Dimitra Lambropoulou notes that construction workers who were living in Athens in the 1960s participated in a male culture of pride at the core of which was the robustness of the body.[33] The possibility of a male body being damaged or injured due to physical labour is what distinguishes male from female bodies. *Betatzides* would often exhibit their naked upper bodies by taking off their shirts in their political demonstrations.[34] The robust bodies of the working men were the focal point of desire for middle-class queer men. The literature of writers who lived their homosexuality from the 1950s to the 1970s and middle-class homosexual research participants describe the masculinity of working men and peasant men as 'natural', 'spontaneous', 'tough'.[35] The beauty of these *andres* was considered the outcome of a life of difficulties and material deprivation – poverty. In a collection of men's photos taken in 1950s and 1960s by the homosexual intellectual Thanos Velloudios (1895–1992) and the editor and poet Yorgos Chronas there was an exaltation of the 'naturalness' of the photographed male naked bodies, the 'Greek statues' as the latter would call them, noting that – contrary to the contemporary fat and ill bodies of affluence – these bodies were the outcome of poverty, of malnutrition, due to a diet consisting of 'potatoes, bread and beans, legumes'.[36] In other words, deprivation of material, consumer goods leads to a 'natural' masculinity in the same way as sexual deprivation accentuates the 'natural' male instinct *kavla*. According

to this perception, the 'natural' masculinity is rather a matter of the soul than of the body. The testimonial of Miltos, a seventy-year-old university professor, sheds light on the contrast between the contemporary male body and the 'natural' masculinity of the past, noting that the latter reflected the soul and adding that this difference is between body and flesh. Yorgos Ioannou, a well-known writer (1927–85) also notes: 'And the beauty is a matter of the soul and not only of the body. And, unfortunately, it presupposes a hardened soul'.[37]

Consequently, the *poniroi* middle-class intellectuals rejected the beautification, the care of the body which included wearing fancy clothes and using cosmetics, because these spoiled the peasant and working-class 'authentic' masculinity. Christianopoulos, in his poem entitled 'To a working-class friend', writes:

Please don't wear perfume.
I like the odor of your body.
There's no perfume lovelier than your sweat.
I want to savour the saltiness of your chest,
to drink in the fragrance of your armpits,
to soak myself in the moisture of your loins.

Please don't wear perfume.
Why are you in such a hurry to forget your village and auto repair shop?
What do you want with perfumed soap?
They will treacherously wreck your virility.

Please don't wear perfume.
It was all I could do to find a man among all these pansies.
So remain what you are:
an unspoiled working-class boy.[38]

As for perfume, Andreas, a seventy-two-year-old Greek-American businessman, recalls that in the late 1960s he brought as a gift a perfume for a middle-class *poniros,* owner of a bar in which many Athenian *poniroi* hung out. He looked at the gift with disgust – as if it was a 'bag of shit', Andreas characteristically says – and of course never used it. In general, perfumes were not considered as compatible with masculinity but as a sign of bourgeois elegance[39] and, therefore, of 'effeminacy'. The only perfume that existed from the 1960s and was used by all family members was the cologne 'Myrto' which was made in Greece.

As for clothing, only the military uniform was considered, exalted, by my *poniroi* interlocutors and intellectuals in their writings and paintings[40] as a 'masculine' accessory. But perhaps due to its compulsory character, the military uniform was not perceived as an 'accessory' but rather as a cloth that reflected and highlighted the toughness and aggressiveness of peasants and working-class soldiers. Moreover, the military uniform constituted a component, a constitutive element of masculinity and, consequently, of the

desire of middle-class *poniroi* towards lower-class young studs, *tekna.*[41] Matt Houlbrook reflects on the relationships between 'men' and 'queans' in London from 1918 to 1957 by stating that 'rather than being erased by sexual desire, class difference *actuated* that desire, eroticized in almost gendered terms'.[42]

However, the majority of *adelfes* had a more or less conventional masculine appearance, at least for the most part of their everyday life. Yannis, a seventy-year-old actor, recalls that the hippy look spread throughout Athens in the 1970s, with a lot of young men wearing bell-bottom trousers and tunics – i.e. embroidered shirts with soft patterns. Both a*delfes* and *andres* wore bell-bottoms and tunics but *adelfes* were distinguished from *andres* by the fact that the bell-like shape of the trousers was a little wider and the tunic hung out of the trousers, while *men* tucked it into their trousers. In other words, *adelfes* 'reworked rather [than] rejected' the conventional masculine appearance.[43] Their dress code and attitude were more eccentric rather than effeminate. Kostas was the legendary barman of a bar in which *poniroi* hung out in the 1970s. Although he was called and was known by his eccentric, 'feminine' nick-name *i*,[44] 'Tsin-Tsin', my interlocutors were impressed by the fact that he would have two cigarettes in his mouth which he smoked simultaneously. Moreover, he wore a shirt that had two different types of sleeve. In addition, 'Tsin-Tsin' and the majority of *adelfes* seemed to exhibit their eccentricity/'effeminacy' in the moments and places of their encounters with *andres*[45] and lived as 'masculine', 'normal' men the rest of their life. This happened also in the cases of more 'effeminate', 'open', publicly recognized *adelfes,* which is close to what is now considered to be the prevailing perception regarding transvestites. My interlocutors remember that these *adelfes* wore wigs and make-up and used inflated preservatives as substitutes for female breasts. ?ne of these seems to be the famous *fterou,* a man who sold plumes for dusting (*ftera*) in the streets of the centre of Athens saying loudly in an effeminate manner '*ftera, ftera*' (plumes).

## Sexual and consumer pleasures in all-male public places

When asking my *poniroi* intrelocutors to mention which were the specific places where they met their sexual partners they start naming some but after a while all said: 'Everywhere!' Andreas – who represents some of my interlocutors who were born and had lived in a Western society such as the USA where they could meet a sexual partner only in the specifically 'gay' places – was impressed and excited when he first came to Athens in 1968 by the 'total freedom', as he perceived it, of homosexual encounters.

In Athens, from the 1950s to 1970s, a man could meet a male sexual partner in almost all public spaces. Even the most central streets of Athens such as Stadiou, were ideal places for erotic encounters between men. Strolling in Stadiou, exchanging glances with other men, a *poniros* could easily start a sexual encounter because many, especially lower-class, men responded to his erotic advances. The same happened in central places such as Syntagma and Omonia but also on the buses or even at political, public gatherings. This diffusion in space of male-to-male sexual encounters is connected to the fact that almost

all public places were male-dominated except for upper-class neighbourhoods such as Kolonaki. Women, especially the unmarried ones, were restricted when going out in public if they were not accompanied by a man, or better yet a relative.[46] This restriction was due to the surveillance of female chastity. So, the women's exclusion and the all-male character of public spaces was accentuated in areas where only men, or mostly lower-class men hanged out. These were the male urinals in several central areas in Athens (Syntagma, Omonia, Kotzia, Kannigos), the big parks in Athens such as the National Park, Zappio and Pedio Areos at night, as well as cinemas. The latter were mainly cinemas near Omonia where most lower-class men would hang out. During the 1950s and 1960s cinemas were very popular and were considered as places of corruption and moral danger for the youth who went to watch films that were officially labelled as inappropriate (*akatallila)* for minors.[47] This moral danger included homosexuality. As Efi Avdela notes, there are many cases recorded in the reports of juvenile probation officers of minors who were persecuted for having sexual encounters with older men in such places. My interlocutors note that it was in the 1950s that many *kolomparades* approached and had sexual encounters with minors. These cinemas usually showed films with cowboys and in the 1970s soft and hardcore porn films called *tsontes*.[48] Also, the all-male cafes (*kafeneia)* and *tavernes*, especially in Omonia Square but also near military barracks in which soldiers[49] would hang out, were places of the *poniroi*'s erotic encounters. A considerable part of these encounters were taking the form of a sexual economic exchange. *Andres* offered their 'masculine' sexual favours not so much for money but usually for consumer goods offered by the middle-class *adelfes*. Even the small amount of money given in some cases to *tekna* was called *hartziliki*[50] or *doraki* – i.e. a small gift. In the majority of the relationships, *adelfi* usually offered a dinner or a lunch, food and drink in a taverna, a treat (*kerasma*), or even a bath in a house.[51] The more affluent *adelfes* offered clothes, watches and other material goods. Andreas remembers that in the late 1960s he and other American gay tourists[52] offered American cigarettes such as Marlboro that were not sold in Greece or were very expensive. The appearance of a well-dressed man, especially in the Western manner, attracted lower-class studs. 'They were stopping me in the middle of the street to ask me where I bought my shoes' recalls Andreas. All the aforementioned suggest that working men were interested in consumer goods and that new modes of distraction such as going to cinemas became very popular among youth in the 1960s. As the reports of the juvenile probation officers suggest, many minors committed misdemeanours such as robbery or panhandling for fulfilling their desire to acquire such goods.[53] In his study on consumption from 1960 to 1975, Vassilis Karapostolis argues that the working-class population would not tolerate any more its material deprivation and had consumerist aspirations.[54] Despite the fact that part of population did not manage to achieve a social ascendance through change of profession (for instance by becoming civil servants), social mobility through consumption and consumerist mobility were espoused by all. Nevertheless, according to Close it was only after the early 1970s that the results of this mobility and overall economic growth were evident.[55] Karapostolis notes that – due to economic uncertainty – the working classes was deprived of consumerist mobility, at least concerning luxury goods.[56] In addition,

my interlocutors emphasized the poverty that existed mainly within the working classes in the 1960s and even in the early 1970s. When asked to describe his long walks in the centre of Athens while cruising for a*ndres* Yannis stated: 'that's why we were doing all these walks because we were penniless'. Not only for Yannis, who was a beginner actor at the time, but even more for the working-class men and soldiers, strolling – in Omonia, the National Garden or Syntagma – was their main distraction. However, it seems that consumption patterns were changing even among working-class men. In this way – as Schofield notes for the commercial homosex in 1950s' London – sexual pleasure and the material, consumer goods offered by *adelfes* constituted a way into a world of consumerist pleasures.[57]

Nevertheless, offers of material goods made by *adelfes* were not, at least in all cases, the necessary sine qua non condition for having an erotic relationship with a working-class *tekno*. Or, the latter – according to the male code of reciprocity between male friends – compensated for the offer in the degree he could afford it, especially when the relationship was not limited to a pure sexual encounter but had sentimental dimensions.[58] While describing his first encounter with a young peasant man doing his military service in the navy, Andreas emphasizes that he was a 'sweet boy': 'he had his pride, he wanted to pay the tickets of the tram, he was very sorry when I left him to go to the islands'. As mentioned, the sexual encounter between an *andras* and an *adelfi* could change into a sentimental attachment taking the form of a friendship between men. In other words, middle-class but also working-class *poniroi* men exploited and reworked the affective ties and the sensuality of male homosociality. In this way, they created homoerotic bonds diffused into male public space.

## The emergence of new, modern, Western conceptualizations of gender and sexuality

From the end of the 1970s onwards, modern, Western conceptualizations of homosexuality and of sexual identity gradually emerged on a broader scale. More specifically, although the gendered categories of *andras* and *adelfi/poustis* continued to coexist with the modern ones, men were divided into 'homosexual/gays' and 'heterosexual/straights'.[59] In other words, the sexual behaviour and identity of a man was conceptualized based on his choice of sex partner and not on the gender to which he considered he belonged. Moreover, *sexoualikotita* – i.e. sexuality, a Western neologism – became the main subject of daily discussions after being perceived not only as a sexual male need, or a necessity for reproduction, but as a constitutive element of the self and personal happiness.[60] The most prominent form of expression of 'sexuality' was the couple, even outside of marriage. This emergence of the 'couple' as a preferential place for sentimental expression is directly connected to the decline, or even destruction, of homosociality. There was a shift in sentiment/tenderness from homosociality to forming couples; a privatization, as I call it, of tenderness in the modern Greek society.[61] The new ideal of couple was also prevalent among 'homosexuals/gays'.[62]

## Shift in masculine desires and new consumerist masculinities

The new distinction between heterosexual/homosexual gradually spread within the working class and is connected with the withdrawal of young working-class studs from sexual encounters with *adelfes.* In the 1980s, these *tekna* were replaced with young immigrants from the Balkans – e.g. Albanians – who were arriving in Greece at that time. More specifically, if a young man responded to the sexual advances of an *adelfi*, or even worse was looking for homosex, he would be considered as, and therefore stigmatized as, 'homosexual'; a category which at that time also included a man having an active role in homosexual intercourse. Moreover – despite the fact that *kavla* remained a valid cultural category – it could no longer justify the participation in homosex. This was due to the fact that young women could have premarital sexual relationships as long as these took place in the context of 'serious' (i.e. emotional and stable) relationships. In other words, sentimentality replaced the taboo of the loss of virginity, which in turn enabled young women to have premarital sexual intercourse.[63] This tolerance towards the premarital sexual activity of women has often been exaggerated and viewed negatively, mainly by older Greeks, as a sexual liberation. Thus, it is supposedly more probable for young men to have heterosexual intercourse. In addition, the new widespread normative ideals of the tenderness and the couple set the rules for the expression of masculinity. In order to attract women, young heterosexual men ought to present themselves as possessing a 'softer' masculinity – i.e. sentimental, 'well-mannered', 'civilized'. The heterosexual man who expresses a hypersexual, aggressive, tough masculinity is considered and, therefore, degraded, as ravenous and backward. In the 1990s, the sexual aggressiveness that was caused by sexual deprivation was no longer considered a characteristic of the Greek man but of young immigrants (such as young Albanians). Consequently, a sexual encounter with an *adelfi* would be a sign of a sexual deprivation which was perceived as a characteristic of an impoverished Greek past, or of other, arguably backward, societies.

In addition, the offers of material and consumer goods made by an *adelfi* in the 1960s and even 1970s would now leave peasants and working-class young men utterly indifferent. In the 1980s, Andreas told of another Greek-American gay who came to Greece with a lot of packs of American cigarettes (as he himself used to do in the past) so as to entice working-class studs to have casual sexual encounters with him. This man returned to the US with his baggage still full of packs of cigarettes as he did not manage to give any away. Apart from the fact that young men could by then buy American cigarettes, offers of material, consumer goods could be perceived as degrading, portraying them as impoverished and challenging their potential upward social and, especially, consumerist mobility.

According to Close, there was a considerable improvement in the Greek standard of living during the 1980s due to the increase of salaries, social protection benefits, social services and the funding of agricultural products by the European Union, despite unemployment and socioeconomic inequalities.[64] This social mobility and ascendance was expressed mainly through consumption.

In this context, labour was no longer considered as prestigious, even among working-class young men. In Perama – a working-class neighbourhood of Piraeus where I conducted part of my fieldwork in the 1990s – a lot of young men refused to work in the dockyard even if some of them were unemployed. They were keen to buy motorcycles, cars, clothes, and wear gold bracelets on their neck or hands even when playing football. These consumerist practices were connected with a new widespread model of the man who was professionally successful, consuming ostentatiously and paying attention to his appearance.[65] Even if professional success was not achieved, a lot of young men would spend a considerable amount of money from their salary, or mainly their *hartziliki* given that this time it was not from *adelfes* but from their parents, on buying motorcycles, clothes, accessories, gadgets and for their entertainment. My young interlocutors in Perama considered these accessories of the new masculinity as necessary for seducing girls. Consequently, robust 'natural' masculine physical appearance shaped by labour was no longer valued as a source of male pride because it embodied deprivation. Young men were exhibiting their social ascendance and status by taking care of their bodies and appearance mainly by the selection of clothes, adornments, accessories, cosmetics and workout sessions in the gyms. From the 1980s onwards, gyms were in most neighbourhoods of Athens and became very popular among young men who engaged in muscle training.[66] Shopping and wearing clothes of well-known brands became very popular even among young men who could not afford them but who would save up money to buy them.[67] Perfumes and cosmetics were no longer considered as a sign of effeminacy; from the mid-1980s onwards, cosmetics for men were made available on the Greek market.[68] This commodification of the male body was perceived by the old generation of *adelfes*, *poniroi*, as a decline of masculinity; a feminization of contemporary young men. Contrary to the 'natural' body of the past, this new masculine body was perceived as 'fake, raw, sweat less, artificial'.[69] Moreover, the military uniform – the erotic fetish of old *adelfes* – was not worn by soldiers in public (since around the mid-1980s soldiers were allowed to wear their civilian clothing). In addition, the uniform that was worn when one was granted a pass, or was taking leave of absence from the barracks changed in order to become more comfortable. This change of the uniform has been interpreted as a loss of masculinity.[70] In other words, not only was the desire of *tekna* taken away from *adelfes* but also that of the older *adelfes*. This split of old *poniroi* and new *tekna* desire strengthens the distinction between male heterosexuality and homosexuality. This also happened among the new homosexual men: the desire of the new middle-class *gays* was directed towards other gay men since gays were considered as masculine as heterosexual/straight men. The emergence of this new gay masculinity was connected, among other things, to the emergence of a commodified masculinity. Weston analyses gender performance based on Benjamin's classic study on art and mechanical reproduction.[71] According to Benjamin, mechanical reproduction erodes the meaningfulness and prestige of the original. The exhibition value of the copies of works of art comes to override the value placed on uniqueness. In a similar way, people in the age of mechanical reproduction – from the Harley to cummerbund to the gold lamé – gender themselves as copies of former copies through a pronounced reliance on

machine-produced goods that are reproductions themselves. In the same way, once the meaningfulness and prestige of the 'authentic' male body shaped 'naturally' by physical labour had been eroded, all Greek men could gender themselves as masculine copies relying on machine-produced masculine goods. In other words, the emergence of a new 'artificial', made by clothes, masculine accessories, physical activity in the gyms[72] and weight-loss programmes, allowed middle-class gay men to become masculine in the same way as heterosexual men. In March 1988, in an article entitled 'Hymn to the Boot' that was published in the gay magazine *Pothos* (desire/lust) edited by a gay political group in Thessaloniki – which was in turn inspired by Salonician Christianopoulos' homonymous poem[73] – the writer concludes with the following: 'The contemporary tough gays, with muscled arms, shaved heads, military boots, tattoo, piercings and aggressive glances, are overwhelming with masculinity. Nevertheless, in contrast to the unaware *tsolia*,[74] they are fully aware that they constitute drag queens- from the opposite side.'

## Heterosocial and homosexual/'gay' places

The destruction of male homosociality was connected directly with the gradual disappearance of homosocial places. The all-male places *kafeneia* were seen by modern young people as obsolete and were degraded as lower-class places. Urinals in central squares of Athens were demolished when these squares were gentrified in the 1980s. Cinemas near Omonia no longer attracted young working-class men since television and videotapes became very popular in the 1980s. As Panayis Panayiotopoulos notes, the popularity of movie rentals viewed at home was connected with the transformation of the home into a place of consumerist and individual pleasures for each family member.[75] So, in the context of general privatization of sexual and consumerist pleasures – since the projection of hardcore porn movies in cinemas but also the circulation of videocassettes containing such movies were permitted in the 1980s – many young working-class men were renting and watching *tsontes*.[76] For these men, strolling around the central squares, parks and streets of Athens became meaningless. They preferred to hang out in *kafeteries* – i.e. the modern cafes that replaced the *kafeneia* first in the big cities (1970s) and then in all of Greece (1980s), or later in the evening – and after dressing up – to drink and dance in discos (popular in the 1980s) and in bars (mostly from the 1990s onwards).[77] *Kafeteries*, discos and bars were places of a mixed, heterosexual sociability where young men and women could meet and mainly, as Jane Cowan puts it, 'show who they are by spending and consuming'.[78] If the heterosexual young men and women preferred to go to modern, sophisticated heterosocial[79] leisure places, their gay counterparts had their own modern, Western leisure places to hang out in; the gay bars.[80], [81] One such place was the legendary bar 'Mykonos' that was considered by many of my interlocutors as the first Greek 'gay' bar. Mykonos opened during the dictatorship (in 1969) in the neighbourhood of Plaka; its owners and bartenders were two friends, a man and a woman, Alekos and Nora. Mykonos – despite the majority of its clientele being queer, *poniroi* men and the

connotations of its name[82] – was not identified as a 'gay bar' at least in the contemporary, Western sense of the term. In his interview, Alekos focuses more on the famous international artistic clientele and the Cycladic and also European aesthetic of his bar rather than its 'gay' character. Besides, he himself was at the time a *poniros*, having both heterosexual and homosexual relationships. In 1979 Alekos moved his bar to Kolonaki under the name 'Alekos' Island'. This new bar was like a typical Euro-American gay-bar[83] in which the first Greek 'gay clones'[84] appeared. The gay bars that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s were either in cosmopolitan, tourist neighbourhoods – e.g. Plaka, Makriyianni, Thisio, or in the upper-class ones such as Kolonaki. In the early 2000s, Alekos closed down Alekos Island and opened a new bar near the new gay neighbourhood, the so-called 'gay village' of Gazi. This new bar was a commercial failure and was also closed down.

## Anti-conclusion

From the 1950s to the 1970s, a significant world of male to male sexual, erotic relationships existed in Athens and generally in Greece. This diffused 'homosexuality' refutes the widespread perception that – prior to the advancement of gay liberation in Greece – there was only oppression, culpability, almost the 'inexistence' of homosexual relationships, especially among the Greek gays who lived their homosexuality from mid-1970s onwards. According to this hegemonic perception, the mid-1970s and the 1980s were the turning point of a linear evolution from an era of murkiness to the luminous years of gay liberation. On the other hand, *poniroi* intellectuals, more or less, severely criticized the ascendance of 'Western' gay culture in Greece and were opposed to the 'new gay'.[85] Many of these criticisms were focused on the distinction heterosexual/homosexual, commercial 'Western' gay 'ghetto' and grieved, as we have seen, the commodification of Greek masculinity. Nonetheless, this decline of the old *poniroi*'s culture was the result of broader and more complex shifts concerning gender, sexuality and the entire Greek economy and society. Nowadays, new 'queer', anarchist and far Left groups make criticisms which resonate with those of *poniroi* – about the commercialization of gay culture and the 'nonetheless-political' character of the LGBT 'Athens Pride'. Nevertheless, at the time of AKOE and the magazine *AMFI*[86] the number of its members was very limited and only very few gays would participate in its demonstrations. Following a broader Leftist cultural attitude at that time, militants of AKOE who adopted an 'alternative' style of clothing mainly listened to rock music or songs of Manos Hadjidakis[87] and distanced themselves from, abstained from going to, the commercial gay discotheques where disco music was played.[88] Only decades later was the gap between gay militants and the commercial gay world bridged, with many gay bars serving as sponsors and participating in 'Athens Pride', which thousands of young gays and lesbians attended. I – by no means – suggest that there is a straightforward causal link between commercialization and the expansion of gay community but, certainly, the growth of a visible gay community corresponds with the visibility of gays and lesbians in a growing

gay commercial world. However, as Pellegrini points out, lesbian, gay, but also heterosexual, identities have always been marked from capitalism: 'So what? This [i.e. the relay capital-identity-community] is not the end of politics homosexual, queer, or otherwise, but among its operating conditions and constraints [. . . .] the commodification [. . .] may actually constitute the starting point for contemporary lesbian and gay politics.'[89]

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## Notes

1. Eurocommunism was a political tendency dominant in several Western European communist parties, especially the Italian one. Eurocommunist parties criticized the Soviet model of communism and were in search of a democratic and national path to socialism. It was given official currency by the Secretary-General of the Spanish Communists, Santiago Carillo, in his 1977 essay 'Eurocommunism and the State'. The 'Communist Party of the Interior' was created in 1968 after the split of the Communist Party of Greece and endorsed Eurocommunism in the 1970s.
2. The stable heterosexual couple was the framework of 'normal' and 'healthy' sexual relationships and was promoted by Communist Youth of Greece affiliated with the Communist Party of Greece. See Nikolaos Papadogiannis, 'Between Angelopoulos and the Battleship Potemkin: cinema and the making of young communists in Greece in the initial post-dictatorship period (1974–81)', *European History Quarterly* 42.2, 2012, 296.
3. Yannis Voulgaris, *I Ellada tis Metapolitefsis, 1974–1990. Statheri Dimokratia Simademeni apo ti Metapolemiki Istoria* (Athens: Themelio, 2001), 126–8.
4. In the late 1970s and early 1980s.
5. Loukas Theodorakopoulos, *Kaiadas. Chronicle of a Siege* (Athens: Eksantas, 1976), 42, 55.
6. The book was published two years after the fall of the dictatorship and its subtitle 'chronicle of a siege' was a reference to the famous movie of the Leftist director Costas Gavras, *State of a Siege* (1973).
7. About the spatial and material turn, see, for instance: Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Anthropos, D., 2000); Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies. The reassertion of space in critical social theory* (London, New York: Verso, 1989); Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).
8. Daniel Miller, 'Consumption' in Eleanna Yalouri (ed.), *Ylikos Politismos. I anthropologia sti chora ton pragmaton* (Athens: Alexandria, 2012), 319–53.
9. Dinos Christianopoulos, *The Naked Piazza* (translated by Kostis N., Peania: Bilieto Publications, 2000), 4.

10. I use the term 'queer' in the sense of all erotic and affective ties between men and all men who engaged in such interactions. See Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London. Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918–1957* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2005).
11. Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 265.
12. For the 'continuum between homosocial and homosexual' and the 'male homosocial desire' see Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky, *Between Men. English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).
13. I conducted my first research for my doctoral dissertation between 1990 and 1992 and I have continued the research specifically on male homosexualities of the 1950s to the 1970s from 2013 onwards. See Kostas Yannacopoulos, *Jeux du désir, jeux du pouvoir: corps, émotions et identité sexuelle des hommes au Pirée et à Athènes* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1995).
14. Tzvetan Todorov, 'Fictions et vérités', *L'Homme* 1989, 111–12, 7–33.
15. Kostas Yannakopoulos, 'Amis ou amants? Amours entre hommes et identités sexuelles au Pirée et à Athènes', *Terrain* 27, 1996, 59–70.
16. Another term used broadly in the 1950s and 1960s instead of *poustis* was *toioutos* (someone of this kind) a term of the archaic language *katharevousa*.
17. *Andras*, in plural.
18. Kostas Yannakopoulos, 'Corps érotique masculin et identités sexuelles au Pirée et a Athènes', *Gradhiva* 23, 1998, 101–8.
19. M.-E. Handman, *La violence et la ruse. Hommes et femmes dans un village grec* (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1983); Renée Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe. The Social Life of Asian Minor Refugees in Piraeus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).
20. Yannakopoulos, 'Amis ou amants?'
21. Homosex: I use this term in the sense of 'an amalgam . . . [that] indicates sexual activities of various sorts between two males'. See: Houlbrook, *Queer London*.
22. *Poustis*, *adelfi* in plural.
23. *Poniros* in singular; *poniroi* in plural, means cunning.
24. Bernard Kayser, Anthropogeografia tis Elladas, translated by T. Tsaveas and M. Meraklis (Athens: EKKE, 1968), 115; Dimitra Lambropoulou, *Construction Workers. The People Who Built Athens 1950–1967* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2009), 20–1.
25. Lambropoulou, *Oikodomoi*, 20–1.
26. David Close, *Ellada 1945–2004* (translated by Y. Mertikas, Thessaloniki: Thyrathen, 2005), 121.
27. Ibid.
28. This 'masculine' gendered/sexual performance was demonstrated mainly in public. According to my interlocutors, in private sexual encounters the gendered/sexual performance of *andres* was more fluid and included even the 'passive' role when having coitus.
29. Handman, *La violence*.
30. Hirschon, *Heirs*.
31. In addition to class difference, age difference was also a constitutive element of these relationships. In some relationships *adelfes* were older than *tekna*. The age difference was the principal constitutive element in the relationships between *kolomparades* and even minors. In these relationships *kolomparades* were masculine, *andres*, and active regarding their role in

sexual intercourse. The figure of *kolomparas* (in singular) and the danger he presented was also widespread in provincial cities and villages. Many parents gave warnings to their young boys on how to avoid the advances of *kolomparades*.

32. See note 12.
33. Lambropoulou, *Oikodomoi*, 228–9.
34. Lambropoulou, personal communication.
35. Christianopoulos, *The Naked Piazza*; Yorgos Ioannou, *The Trapdoor* (Athens: Kedros, 1989).
36. Yorgos Chronas, 'Some words for the naturalness of postures,' in Yorgos Chronas, *Greek Statues. Photos of Men 1950–1960* (Athens: Odos Panos, 1992), 6.
37. Ioannou, *The Trapdoor*, 180.
38. Christianopoulos, *The Naked Piazza*, 73.
39. In the poem cited above, dedicated to a 'working-class friend', Christianopoulos uses the term *floroi* (translated as 'pancies' by N. Kostis) to describe men who use perfumes. *Floros* (in singular) means mainly the bourgeois mannered and well dressed, elegant man and, therefore, the effeminate. In other words, it is the bourgeois – sometimes, excessive – elegance that constitutes *floros* as 'effeminate'. In addition, *floros* might be someone who has sexual relationships only with women without, nevertheless being considered as a*ndras*.
40. Such paintings depicting soldiers and young working-class men are those of Yannis Tsarouhis (1910–89) who is one the most well-known Greek painters and set designers.
41. The military uniform as a component of this desire is very well depicted in the poem of Christianopoulos 'Laces and Elastic Bands' and 'Hymn to a Boot'. Christianopoulos, *The Naked Piazza*, 58–9 and 20–1.
42. Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 211.
43. Ibid, 146.
44. '*i*' represents a version of the gender specific article 'the', (η), in Greek.
45. Yannis says that there were doubts if Tsin-Tsin was a 'real' *adelfi* – i.e. that he had sexual relationships with men. Besides, according to Yannis, Tsin-Tsin was married.
46. Efi Avdela, '"*Neoi en kindyno*"': *Epitirisi, anamorfosi kai dikaiosyni anilikon meta ton polemo* (Athens: Polis, 2013), 310.
47. Ibid.
48. These films were called *tsontes* (*tsonta* in singular) which refers to a small piece of a larger item. So, *tsonta* was a scene of heterosexual intercourse which included penetration and which interrupted the projection of a soft, often Greek, porn film. This scene was usually from another movie.
49. It is not by change that the photos of Velloudios depicted naked soldiers. Velloudios was a high ranking officer, one of the first pilots of military aircraft, and so he had free access to the barracks. Among soldiers *tsoliades/euzonoi* – i.e. an elite unit of Greek army, guards of the king and later of the president of republic, were known as sexual partners of *adelfes*.
50. *Hartziliki* is an amount of money given for buying something; it could be translated as pocket money.
51. The bath seems to be very significant given that in 1964 only 35 per cent of urban households in all Greece had running water. See Avdela, *'Neoi'*, 291.
52. Andreas came for the first time in Athens with a gay 'tour'. Gay Americans often travelled in groups to Athens and the Greek islands because they had read in American homosexual

magazines that they could easily find sexual partners who were masculine, handsome young Greeks, the 'Greek Gods'. On their part, local young men in the islands – as soon as they learned that the homosexual Americans had arrived – would go to the places where Americans would hang out, to meet them.

53. Avdela, '*Neoi*'.
54. Vassilis Karapostolis, *Katanalotiki Symperifora sti Neoelliniki Koinonia, 1960–1975* (Athens: EKKE, 1983).
55. Close, *Ellada 1945–2004*.
56. Karapostolis, *Katanalotiki*, 279.
57. Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 177.
59. Evthymios Papataxiarchis, 'Friends of the heart: male commensal solidarity, gender and kinship in Aegean Greece', in Peter Loizos and Evthymios Papataxiarchis (eds), *Contested Identities. Gender and Kinship in Modern Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 156–79.
59. The term 'gay' – and to a lesser degree the term 'straight' – were used broadly from the late 1980s onwards.
60. Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité 1. La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).
61. Yannacopoulos, *Jeux du désir*.
62. Kostas Yannakopoulos, 'Cultural meanings of loneliness: kinship, sexuality and (homo)sexual identity in contemporary Greece', *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 18.2, 2010, 265–82.
63. At the same time the eroticization of sentimentality renders the expression of tenderness, sensuality between men, suspect of 'homosexuality'.
64. Close, *Ellada*, 304.
65. This model was promoted by the media magazines addressing a masculine, mainly middle-class readership, which were published from the mid-1980s onwards. See Panagiotis Zestanakis, 'Ekdoches tou andrismou sta ellinika lifestyle entypa tis dekaetias tou '80: Playboy, Status, Klik (1985–1990)' (unpublished postgraduate diploma, Rethymno, University of Crete, 2008).
66. Vassilis Vamvakas and Yiannis Karayannis, 'Gymnastiki. I narkisistiki epimeleia tou somatos', in Vassilis Vamvakas and Panayis Panayiotopoulos (eds), *I Ellada sti dekaetia tou '80. Koinoniko, politkco kai politismiko lexiko* (Athens: To perasma, 2010), 93–5.
67. Vassilis Vamvakas and Tatiana Michailidou, 'Endymatologikoi kodikes. Ekdimokratismos tou styl kai apotheosi tis markas', in Vassilis Vamvakas and Panayis Panayiotopoulos, *I Ellada*, 187–90.
68. Zestanakis, 'Ekdoches', 125–7.
69. Ioannou, *The Trapdoor*, 180.
70. Christianopoulos, *The Naked Piazza*, 44–5.
71. K. Weston, *Gender in Real Time. Power and Transience in a Visual Age* (New York, London: Routledge, 2002), 86–7; Walter Benjamin, 'L'Oeuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproductibilité technique' (dernière version de 1939), in Walter Benjamin, *Oeuvres III* (Paris: Gallimard (folio), 2000).
72. From the mid-1980s and onwards gyms become very popular among young homosexual men.
73. 'Hymn to a Boot' in Christianopoulos 2000. In this poem Christianopoulos considers that only tough, 'natural' young *andres* should wear boots.

74. *Tsolia* in the homosexual slang are the *tekna* who are violent towards the *adelfes,* stealing from them, beating or even killing them.
75. Panayis Panayiotopoulos, 'Gia tin ereyna tis oikiakis katanalosis kai tin optikoakoustiki koultoura stin Ellada tou '80. Prologikes skepseis se mia simantiki meleti', in Orsalia-Eleni Kassaveti, *I elliniki videotainia (1985–1990)* (Athens: Asini, 2014), 8–10.
76. The term *tsonta* lost its initial meaning. It is now used to describe a hardcore porn movie.
77. Jane Cowan, 'Going out for coffee? Contesting the grounds of gendered pleasures in everyday sociability' in Loizos, Papataxiarchis (eds.), *Contested Identities*, 190.
78. Ibid, 202.
79. By the term 'heterosocial' I mean the sociability, sexual and non-sexual, between male and female individuals.
80. Except for the bars where the majority of their clientele are gays and lesbians, there are also heterosocial, apparently 'hetetosexual', leisure spaces known as 'gay-friendly'. In these spaces men and women self-identified as gays/lesbians or with more fluid sexual identity can create enclaves of homosexual encounters and sociability. Such a place is described in Kirtsoglou's study regarding female homosexual relationships in a Greek provincial town in the late 90s. In the provincial towns, except for some concrete open-air places, these bars and cafes are the only leisure places where queers can meet each other without being stigmatized as 'homosexuals'. See Elisabeth Kirtsoglou, *For the Love of Women. Gender, Identity and Same-Sex Relations in a Greek Provincial Town* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004).
81. The emergence of these gay leisure places does not contradict the shift in sentiment, tenderness, from homosociality in a couple, a privatization of tenderness, mentioned above. In agreement with Houlbrook, I regard these places as semi-private, in the sense of becoming physically separated from the sites of 'normal' urban life and being marginalized in comparison with the 'straight' places. See Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 270.
82. At the time and especially in the 1970s the Cycladic island of Mykonos was already known as a tourist destination for gay men. See P. Bousiou, *The Nomads of Mykonos* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008).
83. This spatial transformation was accompanied by a change in the erotic life of Alekos. From 1973 he stopped having heterosexual relationships and started having a stable, long-term relationship with a French man.
84. 'Clone' is a term in gay slang that was widespread in the USA during the 1970s, and described the homosexual man who appeared in dress and style as an idealized version of the working-class man.
85. Yannacopoulos, *Jeux du désir*.
86. In the period from 1978 to 1984 in which AKOE and *AMFI* flourished see Kostas Yannakopoulos, 'Omofylofiliko kinima,' in Vamvakas, Panayiotopoulos, *I Ellada*.
87. Manos Hadjidakis (1925–94) was a famous Greek composer who mixed classical with folk music and belonged to the generation of *poniroi* intellectuals.
88. Nikolaos Papadogiannis, 'Greek communist youth identities and rock music in the late 1970s,' in Timothy Brown and Lorena Anton (eds), *Between the Avant Garde and the Everyday: Subversive Politics in Europe from 1957 to the Present* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books), 77–91.
89. Ann Pellegrini, 'Commodity capitalism and transformations in gay identity.' in Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin F. Manalansan IV (eds), *Queer Globalizations. Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 141.