

Institution: University of Oxford		
Unit of Assessment: 26A – Modern Languages		
Title of case study: Gender, Sexuality and Identity in Greece: Changing attitudes and making a difference in culture and education		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: Jan 2010–Dec 2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Dimitris Papanikolaou	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Associate Professor in Modern Greek	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2004–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: Aug 2013–Dec 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Dimitris Papanikolaou's research on queer theory, sexual identity and the critique of homophobia has contributed to a change in the ways gender/sexual identity and its cultural expression are treated in Greece. Papanikolaou's work on queering canonical poet Constantine Cavafy has contributed to a reframing of the literary and cultural canon by bringing into focus hitherto silenced issues. Subsequent exploration of sexual identity and the family has inspired creative practices and the expression of identity throughout Greece. Papanikolaou's expertise and interventions in the public sphere have contributed to a more socially progressive culture and highlighted the political implications of cultural texts to policymakers, educators, cultural practitioners, and social and health professionals.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Discussion of gender, sexuality and queer theory has gathered pace in Greece over the past decade, especially in the fields of anthropology and history. Papanikolaou's work has pioneered this discussion in the study of Greek literature and culture. His research maps Greek queer culture and underlines the need to collect archival material that documents its subcultural, historical and contemporary value for a reconsideration of Greek national identity and citizenship [R1, R2, R3] His more recent research reframes the rise of gender violence, sexism and homophobia in the context of the socioeconomic and political crisis that struck Greece after 2008 [R4].</p> <p>Papanikolaou's monograph [R5], <i>'Made just like me': Queer Cavafy and the poetics of sexuality</i> (2014) offers an analysis of major Greek poet C. P. Cavafy, informed by queer theory and the history of sexuality. Supported by historical analysis and close reading, it argues for the inclusion of Cavafy in a modern canon of queer literature, underlines the educational, cultural and social benefits of such a move, and critiques past Greek attitudes against even the idea of such an inclusion. Papanikolaou's more recent work on the poet points out the importance of Cavafy for an international queer political movement and the empowering insights his poems can provide into issues of ethics, citizenship and belonging [R2].</p> <p>Papanikolaou's second monograph [R6], <i>There is something about the Family: Nation, desire and kinship at a time of crisis</i> (2018), tracks the recurrence of the themes of kinship and family violence in Greek cultural texts since 2008, during 'the Greek Crisis'. Papanikolaou argues that a radical political critique of Greek society lies behind the recent turn towards alternative 'family stories' evident in Greek cinema, literature and the arts. Introducing a queer theoretical angle to this identifiable cultural trend, he shows the political dimension of its underlying themes, but also the new historicizing force that resulted from it. This is what Papanikolaou calls 'archive trouble', a coinage that has already become common in Greek studies.</p>		
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>R1. [Chapter] Papanikolaou, Dimitris. "Mapping/Unmapping: The Making of Queer Athens.", in <i>Queer Cities, Queer Cultures</i> by Matt Cook and Jennifer Evans. London: Bloomsbury, 2014, 151–170. DOI: 10.5040/9781474210898.ch-008</p>		

- R2.** [Journal Article] Papanikolaou, Dimitris. "The pensive spectator, the possessive reader and the archive of queer feelings: A Reading of Constantine Giannaris's *Trojans*." *Journal of Greek Media and Culture*, 1:2 (2015), 279–297. DOI: [10.1386/jgmc.1.2.279](https://doi.org/10.1386/jgmc.1.2.279) 1
- R3.** [Edited Book, available on request] Taktsis, Costas. *Poimata* [Costas Taktsis's *Collected Poems*, edited with introduction by Dimitris Papanikolaou; in Greek], Athens: Gavrilidis, 2018. ISBN 9789605767785.
- R4.** [Journal Article] Papanikolaou, Dimitris. "Critically Queer and Haunted: Greek identity, crisis and doing queer history in the present." *Journal of Greek Media and Culture*, 4: 2 (2018), 167–186. DOI: [10.1386/jgmc.4.2.167](https://doi.org/10.1386/jgmc.4.2.167) 1
- R5.** [Authored Book, available on request] «Σαν κ' εμένα καμωμένοι»: Ο ομοφυλόφιλος Καβάφης και η ποιητική της σεξουαλικότητας [*"Made just like me": The homosexual Cavafy and the poetics of sexuality*]. (Athens: Patakis, 2014). ISBN 9789601656670. Shortlisted for the prestigious Greek Literary Awards in 2016 and "Anagnostis" Literary Magazine Awards in 2015.
- R6.** [Authored Book, listed in REF2] *Κάτι τρέχει με την Οικογένεια: Έθνος, πόθος και συγγένεια την εποχή της κρίσης* [There is something about the Family: Nation, desire and kinship at a time of crisis] (Athens: Patakis, 2018). ISBN 9789601679747. Shortlisted for the Greek Literary Awards in 2020.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Papanikolaou's research and public interventions on gender and sexual identity in Greece form part of an ongoing project which advocates an alternative cultural canon and proposes new ways to integrate literature and culture into debates on social justice, equal rights and a more democratic public sphere.

Reframed the literary and cultural canon

Papanikolaou's book on Cavafy [R5] and its call for a new critical agenda was enthusiastically embraced by a younger generation of thinkers, educators, activists and cultural practitioners [S1.iv, S4]. Having provoked substantial media coverage and a heated debate [S1.v], it was praised for "contributing to a timely and politically significant dialogue on the relationship between knowledge / power and sexuality" [S1.i]. Nikos Vatopoulos, influential Greek journalist and cultural commentator, observed that "one can no longer return to Cavafy's poetry without taking into account Papanikolaou's [...] complex, 'political', and dynamic reading" [S1.iii]. An artist and educator commented that "the fact that there exists an academic work to support and ceremoniously unveil all those things hidden for years is very important for us artists and educators, as it allows us to take up and continue this work" [S6]. Among many events organised on issues raised by the book are two on Cavafy and sexuality at the Onassis Cultural Centre (2014/2015) [S3.iii] which attracted 700+ audience members and over 14,000 online views, and book presentations (Athens, Thessaloniki, London, Oxford). Following this, Papanikolaou was invited to organize a very successful series of 'public lessons on Cavafy' (2016, Onassis Cultural Centre; 2017, Onassis Foundation), aimed at the general public.

Inspired creative practice and the expression of identity

Cultural practitioners have been inspired by Papanikolaou's work on gender, kinship, sexuality and the public sphere. As a writer, educator and theatre practitioner stated, "it brings new openings for political and historical engagement" [S7.i].

Another theatre director remarked: "[Papanikolaou's work] has helped me realize more generally my role as an artist who participates in a wider wave of contestation against Greek society's established beliefs, and more specifically to rethink the ways in which a work of art can reach out to its audience" [S7.ii]. In April 2019, a group led by theatre educator and practitioner Anna Tzakou presented a site-specific performance framed as a comment on Papanikolaou's *There is Something About the Family* [R6; S8]. A performer commented: "[Papanikolaou's work] introduced me to a new way of approaching cultural events [...]; it offered me a new way of

understanding and opening a dialogue with the other. The [book's] concept of 'archive trouble' liberated me, giving the necessary distance so that I could endure very difficult emotions" [S8.iii].

The Thessaloniki International Book Fair (2019) commissioned the performance *However I*, with four poets sharing work in direct dialogue with Papanikolaou's book. The convener stated: "When I commissioned this event, I could not imagine either how powerful the artistic synergy it provoked would be, or that the audience would end up being so large, with dozens of people standing up when the 100 seats of the room filled up" [S3.ii]. Audience members questioned about their attendance indicated the importance and relevance of Papanikolaou's book for crucial debates in contemporary Greek society. "It is rare for an academic book to have such a wide readership", said one. Another called the performance "breath-taking", underlining performers' and audience's deep affective reaction to the text. On a scale from 1 to 5, respondents strongly agreed (average: 4.9), that "the event contributed to the establishment of a more progressive culture in Greece regarding gender and sexuality" [S3.i].

Reviewers commended the social importance and wide reach of Papanikolaou's most recent book: 'Judging from the sheer number and quality of reviews and by the general interest that the book provoked [...] it is obvious that it clearly rocked the boat and very diverse audiences responded to it. [...] this is the right book at the right time' [S2.i]. The book was repeatedly profiled in the media, including interviews with the author and an hour-long programme of excerpts on national radio [S2.iii].

In 2019, the Athens Film Archive invited Papanikolaou to curate a programme of public screenings of the films discussed in *There is Something About the Family* [R6]; the programme took over the title for ten public screenings and discussions (attendance >1,000), with its catalogue read in its print and electronic versions over 10,000 times [S9.i & ii]. Considerable ensuing media interest focused on how Papanikolaou's work facilitates an understanding of new trends in Greek society [S9.iii & iv].

Stimulated debate in the public sphere and made a substantial contribution to socially progressive culture.

Papanikolaou's 40+ newspaper articles within the census period on current events and campaigns for social change were read on average 40,000 times in print/online, republished widely, shared and commented on by audiences ranging from interested citizens to educators and politicians: "he frames and shows the real dimensions of these issues magnificently" (Facebook comment) [S4].

In the parliamentary debate on the new partnership bill that recognised same gender couples for the first time (22 December 2015), an MP quoted Papanikolaou on the social implications [S5.i-iii], while the then Minister of Education started her speech arguing that addressing Cavafy's sexuality can change social attitudes, using terms proposed by Papanikolaou [S5.i, R5]. As she affirmed, Papanikolaou's writings reached a very large audience "alerting them to the existence of systemic racism, homophobia and gender violence in Greek society. It is no understatement to say that I and many other colleagues have been influenced and inspired by his work" [S5.iv].

Papanikolaou's public talks have been attended by 5,000+ people, and viewed over 55,000 times online [S3.iii-iv]. Invitations to speak at activist collectives and NGOs (Beaver, Kiouria, Positive Voice, Diotima) showed a similar reach. Responses highlighted these events as constituting a "very valuable encounter, a form of sharing and exchange" and a "way of 'empowerment', expanding on academic claims and questions, but also reaching out beyond academia" [S10.i].

Papanikolaou's work contributes to community regeneration and development. Since 2019, he has worked closely with Positive Voice, the Association of People Living with HIV in Greece, to create a participatory 'Public Archive of HIV/AIDS in Greece'. The partnership resulted in well-attended public meetings and seminars aimed at activists and volunteers on HIV/AIDS representations, memory and public archiving [S10.ii]. The president of the Association described how Papanikolaou's work "made us rethink our attitude towards our own archive and public history", while events organised with his support "have given us new energy to review the

history of HIV/AIDS in Greece and to address the stigma that still exists in Greek society” [S10.iii]. In May/July 2020, Papanikolaou was invited by feminist NGO Diotima to offer a seminar on “Archives, gender and displacement” aimed at staff working with migrants/refugees in Athens and Moria, Lesbos. In their feedback, they deemed it “absolutely necessary for our work and completely mind-blowing”, adding that “it gave us a boost and offered new ways to think our own archival practices” [S10.iv].

In 2019/2020, in collaboration with Athena Athanasiou and with support from Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung/Athens, Papanikolaou organized the public engagement project *Queer Politics/ Public Memory* with capacity audiences at all meetings (150+) and over 20,000 online views. It “attracted considerable and very positive mentions in the electronic and print press as well as on the radio” [S10] and culminated with the publication of an opensource electronic and print book, *Queer Politics / Public Memory* (ed. Papanikolaou et al). As the Director of Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung/Athens stated, “these events successfully continued the debate on homophobia, gender violence and necropolitics in the Greek public sphere, reaching as many people as possible and engaging non-specialist audiences in the broadest possible way”. The book was downloaded and/or read online “by more than 10,000 people in its first weeks of publication” [S10.v].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Some sources are in Greek. Where this is the case, quotes within section 4 have been translated and highlighted in the evidence.

S1. Reception of *Cavafy* monograph (R5).

- i) Book review by A. Kosifologou (30.11.2014);
- ii) Book review by A. Frantzi (08.03.2015);
- iii) Book review by N. Vatopoulos (28.06.2014);
- iv) Selected book reviews, 2014-16 with citations and URLs
- v) Journal article by D. Eleftheriotis (2017), on the discussion provoked by the book. DOI: [10.1386/jgmc.3.2.273_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jgmc.3.2.273_1);
- vi) List of media presentations about the book *Made Just Like Me* (Patakis, 2014). A full list of presentations available via <https://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/people/dimitris-papanikolaou#Media>

S2. Reception of *Family* monograph (R6).

- i) Book review by S. Vandoros (04.05.2019);
- ii) Selected book reviews, 2018-19 with citations and URLs
- iii) List of media coverage about the book *There is Something About the Family* (Patakis, 2018).

S3. Opinion shaping and established public presence.

- i) Results of questionnaires collected at the 16th Thessaloniki Book Fair’s event *However I* (15.05.2019);
- ii) Letter from the organiser of *However I*, Pavlina Marvin, describing the great interest the event generated and the importance of Papanikolaou’s work in shaping a new gender discourse in Greece (17.12.2020);
- iii) Public announcement of a discussion on *Queer Cavafy and the Poetics of Sexuality*, Onassis Cultural Centre (26.09.2014);
- iv) Selection of publicly available videos of Papanikolaou’s talks, 2014-2020 with URLs, view counts).

S4. Response on social media. Selected Facebook posts 2018-20 with screenshots.

S5. Agenda setting and policymaking.

- i) Greek Minister’s parliamentary speech (22.12.2015);
- ii) Greek MP’s speech, quoting Papanikolaou’s article;
- iii) Papanikolaou’s newspaper article (13.12.2013), quoted in MP’s speech;

- iv) Letter from Sia Anagnostopoulou, Greek MP (2015–), Alternate Minister for Education, Research and Religious Affairs (2015–16), (22.1.2021).

S6. Influencing creative practice 1. Questionnaire responses by an artist and educator (03.07.2019).

S7. Influencing creative practice 2.

- i) Statement from a writer, educator and theatre practitioner (08.07.2019);
- ii) Statement from a theatre director (22.07.2019).

S8. Contribution to creating new cultural artefacts.

- i) Programme notes for *Women in the Car Wash* that cite Dimitris Papanikolaou's book *There is Something about the Family* as the central source of inspiration (23.05.2019);
- ii) Questionnaire answered by Anna Tzakou, director of *Women in the Car Wash*, (10.07.2019);
- iii) Comments by two performers in Anna Tzakou's *Women in the Car Wash* (22.07.2019);
- iv) Giorgos Sabatakakis's review of the performance in *Athens Voice*, commenting on the book's influence (30.04.2019).

S9. Cultural agenda setting.

- i) Programme of the 10th Athens Avantgarde Film Festival, Nov-Dec 2019;
- ii) Letter submitted by the Greek Film Archive (10.08.2020);
- iii) News article by press agency AMNA, which was reported by several other news outlets (24.11.2019);
- iv) Papanikolaou's interview for *FLIX*, the most important cinema website in Greece (21.11.2019).

S10. Working with activists and NGOs.

- i) Questionnaire obtained during presentation of *New Queer Greece* special issue discussion at the feminist collective Beaver (05.06.2019);
- ii) Article on the newspaper EFSYN on the participatory project "Public Archive of HIV/AIDS in Greece" (20.09.2019);
- iii) Letter from the president of the Board of Directors of Positive Voice (20.12.2020);
- iv) Letter from the director of NGO Diotima (08.07.2020);
- v) Letter from the head of Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Office in Greece (18.12.2020).