

The meaning of belonging through cultural national heritage performances: the "panigiri" of the Greek migrants of Brasilia

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Abstract

The first Greek migrants of Brasilia arrived to the new capital of Brazil in the 60's looking for new opportunities. The Greek Orthodox Community of Brasilia was created in 1965, almost after the inauguration of Brasilia as the capital of Brazil. What these migrants brought as heritage with them, common for Greek migrants of their generation, were both their traditions and practices linked respectively to religion and the life they left back to their Greece. The "panigiri", namely an old traditional festival for Greeks, is what exactly related to the expression of both the deep orthodox Christian belief and the Greek social and moral traditions. The proposed paper will be based on a study examining the role of the "panigiri" as a performance of the national identity of the Greek migrants living in Brasilia. It will focus exactly on the aspects surrounding the "panigiri" which became through years the more attractive and collective performance of the Greek community, bringing together the migrants, the new generations and the Brazilians locals. A survey, through face to face interviews, is designed to be used for exploring the travelling of Greek migrants' intangible heritages through their experiences of participating both at the "panigiri" back home in Greece prior to their movement and those to their new home in Brasilia. In this way, the paper aims to reflect the migrants nostalgic belonging to the motherland's traditions through their performances as heritage of migration in the new meaning of homeland, providing opportunities for collective memory of the Greek culture to the new generations.