PART II. NEW HOST COUNTRIES

CHAPTER 7. GREECE

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Introduction

Geographically, Greece is located at the southeastern corner of the European continent, indeed closer to the Middle East, Turkey and the Balkans rather than to what is today defined as the 'core' of the Europe, notably countries like France or Germany. This geographic position of Greece at the fringes of the European continent is to a large extent matched by a geopolitically and economically peripheral character of the country within the European Union, despite the fact that the successive enlargements of the EU to the East in 2004 and 2007 have made Greece more central both culturally and politically. The position of Greece however may also be seen as a pivotal one, between East and West. Dominant discourses on Greek national identity reflect a geopolitical and cultural ambivalence between being 'Western' and 'Eastern' (Roudometof, 1999; Tsoukalas, 1993).

Although politically Greece has been firmly anchored in western Europe in the post World War II period, the cultural positioning of Greece remains ambivalent, modern Greek-ness being of but not in Europe (Triandafyllidou, 2002a). While the European-ness of modern Greece has been officially confirmed by its accession to the European Communities (later European Union) in 1981, the geopolitical, cultural and economic relations between Greece and its fellow member states are often fraught with misunderstandings. During the 1990s, the confrontation between Greece and its fellow partners in the EU on the *Macedonian question*[1] as well as Greece's unpleasant position as the only country who had striven but could not make it to the first phase of the European Monetary Union have been two obvious expressions of these tensions.

The 21st century has brought new developments and new challenges for Greece and its national self-understanding. The inclusion of Greece in the first phase of the Euro zone implementation, on 1 January 2002 has confirmed the Europeanness of the country at the monetary but also at the symbolic level (Psimmenos, 2004). Moreover, the 2004 and 2007 enlargements to Central and Eastern Europe and the shifting of the EU geopolitical, cultural and religious borders farther East has made Greece inevitably more central geographically and religiously (since other Christian Orthodox countries have joined the EU) even though geopolitically it

[1]. i.e. the question of recognition of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as an independent Republic, the name that this last would take, as well as its nationalist claims to what the Greeks deemed as 'their' national heritage (Triandafyllidou et al. 1997; Roudometof 1996).

remains quite peripheral (Triandafyllidou and Spohn, 2003). The economic crisis though that Greece is undergoing at the time of writing (spring and fall 2010), the risk of a national bankruptcy and of quitting the Euro zone have on one hand emphasised the firm anchoring of political elites to the EU but also greatly shown the weakness of Greece as an actor in the European economic and political system.

The expansion of the EU to the east which continues, even if with a slower pace, with a view to incorporating Croatia, the western Balkans and Turkey poses new identity and geopolitical challenges. Enlargement is desired as a factor of stability, democracy and peace in the region, but also for economic reasons, since many Greek firms are highly oriented towards the Balkan markets. Greek public opinion has marked an interresting shift between 2006 and 2008 regarding EU enlargement to southeast Europe and especially to Turkey. In 2008, 47% of Greeks declared in favour of the entry of Turkey in the EU (Eurobarometre, 2008: 30), contrary to the respective 33% registered in 2006 (Eurobarometre, 2006). The possible future accession of Turkey to the EU certainly keeps stiring unsolved identity and geopolitical issues, not least the Cyprus question.

In light of these considerations, this paper first offers a brief excursus on the main factors that have conditioned the development of the modern Greek state and the dominant conception of Greek national identity. The second part of the paper concentrates on the internal Significant Others (Triandafyllidou, 1998) of Greek society over the past 30 years with a view to identifying which have been the important minority groups that have challenged with their diversity the reputed cohesion and homogeneity of Greek society during the last three decades. We cover three distinct time periods: the 1980s and the end of the Cold War, the 1990s and the rise of multiculturalism in Western Europe but also the debacle of Communist regimes and the subsequent transition of central Eastern Europe to liberal democracy, and the last decade with the expansion of the EU to the east, the rise of international terrorism, the financial and economic crisis and the contest of multiculturalism (in Western Europe) in the last couple of years.

In the second part we shall seek to highlight the aspects of 'difference' of specific groups that have been particularly contested. Those aspects that the groups advocate as important for their identity and that the state or the majority group consider 'intolerable' or at least difficult to accommodate. Pointing to such challenging differences will help locate different instances in which 'tolerance' has been an important concept or practice with a view to allowing for diversity to exist. Naturally we shall also take note of the competing concepts in favour of a more active accommodation and respect for diversity or concepts and behaviours that call for the rejection of diversity and the imposition of not only unity but also homogeneity within Greek society.

Greece and Europe

National identity and state formation

While the foundations of Greek nationalism in the late eighteenth century were based on European Enlightenment and its civic ideals (Veremis, 1983: 59-60; Kitromilides, 1990: 25-33), the Greek nation has eventually

been defined in strongly ethno-cultural terms. Common ancestry, culture and language have been the main tenets of the development of the modern Greek national identity together with Christianity – a heritage of the Byzantine Empire (constructed essentially as Greek and related linearly to the Greek classical past.) The dominant national narrative concluded with Greece's subjugation to the Ottoman Empire, the national resurrection in 1821 and the creation of a small independent Greek state in 1831. A unified national consciousness was successfully instilled in Greek society through state policies in military conscription, education and cultlure throughout the ninetienth and twentieth century.

The state and the political and intellectual elites propagated however for several decades an irredentist view of the Greek nation that extended further north to Macedonia and Thrace and further east to Minor Asia. This 'Great Idea' – to unite all the territories where people who shared the Orthodox Christian faith and spoke the Greek language lived – – dominated the Greek national project and politics and, as such, also the successive enlargements of the Greek state until the early 20th century. It was only in 1923 and after the debacle of the Greek forces in Minor Asia by the Turks that irredentism was largely abandoned. Nonetheless the modern Greek state took its present territorial form after World War II when the Dodecanese islands were incorporated into Greece in 1948. This gradual path to the territorial integration of modern Greece has marked Greek nationalism and the national project as a whole, making the conception of Greek national identity – and by extension Greek citizenship – predominantly ethnic, religious and cultural (much less civic and territorial) (Christopoulos, 2006; see also for a review Triandafyllidou 2001, Chapter 3).

Overall, modern Greek identity developed in a web of complicated relationships that evolved around a main contradiction or dilemma concerning the belonging to 'the West' or to 'the East'. This has been articulated in the following characteristics of what one could consider as intrinsic to modern Greek identity: a national pride for a unique past; a frustration of grandeur 'lost' as the modern Greek state emerged into independence as a poor, agricultural economy and an incomplete and fragile democracy; and last but not least a perpetual need to 'catch up' with the rest of Europe as there was much ground to cover in terms of Greece's industrialization, modernization, and democratic consolidation. The intertwining of such contradictory elements has resulted in an ideologically confusing notion of 'Helleno-christianity' and an underlying East–West tension in Greek identity and politics.

Besides, although territorial and civic features have gained importance through the expansion and consolidation of the national territory, the 'essence' of Greekness is still often defined as a transcendental notion in Greek public discourses (Tsoukalas, 1993). In addition, the implantation of modern institutions in the new-born Greek state of the 1830s (with its traditional – largely rural – Greek society) generated a combination of puzzling characteristics that even nowadays persist (Diamandouros, 1983: 47-50). The late and limited industrial development of Greece (and the imperfect functioning of liberal democracy/capitalism in this 'peripheral' country) in conjunction with the introduction of parliamentarism resulted in the distorted functioning of the political system through the preservation of traditional power structures under the cover of Western-type institutions (Diamandouros, 1983; Mouzelis, 1995).

Citizenship in Greece

These features of Greek national identity have marked the definition of Greek citizenship which has been based (until 6 months ago) almost exclusively on the jus sanguinis principle. The previews to the 3838/24.3.2010 laws (voted on March 2010) provided for a separate procedure for acquiring Greek nationality (the so called procedure of nationality definition) that has been reserved for people who could prove that they were of Greek descent and 'behave as Greeks'. The terms used for this procedure imply that Greek descent and national consciousness exist prior to the acquisition of Greek nationality (Christopoulos, 2006: 254). This rule refers to people of Greek ethnic origin, the *omogeneis* (meaning those of the same *genos*, i.e. of the same descent).

There are two broad categories of *omogeneis* in Greece currently: the Pontic Greeks (numbering a little over 150,000), notably people of Greek descent that resided in the former Soviet Republics. The Greek state has adopted a generous naturalisation policy allowing the large majority among them to naturalise through a simplified citizenship definition procedure called 'specific naturalisation' (Christopoulos, 2006: 273). The second group of *omogeneis* (co-ethnics) are ethnic Greek Albanians. These held until recently Special Identity Cards for *Omogeneis* (EDTO)[2] issued by the Greek police which gave them full socio economic but no political rights in Greece. As of November 2006, a joint decision by the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs facilitated the naturalization procedure for them, waiving the fee and the discretionary character of the judgment, encouraging thus ethnic Greek Albanians to naturalise. Indeed this change of policy has led to an exponential increase of naturalisations from two-digit numbers each year to several thousands. While in the period 1998-2006 only a handful of people had naturalised, in the period between 2007 and 2009 approximately 45,000 foreigners, in their vast majority of Albanian nationality, have acquired Greek citizenship.

The distinction between co ethnics and 'other' migrants that Greek law had introduced as early as 1997 had been subject to severe criticism by NGOs, the liberal press[3] and international organisations (ECRI, 2004) for being discriminatory and unfair[4]. ECRI in particular had raised concerns regarding the preferential path to citizenship available to individuals of Greek origin, noting that there are subjective elements in the assessment of such origin, making the applicants liable to discrimination.

It was only in March 2010 that the Greek Parliament voted a new law (law n. 3838/2010) on citizenship and naturalisation which introduced provisions for the second generation of migrants, notably children born in Greece of foreign parents or children born abroad of foreign parents but who have completed at least 6 years of schooling in Greece and live in Greece. In either case, these children can naturalise by a simple declaration by their parents when they are born or when they complete their sixth year of attending a Greek school. The new law also lowers the requirement for naturalisation from 10 to 7 years of residence, provided the foreigner has already received the EU long term resident status which can be acquired after 5 years of legal residence. The new law also introduces local political rights (both passive

2. There were 197,000 EDTO holders on 31 December 2009, according to data released by the Ministry of Interior in December 2010.
3. See, Ios tis Kyriakis, Athens daily, Kyriakatiki Eleftherotipia, 4 January 2004, www.enet.gr/ and Athens Anglophone daily Athens News, 7 January 2004, Citizenship backlog, by Kathy Tzilivakis, www.athensnews.gr. Also Greek Helsinki Monitor at www.greekhelsinki.gr/bhr/english/index.html.
4. Greek authorities are generally required to respond within specified time limits to applicants addressed to them and to provide justification for their decisions.

and active) for foreign residents (living in Greece for 5 years or more). In introducing a substantial element of *jus soli* in the concept of Greek citizenship, the new law has made a breakthrough. Nonetheless, we could maintain that, for mainstream society, Greek citizenship is synonym with Greek national identity, both of which are strongly defined in ethnic, cultural and religious terms.

The role of Europe and the "West"

In the pre-World War II period, Europe played an indirect role in national self-understandings of Greekness: it was part of the classical Greek heritage but also perceived as alien and threatening. Culturally speaking, Greece and Europe were constructed by Greek historiography[5] as part of the same classical Greek/European civilization. From a political viewpoint however, other European countries were seen as – and indeed were actually – 'foreign powers' which imposed their interests on Greece and interfered with domestic affairs. While European foreign powers were perceived also as economically and culturally more advanced than Greece, they were also despised because they could not 'compete' with Greece's glorious classical heritage.

Since the end of World War II Greece has been politically and ideologically part of Western Europe. This largely determined the outcome of the Greek civil war (1944-1948) as well as its post WWII political history. Western military, trade and energy interests held Greece firmly within the Western part of Europe and away from Communist and left-wing tendencies. Greece joined NATO in 1952 and in 1962 signed a pre-accession agreement with the European Communities (EC).

During the post war period the stance of Greek social and political actors towards Europe has alternated between 'Europhilia' and 'Europhobia' given the role that various western actors have played in Greece's political history (particularly the UK and the USA), and the way this has translated in a deep polarization of domestic politics – between the pro-western right and centre-right and the communist and left political forces. The foreign influence over the outcome of the civil war; the 1960s political instability and the Colonels' military coup (1967-1974); the importance of the Marshall Plan for the country's economic recovery; the participation in NATO's southern flank in the context of the Cold War confrontation; Cyprus and the Greek-Turkish dispute, are all factors and events that determined Greece's relationship with the rest of Europe and the West.

At the level of public attitudes, Kokosalakis and Psimmenos (2002: 24-26) show (on the basis of Eurobarometer survey data) that Greeks have been overall positive as regards their country's participation in the EC and later EU, saw no conflict between their national and their European identity, and were overall supportive of European unification which they perceived as economically and politically advantageous for the country. However, qualitative studies have shown that Greeks tend to look at other Europeans as 'others' and as 'different' to the foundations of Greek tradition and collective identity (Kokosalakis, 2004; Anagnostou, 2005). Indeed, legacies of the past, territorial insecurities and antagonistic identities in Greece's immediate neighbourhood the Balkans, have not been easily understood by Western and Northern EU

5. It is to note, however, that as Michael Herzfeld remarks, the negotiation of the Greek past is both a reflection and a distortion of larger projects (than the Greek national project alone) – projects still occurring in the encompassing space of post-Enlightenment Europe (Herzfeld, 2001: 14). These latter concern European nationalism itself and the history of European identity and civilization, with Greece as its assumed starting point. According to Herzfeld, the besetting paradox of European nationalism lies in the fact that it wanted to root itself in classical Greece while at the same time to relegate the latter to *'the domain of the premodern, socially and culturally undifferentiated, ideologically primitive type of society'*. This, he argues, has been a necessary projection in a survivalist universe (Herzfeld, 2002: 913-914, 916).

member-states, and have at times been exaggerated in Greek politics, largely for domestic political reasons. Indeed, during the 1990s, the feeling of alienation that Greeks at times expressed towards the West (Tsoukalas, 1993; 1995) was further accentuated by the controversy between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), the failure of resolving the Cyprus question, and the inability of other EU countries to appreciate Greece's sensibility on these issues (Roudometof, 1996; Triandafyllidou *et al*., 1997, Triandafyllidou, 2007).

In the early 21st century a more flexible understanding of Greek national identity seems to emerge, mainly due to the increasing salience of European policies and symbols, such as the European currency. Besides, the actual experiences of belonging to the European Union reinforce a civic and political value component in Greek national identity (Triandafyllidou et al., 1997; Kokosalakis, 2004; Anagnostou and Triandafyllidou, 2007).

Cultural diversity challenges during the last 30 years

The new European context at the end of the twentieth and early twenty-first century has raised new challenges to Greek national self-understandings and the country's geopolitical positioning within its immediate neighbourhood and of course within the EU and Europe writ large. These challenges are related to the continuing (even if slower) expansion of the EU to the Balkans and Turkey.

Moreover, during the last two decades, Greece has had to make room – even if hesitantly and only to a limited extent – for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity within the nation. These developments have had to do with two different population groups: native, historic minorities and immigrants. Regarding minorities first, regional legal and institutional frameworks—such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)—have furthered progress in promoting the recognition and protection of minorities (linguistic, ethnic, religious, racial) across Europe (Psychogiopoulou, 2009). This progress has also increasingly influenced debates and policies on the position and rights of minorities in Greece, which for long has been a sensitive matter in Greek political life and society. Nikiforos Diamantouros (1983: 55) had described this 'sensitivity' as an indication that the process of national integration is incomplete.

Regarding migrants, even since the early 1980s, Greece can no longer be described as a solely emigration country. The country's population has increased by 10-12%, with large numbers of migrants mainly from the Balkans (Albania, Bulgaria and Romania), ex-Soviet Republics (Georgia, Russia and Ukraine) and, increasingly, Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China). Immigration poses a challenge to dominant Greek nationalist discourses; there has been a gradual recognition on behalf of state institutions and public opinion that Greek society has become de facto multi-cultural and multi-ethnic (Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2009). Tables 1, 2 and 3 below present an overview of the size and composition of the immigrant and native minority population in Greece.

6. This number referring to valid stay permits does not include ethnic Greek Albanians holding EDTO cards

Table 1. Immigrant Stock in Greece, 31.12.2009			
	Size of immigrant stock	% of total resident population	Source of data
Legal immigrant population	636,258	5.86%	Stay permits valid at least for 1 day during 2009, Ministry of Interior
Co-ethnics from Albania	197,814	1.82%	Data from Ministry of Interior, for 31 December 2009
Estimate of irregular immigrants	280,000	2.58%	Maroukis (2008), CLANDESTINO project
Total stock of foreigners	1,114,072	10.26%	
Total population of Greece	10,856,041	100%	LFS, 4th trimester 2009
Co-ethnics from the Soviet Union	154,000	1.42%	Secretariat of Greeks abroad, Special Census, 2000
Total stock of immigrants and naturalized co-ethnics	1,268,072	11.68%	

Source: Triandafyllidou and Maroufof (2010) SOPEMI report for Greece, December 2010

Table 2. National Composition of the Migrant Stock in Greece, 31.12.2009								
	LF S4th Tri. 2009		Third Country Nationals (TCN) Valid Permits December 2009		EU Citizens Valid Permits December 2009		All foreigners (EU and non-EU)	
Country of Origin	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Albania	501,691	59.74%	414,445	70.65%			414,445[6]	56.64%
Bulgaria	54,492	6.48%			51,006	37.46%	55,909	7.64%
Georgia	33,870	4.03%	17,655	3.00%			17,655	2.41%
Romania	33,773	4.02%			38,388	28.19%	41,954	5.73%
Pakistan	22,965	2.73%	17,097	2.91%			17,097	2.33%
Russia	19,522	2.32%	13,512	2.30%			13,512	1.84%
Ukraine	13,748	1.63%	21,644	3.68%			21,644	2.95%
Bangladesh	12,533	1.49%	5,910	1.00%			5,910	0.80%
Syria	12,401	1.47%	7,962	1.35%			7,962	1.08%
Armenia	12,339	1.46%	6,277	1.07%			6,277	0.85%
Cyprus	11,773	1.40%			5,972	4.38%	5,972	0.81%
Poland	11,204	1.33%			10,876	7.98%	11,258	1.53%
Egypt	10,289	1.22%	14,732	2.51%			14,732	2.01%
Iraq	7,849	0.93%	1,183	0.20%			1,183	0.16%
India	7,654	0.91%	13,127	2.23%			13,127	1.79%
UK	7,539	0.89%			7,811	5,73%	7,811	1.06%
Germany	7,270	0.86%			5,914	4.34%	5,914	0.80%
Moldova	4,682	0.55%	12,217	2.08%			12,217	1.66%
Netherlands	3,548	0.42%			2,201	1.61%	2,201	0.30%
Philippines	3,302	0.39%	9,668	1.64%			9,668	1.32%
Other	47,262	5.62%	31,161	5.31%	13,983	10.27%	45,144	6.17%
Total	839,706	100.00%	586,590	100.00%	136,151	100%	731,592	100%

Source: Triandafyllidou and Maroufof, 2010, SOPEMI report for Greece. Based on data from National Statistical Service of Greece, Labour Force Survey 4th trimester; Ministry of Interior Affairs, Valid Stay Permits on December 31st 2009; Ministry of Citizen Protection. Registered EU citizens on December 31st 2009.
*This number referring to valid stay permits does not include ethnic Greek Albanians holding EDTO cards

Native Minorities	1961-1991**	1999/today Absolute numbers	1999/today % of the total population of Greece
Table 3. Native Minorities in Greece			
Catholics, Protestants, Jews and new religious movements		150,000	1-1,5
Jews		5,000	
Catholics		50,000	
Protestants		25,000	
Jehovah's Witnesses		70,000	
Muslims of Western Thrace*		80,000-120,000	0,5
Turkish-speaking		36,000-54,000***	
Pomaks		28,800-43,200***	
Roma		14,400-21,600***	
Roma (all over Greece)		300,000-350,000****	2-3
Arvanites/Arberor		200,000****	2
Macedonians (Slav-speaking Greeks)		10,000-30,000****	2
Vlachs/Aromanians		200,000****	2

Source: Compilation and treatment of data from different sources/estimations (see notes below).

* The Muslims of Western Thrace according to the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations (Treaty of Lausanne), in 1923, counted for 106,000 individuals. According to the Greek census of 1928, 1940 and 1951, there were registered respectively 126,000 individuals, 140,090 individuals and 112,665 individuals (Human Rights Watch, 'Greece: The Turks of Western Thrace', Vol.11, No.1, 1999/January; available at http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/greece/index.htm#TopOfPage [consulted on the 02/11/2010]. It is to note that the report on Muslims of Thrace does not distinguish between the sub-populations that are included in this category (that is to say Roma and Pomaks), referring thus to all as 'Turks of Western Thrace'.

** Unlike the 1951 census, more recent censuses have not addressed issues of national/ethnic origin, language and religion (GHM, Report about Compliance with the Principles of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 1999, available at http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/Minorities_of_Greece.html [consulted on the 02/11/2010]). Therefore, no official data is available and we can only rely on estimations.

*** Estimation of Alexandris (1988) for the numbers in 1981, according to which from about 120,000 individuals 45% are Turkish-speaking, 36% are Pomaks and 18% Roma. According to an estimation of GHM (at http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/english/reports/pomaks.html [consulted on the 02/11/2010]), the Pomaks nowadays count for 30,000 (i.e. the minimum estimated by Alexandris above mentioned).

**** Estimation of GHM, Report about Compliance with the Principles of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 1999, available at http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/Minorities_of_Greece.html [consulted on the 02/11/2010].

In this section we shall briefly outline the main native and immigrant minority groups of Greece, and the main diversity challenges that they pose to Greek society. In table 4 below we present schematically the main native and immigrant minority groups and identify the diversity dimensions on which they challenge the dominant conception of Greek citizenship and national identity.

Table 4. Main Minority and Immigrant Groups in Greece and their Dimensions of Difference

Dimensions of difference	Citizenship	Racial	Ethnic	Religious	Cultural	Linguistic
Co-ethnics						
Pontic Greeks					X	X
Ethnic Greek Albanians	X				X	
Native minorities						
Turks/Muslims of Western Thrace			X	X	X	X
Slav-speaking Macedonians			X			X
Immigrants						
Albanians	X		X	X	X	X
Georgians	X		X		X	X
Ukrainians	X		X	X	X	X
Asian Muslim migrants*	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sub Saharan Africans	X	X	X		X	X

Source: Author's compilation.
* Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Afghani citizens mainly.

Minority groups in Greece can actually be classified into three broad categories in terms of their closeness to the majority group. The term 'national majority' is here to identify Greek citizens born of Greek parents, in Greece, who are Christian Orthodox (at least via a familial affiliation). In terms of the national identity and citizenship conception, *omogeneis,* that is *co-ethnics*, are the minority groups that differ less from the national majority. There are two populations within the larger category of co-ethnics: Pontic Greeks and ethnic Greek Albanians.

The second category of minority groups are *native minorities*, that is people who are ethnically, culturally, religiously different from the national majority but which have formed part of the modern Greek state since its creation. These include the Muslims of western Thrace (which may be further sub-divided into Pomaks, Muslim Roma and ethnic Turks) who largely self-identify as ethnic Turks, and the Roma populations of Greece.

The third category of minority groups in Greece are *migrant populations*. We identify here five different populations: Albanians, as the largest group; Georgians and Ukrainians as the second and third largest nationalities among immigrants; Asian immigrants and asylum seekers (Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Filipinos and Afghanis) who are Muslims from southeast Asia; and last but not least Sub-Saharan Africans who come from many different countries and are Christians in their large majority.

Omogeneis/Co-ethnics

Pontic Greeks

Pontic Greeks are ethnic Greeks who either emigrated from areas of the Ottoman empire (the southern coast of the Black Sea in particular) to the former Soviet Union in the beginning of this century or left Greece in the 1930s and 1940s for political reasons (Glytsos, 1995). The right of Pontic Greeks to return to their 'homeland' (Greece) has been conceded by presidential decree in 1983. Pontic Greeks are defined by the Greek state as members of the diaspora community who 'return' – even though most of them had never lived in Greece before – to their 'homeland' and are, therefore, given full citizen status and benefits aiming to facilitate their integration into Greek society. Pontic Greeks naturalised under the 'definition of nationality' procedure foreseen by the Greek legislation for people of ethnic Greek origin (Christopoulos 2006: 254).

In 2000 there were 155,319 Pontic Greeks in the country. More than half of them (about 80,000) came from Georgia, 31,000 came from Kazakhstan, 23,000 from Russia, and about 9,000 from Armenia (General Secreteriat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000).

Diversity challenges: Pontic Greeks are considered to be similar to native Greeks as regards their national consciousness, culture, and religion. They only differ from natives in terms of their language (as at least the first generation of returnees spoke Russian and/or Ποντιακά (Pontian language) as a mother tongue) and at least the first generation in terms of the socio-economic system that they had been brought up in. Representatives of EIYAPOE interviewed by the author in the mid 1990s considered that the main problem for Pontic Greeks' socio-economic

integration was their excessive reliance on the state to provide for anything and their inability to adapt to a free market economy. There are unfortunately not enough recent studies to assess this claim however it is clear that the cultural and linguistic difference of the Pontic Greeks is still present in Greek society even if on the whole it is not perceived as challenging the national unity. Indeed, Pontic Greeks (together with other ex-Soviet nationals, such as Georgians, Russians, and in a lesser extent Armenians) dispose a non-negligible 'ethnic infrastructure', this is to say their own shops, mini-markets, cafés, festivity halls, dentists, churches, at least in the city of Thessaloniki where they have mainly settled in the 1990s (Kokkali, 2010).

Ethnic Greek Albanians

The second large group of co-ethnics that has recently 'returned' to Greece are ethnic Greek Albanians, widely known as "Vorioepirotes" (Βορειοηπειρώτες). The State Council (judgement no. 2207/1992) attempted to provide a description of their status: co-ethnics from Albania are the people that descend from Greek parents and their place of birth (theirs or their parents) is "Vorios Epirus" (Βόρειος Ηπειρος)[7].

The legal status of ethnic Greek Albanians has been clarified in detail with the Presidential Decree 395/1998. Following from this decree, Greek co-ethnics who are Albanian citizens (*Voreioepirotes*) hold Special Identity Cards for *Omogeneis* (EDTO) issued by the Greek police. As of November 2006, holders of these Identity Cards were encouraged to apply for citizenship. They were exempted from the high citizenship fee and were generally granted citizenship if they satisfied the requirements (in other words, no negative discretion was exerted). Indeed during the past 3 years more than 40,000 Albanian citizens of ethnic Greek origin have acquired Greek citizenship.

Diversity Challenges: Ethnic Greek Albanians differ from native Greeks mainly in their citizenship and to a lesser extent in their language. Contrary to Pontic Greeks, the use of Greek language, especially among the older generation, was more widespread in southern Albania. Also the geographical and cultural proximity was higher – native Greeks of Epirus in northern Greece and ethnic Greeks born in southern Albania had many cultural similarities. Overall ethnic Greek Albanians' public image has also been constructed as 'positive', contrasted to that of 'other' Albanians whose image was negative (Triandafyllidou and Veikou 2002), at least during the 1990s. The ethnic, religious and cultural proximity of ethnic Greek Albanians with native Greeks makes them a minority group that is gradually assimilating into Greek society and poses no strong cultural diversity challenge to the country. At the same time their presence forces to clarify how national and cultural unity and homogeneity is pretty much constructed rather than given depending often on beliefs of common genealogical descent more than actual cultural proximity. It is interesting how the cultural diversity of Voreioipirotes has been treated during the 2000s by contrasting to how the cultural diversity of 'other' Albanians has been perceived at the same time. Actually, however, such distinctions seem to have faded, since Albanian citizens (either *omogeneis* or *allogeneis*) are largely considered as very well integrated to the Greek society, while other – more recently arrived – foreigners (such as Afghani, Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants or asylum seekers) monopolise the public discourse.

7. According to Dodos (1994: 119-121), the term "Vorios Epiros" (Northern Epirus) is a diplomatic and political designation that appears after 1913. It has come out of the opposition of the Greek inhabitants of Greece's border regions to the international agreements that determined the borders of the country together with those people's national fate decided against their will, since the areas where they were living in were granted to the new Albanian state. As a geographical term, it does not cover anything specific, because the limits of the northern borders of the "Northern Epirus" have never been clearly established. In addition, since 1919, even by the most favourable to the Greek positions tracing of borders, the importance of the Greek population is not so obvious (Kokkali, 2010).

Native minorities

There are a number of native minorities in Greece whose population however is rather small (Clogg 2002). According to the data provided by international and Greek NGOs the following national, ethno-linguistic and religious minorities are present in Greece (percentages refer to the total resident population): Roma 3.3%; Arvanites 2%; members of the Macedonian minority 2%; Vlachs 2%; Turks 0.5%; Pomaks 0.3 (Lenkova, 1997; Minority Rights Group (MRG), 1994). Religious minorities, which include Catholics, Protestants and new religious movements, make up nearly 1% of the citizens of Greece. Among these minorities, the Greek State only recognises the existence of the Muslims of western Thrace, the Roma population and Greek Catholics and Protestants. Since official recognition of other minorities of any kind is withheld, these groups are subjected to discriminatory treatment, whether at the collective and individual level. The recent mobilisation of the Macedonian minority (during the 1990s) has been dealt with by refuting its existence and persecuting its activists. In this report we shall only discuss the Muslims of western Thrace and the Roma of Greece.

Muslims of western Thrace

The border region of Western Thrace in the northeast part of Greece is home to a small but politically significant population of about 120,000 Muslims, inhabiting the region together with a Greek Christian majority.[8] With its strategic location between three states and two continents, the Muslim community of Western Thrace marks a particular kind of geographical and cultural-historical boundary between East and West. In Europe's southernmost corner, the region of Thrace borders with Turkey to the east and Bulgaria to the north.

Comprising individuals of Turkish origin, Gypsies (Roma), and Pomaks, the Muslims of Thrace prior to World War II coexisted largely as a religious community characteristic of the Ottoman millet system. Since the 1950s, however, they have transformed into a minority with ethnic consciousness, and in the past twenty years they have mobilized to assert a common Turkish identity. The latter has caused a major and ongoing rift with Greek authorities who officially recognize a 'Muslim minority' in reference to the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 that has defined the status of the latter until the present.

Diversity challenges: The Turks of Thrace pose an important ethnic and religious diversity challenge for Greece as they question its ethnic and religious homogeneity. They share with other Greek citizens neither their genealogical descent nor the religion – they differ in the two fundamental elements that define the dominant vision of Greek national identity and citizenship. Their claims for collective recognition of their ethnic identity have generally been met with intolerance and rejection. At the same time Greece has been pressurised by the policies of the Council of Europe and by the European Court of Human Rights to adapt and update its policy towards its largest native ethnic minority. It has thus abolished the infamous article 18 of the Greek Nationality Code which had been used discretionary to deprive members of the minority from their Greek citizenship unilaterally.

8. The overall (resident) population of Thrace is 358,426 (www.e-demography.gr, 2010). The precise size of the Turkish Muslim population is a matter of dispute due to their large-scale immigration over the years and the lack of an official census since the 1950s. Estimates range from 90,000 to over 120,000 while official accounts put it between 110,000-135,000.

Overall Greek policies towards the minority have become more liberal, defending the equality of individuals before the law and the state no matter what their collective affiliation is in terms of religion. These policies however have been defended in the name of the common, compact and unitary national interest, that is the Greek Christian Orthodox majority's interest (Anagnostou 2005) not by reference to human rights norms. There is no re-consideration or re-definition of what it means to be Greek or a sort of collective level recognition of the existence of minorities that are part of the Greek nation state. There is as yet no room for these minorities to contribute to the definition of what it means to be Greek in the 21ˢᵗ century.

Interesting key events, where the tolerance and intolerance of the Greek state institutions, the norms applied as well as everyday practices adopted can be tested, is the quest of two different cultural associations to include the word Turkish in their title, the rejection of this request by the Greek Supreme Court (decision of January 2005) and the condemnation of Greece on this issue by the European Court of Human Rights in 2007 (Human Rights Papers, 2008). Additionally, it would be interesting to explore the political juxtaposition and the reactions of the society arisen after the announcement of Gulbeyaz Karahasan's (a young Muslim woman) candidature in the 2007 regional elections by the leader of the socialist party (PASOK) and former Prime Minister George Papandreou (Skoulariki, 2009: 69-93).

Roma of Greece

Greek historians' attempts to account for the Roma presence in Greek history have often contributed to the negative stereotyping of their behaviour and ways of life, often stirring thus anti-Romani discourses in Greece (ERRI and GHM, 2003). As any other ethnic minority in Greece, the Roma were subjected to homogenisation, to the imposition of the dominant Greek identity and history and to the misrecognition of their cultural difference. During World War II, the Roma of Greece suffered persecution from the Nazis and, in some cases, even deportation and concentration into camps in Germany, although accurate figures are not available (ERRI and GHM, 2003; EODM, 2002: 2-3).

According to the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPSI) 2008-2010, Roma are considered Greeks with no separate ethnic identity (NCHR, 2009). They are not recognized as a national minority by the Greek State (Pavlou, 2009: 33), which accepts this term only for those groups explicitly mentioned in bilateral treaties ñ namely the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, according to which there is a 12,000-person Roma population, as part of the recognised Muslim minority of Western Thrace. Roma people outside Thrace are not considered by the Greek authorities as members of a minority, but as a ëvulnerable social groupí (CommDH, 2009; cited in Pavlou, op.cit.).

The size of the Roma population in Greece is actually unknown. Recent estimations concord into the number given by the Minority Rights Group-Greece, i.e. 300-350,000 people, half of whom are tent-dwelling Rom. Even after citizenship acquisition through the Decrees 69468/212 and 16701/51 in 1978 and 1979, the Roma of Greece still face marked discrimination and social exclusion, the main types of which include:

Spatial segregation, appalling housing conditions and eviction from their settlements: All national and international reports on Greece agree that Roma live under heavy **spatial and social segregation** (Pavlou, 2009: 12-13). Allegedly, Pavlou (op.cit.) suggests that the only regulatory framework providing for Roma settlements promotes segregation and ghettoisation[9]. Moreover, Roma in Greece are frequently faced with forced eviction (and/or the threat of forced eviction), the subsequent demolition of their homes, destruction of property, etc. Many evictions are linked to major sport or cultural events, in which cases Roma must be made invisible or removed at any cost (Pavlou, op.cit., e.g. the 2004 Olympic Games of Athens). According to Alexandridis (2004) and Rinne (2002), the traditional hostility of the local authorities, who perceive the existence of Roma in vicinity to their localities as a threat to public order, as well as a source of crime (drug dealing, thievery, etc.), is another reason behind their frequent evictions.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has noted, already in its Second Report on Greece (1999), that Roma living in settlements often face extremely harsh living conditions. Similarly, the more recent report of HLHR-KEMO/i-RED on the 'Housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in Greece' (October 2009)[10] suggests that 'inhuman and degrading conditions, as well as the deprivation of a wide range of their fundamental rights is the common conclusion met in different national and international reports on housing of Roma minority in Greece [...]. Roma live in tragic conditions right next to dumps, in shacks, without water and electricity, without basic hygiene, among rodents, and at the mercy of extreme weather conditions and phenomena, affected by epidemic diseases, mainly caused by the trash they are paid to collect and remove'.

Police violence towards Roma and persistent identity-controls in their settlements: Abusive police behavior towards Roma is a major issue when considering this particular population (Pavlou, 2009: 13; ERRI/ GHM, 2003; ECRI, 2009: 32), and one of the main issues raised in the complaints that have been handled by the Greek Ombudsman in recent years. More precisely the complains are related, first, to misbehavior on the part of the police in individual cases, as well as excessive use of force, ill-treatment and verbal abuse; second, to the excessive use of force and illegal massive controls in camps, where all residents are treated as suspicious or even guilty of specific crimes or offences; third, to the Police involvement in the evictions of Roma from their camps in co-operation with the local authorities. The illegal character of the procedure of investigation followed by the police was one of the main issues on which the Greek Ombudsman has been focused (Lykovardi, 2006). It should be stressed, however, that, according to Kalliopi Lykovardi, Senior Investigator in the Greek Ombudsman's Office/Human Rights Department, since 2001, the Greek Ombudsman has received no reports indicating that massive investigations and controls in Roma camps continue (op.cit.).

Exclusion of Roma from the Educational System: A combination of racial discrimination and extreme poverty makes that very few Romani children complete even the basic primary education. The children are all too often subjected to segregation in ghetto schools and Roma-only classes that – most of times – provide inferior education[11]. Municipal

9. According to Pavlou (2009: 12), there are no official or unofficial quantitative data available on regulated or unregulated encampments, ownership, social housing, private renting or household types.
10. This report is referred to herein as Pavlou, 2009.
11. See the press release of the ERRC, on 10 August 2010, at: http://www.ercc.org and http://cm.greekhelsinki.gr. In the same, see also a list of the schools involved in such practices all over Greece.

and school authorities have actively hindered access of Romani children to education by refusing to register Romani students in local schools and dispersing them to schools far away from their places of residence as well as by failing to provide school transport for Roma (ERRI and GHM, 2003; ERRI, 2003; ECRI, 2009).

Barriers to Access to Health Care and Other Social Support Services: It is not exceptional for Romani individuals to lack basic identity documents, what then makes it impossible for them to claim necessary health care and state social benefits. ERRI and GHM (2003) report that, in a number of Greek municipalities[12], local authorities have refused to register factually residing Roma as residents, effectively precluding them from access to public services (such as hospitals) necessary for the realisation of a number of fundamental social and economic rights (such as enrollment to school).

As a consequence Romani people and most particularly children are entrapped in a vicious circle, in which lack of official documents affects their health, education and living conditions (ERRI and GHM, *op.cit*. ; ECRI, 2009. See also Divani, 2008). Romani children are not sufficiently vaccinated because they fail to attend school regularly, but also because of the lack of readily-understandable information available to their mothers. But, the insufficient vaccination hinders their enrolment at school anyway.

Employment: Only few Roma are employed in the mainstream labour market, and this is mainly related to discrimination and prejudice, but also to their lack of qualifications (as a result of a low education). Most Roma living in settlements earn their income from scrap and garbage collection, while Roma in rural settlements occasionally earn a living by seasonal agricultural work. All above types of work are usually informal, thus not giving access to health or social insurance. It seems that many claim it is difficult and expensive to obtain the necessary permits, what then may lead to problems with the authorities (Abdikeeva et al., 2005).

According to the National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR, 2008), due to low levels of education and illiteracy, only an estimated 40 per cent of Roma have a job from which they can make a living. However, apart from education and housing, Roma suffer serious discrimination also in employment from members of the majority group, without exempting state and local-level officials (ECRI, 2009: 31). This is a key issue to their unemployment or under-employment.

Diversity challenges: The Roma have always posed important ethnic and cultural challenges for Greece.[13] Their phenotypic features (colour of skin, face traits) and their traditions and way of life (tent-dwelling, nomadic, traditional dress code for women, under age marriages, patriarchal extended families) make them appear alien to the Greek nation despite their centuries-long presence in the country. Even though a large part of the Roma populations in Greece are Christian, religion does not seem to matter here as a bridge between the majority population and the Roma minority. The Roma in western Thrace are also a more complex case as they are also discriminated against within their own Muslim community (Troumpeta, 2001).

12. For instance, ECRI reports that, in Spata and Aspropyrgos of the Athenian agglomeration, Roma living in settlements do not benefit from the requisite attention from the local social services. (ECRI, 2009: 32).

13. Unsurprisingly, Greek language and culture had an important impact on Romani language and culture. Words derived from Greek make up by far the largest component of the so-called "inherited lexicon" of Romani (ERRI and GHM, 2003).

Immigrants

The third category of minority groups that live in Greece are economic migrants who arrived in the country during the past two decades. We have identified here the three largest groups (see table 2 above), notably Albanians, Georgians and Ukrainians, and southeast Asians (Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Afghans), mainly because these last have been increasingly visible during the last year (although they have been present in relatively small numbers in the country for at least 2 decades) and because of their religious (in the case of southeast Asians) and sometimes phenotypical difference from the national majority population.

Albanians

Albanian migration to Greece took massively place basically in two periods: in 1991 (following the collapse of the Albanian economy and polity) and in 1997 (after another crisis due to the implosion of the financial pyramid schemes). The availability of various access points from the difficult to guard mountainous north-western border of Greece and the proximity of this latter to Albania, together with the reactivation of existent post-WWII societal networks of kinship, friendship, partnership, etc. (that stayed 'frozen' for nearly 50 years due to the isolation Enver Hoxha imposed to Albania in the 1950s) (Kokkali 2010: 161-174 and 2008: 214-218, Sintès 2002) were among the main factors that qualified Greece as by far the major migratory destination for Albanians during the 1990s. In addition the attraction of Greece's large grey economy to undocumented immigrants (who saw in this a rapid economic integration) played a role (Kokkali op.cit.).

Gradually, during the last twenty years, a substantial part of Albanian migrants have settled in Greece. Still, different patterns of migration and various ideal-types of the immigrant can be distinguished among Albanians, basically those who have brought their families in Greece and those who did not. Generally speaking, the former enjoyed much more acceptance from the local communities than the latter, who – in many cases – remained isolated from the "autochthones" and enclosed themselves in exclusively male Albanian-speaking milieus with poor linguistic abilities in Greek (Kokkali, 2010: 206-215, 303). By offering cheap, unqualified labor thus filling the gaps of the Greek economy, Albanians were firstly employed in any possible job. They have been working mainly in construction, agriculture, small industries and a number of other sectors (commerce, transport, hotels and restaurants). Gradually, some have started their own little business of cleansing or slight-repairing of apartments, in which they have been employing other Albanians, mostly relatives. Albanian women work as domestic workers, in the food and catering industry, in tourism and in agriculture. Lyberaki and Maroukis (2005) also showed that Albanian women are progressively moving out from unskilled work and cleaning services to become housewives, if they can afford it.

Georgians and Ukrainians

According to the 2001 national census, there were approximately 30,000 Georgian and more than 13,500 Ukrainian citizens living in Greece. Nikolova and Maroufof (2010) estimate that in 2008 Georgian citizens

living in Greece (both under legal and irregular status) numbered 80,000 while Ukrainians were about 30,000. Women account for 3/4s of all Ukrainians living in Greece. However during the last few years new arrivals of Ukrainian women have slowed down and it is rather members of their families that join them in Greece. By contrast among Georgians women account for slightly more than half of all migrants. Both groups are in their vast majority (81% of Georgians and 92% of Ukrainians) in an economically productive age (between 15 and 65 years of age) and more than half were between 20 and 45 years.

Georgians are for the most part Christian Orthodox while Ukrainians are Catholic, Orthodox or Uniates. Many among them have revived Greek Orthodox churches by attending Sunday mass. However, relations between Greece and Georgia or Ukraine were quite limited before 1989 and both Georgians and Ukrainians were faced with a foreign environment upon arrival in Greece. Their difference is linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and less markedly religious.

Southeast Asians (Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Afghani)

The influx of Pakistani immigrants in particular began during the 1970s but their population augmented significantly during the period between 1991 and 2003. According to the 2001 census the Pakistani community of Greece numbered more than 11,000, 92% of which came to Greece in search of employment. According to the same census, 96% of the Pakistanis in Greece were men who work mostly in manufacturing industries but also in the fields of construction and services. Based on data of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) there were at least 23,000 Pakistanis residing in Greece on 31 December 2009.

Bangladeshis are a more recent community since they began migrating to Greece after 1991. Based on the data of the 2001 census of the National Statistical Service, 94% of about 5,000 migrants from Bangladesh who resided in Greece in 2001 came with the purpose of working and were mostly employed in small shops and restaurants while 97% of them were men. Data from the Labour Force Survey however suggest that there were 13,000 Bangladeshis living in Greece at the end of 2009. Lazarescu and Broersma (2010) estimate that there are between 30,000 and 60,000 Pakistanis and approximately 20,000 Bangladeshis living in Greece today.

Both groups are characterized by a stark gender imbalance: in their overwhelming majority Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants are men. Indeed qualitative research (Lazarescu and Broersma op.cit.) suggests that most of them are married but only 20% live in Greece with their families. They are generally unable to ask for family reunification because their income is too low and probably too unstable.

Afghanis in Greece are very recent arrivals. They are not included in high ranks in the labour force survey or in the database of the Ministry of the Interior, but have been among the top three nationalities among those apprehended at the Greek Turkish borders in the period 2008-2010 (See www.astynomia.gr). Actually only in 2010 there were more than 20,000 arrests of people with Afghani citizenship at the Greek Turkish border. We therefore assume that there may be as many as 40,000 Afghanis in Greece at this time. Further research is of course needed to confirm this number.

Diversity challenges raised by immigrant groups: All immigrant groups raise important identity challenges to the Greek majority to the extent that they are ethnically alien to the Greek nation. However, these challenges have been most acutely felt in relation to Albanian citizens for a number of reasons: because Albanians are by far the most numerous immigrant community in Greece, they are visible in the labour market, in schools, in leisure, among youth, in culture and the arts. Albanians also challenge Greek identity and culture because they are very close to it: the two groups share a common history (of conflict and coexistence), common culture and traditions (of the wider Balkans). Albanian immigration touches the most sensitive points of Greek national identity as it challenges the authenticity of the Greek nation and its symbolic boundaries with its neighbouring nations. Thus, it forces the Greek Christian Orthodox majority to re-consider both its internal and external boundaries: it obliges public opinion and a variety of social institutions such as the school, the welfare state, the labour market, state authorities defending equality in the labour market and in society to re-consider what it means to be Greek today (when 10% of the population is of immigrant origin, a vast majority of whom Albanian) and what are the rights of immigrants in Greek society and polity. It is interesting to note that the religious diversity of Albanians has been largely invisible or indeed blurred not least because they have opted for an assimilatory path in this (but also in other) respect(s). By their silenced otherness they did not challenge the values and the practices of the dominant society. They are thus actually considered – and in this respect they are indeed – the most integrated migratory group in Greece (Kokkali, 2011).

The debate that has arisen in December 2009 and January through March 2010 with regard to the citizenship law reform is an interesting point in question which highlights the predominantly ethnic diversity challenges that immigration raises for Greece.

Other groups of immigrants from Eastern Europe (Ukrainians, Georgians) have not posed important ethnic or religious challenges to Greek society probably because of their lower numbers (compared e.g. to Albanians). Besides, the fact that, on the one hand, Georgians largely share with the Greek majority the Christian Orthodox faith, and, on the other, Ukrainians are overwhelmingly female migrants who usually take care of younger and/or older members of Greek families (thus being very close to these latter), seems to attenuate any ethno-cultural challenge.

The immigrant groups that have most recently raised important diversity challenges in Greece by their visibility in the urban space are Asians. While Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Afghani immigration has been largely male only (and hence has not yet posed issues in school life for instance) and is overall numerically rather small, their largely clandestine entry to Greece (crossing the Greek Turkish borders 'with the help' of migrant smuggling networks), their concentration in downtown Athens, in crammed apartments where each room is inhabited by an entire family, and most importantly their instrumentalisation during the past few years (2007 onwards) by the Greek authorities has converted them (in the media and policy discourses) to the epitomy of the 'migration evils' that Greece suffers. The question of irregular Asian migration through Turkey was related even to the discussion of the citizenship law reform in Parliament in March 2010. Yet, this is not surprising if we consider the criminalization of immigration that has taken place in Greece during

the 1990s and early 2000s and the undifferentiated use of the term 'lathrometanastefsi' (clandestine immigration) in public and media discourses, even when issues of regular migration were at stake (see Petrakou, 2001: 31-56). When discussing the new citizenship law, while the new naturalisation provisions did not concern of course irregularly staying and recently arrived aliens, several MPs used the argument of controlling and combating irregular migration to argue in favour or against the relaxation of naturalisation provisions. In the parliamentary debate Greece was presented to be in danger because it is the 'door to Europe' for millions of destitute and war-ravaged Muslims. Thus, while there has so far been only one major public issue (the construction of an official mosque in Athens, see Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2009), Asian Muslims have now started raising important religious and ethnic diversity challenges for Greek society.

Diversity, Tolerance and Integration

The minority issues for long have been treated in Greece as taboos; they have thus stayed outside the public sphere and the public debate, what then permitted the emergence of non-transparent, arbitrary and oppressive regulations. Even if some NGOs and politicians (mainly of the left) support minority rights, the public discourse is dominated by fearful attitudes on "national dangers" that correlate any claim of a particular linguistic and/or religious identity to foreign interests and irredentist aspirations (Heraklides, 1997; 2004).

According to Skoulariki (2009: 69-70) after 1990, the political discourse on the minorities in Greece has been characterised by:

- A formalistic invocation of the principle of fairness and egalitarianism.
- An obsession with national homogeneity and the fear for otherness.
- Suspicion towards minorities, which *a priori* are thought to be the "Trojan Horse" of foreign interests and a threat for the country's territorial sovereignty.
- A legalistic approach: only minorities recognised by international treaties, such as the Muslim religious minority of Thrace, are officially recognised by the state.
- A selective reference to the ethnic dimension. For example, while the Slavic origins of the Pomak language are emphasised with a view to distinguishing the Pomaks (who are Muslims) from the ethnically Turkish majority of the Muslim minority in Thrace, the Slavic language and cultural identity of the Slavic-speaking Macedonians of Greece is not recognised by the Greek state.

Despite the above situation regarding minorities, the linguistic and religious difference comes unavoidably into light, imposed by the undeniable socio-demographic changes that migration has brought to Greece. Indeed, given that in some schools of the Athenian city-centre, such as Petralona and Gazi, the foreign pupils in a class reach 50%[14], there is not any doubt that issues of otherness are here to stay.

More generally, while multiculturality in Greece is gradually being accepted as a fact, multiculturalism is seen as a normative approach that predicates the parallel (but not integrated) co-existence of different ethnic and cultural communities. By contrast, Greek policy makers and

scholars tend to favour intercultural dialogue: notably the integration of individuals (not communities) into Greek society. In the Greek debate, the intercultural approach is seen as favourable to societal cohesion and as a normative and policy approach that is in line with modernity and liberalism. In practice, however, there is little change in education, anti-discrimination or political participation policies towards this direction (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2009).

The debate on the 2010 law on citizenship and the immigrants' brand-new right to vote in the local elections is telling of this discordance, which is again related to the understanding of Greekness. While an attempt to differentiate national identity from citizenship sees gradually the light in the public discourse the reference to Greek ideals and turbulent history (1821 war of independence, Asia Minor refugees, etc.) is dominant. Indeed, as Kouki, Gropas and Triandafyllidou (2011) show in their analysis of a recent parliamentary debate on the new law, while there is a clear right-left wing rift as regards the dominant views on modern Greek identity, both views are based on the same elements of reference: national history and tradition and the national heroes. In this respect, the role of education is again put into debate. For those in favour of a civic citizenship, education is the means for becoming Greek, whereas, for those in favour of an ethnically based Greek nation, education should reinforce the existing ethno-religious conception of the nation but cannot convert to Greeks those who were born 'foreigners', that is to say of foreign parents.

The above discourses confirm, once more, the genealogical aspect of the nation related, on one hand, to the common language and ancestry, and, on the other, to Orthodoxy, which is also considered as intrinsic to Greekness.

The media and parliamentary debates regarding the construction of a mosque in Athens, on the occasion of the 2004 Olympic Games, are indicative of the dominant understandings of difference in Greece and of how religious difference, in particular, should be accommodated. In their analysis of the debates in the press, Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2009) point out that, while it is generally considered that constructing a Mosque is not only a reasonable religious freedom but also a necessary venue for the needs of the Muslims who desire to practice their faith, a significant underlying unease still exists. This latter partly concerns geo-politics and identity, thus clearly linking some practical issues of Islam (such as the construction of a mosque) with the question of national security and the relationship between Turkey and Greece. As such, the question of the mosque becomes intertwined with Greece's most significant Other (Turkey) and the West's most significant threat (violent Islamic fundamentalism) rather than being treated as part of internal arrangements within Greek society. In other words, cultural and religious differences are defined as coming from outside and/or necessarily related to a sense of threat – both military and symbolic – to the nation and its well-being (*op. cit.*, 966-968). The analogies with the discourses held on the internal minorities of Greece as "Trojan horses" of foreign factors are more than evident.

In the above debate, another central issue was the disassociation of religious and national identity. Here again, "modernity" was at stake, meaning that the establishment of a temple of worship for another faith

was considered necessary in a 'European' and democratic country like 21st century Greece. The terms 'tolerance' and 'democracy' were thus repeatedly mentioned. However, as Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2009: 969) maintain, diversity (and the tolerance of it) were recognised only as an individual private matter and not as an issue associated with the recognition of collective rights.

In the public discourse, the limits of tolerance (that is to say what and who is tolerated or considered as intolerable), apart from the above mentioned issue on the *'individual vs collective'* recognition of diversity, are also set from what is said to be the democratic values of a modern state, 21st century Greece that is. In this respect, the main argument has been that, in the name of tolerance, we cannot abort basic civil rights as for instance equality in front of the law. The case of the Muslim minority of Thrace, where the Islamic law of the shari'a is valid instead, was abundantly cited[15]. Another issue raised even if hesitantly, probably inspired from the western-European and north-American discourses on terrorism, is the Islamic veil of women. A number of articles have recently dealt with whether the veil is a symbol of fundamentalism or of culture, as well as if it is compatible with the multiculturalism experienced in Greek schools[16]. Despite its democratic, liberal and modern coverage, this discourse is undoubtedly intertwined with the same unease that has characterized the debates on the construction of a Mosque in Athens (see also Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2009).

In the above debates, the term *tolerance* is either not used at all or very scarcely. In the Greek context, tolerance (ανοχή */anohi*) corresponds to *liberal tolerance*, notably the will to tolerate practices, beliefs or behaviours with which one does not agree although one has the power to suppress them. The use of the Greek term for tolerance is so far not connected to any sense of egalitarian tolerance, notably to acceptance, let alone respect of cultural diversity.

Terms such as *pluralism* (πλουραλισμός) or *liberalism* (φιλελευθερισμός) are not used in the Greek political debate on migrants and minorities. There are no arguments made in the name of pluralism (let alone religious pluralism) nor in the name of liberalism. Liberalism is understood in the sense of right-wing neoliberal ideology not as regards diversity. The terms national heritage, national identity and the nation are often used and hotly debated as we have noted above and indeed in relation to issues pertaining to migrant diversity accommodation, integration or assimilation.

Indeed, it is the term *integration* (ένταξη) that is mostly used in Greek political and policy debates on ethnic minority and immigrant diversity. Conveniently, its meaning is often not clarified and hence can range from

- integration in a multicultural perspective (of both individual and group diversity, reconsideration of the meaning of national identity, pluralisation of national identity – but these views are held by a very small minority of left wing parties and intellectuals), to
- integration in an intercultural perspective (integrating individuals as bearers of specific cultures, view of culture as a box, promotion of dialogue between cultures, acceptance and respect of 'other' cultures, but no reconsideration of the Greek national culture and identity, nor

15. See: "Holy apartheid for the women of the minority", Eleytherotypia, Ios, 24 December 2006 (and in http://www.iospress.gr/ios2006/ios20061224.htm); "Jurists for the abolition of the Sharia in Thrace", 06 March 2010 in http://tvxs.gr/news.

16 "The crisis has exacerbated tensions in Europe", H Kathimerini, 31 January 2010), "The culture of Sabine", Ta Nea, 8 August 2005. See also "Who is afraid of Islam?", To Vima, 28 May 2006; "Hijab: a symbol or a terror?", Ta Nea, 14 May 2009; "Conference on the Muslim woman in Europe", 8 November 2008 in http://www.ert3.gr/news/et3newsbody.asp?ID=428206

of the fact that for instance migrant or minority children are of 'hybrid' cultural upbringing), and/or to

- assimilation understood as the (peaceful and welcoming but how-ever) total cultural, ethnic and linguistic assimilation of immigrants and minorities into the dominant Greek national culture and language.

Concluding Remarks

Massive immigration flows towards Greece and the consequent shift of the country from an emigration to an immigration pole bring into light and stir old, unsolved issues of the Greek national identity. Moreover, given that the majority of those new immigrants are either nationals of neighbouring states or countries related to Greece's not-so-distant past, it becomes clear that the newcomers, with their presence and their potential claims for respecting their cultural diversity, disturb old equilibriums and established orders. They challenge the idea of national security and territorial sovereignty, as well as the up-to-now crystallized idea of Greekness. Therefore, important parts of the Greek society tend to interpret any minority/immigrant claim of rights as a territorial claim of a neighbouring state that seeks to interfere in the domestic affairs.

Greece's main immigrant groups are not complete "strangers" to Greece: Albanians and "Vorioepiroti" are added to the albanophone Arvanites, by now completely assimilated by the Greek element, but who have - for long - been a distinct community (18th-19th centuries[17]); their descendants can still be found in Greece and are – in many cases – conscious of their (or at least of their fathers' and grandfathers') ethno-linguistic difference. Bulgarians are linguistically very close to a part of the recognised Muslim minority of Greece, the Pomaks, but also to the unrecognized minority of the Slavic-speaking population of the Greek region of Macedonia. Besides, the geographic proximity of this minority to the state of (the Former Yugoslav Republic of) Macedonia (in which the dominant spo-ken language is quasi identical to the one spoken by the Slavic-speaking Greeks) stirs up identity and territorial fears of various kinds.

Those fears substantiate the existing (traditional) suspicion towards minorities, but also nourish the unease of the Greek society regard-ing cultural diversity, and in particular religious – and most specifically Muslim – diversity. Despite the recent apparent changes in the general social climate (the media and parliamentary debates on diversity, the rec-ognition of the need to implement changes in the educational system, the 2010 law on citizenship and the migrants' participation to the local elections) and the undeniable fact that in the early 21st century a more flexible understanding of Greek national identity emerges (especially among elites), there seems to be little room for the accommodation of ethnic and religious diversity in practice.

The current acute economic crisis certainly does not make things any easier. Immigrants become easy scapegoats as impoverished Greeks start competing with them for jobs in the low skill sector and any claims for special measures (for Roma or immigrant children in schooling for instance) are seen through the lens of the budgetary constraints even more than before. The obvious arguments include: we have hardly enough money to provide for decent schooling for our own children. Can we really afford the extra effort for migrant children? We can hardly

[17]. Circa 1850, there was still a sizable albanophone population in Greece, located mainly in Attica, north of Euboea, etc. According to the 1928 census, the ethnic Albanian popula-tion reached 19,000 people, but it seems that this figure is underesti-mated and that we should instead consider a figure around 65,000 people (Poulton, 1991)

save our jobs and make ends meet, how can we bother about the special problems that migrants and their families face? And if Afghanis suffer persecution in their own country, does this mean that they have to come here to be fed? We cannot stand any more foreigners. The country has reached its limits.

In this negative climate the notion of tolerance can provide for a fruitful normative and policy basis because it allows for different groups and claims to be treated differently. Liberal tolerance can be defended for a variety of diversity claims that do not necessarily require a whole-hearted embracement by the majority population but just their tacit approval for letting be. Such issues include the codes of dress, the customs and life choices including issues of gender equality of minority and immigrant people, to the extent that these habits do not infringe Greek civil law. In addition there can be a claim for egalitarian tolerance, that is for acceptance and recognition of specific claims to cultural and religious diversity that require public recognition and state support to be satisfied. Such claims include the construction of one or more official Muslim temples in Athens; the introduction of alternative religion classes in schools; and the recognition of the native and immigrant populations' contribution to the Greek history and to society and economy today. Last but not least, the principle of non-tolerance can also provide for a good basis for forbidding practices that are against the Greek Constitution and Greek civil law (for instance some provisions of shari-a family law that treat daughters and wives as unequal to their male counterparts, marriages at the age of puberty, and female circumcision). Ultimately the issues that will be subject to non-tolerance, liberal tolerance and egalitarian tolerance will have to be decided on a case by case basis and in relation to their specific context. It is worth noting that deciding what is tolerable and intolerable is also a way of drawing boundaries between 'us', the ingroup, and 'them', the outgroup(s).

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