

## 8. TOWARDS MINORITY POLICIES BEYOND RECIPROcity? THE EU, GREECE AND TURKEY

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According to the commonly accepted nationalist paradigm, minorities are not a part of the unity to which the nation aspires. In a way, they exist against the ‘will of the nation’ and their very existence is tolerated but not accepted by the majority. Tolerance is circumscribed by a range of attitudes and sensitivities, from ‘positive hospitality’ (*Wirtbarkeit*) in a Kantian sense, to assimilation and/or attempts at elimination both of which reflect the societal objective of being ‘among selves’ within a homogenous population. Yet while this nineteenth-century nationalist dream of a “pure” nation seems to have resurfaced in the twenty-first century, it has become nearly impossible to achieve, in Europe, for at least three reasons. First, the progressive denationalization of governance has imposed the transfer of sovereignty to supranational political, cultural and economic structures. Second, access to transportation, although it exposes the huge and persistent gap in wealth between North and South, has empowered transnational communities. Third, there has been a shift towards micro, autonomous entities (e.g., regions, federate entities, Euro-regions) which has fostered the ongoing creation and reshaping of entities within the nation.

Nevertheless, it is too early to announce the death of the nation-state which would result in “majorization of minorities” i.e., the end of the dominance of certain ethno-cultural groups in a given nation-state. In many such states, including those of Southeast Europe and not least Greece and Turkey, the dominant group has employed radical measures in its resistance to the pressures emanating from their multicultural societies. Such behaviour begs a question: Is it possible for minorities to pursue, obtain or preserve their rights if they fear reprisals by the state? What is at stake, in Arendt’s terms, is more than rights but “the right to have rights” or what Simmel conceived of as the legitimate

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right of groups to exist.<sup>2</sup> To this day, the question of whether a group of people (as opposed to individuals) has a legitimate right to exist remains a controversial feature of public discourse in Greece with regard to the Turks of Greece, and in Turkey with regard to the much diminished Greek community. On both sides, the existential question of what it means to be Greek or Turk is intertwined with the perception that the respective minorities present a danger to Greek/Turkish interests.<sup>3</sup>

In this chapter, I explore the situation of the two ‘reciprocal’ minorities in the context of societal Europeanization in the two countries and its impact on the legitimization of minorities as either citizens or as groups. It can be assumed that the process of Europeanization played a facilitating role in the recognition of minorities’ right to exist not merely as bearers of legal rights but as members of society. But the process of structural Europeanization in Greece and Turkey can, at best, normalize the existence of the two minorities. The question at hand is not the formal protection of these minorities by Greek or Turkish laws, but whether their respective nation-states can internalise

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<sup>2</sup> The problem of legitimacy is discussed in the work of Georg Simmel, especially in his *The Philosophy of Money*, (London: Routledge 1990), [*Philosophie der Geldes*, (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1900)]. For a thorough analysis of Simmel’s treatment of legitimacy see Pierre Noreau, ‘Le droit comme forme de socialisation: Georg Simmel et le problème de légitimité’, *Revue française de science politique*, vol. 45, no. 2, April 1995, pp. 56–78. Simmel makes a clear distinction between granting individual and collective legitimacy to exist. The latter implies a direct correlation between fear for survival as a group and acceptance of the other. In other words, legitimacy can be granted only if the dominant group (i.e., the national majority) trusts that the existence of the dominated groups (i.e., minorities) will not threaten its own existence.

<sup>3</sup> There is a major definitional problem regarding both minorities. In Greece, the intellectual and political elite of the minority demands ethnic recognition of the minority as being ‘Turkish’, something which the Greek authorities resist by arguing that in the Treaty of Lausanne, minority rights are granted to ‘Muslims’ and not to ‘Turks’. Moreover, the minority is divided linguistically between Turks, Pomaks and Roma. It is interesting to see that notable Pomaks and Roma people of the minority also claim recognition as ‘Turks’ insofar as this is tantamount to claiming protection by Turkey. As for the Greeks of Turkey, they were categorized under the Ottoman Empire in a religious fashion, and this remains the case in modern Turkey. The term ‘*Rum*’ was used which is historically associated with Rome and distinct from ‘*Tunan*’ which means citizen of Greece. The designation of *Rum* is not disputed by the minority. On the definition of the Greek minority of Turkey, see Samim Akgönül, *De la nomination en turc actuel: appartenances, perceptions, croyances*, (Istanbul: Isis, 2006). About the identical divisions of the Muslim minority of Greece see Olga Demetriou, ‘Prioritizing “ethnicities”’: The uncertainty of Pomak-ness in the urban Greek Rhodope’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2004, pp. 95–119. This subject is also discussed in Samim Akgönül, *Une communauté, deux États: la minorité turco-musulmane de Thrace occidentale*, (Istanbul: Isis, 1999), pp. 220–244.

their political belonging to the ‘nation’. This, I argue, ought to be the core feature of what has been touted as our post-national era.

Such a condition appears in cases where the majority group attains a level of “enlightenment” that allows it to accept the existence of the minority without further debate. In this context, the process of Europeanization paradoxically goes hand in hand with a more or less sincere discourse of multiculturalism. In many countries, multiculturalism is a societal fact which does not require an explicit public policy authorized by the government. In the UK, for instance, the heterogeneity of the population is recognized and accepted in the official rhetoric as well as by public opinion. In other countries such as Canada, recognition and acceptance of minorities is very much at the heart of the identity of the polity, even if this is not always a straightforward process<sup>4</sup> and public policies are thus designed to protect and promote what Kymlicka calls multiculturalism.<sup>5</sup> It is clear that this proactive approach is shared neither by most EU member states nor by Greece and Turkey. Quite the contrary, members and institutions of the Greek-Orthodox minority of Turkey and the Turkish-Muslim minority of Greece have not entirely realized that the minority status does not need to have a degrading connotation. The perception of minority status as demeaning is a legacy both of Ottoman society and Greek and Turkish nationalism. Yet, the last decade has witnessed important changes affecting the two minorities.

#### *Societal change in Greece and in Turkey*

A minority does not emerge *sui generis*. Two simultaneous processes have to take place in order for a group to qualify as a minority. The first is a quantitative process. A group is either diminished through massacres, exiles, population exchanges, etc., or the group flees from a country due to economic and political conditions as well as ethnic persecution, finding itself a minority in the host country. The second is

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<sup>4</sup> See the Islamic family law issue: Sherene Razack, ‘The “Sharia Law Debate” in Ontario: The Modernity/Premodernity Distinction in Legal Efforts to Protect Women from Culture’, *Feminist Legal Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1, April 2007, pp. 3–32.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Will Kymlicka and Keith Banting, *Multiculturalism and Welfare State: recognition and redistribution in contemporary democracies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

a qualitative process.<sup>6</sup> The majority, i.e., the group that considers itself as the legitimate ruler of a territory, marginalizes non-dominant groups. The majority constantly expects proof of the loyalty of the minority such that the minority is put in the position of constantly having to prove its belonging to the nation without ever having that belonging affirmed.<sup>7</sup> A minority comes into existence due to the combination of these two processes, as was the case in Greece and Turkey. As a matter of fact, in nation-states that regard multiculturalism as potentially destabilizing—as is the case in both Greece and Turkey—the majority perceives minorities as its Other. Thus, exclusion of the minority becomes a vital component of the majority's own existence. In this respect, the Other which emerged within the context of the nineteenth-century continues to have implications for the twenty-first century.

A minority is inseparable from the nation in which it resides. Where there is no nation, there is no minority. Since in pre-modern empires, *a fortiori* in the Ottoman Empire, one cannot speak of a nation, there were no minorities so to speak. The Ottomans were imperial but not in the sense of western colonialism in which possessions were remote and retained their own cultural and ethnic characteristics to some degree. In the Ottoman Empire, which in the eighteenth- and even the nineteenth-century had its centre of gravity around the Aegean, the population had varying religious beliefs but shared a common way of life and cultural traditions.

Thus, all minority movements in the Ottoman Empire were perceived by the regime as rebellion against the system. If minority agitation was subdued, it entered the annals of history as a suppressed revolt. If an uprising succeeded it became a war for independence. This was the case with the 'Greek revolt' as well as with the 'War of Independence' led by Mustafa Kemal. Such confrontations serve two purposes. One, of course, is to liberate a territory and the population considered to

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<sup>6</sup> The distinction between quantitative and qualitative processes was elaborated by Serge Moscovici who, following Max Weber, introduced a concept of domination as the essential element to qualify a group as minority [Serge Moscovici, *Psychologie des minorités actives*, (Paris: PUF, 1976)]. The terms, 'minoriation' and 'minorization', are frequently used in French sociology. For a theorization of this dual process, refer to Philippe Blanchet, 'Essai de théorisation d'un processus complexe', in Dominique Huck Dominique and Philippe Blanchet, eds., *Minorations, minorisations, minorités: études exploratoires*, (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2005), pp. 17–47.

<sup>7</sup> Dan Rabinowitz, 'The Palestinian Citizens of Israel, the Concept of Trapped Minority and the Discourse of Transnationalism in Anthropology', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2001, pp. 64–85.

be under occupation. The second is to create a heroic myth, necessary for the construction of a national psyche.

Nations are founded and built upon victories and defeats, on ‘catastrophes’ and traumas which form pillars of the collective memory and communal association. The pains are magnified and celebrated alongside successes and victories, gluing the community together in shared pride over heroic acts undertaken in the name of the nation, and in veneration of the mythic founders. As such, Greek and Turkish literature is saturated with texts about national suffering. Vénézis said that Greeks, as a community, build their identity on pain.<sup>8</sup> The same can be said for Turks. A Turkish sociologist speaks about ‘exorcist texts,’<sup>9</sup> designed to avoid repetition of the foundational trauma. I would argue that, on the contrary, nations need this kind of collective pain in order to continue their existence as nations. The Greek nation had already been built before the *Mikriasiatiki Katastrofi*, the Turkish nation began to be constructed during the the *Kurtuluş Savaşı* (which narrates the same event from an opposite point of view). Combined with the compulsory exchange of populations, the 1920s were a traumatic decade for both nations. These years furnished each nation with its ‘constitutive enmity’,<sup>10</sup> its Other, in the form of Greeks for Turks and Turks for Greeks.

That said, the Other of the Greek is not only the Turk, but also the Slav or Catholic. And the Turkish nation was not exclusively built in opposition to ‘Greek-ness’; ‘Ottoman-ness’ and ‘Arabic-ness’ were also constituting Others the formation of the Turkish national mindset and self-perception. But nationalist sentiments in Greece and Turkey were fed by their continued affirmation of their identities as nation-states in opposition. One of the principal problems related to the issue of nation self-identification was ‘purification’ of the population, which was

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<sup>8</sup> For more on the Greek nation building process in Vénézis’ work see Herkül Millas, *Ayvabık ve Vénézis: Yunan edebiyatında Türk imajı*, (Istanbul: İletişim, 1998), in English see Iraklis (Hercules) Millas, ‘Tourkokratia: History and the Image of Turks in Greek Literature’, *Southeastern Society and Politics*, vol. 11, no. 1, March 2006, pp. 47–60.

<sup>9</sup> Kirtunç considers that the literary texts which describe massacres, wars, and exile in crude detail allow for the expression of pain so that reproduction of the traumatic experience can be avoided. According to her, these are ‘exorcist texts’. Ayşe Lahur Kirtunç and Esra Öztarhan, ‘Borders Crossed and Uncrossed: The reciprocal Enforced Migration of Greek and Turkish Diaspora after the Lausanne Agreement’, *33rd Annual Popular Culture Association Conference*, 17/4/2003, New Orleans.

<sup>10</sup> Bernard Lory, ‘Strates historiques des relations bulgare-turques’, *CEMOTI*, vol. 15, 1993, p. 150.

operationalized by the inclusion of those considered to be part of the nation and the exclusion of those regarded as foreigners. The compulsory exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey sought to achieve this ‘purification’ and, unfortunately, was quite successful.

Otherness has a twofold effect on the nation-building process, and therefore on the reinforcement of the identification attributed to someone as a member or an outsider with regard to a given group. When Turks think about the ‘Greek’, they see someone dissimilar from them, an Other, which is potentially threatening to ‘Turkishness’. Even if the Greek or Turkish Other appears benign, its Otherness becomes problematic when applied to Greek and Turkish minorities within the territorial confines of the two nation-states. For, when enemies are distant entities, members of the nation may suspect that differences are exaggerated. In the case of minorities whose Otherness is proximate and thus threatening, the entire set of characteristics ascribed to the group is verifiable on daily basis. Such demonization of the Other ‘within’ has been the plight of the Greeks of Turkey as well as the Turks of Greece. The reaction of the dominant ethnic group to the perceived threatening image of the enemy within has led to the economic, political and social marginalization of minorities. The majority persistently has sought to persuade or coerce the members of minorities to amalgamate with the majority group. But when members of minorities ‘exit’ their community to join the other side in a visible way, i.e., through practices like abandonment of their forms of worship, use of the language of the majority, mixed marriages, and adoption of ideological attitudes conforming with the majority’s ideals, this same majority may emphasize more rigid aspects of its identity. Fearing the adulteration of their own kind, they emphasize the Otherness of proximate groups rather than the Otherness of enemies from afar.<sup>11</sup> This leads to the double marginalization of the individuals or groups in question. First, they are marginalized by the majority group in that the earnestness of their efforts to assimilate is questioned in order to justify the rejection of ‘polluting’ newcomers. Second, by leaving their own brethren and thus

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<sup>11</sup> Samim Akgönül, ‘From the “constitutive enmity” to the “otherness of proximity”’. Turkish and Greek minorities in the nation-making process in Greece and Turkey’, conference at the colloquium *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797–1896)*, King’s College, London, 6–10/9/2006.

relinquishing their original identity, they become 'traitors' to their group. In this context, is it possible to assert that the EU has transformed the treatment of minorities? Can we say that the marginalization of Turks in Greece and virtual disappearance of Greeks in Turkey has been mitigated by the process of Europeanization which has been gaining momentum in the last decades?

Unquestionably, both societies have been affected by their engagement with the West, engagement characterized by mixed feelings in that the West has long been considered a rival, different and even dangerous entity. For Greek society, the West was Catholic on the one hand, and imperialist on the other. Similarly, for Turks, the West represented Christianity, as well as an invader and a colonizer. Since the liberalization of the two societies—beginning in 1974 in Greece with the fall of the junta and in 1983 in Turkey with the return to democracy after the military coup in 1980—demonization of the West has abated and Western social and cultural values have infiltrated Greek and Turkish societies.

From this point of view, we can assert that Europeanization was able to transform—partly—'multiculturality' in Greece and in Turkey into 'multiculturalism', at least in public discourse (since the assumption that multiculturalism is a common political value across Europe would be nothing but naïve). Since the 1990s, the concepts of nation and state have undergone significant transformations in Europe and this has affected Greece and Turkey. Due to the fact that the treatment of minorities in the two countries is reflective to some degree of the meaning that they attach to the concept of nation, the minorities are among the first to feel the impact of public discussions on what it means to belong to the nation.

Two structural factors help explain change in the perception of the conceptualisation of the nation in Europe. First, a series of historical changes have transformed the internal dynamic of post-World War II Europe. The idea of Europe has been transformed from one in which Europe was about peace diplomacy into one in which Europe is about world markets, free trade and cross-border market economies. With the rise of popular support for a politically powerful and viable Europe in the international arena, the European Union was established. The collapse of the Soviet system led to a Europe based on a common identity in which the ethnic and cultural diversity of eastern and western

Europe was united under a single geopolitical umbrella.<sup>12</sup> These were intertwined processes, in which all stages continued to develop without displacing the preceding ones. At the same time, debates over what constitutes European-ness have piqued reflection about what ought to be the criteria of belonging to a European identity. Meanwhile, protection of European minorities has improved, especially when juxtaposed with the situation of non-European populations living in Europe that have become increasingly marginalized. The effects of Europe's transformation can also be observed in Greece and Turkey, and can be described as a *push* factor for the more effective protection of the minorities living in the two countries.

The second structural reason is the *pull* factor which is a consequence of unprecedented developments with regard to the locus of sovereignty. That is, sovereignty is increasingly being displaced to the supranational, the sub-national, and the transnational. This has put pressure the nation-state, resulting in the emergence of exclusivist nationalist sentiments whose objective has been to prevent assimilation of the minority into the mainstream. As such, the recent rise of nationalism in Turkey and in Greece is mirrored across Europe, exemplified by the proposal of French President Nicolas Sarkozy to create a 'Ministry of Immigration and National Identity.' The countries of southeast Europe are also receptive to the upsurge in nationalist sentiment due to their multiethnic history.

Adoption of western values has led to greater attention to the protection of the two minorities in Greece and Turkey. It has also indirectly created resentment towards these groups. Moreover, in spite of an undeniable warming in Greek-Turkish relations—which will be analyzed in the following section—the feeling that minorities represent Others persists. That said, the development of civil society and the widening of free speech, especially in the 1990s has made it possible for the minorities to voice their opinions both inside and outside their country of residence. Greek and Turkish intellectuals have joined forces with their minority counterparts to campaign for improvements in minority rights. For example, a segment of the Turkish humanist and anti-nationalist left has demonstrated its commitment to the rights of

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<sup>12</sup> With regard to the argument that European identity construction (Europe of Peace, Europe of Market, Europe of Political Union and Europe of Identity) see Samim Akgönül, 'La Turquie dans l'Union européenne?', *Policy Paper 18*, (Paris: Ifri, September 2005).

minorities. And minority newspapers like *Agos*<sup>13</sup> (Armenian) and *Şalom* (Jewish) have deliberately chosen Turkish as their language of publication so as to play a role in raising awareness on minority issues, even if they only reach very few Turkish readers without minority background.<sup>14</sup> In Greece too, a number of universities in Athens and Thessalonica are participating in a movement seeking to recognize and support the Turkish (Muslim) minority.<sup>15</sup> Groups such as IOS<sup>16</sup> openly criticise the ostrich-like policy of the Greek authorities who take refuge behind court decisions (especially decisions on the ‘Turkish’ character of the minority) to avoid changing the course of public policy.<sup>17</sup>

As a consequence, two contradictory processes have taken place in Greece and Turkey. One is Westernisation of norms and permeation of multicultural values among the intellectual elite. The second is radical resistance to addressing minority demands in religious circles in Greece<sup>18</sup> and in nationalist circles in Turkey. It is important to note that, contrary to Turkish nationalist opinion, the conservative political class in Turkey in the 2000s with its clear attachment to Muslim values has adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the non-Muslim minorities in the country. These circles, part of a new conservative elite, may believe that religious liberty for non-Muslims will undermine the stern secularism of the Kemalists. Having said that, it must be noted that talk of improving the religious rights of the non-Muslims (e.g., reopening of the Orthodox Halki Seminary) has not for the time being translated into concrete policy changes.

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<sup>13</sup> The editor of *Agos*, Hrant Dink was assassinated on January 19, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> In contrast, the Greek press in Turkey decided against publishing Turkish pages in its newspapers in order to protect the minority language.

<sup>15</sup> See for example works of Konstantinos Tsitselikis of Thessaloniki University on the Muslim Minority in or on the Minority education program by Anna Frangoudaki of Athens University: ‘National & Capodistrian University of Athens Program for the education of Muslim Children’ [museduc@ecd.uoa.gr](mailto:museduc@ecd.uoa.gr)

<sup>16</sup> IOS, meaning virus in Greek, is a group of journalists which denounces the nationalism and the shortcoming of the legal apparatus in Greece. Through thematic files published Sundays in *Eleutherotypia*, this group covers, in a striking way, topics such as the Muslim minority, the school textbooks, the mention of the religion on the identity cards, etc. The group also manages an Internet site: [www.iospress.gr](http://www.iospress.gr).

<sup>17</sup> *Eleutherotypia*, 04/03/2007.

<sup>18</sup> See the polemic over the removal of religious affiliation from identity cards in accordance with the European demands: Lina Molokotos-Liederman, ‘Identity crisis: Greece, Orthodoxy, and the European Union’, *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, vol. 8, no. 3, October 2003, pp. 291–315.

*Bilateral relations: Sources of a new momentum*

Directly or indirectly, minority questions have affected bilateral relations. The main source of conflict between Greece and Turkey after 1923 and during the 1930s was what to do with those who were forcibly exchanged, and what to do with those who remained.<sup>19</sup> Starting from the 1950s, other problems emerged, in particular in Cyprus and the Aegean Sea, and the minorities became the bargaining chips in bilateral conflict.<sup>20</sup>

Historically, Greek-Turkish relations have experienced major ups and downs. Since the late 1990s, the two countries, and even the two nations, have embarked on a process of rapprochement which has had beneficial implications for the two minorities. This period was preceded, however, by the extreme tension of the 1980s and 1990s. Greek-Turkish relations deteriorated from 1980 through the 1990s in four distinct areas:

First, the Cyprus question became more complicated due to the Europeanization of the conflict with the accession to the EU of the Republic of Cyprus. Tensions also worsened over national security issues, especially with the *doctrine of common defence* set up between Athens and Nicosia in the autumn of 1993 which was clearly directed against Turkey and, fuelled Ankara's anger. Moreover, the failure of the Annan Plan due to the Greek Cypriot veto and the fact that this had no ramifications for the accession of the Republic of Cyprus created a sentiment of imbalanced treatment among Turks, a feeling which was not completely unfounded. A second field of conflict during the 1990s was the Aegean. In this period, the question of 'grey zones' was added to a list of sources of conflict concerning territorial waters, the continental shelf, the Flight Information Region and the demilitarization of the Aegean Islands. Grey zones are sections of the Aegean Sea, which are very close to the Turkish coasts and which have small islets of rocks the sovereignty of which became a source of conflict between

<sup>19</sup> See the recently published book of Damla Demiröz, *Savaşın Barışa Giden Yol, Atatürk Venizelos Dönemi Türkiye-Yunanistan İlişkileri*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Samim Akgönül, 'Chypre et les minorités gréco-turques: chronique d'une prise d'otage', *Gremmo-Monde arabe contemporain, Cahiers de recherches*, 29 'Recherches en cours sur le problème chypriote', 2001, pp. 37-51.

the two countries. A well-known example of such a dispute was the crisis of 1996 over the small islets of Imia/Kardak.

A third area in which Greek-Turkish relations were marked by tension in the 1990s was their respective relations with the EU. Turkey accused Athens using its veto to block Turkey's integration with the Union. The Turkish authorities considered the Luxembourg Summit of December 1997, at which the candidacy of Cyprus was confirmed and that of Turkey denied a confirmation of Greek (and German) exclusionary attitudes. Since then, there has been a remarkable change in the Greek approach to Turkey's EU bid. Sceptics have interpreted this change to mean that Athens has bequeathed the role of the spoiled child of Europe to Nicosia, while realists have argued that it is a demonstration of Greece acquiescence to the idea that a Turkey within the EU is less of a threat than a Turkey outside.

Last but not least, Greek-Turkish relations in the last decade of the twentieth century worsened due to a very sensitive subject: the Kurdish issue. Turkey long charged Greece not only of supporting the PKK politically, but also of providing military training to its members. This perception was fed by Greek parliamentarians' visits to Abdullah Öcalan in 1994 and 1996 in Syria, the strategic alliance between Greece and Syria—a country which supported the PKK—in contradistinction to the military alliance between Turkey and Israel. Finally, Greece's Lavrion refugee camp was a source of bilateral hostility, as the Turkish authorities believed that PKK militants received military training at the camp.

These four factors played a key role in the Greek-Turkish conflict. In an apparently unending ebb and flow, one or another of these issues would sweep the agenda, and enrage public opinion and the media, shaping the political agenda in both countries. That said, it would be inaccurate to assume that the rapprochement of 1999 came out of nowhere.

Even under the tense conditions of the 1990s, several non-political 'platforms' for dialogue were developed in the form of civil, industrial and artistic initiatives. The annual Dikili Festival, which gathers people from the two coasts of the Aegean (primarily the inhabitants of Dikili and Lesbos), bi-communal concerts organized in Cyprus with the participation of popular young Turkish and Greek singers, and the engagement of two important public intellectuals, Mikis Theodorakis

and Zülfü Livaneli became models for cross-cultural dialogue.<sup>21</sup> It is necessary to add to this list the involvement of some Greek and Turkish politicians at the behest of business leaders in bi-national meetings organized by the Greek-Turkish Council of Businessmen.<sup>22</sup> Also worth mention are the reconciliation which has occurred between the Greek 'lobby' of the United States and circles connected to the contentious personality of Fethullah Gülen.<sup>23</sup>

A series of political events also helped prepare the grounds for reconciliation. The most striking of these occurred in 1999 with the arrest of the most wanted man in Turkey, the leader of PKK, Abdullah Öcalan. The fact that Öcalan was captured by Turkish militia in Kenya when he was leaving the Greek Embassy<sup>24</sup> and carrying a Cypriot diplomatic passport<sup>25</sup> (not to mention the fact that he passed through Greece on two occasions before arriving in Kenya), was taken as proof of the involvement of certain Greek officials with the PKK. While this might have led one to expect a rise in bilateral tensions, Turkish public opinion focused on the arrest itself rather than alleged

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<sup>21</sup> The 'Dikili Festivities of Peace and Democracy' started in 1986 in the shadow of the military coup of 1980. It was an initiative of intellectuals which attracted a small number of artists involved in the Greek-Turkish friendship. Since then, the festival has become an eagerly anticipated annual event on both sides of the Aegean sea. For more information about this festival see [www.dikilifestivali.com.tr](http://www.dikilifestivali.com.tr).

Joint concerts with Turkish and Greek singers have become commonplace thanks to the initiatives of Mikis Theodorakis, Zülfü Livaneli and Maria Farandouri in the 1980s. Since 2004, cultural events such as the festival of Güzelyurt/Gelveri are also held in Cyprus.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.deik.org.tr/councils.asp?councilId=13>

<sup>23</sup> Fethullah Gülen is the leader of an ideological/political movement whose followers are known in Turkish as 'Fethullahçı'. The group is heir to the mystical Nurcu brotherhood founded by Said-i Nursi in the 1930s. A former imam, Gülen is now at the head of an empire that owns newspapers, television channels and funds private Muslim schools throughout the world. A network of other associations surrounds the movement. Gülen, who lives in self-imposed exile in the United States, remains a source of controversy in Turkey. His position favouring greater religious freedom for non-Muslims in Turkey is considered by secular Kemalists as a step in the direction of Islamization of the regime. Calls for inter-religious dialogue have become a staple of Gülen's movement which supports, for example, the reopening of the Halki Seminary. For more on this movement see Elisabeth Özdalga, 'Worldly asceticism in Islamic casting: Fethullah Gülen's inspired piety and activism', *Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 9, no. 17, Autumn 2000, pp. 83–104 and also Ömer Caha and Bülent Aras, 'Fethullah Gülen and his Liberal "Turkish Islam" Movement', *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 4, December 2000, available online: <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2000/issue4/jv4n4a4.html>

<sup>24</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 17/02/1999.

<sup>25</sup> In the name of Lavaros Mavros, *Cumhuriyet*, 20/02/1999.

Greek complicity in his attempts to remain free. In fact, Turkish Foreign Minister İsmail Cem made reconciliatory statements towards Greece in May, which were backed up a month later by remarks in a similar vein by Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit. The comments were tantamount to an invitation to Athens to join the discussion table and open a new page in Greek-Turkish relations.<sup>26</sup>

During the days that followed the capture of Öcalan another factor emerged in bilateral relations: Giorgios Papandreou heir to the Papandreou dynasty replaced Theodoros Pangalos as Greek foreign minister. A young, US-educated politician, Papandreou was already known in the international circles for his liberal position and Western political values, evident in his support in 1998 for a proposal to abolish Article 19 of the Greek law on nationality,<sup>27</sup> a measure deemed by scholars, experts and human rights activists as “the last discriminatory law of Europe.” Prior to his appointment as foreign minister, he had served as the Minister of European Affairs in the Simitis government, a post of eminent importance in the eyes of the Prime Minister.

His political will and humanist vision of international affairs made it possible to take the initiative. Following a meeting of the two foreign ministers in New York<sup>28</sup>—an encounter which incidentally took place in the context of another burgeoning crisis in the Aegean,<sup>29</sup> the Greek government made a reconciliatory move by unofficially recognizing the ‘Turkishness’ of the minority in Western Thrace.<sup>30</sup> Turkey and the minority elite had long called for public recognition of the ‘Turkishness’ of the minority in Western Thrace, in contrast to Greek authorities’ traditional preference for the term ‘Muslim minority.’ Athens had long justified its use of the latter expression with references to the Treaty of Lausanne which had institutionalised the existence of the ‘Muslim’ community, composed not only of Turks, but also of Pomaks (Slavophones) and Roma. Importantly, Papandreou did not acknowledge the minority as being homogeneously Turkish as it is portrayed in the Turkish media, but he officially recognized that the minority in Western Thrace was in part constituted by Turks who thus were entitled to the right to call

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<sup>26</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 18/06/1999. About this ‘new page’ see Samim Akgönül, *Vers une nouvelle donne dans les relations gréco-turques?*, *Les Dossiers de l’IFEA*, no. 6, April 2001.

<sup>27</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 13/06/1998.

<sup>28</sup> The call for the meeting came from Papandreou, *Cumhuriyet*, 30/06/1999.

<sup>29</sup> On the island of Angathonisi see *Cumhuriyet*, 01/06/1999; on a Greek submarine see *Cumhuriyet*, 17/06/1999.

<sup>30</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 28/07/1999.

themselves Turkish.<sup>31</sup> From this perspective, Papandreou's statement was not revolutionary in nature, but rather represented continuity with Greek state policy on the minority.

Conversely, and maybe most importantly, a round of bilateral meetings was organised after the initiative of Cem and Papandreou. Some within Greek and Turkish diplomatic circles regarded the new platform for dialogue with mixed feelings and scepticism. On one hand, the radical press in Greece accused Papandreou of making unnecessary concessions to Turkey,<sup>32</sup> On the other, a number of Turkish diplomats pronounced that the dialogue was 'cosmetic'<sup>33</sup> and 'hopeless'.<sup>34</sup> According to these circles, the efforts of Cem and Papandreou were but lip service to their respective liberal constituencies, and since there was no substantive change in the two countries' approaches to one another, there could be no new deal.<sup>35</sup>

Indeed, the process of reconciliation which had been launched in February 1999 was political and had no real popular base. This appeared to change in the summer of the same year, specifically at 3:07 in the morning of August 17th, when an earthquake of 7.4 magnitude shook the western and southwestern parts of the Marmara region in Turkey. Within hours images of the catastrophe were broadcast around the world, with first estimates of the death toll and scenes of massive destruction generating a massive outpouring of sympathy. The Greek people were among those who demonstrated the greatest empathy. The outpouring of solidarity was returned when another earthquake hit the suburbs of Athens on September 8th. Although this earthquake was lesser in magnitude, it produced a feeling of a shared tragedy and camaraderie among ordinary Greeks and Turks. The experience of the earthquakes gave rise to three types of bilateral peace initiatives.

#### *Private initiatives*

Private initiatives began with humanitarian assistance, such as the sending of teams to rescue victims trapped under rubble. Soon, and bolstered by climate of reconciliation, such initiatives soon took on diverse forms. Not only artists and intellectuals, but also ordinary citizens were keen to

<sup>31</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 02/08/1999.

<sup>32</sup> *To Vima*, 29/07/1999.

<sup>33</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 29/07/1999.

<sup>34</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 28/09/1999.

<sup>35</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 17/07/1999.

participate. Both the Greek population and the Greek Diaspora became involved.<sup>36</sup> Greek athletes, for example, launched an initiative under the slogan “Sport mitigates the pain and brings people together.” Greek Olympic champions paid a visit to Turkey to deliver aid from Greece.<sup>37</sup> And basketball and football matches between Turkish and Greek teams were organized to raise funds for earthquake victims.

Not surprisingly, old hands in Greek-Turkish dialogue also took the stage. Popular artists like Zülfü Livaneli, Mikis Theodorakis and Maria Farandouri organised concerts for the victims and made other efforts to bring together the two peoples. Other singers joined efforts to help the victims,<sup>38</sup> launching what would eventually become joint cultural events.

### *Civil society initiatives*

Civil society efforts to promote reconciliation were perhaps the most important both in terms of their sheer number and their consequences. Not surprisingly, the first initiatives came from rescue organizations in the wake of the earthquakes. While the scope of such activities was limited to humanitarian assistance, journalists at the time were keen to have rescue workers characterize their work as being in the service of Greek-Turkish relations.<sup>39</sup> Other humanitarian aid organizations and rescue missions appeared to carry out their work without attaching any particular agenda to their actions.

Among the most involved civil society actors was the Orthodox Church. At a local (Istanbul), as well as on the international level, the Church appeared to be deeply affected by this tragedy. In the days immediately following the earthquake, the Patriarch Bartholomew launched a call for help in the parishes, declaring that unoccupied churches in Istanbul could be used to help and house those who had lost their homes.<sup>40</sup> The American, Canadian and Australian Orthodox

<sup>36</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 01/09/1999.

<sup>37</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 02/09/1999.

<sup>38</sup> *NTV*, 18/10/1999, the concert gathering 2000 people in Olympia.

<sup>39</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 10/09/1999. To a journalist who was pointing out that one of the survivors rescued by the Turkish organization AKUT was a Greek Cypriot, the rescuer replied “we, we are speaking the language of life, politics is the business of the politicians”.

<sup>40</sup> *NTV*, 30/08/1999.

Churches launched similar relief programmes,<sup>41</sup> although Greece's Orthodox Church did not take part in these activities.

Other more general and ongoing initiatives include that of the Greek Federation of Bank Employee Unions (OTOE) which visited Turkey in order to start cooperation with the Turkish unions.<sup>42</sup> The Turkish-Greek Business Council founded by tycoon Rahmi Koç—and which had been suspended during the Öcalan crisis—also resumed its activities under the presidency of the businessman Şarık Tara.<sup>43</sup>

Another noteworthy initiative came from journalists. Needless to say, the media plays an important and usually a detrimental role in the Greek-Turkish relations. Populism, sensationalism and the desire to shock are common features of the populist media in both countries. Indeed, the media is arguably responsible the creation of the İmía/Kardak crisis in 1996 an episode which nearly escalated into an armed conflict.<sup>44</sup> Since media-fuelled public opinion can shape government policy, the commitment of journalists to reconciliation is of paramount importance. In this context, it is remarkable that with only a few exceptions news agencies—from pro-government organs to neutral institutions to opposition mouthpieces—adopted more or less similar attitudes and language when it came to trumpeting rapprochement.<sup>45</sup>

#### *Government initiatives*

The proliferation of individual and public efforts to bring the two nations closer begs the question as to whether such initiatives eventually contributed to the formation of new minority policies. It appears that Papandreou, Cem and their respective teams were in fact seeking, within the framework of “seismic diplomacy” Cem, to convince their more conservative political circles, to go beyond humanitarian cooperation and use the goodwill generated by the earthquakes to to accomplish bigger things on the bilateral front.

After the meeting of the two foreign ministers, official initiatives were taken in two areas. The first concerned an issue which had long been on the agenda of internal and external critics: purging Greek

<sup>41</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 31/08/1999.

<sup>42</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 03/09/1999.

<sup>43</sup> *NTV*, 09/10/1999.

<sup>44</sup> See the January 1996 issues of *Hürriyet*, *Sabah*, *Eleftherothipia* and *Chronos*.

<sup>45</sup> Among others, we can quote the Greek-Turkish Journalists meeting held in Paris in the UNESCO building on December 14, 2004. *Radikal*, 15/12/2004.

and Turkish schoolbooks of hate speech.<sup>46</sup> To this end, cooperation between the two ministries of National Education was launched.<sup>47</sup> The issue of schoolbooks is of paramount importance, not only due to the brainwashing effect which jingoistic tracts have on the youth of both countries, but also because of the hostility towards minorities which is engendered by such texts. A second political gesture, though more impressive in scale but which—alas—proved futile was discussion of reopening the Halki Seminary, something of great importance for the Greek minority in Turkey and critical to the survival of the Patriarchate. US pressure about the seminary had a positive impact on some Turkish authorities at the time, especially on Bülent Ecevit,<sup>48</sup> but the issue remains blocked by nationalist circles. As will be shown later, the debate and impasse over the seminary epitomizes the fact that in spite of reconciliation processes, the minority-related matters still carry negative associations with the notion of reciprocity.

As anyone interested in the Turkish Muslim minority of Greece and the Greek Orthodox minority of Turkey might know, many of the ongoing problems have to do with the negative application of the principle of reciprocity, a staple of international law and international relations. The idea of reciprocity originated in the Treaty of Lausanne, in a section of the article dealing with ‘protection of minorities.’ In spite of specific obligations set out for both states, the article has long been evoked to justify reprisals against the minorities for the actions of its kin state: Yet:

Contrary to what many might still believe, Art. 45 of Lausanne (“The rights conferred by the provisions of the present Section on the non-Muslim minorities of Turkey will similarly conferred by Greece on the Muslim minority in her territory.”) is not about Reciprocity. It’s about what one would rather describe as “parallel obligations”; i.e., Turkey will apply the provisions of Section III to her non-Muslim minorities and Greece will do the same to her Muslim minorities. These obligations are in no

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<sup>46</sup> Especially by the Council of Europe. For Greek schoolbooks, see among others, Penelopi Stathis, ‘Yunan (ve Türk) ders kitaplarında “Ben” ve “öteki” İmgeleri’, in *Tarih Eğitimi ve Tarihte Öteki Sorunu*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), pp. 125–133; for Turkish schoolbooks see among others, Samim Akgönül, ‘Les Grecs et la Grèce dans les livres scolaires turcs’, in Samim Akgönül, dir., *Images et perceptions dans les relations gréco-turques*, (Nancy: Genèse, 1999), pp. 36–46.

<sup>47</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 26/09/1999, *To Vima*, 30/09/1999.

<sup>48</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 19/10/1999, article of Leyla Tavşanoğlu, ‘Heybeliada Ruhban Okulu Türkiye’nin önünü açar’ (The Halki Seminary would broaden Turkey’s horizon).

way dependent on the practice of the other. These are to be applied by the two respective states individually and independently.<sup>49</sup>

Historically, politically, legally and sociologically, the minorities' situation has been circumscribed by the resonance of the principle of reciprocity for the two governments, public opinion, and the minorities themselves. The concept is also well-known to international organizations working for the protection of the minorities, such as the Council of Europe, and the networks of minority associations for those who have migrated across the Aegean or elsewhere.

Reciprocity is at play when, for example, the Greek Orthodox minority in Turkey encounters legal difficulties in the exercise of its right to maintain Greek schools. This is because the Turkish government points to similar restrictions faced by the Turkish minority in Western Thrace. Likewise, when Muslims of Greece voice their complaints about discriminatory state policies, the Greek government draws attention to the suffering of Greeks residing in Turkey. In this respect, the minorities in both countries historically have been used as tools by their governments to manipulate Greek-Turkish relations. Even worse, they have been subject to immediate and direct reprisals of a political, legal, social, educational and personal nature.

#### *Recent developments in Greece and Turkey*

*The Turkish minority in Greece:* First of all, it is important to remember that the 'otherness' of Turks has been one of the main ingredients in the process of Greek nation-building. Greek authorities as well as public opinion, employ religious rather than ethnic criteria in defining group identity. As such, even though the Muslim minority is made up of people from different ethnicities, members of the minority face difficulties both in openly revealing their ethnic identity and in practicing their cultural traditions. Indicatively, it is prohibited by law to use the terms *Tourkos* and *Tourkikos* ('Turk' and 'Turkish') in the titles of organizations, although individuals may call themselves *Tourkos*. To most Greeks, the words *Tourkos* and *Tourkikos* connote Turkish identity and

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<sup>49</sup> Baskin Oran, 'Religious Differences and Human Rights: Historical and Current Experiences from South East Europe', *3rd Human Rights Meeting, Human Rights and Diversity: New Challenges for Plural Societies*, San Sebastian, Pays Basque, Spain, 8-9/2/2007.

loyalty to the kin state. Thus, many Greeks object to use of the terms by Greek citizens of Turkish origin.

The human and minority rights of Muslim-Turks—who possess minority status by virtue of bilateral agreements and international mechanisms—have been severely violated by the state. The issue of self-identity is perhaps the most contentious and arguably the most important problem facing Greece today. In 1950s and 1960s, official use of the term ‘Turkish’ was common. During and after the junta, however, Greek officials have denied the minority the right to assert its ethnic identity, and instead insisted on self-identification along religious lines. Notwithstanding that the minority is composed of three ethnic groups—of which Turks constitute 65%, Pomaks 30%, and Roma 5%—their common identity is Turkish. The Pomak urban elite considers itself Turkish partially because Pomaks and Turks had a higher standing in the Ottoman Empire; but also, because Turkey, as the kin state, supports those who consider themselves to be Turkish origin.

Well known cases of discrimination involve the registration of Turkish associations. Organizations using the word ‘Turkish’ in their title were forbidden in 1984 by the court order (e.g., Xanthi Turkish Union, founded 1927; Komotini Turkish Youth Union, founded 1928; Western Thrace Turkish Teachers Union, founded 1936).<sup>50</sup> A second issue concerning discrimination against the minority is freedom of religion. Although Law 2345/1920 required, in accordance with the 1913 Athens Agreement Protocol no.3, that muftis be elected by and within the community, spiritual leaders of Muslim communities have always been appointed by Greek authorities. The position of Head Mufti, mentioned in the same international agreement, never came into existence. On January 1991 the law of 1920 was repealed and thereafter the President of the Republic began appointing the Mufti per the Minister’s recommendation. In response, the minority elected two muftis in the mosques, neither of which, however, was recognized by Greek officials. The question of the *modus operandi* in selecting the muftis continues to be a source of controversy in Greece. Indeed, since the

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<sup>50</sup> On March 27, 2008 the European Court of Human Rights has notified its Chamber judgments<sup>1</sup> in the cases of *Emin and Others v. Greece* and *Tourkiki Enosi Xanthis and Others v. Greece*. The Court held unanimously that there had been a violation of Article 11 (freedom of assembly and association) of the European Convention on Human Rights in both cases. In the case of *Tourkiki Enosi Xanthis and Others* the Court also held, unanimously, that there had been a violation of Article 6 § 1 (right to a fair hearing within a reasonable time) of the Convention.

death of the elected mufti of Xanthi, Mehmet Emin Aga, on September 9, 2006, the minority's leadership has sought a solution to the issue of muftis' election. The simultaneous existence of two muftis 'recognized' by the minority and those appointed by the Greek state poisons the everyday life of the minority. A compromise is yet to be found, as the 'advisory council of the minority' announced two candidates eligible for the position of the mufti, whereas this position is already occupied by a mufti appointed by Athens. The two candidates, Ahmet Hraloğlu and Ahmet Mete were public figures with a certain level of recognition within the minority, as the deputy secretary of the late mufti and the vice-president of the Council of Sermon and Preaching, respectively. Both opposed appointment of muftis by the Greek government. The election took place on December 31, 2006, the day before the *Bayram* festivities. According to the press, 9,567 people were present in the mosques (the population of the Muslims of Western Thrace is estimated at 120,000). The vote by raised hands led to the election of Ahmet Mete, who received 5,137 votes for his candidacy.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dora Bakoyannis, paid a visit to Western Thrace following the election in the mosque. Her visit marked a new policy on the part of the Greek authorities. This policy consisted of a number of including proposals which will certainly transform minority life. They include a proposal, startling in the Greek context, to launch a program of 'affirmative action' by introducing a five percent quota for Muslims in the public sector. Greek nationality has also been promised to the thousands of stateless Muslims living in Greece, a measure that is welcomed. The most controversial proposal is over the creation of a body of teachers, *ierodidaskaloi*, to be in charge 'of religious instruction.' The opposition of the minority stems in part from the competition between elected and appointed muftis, the latter being charged to manage the new religious personnel. It envisages that the selection of these 'instructors' will be undertaken by a committee with the approval of state-appointed muftis. This proposal has caused some to criticize Greece's new policy towards the minority even before any of the new proposals have been implemented.

Since the 1990s, deliberate human rights violations towards the minority have decreased due to and within the framework of the Europeanization of Greek legislation. For example, the infamous Article 19 of the nationality code stipulated that "a person of non-Greek ethnic origin, leaving Greece without the intention of returning

may be declared as having lost his Greek nationality.” The article was abolished in 1998. The same article applied to a person of non-Greek ethnic origin born and domiciled abroad, whose minor children living abroad may be declared as having lost Greek nationality if either parents lost theirs. With the draconian application of this law, thousands of Turks of Western Thrace lost their nationality and became *Heimatlos*. Unfortunately, although the law was revoked, those stripped of their citizenship are not permitted to retroactively regain it, either as individuals or a group. The abolition of the law sparked heated debate in Greece, Turkey and the international community. Commentators in the EU argued that Greece, in the face of pressure from Brussels and the Council of Europe, changed its legislation so as to comply with the criteria of Strasbourg. By way of contrast, Ankara argues, Greece abolished the law due to pressure from the Turkish government. According to Athens, the move was unilateral and not the outcome of external pressure.

Most recently, legal amendments have been passed that address the question of religious rights. Specifically, Article 27 of Law 3497 of 2006 repealed the law 1363/1938 which vested local Orthodox clergy with the authority not only to block the construction and repair of mosques, but also to determine the height of mosque minarets which were not to exceed the height of church domes.

Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, religious nationalist overtones remain discernible in government and public rhetoric, and systematic human and minority rights violations continue to take place. The Greek state still defines the minority in religious and not ethnic terms. Registration of public associations using the term ‘Turk’ in their titles is still forbidden, and regards the question of how to elect religious leadership of the community remains an outstanding source of controversy.

### *The Greek minority in Turkey*

The situation of the Greek minority in Turkey differs from that of Turks in Greece, not least because of its marginal size vis-à-vis the overall population of Turkey. Turks of Greece form almost 1,5% of Greece’s total population whereas the Greeks of Turkey constitute less than 0,01% of the total population. Understandably, it is more challenging for a religious minority of such small size to preserve a strong sense of its ethnic and cultural identity in a nation state with its own clearly defined religious and cultural contours.

The first years of the Republic were a period of adaptation and transformation of identity for the Greeks of Turkey, as well as for the entire Turkish population. Greeks' integration in the Turkish nation was a complete failure, especially when compared to the assimilation of other non-Turkish groups. "I am Corsican but I feel French," said Napoleon Bonaparte; but in the 1920s, only a few Greeks would have said 'I am Greek but I feel Turkish.' This failure can be explained by the bifurcation of Greek and Turkish national identities that began in the early nineteenth-century despite cultural similarities, intertwined history, and the fact that they had shared the same territory for centuries. This process accelerated at the beginning of the twentieth-century with the Balkan Wars, the First World War and the Greek-Turkish War. In this respect, the Muslim character of the Turkish nation became increasingly apparent at a time when Orthodoxy was increasingly identified as a core aspect of Greekness. As such, those Greeks who remained in Turkey after the establishment of the Turkish Republic were regarded as foreigners by the Turkish leadership as well as by public opinion. Under these conditions the Turkish authorities adopted a contradictory set of policies towards the Greeks: on the one hand, they sought to marginalize and confine the minority to the boundaries of its own community, and on the other, they sought to force Greeks to assimilate.

Accounts of the hardship Greeks underwent in the 1940s in particular, do not always take into consideration the adversity associated with the wartime context and the general feeling of frustration—ideological, kinship-based, and economic—that had engulfed the entire country. This was a time of high tension between nationalists and proponents of entente, in which President İnönü waited anxiously for an opportune moment to choose sides in the war once it became clear who would win. Still others were convinced that only neutrality could preserve Turkey. The fear of a common external enemy did not create a sense of national unity binding Turkey's ethnically diverse communities together. Quite the contrary, it generated spirals of suspicion and mistrust, eventually leading to witch-hunts directed towards the most conspicuous 'enemy from within': non-Turks. In this climate, characterized by policies like '*vatandaş türkçe konuş!*—'Citizen, speak Turkish') and the notion of *muhbir vatandaş* (informant citizen), non-Turkish residents were subject to discriminatory new policies such as mobilization into special army units, and a heavily discriminatory wealth tax which targeted non-Muslim and proscribed deportation to a working camp in case of non-payment.

Finally, economic frustration—which does not discriminate on ethnic or religious grounds especially during times of war—contributed to the plight of the minority during the 1940s. Wartime realities were permissive to the abuse of power, and brought out in some the sinister side of human nature, whether Armenian, Greek, Jewish or Turkish. From bankers to peasants, they exploited the economic situation in the country through black market activities, stockpiling of food, tax evasion and trafficking. Thus, although Turkey did not take part in or suffer directly from the war, it did become enmeshed in individual and societal depravity because of it. It was during these difficult years when the sense of the minority as an ‘enemy within’ reached its peak.

The years following the war brought little relief to much of society. They also brought two developments which had a direct effect on Turkey’s Greeks. With the passage to multi-party politics in 1950, a new Turkey was born, bringing new hopes to the minorities. At the same time, the Democratic Party which came to power at the beginning of the decade espoused a populist discourse with Muslim motifs which in time drove non-Muslims to a marginal position within domestic politics. In addition, a major demographic shift occurred in Istanbul with waves of Anatolian migrants pouring into a city unable to provide jobs to the newcomers. This fomented hostility between the outsiders and the native Istanbul residents, who found themselves in minority vis-à-vis migrants. The Greeks of Istanbul thus became a minority within a minority.

The second development of the 1950s was the emergence of the Cyprus question which had a direct impact on the life of the Greek minority. The anti-minority and specifically anti-Greek riots of September 6–7, 1955 reflected rising animosity towards Greeks due to Cyprus. Indeed, the expulsion of Greek nationals in 1964 disrupted the life of the minority community in Istanbul in a similar fashion as the population exchange of 1923 had for Greek life in Anatolia.

Today, given that so few Greeks remain, the minority faces a number of challenges regarding the status of its institutions like the Patriarchate, the Halki Seminary, and religious foundations. The case of the Patriarchate is especially interesting. In 1923, the Patriarchate continued to operate by relinquishing socio-political aspirations and devoting itself to being a local church, i.e., by attending to the religious and spiritual needs of the Greek Orthodox community in Istanbul. However, as the minority grew smaller, the Patriarchate became more influential and more visible in the international arena, in keeping with

the ecumenicity implied by its title. In effect, it began acting more by acting like a transnational institution. Since the 1990s, this has been a source of heated debate in Turkey. The controversy revolves around use of the word ‘ecumenical’ by the Patriarchate. The Patriarchate contends that ‘ecumenical’ refers to its historical and spiritual role and that it is appropriate because it oversees several non-Turkish Orthodox churches, such as those of the United States and even Estonia. But Turkish nationalists accuse the Patriarchate of harboring a secret agenda for the creation of an independent state along the lines of the Vatican on Turkish territory. Yet other segments of Turkish society are supportive of the international character of Patriarchate, seeing it as an asset for Turkey’s international profile rather than a threat to the national interest. What all these positions share is an overriding concern for Turkey’s interests rather than for the well-being of the Patriarchate, and to an even lesser extent, the Greek minority. The debate over the title and international character of the Patriarchate demonstrates that the fear of losing sovereignty remains present in the mind of Turkey’s leadership. In addition, because of official Turkish history and interpretations of that history, Turkish public opinion to this day treats with mistrust ‘non-Turkish’ institutions, especially ones with explicit ethnic and religious overtones.

The same analysis applies to the theological school on Halki island in Istanbul. The seminary, which provided training to Orthodox clergy from all over the world, was closed in 1971 along with other private institutions of higher education. It was closed in accordance with a ruling of the Constitutional Court which nationalized all private institutions of higher learning. Article 3 of the Law no. 625 continues to ban private institutions providing military and religious education. The Patriarchate has responded by calling for the reopening of an independent school to train its clergy, something essential for the survival of the Patriarchate. But, in spite of pressure from the United States and the European Union the law has not been amended. Needless to say, Turkish membership to the Union is very much favored by the current Patriarch. The best—and semi-official offer—that has been made by the Turkish authorities suggested incorporating Orthodox theological training into the framework of the Theology (Muslim) Faculty at the University of Istanbul. Turkish government resistance stems from the suspicion that the seminary would become a religious centre which would seek to undermine Turkey’s interests. This fear has been sustained for decades due to the unshakeable perception on the part of

segments of the political leadership, public opinion and, especially, the judiciary of Greeks as foreign elements. Baskin Oran cites examples of this fear:<sup>51</sup>

- Art. 5/j of the by-law against sabotage enacted in 1988 and repealed in 1991 called non-Muslims: ‘Domestic foreigners’. Indeed, this article considered: “Domestic foreigners in the country (Turkish citizens) and those from foreign race” to be potentially dangerous;
- Fearing that Phanar, the seat of the Patriarchate, would grow into an entity akin to the Vatican, investigations were launched in October 1993 against Greek citizens buying property in areas adjacent to the Patriarchate;
- On April 17, 1996 the Administrative Court no. 2 of Istanbul called a Greek-Orthodox citizen of Istanbul: “A foreign subject Turkish citizen”;
- In February 2006, a report prepared by the State Supervisory Council attached to the office of the President of the Republic classified non-Muslim religious foundations under the category “Foreign Legal Persons.”

In recent years, the question of minority religious foundations has received much attention, resulting in international pressure on the Turkish government by the European Union, and domestic pressure by reformist Turkish intellectuals.

The religious foundations constitute the main communal institutions of the non-Muslim minorities in Turkey and are described under the Turkish law as “community foundations”. In 1936, the new Law on Foundations ordered all the foundations to submit a property declaration. The main target of this law, paradoxically, was Muslim foundations. One can even say that the 1936 declaration served non-Muslim foundations by giving them a new legal status. However, with the escalation of the Cyprus conflict in the 1970s, the declaration of 1936 was used by Turkish authorities to ‘punish’ Greek foundations for the activities of their Cypriot brethren despite the fact that the ‘Greeks’ in question were Turkish citizens. The General Directorate of Foundations required that non-Muslim foundations resubmit their statutes. Since most of these foundations had been established under Ottoman rule

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

by individual decrees of the Sultan of the day, none had statutes. The General Directorate of Foundations thus ruled that properties covered under the declarations of 1936 would be accepted but that all real estate acquired by community foundations after 1936 (purchases, donation, lottery, inheritance, etc.) was to be expropriated by the state.

Through a series of reforms enacted in accordance with the EU accession process from 2001 to 2004, a number of improvements have been registered in the status of the foundations. On August 3, 2002 the third so-called ‘Harmonization Package’ resulted in the amendment of the Law on Foundations which enabled non-Muslim foundations to acquire real estate property with the authorization from the Council of Ministers and also to register any un-registered property. On January 2, 2003 the fourth package led to another amendment of the law which replaced the Council of Ministers’ authorization with that of the General Directorate of Foundations. Despite these amendments the official distinction between Muslim foundations and non-Muslim foundations is still effective. After long parliamentary discussions and public debates, a new law on foundations was adopted on November 2006. However, there are still obstacles for non-Muslim foundations that make the recovery of properties seized, sold, or rented by the state, to say the least, difficult. Notably, the President of the Republic vetoed the law in December 2006, justifying his decision by arguing that the laws may confer non-Muslim foundations with too much ‘political and economic power’ thereby potentially undermining Turkey’s national interests and dividing the country along ethnic and religious lines. In January 2007, the European Court of Human Rights made its first ruling on the issue. It found the government of Turkey guilty of the violation of property rights, as stipulated in Protocol I, Article 1, and ordered it to pay 910,000 Euros in damages to the Phanar Greek High School Foundation.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> On February 20, 2008, a new law on foundations (Nr. 5737) was voted by the Turkish National Assembly. Besides some improvements, the main problems remain especially based on the “reciprocity” concept and the perception of these foundations in a special “minority” status.

*Conclusion*

The focus of this article has been on the importance of societal as opposed to the legal developments in the treatment of minorities in Greece and Turkey. Legal adjustments, certainly, have taken place within the framework of Westernization and Europeanization. While these developments have more to do with rights of other minority communities in the two countries, i.e. Kurds in Turkey, the process of integration with the West has indirectly given the Greek minority of Turkey and the Turkish minority of Greece an opportunity to voice their opinions to the outside world and challenge their status as second class citizens. However, because of history and historiography, minorities continue to be perceived in pejorative terms in the two countries.

The number of legal reforms carried out in both countries, no doubt had a positive impact on the situation of both minorities. Nevertheless, as the sociologist Michel Crozier points out: "societies are not changed by decrees." Laws providing protection are meaningful only if they are internalized by the population. Only if and when the minority is recognized and its existence understood as legitimate can its social, political, and economic existence be empowered. Only then can a minority claim the "right to have rights."

At the practical level, a major contribution the European Union could make towards harmonization of relations between Greece and Turkey would be to mediate an agreement on free movement and settlement between the populations of both countries which would reinvigorate the transnationality of the two minorities. Such an ambitious policy would benefit not only the minorities of Greece and Turkey, but also have a far-reaching positive impact on relations between Ankara and Athens. On one hand, it might produce confusion and debate with regard to identity questions, but the problems that this might have created certainly will not exceed the problems created by the compulsory population exchange of 1923. At the same time, the experience could transform perceptions of the Greeks of Turkey and the Turks of Greece so that they are no longer cast as threatening outsiders but rather as vital participants in the cultural life of their societies.