Intercultural Education in Europe: The Greek Experience

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Introduction

In contemporary Greek society, the presence of individuals or groups of people from a language and culturally diverse background (i.e., returning Ethnic Greeks, foreign immigrants, Greek Roma, Greek Muslims from Thrace), presents fundamental challenges not only for the scientific conceptualization of the consequences of such a presence, but also for the formation of policies and the adoption of practices which address the problems that emanate from the inclusion of such diverse individuals into Greek social and political institutions particularly considering that in the 1991 Census 95% of the population was linguistically, ethnically and religiously homogeneous. (National Census 1991).

The rejection of the assimilation model in several countries, at least at a theoretical level, led to the adoption of the intercultural model and the realization of an "**inclusive society**", in which people from language and culturally diverse backgrounds are able to pursue and attain economic, political and social rights and are equally able to equitably access the same institutions, within the host country, as with the rest of the population. At the level of policy practice regarding the inclusion of immigrants, the rejection of the assimilation policy is linked with, the granting of citizenship to the immigrant whereby in turn being placed in a position to accept the political culture of the host country, the development of specialized institutions and the implementation of specific measures which facilitate integration. On the part of the immigrant, there is the requirement; the acceptance of the fundamental constitutional principles of the host country, the knowledge of the host language, history and culture, the development and fostering of relationships with the host population, the participation in social and civic networks and the development of a subjective sentiment of "*co-belonging*" with the host society.[1]

Within this Paper, the significance of **intercultural education** is linked with the wider process of integration of people from migrant backgrounds in Greek society, since the typology of integration policies adopted, define the framework from which all intercultural based interventions are developed from.

Intercultural integration therefore means, the recognition of the cultural diversity of the society and the concurrent pursuit for interaction and cooperation while supporting the right of all cultural social groups to preserve aspects of their culture which they deem as relevant in their lives and which contribute to the general culture of the host society. It also means the promotion of intercultural dialogue and the building of public trust and shared cultural development with a particular emphasis to the reform of public institutions and services so that they are in a position not only to respond to the new challenges but also meet the needs of all citizens. Within the process of intercultural integration, the uniqueness of the so called 'purity' of each culture and the need for their preservation is not stressed. There is no exaggeration on cultural differences and on the divisionary lines between various cultural groups which make up a given society. Above all, there is no support for the notion that these differences should be protected by the laws and the institutions of the State. The adoption of a policy which accentuates differences is considered to lead to rivalries, conflict and segregation among the various cultural groups in their attempt to gain an increasing share of power, often resulting in the isolation, the ghettoization and the exclusion of

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[1] Despite individual differences, the integration of migrant populations in many European host countries is fundamentally pursued through their institutions for the inclusion of all citizens by laterally creating new and specialized institutions for its facilitation. In the past, the acquisition of citizenship and the expansion of social and civil rights (to working class, women etc) was a key institutional parameter for integration which had remarkable results in European capitalist societies. The societal inclusion through citizenship has historically constituted a fundamentally traditional mechanism. Marschall, T.H. (1950). *Citizenship and social class and other essays*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

particular social groups with all the known consequences both for the said groups and for society as a whole.[2]

The aim of this paper is to present the basic elements of the intercultural policies for the integration of people from migrant backgrounds over the last two decades in Greece. It is important to note that the central structure of the Greek State bestows on the State itself, a dominant role in formulating the policies for the intercultural integration of immigrant populations and allows it to perceive integration as a process that can and should be guided by a policy of intervention.[3]

Policies of Intercultural Integration and Social Cohesion

The integration policies in Greece address the following social groups:

- Foreigners [4] (immigrants and refugees)
- Ethnic Greeks[5] from countries of the former Soviet Union and Albania
- Returning Greek emigrants

1. Greece as an immigrant country

The collapse of the former Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War period is marked with the movement of significantly large numbers of immigrants from Eastern Europe to Western Europe. In Greece, there is a significant influx of immigrants, mainly from Albania, but also from Russia, Ukraine and Georgia, many of whom are acknowledged as "Ethnic Greeks", recognized by the State and accorded with preferential treatment. It is during this period that migration and immigration policies in Greece are given political priority and there is, for the first time, acknowledgement for the need for the adoption of specific measures in the integration of immigrants into Greek society.[6] During the last decade and notably from 2005 and onwards, there has been a major change regarding the origin of immigrants: significantly reduced numbers of immigrants from countries such as Albania, Russia, Georgia, and an increasing rate of immigrants from Asian, African and the Middle Eastern countries, despite the serious obstacles faced by the Greek State, the economic crisis afflicting Greek society in recent years and the Dublin II Regulation.

Despite the relatively recent migration experience in comparison with other European countries and the absence of a strong tradition in the integration of immigrants, Greece has maintained a particularly strong debate on migration and immigration policy in recent years, in light of the on-going and largely, unregulated influx of immigrants in search for the "Promised Land" in countries of the European Union. The point of difference in comparison to other European countries particularly those of the north, lies in the fact that, in a very short period of time, Greece was transformed from a country of emigrants (outbound migrants), to a country recipient of immigrants (incoming migrants), without having the necessary infrastructure both at the level of institutional structures and in terms of social consciousness.[7] The massive nature of this migration is directly linked to the fact that Greece is considered the "gateway" to the European territory.

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[2] Markou, G. (2010). *Introduction to Intercultural Education*. University of Athens . Self-Publication.

[3] The Integration policy is expressed in the sanctioned laws that have been voted over time for the integration of returning Ethnic Greeks and foreign immigrants in Greece and in numerous projects that have been developed to guide the integration policies.

[4] The term 'foreigner' is defined as "any natural person who does not have Greek citizenship or nationality". Law 2910/2001, Article 1. The term 'foreigner' which was adopted by the National Statistics Service is in itself "problematic" since the differentiation of the data on citizenship (Ethnic Greek - Foreigner) does not lend itself to the understanding of the integration process. There is no data differentiation, for example, between successfully integrated foreigners from non-integrated foreigners. Similarly, in the case concerning Ethnic Greeks, who are naturalized almost automatically, it is difficult to identify within the data their problems of integration. We believe that this could be resolved with the adoption of terms which would allow a differentiation between foreign nationals to: naturalized Greeks born in Greece, Greeks with a Greek parent, Ethnic Greeks etc.

[5] The term "Ethnic Greek" (homogeneis) refers to any natural person who claims Greek descent and shares common cultural elements with Greeks such as language, religion, traditions and national consciousness but without Greek citizenship. The Ethnic Greeks are nationals of countries outside of the EU originating initially from Greece and migrated from countries outside of the Greek territory or territory once annexed to Greece which continued to accept the influence of Greek culture. This particular group of people feel (or consider themselves to feel) that they are returning to the "homeland". In this paper we refer exclusively to Ethnic Greeks from countries of the former Soviet Union and Albania. Their case can be described as something akin to the German Aussiedler.

[6] The interest of the State is expressed through the establishment of the Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO). First recipients of the integration measures are Ethnic Greeks from the former Soviet Union, are equivalent to the so-called Aussiedler in Germany.

[7] However, within a time span of a few years - if you compare the time it took northern European countries with a long experience in immigration, for example, Germany – Greece can rightly boast of the fast pace adaptation of Greek society and its citizens to the unprecedented conditions created by

Notably though, during the first decade of the 21st century, while there is a reduction in the rates of migration to northern European countries and a shift in political and scientific based interest in inclusion and integration policies, there is in Greece a continuous and unregulated influx of immigrants, igniting a heated debate over the feasibility of permitting economic immigrants to remain in the country. Several politicians consider and assert that migrant stay should be temporary, while others question whether the country is at all in a position to accept the permanent settlement of illegal immigrants from Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Proposals emanating from Left winged Parties and from Trade Union Movements advocate for the permanency and inclusion of immigrants in Greek society. Nevertheless, the Government is endeavouring to repatriate many illegal immigrants to their country of origin. The Government deems necessary stringent measures which reduce the numbers of immigrants while at the same adopting inclusion measures for those immigrants with legal residence status. The formulation of a controlled and planned immigration programme through strict reduction measures, such as those adopted in other member States of the European Union, whilst implementing integration measures in Greek society for legally and long-term immigrants, is the nexus upon which all efforts in shaping the Greek migration policy in recent years, is based on.[8]

1.1 Demographics and Immigration

According to the 2001 Greek Census (the 2011 Census results are still pending), there were 797,093 foreigners (without Greek citizenship) registered living in Greece, representing 7.3% of the total population (10,964,080) registered. The majority of immigrants registered by nationality were from Albania constituting 57.0%, (438,036) of the total immigrants in Greece of which between 76.0% and 86.0% lived in the regions of Epirus, Thessaly and Western Macedonia. Immigrants from Bulgaria followed with a considerable difference at 5.0% of the total distribution of immigrants in Greece, Georgians at 3.0% and Romanians equally at 3.0% of the total foreign population. Of the total registered immigrants in Greece (54.5%) 415,552 were men and (45.5%) 346,639 were women, with an overall gender balance. However, certain groups of f immigrants had highly skewed percentages; for example, immigrants from Asian countries (Pakistan, Bangladesh, India) and from Syria and Egypt had particularly high rates (over 80%) consisting exclusively of males.

A preliminary, yet differentiated picture of the distribution of legal status immigrants in Greece, by country of origin, is given in the most recent data (end of 2012) provided by the Ministry of Interior Affairs as juxtaposed with the 2001 Census. (See Table 1). In these latest figures regarding legal status immigrants, there was recorded a strong tendency for repatriation to their countries of origin by migrants from Albania, Russia and Georgia while at the same time there was an increase in numbers of immigrants from Asia, Africa and the Middle East.[9]

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immigration. The adaptation concerns both the institutions that incorporated all relevant EU Directives, and the labor market where, despite high unemployment rates in the total population, unemployment for immigrants is lower than that of native Greeks. It needs to be noted here that a considerable degree of immigrants' access to the labor market largely refers to undeclared work. See Robolis, S. (2011). Economic crisis, Labor market, Migration. in: Moisidis, A and Papadopoulou, D (eds.). *The Social Integration of Immigrants in Greece. Employment, Education, Identities*. Athens Review, 2011, pp. 51-77.

[8] Bagavos, X., Kapsalis, A. (2008). The Context of Migration Policy in Greece, *Series Studies*, Issue 29, Athens, HPC / INE / GSEE - ADEDI - KEKMOKOP.

[9] It should be emphasized that a significant number of foreigners in Greece belong to the category of illegal immigrants. Although the exact numbers of the immigrant population residing without authorization is not possible, various estimates put the figure between 400,000 and 500,000 with the areas of Attica and Thessaloniki being the main pole of attraction, primarily due to employment opportunities and migrant networks. It is estimated that one in ten Greeks has a migrant background. Similar difficulties are encountered regarding accurate estimates of the number of Ethnic Greeks from the former Soviet Union and Albania. According to various sources, the Ethnic Greeks from these countries put the figure at about 65,000 by the mid-1990s, while estimates for the total population by the mid first decade of 2000, ranges between 150,000 and 200,000. See Lianos, T, et al. (2008) *Estimate of the number of foreigners residing illegally in Greece*, Athens IMEPO. Kanellopoulos, K. et al (2011), *Illegal Immigrants in Greece, Athens*, CIF. Maroukis, T. (2011). *Illegal Migration in Greece: Realism, Respect, and "Smart" Deportations* in: Syrri, D. (ed.) *Co existing with Immigration*. Thessaloniki, Ianos, pp. 42-50. Robolis, S. (2008). Migration in Greece, An Expert Report for SOPEMI - OECD, Paris.

Table I: *Immigrants (N=417.028)[i] with legal status in 2012 and distribution of immigrants (D=761.813) according to the 2001 census[ii]*

Country of origin	N	D
Albania	284.367	438.036
Bulgaria	---	35.104
Romania	---	21.994
Pakistan	12.393	11.130
Ukraine	15.911	13.616
Poland	---	12.831
Georgia	12.940	22.875
India	10.394	7.216
Egypt	10.359	7.448
Philippines	7.774	6.478
Moldova	8.816	5.716
Syria	5.672	5.552
Russian Federation	12.262	17.535
Bangladesh	4.760	4.854
Iraq	565	6.936
Armenia	4.678	7.742
Yugoslavia	3.165	3.832
Nigeria	1.339	2.015
Ethiopia	4.760	1.163
Other Countries	16.869	129.740
Total	417.028	761.813

[i] Source: Greek Ministry of Interior Affairs (31-12-2012). The absence of data from Bulgaria, Romania and Poland is due to the fact that immigrants are not included as foreign nationals but as nationals of EU countries.

[ii] Source: National Statistic Services(NSS), National Census 2001.

Of special note is the data relating to the basic characteristics of the immigrant population resulting from the further analysis of data from the 2001 Census provided by the Statistical Service Department with reference to foreign immigrants and relating to:

1.1.1 *Place of settlement* (Location in Greece)

The range of immigrant population densities and the regions of settlement are associated with patterns of migrant economic integration. Almost half of the immigrant population (48.6%) is located in the Attica region followed by Central Macedonia at 13.1%. The regions, Peloponnese, Crete, Central Greece, Western Greece and Thessaly employ a quarter (25%) of the total immigrant population, and the remaining smaller percentages are allocated to, the islands of northern and southern Aegean (1.37% and 3.7%) respectively, the regions of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (2.6%), Epirus (2.0%) and Western Macedonia (1.2%). Notably more than 80% of immigrants choose to settle in urban areas while the rest settle in rural areas. Of those settling in urban areas, more than 60% settled in the regions of Attica and Central Macedonia. In the remaining regions, the ratio of urban and rural migrant settlement is 60% in urban areas and 40% in rural areas.[10]

1.1.2 *Population dynamics*

Approximately 80% of immigrants are involved in productive labour (are of working age) with more than half aged between 25-44 years. This corresponds to 45,6% of the total immigrant population, while for the general Greek population the percentage is only 28.9%. Only 3.5% of immigrants are over 65 years. This contrasts with the figure of 18.1% for Greeks.[11]

1.1.3 *Level of Education*

With reference to the level of education, 23.3% of immigrants have completed primary school education, 28.0% are graduates of secondary education, while 17.9% have completed compulsory education and 8.3% have a tertiary diploma or post-graduate degree. The highest levels of education observed amongst the immigrant populations are from countries of the former Soviet Union (Russia, Ukraine, Georgia) Poland and Romania. Relatively low educational levels are observed in immigrants from Albania, Bulgaria and Pakistan.[12]

1.1.4 *Reason for migration and length of residence in Greece*

From the total registered immigrant population, more than half (54.2%) declared that finding a job was the major reason for migrating to Greece, 13.0% for family reunion and 7.0% for repatriation. A relatively high percentage (21.5%) reported reasons that did not fall within the main categories of the Census.

Regarding the length of stay of those who declared that they migrated for work, only 12.2% were in the first year of residence in Greece, 46.8% were in the country from 1 to 5 years and 41.0% were resident in Greece for over 5 years.[13]

1.1.5 *Employment*

Around 90.0% of immigrants were employed as salary workers (representing 13.0% of the total salary employment in Greece), and 6.5% were self-employed (there were differentiated ratios between men and women). Over two-thirds (66%) of immigrants said that they worked as unskilled manual labourers, technicians, small tradesmen and operators of transport vehicles; 10.0% worked in the service sector and as vendors in shops and flea markets and 7.0% said they worked as agricultural farmers, livestock farmers, etc. With reference to the sector of their economic activity, a quarter (25%) worked in the construction industry, a fifth (20%) in the primary production sector,

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[10] Source: NSS, Census 2001, Table 1: Foreigners.
[11] Source: NSS, Census 2001, Table 3: Foreigners.
[12] Source: NSS, Census 2001, Table 4: Foreigners.
[13] Source: NSS, Census 2001, Tables 6 & 7: Foreigners.

12.5% in the industry sector, 16.0% in the trade, hotel – restaurant sector and 20.5 % in other services.[14]

1.2 The integration of immigrants into Greek society

In any given society, citizenship[15] constitutes the basis for the integration of individuals into its institutions. The acquisition of citizenship forms the necessary condition for immigrants to achieve the sense of "co belonging" in the host society, and contributes in many ways to their active civil involvement and civic participation. This has in turn, a positive impact on the immigrants' capability and desire to be integrated since they feel accepted and acknowledged as members of a civil community.[16] In Greece and as in the case of other European countries, until the first decades of the post war period, the term 'nationality'[17] was inextricably linked to decent a privilege reserved only for those who had ethnic ancestral origins. The key political player in this area, usually the said government, worked in the past within the parameters of Greek tradition. The National Authority of Citizenship, which constitutes Greek tradition, had proved to be a major obstacle to the naturalization of foreigners (immigrants - refugees).

1.2.1 Citizenship and Integration

Until the passing of the Law 3838/2010, the policy of citizenship which was in force till then, made reference to the formation of the Greek Nation-State two centuries ago with the conceptualization of the notion of 'nation' based on the principle of homogeneity. Deviations from the linguistic, religious, ideological and regional norms were perceived as a threat to the social and political cohesion of the State. The concept of nation was based on the creation of a common language and a common culture. Nationality corresponded with citizenship and national integration was sought through the status of citizenship and education primarily constituting the key institution for achieving national integration. Over time, there were endeavours to integrate Ethnic Greeks from the Diaspora who lived in areas annexed to the Greek territory, into the Greek nation. This was predominately attempted through citizenship status and public education. The process of acquisition of Greek citizenship, formulated on the logic of the "*right of blood*" (*ius sanguinis*) differentiates Greeks from foreign nationals with the exception of the defined category of Ethnic Greek foreign nationals who were perceived as sharing a common origin, language, culture and religion. The naturalization of foreigners was acceptable and traditionally resolved only in exceptional cases and with very low rates.[18] These exceptional cases of naturalization of foreigners were led by the principle that naturalization should be the end product of the integration process as a whole, and not the medium to achieve integration or at least an important step in the process of integration.

It is worth noting that in the debate surrounding the status of citizenship in Greece; arguments are predominately stereotyped, often ignoring the non-static and historically variant concept of nation, as a basis for the concept of citizenship. This is due largely to the fact that for many decades the Greek State supported the existence of a "national myth", which was based on the great achievements of the past, with no emphasis to the present, which was more than often stigmatized by poor performance compared to those of previous eras. A bonding mechanism between the past and the present seemed to be that of origin, on which the identity of the Modern Greek citizen was based on. By the turn of the century, there was an apparent shift from a national to a more political

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[14] Source: NSS, Census 2001, Tables 8 & 9: Foreigners.

[15] The concept of citizenship beyond its clear legal term, has a social and cultural dimension. It is both a medium and means of social restriction, since contemporary nation states perceive themselves and derive their legitimacy from serving the interests of specific social groups. A typical example is the inaccessibility of non-citizens to voting rights. According to Brubaker citizenship policies relate primarily to those who belong to the nation. The national state, in addition to national and demographic dimensions and institutional arrangements, is a way of thinking and validating political and social membership. This is why discussions on the provision of citizenship to immigrants are largely discussions about the nation and what "co-belonging" should mean. Brubaker, R. (1992). *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, Mass.-London, Harvard University Press, p. 180.

[16] Vermeulen, H.(2001). *Culture and Inequality; Immigrant Cultures and Social Mobility in long-term Perspective*. Amsterdam. Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies. IMES.

[17] The term "nationality" comes to mean the public law right of the individual to bond with a particular country and to a particular people with whom they feel they belong to. See Krispis - Nikoletopoulou (1965). *Nationality*. Athens, pp. 18, 36, 53.

[18] Kontis, A. (2009). Citizenship and Immigrant Integration. in: A. Kontis (ed.) *Social Issues: Immigrant Integration*. Athens, Papazisis, pp. 21-69, p 60.

concept of citizenship and there were attempts made to connect it to the formation of a new national consciousness based on the concept of a new democratic political structure and a new model of economic development.[19]

The reform process which took into account the gradual shift from the hitherto dominant principle of '*ius sanguinis*' to the principle of '*ius soli*' occurs through the inclusion of the mode of acquisition of Greek citizenship in the Foreigners' Act (Law 2910/2001, Law 3446/2003 and Law. 3284/2004), linking the granting of citizenship to the social and political integration, initially, to Ethnic Greeks (Law 2790/2000, Law 3013/2002,) and later to Foreign immigrants (Law 3838/2010).

The change in the perception of the nation and of citizenship in Greece is a result of accumulative factors over time that exerted pressure for change. Amongst some of the most significant factors as mentioned below are:

- In the intellectual sector and in the political world in general: the effect of the deconstruction of the concept of nation as a result of extreme nationalism by the Nazi totalitarian regime and the crimes committed by the Nazi troops on the occupied Greek people during the second world war. Additionally, the nationalist concept of the nation that dominated during the days of the Colonels and the restoration of constitutional legality based on the political principle of the Western World since the fall of the Junta Regime in1974. But more recently, the significant increase in rates of the racist (in the sense of race) political party, Golden Dawn and its representation in Greek Parliament.

- The entry of Greece into the European Union marked a new historical phase: the period of redefining the basic principles of the Constitution and its social structures. The Greek Constitution adapted significantly to the new European context (in terms of demographic, social, economic parameters) hence affecting the convergence of Greeks and foreigners at the level of individual, social and political rights (access to public health services, education, social security, political participation, etc.).[20]

- Migration as a subject of political debate and as a field of implementation of state policy had a particular influence on the further development of the concept of the 'nation' and the institution of citizenship. Political parties, associations, unions, migrant organizations, lawyers, intellectuals, journalists and many others, have initiated a debate on the need to change the law on citizenship. These discussions ultimately included the concept of the nation and the nation state, as they constitute the main obstacle in the integration of immigrants. Many argued that the '*ius soli*' should be added to the principle of descent so as to facilitate the process of naturalization. [21]

1.2.2 Naturalization policy and integration

The Law 2910/2001 brought into effect an initial change in the acquisition of Greek citizenship. The significance of this change is based on the fact that for the first time, elements of '*ius soli*' are incorporated in the '*ius sanguinis*' process of naturalization of foreign immigrants. From the basic requirements as set by this law, it can be inferred that only those foreigners who abide by an "honest life" for many years, those having satisfactory knowledge of the Greek language, Greek

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[19] The new sense of the national identity is dictated by the need to avoid the undermining of collective consciousness and the need for social cohesion. Those who believe in "constitutional patriotism", interpreted as identification with the nation state due to constitutional rules, laws and commitment to democratic institutions, look forward to a new national consciousness based on the basic principles of a democratic society and institutions governed by equality and justice, in which all citizens can identify with.

[20] In the report on the constitutionality of certain provisions of the Bill, "Current provisions for Greek citizenship and political participation of Ethnic Greeks and legally residing immigrants and other regulations", which Conservative MPs had reported as unconstitutional during the debate in Parliament, the Scientific Council ruled in favor of the constitutionality of these provisions of the Bill making reference to specific articles of the constitution that prove their compatibility with the economic, social and political participation of immigrants in Greek society. Greek Parliament, Directorate B Scientific Studies – Department of Legal Drafting and Bill proposals (08/03/2010), Report on the Bill "Current provisions for Greek citizenship and political participation of Ethnic Greeks and legally residing immigrants and other provisions".

[21] As characteristically referred to in the Explanatory Memorandum of Law 3838/2010, "it detaches Greek Citizenship from the stifling exclusive anchorage of the '*right of blood*' (*ius sanguinis*)".

history and Greek culture, may acquire Greek citizenship through the process of naturalization. More specifically, the law sets the following conditions for the naturalization of foreign immigrants:

- A total of ten years of legal residence in Greece during the last twelve years before the application for naturalization.
- Be at least 18 years old.
- Have no pending expulsion decision nor any sentenced convictions that fall under the criminal code.
- Have sufficient knowledge of the Greek language, Greek history and Greek culture in general.

These conditions, especially the requirement by law for 10 years legal residence, participation in the Greek lifestyle, knowledge of the Greek language, Greek history and Greek culture - and the certification of this knowledge required for the interview process of the interested immigrant before the Naturalization Committee, denotes the intention of the State to preserve the basic notion that foresees the issue of Greek citizenship by naturalization to be the last act of a long process of integration, hence the sealing with the oath taken by the immigrant: "*I swear to guard faith in this homeland , show obedience to the Constitution and laws of the State and discharge conscientiously my duties as a Greek citizen*".[22]

The naturalization of second generation immigrants depends solely on the naturalization status of first-generation immigrants. Children whose parents are Greek citizens automatically become Greek citizens at birth, and children with parents without Greek citizenship can obtain it only on condition provided that they are born in Greece and have come of age. The naturalized foreign immigrant may retain the citizenship of the country of origin and has full legal status as with native Greek citizens.

The point of differentiation in the naturalization policy concerns those who are recognized as 'Ethnic Greeks'. In their case, the naturalization process is seen as a fundamental means of accelerating their integration into Greek society through the implementation of additional 'fast track' integration measures. This is especially apparent in the case of Ethnic Greeks from the Former Soviet Union and from Albania.[23] Specifically, in the Laws 2790/2000 και 3013/2002 regarding the granting of Greek citizenship to Ethnic Greeks coming from countries of the Former Soviet Union, there were distinct provisions and regulations in place for resettlement and community integration support.[24] Integration into society was predominately promoted through institutional infrastructure; by providing appropriate housing, employment and vocational opportunities as well as teaching and learning support for their children in the school education system.

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[22] Law 2910/2001 "Entry and Stay of Foreigners in the Greek Territory. Acquisition of Greek Citizenship by naturalization and other provisions", article 62. Of interest is the emerging logic of decentralization through the law, which essentially indicates that there is awareness that integration has also a local implication. This is apparent in the provisions of the law where although Greek citizenship is accorded by Ministerial decision, the handling of the substantive part of the naturalization process is entrusted to two decentralized institutions of the Region: a) Naturalization Committee, which through the foreseen interview assesses the personality of the applicant for Greek citizenship confirming his/her real interest and whereby conferring an opinion to the Minister regarding the granting or denial of citizenship. b) Committee on Migration, which consists of two employees from the Immigration Department and a representative of the Police Authority, for the purpose of examining the validity and the thoroughness of the supporting documentation submitted by the interested immigrant concerned and formulating an opinion on the granting of Greek citizenship.

[23] We note here the distinction between the 'Northern Epirus' Ethnic Greeks from Albania and "Pondion" Ethnic Greeks from countries of the former Soviet Union, regarding the legalization process: While Pondion origin Ethnic Greeks are recognized as "repatriated - returning Greeks" and treated as refugees - something similar to the Greeks from Asia Minor in 1922 - who could benefit from low interest rate housing project loans, land concessions and other benefits not covered by the other immigrant categories- where for the Northern Epirus Ethnic Greeks not recognized as refugees, did not enjoy the privileges of the Pondions except for the special Identity Card which enabled the unrestricted renewal of residence and work permits. The reason for this difference is related to the assessed necessity of the presence of Ethnic Greeks in Albania in light of the bilateral Greek - Albanian relations.

[24] Apart from the possibility of the acquisition of Greek citizenship, this particular group of Ethnic Greeks may alternatively choose to be granted "Special Identity Card for Ethnic Greeks Abroad". This is essentially provided in cases where the acquisition of Greek citizenship involves the loss of citizenship of the country of origin in accordance with the provisions of the local law of that country. (N.2790/2000) The Special Identity Card for Ethnic Greeks serves as a residence and work permit, permitting Ethnic Greeks to remain in Greece as a foreign national yet enjoying the rights and benefits of returning Ethnic Greeks with Greek citizenship.

The Law 3386/2005 promotes the social integration of immigrants through *"...the granting of civil rights to non EU citizens, which not only safeguard equitable participation in the economic, social and political life of the country, but also reiterate the obligatory respect for the fundamental laws and values of the Greek society... while preserving at the same time their ethnic identity."*[25] This particular law was able to deal with issues, to a greater extent, regarding the possibility of securing permanent residency, the right of family reunion and the right to work, by decentralizing the process of granting residency permits from the Regional Foreigners and Migration Offices to the Offices of the Regional Decentralized Administration Directorates. (Since the passing of the Law N.3852/2010 the Regional Directorate of the Decentralized Administration is now the responsible authority). This law also included relevant EU directives regarding family reunion, the right of stay and the granting of residency permits to those immigrants deemed as "long term residents".[26]

According to the same law, the integration of an immigrant into Greek society can be considered successful on the provision that there is:

- Certified knowledge of the Greek language and the successful completion of history, Greek culture and lifestyle courses.
- Evidence of inclusion into the Greek workforce and active community participation.[27]

For this intention, a National Committee for the Social Integration of Immigrants was established whose main task was to put forward proposals and actions for the social inclusion of immigrants to the Interministerial Commission. An Integrated Action Plan (Program ESTIA 2007 - 2013)[28] was also developed, which included specific programs for access into the workforce, education, health, housing, cultural activities and other public sectors, for services and counseling of immigrants, for combating racism and xenophobia and for community awareness.[29] There are also other several subprograms and intervention measures which form part of the Integrated Action Program which we will not go into a lengthy analysis here regarding their outcomes at both at a macro social and economic level. We can however stress that, the fundamental principles underpinning the Integrated Action Program are indicative endeavors of integrating into Greek migration legislation all those European directives on human rights relating to migrants, and that the results of the activities developed within this program are not completely ineffective.[30]

Despite the magnitude of the endeavours for integration policy transformation, the main conclusion drawn from the overall activities of the Greek State by the middle of the first decade of the 21st century is that Greece still remains irresolute in front of a fundamental issue; the exclusion of a substantial proportion of its population from its basic civil rights, as this implies in terms of democratic legitimacy. As a consequence, there emerge fundamental contradictions, where on the one hand, the State expresses its intent for the integration of immigrants and on the other, it seeks to preserve their national identity without making it clear how it intends to facilitate this preservation.[31] Within the specific understanding of the legislation, inclusion is defined as also

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[25] Law 3386/2005. "Entry, Residence and Social Integration of third country Nationals in the Greek Territory", article 65.

[26] The right to family reunification is regulated by European legislation, which has been incorporated into the Law 3386/2005. Family reunion is a key factor in facilitating the integration of immigrants into the local community.

[27] idem, Article 66.

[28] The main principles as defined in this program are: a) to avoid any form of discrimination against foreigners based on sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, sexual characteristics, language, religion or belief, political or any other personal expression, membership to a national minority, property, disability, age or sexual orientation b) to support the implementation of equal treatment in all aspects of economic, social and cultural life, regardless of racial or ethnic origin, to promote economic and social cohesion, c) to respect fundamental rights, as guaranteed by the domestic law on the protection of cultural and religious differences, d) to support and to promote personal contribution to wider social, economic and cultural activities, and efforts to serve and contribute to improving quality of life e) to assist in family cohesion and to strengthen existing social support networks in which participation is permitted, f) to strengthen effective participation, as partners in the shaping, implementation and evaluation of social inclusion policies and the development of relevant strong consultative structures. Law 3386/2005, Article 66.

[29] Law 3386/2005, Article 66 also Law 3536/2007 and Opinion No 165/16.01.2007

[30] This becomes evident when one compares the results in Greece with the results of similar activities in other countries - members of the European Union. See Harmovitis, D. (2011), for an "Migrant Integration Policy Index" in: Syrri D. (ed.) *Coexisting with Immigration*. Athens, Ianos, 2011, pp. 108-117.

[31] Unless for this purpose, it can be considered sufficient within the statement of the law in which according Ministerial approval, may regulate "matters for optional teaching of the mother tongue and culture where there is a sufficient number of students who are interested, as part of support

incorporating the perspective of the reproduction of the ethnotic minority since the aim is the integration and the lateral maintenance of the ethnotic identity.[32] However, the evidence so far is in the direction of a policy of assimilation, since integration is interpreted here as the full adaptation to Greek lifestyle conditions and the State refuses to give the minority status to migrant groups.

The granting of Greek citizenship to foreign immigrants who were born and educated in Greece-(i.e. second generation and long term residents) who have no criminal court case involvements, is outlined in the Law 3838/2010, almost ten years after the first attempt to address the problem of the naturalization of immigrants. This respective law weakens significantly the bond between ethnicity and nationality and it attempts to shift the emphasis from the principle of "right of blood" (ius sanguinis) to the principle of "right of soil" (ius soli). Hence, in turn, it is able to shape those fundamental conditions necessary for the integration of foreign immigrants into the institutions of Greek society by providing a comprehensive set of policies and social rights.[33]

According to the Law 3838/2010 [34] Greek citizenship can be acquired by:

1. (*ipso jure*, automatically at birth) children whose foreign immigrant parents were born in Greece, live permanently and have legal resident status in Greece.[35]
2. foreign immigrant children born and who live in Greece, whose parents legally reside in Greece for at least seven (7) consecutive years.[36]
3. foreign immigrant children who have successfully completed at least six (6) grades of schooling in Greece and live permanently and legally in the country since the completion of their six year study. A precondition is set that both parents must reside permanently and legally for at least seven (7) years in Greece. The prerequisite years of residence is reduced to three (3) years to foreign immigrants from Member States of the European Union, spouses of Greek nationals, those having legal parental authority over children with Greek citizenship, foreign nationals of Ethnic Greek background, officially recognized political refugees, stateless people etc [37]

Foreign immigrants who wish to be naturalized as Greek citizens should:

- have knowledge of the Greek language and should be successfully integrated into the economic and social life of the country, [38]
- actively participate in the civil activities of the country. [39]

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measures offered by Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and to determine the employment relationship and the qualifications of teachers who teach the mother language and culture of their country of origin. Law 3386/2005, Article 72.

[32] The explanation that can be given here is that the policy makers have not thought out nor adequately analyzed this issue and have failed to recognize the need to formulate a clear policy of integration. It also seems that there is no attempt to openly acknowledge their intent to seek integration in the sense of assimilation and therefore choose ambiguity.

[33] The Greek Citizenship Code (Law 3284/2004, Government Gazette, 217 A), modified by the new law, (3838/2010) based on the "*right of blood*" (*ius sanguinis*), under which a person can acquire citizenship through the Greek parent automatically at birth, regardless of place of birth. This was dictated by the need for Greek migrants abroad and their children to maintain the bond with their homeland. But there were elements under the "right of soil" (ius soli) in which Greek citizenship can be acquired by persons born in Greece, provided that they do not acquire at birth, ipso facto, the nationality of another country, for the purpose of limiting the cases of statelessness.

[34] Law 3838/24.3.2010 "Current Provisions for Greek Citizenship and Civil Participation of Ethnic Greeks and legally residing immigrants and other regulations".

[35] idem Article 1

[36] idem Article 1

[37] idem Article 3

[38] Consideration is given to, the familiarity with Greek history and Greek culture, business and economic activity, any public or charitable activities, the possible attendance at Greek educational institutions, the participation in social organizations or collective bodies whose members are Greek citizens, any kinship and bond through marriage with a Greek citizen, the fulfillment of taxation obligations and duties towards social security authorities, the acquisition-ownership of real property and the overall general asset situation. Special consideration weight is given to recommendations made by Greek citizens regarding the social and professional life of the applicant Article 4.

[39] Consideration is given to the sufficient familiarity with the institutions of the democratic Greek polity and the political life of the country as wells as basic knowledge of Greek political history and recent political events. Special emphasis is also given to the participation in collective organizations, political associations or unions involving Greek citizens, and prior participation of the applicants in primary election authorities. Article 4.

The fulfillment of the above mentioned requirements are attested through a special test conducted before the Committee on Naturalization. (Ethnic Greeks are exempted).

The naturalization of foreign immigrants for the period 2000-2012 is illustrated by the following data from the Directorate of Citizenship.

Table II: Naturalization data of Ethnic Greeks and foreign immigrants for the period 2000-2012

	YEAR	ETHNIC GREEKS	FOREIGN IMMIGRANTS	Article 13 Law 4018/11	TOTAL	DENIALS		PENDING	
						ETHNIC GREEKS	FOREIGN IMMIGRANTS	ETHNIC GREEKS	FOREIGN IMMIGRANTS
				N.3838					
1	2000	464	543		1,007				
2	2001	690	1,084		1,774				
3	2002	445	1,696		2,141				
4	2003	528	1,368		1,896				
5	2004	464	806		1,270				
6	2005	545	1,313		1,858				
7	2006	570	1,348		1,918				
8	2007	5,823	1,071		6,894	24	101		
9	2008	9,946	898		10,844	66	66		
10	2009	12,354	612		12,966	18	46		
11	2010	6,162	375		6,537	30	42		
12	2011	6,551	827	103	7,481	26	97		
13	2012	5,199	590	558	13	6,360	61	256		
	TOTAL	49,741	12,531	661	13	62,946	225	608	3.000 ACTIVE	5.000 ACTIVE

Source: Ministry of Interior Affairs

The law also refers to the right of participation of Ethnic Greeks and Foreign immigrants to prospective primary elected bodies in local governments, that is, participation in the political process of the country. The right to vote is accorded to Ethnic Greeks and foreign immigrants with permanent and legal status residence of five (5) consecutive years only in the event of local government elections. Nowhere in the law is there reference to participation in national elections. The right to be elected is granted to registered voters on specialized lists permitting them to submit their candidature for the office of councillor, for consultant of the municipal departments and of the local council provided that they are at least 21 years of age and with the additional condition that they have sufficient knowledge of the Greek language for the performance of their duties.[40]

The new law on citizenship and the legal status of the citizen reflects a new concept towards the nation. It was only natural, that this new concept would spark intense confrontations during parliamentary debates with 'conservative' opposition MPs raising the issue of the unconstitutionality of the law.

The main Opposition Party at the time, the New Democracy Party, raised complete opposition to the new regulations and was persistent to the retainment of the prerequisites as set by then the current applicable laws granting Greek citizenship to foreign immigrants. They maintained that the political "mass naturalisations" place in jeopardy the national and social cohesion of the country by becoming a draw card for the massive entry of illegal immigrants resulting in extensive unemployment and increased insecurity and deprivation for all. They consider the multicultural approach as an "*ideological construct which is collapsing everywhere*" since "*it proclaims that all cultures can live together in harmony, even though this has been disproved, as there as are cultural*

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[40] Law 3838/2010 Article 14.

elements that cannot coexist".[41] They also maintain that the integration of immigrants is understood as meaningful if there is an acceptance of the culture and the norms of the Greek society: "*We want immigrants who choose to take root in our country, to leave behind elements of their culture which are incompatible with our own, to join our society, to feel Greek, to become Greek through our own education. We do not wish that they simply receive their legal papers through fast track processes and then generate into different ghettos*".[42]

The aforementioned position by the New Democracy Party, as expressed by its Chairman, Mr Antonis Samaras, is particularly interesting, as it clarifies for the first time, the Party's position on the necessary preconditions for the granting of Greek citizenship and on the social integration of immigrants. It casts off therefore, the up until then, ambiguity in the Law 3836/2005 which expressed the desire of the State for the social integration of immigrants with the parallel preservation of their national identity. In essence, this stance supports the notion of the assimilation of immigrants- that is, that immigrants need to feel Greek, to become Greek- which it considers as a means of averting the development of separate migrant communities, and hence, the spawning of different ghettos. To this accord then, their insistence for ten years legal residence during the twelve years prior to the application for naturalization. For the children of immigrants, it is proposed that the right of acquisition to Greek citizenship should be acquired at the onset of adulthood provided that they have completed the compulsory ten-year education.[43] The New Democracy Party continues to see the granting of citizenship to foreign immigrants as an end result of successful integration into Greek society.

However, the official policy in Greece since the mid 1990s has been the intercultural approach and not the multicultural approach, (Law 2413/1996). Supporters of the intercultural approach argue that social cohesion, a prerequisite in democratic societies, is best assured when there is recognition of the civil rights of people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and participation in local and national elections is achieved. In this manner, people from diverse language and cultural backgrounds are able to be connected to the local community, hence reducing any tensions, violence and crime. Supporters of the intercultural approach, in turn, do not accept, therefore reject, the basic premise of the multicultural approach regarding the uniqueness of each culture and more so the notion of the state's obligation to defend the dividing lines between the different cultural groups that make up society. The intercultural approach emerges only in democratic states whose democratic preservation and reinforcement are promoted through a democratic culture and the rule of law.[44]

2. School Education and Integration

Up until the mid-1990s, the number of returning Ethnic Greeks and foreign immigrant students in Greek schools was limited. However, during the decade 1995-2005, there was notably a sharp increase in enrolments of students from migrant backgrounds whereby in 1995 from 8,455 students, this number rose to approximately **130,114** in 2004, representing 8.9% of the total student enrolments (8.0% in Kindergarten, 9.5% in Primary Schools, 10.3% in Junior Secondary, 4.0% in Senior Secondary, and 8.4% Technical Vocational Education respectively). Students from Albanian represented 71,5 % of the total migrant background students followed by students from the former Soviet Union at 15,9 %.[45]

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[41] Press Office of the New Democracy Party . Speech - Reply by the President of New Democracy Party, Antonis Samaras on the agenda of the parliamentary debate on Citizenship and Migration Policy. 08/02/2010.
[42] loc. cit
[43] Press Office of the New Democracy Party (11/01/2010) Letter by the President, Mr Antonis Samaras to the Minister of Interior Affairs, Decentralization and e-Government, Mr. John Ragousi.
[44] Markou, G. (2010). *Introduction to Intercultural Education*. University of Athens. Self-Publication.
[45] Dretakis, M. (2001). Exceeding 5% of the student population are Children of Returning Greek and foreign migrant in schools. *Modern Education*, No. 119, pp. 38-43. See also: Gotovos, A. and Markou, G. (2004). *Returning Ethnic Greek and foreign immigrant students in Greek Education*. Athens IPODE. CER. 2005

Table III: Distribution of foreign immigrant students in Greek State Schools across regions (2002/2003 scholastic year)

Region	Preschool Education/ Kindergarten		Primary Education		Lower Secondary Education		Senior Secondary Education		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Eastern Macedonia/Thrace	169	1.8	1.004	1.8	363	1.6	216	1.88	1752
Central Macedonia	1.351	14.2	6.945	12.7	2.909	12.8	1127	9.82	12332
Western Macedonia	171	1.8	723	1.3	254	1.1	130	1.13	1278
Epirus	243	2.5	1.158	2.1	536	2.4	339	2.95	2276
Thessaly	490	5.2	2.558	4.7	662	2.9	330	2.95	4040
Ionian Islands	278	2.9	1.613	2.9	784	3.4	381	3.32	3056
Western Greece	492	5.2	2.615	4.8	909	4.0	501	4.37	4517
Central Greece	587	6.2	2.832	5.2	816	3.6	275	2.40	4510
Attica	3.939	41.4	25.528	46.8	12.404	54.7	7009	61.08	48880
Peloponnese	606	6.4	3.526	6.5	1.244	5.5	522	4.55	5898
Northern Aegean	129	1.4	706	1.3	123	0.5	57	0.50	1015
Southern Aegean	417	4.4	2.118	3.9	734	3.2	286	2.49	3555
Crete	631	6.6	3.244	5.9	955	4.2	293	2.55	5123
Total for the country	**9.503**	100.0	**54.570**	100.0	**22693**	100.0	**11475**	100.0	**98241**

Source: Gotovos, A., Markou, G.: Returning Ethnic Greek and Foreign Immigrant Children in Greek Education. Institute for Greek Diaspora Education and Intercultural Studies, Athens 2003.

Table IV: Distribution of Returning Ethnic Greek students in Greek State Schools across regions (2002/2003 scholastic year)

Region	Preschool Education/ Kindergarten		Primary Education		Lower Secondary Education		Senior Secondary Education		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Eastern Macedonia/Thrace	235	14.9	1.894	15.1	1.731	16.2	1178	16,78	5038
Central Macedonia	729	46.1	4.529	36.0	4.314	40.3	2540	36.17	12112
Western Macedonia	31	1.2	215	1.7	113	1.1	87	1.24	446
Epirus	14	0.9	292	2.3	220	2.1	134	1.91	660
Thessaly	60	3.8	244	1.9	144	1.3	96	1.37	544
Ionian Islands	26	1.6	183	1.4	55	0.5	42	0.60	306
West Greece	21	1.3	269	2.1	158	1.5	106	1.51	554
Central Greece	42	2.7	192	1.5	122	1.1	57	0.81	413
Attica	332	21.0	3.794	30.2	3.340	31.3	2481	35.33	9947
Peloponnese	24	1.5	213	1.7	174	1.6	107	1.52	518
Northern Aegean	8	0.5	70	0.6	37	0.3	18	0.26	133
Southern Aegean	26	1.7	222	1.8	126	1.2	111	1.58	485
Crete	32	2.0	462	3.7	158	1.5	65	0.93	717
Total for the country	**1.580**	100.0	**12.579**	100.0	10.692	100.0	**7022**	100.0	**31873**

According to Law 2910/2001 *"Foreign minors residing on Greek territory are subject to the requirement of the minimum schooling as their counterpart nationals."*[46] The same law also regulates the free access to all levels of schooling and education by immigrant children by following the same procedure: *"The foreign minors studying at all levels of education have unrestricted access to school or educational community activities"*.[47] In fact, it obliges the administration of the school to enrol immigrant and political refugee children even in the event of "insufficient documentation". Hence viewing access and participation to schooling by immigrant and refugee children independent from the residence permit status of their parents. The same law also sets the terms and conditions for the recognition and accreditation of educational qualifications gained in the country of origin. It also provides the framework for the possibility of the teaching of the immigrant students' mother tongue together with the cultural aspects of the country of origin, on a voluntary basis, after school hours.[48] Conjunct to this, the Law 2413/1996 foresees the adoption of intercultural education and the adjustment of the school curriculum to the new social, cultural and educational needs generated in multicultural environments.[49]

According to the present legislation, returning Ethnic Greeks and foreign immigrant children living in Greece must be integrated into the regular school program.[50] The indicative duration of studies in kindergarten is two years with only the second year being deemed as compulsory. Children from the age of four years become eligible for entry into kindergarten. The importance of early childhood education for later and successful attendance in primary school has sufficiently been established. For the continuation into primary school, students are enrolled in June following graduation from kindergarten. Foreign immigrant students can however enrol outside this time frame. The duration of studies at Primary School is six years and three years for Junior Secondary School; hence a ten-year compulsory education. Graduates have the opportunity to continue their studies in a Senior Secondary School or in Technical Vocational Training Schools. For those over the age of 18 who have not completed compulsory education are able to attend Second Chance Schools, as legislated by the Law 2525/1997.

The safeguarding and the facilitation of free access to public education covering the full spectrum of the education system, that is, from kindergarten to university, are considered key factors of the integration process through which opportunities for social mobility are offered. The integration of returning Ethnic Greeks and foreign immigrant students into regular public schooling is a conscious choice by the State. It is for this reason that enrolment into public schools is possible irrespective of the legal residence status of the parents, that is, even in the event that parents are deemed as illegal immigrants. Schooling not only provides the opportunity for the development of the students' cognitive ability but also provides the opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge about the host country culture and the development and expansion of information and social networks. **Cultural integration** also includes the notion of internalisation of values, norms, attitudes and the shaping of beliefs and in which language plays a key and essentially significant factor. It is sequential then, that immigrant children included in the Greek educational system are in a position to receive the appropriate socialization influences through the holistic functioning of the school.

The most recent data (2013) regarding enrolments of students from a migrant background in Greek schools, reinforce the need for the sustainability and the constant appraisal and readjustment of

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[46] Law 2910/2001. "*Entry and Stay of Foreign Immigrants on Greek territory. Acquisition of Greek Citizenship by Naturalization and other provisions.*" (GG 91 vol A). Article 40, paragraph 1.

[47] idem, Article 40, par. 2.

[48] The same wording is repeated in the subsequent Law 3386 / 2005, Article 72.

[49] Law 2413/1996, Greek Education Abroad, Intercultural Education and other provisions. Government Gazette A' 128, Articles 34&35

[50] An exception to this rule are the named 'National-Ethnic Schools' for the Polish and Armenian students, in which the core subjects are taught in the mother tongue. The reasoning behind these decisions (measures) was to avoid problems associated with temporarily residence in Greece. It is difficult to understand the logic which dictated the establishment of these separate – separatist schools; perhaps with the logic of the 'minoritorization' or with the logic and practice of the Labor Rotation System, (in the case of the Greek Ethnic Schools in the Bavarian Region of Germany.

interventions required in school settings as the figures show that, despite the economic crisis and the repatriation of immigrants from Albania, Russia and Georgia, there is a stronger than ever presence of immigrant children in Greek State schools.

Table V: Distribution of foreign immigrant students in Greek State Schools across regions for the scholastic year 2012/2013

Region	Preschool Education/ Kindergarten			Primary Education			Junior and Senior Secondary Education			TOTAL
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	
Eastern Macedonia/ Thrace	206	296	402	805	699	1,549	394	335	729	2,680
Central Macedonia	1,501	1,390	2,891	4,989	4,531	9,520	2,758	2,369	5,127	17,538
Western Macedonia	148	135	283	554	537	1,091	324	292	616	1990
Epirus	235	185	420	789	699	1,488	524	425	949	2857
Thessaly	622	520	1,142	1,973	1,725	3,698	1,250	1,118	2,368	7,208
Ionian Islands	345	322	667	1,144	1,055	2,199	655	610	1,265	4,131
Western Greece	498	463	961	1763	1867	3,630	906	816	1722	6,313
Central Greece	668	569	1,237	2,142	1,919	4,061	1,285	1,180	2,465	7,763
Attica	3,423	2,965	6,388	14,096	12,488	26,584	8.822	7,698	16,520	49,492
Peloponnese	928	722	1,550	2,698	2,474	5,172	1,341	1,162	2,503	9,225
Northern Aegean	204	181	385	530	503	1,033	305	266	571	1989
Southern Aegean	522	469	991	1,784	1,538	3,322	1007	936	1943	6,256
Crete	786	759	1,545	2,719	2,508	5,227	1,143	1008	2,151	8,923
Total for the country	10,086	8,976	**18,862**	35,986	32,543	**68,574**	20,214	18,216	**38,929**	**126,365**

Source: Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports. Department of Primary Education & Department of Secondary Education

Table VI: Distribution of Returning Ethnic Greek students in Greek State Schools across regions for the scholastic year 2012/2013

Region	Preschool Education/ Kindergarten			Primary Education			Junior and Senior Secondary Education			**TOTAL**
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	
Eastern Macedonia/ Thrace	50	48	98	414	332	746	189	198	387	1,231
Central Macedonia	175	138	313	771	706	1477	606	579	1,185	2,975
Western Macedonia	3	4	7	18	16	34	26	18	44	85
Epirus	-	-	-	26	27	53	27	20	47	100
Thessaly	6	5	11	23	23	46	14	11	25	82
Ionian Islands	2	3	5	24	15	39	6	11	17	61
Western Greece	3	1	4	22	16	38	11	14	25	67
Central	6	7	13	14	7	21	13	14	27	61

Greece										
Attica	192	200	392	627	608	1235	**287**	241	528	2,155
Peloponnese	1	1	2	59	49	108	9	8	17	127
Northern Aegean	-	-	-	9	8	17	2	7	9	26
Southern Aegean	3	1	4	23	10	33	13	15	28	65
Crete	27	24	51	81	61	142	27	26	53	246
Total for the country	468	432	**900**	2,111	1,878	**3,989**	1,230	1,162	**2,392**	**7,281**

Source: Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports. Department of Primary Education & Department of Secondary Education

2.1 School Education and Learning Support Measures

Education policy has also had to undergo extensive changes incorporating within its framework of educational approach, an intercultural education, defined as *an approach* which promotes, the appreciation of cultural diversity, solidarity and tolerance, the fostering of mutual respect, ethnorelative thinking as a means of avoiding stereotyping and prejudice and as *a strategy*, focusing on the reformation of the school curriculum, of its established practices, of its procedures and structure as a means of reducing the impact of the disablement of students from different language and cultural backgrounds. (Markou, G. 2001:74)[51] (Banks, J.A., & Banks, C.A.M. 1993:9)[52].

The reduction of the barriers which inhibit student progress due to language, cultural and family background differences which students from migrant backgrounds bring into the school learning setting constitute the main intervention parameter not only in ensuring successful school learning and peer acceptance but also successful school and wider community inclusion both for the students and their families. In order to meet the needs of these students and as a general response to the challenges posed by the multicultural synthesis of the student population evident in Greek schools, the Greek State has, over time, developed and implemented a series of measures identified either as *general measures*, directed towards all school students or as *specialized measures* directed for implementation in specific schools with significantly high enrolment numbers of students from migrant backgrounds, for the purpose of facilitating school inclusion.

2.1.1 General Support Measures

An intercultural approach in education, as a means of school improvement, is fundamentally about raising student achievement through focusing on the teaching- learning process and the conditions which support intercultural understanding and communication. Therefore, any strategies developed should focus on improving the school's capacity for providing quality education for all students in times of change.

2.1.1.1 Remedial Teaching

As with all students experiencing learning difficulties and poor school results, students from migrant backgrounds can equally attend remedial support classes. This compensatory in nature teaching and learning activity forms part of a broader framework of initiatives by the State designed to raise the quality of education and to promote equal opportunities.

2.1.1.2 Intercultural Interventions

A series of interventions have been implemented over the years within the Greek education system with the aim of introducing the intercultural dimension into the educational process. These amongst others, include:

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[51] Markou,G., (2001). *Introduction to Intercultural Education*, Athens. Self-publication.
[52] Banks, J.A., & Banks, C.A.M., (1993). *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* (2nd ed.), Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- The redesigning and the reconstruction of the School Curricula and school text books to adhere to the principles of intercultural education.
- The establishment of the interdisciplinary approach in an attempt to analyze issues related to multiculturalism, the European identity, globalization and the daily lives of citizens.
- The establishment of partnerships between Greek and foreign schools
- The integration of intercultural education into the curricula of University teacher education departments.
- The organization of intercultural education training and development seminars for teachers in primary and secondary schools.
- Programs for Intercultural Intervention at the school level

2.1.2 Specific Support Measures

In addition to the general measures adopted to facilitate the successful integration of students from a migrant background into Greek schools and which are implemented in all schools, the Greek State has taken additional specific measures seeking to ensure the successful integration and participation of these students into the learning process when and wherever necessary. The key educational intervention measures adopted have as a focus:

(i) the emphasis on the prevention of school failure
(ii) the early intervention for struggling learners
(iii) teacher professional development and training in specialized support measures

At the level of implementation, these short term measures are in the form of additional or complementary lessons, usually organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Education or under the responsibility of designated University Teacher Education Institutions and make reference to :

2.1.2.1 Reception Classes

The establishment and the functioning of Reception Classes in Greece were first legislated in 1983 in the Law 1404/1983 and the Ministerial Decree 494/1983 for the children of returning Ethnic Greeks from countries in Europe, from America, Canada and Australia. Experience gained from the operation of these Reception Classes and specifically during the wave of migration mainly from the countries of the former Soviet Union, in the decade that followed, urged for the reexamination of the their operational framework. Reception Classes are usually divided into two phases (Phase I and Phase II). During Phase I, students attend separate classes for intensive language instruction for Greek and other language embedded subjects of the curriculum. In subject areas of the curriculum where Greek language skills are less demanding such as music, gymnastics, art and another foreign language, students participate together with all other students. The maximum period of participation in Phase I classes is two years and it is expected that there is close cooperation between the school and the family.

During Phase II, students are mainstreamed into the school curriculum and participate in regular classes with their peers but receive additional support in the form of individualized instruction. In this revised form of Reception Classes, students are no longer isolated in autonomous parallel classes but are integrated into the mainstream school with participation in support classes. It is generally a flexible institutional and instructional intervention at the school level for the purpose of supporting successful integration of Returning Greek and foreign immigrant children into the Greek school. For the establishment of reception classes in schools, there needs to be an enrolment of a minimum of 9 students (9-17 students) and the approval of the Teachers' School Body. Students, who continue to experience learning difficulties in the mainstream classes due to language deficiencies, usually attend Phase II of the reception classes for another school year or less, following evaluation by the Teachers' Body within the school, where upon the student is then completely integrated in the mainstream. The teaching is usually entrusted to teachers qualified in

the teaching of Greek as a second language. Usually, further optional support continues in the afterschool tuition classes.

2.1.2.2 Afterschool Tuition Classes

For students from a migrant background in state schools and who need further support, these students can participate in small afterschool classes (between 3-8 students) which provide curriculum specific language support. These classes usually cater for students who have completed both phases of reception class support.

It is worthy to note that these three types of learning support are solely funded by the State without any fees for the parents and without any involvement or financial support from the countries of origins of the immigrant students. The support teachers who undertake the teaching tasks in these measures are usually mainstream teachers from the same school. One can comment that over the years, the State has recruited and remunerated many teachers for this purpose. In all support measures, the intercultural knowledge and competencies of teachers are taken into consideration during their selection process. Additionally, teacher training seminars are also organized under the responsibility of the school administration and school counselors.

2.1.2.3 Intercultural Schools – Classes

According to Article 35 of Law 2413/1996, new or designated existing schools or classes with a significant number of students from a language and culturally diverse background can be deemed as Intercultural Schools. The law foresees the establishment of these schools from local authorities, religious institutions and other nonprofit organizations. Without altering the basic purpose of the integration of students from language and culturally diverse backgrounds, it is possible to enrich the school curriculum and the general school operational framework with intercultural activities in an attempt to best meet the needs of their students. The composition of the student population varies depending on the school and teachers are chosen for their knowledge of intercultural teaching and learning skills. From 1996 until today 26 Schools of Intercultural Education operate across the country (13 Primary Schools, 9 Junior Secondary Schools and 4 Senior Secondary Schools, of which 10 are situated in Macedonia-Thrace, 13 in Attica, 2 in Epirus and 1 in Crete.) [53]

The following table illustrates the countries of origin and the distribution of the students of migrant background who attended Schools of Intercultural Education (S.I.E) during the school year 2012-2013.

Table VII: Distribution of immigrant students and country of origin in SIE (scholastic year 2012-2013

REGIONAL	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	PRIMARY EDUCATION			SECONDARY EDUCATION			TOTAL		
		M	F	TOTAL	M	F	TOTAL	M	F	TOTAL
AFRICA	EGYPT	19	9	28				19	9	28
	ETHIOPIA	4	2	6				4	2	6
	NIGERIA	12	34	46	3	3	6	15	37	52
	TANZANIA	0	3	3				0	3	3
	KENYA	3	0	3	1	0	1	4	0	4

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[53] It should be noted that the establishment and the functioning of the Reception Classes and the Tuition Classes either through the Ministry of Education staffing allocations or through external program funding, constitutes a financial burden concerning the salaries of the teachers, the training and professional developing activities, school infrastructure, teaching resources, etc. Schools of Intercultural Education are considered "expensive" schools because the small number of students per classroom, the enriched program with additional subjects and activities, the extended teaching program, and most importantly, student transportation by buses from various parts of the city, constitutes a financial burden that far exceeds the average expenditure per student in other public schools.

	SYRIA	16	14	30	4	4	8	20	18	38
	GHANA	2	0	2	0	2	2	2	2	4
	MOROCCO	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	2
	ALGERIA	0	1	1				0	1	1
	LIBYA				1	0	1	1	0	1
	SEYCHELLES	0	1	1				0	1	1
	ERITREA				0	1	1	0	1	1
	CONGO				3	0	3	3	0	3
	IVORY COAST				-					
	SENEGAL				0	1	1	0	1	1
	SOMALIA				3	0	3	3	0	3
	SUDAN				1	0	1	1	0	1
ASIA	BANGLADESH	3	1	4	1	2	3	4	3	7
	INDIA	3	3	6	6	1	7	9	4	13
	PHILIPPINES	8	2	10	5	1	6	13	3	16
	PAKISTAN	5	2	7	9	2	11	14	4	18
	SRI LANKA	0	1	1				0	1	1
	KOREA	0	1	1				0	1	1
	CHINA	2	0	2	10	13	23	12	13	25
	PALESTINE				1	1	2	1	1	2
	AFGHANISTAN	10	8	18	35	9	44	45	17	62
	LEBANON	0	1	1				0	1	1
	TURKEY	1	0	1	3	0	3	4	0	4
	ARMENIA	4	3	7	1	2	3	5	5	10
	IRAN				3	2	5	3	2	5
	UZBEKISTAN	0	1	1	1	3	4	1	4	5
	KAZAKHSTAN				2	1	3	2	1	3
BALKANS	ALBANIA	109	78	187	79	53	132	188	131	319
	ROMANIA	4	2	6	11	11	22	15	13	28
	BULGARIA	7	8	15	18	17	35	25	25	50
	SERBIA-HERZEGOVINA	1	2	3	2	1	3	3	3	6
	FYROM				5	1	6	5	1	6
EASTERN EUROPE	MOLDAVIA	2	2	4	13	7	20	15	9	24
	GEORGIA	21	17	38	35	38	73	56	55	111
	POLAND	4	2	6	7	5	12	17	7	18
	UKRAINE	4	2	6	6	7	13	10	9	19
	RUSSIA	8	6	14	6	10	16	14	16	30
	LITHUANIA	0	1	1				0	1	1
	BELARUS	0	1	1				0	1	1
CENTRAL EUROPE	ITALY	0	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
	PORTUGAL	0	1	1				0	1	1
	BELGIUM				0	1	1	0	1	1
	GERMANY				1	0	1	1	0	1
	GREECE				12	7	19	12	7	19
OCEANA	NEW GUINEA	2	0	2	4	0	4	6	0	6
AMERICA/ SOUTH AMERICA	USA.	6	6	12				6	6	12
	CANADA	2	2	4				2	2	4
	SANTA DOMINICA	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	2
	CUBA	1	0	1				1	0	1
	BRAZIL				3	3	6	3	3	6
	VENEZUELA	1	0	1				1	0	1
	TOTAL	265	220	**485**	297	210	**507**	*562*	*430*	*992*

Experience to date from the functioning of these schools does not enable us to make generalizations regarding their positive contribution to the successful integration of children from language and culturally diverse backgrounds, as there are significant differences between them relating to one of the outcomes of intercultural education, namely that of the effects and the opportunities related to the interaction between Greek and foreign immigrant students. There are, for example, Schools of Intercultural Education with an exclusively foreign immigrant student population, due to either the laxness of the State or that schools failed to convince in Greek parents about the quality of the intercultural education provision, to allow their children to attend these schools.

2.1.2.4 The Program for the Education of Returning Ethnic Greek and Foreign Immigrant Children

As a means of promoting the introduction of intercultural educational dimensions and the integration of migrant children in the Greek School Education system, the Ministry of Education proceeded in 1997 in the development and the implementation of three Intervention Programs in Education:

a) The Education of Returning Greek and Foreign Immigrant Children
b) The Education of Roma Children and
c) The Education of the Greek Muslim Minority Children of Thrace

These Programs which are co funded by the Greek State and the by the Social Structural Fund of the European Union, form the bases for innovation in Greece and contribute significantly both at the level of scientific discourse for intercultural education and at the level of school based aspects of interculturalism.

The Program for the Education of Returning Greek and Foreign Immigrant Students has been developed and implemented primarily by the Centre for Intercultural Studies of the University of Athens and partly by the University of Thessaloniki. This program comes to a conclusion in 2013 but there is increased probability for the continuation of the program in the coming years. The Program has an established extensive network of partners covering all administrative regions in Greece through which centrally developed activities can be effectively and successfully implemented at the school level.

These activities include:

(i) The examination of the social, pedagogical and psychological factors and school conditions conducive for the integration of migrant children into the education system

(ii) The development and implementation of coordinated intervention measures which promote inclusion and reduce forms of exclusion of migrant children in the educational system and eliminate the barriers which prevent students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds from reaching their full learning potential

(iii) The development of a framework for re-examination of those barriers in terms of changes in the learning environment.

(iv) To improve support structures and networks for the inclusion of students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds into schools and their community as a whole.

(v) The development of a coordinated professional development program for teachers and educational policymakers and members of the wider educational community on issues relating to intercultural education.

(vi) The design and development of appropriate teaching material and teaching methods which allow all students to become involved in learning processes

(vii) The promotion of activities which ensure school achievement, foster respect for cultural diversity and international understanding and the interaction between school and society.

All these dimensions of the program are directly related to the general encompassing aim of the State to enhance the quality of Greek School educational provision, the promotion of equal opportunities and the creation of those conditions which foster understanding and cooperation. Intercultural inclusion activities developed and implemented aim to prevent the alienation of children from language and culturally diverse backgrounds from their family environment while at the same time facilitating their intercultural integration into the school and wider community.

2.1.2.5 The Teaching of the mother tongue and culture

With regards to the teaching of the students' mother tongue, lessons can be offered afterschool hours on a voluntary base. However, recent research aimed at immigrants from Albania, who constitute the largest migrant group in Greece, in an attempt to ascertain their attitudes towards the teaching of the mother tongue to their children, revealed that mother tongue language learning was not a priority. According to the parents, they prefer that their children learn proficiently the Greek language and other foreign languages, as they believe this will ensure them better prospects for social and career advancement both in Greece and abroad.[54] Similar findings were also noted during the implementation of the Program 'Education of Returning Greek and Foreign Immigrant Children' at the Secondary School of Intercultural Education of Aharnes in 2000, in an attempt to extend the curriculum with selective afternoon teaching and learning activities such as the teaching of the Russian language. Parents preferred their children select classes for other foreign languages or for computers and technology studies rather than the learning of the Russian language as they considered the acquisition of their mother tongue a family issue. In essence, their educational standards and aspirations do not differ from those of native Greek parents.[55]

2.1.3 The Intercultural Approach in Greek Education

The intercultural approach appears in Greece in the early 1980s, coinciding with the return of a large number of Greek migrants from western traditional countries of emigration, mainly from Germany. The mass and unregulated influx of immigrants in the years which followed, from neighboring countries and from the states of the former Soviet Union initially, and later from Asia, Africa and the Middle East, shaped and continues to shape the circumstances of multiculturalism in Greek society. As a result, Greece is confronted for the first time in its modern history, with the issue of the inclusion of people born and raised in other countries with different language and cultural backgrounds. For Greek education, the challenge is particularly significant as this involves the adoption of major changes deemed necessary to meet the new and developing needs.

The Program for the "Education of Returning Greek and Foreign Migrant Students" has played an important role in the shaping of the theoretical framework of intercultural education and of intercultural interventions both at the level of the school and at the level of scientific research.

2.1.3.1 Intercultural Education Framework: Policy formulation and implementation

Amongst the Scientific Director and the members of the Scientific Committee of the Centre for Intercultural Studies at the University of Athens, there has been a shared understanding that the philosophy and objectives of the intercultural policies adopted, both at the level of scientific

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[54] Kokkali I. (2011).*Strategic Integration and Adjustment Forms of Albanian immigrants in Greek Society: The example of Thessaloniki*. In: Moisidis, A.and Papadopoulou, D.(eds.). *The Social Integration of Immigrants in Greece. Employment, Education, Identities*. Athens Review, 2011, pp. 211-265

[55] Program for the "Education of Returning Ethnic Greeks and Foreign Immigrant Students" University of Athens, KEDA 2001-2004. Perhaps this is the main reason why, apart from a few cases, there has been up till now, no teaching of the migrant children's mother tongue.

discourse and implementation, should not create nor reproduce minorities but rather foster intercultural understanding and constructive cooperation between native born Greeks and people from migrant backgrounds. Throughout all the intercultural educational programs and interventions implemented by the Centre, there have been concerted efforts towards the establishment of a 'rule of law' State where all citizens are able to be included and give legitimacy to the State. These type of intercultural educational activities assist all students to acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to strive for the realization of basic democratic principles of equality and justice. In essence, the basic objective of these activities is the shaping of intercultural democratic citizens. For this purpose there is an urgent need to redefine the school curriculum and the school subject course of political and social education. The traditional principles of civic education as a means of acquiring knowledge on governance, democratic institutions, national constitutional and political history need to be expanded and reinterpreted in light of broader concepts for rights and obligations of citizens who live and work in multicultural environments both at national and supranational levels. The values of collectivity, solidarity, tolerance, mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity, peace and international cooperation should be cultivated among young people. Young people should realize that the values of individualism, competition and consumerism that promote the expression of neoliberal global capitalism today, impoverish large segments of the population and virtually eliminate the middle class that has historically been the pillar and guarantor of democratic institutions. Ultimately, this will lead, sooner or later, to unrestrainable social unrest and conflict with unpredictable consequences, since the 'exceeding the limits' perpetrated by unaccountable markets will follow a Nemesis of punishment. This is the most important lesson learnt throughout the teachings of the ancient Greek tragedies: exceeding the limits both at an individual and collective level, has inevitable Nemesis, (punishment). In Greece, the need for the redefinition of the school curriculum and the school subject course of Political and Civic Education is motivated by two emerging factors within Greek society: a) the majority of immigrants who are now able to acquire Greek citizenship, that is, able to become Greek citizens, originate from countries with autocratic or theocratic regimes, and b) the rapid rise of the extreme conservative, racist (in the sense of race) Golden Dawn Party and its representation in the Greek Parliament.

2.1.3.2 Intercultural Education: Scientific Research Activities

At the level of scientific research, the Scientific Research team of the Centre for Intercultural Studies of the University of Athens, questions the validity of many research studies, regarding the social integration of people from linguistic and culturally diverse groups, as all students usually seek to explain the integration deficits into Greek society either through the influence of their ethnocultural backgrounds or due to the approach of social stratification. The majority of these research studies have as a central theme, the exclusion of these social groups from the various sectors of the Greek community. They often include rhetoric about racist attitudes, an accentuation on differences and a conceptual limitation of interculturalism in the narrow context of culture, through which there is an attempt to interpret social inequalities and social exclusion. Of course, it goes without saying, that there is a dominance of research studies which limit their research scope to the behavior and attitudes of foreigners using, at best, the respective characteristics of Greek nationals as a comparative factor. Studies, which take into account simultaneously the two sides of the integration process and which perceive integration as the effective intercultural interaction and cooperation between all social groups, are still pending. For the Scientific Research team of the Centre, such a perception and practice cannot by itself fully illuminate the plurality of relations of the various groups that make up a contemporary multicultural society let alone their inter relationship interactions.

This becomes particularly evident in the studies regarding the Greek Roma community currently conducted by the Centre for Intercultural Studies as part of activities of the Program for the Education of Roma Children. The differentiation of the Roma communities into many subgroups according to their various living conditions is a key feature for their social and cultural reality.

Taking into account that the socio-cultural reality of Greek Roma, as with non-Roma Greeks, is not static but constantly changing, this shapes a multiplicity of conditions of which, in any attempt of investigation and analysis, requires the search for a broader spectrum (matrix) of factors affecting the process of integration and interaction. It is hoped that the current studies conducted by the Centre's Research Team, will contribute to a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the problems arising from the complexity of social conditions, and which in turn, will be able to contribute to the development of more effective intervention policy measures. Additionally, it is also hoped that the studies will contribute to the quintessence of public debate encompassing issues not only of the causes of the difficult social conditions afflicting directly Greek Roma, but also of the sharing responsibility of the problems related to their social integration and the relationship between Roma and non-Roma Greeks.

In the current public debate, the integration process deficit regarding the Roma community is often presented as a consequence of the specific social relations and cultural situations shaped by this particular social group, who, in support of the various State proposed integration policies, abandon these deficiencies, i.e., their language, interest in schooling and adopt an instrumental perception of education. As a result, there is a formation of perceptions at the political level, in the media and amongst non Roma Greek citizens that attribute this social integration deficit to the Roma themselves, who are perceived as having sole responsibility.

3. Concluding Statements

Research results show that, despite the serious problems associated with residence and work permits, communication, mainly due to language deficiency, housing and employment, etc. it is characteristic of the majority of immigrants in Greece, of their intention for long-term prospect in remaining in the country. The intention to settle permanently in Greece is also expressed by their children who attend Greek schools.[56] This has also shown to be of similar experience by traditional European immigration countries in which expectations for temporary stay of immigrants, and the theory of a labor rotation system proved to be unsubstantiated. The permanent nature of migration is still the rule of fact.

Other research studies show that the process of legalization contributes significantly to the successful integration of immigrants in host societies, as it facilitates family reunification, regular school attendance of their children, employment opportunities and generally contributing to the total life organization of immigrants, since they are able to attain a sense of a better life achievement both for themselves and their families. The status of legalization has particularly reinforcing value on the psychological position of the immigrant as it promotes the feeling of acceptance and belonging as an equal member of society. The legalization of immigrants seems to work positively on school performance of migrant children.[57]

The successful integration of immigrants who live and work in Greece for many years is now a stated objective in Greek migration policy. The recent Law 3838/2010 amends significantly the Greek Citizenship Code, shifting the right to Greek citizenship from the "*right of blood*" (*ius sanguinis*) to the "*right of soil*" (*ius soli*). In this way, national identity ceases to be constructed exclusively in terms of ethnicity and incorporates political, educational, cultural and social conditions. With this law, there is noted a significant progress in securing legal residence, the right to family reunification and employment, but fundamentally securing participation in the civil and civic life of their place of residence (participation in elections for local authorities). With the most recent changes of the Law 3852/2010, there is the provision for the establishment and functioning of a Council for the Integration of Immigrants in the country's municipalities where local government assumes an important role in promoting the social integration of immigrants living in

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[56] Haliapa, A. (2009). *Integration in Greece. The Problem of the Second Generation*. PhD Thesis, Harokopio University, Department of Geography.
[57] Moisidis, A. and Papadopoulou, D. (2011) *Introduction: Social Integration of Immigrants in Greece. Employment, Education. Identities*. in: Moisidis, A and Papadopoulou, D (eds). *Social Integration of Immigrants in Greece*. Employment, Education Identities, Athens, Criticism, pp. 9-49.

their administrative area. Although the "nationalist" concept of the nation, expressed by Conservative MPs, perceives naturalization as a result of a successful process of integration and belonging to the nation as a kind of primordial bond, the modifications in the new law refer to the process of naturalization as a vehicle for integration. The absence of the "nationalist" concept of the nation and the nation state is evident in the new law and the definition of citizenship proclaims the citizen as a member of its constitutional order. The naturalized persons must accept the proclamation of this content, giving oath after the onset of adulthood (Article 7).

However, despite the enactment of the new law, supporters of the nationalist conception of the nation and the nation state are not solely satisfied with only confrontation of arguments, but have proceeded to dispute the law in the Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of certain provisions. A society that is experiencing a continuous stream of migration and in need of an ongoing process of integration into European structures is fully supportive of this new law. Although it is still early, the first naturalization data show an upward trend, although not particularly significant at this stage.

The granting of citizenship is entrenched in the fundamental principles of a democratic government. The democratic nature of modern states has generated many discussions and reflections on citizenship, since it is directly related to its legitimacy derived from all residents. Beyond the common language, all social groups within a democratic society should demonstrate adherence to the democratic principles, the Constitution and the individual rights provided therein, as well as mutual respect and tolerance. In the common political space of the state, individuals develop interrelations and participate in the same legal, administrative and political contexts. The values and common practices of a democratic society cannot be put in dispute. The specific recognition of collective cultural values, traditions and identities cannot be achieved when these lead to practices that militate against the democratic process of dialogue and consensus arising from the adoption of common rules in the public sphere.

Education is the most important institution for the integration of children from language and culturally diverse backgrounds in any host society. For this reason, the successful or non-educational participation constitutes a reliable criterion for assessing the degree of integration of migrant children in Greek society.

There is evidence to suggest that migrant children are still heavily influenced by the difficulties encountered in the Greek educational system. However, given that integration is a continuous process and observing the rising trend in the indicators pertaining to the number of students from a migrant background who complete primary school, and those who continue to Junior and Senior High School, we observe a gradual improvement in their educational situation. In the research study by Gotovos and Markou (2004, 124-126) it was found that the average school performance of students from a migrant background is a grade of 14 out of 20, with differences noted between first and second generation migrant children. The proportion of migrant students studying in secondary education is increasing, especially in Junior High Schools and Technical and Vocational Schools. This seems to be attributed to the contribution of teachers and especially to the structure of the Greek educational system which has a horizontal single form schooling structure in secondary education without the vertical variations encountered in other educational systems, such as the German education system with the three different types of schools in secondary education.

The major problem and the most serious difficulties facing the Greek school today in the period of neoliberal globalized capitalism and economic crisis, is undoubtedly youth unemployment particularly for those aged between 15-24 where in some regions of Greece, namely Western Macedonian youth unemployment reaches a staggering 72,5 % (EUROSTAT May 2013). This is significantly higher than the unemployment level in other states in Southern and Northern Europe and the EU average rate of 22.9 %. The weakness of the labor market to create new jobs for unskilled and skilled workers will develop a state of high competition and social tension between Greek and migrant background youth. The inability to integrate immigrant children of second and third generation in the labor market undermines significantly the school's task for intercultural integration into Greek society.

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