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Between ethnocentrism and Europeanism? An exploration of the effects of migration and European integration on curricula and policies in Greece

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Abstract

Greek national identity has been challenged by processes of European integration and migration-related cultural diversity. This article begins with a socio-historical analysis of the impact of national, European and multicultural political agendas on education policy in Greece. Drawing on curriculum documents and semi-structured interviews, the article argues that these three agendas were put together in rather different ways, depending on the school material. History remained largely ethnocentric while geography and citizenship curricula veered between ethnocentrism and Europeanism; in doing so they marginalized topics relating to migration, 'otherness' and integration. Some policy makers also struggled to move beyond a mere recognition of the plural character of Greek society while others revealed more progressive views of a synthesis between notions of Europe and diversity. The study is drawn from a larger Greek case study and addresses a number of broader sociological concerns in Europe including how to respond to increasing diversity resulting from migration. It departs from standard two-way comparisons of national-versus-European or national-versus-multicultural agendas in addressing the complex interface of national, European and migration-related issues.

Keywords

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Introduction

Few countries in Europe demonstrate the connections between religion and national agendas more clearly than Greece, where the Orthodox Church has identified itself with the nation state and the forging of an ethnically based identity (Clogg, 2002). Questions of identity have thus largely centred on issues of common ancestry, language and the unique 'Helleno-Christian' religion, simultaneously leaning on classical memories and Byzantine traditions (Tsoukalas, 2002; Tziovas, 2001). Socio-historically, and educationally, these have been important ways of protecting the nation state against the perceived 'other' (e.g. the Turks). During the first three decades following the Second World War, Greece was initially polarized between communist insurgents (who tried to ally the country to the East) and the more western orientation of liberals, royalists and government forces of republicans (Carabott and Sfikas, 2004). Policy makers and politicians emphasized national agendas around identity and language while European discourses appeared to have little implication for the political and education systems. Greece was eventually assigned to the West and, of a total of 1,304,763 emigrants who left the country before 1974, nearly 800,000 entered northern European countries, 85 percent going to Germany (Markou, 1994). Greece recovered economically thanks to this emigration.

Educational issues concerning return migrant children were largely ignored at the time despite the fact that an increasing number of Greeks chose to return after the end of the military dictatorship and the oil crisis in Europe in 1974. Instead, politicians and educators argued over which form of the Greek language young people should be taught in schools. Conservatives argued for a constructed, purified form of the Greek language with many similarities to ancient Greek (*katharevousa*), whereas liberals suggested a vernacular, modern language (*demotiki*) as a means of expression at all levels of education. Under the conservative Karamanlis government (1974–80), educational reform in 1976 was marked by the emergence of democratization in the aftermath of the seven-year military dictatorship. This involved a new Constitution and Greece's prospects of joining the then European Economic Community. Legislation replaced *katharevousa* with modern Greek as the official teaching language. It extended compulsory schooling from six to nine years and developed technical and vocational training as an important part of the educational system. Zambeta (2000: 149) argued that the educational system at the time adopted a clearly denominational model of instruction, as expressed in Articles 3 and 16 of the Constitution. 'The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. Education shall aim at ... the development of national and religious consciousness and at their formation as free and responsible citizens' (Government Gazette, 2001; translated from Greek). However, she also acknowledged that the contradictory character of policy making was reflected in the 1985 educational reform stating that the freedom of religious consciousness is inviolable.

The educational response to the presence of migrant students (mainly repatriated ethnic Greek students) at the time was characterized by granting them time.

In their first two years of schooling, students were marked with leniency with a pass mark of 8 rather than 10, particularly in language subjects. In the early 1980s, the rationale behind these time allowances and reduction in demands was further supplemented with one providing for compensatory measures (Damanakis, 2005; Makri, 2003). Reception classes (with an emphasis on Greek language learning) and, subsequently, tutorial or support classes (which provided training in several subjects repatriated students had difficulties with) were established with the aim of assimilating migrant students into the Greek educational system. However, the separate responses towards repatriated Greek students on the one hand, and 'foreign' students of non-Greek origin on the other, have been indicative of the ethnocentric, and partly Eurocentric, nature of the Greek education system. The dominant rationale at the time was one of a 'deficit hypothesis' (Damanakis, 2005). 'Sameness of identity was advanced, others being required to adapt to it and adopt it while sacrificing their diversity' (2005: 81). The deficit of 'foreign' students was not to be Greek, not to speak Greek and not to follow the Orthodox religion.

Despite the assimilatory–compensatory approach in schools, Greek academics had already started to debate the concept of intercultural education during the 1980s. Gotovos and Markou (1984), for instance, criticized the assimilatory educational policy and practice and proposed that students should be allowed to retain those elements acquired during their stay in a reception country without them being considered as a disadvantage. 'It is in the interest of the school', Markou (1994: 40) argued, 'not to assimilate them culturally through the "logic" of conformity and homogeneity, but to help them acquire the necessary knowledge and skills which will allow them to improve their school performance and successfully gain acceptance from fellow pupils to be different.' Academics were increasingly aware that changes in the curriculum needed to take place. On the one hand, opportunities to form one's new cultural identity needed to be offered and, on the other hand, indigenous Greek students needed to be given an opportunity to overcome their stereotypes and prejudices. This new approach of 'intercultural education' therefore emphasized migrant students and indigenous students as equally important participants in the learning process whereas the assimilatory–compensatory approach applied only to the linguistic and cultural deficits of migrants.

More recently, the relationships between national, European and multicultural values have impacted concurrently on political and educational discourses[1]. Greece had to respond to an unprecedented wave of immigration following the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989. Major groups of migrants included: (a) co-ethnic Greeks from the former Soviet Union (*Pontic Greeks*); (b) co-ethnic Greeks from Albania (*Vorioepirotes*); and (c) economic migrants particularly from the Balkans and Eastern Europe and to a lesser extent from Asia and Africa. The 2001 immigration law (Government Gazette, 2001) did little to remove the ingrained discrimination that existed regarding citizenship acquisition between co-ethnic returnees (*homogeneis*), Greeks born in Greece and so-called 'foreigners' or 'aliens'. Pontic Greeks

were welcomed and given Greek passports, as were Greek Albanians. However, the latter did not receive citizenship until 2006. These preferential treatments resulted in a 'hierarchy of Greekness' (Triandafyllidou and Veikou (2002: 201f.) consisting of 'real Greeks' born in Greece, followed by Pontic Greeks, co-ethnics from Albania (Greek Albanians) and finally 'aliens'.

According to the 2001 census, there were 10,964,020 inhabitants in Greece, of whom nearly 800,000 were 'foreigners' (non-Greek citizens). The largest group of migrants were Albanian citizens (438,000) followed by Bulgarians (35,000), Georgians and Romanians. In 2000, according to the special census administered by the General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad, 154,000 Pontic Greeks have settled in Greece. In addition, Triandafyllidou and Maroufof (2008) estimate that 167,000 undocumented or irregular migrants have entered Greece since the latest census. Thus, the total number of migrant residents including co-ethnic returnees was approximately 1.17 million (10%). In 2006, according to IPODE (an institute within the Ministry of Education responsible for collecting educational data), there were 138,193 'foreign' or repatriated ethnic Greek students in the country. This translates into 9.5 percent of the school population. However, Greek official statistics have recorded citizenship rather than ethnicity and there is a real possibility here that migrants obtaining Greek citizenship will become 'invisible' in future censuses. Although the total naturalization rate is still low (188,000 co-ethnics from Albania held a special identity card in 2007 and were thus eligible for naturalization), 7481 of these co-ethnics were granted citizenship in 2007.[2]

Despite large-scale immigration, it was not until 1996 that Greece responded to the presence of (im)migrant communities in the classroom with Law 2413 on Greek Education Abroad, Intercultural Education and Other Provisions (Government Gazette, 1996). This represented the first official recognition that migrants were there to stay and that diverse communities had specific educational needs. It also represented a shift from earlier notions of 'foreigner education' and the 'deficit hypothesis' to the 'difference hypothesis' maintaining that policy makers and politicians now attempted to recognize, albeit to a limited extent, cultural and ethnic differences in Greece (Damanakis, 2005; Reich, 1994). This law legitimized the foundation of so-called intercultural schools by invoking 'cultural distinctiveness'. Apart from the normal curriculum, intercultural schools would provide courses with up to four hours' tuition per week on the language and culture of migrant students' country of origin. These schools would also teach Greek to parents of students and inform them about the Greek educational system and encourage their participation in school activities. Since 1996, a total of 26 such schools have been established across the country – 13 primary schools (*dimotiko*), nine junior high schools (*gymnasio*) and four senior high schools (*lykeio*). Out of a total of 15,174 state schools, these intercultural schools correspond to 0.17 percent, whereas there are 9.5 percent of students with a migrant background in Greek schools. Despite legal measures to address the effects of migration in schools, in practice, migrants were subjected to assimilation pressures because none of the governmental measures encouraged the maintenance of students' ethnic identities (Palaiologou and

Evangelou, 2003). The law also only concerned those 'with educational, social and cultural particularities', thus not serving the objectives of intercultural education (Makri, 2003). Moreover, intercultural schools soon became institutions that catered exclusively for 'foreign' students, as Greek students stayed away fearing that they offered limited learning opportunities (Nikolaou, 2000). It is worth noting that for a school to be identified as intercultural, at least 45 per cent of the student body must be non-Greek; but not all schools with at least 45 per cent migrant students are identified as intercultural.

Key educational attempts to address the growing diversity resulted in the creation, in 1999 (Government Gazette, 1999), of reception and tutorial classes (this time targeted specifically at 'foreign' non-Greek citizens). Tutorial classes provide after-school tuition for migrant students. In practice, the amount of time spent in such classes varies between three and ten hours per week (Palaiologou, 2004). Students in reception classes receive five to 10 hours of instruction per group. During the rest of the school day, they attend mainstream classes and they are expected to acquire the language through classroom immersion. The same 1999 legislation left the initiative to organize mother-tongue teaching to the prefectures without clear budget lines. However, fieldwork indicated that only sporadic private initiatives exist with the support of some teachers and parents for Albanian, Ukrainian and Arabic language classes to take place in their schools during evening hours. This is the case despite the fact that Article 72 of the latest immigration law (Government Gazette, 2005) provides for the Minister of Education to arrange mother-tongue teaching and culture classes. In addition, three educational programmes were carried out between 1997 and 2007 in collaboration with Greek universities. They were financially supported by the European Social Fund with a view to helping students participate in society whilst also maintaining their ethnocultural identities. These initiatives relate to three different groups of students: (a) the historical Muslims of Thrace; (b) Travellers (80,000 to 120,000 according to Markou, 1994); and, (c) repatriated and 'foreign' migrant students. The first two groups fall outside the scope of this article, but there is evidence that both suffer discrimination in education and in society at large (Zambeta, 2000).

The continuing processes of European integration had a direct impact on education during the 1990s. For example, by increasing the total number of teaching periods, curriculum space was created not only for Information Technology but for a second foreign language at secondary level and for the introduction of a first foreign language at primary level (Mattheou, 1998). The European dimension in education is formally based on the Resolution by the Council of Ministers of Education to 'strengthen in young people a sense of European identity' (Council of Ministers of Education, 1988: 5). A Green Paper suggested ways of cooperation amongst students, parents, teachers, administrators and trainers (Council of Ministers of Education, 1993). Greece has increasingly participated in European exchange programmes in primary and secondary education, teacher exchange schemes and transnational exchanges in vocational training (including Socrates, Leonardo and Comenius). A separate directorate functioning within the Ministry

of Education has been responsible for the promotion of cooperation between Greece and other European countries and also for the dissemination of educational information amongst teachers and students. Whilst this participation has contributed to the development of a European educational dimension and a partial European identity, its potential is considered to have been restricted by the inflexibility of school curricula and of the educational system overall (Diamantopoulou, 2006: 139).

In 2003, the Ministry of Education overhauled the curriculum to incorporate a European and intercultural dimension under the general principle of 'strengthening cultural and linguistic identity within a multicultural society'. This new initiative focused on promoting respect and development of linguistic and cultural diversity along with respect for cultural and national identity. It encouraged multidisciplinary methodologies in the teaching of history, geography, literature and foreign languages; and included an optional study programme of two hours per week for general debates on issues such as European identity, globalization and multiculturalism (Hellenic Regional Development Centre, 2007: 64). The extent to which the 2003 reform in Greece was triggered by the needs of migrant students remains unclear and debatable because of a leading European trend to move away from knowledge-based curricula to defining cross-curricular skills such as intercultural competence.

Methodology

This article focuses primarily on interviews with education officials and contextualizes these interview findings through a critical analysis of geography, history and citizenship education curricula in Greece. It deals with a number of broader, very important and as yet unsolved issues in this country. How are children of migrants, whether they are of Greek origin (*returnees/homogeneis*) or of 'foreign' origin (*allogeneis*) going to be integrated into the education system and into society in general? To what extent should they be given an opportunity to maintain and cultivate their distinct cultures while being integrated into the society? How can the Greek education system benefit from intercultural education? What is the role or influence of European integration in today's Greek identity, and what shape does it take in its transmission in schools? How strong is ethnocentrism in Greece? How can, or should, the still ethnocentric Greek identity be modified to correspond to the fact that Greece has become a multicultural country? And what role could Europe play in achieving this modification? All these questions constitute part of ongoing debates not just in Greece, but also elsewhere in Europe. Two different bodies of literature have emerged between those focusing more on the national and European dimensions (e.g. Hinderliter Ortloff, 2005; Ryba, 2000) and others stressing the multicultural and global educational dimensions (e.g. Graves, 2002; Wilhelm, 1998). Although there is also some general literature on the European dimension that deals with issues of intra-European diversity (e.g. Delanty, 1995;

Sultana, 1995), there has hardly been an explicit attempt at synthesizing the various educational dimensions.

For the broader study, I began by reviewing the relevant literature on national identity and civic education, Europe and European education, and multiculturalism and multicultural education in Greece, Germany and the UK (specifically England). My choice of countries was based on three main criteria. First, these countries have placed different emphases on their European and multicultural agendas. German politicians and policy makers constructed a 'Europeanized German identity' after the Second World War whilst struggling to include minority ethnic groups such as the Turkish Muslims into its concept of nationhood, which, like Greece, still favours the principle of *ius sanguinis* (Faas, 2010). The UK, on the other hand, has not only prioritized the *ius soli* approach to citizenship and marginalized European agendas, but the country also had to develop approaches to cultural diversity after the arrival of the Empire Windrush in 1948. Since the 1980s, schools have been actively engaged in developing multicultural and anti-racist initiatives (Faas, 2010). Unlike Germany and the UK, Greece has only recently become an immigration country, and multiculturalism is still more of a policy buzzword than a reality. Although the country joined the European Community only in 1981, it soon began to support European integration as well as the development of joint policy in areas such as education.

Second, these three countries rely on different models on how to address diversity in education. Germany and Greece prefer the term 'intercultural education' whereas the English model is one of 'multicultural education'. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2006), multiculturalism describes the culturally diverse nature of societies. It not only refers to elements of ethnic or national culture, but also includes linguistic, religious and socioeconomic diversity. In contrast, interculturalism refers to evolving interactions between cultural groups. Multicultural education uses learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance, or at least tolerance, of these cultures whereas intercultural education aims to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together in culturally diverse societies through the creation of respect for, and dialogue between, different cultural groups.

Third, there were also personal motivations for choosing these countries including that the author is a German native, studied in the UK and worked in Greece for nearly two years. This ensured a sense of familiarity and a more in-depth understanding of each sociocultural context that, in turn, facilitated the interpretation of findings in each country.

I collected and analysed the relevant Greek, German and English history, geography and civic education curricula, and decided to apply two main criteria to the curricular analysis in an attempt to minimize problems of equivalence in the broader study: (a) *age* and (b) *compulsory schooling*. This approach ensured a curriculum analysis of five years of compulsory schooling with students aged between 10 and 15 (for a comparative curriculum analysis across the three countries, see Faas, forthcoming). The curriculum documents were subsequently

triangulated with insights obtained from semi-structured individual interviews with policy makers conducted in people's workplaces in Athens, Stuttgart, London and Brussels. A total of 30 policy interviews were conducted including 13 in Greece, seven in Germany, six in England and four in Brussels within the Directorate-General for Education and Culture. The six institutions where the discussions were held were compatible in terms of their responsibilities and focus on European and intercultural issues relevant for this project. They included the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in the UK; the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as the Institute of Education of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg, Germany; and the Pedagogical Institute and the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (hereafter Ministry of Education).

In this article, I focus on the Greek case, which was carried out in cooperation with another project within the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy in Athens in 2007 (see also Palaiologou and Faas, forthcoming).[3] This was mainly because I am not proficient in Greek and therefore had limited access to the Greek literature. The website of the Greek Ministry of Education provided an English version of the Greek curriculum. To analyse the curricula and policy discourses, I developed a conceptual framework linking European and multicultural dimensions. First, *inclusive national* approaches, which include a range of migration-related topics combined with a national dimension. Second, *inclusive European* approaches, which include a range of migration-related topics combined with a more European dimension. Third, *exclusive Eurocentric* approaches, which consist of a strong European ethos and little if any acknowledgement of migration-related diversity. Fourth, *exclusive nationalistic* approaches, which consist of a strong national ethos and little if any acknowledgement of diversity. The quantitative part of the analysis referred to the presence of European, cultural diversity and national topics in the curriculum. To this end, I carried out a content analysis to find out which units across the five age groups referred to Europe, diversity and the nation state. The qualitative part focused on the discourses employed in the curriculum such as more inclusive and exclusive constructions of Europe and the nation state.

Interviews were taped and transcribed with the following: senior officers from the Ministry of Education; officials from the Institute for the Greek Diaspora Education and Intercultural Studies (IPODE), a semi-autonomous institute within the Ministry of Education responsible for conducting educational studies; advisors from the Pedagogical Institute (PI), an independent institution that oversees the drafting and revisions of curricula and textbooks; representatives from the Greek Federation of Secondary State School Teachers (OLME); and the heads of District Offices responsible for high school education in central Athens.[4] The interviews were carried out either by native speakers or with the help of an interpreter. The aim of these interviews was to learn more about the ways in which Greek policy officers conceptualized the educational challenges of responding to migration-related diversity and European integration. Table 1 summarizes the main questions used to guide the discussions.

Table 1. Interview guide for policy makers

1. How would you describe the school population in this country?
2. What are, in your opinion, the main policy measures taken by the state to address the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity in schools today?
3. To what extent have these measures succeeded? What are their major strengths and weaknesses?
4. How do you see schools evolving in the next ten years, with special reference to ethno-cultural and religious diversity?
5. Have the main objectives of education changed in recent years because of the presence of immigrant and co-ethnic returnee students in schools? In what ways?
6. Do immigrant and co-ethnic returnee students have special educational needs and what are these needs in your opinion and how have these been addressed?
7. How important do you think a European dimension in education is?
8. To what extent should schools promote national and/or European values? Can you give me examples of such values that are important in the curriculum?
9. Do you think that teaching/education should include both a European *and* an intercultural dimension?
10. What do you think about the overall attention given to European issues compared with national and/or multicultural issues in schools?
11. Which of these three issues/dimensions/identities (i.e. national, multicultural, European) would you say the curriculum should promote and why?
12. How should schools respond to the presence of students from diverse (ethno-cultural and religious) backgrounds, European and non-European?
13. How do you define citizenship and what sort of citizens do you think schools should aim to create?
14. How can schools today respect cultural and religious diversity among students and at the same time promote a common bond?

Whilst this type of research yields insights into the ways in which national and regional curricula reflect macro-political debates about Europe and migration-related diversity, it is beyond the scope of this study to also consider 'single text-books' issued by the PI that interpret and exemplify the Greek curricula including such sensitive issues as the relationship between ethnocentrism and Europeanism. A future textbook analysis could usefully build on knowledge obtained from my curricular and interview analysis.

Sustaining Greekness in curricula and policy discourses?

The curriculum analysis revealed an emphasis on national topics, particularly in history where nearly two-thirds of units dealt with Greece (e.g. the Byzantine

Empire, the Greek War of Independence, Twentieth-century Greece). The European dimension was perhaps best developed in geography although it should be noted that Europe was defined mainly in political terms and thus used as a synonym for the European Union (EU) rather than in geographical terms (e.g. Greece and the EU, the political division of Europe). Countries and cultures beyond Europe or the EU remained largely unexplored. There was also ample reference to Greece and Europe where Europe seemed to be constructed as an 'add-on' dimension and compatible with Greek national identities (e.g. the population of Europe and Greece, the surface of Europe and Greece). In contrast, the intercultural dimension was underdeveloped, particularly in geography. Although there were occasional references in sub-units to issues of cultural diversity (e.g. realize the need for the preservation of diversity within the context of a multicultural Europe), these sub-units often addressed global or international aspects rather than migration-related topics (e.g. the individual and the international community; global transportation networks).

While citizenship and geography curricula achieved a better balance between national and European topics, the history curriculum was still ethnocentric (22 out of 34 history topics had a national focus). The present history syllabus begins with a short statement of the teaching and learning aims, including the development of historical thinking and historical awareness. The educational authorities specify that history classes should make pupils aware that the modern world is a continuation of the world of the past (Government Gazette, 2003: 99). To this end, most of the Year 5 (ages 10 to 11) and Year 8 (ages 13 to 14) curriculum dealt with the rise and fall of the Byzantine Empire and its contribution to civilization worldwide, whereas national teaching units in other years reinforced Greece's struggle for democracy, freedom and national independence. History was also the only social science subject taught throughout nine years of compulsory schooling in Greece and thus was elevated to the status of mathematics and Greek language.[5] The main purpose of the reformed history curriculum still lies in the development of national consciousness and citizenship, with Europe and multiculturalism being only marginally addressed.

In contrast, the compatibility of national and European citizenship agendas and identities was well developed in the contemporary geography curriculum where objectives included realizing that every European country is set within a wider context and how it is interdependent with other European countries. It recognized the physical features of the European environment and described how they influence the lives of Europeans. Although at one point, in Year 7 (ages 12 to 13), the objective was also to recognize cultural differences between groups of people around the world in the way environmental problems are dealt with. A majority of units that dealt with global and/or intercultural issues emphasized Europe (e.g. the physical features of the continents with special emphasis on Europe). This 'special emphasis on Europe', coupled with units in which Europe appeared synonymous with the EU (e.g. Greece and the European Union) amounted to a sense of Europeanism being added onto the prevailing ethnocentrism, which, in the

national political framework, was based on common ancestry, the Orthodox Christian religion and Greek language. Macro-political discourses were therefore reflected in the shaping of these subject curricula. It remains to be seen whether the odd reference to cultural and ethnic diversity in the current geography curriculum is simply recognition of the culturally diverse nature of Greek society or a more coordinated effort to address the presence of non-European, non-Christian immigrant communities.

The veering between ethnocentrism and Europeanism could also be seen in citizenship education. The objectives of citizenship and social studies programmes included students' cultural development in strengthening their national and cultural identity, by increasing their awareness of the nature and role of various groups they belong to and their readiness to accept diversity. It also included the development of young people's Greek identity and awareness based on Greek national and cultural heritage (Government Gazette, 2003). Citizenship fuses notions of both ethnocentrism (by outlining the political system of the Greek state, the Greek citizen rights and responsibilities, the importance of the Constitution) and Europeanism (by reiterating the thoughts of the President of the PI to focus on both national identity and cultural heritage and European citizenship). This, then, resulted in one unit per age group entitled 'The individual and the European Union' discussing the background of its foundation, current member states and the notion of a European citizen. The Greek citizen was constructed as a European citizen in these units and an objective in Year 9 (ages 14 to 15) clearly stated that 'pupils should [be] aware of the fact that they are Greek and European citizens at the same time' (Government Gazette, 2003: 125). This was not surprising given that successive governments have emphasized the cultural relationship between Greece and Europe. Arguably, this conceptualization of Europe did not include all those immigrants and students in Greece originating from Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania or Asian countries. However, there was also one unit in each year group that addressed 'the individual and the international community'. Given that these units dealt with human rights issues, they could well be seen as a response to the increasingly multicultural nature of Greece.

Senior policy officers in the ministry also struggled to provide concrete examples of intercultural (or multicultural) education and frequently stressed notions of equality. Integration seemed to be equated with assimilation even though this was formally rejected. Ms Doxiadis (the Director of Primary Education in the Ministry of Education), whilst discussing the importance of helping migrant students integrate, mentioned that 'look, for example, I have christened a foreign student and she is now a first-year medical student'. This example was flagged with a lot of pride of how this student had successfully 'integrated', but the reference to the christening suggests that, following the national pattern, the main point was to become Orthodox Greek and speak Greek. Mr Konstantinitis, the head of a district office in Athens, applauded 'the non-Greek mother tongue pupils' for being 'among the best in reciting their poems, dancing the Greek traditional dances [during national commemorations on Independence Day, 25 March, and Ochi

Day, 28 October]. They participate.' Generally, ministry officials held more tradi-
tional conservative views compared to middle- and junior-ranked officers and
referred to equality as a core value of the education system while arguing that
the notion of interculturalism falls outside the responsibilities of their unit or
directorate:

> Mr Dranias: [The main goal is] to integrate them in the education system so that they
> also have equal opportunities and access to education. To reduce school drop-out
> rates. ... The needs of life and society always vary, which means that today as citizens,
> us too, of the EU we see things differently. And the needs of education are also larger.
> Because here we have the human right to education, regardless of gender, nationality,
> besides the Constitution foresees that and gives the right to all children, that all people
> can take part in Hellenic education regardless of their country of origin, gender or
> religion. Very important. ... Our education has humanist values and it has never
> separated [foreign students from other students]. Children can show their cultures
> to a certain extent. This can be supported by parents as well. There are several special
> days; for example 'Friendship Day' which takes place in schools. (Director of
> Secondary Education, Ministry of Education)

In contrast to this appraisal of Hellenic education and the fixed, static nature of the
Greek education system into which non-Greeks should somehow integrate or
assimilate, a more progressive view of combining national and intercultural
values and agendas was found amongst IPODE officers (such as Ms Theodoris)
and within OLME. Here, intercultural education involved not only
exchange and knowledge of other cultures but also a redefinition of national iden-
tity through interaction with ethnically diverse pupils and intercultural dialogue.
Intercultural education was seen as being relevant for all pupils and a cross-curri-
cular issue:

> Ms Theodoris: We are trying to open up the school generally, for everyone. For
> native students as well, this is our goal. The basic element, from which we start in
> conferences and workshops, is that intercultural education concerns native [Greek]
> students too. In practice, this is much more difficult. We might say that the basic
> element is the interaction, which helps the native and 'foreign' students, but, of course,
> in practice, when you have children in primary and high school that don't speak Greek
> at all, it is understandable that the weight is going to be laid on language learning first.
> However, the objective of the school shouldn't be to transform them into Greeks,
> neither from a linguistic nor cultural point of view. Of course, I [the educator] can also
> take elements from these students. This is my own opinion. (Director of Research,
> IPODE)

Arguably, many educators in Greece are insufficiently prepared for the two-way
process that intercultural education requires. In contrast with teachers who grad-
uated some 20 years ago, young teachers now have training on intercultural and

anti-racist educational issues as part of their university courses. Individual initiatives have remained the most important catalyst of intercultural education. There is thus still some way to go, according to Ms Theodoris, before the cultural and linguistic capital a migrant student brings to school is fully appreciated. Ms Arvanitis from the Centre for Intercultural Education went so far as to claim that, even among many progressive policy officers, there has been no conscious reconsideration of what it means to be Greek today, and that there is generally a hierarchy of 'race' and a feeling that the Greek culture is somehow superior, for instance, to Albanian culture.

The ethnocentricity of the Greek education system and the difficulty of combining national and intercultural values have been already noted by, among others, Avdela (2000) who argues that the continuity of Hellenism from antiquity to the present constitutes an important part of Greekness that is particularly reinforced through the teaching of history. The (history) curriculum 'should focus on the preservation of our national identity and cultural heritage on the one hand, and the development of European citizenship awareness, on the other' (Government Gazette, 2003: 5). Ms Papadopoulos from the PI partly agreed with this view but pointed out that the European dimension is very strong in senior high schools (*lykeio*). In contrast, she thought that primary schools focus more on national history with junior high schools (*gymnasio*) balancing national and European topics. 'The only issue where the balance is not good is not between European and national dimensions but between the military-political dimension and the socioeconomical dimension because our books and curricula have a lot more stress on military and political issues than on social and economic issues' such as diversity and migration. She also argued that the history of the Byzantine Empire should not merely be seen as national Greek history but European history:

> Ms Papadopoulos: Of course it's not a simple thing because when we speak about ancient history we speak mostly about ancient Greek history. Some people think of it as a national history other people think of it as a European history. So the percentages [the quantitative part of my analysis found that two-thirds of history topics were national oriented] are not so accurate. ... It's a matter of what you call European and what you call national. It's just what I told you before about ancient Greek history; speaking about the Athenian democracy of Pericles – is this national Greek history or is it European history?

> DF: So, how would you then define units around the Byzantine Empire for example?

> Ms Papadopoulos: I ask you! I don't think that this is only national history for Greeks because Byzantine was not Greece. It was a multinational empire. It was actually the follower of the Roman Empire. Only from the seventh century onwards, Greek language was the official language. So we Greeks speak about the Hellenization of this empire and this history is a Greek history from then on. (Senior Advisor for History, Pedagogical Institute)

There were other examples that highlight that the European dimension is interwoven in the school materials and study programmes. Ms Pantazopoulou from the Directorate of European Affairs in the Ministry of Education thought that there was no distinction between Greek and European values. Like other interviewees, she referred to common notions of democracy, tolerance and equality and also stressed that one of the advantages of the EU was its respect for diversity and for difference within and among member states. It was hardly possible for Ms Pantazopoulou to talk about a distance between the two because all national values are part of the European values, and democracy as a core European value was first created in Greece. She also mentioned that, from her viewpoint, the European dimension is mostly about learning two or three languages. Then the next priority is responding to the needs of children while special educational needs and migration-related matters follow later. Similarly, Ms Papadopoulos argued that Europe is relevant for the design of textbooks and curricula because 'we are part of Europe. So speaking about Europe we speak about ourselves . . . and the books of the last decade stress a European dimension more than the books before that. So this idea of the EU was implemented but it is not something we have a big debate about.'

There was, however, little evidence that the (at times) ethnocentric discourses and curricular approaches might develop into more Eurocentric ones. Curriculum advisors from the PI talked about Europe as including 'not just the EU-27 countries but the Balkan Peninsula and Byzantine Empire. Turkey is a part of Europe too.' Ms Arvanitis, who coordinates a programme on the education of repatriated and 'foreign' migrant students and helps develop new textbooks and teacher training courses, further thought that the European and intercultural dimensions should be intertwined in future policy developments:

> Ms Arvanitis: For example, I would consider very important for the children to understand that Europe has a black past. Europe has an amazing wealth from its colonies. . . . Apart from that, today, a European citizen means a responsible citizen of the world because Europe takes central decisions with wide-ranging influences. For example, the Moroccan fisherman who lived traditionally from fish is not allowed to fish. . . . A powerful fortress has been created, who will be in and who will be out. (Head of the Centre for Intercultural Education)

In her view, 'Greece believes that it is extremely homogeneous and at the end of the day doesn't care much about other [cultures and religions]'. Greeks, she maintained, are not threatened by the notion of Europe or being European citizens but might feel that some 'others' do not share the common European values such as human rights and democracy. In fact, she continued, 'Greeks believe that other Europeans have something to gain from the notion of a Greek citizen' and that 'everything that means European has been discovered by Greeks', pointing towards the high level of national and cultural pride. Three curriculum advisors I spoke to also acknowledged that Greece should develop its intercultural dimension and add topics on, for example, the Philippines and Pakistan in geography.

But they felt that time constraints were the biggest hurdle in achieving a more balanced curriculum. At present, social science subjects are being taught for two hours per week with one mandatory textbook for each age group consisting of 150 pages. Mr Ioannidis, the citizenship advisor, was quick to point out that the curricula and books are not Greek-oriented but include national, European as well as world issues. The relatively new emphasis on Europe could be seen in the four basic strands of citizenship education: (a) the individual and the society; (b) the individual and the state; (c) the individual and the European Union; (d) the individual and the international community. In Mr Ioannidis's words, 'when I was a student, the umbrella was democratic citizenship; now it is the European perspective and under this perspective we have domestic issues, issues relating to social cohesion, human rights, etc'. Despite addressing a range of topics, Mr. Ioannidis in particular acknowledged that these are not equally balanced:

> Mr Ioannidis: [The fact that Europe has its own strand whereas migration and integration is only part of another of the four total strands] is a weakness in the citizenship curriculum and textbooks. Perhaps we need to add something, one or two units around acceptance of 'otherness', migration and refugees because this is increasingly a hot issue. Although the topic is being discussed and there is something on refugees in the fourth strand, it is a lot less than Europe and you have observed a weakness here. (Senior Advisor for Citizenship, Pedagogical Institute)

> DF: Do you think that geography should include both a European and a multicultural dimension?

> Mr Michaelidis: If you say multicultural here, what is the big difference with the European? For me, it's the same. It's difficult to find a difference. If we say multicultural, for us, for the Greeks, we have many people working here from other countries. If you write [in the books and curricula] many things from the Balkans, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania that is at the same time European culture. Why not? Perhaps, you have a point. We don't have things for Philippines for example. Here, perhaps, it's a problem because we have many people from the Philippines who work here and we don't have data in our books; for Pakistan as well. Here it's a good idea to add that. But my problem is the time. (Senior Advisor for Geography, Pedagogical Institute)

My 'observations', as both policy officers called them, almost seemed to have prompted them to look more carefully and systematically at the next curriculum and textbooks for 2013. Unfortunately, the cycles in Greece are such that a new textbook will only become available five years after the design of a new curriculum; and the present curriculum was written in 2003 with the textbooks currently being distributed. For the time being, therefore, the marginalization of issues of cultural and ethnic diversity in the geography and citizenship curriculum remains. Although at one point, in Year 7 (ages 12 to 13), the objective is also to recognize cultural differences between groups of people in the way they deal with environmental

problems, a majority of geography units that deal with global and/or intercultural issues emphasize Europe (e.g. the physical features of the continents with special emphasis on Europe).

Several other interviewees considered the mere recognition of the multicultural nature of Greek society as a problem. They framed the European dimension and consciousness not purely in EU terms but, like Mr. Halkias from OLME, acknowledged that 'communication with foreign countries makes multiculturalism easier even if migrants don't come from the EU'. Officials from IPODE such as Ms Theodoris also underlined that the theme of 'us' (i.e. Greeks) and 'them' (i.e. foreign students) is counterproductive to the efforts of allying the national Greek and European discourses to the intercultural ones:

> Ms Theodoris: The Greek tradition, the Christianity belongs somewhere else. Interculturalism has to do with us and the foreigners. I think that's how it is in most people's minds. So, they are two different things. We are Greeks and Europeans, but now we have the foreign students, to see what we are doing with those. At the time being, they are two different things and there is no connection. ... There has been a struggle to add foreign languages. The latest initiative was that Ancient Greek classes were added instead of hours for a second foreign language, which shows that we are still in a defense position as for the European part ... and the intercultural hasn't been combined with the European and Greek. (Director of Research, IPODE)

> Mr Halkias: Since the 1990s, we have been saying that the European consciousness [identity] stands in contrast with the non-European consciousness. The two were seen as opposites really. I have been saying that the challenge for the citizen is to get ready for any kind of incorporation. This means that he or she will negotiate his or her identity, will prepare to respect what we call national identity without bringing him or her in conflict with the European consciousness [identity] or other identities. (Head of the Greek Federation of Secondary State School Teachers, OLME)

Such more progressive views contrast with senior ministry officials who reduced the European dimension in education to learning two or three foreign languages (notably English, French or German) and also thought that a differentiation needs to be made between non-European (non-EU) migrants and mobile EU citizens. According to Ms Pantazopoulou from the Directorate of European Affairs, EU citizens are not migrants per se but internal mobile individuals. Again, this ministerial definition underlines that Greek national and European values were seen as compatible whereas non-European values and (im)migrants were somehow perceived as 'the other'. In Ms. Pantazopoulou's words, 'Greek schools are creating Greek citizens with a European [EU] perspective'. In contrast, some of the most progressive views were expressed by the history advisor from the PI, Ms Papadopoulos, who argued that the national, European and intercultural dimensions are all interlinked and are not competing spheres. She not only pointed

towards the discrepancies that still exist in Greece among differently located groups of policy makers but also maintained that balancing social cohesion and cultural diversity should be the main future policy concern:

> DF: If you take those three dimensions – the national, European and intercultural – which of these would you say the curriculum should promote and why?

> Ms Papadopoulos: I don't agree with the separation, you know. I think there must be a synthesis of all the three. Because what is national nowadays without multicultural? What is European without the national of all the nations of Europe? There is no European history without the national histories of the European nations. So perhaps it gives us a help to measure things when we separate but, in fact, when we have a book and when we want to teach history to children we must synthesize all these things. It's not a diplomatic answer; it is what I believe for history teaching but also generally.

> DF: Are you saying that the national and European dimensions are compatible with interculturalism?

> Ms Papadopoulos: Of course, of course! Because nowadays immigrants are agents of the national history of the nation they live in. Nowadays, economy let's say. We say that our economy is developing or underdeveloping. Do not immigrants take part in this? I think they have a very great role. When my mother was very ill I had women from Bulgaria, from Russia to help me. This was a part not only of my national contemporary history but also of my family history. ... And what our students must understand is not that I am here Greek, you are there German [European] but what I say about 'us'. (Senior Advisor for History, Pedagogical Institute)

There were other incidents that highlight the difficulties in synthesizing these three educational dimensions. For example, after nearly two decades of immigration, policy makers and academics still officially employ divisive terms such as 'aliens' or 'co-ethnics' (and differentiating further among the homogeneis between Pontic Greeks and Greek Albanians). Arguably, whilst the focus is presently more on stay permit renewals and improvements of migrant integration services, it might be seen as premature to problematize terminology issues, but this could well become important for the successful integration of the second and third generation. In its current form, the terminology emphasizes differences instead of commonalities amongst the ethnically and culturally diverse populations residing within Greece.

Concluding remarks and policy implications

The study has shown that we cannot understand contemporary curricular and policy developments without looking first, from a socio-historical point of view,

at the interface between national identity, Europe and migration. The ethnocentric legacies in the form of closed or hierarchically biased naturalization policies and divisive terminologies could all be found, in one way or another, in the current discourses and curricula. Yet, at the same time, new discourses around the need to combine European and intercultural educational dimensions clearly emerged. In our globalized world, intercultural awareness has become a key competence and it is therefore important for all students to have access not just to a European educational dimension, but also to an intercultural dimension. Instead of reforming Law 2413 and the meaning and scope of intercultural education, an entirely new law is needed that reconceptualizes the defensive Greek national identity to include (im)migrant communities and also combines a cross-curricular European with an intercultural dimension. In so doing, this would account for both intra-European and extra-European aspects of diversity such as the need for teaching units around Pakistan and the Philippines. At the same time, as highlighted by some interviewees, it is necessary to balance notions of diversity with social cohesion instead of simply celebrating the multicultural character of Greek society in textbooks and curricula. There is a danger that Greek policy makers continue to emphasize cohesion around Greek language learning at the expense of diversity around, for instance, mother tongue teaching instead of allying both approaches. This cannot only be seen in the ethnocentric nature of history teaching, but also in the unfortunate ('45 percent') definition of intercultural schools whose future role should also be seriously questioned and debated amongst policy makers.

One of the broader concerns arising from this article is how to address the increasing migration-related diversity in Europe. At policy level, there has been an intense debate about how to bond different communities together given the underachievement, high school drop-out rates of many migrant students (see Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2006) and tensions between the national majority and migrant minorities in several countries, including Denmark and France. One conclusion that can be drawn is that the policy of multiculturalism has failed and that a return to an assimilationist approach is desirable. Academics such as Modood (2007) strongly oppose this reductionist view and instead reconceptualize multiculturalism along civic integrationist lines. Such a balance between multiculturalism (or diversity) and integration (or cohesion) was also promoted in a recent Green Paper (European Commission, 2008), which stressed that teaching an official language of the host state and the mother tongue and culture of the country of origin is equally important for migrant students. We saw that Greece is still far from striking a balance between the two and there is all too often an implicit assimilationist view, particularly among officials in the Ministry of Education, around sustaining ethnic and religious homogeneity and confining intercultural education to 26 designated intercultural schools.

Notes

1. The Greek national identity has also been challenged by the foundation of the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (see Roudometof, 1999; Triandafyllidou, 1998). However, given the study's focus on Europe and migration, this was not an issue I explored further empirically.
2. The statistical information provided here derives from the Ministry of the Interior and was provided in the form of a letter upon request in early 2008.
3. This FP6 project was partly affiliated to the EMILIE project, coordinated by the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy. All EMILIE project reports are available at http://emilie.eliamep.gr/category/reports/.
4. The identities of all respondents were protected by using pseudonyms.
5. Compulsory subjects in the six-year primary school (*dimotiko*) are Greek language, history, mathematics, environmental studies, geography, physics, social and civic education, music and arts, a foreign language, religion and physical education. Additional compulsory subjects in junior high school (*gymnasio*) at secondary level include ancient Greek, a second foreign language, chemistry, home economics, computer science and technology.

Acknowledgements

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