

The Question of Minorities: Adaptation Strategies of the Greek National Education System and Inter-European Comparisons

Anna M. Koumandaraki¹, Dimitris G. Magriplis²

(1. Greek Open University; 2. University of the Peloponnese)

Abstract: The paper aims to analyze the effects of teacher/pupil interaction in multicultural school settings. Its main presumption is that the teacher's positive attitude towards cultural minorities has a positive impact and makes the children who belong to minorities more easily incorporated into their peers of the majority. The paper examines the attitudes of students in the University of the Aegean who are future nursery school instructors towards foreigners in schools. More specifically, the paper analyses the impact of a university course on "Education and Minorities" of which these students were members during the years 2002–2003. A survey was conducted concerning this group. The findings concerning the ethno-racial subsets' better adaptation to the nursery school social environment will be presented. The paper's additional aim is to discuss the different national policies towards national subcategories in three different European countries: France, Germany, and Greece. Here the different notions of the term "nation" and "national culture" are to be compared.

Key words: multiculturalism, education, national identity, minority rights

1. Introduction

The paper analyses the results of the survey and the interrelation of them with the factors contributing to minority children's effective adaptation in schools. Furthermore, it attempts to compare the school experience of minorities in three European countries; France, Greece, and Germany. While the research aim is to apply its findings to all kinds of minorities, the first priority is given to ethnic minorities for a variety of reasons. It is widely held that, in these countries any reference to minorities in education is a reference to nationally diverse groups. It seems that both in English and Greek bibliography and amongst survey respondents, the term "minorities in schools" is used to characterize mainly ethnic groups. Ethnic diversity refers not only to diversifications of cultural background, but also discrepancies in the minorities' economic status compared to the average majority financial state. The Greek respondents regard the inferior economic status and the entirely different cultural background of the former¹ as the generative cause of these inequalities.

Anna M. Koumandaraki, Ph.D., Adjunct Lecturer in Greek Open University; research areas: political sociology, historical sociology. E-mail: akoumantar@yahoo.gr.

¹ Sevasti Troumpeta (2001), *Constructing Identities for Muslims in Thrace: The Example of Pomaki and Gypsies*, Athens, Critiki. (in Greek)

2. Strategies of National Education Systems towards Minorities in Three Countries

In order to decipher the strategy of three countries towards the minorities one has to analyze the different connotations of the concept of nation locally. It seems that in the case of Greece, emphasis is given primarily to religious criteria and secondarily to the common linguistic basis. Contrary to what has happened in the other European countries, the Greek Orthodox Church has transformed religiosity into a public matter. At the same time the Orthodox Church has managed to exert a strong influence on the national education system and to establish a privileged position within the Greek state, overwhelming other religions. The prevalence of the Orthodox Church contributes greatly to Greek national homogeneity in such orientations that also incites the marginalization of ethnic minorities within the Greek territory².

In France and Germany the religious parameters do not determine the notion of national community to the extent that they do so in Greece. In France, particularly, national identity is linked with commitment to democracy whilst religion is entirely excluded from the most important French national characteristics³. Within this context religion becomes a private matter whilst French national education declares that, at least in principle, national minorities are to be tolerated. In Germany the emphasis is given to the German nation's intellectual superiority without direct emphasis on the Germans' religious orientations⁴. It can be said that, although the Germans and the French apparently show greater tolerance than the Greeks towards minorities, they have imposed prerequisites regarding the minorities' thorough incorporation in their countries. They both require from the minority pupils a very good knowledge of German and French languages as a precondition for enrollment in German and French schools. At the same time, France seems to dissent from Greece on the issue of religion, since the citizens' commitment to the French democracy ideals is the major constituent as well as the first criterion determining the French national community. Germans' belief in Germany's cultural superiority surpasses all religious premises. Both in France and Germany the national identity is primarily a democratic identity, which favors cultural differentiation amongst its members. However, cultural differentiation as a criterion of citizenry classification is not entirely eliminated in the two countries. Foreign immigrants continue to constitute a different nation within the French and German territories respectively, and are often considered second-class citizens. In Germany, for instance, children of foreign workers do not have the same opportunities to go to University⁵ as those who have German nationality. As stated, those youngsters who succeed in secondary and University education become socially homogeneous. It is hard though to imagine immigrant children being successful in school. In France, school failure is expected to be a considerably more frequent occurrence amongst immigrants. In the case of Greece, the minorities' right to education in their own language is recognized only in the case of the Muslim minority in Thrace. Before the nineties, the official Greek policy was to stress the national homogeneity within the country's borders. With the marked exception of the Muslims, the minorities who were the remnants of Ottoman

² Evie Zabetta (2003), *School and Religion*, Athens, Themelio, pp. 121–125. (in Greek)

³ Hugh Starkey (1992), "Education for citizenship in France", in: Eileen Baglin Jones & Neville Jones (Eds.), *Education for Citizenship: Ideas and Perspectives for Cross-Curricular Study*, London, Kogan Page Limited, pp. 85–102.

⁴ The idea for German national superiority is maintained even when the Germans themselves are a minority. The concept of minority on literature refers to national language and religious Otherness. See Michael S. Byram (1986), *Minority Education and Ethnic Survival: Case Study of a German School in Denmark*, Avon, Multilingual Matters LTD, see also the well known book of Ogbu, J. (1978), *Minority Education and Caste*, New York: Academic Press.

⁵ G. Matzouranis (1976), *Greek Workers in Germany*, Athens, Gutenberg, pp. 219–229. (in Greek) The author argues: "...a significant number of children who live in a overdeveloped country with their migrant parents who work hard, are deprived of the possibility of attending elementary school although in theory, all migrant children in Germany attend a nine year education", p. 221.

times were ignored by the Greek state. Political reasons dictated by the governing bodies' policy to establish the Greek sovereignty against the other Balkan countries' expansive policies aiming at an extension of their borders to the south, dominated and determined the Greek policy towards minorities. The problem of minorities became easily discernible in the Greek case at the beginning of the nineties when the first immigrant workers from Albania crossed the Greek borders. It was then that the image of the non-Greek "Other", who was deemed both, uneducated and economically deprived, emerged. By viewing those immigrants as inferior on the grounds of their own social and cultural level, the Greeks directly associated immigrant poverty with the rise in the delinquency rate. The alleged connection of immigrant workers to the increase of crime rate is not only a Greek reality. In France, foreign workers are expected to exhibit similar behavioural patterns⁶. Moreover, they are expected to be school failures — a factor which, according to the bibliography, contributes greatly to their criminal acts. At the same time, it may be expected that Greece, a country which in the sixties had been a country exporting immigrants, would show greater tolerance to foreign workers, who, since the nineties, have transformed Greece into a country that imports immigrants. The difference between Greece and Germany — which for instance, in the fifties and sixties accommodated a considerable number of Greek workers, is this. The influx of Greek immigrants into Germany was closely supervised and tightly controlled by German authorities whilst the Albanian influx into Greece remained uncontrollable. Hence a rise in the criminality rates in Greece was subsequent.

3. Teaching Minorities in Greece: A Difficult Task

On the grounds of the aforementioned argumentation one might easily conclude that teaching minorities is not an easy task, especially in Greece where the mass media present their audience with an admittedly negative stereotype of the Albanian immigrant. Furthermore, as has already been said, Greeks put emphasis on national homogeneity in their country and systematically ignore the minorities living within their national border. Apart from the Muslim minority in Thrace, no special measures were taken for the teaching of the minority languages and culture. Moreover, Greek schools have a highly Hellenic-centered ideology that definitely does not promote the non-Greek Other tolerance. In the history lessons, Greek children are taught about the Greek War of Independence and the Greek people's resistance to the Germans during the Second World War. Hence, on the one hand, foreigners identify with the country's enemies during these two wars whilst, on the other hand, the Greeks always gain very positive credits. The negative image of the national other is also enhanced by the mass media recurrent broadcasts about the foreign workers' criminal character.

According to the literature the concept of minorities is characterized as a problematic one since it fosters prejudice and latent racism against minority children (Jim Cummins, 1999, pp. 43–47). This discriminating treatment may identify to a great extent with social exclusion that becomes comprehensible when we realize the way that the national state behaves towards all those categorized as culturally different. Here the different language and religion are not enough in order to determine cultural diversity. Moral values which are dominant on minorities emerge as completely incompatible with the majority prevailing standards to such an extent, that the confrontation of these two, over rules and values is inevitable (Sevasti Troumpeta, 2001, pp. 187–189).

In education the question of minorities refers to the problems that teachers are confronted with in their attempt to help incorporate the culturally different pupils in the class. Here the imperative is to determine the goals

⁶ Bernard Charlot, Elisabeth Bautier (1999), Jean-Yves Rocheux *Ecole et Savoir Dans Les Banlieues et Ailleurs*, Paris, Bordas, p. 129.

of the educational system as far as foreign students are concerned. As Jim Cummins (1999) explains the main debate is between those who advocate national homogeneity and those who believe that the minorities should be acceptable in class. Intercultural education is the main means to this process (Cummins, 1999, pp. 43–47). Those who support intercultural education believe that citizenship is most compatible with an education system which is more tolerant to cultural diversity. According to this line of thought the national uniformity is a social construct. All modern societies are the outcome of the assimilation of different ethnic groups. The national myth which the history courses promoted was based on the selective teaching of historical facts (Gotovos, 2001, p. 79). Within the framework of national historiography the national Others' presence was systematically ignored. In the case of Greece the national historiography tried to prove that there was a line of racial and cultural continuity between Classical and Modern Greece. In education the myth of national homogeneity is promoted and the others are simply ignored. The case of the Greek gypsies who usually fail to end elementary education thus impairing their potential to exercise their political rights is a compelling example. Within this context, the culturally "Others" within the territorial jurisdiction of the nation state are systematically ignored. Under the governmental sustenance of national statistics and national historiography, the Greek state created an education system which promotes and perpetuates the myth of ethnic homogeneity whilst minorities play a peripheral and negligible role. However, the financial immigrants from Eastern Europe who came in the country in the nineties changed this situation and increased the number of ethnically "Others" in Greek education.

4. Methods

Under these circumstances our questionnaire attempts to shed light on the Greek students' attitudes not only towards ethnic minorities but, also, to decipher their views on the difficulties Greek teachers have to face in ethnically "mixed" classes. The 131 students who constitute our sample will work in nursery schools and primary schools as teachers when they graduate. The questionnaire asks them to answer its questions both from the standpoint of the teachers and the standpoint of those being taught in the past.

5. Results

The questionnaire is divided into four parts. In the **first part** the respondents were asked whether they had foreign classmates while still in school. Furthermore, they were asked about their interaction with foreign pupils and whether the foreigners were in some way "different" from them. Ninety per cent of Greek students responded positively in the first question and forty percent responded negatively. The first question is the following:

(1) When you were at school did you have classmates who belonged to minorities of ethnic origin or other minority group? Please answer "Yes" or "No".

Table 1 Students' Acquaintance with Foreigners in Their School Age

Total of students who answered the question	The students who answered "yes"	The students who answered "no"
130	90 (69.2%)	40 (30.77%)

The first conclusion to be reached is that the number of minority children in Greek schools is steadily increasing in the recent years. The second question aims to portray the relationship of ethnic minorities with the Greek children in school.

The second question is posed in the following way:

(2) If you answered yes in the previous question please describe the quality of communication of minorities with the rest of the children at school.

Table 2 Quality of Communication of Minorities with Majority Children at School

Total of students who answered the question	The communication was very good cooperation	The communication was good	The minorities were detached	The minority children were isolated
97 (74%)	23 (23.7%)	37 (38.1%)	15 (15.5%)	22 (22.7%)

It is particularly interesting that most students chose to describe their relationship with the minorities as “good”. It seems, therefore, that more than half of the students have experienced interacting with ethnic minorities. Their opinion about minority classmates is that they belong to a different social milieu from them and have a different educational and cultural level. Obviously, the students place minorities in the category of the culturally inferior “Other”. Consequently, they adopt the Greeks’ overt hostility which is specifically directed against the Albanians. This hostility is enhanced by the way that Greek schools envisage particular foreigners such as the Turks and the Germans. Students however, do not adopt a nationalist hostility unconditionally and entirely. In fact, in the question where they were asked whether they believe that all that is taught in school about foreigners corresponds to reality, fifty five percent answered that they did not know, sixty percent responded negatively and only fifteen percent responded positively.

The third and the forth questions are the following:

(3) Do you believe that the things which are taught in school about foreigners accurately reflect reality?

(4) Please explain your answer in question 3.

Table 3 Students’ Opinion about the Greek School Attitudes about Foreigners

Total of students who answered the question	Total of students who answered positively	Total of students who answered “no”	Total of students who answered that they did not know the right answer
130 (99.2%)	15 (11.8%)	60 (46.2%)	55 (42.3%)

Table 4 Students’ Explanations about Their Response in Question 3

Total of students who answered the question	They said that school learning corresponds to reality	They said that school learning corresponds only partially to reality	They said that school learning does not correspond to reality
84 (64.1%)	13 (15.5%)	26 (30.9%)	45 (53.6%)

The way these questions are answered is very interesting. Those who said that the Greek school treats foreigners as equals to Greeks contradict with what the Greek mass media relative literature argues for this relationship. In the sixth question the number of students is limited as many students argue that they had never been acquainted with different cultures in the Greek school. Furthermore the number of those who argue that school learning does not correspond to reality is particularly high.

The first comment which we may make is that the number of minority children in Greek schools is steadily increasing in the recent years. The second question aims to decipher the relationship of ethnic minorities with the Greek children in school.

The fifth question is the following:

(5) According to what you learnt about foreigners in school, what are the social features of these people?

Table 5 Students’ Views on Foreigners’ Social Features

Total of students who answered the question	The foreigners are superior to Greeks	They are equal and similar	They are different	They are inferior	Some of them are inferior
95 (72.5%)	1 (1.05%)	14 (14.7%)	51 (53.7%)	24 (25.3%)	5 (5.3%)

The small number of students who responded to this question is due to the fact that many of them admitted their ignorance as regards foreigners in schools. Moreover, the greater number of those who answered the question told us that foreigners are different or inferior. The concept of inferior foreigner refers to the low educational, cultural, and financial background of these people. Those who define the foreigners as different from Greeks mean that foreigners are neither inferior nor superior, but they have a different culture without stating whether it is inferior or superior to Greek culture. This means that students have a more positive attitude towards foreigners than other groups in the native population.

In the **second part** the students were first asked whether they encountered minorities while teaching in nursery schools. An overwhelming majority of ninety percent of the students answered yes. The deduction that may be drawn from this high percentage is that nursery teachers' first contact with the Greek school "Others" leads them to classify the "different" pupils in two categories. These are:

- the quiet and isolated minority children who seem to have serious difficulties in integrating and communicating both with their Greek classmates and their teachers.
- the active minority pupils who contend with the Greeks for high grades and the teacher's attention and support.

In Greece there are no classes preparing the minorities to integrate effectively into a Greek school. There is a very limited number of multicultural schools — twenty in all over the country which cannot cover the needs of immigrant children for education⁷. This situation differs in Germany where there is an adequate number of such preparatory classes. At the same time, however, minorities in Greece have the opportunity to attend nursery schools where the principles of multicultural education are appreciated. Students seem to believe that the nursery school is the ideal place for the multicultural education since there is a place for minority children to express themselves freely and on equal terms with the Greek children. In primary and secondary school these attitudes towards multiculturalism diminish dramatically as disciplinary rules are very tight as far as the pupils' compliance with the Greek state's official version of history is concerned. The Greek policy bears similarities with French education where cultural differences are not tolerated since they are considered inconsistent with the religious liberalism concept of the French democratic values and the ideal of equality. The expulsion of Muslim girls from French schools when they insisted on wearing attire imposed by their religion substantiates the aforementioned argumentation. In a similar way, in Germany within the education system there are mechanisms which impose social homogeneity in the higher educational levels which, in practice, means that youngsters of migrant origin have a frail chance to attend University⁸. Consequently, one may argue that, not only in Greece but also in France and Germany, does the national majority have the power to impose their own rules of the game on minorities within the education system but also they have defined their own national identity as a precondition of minority tolerance. The existence of this prerequisite proves that, in spite of the jargon in the articles and studies which optimistically see multiculturalism pervading education and causing the elimination of nationalist approaches⁹,

⁷ The twenty multicultural schools require good knowledge of Greek and English as a prerequisite for pupils' admission in their classes. Hence Albanian children who are unable to fulfill their requirements are not accepted there. See Kaldi Stavroula and Palaiologou Nectaria (2004), "Research findings from a bilingual-multicultural primary school: Suggestions for public education", paper in 2004 ECER Conference.

⁸ Hans-Peter Blossfield (1993), "Changes in educational opportunities in the Federal Republic of Germany: A longitudinal study of cohorts born between 1916 and 1965", in: Yossi Shavit and Hans-Peter Blossfield (Eds.), *Persistent Inequality: Changing Educational Attainment in Thirteen Countries*, Oxford, Westview Press.

⁹ Yvette Lapayese (2003), "Toward a critical global citizenship education", *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 47, No. 4, pp. 493–501.

majorities have by no means reconciled themselves to the existence of other cultures within their territory.

The competitiveness between minorities and Greeks may not be exacerbated, on condition that teachers play a regulating role in pupils' relations. In the **third part** of the questionnaire the students evaluated the role of the teachers in multicultural schools. The vast majority of them — that is 90 percent — held the conviction that the teachers should actively intervene in the relations between the minority and the majority. What most of the students demanded was the teacher's impartiality towards the minorities; that is to treat the minorities with respect and to consider them equals to the Greek majority. The teachers should not favour specific groups in the class at the expense of others. In fact, students ask teachers to use their authority in class in order to foster a friendly atmosphere and discourage any manifestation of frictions between minorities and Greeks. As a student stated:

“The role of the teacher is to offer a pleasant lesson based on the balance between the demands of the two parts and to nurture a warm and friendly relationship amongst the children”.

The students seemed to believe that the teacher has the power to create a friendly atmosphere in the class and it is his own responsibility if he fails to do so. The sixth question concerns the teachers' attitudes towards the minority pupils. It is the following:

(6) What is your opinion about the teachers' attitudes towards the minorities in class?

Table 6 Students' Opinion about Teachers' Attitudes towards Minority in Class

Total of students who answered the question	Very Positive	The teachers treated the pupils as equals regardless of ethnic origin	They were not concerned with ethnic minority children difficulties	They were discriminative towards minorities
97 (74%)	23 (23.7%)	56 (57.7%)	10 (10.3%)	8 (8.2%)

It is particularly interesting that in the students' answer to this question teachers seem to be to a great extent unbiased and impartial towards the children irrespective of their ethnic origin. Their attitude is considered particularly positive by students. What is however the prevailing tactics in Greek school towards minority children? This is the theme of the next question:

The next question is the following:

(7) Do you believe that the teacher has to play an active role in determining the relationship between minorities and the rest of the children?

Table 7 Students' Opinion about the Teacher's Active Role in the Relationship of Minority and Majority Children in Class

Total of students who answered the question	Those who said “yes”	Those who said “no”
123 (93.9%)	109 (88.6%)	14 (11.4%)

(8) Please explain your answer.

Table 8 Students' Explanation about Their Opinion on Teacher's Role in Class

Total of students who answered the questionthe teacher should regulate the relations among the children	The teacher should treat the children of the two groups as equals
122 (93.1%)	84 (68.9%)	38 (31.1%)

We see that the number of students who believe that the regulative role of the teacher should determine the relations among the children is considerably increased whilst the advocates of the teacher's keeping of equal distances decreases. In many questionnaires the students also argue that the teacher intervention, if necessary, should be sensible and discrete and take place only under exceptional circumstances.

In the **fourth part** of the questionnaire the students were asked to say whether they considered as right or wrong 8 sentences related to ethnic minorities' presence in the Greek school. The first sentence is the following:

(a) The difficulties with which minority children are faced in school derive from their socialization within their own family.

Table 9 Students' Opinion about the Reasons of the Difficulties Minority Children Are Faced in School

Total of students who answered the question	Students who answered that the argument is right	Students who answered that the argument is wrong
128 (97.7%)	64 (50%)	64 (50%)

Fifty percent of the students found this sentence right and fifty percent wrong.

(b) Minorities are welcome in Greek schools provided they show that they respect the values of the country that hosts them.

Table 10 Students' Opinion about Minorities' Proper Behavior in Class

Total of students who answered the question	Students who answered that the question is right	Students who answered that the argument is wrong
130 (99.1%)	106 (81.5%)	34 (26.1%)

In their answer the students support the need to protect the Greek cultural identity and argue that minorities should respect the Greek values.

The next argument is the following:

(c) Most of the time the minorities adopt a contentious and provocative behavior towards the other children in the school.

Table 11 Students' Response to the Minorities' Alleged Provocative Behavior in School

Total of students who answered the question	Students who answered that the statement is correct	Students who answered that the statement is wrong
124 (94.7%)	43 (34.7%)	81 (65.3%)

The fourth sentence argues that:

(d) Minorities should identify with the foreign immigrants who entered the country during the last years.

Table 12 Students' Opinion about the Statement that Minorities Identify with Foreign Immigrants

Total of students who answered the question	Students who answered that the statement is correct	Students who answered that the statement is wrong
128 (97.7%)	46 (35.9%)	82 (64.1%)

The fact that sixty four plus one percent argued that this statement was wrong proving that students had been aware of the existence of ethnic minorities in the country.

The fifth sentence argues:

(e) Greek education to a great extent ignores minorities in school.

Table 13 Students' Response to the Statement that the Greek Education to A Great Extent Ignores Minorities in School

Total of students who answered the question	Students who answered that the statement is correct	Students who answered that the statement is wrong
130 (99.2%)	80 (61.5%)	50 (38.5%)

It is remarkable that sixty one percent plus five agreed with this statement.

The sixth sentence has the same line of argument claiming that:

(f) The national education system must preserve the Greek people's particular national culture.

Table 14 Students' Response to the Statement that the National Education System Must Preserve the Greek People's

Particular National Culture		
Total of students who answered the question	Students who answered that the statement is correct	Students who answered that the statement is wrong
128 (97.7%)	40 (31.3%)	88 (68.8%)

The majority of the students seriously question the standpoint that Greek education should oversee or neglect the foreigners' special problems. Adopting the similar anti-nationalist line of argument, only thirty one percent plus three agreed with the sixth sentence whilst a majority of sixty eight plus eight percent disagreed. The students are favorably predisposed towards intercultural education. This is substantiated by their answers in the following phrase.

The seventh sentence is the following:

(g) intercultural education constitutes a significant means in the renovation of the Greek school.

Table 15 Students' Response to the Statement that Intercultural Education Constitutes A Significant Means in the

Renovation of the Greek School		
Total of students who answered the question	Students who answered that the statement is correct	Students who answered that the statement is wrong
127 (96.9%)	120 (94.5%)	7 (5.51%)

Here almost all the students, that is ninety six percent, agreed that intercultural education can significantly contribute to the reformation of national education system. In the same line of argument the last sentence states:

The multi-cultural character of Greek society is already a *fait accompli* and the rejection of the nation-centered identity of Greek education has become imperative.

Table 16 Students' Opinion about the Alleged Multi-Cultural Character of Greek Society

Total of students who answered the question	Students who answered that the statement is correct	Students who answered that the statement is wrong
125 (95.4%)	86 (68.8%)	39 (31.2%)

Sixty eight plus eight percent agreed whilst there was a thirty one plus two percent who disagreed.

7. Interpretation of Statistic Results

The students who participated in the survey above try to view minority and Greek children as equals. They are not hostile to minorities in school although they acknowledge the differences between them. They recognize that the Greek education system is in principle ethnocentric and ignores minorities. However, the students have a negative opinion about this fact. They believe that minorities should be treated equally and that the teachers should regulate the relations of the pupils of the two groups: Greeks and foreigners. In spite of the young of their age the students know well that Greece is not a homogeneous ethnic entity and that the country's population is characterized by diversities. Moreover, they are convinced that long before the immigrants' advent, the country had been populated by ethnic minorities despite the absolute absence of relevant teaching material in the Greek educational system curricula.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, one could deduce that, Greek students are fully aware of the difficulties that minorities have to face in order to integrate into the Greek school system, and they almost entirely agree that these difficulties have to be meditated. More specifically, they advocate intercultural education and consider the national-centered character of the Greek education system as dysfunctional since it impedes the interaction between the Greeks and the foreigners in schools. Within this context, the teachers' role is considered as crucial since the teachers' positive attitude towards minorities creates the space wherein minorities may be accepted as equals to the majority. Whilst one could criticize ethnocentrism in Greece, one must also compare the differences between the Greek national identity with its French and German counterparts. Whilst in Greece the cohesion and the identity of the national community is greatly determined by religious orientations, in Germany and France they are based on the political principles of democracy and on their common linguistic background. At the same time however, similarly to the Greeks, the French and the Germans place serious limitations on the extent to which ethnic minorities will be tolerated in their country. Additionally, in all three countries the lack of knowledge of the national languages the linguistic barriers pose serious obstacles to the minorities' progress in school. Moreover, Greek students seem to identify teachers' indifference to minorities with impartiality and equality in pupils' treatment irrespective of their national origin. The students' remarks regarding the teachers' indifference indicate their lack of sensitization towards the minorities' particular needs. At the same time, however, their questioning of Greek ethnocentrism may be considered as a step towards the achievement of greater tolerance towards minorities in the country. Limitations in our study are inevitable since the students who responded to the questionnaire had already been informed about the minorities' problems in Greek schools by the University course on "Minorities and Education". One may expect that, if they had not been taught about this issue, their attitude towards minorities would have been less positive. At the same time, however, this limitation on the research proves how important the course on minorities within the context of the University of the Aegean is in order to prepare the students to overcome the problems of a multicultural class in the officially Hellenic-centered school.

The principles of intercultural education are highly appreciated in Greek university circles. In the Greek bibliography on the impetus of nationalist ideology on Greek education, Greek nationalism is often criticized as being a force which enhances Greeks' isolation from other European nations. Moreover, it is viewed as imbued with cultural obsolescence — a fact which endangers the country's potential for integration into European civilization. Among the forces of cultural obsolescence the Orthodox Church and the nationalist school ideology are seen as the most prominent representatives. As long as the Greek Church insists on intervening in national politics and demanding to play a leading role in Greek policy, critics believe the road to Greece's Europeanization will be jeopardized. According to pro-Europe Greek intellectuals, Greece's highly nationalist profile places our country behind other European countries¹⁰. Therefore, both France and Germany's endeavors to resist the influence of cultural Others may not be dictated by the same reasons as in the case of Greece; because in their case, the insistence on their cultural domination over minorities should not be attributed to symptoms of nationalist arrogance vs. the others but, on the contrary, as a genuine attempt to shield the power of political values such as democracy, equality, and freedom in European societies against the authoritarian forces which fight against them.

¹⁰ Anna Fragoudaki (1997), "The political effects of the unhistorical effects of the Greek Nation", in: Anna Fragoudaki-Thalia Dragona (Eds.), *What is My Country?* Athens: Alexandria, pp. 143–200. (in Greek)

References

- Blossfield Hans-Peter (1993). "Changes in educational opportunities in the Federal Republic of Germany: A longitudinal study of cohorts born between 1916 and 1965", in: Yossi Shavit and Hans-Peter Blossfield (Eds.), *Persistent Inequality: Changing Educational Attainment in Thirteen Countries*, Oxford: Westview Press.
- Byram Michael S. (1986). *Minority Education and Ethnic Survival: Case Study of A German School in Denmark*, Multilingual Matters Ltd: Avon.
- Charlot Bernard, Elisabeth Bautier and Jean-Yves Rocheux (1999). *Ecole et Savoir Dans Les Banlieues et Ailleurs*, Paris: Bordas.
- Cummins Jim (1999). *Negotiating Identities: Education for Empowerment in a Diverse Society*, Athens: Gutenberg. (in Greek).
- Fragoudaki Anna (1997). "The political effects of the unhistorical effects of the Greek Nation", in: Anna Fragoudaki-Thalia Dragona (Eds.), *What is My Country?* Athens: Alexandria, pp. 143–200. (in Greek).
- Giroux Henry A. (1995). "Radical Pedagogy as cultural politics: Beyond the discourse of critique and ant-utopianism", in: Peter McLaren (Ed.), *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture: Oppositional Politics in a Post-modern Era*, London: Routledge, pp. 29–84.
- Hechter Michael (2004). "From class to culture", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 110, No. 2, pp. 400–445.
- Kaldi Stavroula and Palaiologou Nectaria (2004). "Research findings from a bilingual-multicultural primary school: Suggestions for public education", in: *2004 ECER Conference*.
- Lapayese Yvette (2003). "Toward a critical global citizenship education", *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 47, No. 4, pp. 493–501.
- Matzouranis G. (1976). *Greek Workers in Germany*, Athens: Gutenberg. (in Greek)
- McLaren Peter (1995). "Introduction: Education as a political issue", in: Peter McLaren (Ed.) (1995), *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture: Oppositional Politics in a Post-modern Era*, London: Routledge, pp. 1–25.
- Moscoviçi Serge (1989). "Innovation and minorities' influence", in: Papastamou S. (Ed.) (1989a), *Social Influence*, Athens: Odysseas. pp. 255–367.
- Parekh Bhikhu (1997). "Multicultural education concept", in: Sohan Mogdil, Gajendra K. Verma, Kanka Mallick, Celia Mogdil (1997), *Multicultural Education: The Interminable Debate*, Athens: Hellinika Grammata, pp. 44–65 (in Greek).
- Starkey Hugh (1992). "Education for citizenship in France", in: Eileen Baglin Jones & Neville Jones (Eds.) (1992), *Education for Citizenship: Ideas and Perspectives for Cross-Curricular Study*, London, Kogan Page Limited, pp. 85–102.
- Taylor Charles (1997). "The politics of recognition", in: Charles Taylor (1997), *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Athens: Polis, pp. 71–140. (in Greek)
- Torres Carlos Alberto (1998). "Democracy, education and multiculturalism: Dilemmas of citizenship in a global world", *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp. 421–443.
- Troumpeta Sevasti (2001). *Constructing Identities for Muslims in Thrace: The Example of Pomaki and Gypsies*, Athens, Kritiki, (in Greek).
- Zabetta Evie (2003). *School and Religion*, Athens, Themelio. (in Greek)