# Regional Policy and Minorities in the EU:

# The Case of Western Thrace, Greece

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# Abstract

Since the 1980s regional policy has played an increasingly important role in the political agenda of the European Union. Influenced by these external policies and by particular political and social circumstances internally, Greece has gradually introduced reforms in order to update its domestic system of regional and local government. Accordingly, during the 1990s an elected first and second tier of local government was created in Greece.

The new regional and local government reforms have affected Greek society in many ways, ranging from economic development to the promotion of local cultures. The aim of the thesis is to examine these reforms and the increasing EU structural funds in relation to issues of ethnicity and ethnic/religious minorities. The focus is on the Muslim minority that inhabits the region of Western Thrace, which is the only officially recognised minority population in Greece.

The study is divided into three main parts. The first part looks at the issues of regional and local government both in the European Union and more specifically in Greece. The second part focuses on the Muslim minority itself, examining the recent history of the area and the political and educational issues affecting the Muslim minority. The final part embraces the main points of the thesis whilst concentrating on the issues that directly relate to the new local government reforms and the local society.

The main purpose of the thesis is to contribute its findings to our understanding of regionalism and minorities as the European Union expands while reflecting the experiences from the area of Western Thrace in Greece.

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# Acknowledgements

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**Map 1:** Map of Greece



Source: Adapted from Map 8 (Clogg 1995 p.130)

**Map. 2:** Map of Greece in the 1920s following the exchange of minorities



**Source:** Adapted from Map (p.702) Ladas 1935

**Map 3:** Map of Western Thrace



**Source:** Adapted from Collins World Atlas p.16

# INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this thesis is to investigate and explore the way successive European regional policies and growing structural funds affect the Muslim minority of the Greek region of Western Thrace in relation to the Greek national-state. The idea of a regional Europe is an old one. But it was not until the 1980s that it played a considerable role in the political agenda of the European Union. European integration was thereafter promoted on two levels: integration between the member states - 'the Europe des Patries' - on the one level, and integration among the various regions on the other - 'the Europe of Regions'. The relationship between these national and sub-national levels of government within the EU raises questions and opens up suggestions for new economic planning and new ways of governance and social policy. Further, the complexity of the issues surrounding the interaction between the region, the nation-state and the European Union encourages new interest in the study of nationalism, minority status and citizenship.

The introduction of new policies promoted by the 'Council of Regions' within the European Union has led to changes in the structure of governance in many member states. Greece is a vivid example of such political/governmental restructuring under EU influence. One of the most centralised member-states, Greece resisted decentralisation. The reason behind this opposition lay in the strong feeling of vulnerability to external threat, a feeling which became more intense during the last decade in the Balkan Peninsula. From the Greek point of view a decentralised state is a weak state. However, under the new EU directives, pressure was exerted for regional restructuring and the gradual introduction of increased powers for regional authorities.

The European Union as an entity is by no means a unified polity. The member states differ in many dimensions ranging from economic situation to cultural patterns. Although a closer analysis may present common historical references that influenced the future development of the European states and

their population, it should be noticed that they influenced each country in separate ways. In addition, Europe has recently experienced two World Wars that created hostilities and alliances among European states. Inevitably, any attempt at greater unity leads to questions of identity: that is, a new European identity, if such a term is possible, or new national identities within the new European reality. "Unity in diversity" characteristically is the slogan promoted by the Council of Regions (CoR). Local, ethnic and national identities have to adapt in response to the new situation on all three levels: regional, national and European.

This last issue becomes more complicated in the case of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities (whose definitions will be fully explored in a separate chapter) that reside in the EU member states. If we take into consideration that minorities are sections of the population that either deviate from or fail (partly or fully) to complete or be part of nation-state building, closer European integration presents new challenges both in terms of their position in society and for a common European identity. Moreover, in many cases minorities inhabit particular regions of member states that can benefit as a whole from the 'principle of subsidiarity and proximity' promoted by the European Union regional policies.

Greece again represents a challenging example for the study of regional policy and minorities in the new European reality. Greece, as a country is relatively homogenous as far as its ethnic population is concerned, for it also shares, to a large extent, a common language and a common Greek Orthodox religion. There are two reasons given by Rozakis for this high degree of homogeneity: historical circumstances and a government policy that aimed to homogenise all aliens (Rozakis 1996: p.97). However, minorities still exist in Greece. The largest of these, and the only one officially recognised and protected by international agreements, is the Muslim minority of Western Thrace.

The region of Western Thrace is a unique case in the European Union for two main reasons. It is the first region with an official Muslim minority to be part of the EU and second, it is one of the EU's poorest regions. Further characteristics increase the region's noteworthiness and the resulting problems and challenges that it faces contribute to a very complex situation. Geographically, the region occupies a strategically important position at the corner of the European Union and its European borders. In ethnic terms the region can be considered as multi-ethnic, with Greeks forming the majority of the population, the rest comprising a grouping of Turks, Pomaks and Rom. In terms of religion there is a split between Greek Orthodoxy and Islam. Finally, and most importantly, the region borders Turkey, the country with which the Muslim minority associates and mostly identifies. It also happens to be the traditional enemy of Greece. To an extent it could be argued that Western Thrace is the area where Greek and Turkish nationalisms are tested.

Bearing the above comments in mind, this thesis examines how the deepening European regional policies and enlarged structural funds affect the Muslim minority in Western Thrace in relation to the Greek national-state. The belief, supported throughout this study is that although the thrust of such EU policies is based on economic and political grounds, we need to pay greater attention to the social and cultural dimensions and the needs of the Muslim minority population itself.

To achieve this task the present study focuses on four main questions that the following chapters will attempt to answer. The first question addresses the extent to which structural changes in national and sub-national levels of government have been brought about by EU regional policy, especially in the case of highly centralised states such as Greece. The second covers the belief portrayed in relevant academic literature that greater regionalism and increased powers for local government promotes higher participation, direct democracy, centralisation/decentralisation and centre/periphery relations. In particular, in what ways has this been achieved in Western Thrace and what are the benefits for the local Muslim minority population? The third concerns what has already

been stated, that Western Thrace's experiences increased both Greek and Turkish nationalism, a feeling mostly fuelled by the geographical location and historical circumstances of the region. So, do the European Union and the regional policies promoted by its institutions bring a new challenge to the area of Western Thrace? The final question considers to what extent we can talk about a European Social Regional Policy; in the case of Western Thrace, a social policy that takes into consideration the sensitivity of the issues and problems faced by the Christian majority and Muslim minority populations.

In short, as will be analysed in the succeeding chapters, changes in the political behaviour of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace have occurred, especially during the 1980s and early 1990s. These changes were mainly triggered by a greater mobilisation of the minority members largely in terms of ethnicity, with the gradual replacement of the Muslim religious identity by an ethnic one. These changes can be observed in both forms of political representation and matters of education for the Muslim minority. It is not coincidental, as will be further elaborated that these changes in Muslim minority attitudes were brought about at the same time that closer European Union integration was achieved and regional policies and funding were promoted within Greece.

## 1. Structure of Thesis

### 1.1 Part I

In order to articulate the above points and address the aforementioned questions the thesis is divided into three main sections. The three chapters forming Part I focus on the issue of Regional Policy in Greece and Europe, with emphasis on the region of Western Thrace. The first introduces the concepts of region, regional policy and local government. The prime emphasis of this section is to explore the social and cultural meanings of the above terms, although the economic and political dimensions will also be taken into consideration. In addition to clarifying the definitions of these concepts for the particular case

study, the chapter focuses on the three issues most often mentioned in the literature on regional policy: aspects of democracy in regional government, arguments for and against centralisation/decentralisation, and the relation between centre/periphery. These three issues will be tested in preparation for the case of the Muslim minority in Part III of the thesis.

The second chapter explores the issue of regional policy in Greece. The chapter provides background information on the regional concept in Greece and shows how prepared the Greek state is for the implementation of such policies. The effectiveness of such new policies points to a system of interaction among the local officials as well as to the ability of the local administration to process and implement policy. The cultural particularities and the strength of the civil society are therefore also the subject of this section. Concepts such as "cultural dualism", "clientelism" and "lack of administrative transparency" in the case of Greece are considered as obstacles for regional restructuring that have implications for Christian/Muslim relations in the area of Western Thrace. These are fully elaborated in Part III. Finally, the chapter compares the regional inequalities within Greece in terms of the geographical distribution of population, wealth, health and culture.

The third chapter deals with the European dimension of regionalism and regional policy. The European Union with its Council of Regions is the driving force behind regional structural change and regional development funding in most of its member-states. The function of this chapter is to examine the regional restructuring foundations set by the European Union and their purpose and impact on its member-states' civic societies on one hand and on the Union as a whole on the other. Again, as in the previous chapter, particular emphasis is placed on the EU's economic regional restructuring, as the majority of its policies involve the economic advancement of the underdeveloped regions. Here consideration is given to the social regional policies and their impact on the population that inhabit the regions. The chapter includes a brief historical background of the establishment and function of the Council of Europe during the different periods of the EU's development, together with the examination of

the Council's contemporary structure, aims and achievements, especially on issues of culture, identity and ethnic relations. Finally, the chapter focuses on the differences between Eastern and Western European concepts of regionalism and how these differences are bridged, if indeed they are, by a common European Union Regional policy.

## 1.2 Part II

The second part of the thesis focuses directly on the area of Western Thrace and the Muslim population that inhabits the region. The historical existence of Western Thrace as a region is relatively short, starting in 1923 when it became part of Greece. Nevertheless, the region did experience a wealth of historical events and movements of population and cultures in the years prior to this date. Today, as already stated, the region faces a complex of issues ranging from low economic performance to the mixed ethnic/religious population.

The first chapter examines the issue of national, religious and ethnic minorities and their role in the nation building process in Greece. The first two decades of the twentieth century are of particular relevance as it was during this time that minorities acquired their legal status in the Balkan Peninsula. However, the way minorities are accommodated is an ongoing process closely connected to the civil and cultural perceptions of 'Greekness'. Tracking the process by which identities change from the beginning of the 20th century until the present day contributes to the theoretical framework of this section.

The second chapter gives an historical insight into the region in relation to the Muslim minority from 1923 to today. The first section provides general information on the area portraying the geographic and demographic characteristics and second, the ethnology of the people, with statistics on the fluctuation of the population. The second section examines four historical periods that are significant for both the Christian and Muslim populations: an overview of the two Balkan Wars which led to the signing of the Lausanne Treaty; the years immediately following the Lausanne Treaty; the period from

the early 1930s to the 1970s and finally the recent decades from the 1970s which are marked by ethnic self-consciousness.

In addition, observations from 1923 to the present day reveal a shift in the local Muslim elite from the "Old-Muslim" tradition attached to the old Ottoman Empire's theocratic values to a "modernist" attitude more in contact with modern Turkish nationalism. This change is important as it colours the attitudes, perceptions and demands of the Muslim minority. In short, it highlights the transformation of a religious to an ethnic identity.

The next two chapters focus on education and politics, the two issues identified in the problems expressed by the Muslim minority members. Although both chapters focus on the core issues, they also show aspects of the life and society of the Muslim community, from family life to the position of the Muslim women.

In the third chapter education is observed to be a significant feature of every modern state, playing an important role in the formation of a common national identity above any other 'sub-identity' based on class, locality, religion or language. It can often be seen that educational issues feature prominently in political agendas. The chapter examines three main aspects of the Muslim minority's education: the legal framework and the limitations it places on Muslim minority education in Greece, the present structure of Muslim education at primary and secondary level, and particular problems faced by the Muslim students. Significant factors are poor linguistic skills, compounded by bilingualism, trilingualism and the very low level of education in the Muslim community in general.

The final chapter of Part II examines Political Movements in Western Thrace. A close examination both of the development of local political movements and parties and the electoral behaviour of the population highlights comparisons between the Christian and Muslim population. A milestone in the

political life of the Muslim minority was the formation of two ethnically based parties – of brief duration – whose main agenda was ethnic self-determination.

The chapter firstly examines the historical issues surrounding ethnic minority voting behaviour, especially in the geographical area of the Balkan Peninsula. Secondly, patterns of Muslim electoral behaviour are divided into two periods each reflecting the ideology of the local Muslim elite at the time, that is, the 'Old Muslim' tradition that can be identified from the 1920s to the end of the Second World War and a more "modernist" motif visible in contemporary electoral behaviour of the Muslim minority.

## 1.3 Part III

The third part of the present study encapsulates the concepts expressed in the two previous sections in a context of a regional social policy. It is the belief of the thesis that in the short term, the restructuring of regional policy in Greece has created grievances as local and ethnic identities have had to readjust and reorganise under the new circumstances. Major changes in the Greek administration, aimed at breaking down clientelism (only to a certain extent, given the historical realities of Greek politics and society), and at strengthening civic society, are themselves efforts often met by local opposition (Papoudaki, 1999 p.62).

In the long term, however, these current changes are advantageous for the local population, especially the Muslim minority as it benefits financially from the new incentives introduced in the area, and politically as the changes increase Muslim participation. Although until recently the Muslims always participated in local politics and elected Muslim representatives, the very centralised character of the Greek system of governance meant declining participation, a situation which is in the process of change.

Looking closely at these changes, Part III takes the main concepts of Part I, that is, regionalism and democratic representativeness, effects of

centralisation/decentralisation and relations between centre and periphery, and examines their applicability in the case of Western Thrace. Further, it considers future benefits for the Muslim minority which may occur as a result of greater regional power. An important development in the relationship between regionalism and the Muslim minority is the transferral of the issues that concern the minority from the Foreign Ministry to the governmental area that also deals with regional/local government issues – the Ministry of Interior.

To conclude, my belief is that this study can contribute to an original examination of the effects of greater regionalism in Greece on the Muslim minority. Hopefully, these findings will contribute to our understanding of regionalism and minorities over the long term as the European Union expands. Although the thesis touches upon the economic position and political and cultural sentiments of the Muslim minority, it must be stated that it is not these issues but the Greek governmental regional restructuring and its effects on the Muslim community in relation to the Greek majority which are the focus of this study.

The subject was approached in this way as most of the other literature on the Muslims in Greece has dealt with either the attitudes/values or the national consciousness of the population. As the European Union integrates further, it is worth examining the evolving connection between the three levels of government, the EU, national and local, and the social developments they bring to the regions and their populations. Finally, a further important reason that this approach was selected to explore the subject in this way was the linguistic obstacle of the researcher (a non-Turkish speaker). To study the attitudes, underlying values or any forms of consciousness requires that the researcher speaks the language of the population studied.

## 2. Methodology

Methodologically, the thesis benefited from three types of data collection and analysis. A detailed list of all sources is provided in the 'Primary Sources' section of the bibliography.

The main aim of the thesis was to gather information on the effects of European Union regional programmes on the recently created local government system of Western Thrace and the ethnically divided local population, with particular emphasis on the Muslim minority. For this reason, specific knowledge was needed to answer questions on the allocation of structural funds in the region and on the problems faced by the local governments at their early stage of operation, especially in areas with an ethnically mixed electorate.

Therefore, interviewees with adequate knowledge on the subject of either regional policy or the issue of the Muslim minority, or both, were approached for their expertise. The choice of experts was made according to three criteria. First, to reflect the three levels of government which were represented by officials from each of these levels. Under this category elected members of primary and secondary local government councils and local MPs were interviewed. The second criterion was to acquire the accounts of people that dealt with or researched the area. Thus, researchers and journalists were included so that they could contribute their experiences. Finally, the interviews were drawn from both the Christian majority and the Muslim minority in order to represent views from both communities.

The interview questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions where the interviewees had the chance to express fully their opinion on the subject. The questions were also categorised into three groups: questions on regional policy in Western Thrace, questions on the Muslim minority and current issues of concern and finally, questions about the influence of the European Union and the future prospects of the region. Aside from this basic structure some follow

up questions were also raised according to the specific conversation. A full list of the questions is provided in Appendix 2.

The second method used in this thesis was the study and analysis of official documents. The status and situation of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace depends largely on the terms and conditions of the Lausanne Treaty and subsequent educational agreements between Greece and Turkey. In addition the Muslims of the area often appeal to either international bodies or treaties in order to communicate the Muslim community's grievances. Reference to official documents by all parties concerned establishes legitimacy for past and present demands. For this reason the examination of official documents has provided the thesis with a deeper understanding of the historical background and a framework for the analysis of the Muslim demands.

In the area of Greek regionalism, local government systems in their current form are newly developed. In this area too, official documents were studied in order to trace the establishment of these systems and observe their functions.

The category of official documentation includes official treaties such as the UN Sub-Commission of Minorities Resolution and the Lausanne Treaty, EU Directives and Regional Policies, Regional Structural Funds, and secondary treaties such as Greek-Turkish educational and cultural agreements. Particular Greek laws and articles and Ministry directives concerning both the Muslim minority and the issue of Regionalism and regional restructuring were also examined. These include the Code of Prefectural Self-Government and the Constitution of the First Degree of Local Self-Government. In addition some quotations of relevant political speeches were included.

Finally, this thesis benefited from the use of some additional sources to support particular sections in order to gather contemporary information on economic and political trends in the area of Western Thrace. Such research includes official statistics on contemporary issues obtained from the Greek

Statistical Organisation, the European Union's Eurobarometer and the US Department of State. Statistical information from non-governmental organisations such as Helsinki Watch, the Minority Rights Group and Amnesty International was also taken into account.

A search was conducted of the official Web-sites of the EU, Greek and Turkish governments, local authorities and newspaper archives. These provided information on local and national media attitudes, Prime-ministerial and other official speeches as well as other relevant information on the economic and educational achievements of Western Thrace society. Additional searches on the web provided further information on recent regional research, relevant to the subject of regional social policy.

**PART I**

# Chapter 1

## Theoretical Approach to: Region, Regional Policy and Local Government

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## 1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the concepts of region, regional policy and local government in order to provide a theoretical base for Part I of the thesis. Many of the ideas developed here will be applied first to the analysis of the Greek system of regional policy and the structure and role of local government and second, to the study of European Union regional policy.

There is a plethora of ways to approach the issues of region and regionalism. Most of the literature concentrates on the economic dimension of both the region and its relation to either the state or the European and international community. Considerable interest comes from the urban development scientists who are more concerned with urban-rural planning. To a lesser extent, social and political scientists view the region as an historical space for social interaction with its own political dynamism (Giddens 1984, Harvie 1994, Beetham 1996).

The issues discussed in the chapter have been selected on three criteria. First, according to the way they relate to the Greek society although a more general perspective is provided in order to allow a comparative approach. Second, how they relate to the issues that concern the Muslim minority population whose issues are considered in Part II. Finally, as a base for the general discussion of regional policy and ethnic minorities in Greece.

The first section of the chapter focuses on the clarification of the terms: region, regional policy and local government. The general view adopted, especially for the cases of regional and local government, is that definitions vary between different countries and different historical traditions. For this reason, a short historical background is provided to cover the development of regional policy. Here, three approaches are considered: the top-down approach, where all attempts at regionalism comes from the centre; the bottom-up approach, where regional movements ranging from many ideological backgrounds make their demands; and finally, the new regionalism approach, which shows the role of the regions in the new world order where the economy tends to be global but, more importantly, EU integration becomes closer.

For the case of local government, a typology is provided based on Goldsmith's analysis where the following three types can be distinguished: a. the clientelistic/patronage type, which fits the Greek situation; b. the economic growth type, examples of which can be found in America and Canada; and c. the welfare state type that is more applicable to Scandinavian countries and the UK.

The second section of the chapter focuses on three issues most often mentioned in the literature on regional policy. It begins by exploring the concept of local government and democracy and considers ways to 'test' the democratic element of local government. Adopting the four concepts as argued by Beetham, this section examines authorisation, accountability, responsiveness and representativeness as elements of a democratic local government system.

Next to be focused upon are the arguments for or against centralisation/decentralisation which are examined as well as the three types of decentralisation: deconcentration, devolution and federalism. In short, centralist arguments refer to the need for a general co-ordination, uniformity of services, administrative efficiency and modernisation, which can be opposed by the traditional regional society. Arguments for decentralisation suggest that as there is higher local participation this is a more effective control, which both enables parliamentary scrutiny and provides a more democratic procedure. In addition,

ecology movements argue in favour of decentralisation in the fight to combat the environmental pollution produced in highly congested centralised states.

The final concept considered in this section is the relation between centre and periphery. The argument here is dominated by the Marxist criticism of the development of the capitalist state. Although theories on this issue were developed during the 1950s and 1960s they can be of some relevance today as regional disparities still exist. This centre-periphery concept is also useful for students of nationalism as it is concerned with issue of the national versus the local. As it will be seen the arguments of uneven development and regional deprivation raised by the application of this concept can contribute ideas in Part III of the thesis.

## 2. Section I: Main concepts of Region, Regional policy and Local government

### 2.1. Region

Before examining either the concepts of 'regional policy' or 'local government' it is necessary to discuss the notion of 'region'. As Bourdieu argues, there are multiple ways of defining a 'region' and the term itself is the object of dispute among different disciplines (Bourdieu, 1980: 149-152). Geographers are keenly interested in the physical mapping of an area, historians, defining a nation, give an account of the historical roots of particular regions. The emergence of regional science and the rise of regional movements with their demands for regional development have attracted the interest of economists dealing with investment, trade, taxes and employment.

Political scientists concentrate their attentions on the organisation of people into different political bodies and the function of governments, local and national. With the appearance in the 1970s of new types of regional movements (see p.29), which set as their priority the search for regional identity, regional autonomy or secession, sociologists and social anthropologists became

interested in the subject of the region. The way regions relate to the nation-state is also of interest to students of nationalism and ethnicity.

The concept of 'region' not only possesses different meanings across the spectrum of academic disciples, but also in the historical traditions of each country. There is a general consensus that the term region refers to a space, but again the meaning of space varies: economic space, political space, territorial space or a space for social interaction (Keating 1998: p.11). For Giddens, the region has this fundamental spatial quality that does not merely signify physical demarcation, but a space where social contact and social action, from family relations up to the nation-state, takes place across timespace. He also holds that there is 'a strong degree of regional differentiation in terms of class relationships and a variety of other social criteria' (Giddens 1984: p.140) between the regions.

For the purpose of this thesis, region has been defined as a geographical area with its own institutional, political, economic and social interaction system where its historical background, physical environment and ethnic and cultural composition shape the forms of social action and contact. As a consequence the focus of the succeeding chapters will be on the region of Western Thrace (a geographically defined area), and the historical events that have shaped the ethnic composition and cultural character of its population. Further attention will be given to recent changes introduced by the Greek state to the local government system, which have brought a new political and social dimension to Christian/Muslim community relations, encouraging, as we shall see in Part III of the thesis, closer contact and co-operation whilst nevertheless exposing the problems of cohabitation.

## 2.2. Regional Policy

Regional policy is a particular type of public policy-making process where the central government (or central governmental bodies of a state) introduces and implements a number of policies concerning the country's regions. (Adrikopoulou 1995: p.15). The main aim of such intervention is the elimination

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of regional inequalities in order to bring an equality of opportunities and service provision to all regions. These policies cover the economic, political or social sector; for example, educational reforms or reorganisation of the local government system.

The experience of most countries, especially developing ones, shows that regional inequalities in the level of development tend to become wider when particular intervention policies are not adequately planned by the state. This was especially true when, in order to overcome the 1930s recession, Western European countries and the USA introduced policies to assist the weaker regions. Although national planning at the macro level was normally satisfactory, regional planning did not receive adequate consideration. This situation started to change as new patterns of regional policies and theories started to emerge.

Until the beginning of the 1970s, regional policy in most European countries was almost exclusively a national issue and had the character of a centrally organised national initiative. Since the mid 1970s, two new trends have emerged in the practice of regional policy. Both trends include changes in the decision-making processes, in local institutions and administration and the implementation of regional policies.

One trend to emerge was the tendency towards decentralisation within the national state. Local and regional authorities seeking to develop the internal potential of particular regions applied newly acquired 'local' policies. (Decentralisation and centre-periphery relations will be further examined under Part II of the present chapter). The second trend was towards integration at the European Union level. The Council of Regions (created in 1991) promoted policies for economic and social cohesion aimed at limiting regional inequalities in the Union. Due to its importance this supranational level will be examined in a separate chapter.

*2.2.1 Short Historical Background of Regional Policy*

It is difficult to discover a historical background for the concept and institution of regional policy and local government in Europe. The reason is that the way regional and local government developed and evolved depends entirely on the geography and history of each country concerned. As Giddens suggests, the 'region' is a universal notion but specific formations compel precise definitions (Giddens 1994: pp.120-143). As will be elaborated further in the following chapter, the Greek local government system can be traced from the Ottoman style of governance whereas the system developed in Western Europe is based more on the feudal past of these countries.[1] An important development in the shaping and approach towards regional issues are the policies followed by the EU, especially with the establishment of the Council of Regions of Europe (CoR). The CoR in itself is not a major institution in the EU, but in comparison to what previously existed, its creation can be considered as a breakthrough. This European dimension will be discussed in detail in a separate chapter.

Although the idea of region is not a contemporary issue, [2] regional policy as a basic requirement in domestic politics appeared just before and immediately after the end of Second World War. Thus, as we have seen during the 1930s, governments in Western Europe and America had introduced some regional measures for economic recovery. However, even before the 1930s there had been some policies relating to the problems faced by less developed regions: for example, programmes concerning the use of the land of the Rhine Valley in 1915, or the South Wales Regional Survey in 1920, and the Doncaster plan in 1922. However, these policies could only be described as sporadic as they did not belong to a general theoretical plan or as part as of national/state policies.

There are three approaches (Keating, 1998: p12-18) that can be distinguished with regard to regional policy. First, the top-down approach according to which central governments felt the need to promote regional policies in order to minimise disparities among different areas of the state. Second, the bottom-up approach, where regional policy emerged from the

demands of the regions themselves and regional movements drew support from all spectrums of the political parties. Third, the new regionalism, where new impetus was given to the idea of regional policy and regionalism by a number of factors, namely, economic restructuring, state reform, the promotion of the ideas of globalisation and European integration.[3]

'Top-down approach':

The emergence of the nation-state during the 19th century attempted to eclipse the regions, considering them as obstacles to national unity. Regional culture, education and local government were made subordinate to linguistic nationalism, social security and military requirements (Harvie 1994: p.37). For example, in France, Italy and Spain, various governments tried to eliminate regional particularities, and while the German system was based on federation, Prussia was dominant.

After the Second World War, in a move towards the modernisation of the state administration, western democracies reintroduced the idea of regionalism. Disparities among territories were recognised and the years that followed witnessed the emergence of regional policies by the central government – a process that intensified during the 1960s. From this period until the 1980s, the UK, Belgium, France, Italy and Spain re-established the regions as part of their economic growth or, in some cases introduced concessions to cultural minority policies (less evident in Franco's Spain). In their efforts to mobilise, governments also sought to win the loyalty of old or newly-emerged local elites with the establishment of new regional institutions. Soon, 'political issues were increasingly seen in a regional perspective, producing a politicisation of regionalism, which was given further momentum by political mobilisation within the territories themselves.' (Keating 1998: p.13)

'Bottom-up' approach:

In contrast to the reintroduction of regional planning by central governments, regionalism as a political movement has taken various forms and been linked to ideologies on the Left and the Right. Here, regional movements make demands

on central governments either in order to preserve regional identities or to fully incorporate themselves within the state. According to Keating's categorisation, there are six types of regionalism ranging from the extreme Right to extreme Left spectrum of ideology (Keating 1998: p.14).

Briefly, on the Right, there is conservative regionalism where the traditional community resists the homogeneity and secularism of the modern state. Second, there is what can be called 'bourgeois regionalism' (Harvie, 1994) where economically advanced regions react to the archaic bureaucracy of the central state. Third, is the technocratic view of a depoliticised region which gives a new role to the interest and development of high technology. On the Left, there is progressive regionalism, fed by notions of unequal development, internal colonialism and ecological questions.

On the extreme Right are regional movements opposing centralised policies for regional equality and immigration either internal or external (see for example the policies of Lega Norte in Italy). Finally, in areas of strong historical traditions separatist regional movements can be found desiring autonomy or separation. Examples here can be observed in Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Basque country.

The 'new regionalism':
Between the 1980s and 1990s regionalism in European countries became current once more after its slow-down in the 1960s and 1970s following the economic crisis. The reasons for this new trend lie in the restructuring of the economy at an international level, to reforms occurring in the government of the states, but most important of all, to the European integration. (Keating 1998: p.18, Vergopoulos 1995: p.125).

It can be argued however that the efforts to globalise the world's economy led to a change in regional development policies. Following the view that 'economic development and the insertion of territories in the world economy today depend on specific territorial characteristics' (Keating 1998:

p.16), governments paid more attention to endogenous development or to attracting investment linked increasingly to territorial qualities. Second, as some decision-making power lies within local authorities today, any introduction or change to the procedures of public policy-making process by central government has to take into account the issue of locality. Finally, the strengthening of the European Union has given rise to demands from regions for their voices to be heard as well as those of the central states. This opportunity was given by the regional policy introduced and followed by the EU since the 1970s, which encourages strong regional mobilisation, as we shall see in a later chapter. [4]

## 2.3 Local Government

The different ways of defining the concept of local government reflects its changing role and function across nation states and over time. We can, however, arrive at a working definition that can support further arguments on the issue in the present thesis. As Harloff argues, despite differences in structure and style, all systems of local government are based on common goals. These are: to provide those communal services which citizens cannot supply on an individual basis, to promote a more even distribution of the burdens and benefits of public action and to protect weaker members of the society (Harloff 1987: p.7)

Bearing in mind the above, it can be argued that local government is a form or system of administration for small areas ranging from regions to towns and villages. Local government is usually conducted through an elected body, with self-government involving the administration of public affairs in each locality. In most countries, local government is subject to central government but it can possess a considerable amount of responsibility and discretionary power. In this sense, local government can be perceived as a form of decentralisation. (Byrne 1985: pp. 25-37). Furthermore, local government cannot be seen merely as a system for the delivery of discrete services: the very 'essence of local authorities is their potential to bring together services at the

local level in the light of local needs and demands'. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 1992: p.8)[5]

Regional policies, as described in the bottom-up approach can be implemented by local authorities. In some countries, for example Spain and the UK since devolution took place, regional authorities are more powerful institutions and they are responsible for large geographical areas. Local governments on a smaller scale have a more limited function (Goldsmith 1990: p.23).

This was mainly the case for Greece before the introduction of local government reforms during the 1990s. As we shall see in greater detail in the following chapter, the local government authorities (LGAs) in Greece before the reforms were highly fragmented, had minimum responsibilities and finances and were under the control of a paternalistic state (Verney 1994: p. 168). With the introduction of regional reforms the Greek state aimed to empower the local institutions and give an important political meaning to the regional unit.

For the region of Western Thrace, as will be argued in Part III, these institutional changes had an additional impact on the local society. The ethnically and religiously mixed population was called upon to participate in the process of local policy-making. Despite initial criticisms and weaknesses the local society has overall welcomed the new reforms in contrast to a decade earlier when '... the lack of public interest in increasing the power and responsibilities of local government authorities (LGAs) which often appear irrelevant to everyday life' (Verney 1994: p.167) was the general view.

## 2.4 Types of local government systems

As has already been mentioned, there is a diversity of local government systems in Europe. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to look closely and compare systems of local government, nevertheless a reference to an existing

typology developed by Goldsmith (Goldsmith 1990: p.23) can act as a basis for a theoretical argument on Greece and local government. The comparative approach adopted in this typology has been used to clarify further our understanding of the Greek society.

Goldsmith adopts the Weberian 'ideal types' to categorise the various systems of local government. They are ideal types because no individual municipality or local government system will fit exactly with any single type but will be closer to one particular type then to another so will give an "approximate fit".

There are three types of local government system. First is the clientelistic/patronage model. This type of system is based on clientelistic or patronage relations between the leader and the people where for example, in late 19th and early 20th century in America, and until recently in France, Italy and Spain, favouritism in exchange for votes at the local level often took place. In both Greece and Turkey this system continues to exist despite attempts at modernising the administration.

Being historically persistent in modern Greece, clientelism is a relevant concept to the present thesis as it has determined the course of regionalism and affected the majority/minority relations in the area of Western Thrace. These issues are examined in greater detail in a subsequent chapter. Briefly this view discussed by Mouzelis (Mouzelis 1995: p.15) holds that there are three basic phases of political development in Greece in each of which the presence of clientelistic networks is evident.

The first phase, from the middle of the 19th century to the 1909 military coup, was characterised by a small number of local families controlling lower-class votes. Political parties were also led by leaders attached to regional clienteles. The second phase begun with the election of Venizelos Liberal Party. Despite efforts to break-up the local-families' control by means of greater centralisation, clientelistic networks remained in the political life of Greece

during the interwar period until the end of the military dictatorship in 1974. Finally, the rise of PASOK into power after the collapse of the dictatorship sought to bring fundamental changes in political organisation and to break-up clientelism by replacing traditional patrons with new educated party officials. Despite this, however, the concept of clientelism remained in Greek politics based on populist forms of organisation where a new type of personalistic/particularistic politics was developed.

In the Greek local government system, there is still a strong presumption among the population that local politicians are elected in order to deliver particular services to particular constituencies or people. This system is well rooted in Greek society and attempts at modernisation and moves for greater transparency in local government procedures are met with opposition (Papoudaki 1999: p.62).

The second type of local government system is the economic development model. For the countries that fall under this category, the main aim of local government is to promote the economic wealth of the community it represents. Local economic growth is paramount and is assisted by services such as fire, transport and the police, which provide the foundations for further growth. This type of local government can be found in the US, Canada and Australia.

There are three main features of such a system: a. a consensus among the locally elected officials and business interests, both desiring economic growth; b. the use of land or the changing patterns of using the land together with economic growth as a prime concern to local governments; c. very little control over what kind of capital investment a city attracts, and therefore the source of the city's growth. Prominent examples of this system are the US cities that attracted manufacturing investment before and after the Second World War. This resulted in their growth being related to the growth of the manufacturing industry. A change of capital investment to property, finance and provision of

services from the manufacturing sector signalled the decline of some cities and the growth of others where such capital was invested.

This alliance of business interests and local government systems takes on a more extreme form in Canada and Australia. In both countries the responsibilities of the municipalities are minimal and any calls for increased power have been met with opposition from either the state or provisional governments. Consequently, local government has concentrated its efforts on the development and use of land at the expense of welfare, equity or redistribution issues.

The remaining type of system is the welfare-state model. The local government systems of the Scandinavian countries, Germany, Holland and Britain are based on the welfare model. After the end of the Second World War the prime aim of local government was not only the regulation of land use but also the provision of goods associated with the welfare state. All countries under this system, with the exception of Germany, have strong centralised governments and local governments are used to deliver welfare services such as health and income support payments.[6]

Another aspect of this model is the insignificant power possessed by local officials. In the case of Scandinavia, local politicians are excluded from direct policy making procedures. In Britain, traditionally, local politicians at the periphery are seen to be responsible for 'low politics', which concern the localities, whereas those at the political centre concern themselves with the 'high or national politics' of economy, defence and foreign affairs.

Finally, the other feature of this model is the existence of locally based but nationally organised positions for highly paid professionals[7]. The purpose of such a system in both Britain and the Scandinavian countries is uniformity in the provision of services across all the local areas.

To summarise, the three types of local government systems differ in their approach to issues such as uniformity of services, economic development, the use of land and the type of services they provide.[8] Accordingly, differences in their structure, level of power and flexibility to modernise are also apparent. For example, in all countries with a third type structure there has been some form of reorganisation or replacement of small local authorities with larger ones. The more traditional structures of the first and second type have made reform more difficult, as will be shown in a later chapter on the case of Greece.

## 3. Section II: Democracy, Centralisation-Decentralisation, Centre-Periphery

### 3.1 Local government and Democracy

As has been mentioned above, local government and local government organisations provide a range of services to the local community they represent. These services such as education, welfare, housing and transport are considered central to the social and economic well being of citizens.

Another more important function of local government that has been highlighted and discussed in local government literature is the close relationship between local government and the promotion of democracy. This is important, as we shall see later, because greater democracy invites higher participation from all parts of the society in the decision making process. In the case of Western Thrace this is highly relevant as the recent regional reforms, which give more power to the local authorities, enable the local communities (Christian, Muslim or mixed) to have a more political and financial involvement over local affairs. (Part III of the thesis, examines the issues of local democracy and the Muslim minority in more detail).

The EU and the Council of Regions have also adopted the idea of regionalism and democracy. Briefly[9], the opening statement of EU regional policy is 'the Council of Europe has always recognised the overriding

importance of democracy at local and regional level. After all, freedom is a neighbourhood issue as well as a national one. Local self-government must meet the needs of all Europeans, in towns and villages, central and peripheral regions and across borders. The Council took its first step towards local authority representation in 1957, and since then its work has extended from Iceland to Russia and from Norway to the Balkans' (webpage:www.europa.org /accessed in summer 1999).

At the heart of the argument is the view that local government is a level of government closest to citizens and its role is to represent any concerns or views of the locality. And as Stoker argues: '…local government provides an opportunity for political participation and expression that has a pivotal role in a democratic political system' (Stoker 1991: p.1). To explore this view of local government and democracy this section considers the features of democracy analysed by Beetham at the political level (Beetham 1996: pp.29-40).

As a starting point, it will be accepted that democracy is part of the political domain, the sphere of collectively binding rules and policies. Although certain individual rights are entailed by the concept of democracy (such as freedom of speech, association etc.), the point of reference is still the process of collective decision-making.

Next, the concept of democracy, as it belongs to the political domain, cannot be confined to the government or governmental decision-making bodies. In this way, democracy can either be found or applied to any bodies/collectivities/associations where there are common policies and rules to be made, and where such decisions can have an important impact on peoples' lives. However, what makes governmental decision-making of special importance is that 'its association (the state) embraces everyone within a given territory, that membership and tax contributions are compulsory, that disagreement about its rules and policies is correspondingly intense and that the institutions for deciding and enforcing these rules and policies are highly developed' (ibid.: p.29). And here lies one of the criticisms of democracy,

namely how democratic can a system be considered to be when one or two of its areas have considerably more power in their decision-making and implementation than others.

Lastly, given the political nature of democracy, a democratic system can be described as a system of collective decision-making, which is subject to control by all members of the association as equals. Therefore, popular control and equality can be considered further features or principles of democracy. Although both of these principles form a vital part of a democratic system, in reality it is only within small-scale organisations that they can be realised. Again, the practice of these two principles at the level of local government can be as open to criticism as an institution on a larger scale, such as the state.

The above criticisms give rise to the general question as to how democratic a system of local government can be. It is useful to consider here what Beetham proposes as the four 'mediating concepts' as measurements of democratic procedures in institutions or government.

The first, authorisation, is key to governmental decision making through election by equal voting. This concept of authorisation embodies the idea of political sovereignty, in the way that the people constitute the only rightful source of political authority and political power.

The second concept is that of accountability, that is the accountability of public officials to the people over certain actions and policies followed by them while in office. For accountability to work, access to independent information about government activities and a guarantee that the electoral process does not favour the incumbents[10] must be provided. This is particularly important in a clientelistic system such that found in Greece.

The third, criterion is that of a responsive government. The idea behind this is that governments take continuous notice of public opinion – the full range of public opinion – when they formulate and implement the law. In practice,

this translates into the legally recognised right of consultation and access to government by all sectors of opinion with an interest in a given policy or piece of legislation.

Again the implementation of this concept is problematic, especially on a national scale. One way to justify responsiveness is a system of elections but elections do not guarantee that the public voice will be heard on every issue and would as a consequence need to be supplemented by other institutions and procedures. In states comprising an ethnic or religious minority the concept of government responsiveness either through elections or institutions can be problematic. State institutions or bureaucracy can appear to be either distant from ethnic sentiments or rather to be identifying with the interests or ethnic sentiments of the dominant group (Smith 1981: p.191). In addition certain issues are conducted in secrecy in cases that concern national interest and security over which, consequently, the public is neither informed nor can express any opinion.

Finally, there is the criterion of representativeness. This last concept links with the democratic principle of equality, that is both political and citizenship equality. In the political sphere for an elected body to be properly representative of political opinion entails that all votes should have equal value. In the social sphere representativeness means that there is an equal opportunity for everyone to stand for public office. For public opinion to be representative equal access to the media and government is required, and although the outcome cannot satisfy everyone, it guarantees that the procedures followed are fair. In practice again, the concept of representativeness can be and has been criticised as there are different means of discrimination towards socially disadvantaged groups (such as women, ethnic minorities or economically disadvantaged population) – a question that is particularly relevant to the case I shall be investigating.

To summarise, a representative democracy means that the elected government is popularly authorised, accountable and responsive to its citizens and representative of the people. These four criteria are met through competitive

elections and a variety of other institutions and procedures. In addition, it requires the active participation of the citizens who are exercising their rights. Only in this way will access to and control of the current government be ensured.

There is a criticism of all the listed criteria as well as doubt as to how democratic a system of local government is or could be. However, they can act as guiding concepts for investigating an initial question: the relationship between local government and democracy. Furthermore, the degree of local democracy according to the above criteria depends upon the type of local government being considered and the role it plays in the community. This will differ considerably from country to country according to the structure and function of local government which exists within them.

The above criteria will be closely considered focusing mainly on Greece but attention will also be given to European regional policy in the appropriate chapter in order to draw some connection between democracy at the local level and the Muslim minority of Western Thrace. In addition, the concept of democracy will be of major importance in Part III of the thesis where the role of ethnic minorities in regional policy / local government will be examined.

3.2 Centralisation – Decentralisation

This is another recurring term in the literature on regionalism or local government. The term 'decentralisation' has often been used in a loose terminological sense, which leads to confusion as to its exact meaning.

There are three types of decentralisation discussed in the literature: deconcentration, devolution (executive or legislative) and federalism (Mellors 1987: p.7). Which of these three types can be applied to different countries is dependent on what system of local government they adopt. In the case of Greece the term decentralisation, initially, veered more towards deconcentration, a

policy actively promoted by the PASOK government after it was first elected in the 1980s.

Deconcentration refers to the delegation of administrative authority by central government to public service officers working locally. However, the term does not automatically mean the transfer of political power and therefore, in principle, the decision making process can remain with the central authorities.

In contrast, devolution involves some transfer of political responsibilities and therefore gives scope for decision making to be passed to the lower level of government. This lower level body has the capacity to act as an institution of general government, is elected and generally exercises responsibility over reasonably large territorial units. The extent of their level of responsibility can take two terms: executive-legislative devolution. Executive devolution is where the central government defines the broad framework of policies and sets national standards but allows the lower tier to implement them. Legislative devolution separates the responsibilities of the upper and lower tiers so that instead of having joint responsibilities, the central government retains full responsibility for policies of national significance (for example, defence) and the lower tier is responsible for public policy areas (for example education).

Federalism on (the other hand) is the most powerful form of decentralisation. It shares some characteristics of legislative devolution in the distinction or responsibilities between the upper and lower level, but, in the case of federalism, there is a written constitution, which cannot be amended by the central government.

## 3.2.1 Centralisation

There are several arguments to be considered for and against centralisation. One argument often used for centralisation is the need for co-operation. Co-operation occurs both at the level of policy-making and its implementation. In this way government can ensure the compatibility of its policies so they do not contradict

one another as well as ensuring they have jurisdiction over all policy areas concerned (for example, the Treasury, Home Office etc.)

A second argument is the desire for uniformity in service provision. In some areas such as foreign policy, transport, postal service, currency or the police service, a degree of uniformity is an important element to the functioning of the state. Similarly, uniformity in areas such as in the educational system can ensure the coherence of the state as a nation and the desirability of its continuation[11]. In addition, uniformity of welfare provisions (such as health care, housing etc) means that there is a generally accepted view that all citizens are entitled to equal provisions and that there is the same minimum level of provisions everywhere in the country.

Mellors and Copperthware raise a third argument about what they term an 'in-built' dynamism towards centralisation (ibid. p.7) in modern political systems. The central management of the economy, the expectations of the electorate and the media's focus on national news are all sources of this dynamism which re-enforces centralisation.

A fourth argument, in defence of centralisation claims that central government can provide administrative efficiency as it is better equipped to do so. There is considerable doubt as to how local government could provide such efficient services.

Finally, modernist critiques argue that the local governments might hold more traditional views of society. As a result they might be closed to new ideas and regard change with suspicion, adopting narrow or what Byrne (1998: p.31) calls 'parish pump' attitudes and policies.

Despite all the advantages listed above, centralisation does present problems in the way a system functions. First, there is the argument that excessive centralisation has the opposite effect and that it becomes inefficient in terms of its administration. The bureaucratic machinery becomes too large and

faces problems of management and co-ordination. The statement that describes such a situation perfectly is the one provided by the 1973 Kilbrandon Commission on the Constitution reporting on the highly centralised state within France as 'anaemia in the extremes and apoplexy at the centre. (Mellors 1987: p.7)

The next problem to arise from such a high level of centralisation is that of remoteness. Policies made by central government alone do not necessarily apply to local areas. Therefore, there is always a need for the regional offices of most departments to either provide particular information relating to the locality in question or to find ways of making policy more applicable.

This leads us to the third problem, which connects to the particularities of the locality. That includes the needs and resources, which vary from area to area in every state in terms of geography (mountainous/seaside), geology (natural resources) and population (age, ethnicity or educational level, skilfulness). Standardisation or policies of uniformity under these circumstances are therefore unattainable goals. The issue of these variations has to be taken into account by the decision-makers. This variation among the different localities and the potential consequences in policy making will be further elaborated in Part III of the present thesis.

## 3.2.2 Decentralisation

Most arguments in support of the decentralisation of the political system coincide with the criticism of centralisation. Therefore, when political and administrative authorities are highly centralised the parliament can find it difficult to adequately control or scrutinise the actions of the government. In the UK for example, the decline of parliamentary scrutiny has been a recurrent theme since the 1930's (Mellors 1987: p.8).

As has been debated in the section on local government and democracy, communities that are physically distant from the centre where decisions are

taken can feel isolated and excluded from democratic procedures. This can also apply to socially remote, i.e. socially disadvantaged communities, where their voices might be heard better through a member local council than a central administration. In addition, a local government will be drawn from the local population who possesses local knowledge and a commitment to the local area and its people.

Local governments are multi-purpose bodies and can ensure a higher degree of co-ordination. That is, they respond to and implement policies from more than one central government department and can as a consequence, take a more holistic approach to public policies.

Finally, there is the environmental argument for defending decentralisation. A highly centralised state, with the associated increases in congestion, can create high levels of environmental pollution in particular areas which affects not only peoples' health but also is disastrous for the natural environment. The main aim of the ecology movements and the joint regionalist movements in the 1960s and the 1970s was to deal with local issues, which they argued had been neglected. As Strassoldo (1992: p.35) comments, the defence of natural environments is closely connected with the defence of the cultural landscape. Ecological issues have also been used in the case of Greece, where Athens experiences high pollution levels. Decentralisation was suggested by the PASOK government as one solution to the problem.

3.3 Centre-Local relations

In part, the arguments concerning centralisation or decentralisation derive from centre-periphery relations and theories that developed accordingly. Most of the latter focus on uneven development and derive from the Marxist critique of the capitalist state and capitalist development. Despite originating from economic analysis, theories of uneven development have had also an impact on the social sciences. For regional studies, theories of uneven development were first considered during the 1950s and the 1960s when regional policy questions

began to be raised. However, as regional disparities still exist[12], some of the issues of uneven development theories can still be considered (Adrikopoulou, 1995: p.24).

Central to centre-periphery relations is the role of the modern state. According to Brass (1985: p.3), there are three broad theories of the modern state. First is the view of the pluralist perspective which holds that the state is a neutral arena where interest group conflicts – for example between ethnic, economic, gender or ecology groups – take place. The outcome of these conflicts determines the particular policies adopted by the state and its agencies. These new policies in turn elicit responses and actions from interest groups. The state is, therefore, both a respondent to and participant in the demands of interest groups. But one quality of the state important to the pluralist theories is its neutrality. That is, the state is neither dominated by nor dominates the interest groups.

The second view is the classic Marxist theory according to which the state is an arena that functions as an instrument for the promotion of the interests of the dominant group. The state acts as a reserve power for the capitalist classes to control workers' resistance, natural resources and the demands in the interest of capital and the ruling class (Hatzimichalis 1994: p.91). In this view, both the central and the local interests have the same function, the preservation of the capitalist mode of production.

Finally, there is the view of the state's role that comes from neo-Marxist theories and scholars working on core-periphery and internal colonialism questions. Neo-Marxist writers such as Poulantzas and Habermas attribute some autonomy to the role of the modern state. The main break with the classic Marxist theory lies with the concept of a unified ruling/dominant group. Neo-Marxists argue that particular groups, motivated by the wish to retain their power, can sometimes act against the interests of the dominant groups in order to achieve their objectives.

In the same fashion, the concepts of internal colonialism and core-periphery relations were developed in Marxist thought in order to incorporate the role of ethnicity within the modern state. Briefly, in an ethnically diverse society, Hechter perceives a 'cultural' system of stratification where the core regions benefit from better opportunities than the dependant peripheral and ethnic regions. High status positions are reserved for people from the core, while low status positions are filled by people from the periphery. Hecher's argument is based on a notion of deprived regions populated by ethnic groups different to those of the core regions, the former becoming internal colonies.

Nairn, again pursuing the economic element, notes an imperialist quality to the relations between the centre and ethnically different periphery. The uneven development of capitalism means the advancement of some societies over others and is itself determined by their unequal relations. The imposition of development by the centre – for its own advantage – is met with regional resistance (for Nairn the resistance is nationalist in nature as a reaction against "foreign" domination.

An alternative to the above theories can be found in Gellner's concept of uneven development. For Gellner, uneven development does not derive from capitalism but is a product of modernised and industrialised society. It is not economics but cultural relations that determine the new social structure of modernised society. And it is cultural and not class cleavages that can derive from unequal development. As he argues: 'during the early period of industrialisation, entrants into the new order who are drawn from cultural and linguistic groups that are distant from those of the more advanced centre, suffer considerable disadvantages which are even greater than those of the other economically weak new proletarians who have the advantages of sharing he culture of the political and economic rulers'. (Gellner 1993, in Smith and Hutchinson 1994: p.69)

All these concepts have been criticised: in the case of the plural perspective it was their ethnocentrism, for the classical Marxist view lack of the

complexity, and for the neo-Marxist tradition it was the limits of applicability. In terms of explaining the rise of the new regionalism, the first two theories are not so relevant as they adopt a top-down approach, and although the plural argument accepts the neutrality of the state, it cannot explain why particular groups succeed with the help of the state.

On the other hand both the neo-Marxist approach and Gellner's argument that the cultural conflicts resulting from uneven development allow room for a fuller explanation of the conflicts within the periphery. Such conflicts are not necessarily economic or a direct reflection of the top-down disputes. In other words, any conflict, struggle or demand does not necessarily always come from the centre.

The above is by way of an introduction to the main arguments concerning central-local relations and uneven development. The critical consideration of these theories and their relation to the rise of the new regionalism, especially regarding the position of ethnic minority groups in this new regional concept, will be fully elaborated both in Part III of the thesis as well as in the chapter on the European dimension.

## 4. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to outline and discuss the major issues concerning the region, regional policy and local government. The themes that have been examined act as a theoretical base for Part II of the thesis on regional policy but also reflect the analytical approach of Part III on regional policy and minorities. Nevertheless, there are several conclusions that can be drawn from this chapter. First, regionalism is an interdisciplinary subject attracting the interest of economists, geographers, urban planners, anthropologists and more recently, political and social scientists. A new dimension to regionalism is the contribution of scholars of nationalism and ethnicity, incorporating the question of ethnicity and ethnic relations at the two levels of centre-local relations and interregional social interaction.

Second, the concepts of region, regional policy and local government are universal and implemented by most countries. However, there is diversity in the historical and cultural roots in each society that has led to the development of different regional systems and regional politics. To approach this problem, the present study has included a short historical background and a typology of local government systems, focusing particularly on EU countries and Greece.

Third, it is often argued that an effective system of local government contributes to a more democratic form of national level government. Four aspects of 'democratisation' were examined: authorisation, accountability, responsiveness and representativeness and these will be applied to the case study in Part III.

Fourth, the issues of centralisation/decentralisation lie at the heart of the regional debate. The chapter has looked at some of the main arguments concerning this issue as well as the different forms of decentralisation. This debate became relevant during the 1980s especially with the rise of ecological movements. As a result of the closer integration of the European Union, regional policy became part of the 1990s political agenda of various states. For example, we saw in 1997 the introduction of devolution in the UK, and, in the beginning of the 1990s the restructuring of the local government system in Greece.

Finally, centre-periphery relations and uneven development were two of the themes developed during the 1960s in order to explain regional disparities and regional deprivation. The chapter has briefly examined the main theories of uneven development especially from the point of view of state-periphery relations.

**Notes**

1. In the case of Western Europe 'local self administration dates back to the Middle-Ages, and the development of the central bourgeois state has institutionalised them...(in south Europe) local experiences were there as well, but the development of centralised and authoritarian institutions at the level of the central state destroyed most of the local initiatives' (Hatzimichalis 1987: p.105)

2. Regions pre-exist the nation-state as a form of governance. It was nationalism that 'broke down the various localisms of region, dialect, custom and clan and helped to create large and powerful nation-states, with centralised markets and systems of administration, taxation and education' (Smith 1998: p.1)

3. In some of the literature globalisation is mentioned as a factor, but as there is much debate over this issue, it is more useful to talk about the promotion of such an idea.

4. For example the introduction and increase of structural funds for the benefit of the regions and not the central state.

5. This last feature is more part of the local government welfare system than of the clientelistic or economic growth systems, both of which will be analysed in the following section.

6. The only exception in Britain where both health and social security benefits are provided by central government departments.

7. A system often criticised as bureaucratic paternalism.

8. The use of land is a very important issue in Greek local politics and in particular in Western Thrace where there is also the issue of the Muslim minority

9. More information on the subject of EU regional policy will be examined in a separate chapter.

10. In addition, supplementary procedures and institutions should also be accountable. This includes: the accountability of non-elected officials to elected ones; an independent judiciary to ensure legal accountability and uphold the freedoms of speech; associations upon which electoral accountability depends; independent accounting offices to ensure financial accountability; independent media with commitment to investigate journalism, etc.

11. Regional culture, education and local government, once they were made subordinate to linguistic nationalism, social security and military requirements, slipped away not only from realpolitik but from the academic study of politics. (Harvie 1994: p.34)

12. Although under different circumstances, especially with the EU dimension.

# Chapter 2

## Regional Policy in Greece

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## 1. Introduction

The issues surrounding centralisation and decentralisation have had an impact on Greek politics from long before Greece became a member of the European Union. Despite being regarded today as one of the most centralised states in the EU, the Greek political past was based on a highly decentralised system of governance with local elites having a stronghold on the country's internal and external affairs.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the stages of transition of local and central forms of governance in Greece. The rise of clientelism and the strengthening of the central state are examined in relation to democratic procedures and centre-periphery relations. This is essential if we are to understand and explain the developments and problems of Western Thracian local politics in relation to the Muslim minority population.

The first section provides a short historical review of regionalism and local government in Greece. Although a decentralised form of government was inherited from the Ottoman past, a centralist tradition was established with the formation of the Greek nation-state in the 1830s and persisted until recently. The desire for a strong centre can be attributed to the climate of political and territorial insecurity that has featured until even recently in the Balkan Peninsula (Verney 1994: p.167). The Balkan wars, the Macedonian question, the Bulgarian occupation of Western Thrace and Eastern Macedonia during the Second World War and the turbulent relations between Greece and Turkey were all factors that contributed to a strong central government in Greek political history.

There is another reason that decentralised forms of government were discouraged. Clientelism has been a dominant force in Greek political life and despite efforts to break it up, this sort of paternalistic networking has persisted in the history of modern Greece. Initially a small number of local families exerted power by controlling local votes and networks. Gradually these traditional patrons were replaced, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, by increasingly centralised forms of political structures which broadened political involvement for more sections of Greek society. However, clientelism persisted, merely acquiring a more centralised form, indicating a very weak civil society (Mouzelis 1995: p.19). As a result there has never been strong public pressure to bring the central decision-making processes closer to the citizens or to open organised channels for the promotion of general demands (Verney 1994: p.164). Central government as the main decision-making mechanism retained its power until recently.

The second section of this chapter focuses on the contemporary changes in the local government system that took place during the 1980s and 1990s. The aim of these rapid transformations was partly to introduce a more efficient management of the EU structural funds and partly as an attempt to modernise the political system of the country.

Local government in Greece today consists of two elected tiers: the municipal and the prefectural, each with an elected council and budget. There is a third level of government, the region where a regional director is appointed by the state and his/her main responsibility lies in the management of the funding allocated to the particular region.

For the area of Western Thrace the changes in the local government system have brought a new dimension to Muslim/Christian relations. Although these implications are fully examined in Part III of the thesis, we can anticipate them by noting that the recent regional changes have created a new electorate and new opportunities for closer co-operation between the two groups.

## 2. Section I: Historical review of regionalism and Local government in Greece

### 2.1 Short historical background

Many of the features of the modern Greek local government system originate either from the time of the Ottoman Empire or in the 1830s with the creation of the modern Greek state (Paraskevopoulos 1999: p.101). Until the most recent government re-structuring, as we shall see later in the present chapter, the prefecture, and the first tier of government (municipality and commune) were the only two units of the local government system in Greece.

The concept of the commune originates from the Ottoman system of governance. Although there are theories tracing the existence of the commune system to before the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, it was during this period that communes were allowed to function as administrative units and it was this particular form that was preserved and adapted by the modern Greek state [1].

From the beginning the Ottoman administrative system was based on a combination of central government and communal self-government (Kontogiorgis 1982: p.33). The communes in Ottoman Greece became a form of local government system. Variations in the size and functions of local institutions resulted from the geographical and economic conditions of each region as well as the special privileges granted by the Sultan to some regions. But in general terms, the communes were responsible for the provision of services such as education, water and public works, with the maintenance of roads being funded mainly by the collection of taxes. The communes were headed and administered by local governors elected by the local Muslim population. However, the system of electing the local governors soon diminished and was replaced by a hereditary post creating rich and powerful local elites with influence to central government.

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards the powers of the sultans started to decrease, a decline caused partly by the economic expansion of other Western European monarchical states (Mouzelis 1978: p.5)[2]. As a result of this decline, the Porte increasingly lost some of its power while local pashas (local potentates) gained extra hereditary rights and autonomy at the expense of both the state and the peasants of the particular *chifliks* (areas of land ownership), who lost the protection of the central state (ibid. p. 6).

This increasing autonomy and power of the local landed elite came to play a major role in the structure of the newly founded Greek state in the 1830s. Thus the issue of centralisation-decentralisation became a prominent feature of the political agenda, triggering heated debates between the 'westernisers' and the 'traditionalists'[3]. Although the local land-owning class opposed the strong centralised state proposed by the westernisers, the latter managed to promote their views and led to the development of a central Greek state and administration (in the early 1830s). This victory was only relative as the traditionalists were still able to use the new system to their advantage and safeguard their interests (ibid. p.14)[4].

Despite such drawbacks, the institutional framework promoted by both Prime Minister I. Capodistrias[5] (1828-31) and King Otto (1833-62) was based on the notion of a unitary central state with a national army, national educational system and common economic policy and planning. The management of local affairs was handled by a newly introduced system of prefectural and provincial levels of government. Both levels functioned as an extension of central government administration over the various regions (sub-national units) and were headed by state-appointed prefects and heads of the provinces.

Furthermore, in 1833 the municipality was introduced as a new - first tier - unit of local government. Administratively the municipality comprised more than one commune. This new system in effect absorbed and replaced the traditional communes. The aim of both the prefectural and municipal systems

was essentially to restrict the power and autonomy of the local elites (Paraskevopoulos 1999: p. 104).

The system of municipalities did not survive in its original form. Instead, in an attempt to modernise the system of local government in 1912, Venizelos[6] re-established the communes as part of the first tier level of local self-government. As a consequence, the 442 municipalities that existed at the end of the 19th century were gradually replaced –although not completely abolished- by 6,000 communes (Makrydemetris 1997: p.66).

Until the recent changes of 1990s, discussed later in the chapter, the first tier of local government in Greece continued to be based on the municipality-commune system of 1912. This was in contrast to other western European states which in seeking to modernise their local government had introduced local government reforms during the 1970s (Verney, Papageorgiou 1993: p.110).

The secondary, prefectural level of government on the other hand has retained the same general features for almost 150 years. Some of these features include the state appointment of the prefect, his/her obligation to scrutinise municipal decisions combined with the power to reject them and the responsibility to manage the public organisations within the domain. Further, the role of the prefect remained the same during this period: namely his/her political role continued to be pivotal to the maintenance of the central government power (Christophilopoulou 1997: p.39) – a point which will be highlighted in the following sections of the chapter. In this way it can be argued that the prefecture which included the prefectural council, became one of the most constant institutions of state administration (Makrydemetris 1997: p. 66).

The next important development of the local and prefectural governments was the introduction of the 3200/55 law. The traumatic experiences of the Civil War in 1946-49 had left a deeply divided Greek society and the succeeding post-Civil War governments made great efforts to demobilise the population, a large portion of which had been radicalised by the communist-

dominated resistance of the Second World War (Verney 1994: p.168). All the policies that followed took this factor into serious consideration.

It should be noted that the short-lived formation of the PEEA (Politiki Epitropi Ethnikis Apeleutherosis – Political Committee of National Liberation), also known as the 'mountain-government', in 1944 proposed a code of local self-government as a vital part of public life[7]. This reflected their ideological belief of 'government by the people'. As PEEA was never recognised as a legitimate government, the post-Civil War governments ignored this proposed structure for a local government system.

As a result, the general trend towards local government during this period was to keep it as weak as possible and gradually increase the level of state intervention over local affairs (the top-down approach). The 3200/1955 law of prefectural administration sought to reinforce (further) the position of the prefect as an extension of central government in all localities. The prefect became responsible for issues in his/her area such as education, religious matters, economics, industry and commerce, transport and public services, agriculture, employment and social welfare. Policies of national importance such as defence, foreign or general economic policies were, however, exempt as they were the province of central government. A prefectural budget for the funding of public services was allocated to each prefecture. Finally, the law governing the establishment of prefectural councils ensured the character or role of these councils was only advisory.

The strengthening of the prefect's position affected the status of the municipality and the commune, both of which continued to be publicly elected bodies of local self-government. Their limited activities such as street cleaning, rubbish collection and the care of cemeteries, were subject to central control, and all of their decisions had to be approved by the prefect.

Although this arrangement had been in force since 1833, prefectural control was most vigorously[8] applied during the 1950s and 1960s as a means of

controlling left-wing mayors (Verney 1994: p.169). As a result, the prefect had the power to prevent the implementation of any municipal/commune decision and to discipline a mayor by imposing a temporary suspension from his/her duties (ibid.). The predominant ideology of the post-Civil War governments was therefore to establish an 'apolitical' local government. To achieve this, the succeeding governments tightened the prefectural supervision of local authorities (Paraskevopoulos 1999: p.105).

During the military dictatorship (1967-1974), central state control became even tighter. The colonels, as part of their policy of direct control and economic development, created a 'political super-structure which was designed to deal more effectively with the rising social discontent' (Mouzelis 1978: p.128). These changes together with the extreme anti-Communist ideology of the dictators penetrated all aspects of Greek society.

In the case of local government, complete state control was imposed. The elected local councils were abolished and replaced with government appointed mayors (Verney, Papageorgiou 1993: p.112). As a consequence the slightest possibility for left wing or general public opposition to the government was effectively eliminated. As will be seen in the following section this highly centralised state was to be inherited by the post-dictatorship democratic governments.

In summary, therefore, centralisation of the state in Greece was the primary desire and objective of Greek governments from the time of the first Greek governor Capodistrias. But the highly fragmented, newly established Greek state presented a society with deep social divisions that were also reflected in the ideological trends at the time. The structure of centralisation and local self-government inaugurated in 1833 remained the same in principle until the 1970s.

Due to the general political, social and economic climate during these years the introduction and the later strengthening of the prefectural institution

was perceived both as an effective measure for the dissemination of the central power and also as a sufficient control over the various localities. Subsequently, factors such as political instability, autonomy of the local land-owning elite especially in the early years, the outbreak of many wars (i.e. the Balkan, Greek-Turkish, the First and Second World Wars and the Greek Civil War, 1946-49), the territorial expansion of the Greek state and the military dictatorship have contributed to a weak local government system in Greece.

During the last two centuries a top-down, centralist approach has existed in the Greek administrative structure. Demands for an increase in the powers of the existing first tier or for the introduction of a second tier have been few. Instead, the weakening of centre-periphery relations was often perceived as a threat to Greek territorial integrity (Verney 1994: p.167) and local government was seen as standing in opposition to the existing governments.

## 3. Section II: Contemporary changes in Greek local government system

### 3.1 1974-1994

The fall of the military dictatorship in 1974 marked the re-establishment of democracy in Greece and particular efforts were made to prepare the country to be fully integrated into the European Economic Community (EEC). There was an evident need for the improvement of economic, political and cultural institutions to bring them into line with western European standards.

Local government was one of the areas particularly neglected, as its democratic representation had been silent for almost seven years. The post-dictatorship period brought rapid developments to both the prefectural administration and the first tier of local self-government, the municipalities and communes. Three phases can be distinguished in this period during which local government reforms took place: the period between 1974 to 1981 when a limited number of hesitant reforms were introduced; 1981-1994 when rapid changes

were introduced during a transition period for local government; and finally 1994 until today when the previous reforms began to materialise.

During the first phase, the new ND government (ND: New Democracy, the Greek conservative party) took office immediately after the collapse of the dictatorship and stayed in power until 1981. The new government had inherited – as we have seen – a very weak system of local government. In addition to the administrative weakness, the first tier (municipality and commune) had been considerably underfunded. This financial crisis also continued through the period following the fall of dictatorship. According to Tsatsos, cited in Verney, the state budget attributed to local government was 11% in 1965 but declined to 6.6% in 1978. By 1981 less than 5% of the state budget went to the first tier. Comparing this figure with other EC states, Greek scores are remarkably low: Belgium spent 13.9% in 1983, UK spent 33.1% in 1983 and Denmark 70.8% in 1984 (Tsatsos cited in Verney 1994: p.169)

Despite this, the government reluctantly proceeded towards decentralisation. Although the new constitution of 1975 made provisions for the introduction of a new tier in local government, the ND government limited its reforms to the reintroduction of the pre-dictatorship system (ibid. p.168). One consequence of this was that the prefect was restored to his/her previous status of a 'quasi-civil servant', chosen by the government from a list of candidates on the basis of specific criteria for their appointment and evaluation (Paraskevopoulos 1999: p.106).

In the case of the first tier, certain reforms were implemented with the introduction of a new municipal code in 1980. For some sectors such as welfare provisions or cultural facilities, the first tier assumed equal responsibility with central state decision-makers (Verney 1994: p.170). In addition there was an attempt to manage the highly fragmented local government system by allowing the voluntary merger of local government units, although few did so (ibid.). However, these were but the first steps towards the effective modernisation of

local government. In comparison to other EC member states at the time, Greece still remained a highly centralised state.

In 1981 two major events came to play an important role in the development of the local government system in Greece: entry into the EC whose policies were increasingly towards greater regionalism in economic, political and administrative levels, and the coming to power of PASOK (the socialist party). Decentralisation became a primary objective of PASOK's agenda and formed part of a greater democratisation programme[9]. The new government proceeded with reforms at both the prefectural and first tier levels. In general, this phase can be characterised as a transitional period for the rapid changes and radical transformations that followed after 1994.

In 1982 the government introduced the 1235/82 law according to which the position of the prefect remained a government appointment. In addition the prefectural councils (first formed in 1955) were reintroduced and their main function, as before, remained advisory[10]. Their role, however, now also included responsibility for the approval of the prefectural budget fund (Verney, Papageorgiou 1993: p.112). Another important change took place with regard to the composition of the prefectural councils. Instead of being formed of civil servants, under the new law membership of the prefectural council consisted of local government representatives, two representatives from the Local Association of Municipalities and Communes (TEDK: Topikes Enoseis Dimon kai Koinotiton), and elected members of professional organisations, agricultural co-operatives and labour organisations (Paraskevopoulos 1999: p.108).

Further modernisation also took place in the first tier of local government which was given the opportunity to form municipal enterprises for more effective management of its resources together with an increase in the overall budget allocated for local government (Verney 1994: p171). Most important of all was the abolition of the prefect's right to intervene in the first tier decisions. This was followed by members of the first tier being given the right to participate in the prefectural councils. These changes however provided only

limited autonomy for the first tier as the prefect continued to check the legality of their decisions and could as a consequence intervene in municipal or communal affairs (ibid.).

During the 1980s the European Community (EC) introduced the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes (IMPs) – special funds for southern Europe. Greece, then still a highly centralised state, was 'confronted with the task of implementing the increasingly complex EU policy based on principles such as planning and partnership, which entailed substantial regional and local involvement in policy-making and policy implementation (Ioakimidis 1996: p.43). The task of further decentralisation therefore became a necessity.

In 1986, under 1622/86 law, to comply with the IMPs a new decentralised third level of government – the regional level - was created, consisting of 13 geographically defined regions[11]. Administratively, the regions were headed by a Secretary General appointed (or dismissed) directly by the central government. Regional councils were also introduced, their membership formed from the prefect of each separate prefecture[12] plus one representative of the Local Association of Municipalities and Communes in each prefecture (Paraskevopoulos 1999: p.110)

Within the framework of such changes, demands were raised for further decentralisation at the prefectural level. Law 1622/86 enabled the creation of an elected second tier of local government, the prefectural local authorities, but this section was not implemented until 1994. In the meanwhile, a change of government took place and a coalition government of ND and Synaspismos (Synaspismos: a coalition of the left and progressive forces) was formed in 1990. Later in the same year ND won the elections outright and the decentralisation process stopped[13].

The reluctance of ND for further changes in local government can be explained by the fact that the party relied on a more traditional clientelistic network (based on the appointment rather than election of the prefect). In

addition ND lacked both support and influence in the first tier of local government. (Christophilopoulou 1997: p.52).

Despite these drawbacks, the level of decentralisation achieved during the 1980s allowed for greater participation of the local/regional authorities in the monitoring of committees and councils. The process of policy-making still remained the main role of the central government. The implementation of such policies now required a degree of partnership with local government that made the latter more active in wider public policy matters. In addition, the local/regional authorities were able to form a closer connection with European institutions and equivalent local or regional bodies (Ioakimidis 1996: p.42). In this respect, it can be argued that the 1980s and early 1990s marked a transitional period for the further participation that followed.

To summarise these developments, the following Diagram 1 shows the structure of the local/regional government before the introduction of laws 2218/1994 and 2240/1994, both of which will be examined, in the next section.

**Diagram 1:** Regional and Local Government in Greece prior to laws 2218/1994 and 2240/1994

| Regional Level | 13 regions | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Regional Council | | Secretary General of the Region (appointed) |
| | | | |
| 2nd Tier of Local Government | 54 Prefectures | | |
| | Prefectural councils (appointed and only advisory) | | Prefect (appointed) |
| | | | |
| 1st Tier of Local Government | 457 Municipalities | | |
| | Municipal Council | Municipal Committee | Mayor (elected) |
| | 5318 Communes | | |
| | Communal Council | | Chairman of the Community Council (elected) |
| | | | |

**Source:** Committee of Regions

website: http://195.200.108.36/grcea4_en.pdf accessed on June 2001

There was only one highly fragmented tier of local government consisting of 447 municipalities and 5318 communes. Moreover, despite the then-recent reforms for greater autonomy, both units were under the partial control of the prefect who had the power to check their decision making process. Directly above the first tier stood the decentralised level of prefecture, with 54 prefectures in total and headed by the state appointed prefect. Finally, the new level of regions was introduced, also headed by a state appointed secretary-general whose functions were mainly the management of the EC funds such as IMPs.

It can be observed therefore, that by the end of 1980s Greece was still a highly centralised state and the steps undertaken to create greater decentralisation had been carried out reluctantly. In fact, the entry of the country into the EC was the determining factor in all the local government reforms that followed. This connection between the Greek decentralisation process and the role of the EC will be more fully explored in the following chapter, but, in brief, the few changes that were introduced during this period helped prepare the ground for the rapid changes that followed during the 1990s.

## 3.2 From the 1994 to the present day

This period represents the third phase of decentralisation in Greece following the fall of the dictatorship. In 1993 PASOK won the elections and proceeded almost immediately to introduce a decentralisation programme that from 1994 to 1997 covered all three levels of local government: region, prefecture and the first tier. Diagram 2 fully illustrates a summary of the changes that occurred.

**Diagram 2:** Regional and Local government in Greece since laws 2218/1994 and 2240/1994

| Regional Level | 13 regions | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Regional Council | | Secretary General of the Region |
| | | | |
| 2$^{nd}$ Tier of Local Government | 51 Prefectures | | |
| | Prefectural Council | Prefectural Committee | Prefect |
| | | | |
| 1$^{st}$ Tier of Local Government | 900 Municipalities | | |
| | Municipal Council | Municipal Committee | Mayor |
| | 133 Communes | | |
| | Communal Council | | Chairman of the Community Council |
| | | | |

**Source:** Committee of Regions

website: http://195.200.108.36/grce_en.pdf accessed on June 2001

*3.2.1 Second tier of local government*

The first reform the PASOK government introduced involved the formation of a second tier of local government (prefectural self-government). As seen above, law 1622/1986 was the basis for such reforms but as it was not fully implemented, the government additionally introduced laws 2218/1994 and 2294/1994 to cover the creation of the second tier in local government.

Following the new proposals the existing form of the prefecture was replaced by an elected second tier of local government, which consisted of the prefect, the prefectural council and the prefectural committees. The prefect and the prefectural councils were both elected directly by the local electorate every

four years, whilst the members of the prefectural committee were elected by the prefectural council every two years.

The majority of the functions of the elected prefect and prefectural council remained the same as before. All the duties previously undertaken by the state appointed prefect such as planning and regional development, agriculture, tourism, social welfare and health, transport, culture and education were transferred to the newly formed second tier. Excepted were those duties connected to the Ministries of National Security and Defence, Economics, Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Further, the second tier was enabled to make its own decisions on matters concerning its internal structure and personnel.

In addition to the development of a second tier in local government, law 2240/94 introduced a special category of enlarged prefectures (*dievrimenes nomarchies*), one for the region of Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace and the other for the metropolitan areas of Athens and Thessaloniki. The aim of these units was to merge groups of prefectures for the better management of resources[14]. As we shall see in a later section of the present chapter, the creation of the enlarged prefectures was met with opposition by the Muslim minority in Western Thrace who held that it created a Christian population majority and thereby excluded the possibility of Muslim representation.

A third development was the abolition of any intervention by the prefect regarding the decisions taken by the municipalities or communes. The provisions of law 2240/94 abolished the hierarchical relationship between the first tier and the previous prefectures. The total separation of any hierarchical control between the two tiers was also accompanied by their financial independence. Prior to the 1994 reforms the financial function of the prefectures had involved the distribution of funds provided by the Peripheral Public Investment Programme and the administrative control of the first tier budget. After 1994, the funds attributed to the second tier included revenue from taxes, various charges, income from property and a specific annual transfer from the

central state for existing central state functions. A second source of revenue derived from loans or specific funds from the EU (Paraskevopoulos 1999: pp.119-120).

*3.2.2 Regional level*

As already described the 13 administrative regions were established by law 1622/1986 as a measure (and EU pre-requisite) for an effective management of EU funding. This structure remains the same today and regions function as central administrative units for regional planning and development. Following the 1994 reforms to the second tier, the region became the only decentralised form of state administration.

Law 2503/1997 provided for further development of the regions and as in the past the regional secretary was appointed directly by the state as the head of each region representing both the state and the government. This however did not take the form of control, as had previously been the case with the prefects, since the regional secretary had no control or supervisory role over either the first or second tiers (Chlepas 1997: p.129). The regions (as with law 1622/86) are also governed by a regional council whose members include representatives from the first and second tier of local government, and representatives of professional organisations.

*3.2.3 First tier local government*

The next significant step towards greater decentralisation took place in the first tier of local government with the introduction of the 'I. Capodistrias' Programme in 1997. The programme symbolically carried the name of the first governor of the independent Greek state whose vision it was to create the administrative organisation of the newly founded Greek state.

The main task of the new legislation was to put an end to the extremely fragmented local government. As we can see in Diagram 1, the first tier

consisted of 457 municipalities and 5,318 communes. As Verney argues, perhaps the greatest obstacle to the development of an effective first tier was its extreme decentralisation (Verney 1994: p.169). This was also the position assumed by the government who argued that under the existing system the first tier was unable to fulfil its political, administrative and developmental role. The government identified the crucial need for reform: 'In order to achieve a more rational administrative organisation and to adjust the institutional framework to recent experience and the administrative and developmental requirements of modern Greek society, one may suggest the specialisation of the specific types of primary level local authories'[15]

Following the approval of the Programme, the new municipalities were formed by the merging of communes. The institution of a commune was not completely abolished but limited in number. As we can see in Diagram 2 the number of municipalities increased to 900 and the number of communes decreased to 133. The first tier (municipality and commune) became responsible for local affairs, having as its prime objective the social and economic development of the inhabitants as well as the protection of their culture. Funding for the new municipalities and communes came from three sources: central individual resources (CIR), local government (CDLG) and interest-free loans to be made to the local authorities (I. Capodistrias Programme 1997: p.10)

Diagram 2 also highlights the structure of the first tier showing how the municipalities are governed by three bodies. The first of these is the municipal council, a decision making body, which consists of 11 to 41 members (depending on the size of municipality) who are elected every four years directly by the electorate. The second is the municipal committee, which consists of two to six members and is chaired by the mayor. The main tasks of the municipal committee include setting the budget, auditing the end of the year accounts and the management and adjudication of all public sales. In addition to this the mayor has responsibility for the implementation of decisions taken by the municipal council and committee. The mayor is directly elected and required to sit in the council meetings but cannot vote for/against any decisions taken.

The communes consist of two elected elements: the community council and the chairman of the council. The community council comprises seven to eleven members (depending on the commune's size) and is directly elected by the local electorate for a specific term. As in the case of the municipal council the community council is also a decision making body headed by a chair who is elected from the council itself. The second element, the chairman of the community council, represents the community and implements the decisions taken by the community council. The community chairman also heads the unit dealing with communal services.

All the new reforms of the two tiers of local government and the regional level introduced during the 1990s are still in force today. To recap, the devolution process in Greece took its most radical form after 1995. For the first time in the history of modern Greece, the introduction of laws 2218/94 and 2240/94 established a second tier of local government with the prefects and prefectural councils directly elected by the populace. For the first tier the above laws provided autonomy by abolishing the right of the prefect to intervene. Most important, the Capodistrias programme aimed at modernising the first tier by reducing its existing fragmentation. Finally, to a lesser degree some changes occurred at the regional level. The 13 regions were constituted as the only decentralised form of government and the introduction of law 2503/1997 allowed for some administrative reorganisation while strengthening their role as development units.

## 3.3 Clientelism

Before proceeding to the next section it is worth re-examining the development of clientelism in Greek society and the role it played in the structure of local government and local politics in general. The term 'clientelism' refers to the existence of powerful patrons who have the ability to intervene in public affairs and as a consequence influence state policy.

According to Mouzelis, in Greece unlike other western European societies, the interaction between the state and interest groups was based more on personal grounds than collective ones. Looking at the political development of modern Greece, three phases can be distinguished (Mouzelis 1995: p.18-19) during each of which different forms of clientelistic networks have been present.

To recap from chapter 1, the first of these phases began in the middle of the 19th century and lasted until 1909. The main characteristic of this period was the existence of a small number of powerful families of notables able to influence lower class voting. The political parties participating in the system were unorganised and led by potentates closely connected to regional clienteles.

The second phase started in the 1909 and lasted until the fall of military dictatorship in 1974. The rise to power of the E. Venizelos Liberal Party in 1910 involved the centralisation of the political structure and broadening out political participation in an attempt to break the power possessed by these families. Despite these moves the clientelistic character of the Greek political parties remained in place throughout this period.

The third phase coincided with PASOK's rise to power. This was the first time that a broad-based ruling party organisation existed whose branches reached out as far as small villages. Its existence made a wider membership possible whilst at the same time further centralising the party structure. Traditional clienteles lost their support as new and educated party members gradually replaced them. However, the personalistic/particularistic element in Greek politics was strengthened by a more populist form of organisation. This situation was not exclusive to PASOK and was also reflected in the structure of ND party.

The persistence of clientelism in the Greek society has also influenced the development of the local government system. As was highlighted earlier, even from the beginning of the modern Greek state centralism was favoured as a means of decreasing the local potentates power. Hence the introduction of a

prefecture in order to extend state control to all local areas, and the formation of municipalities as a new unit of local government.

In 1912, Venizelos, as part of his modernisation programme reintroduced the unit of commune. Such change brought with it partial decentralisation and a considerable fragmentation of the political system at the regional level (Makrydemetris 1997: p.66). The power of the local clienteles however persisted throughout the century with their continuing influence on both local and central administration.

The increasing power of the prefect perpetuated the situation where clientelistic networks play an important role. For example, even until 1994 the prefect made the decisions concerning the provision of services and the distribution of the funds, as they were transferred downwards by the central government. Often, prefectures were used as political channels, exerting pressure, to cope with local needs (Paraskevopoulos 1999: p.105). This sort of clientelism can be associated with the second phase described above where central government bodies also functioned in accordance with the demands of the local clienteles. Further, the authority embodied in the prefect (after 1955) gave him even tighter control over the first tier as a means of controlling left wing local councils. In this situation, the expansion of political clientelism became connected to the mechanisms of state repression (ibid.).

The rise to power of PASOK in 1981, did not put an end to the clientelistic networks, but merely transferred them from the personal to party level. The changes that followed highlight this new trend. With the introduction of law 1235/82 prefectural councils were created as intermediate levels between the central administration and local interest groups. However, in reality the prefectural councils served to strengthen the party organisations as most of the local organisations created were controlled by PASOK. As a result PASOK succeeded in eliminating ND clienteles (Christophilopoulou 1997: p.49)

Finally, it can be argued the 1994 reforms followed by the Capodistrias programme have led to both the further modernisation of the Greek administration system and the gradual reduction of clientelism that is so well rooted in Greek society. The resulting distribution of power among the three levels of the administrative system is considered by many to be the most appropriate for the revival of Greece's political system.

## 3.4 Decentralisation and the Muslim minority of Western Thrace.

Issues concerning the Muslim minority of Western Thrace are analysed in detail in Part II of the thesis. Furthermore, Part III concentrates on the current issues of decentralisation and their effect on Christian/Muslim relations in the area. This section therefore can act as a short introduction to these themes.

To give a brief overview, the Muslim minority became part of the Greek state when Western Thrace was incorporated into Greece. The Muslim minority is composed of three ethnic groups: the Turks, Pomaks and the Muslim Rom. Their existence and religious identity is determined and protected by the Lausanne Treaty (1923). Increasingly, from the 1960s onwards, Muslim demands for self-determination as a 'Turkish-ethnic minority' surfaced reaching their peak in the beginning of the 1990s.

The highly centralised Greek state left little room for Muslim representation and participation within the local society before the introduction of the 1994 reforms. Although representation existed at a national level, the lack of a second tier of local government combined with the weak first tier had deprived the Muslim population of a forum within which to raise their concerns or exert their opinion on local affairs. The Christian population on the other hand desired such centralisation as for them it represented a means to gain greater security, especially from the perceived Turkish threat. This sense of centralisation alone serves as an indicator of the tentative situation existing prior to the 1994 local government reforms.

Many of the Muslim minority issues were directly connected with having an appointed prefect with the power to approve or dismiss particular decisions or demands. To give one example, the appointment of teachers for the Muslim minority schools was at the discretion of the prefect. It is therefore interesting to note that many Muslim teachers despite being Greek citizens, because they received their training and degree in Turkey, used to find it difficult to be appointed to teaching positions in Muslim schools of Western Thrace (Anagnostou 1999: p.221).

The introduction of the second tier in 1994 was met with much resistance from the local society of Western Thrace. Christian opposition was focused on the weakening of the state caused by decentralisation and the increased possibility for the election of a Muslim prefect in the area of Rhodopi (see the relevant literature in Part III). Conversely the establishment of the enlarged prefectures only served to arouse Muslim suspicions that this was just a measure to limit Muslim second tier representation.

These were the initial reactions to the proposals. However, the establishment of the second tier and the modernisation of the first tier appear to have encouraged closer links between the Christian and Muslim communities. As we shall see in greater detail in Part III, the interviews that were conducted during the summer of 2001 as part of this thesis confirm this trend as both Christians and Muslims expressed the view that the multiethnic character of the region was an asset for cultural development.

## 5. Conclusion

The present chapter has concentrated on Greek regionalism from the formation of the modern Greek state in 1833 till today. An historical review has revealed why such a centralised state developed and how it was that on the eve of the country's entry to the EC, Greece was characterised as the most centralised member-state with an old fashioned administrative system.

In fact the lack of more than one elected local government bodies has led to an inability in Greece to receive and effectively manage EC funds. Therefore, at the beginning of the 1980's the government of PASOK in response to the EC challenge introduced the first regional reforms and established thirteen administrative regions that remain in the same form today.

The 1980s in general became a transformation period between the previous era of centralisation and the rapid reforms that were to follow during the 1990s. Apart from these regional reforms, further measures were introduced for the modernisation of the administrative system, thereby strengthening the first tier by the partial abolition of prefectural control, the creation of prefectural councils and preparation for the establishment of the second tier.

It was during the 1990s however, that more rapid reforms took place. First, a second tier of government was created with the election of prefectures and prefectural councils. Second the regions acquired a better defined framework and their developmental role was upgraded. Third, with the introduction of the Capodistrias programme in 1997, the first tier became a more autonomous and more unified level of local government.

As has already been commented, clientelism has been a persistent feature in the Greek political system since the 1830s. Although taking different forms, from a more personalistic to a more party-oriented force, it was never eliminated from the Greek political and social landscape. The reforms that took place from 1994 onwards aimed at introducing a more modernised western European form of administration and the elimination of clienteles. The success or failure of these reforms will depend on future political developments.

**Notes**

1. There is some controversy over the origins of the Greek commune under the Ottoman rule. Some theories argue that the communes are descended from the autonomous Greek city or Roman imperial system. Other theories claim that the commune system originated in the Byzantine period. Despite the integrity of such arguments, the theories have often served the dominant ideologies in modern Greece, which had attempted to glorify and Hellenize the commune under Ottoman rule, while remaining sceptical of the idea of decentralised organisation, (Kontogiorgis 1982: p.75). Another view concerning the origins of the Greek commune is highlighted by Zakynthinos who held that the Greek commune was developed to serve as a means for the people to preserve their religious and national identity under the Turkish administration. As Zakynthinos argues 'for the Greeks of the Turkish period the commune was not only an embryonic social and political organism, it was also a means of self-presentation' (Zakynthinos 1976: p.64).

2. The expanded European states in an effort to strengthen their economies gained some favourable terms for trading with the Ottoman Empire which increased with the gradual disintegration of the Ottoman economy. The new agricultural demands, along with the lack of technological advancement, further weakened the authority of the Porte while bringing about some restructuring in the system of land ownership. As a consequence local landowners gained increased power. (Mouzelis 1978: p.5-6)

3. These were the two ideological trends representing the diverse interests of the various groups in the newly founded Greek state which were also present in pre-revolutionary Greece. The 'westernisers' drew their support mainly from diaspora *intelligentsia* and aspired to create an independent Greek state structured according to western European standards. Conversely, the traditionalists expressed the views of the local land-owning class who after the revolution hoped to maintain their previous social position by continuing the Ottoman system. The divisions between the two groups were deep and

permeated in all aspects of Greek society including debates over monarchy, land ownership, identity and culture. The modern/traditional conflict is, as we shall see in the second part of the thesis, still present as far the Greek identity is concerned. For an in-depth analysis of this division, see Diamandouros 1983.

4. The traditionalists were also discreetly encouraged by the British and French ministers who did not favour the pro-Russian foreign policy followed by Capodistrias –see next footnote. (Stavrianos: p.291)

5. Ioannis Capodistrias was the first elected Greek Prime Minister. He was a Greek from the island of Corfu but had previously served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Tsar in Russia. His main aim was to create a strong central Greek state. His aspirations however were in opposition to the interests of the local elites to the extent that they cost him his life. He was assassinated in 1831 by members of a powerful local family (Clogg 1995: pp.45-48)

6. Modernisation was not the only reason for the re-introduction of the commune system. The municipalities became a stronghold of pro-monarchy opponents and evidently posed a threat to Venizelos' power as a Prime Minister (Paraskevopoulos 1999: p.104)

7. The PEEA was formed in March 1944 and lasted until November of the same year. In August 1944, the PEEA voted for and produced a concise 'constitution of EAM resistance' which determined public policy in Greece (Papagiannis 1994: p.11). Part of this constitution was the code for self-government that aimed to lay down the principles of Greek local administration. The local government of Greece was to be divided into three administrative regions: the municipality-commune on the first tier, the province on the second tier and the region on the third. The third tier would have acted as a decentralised form of government with PEEA appointed regional officials. For the second and third tier of local government, the

councils and heads would have been elected directly from the people (ibid. p.13). This proposed system bears close similarities to the present system of local government as will be seen later.

8. The predominant aim of the post-Civil War governments was the restriction of communism both internal and external, which had until then limited any efforts made for the reconstruction of the civil society (Clogg 1955: p.154). Local government was but one example of this ideological trend. In 1958 the party of the EDA (the United Democratic Left Party) which was supported by the outlawed and exiled Communist party, won enough votes to be elected as the official opposition party (ibid. p.162). As a result, local government as a body of popular participation – and potential forum for left wing politics - was kept as weak as possible out of fear of the expansion of communism.

9. Decentralisation was however not only an objective for the PASOK government but was also a requirément of the EC as we shall see in more detail in the following chapter. During this time, PASOK opposed Greece's entry to the EC. Commitment to decentralisation was therefore promoted as part of the Socialist Party agenda (Verney 1994: p.170)

10. The advisory role allows the members of the councils to propose specific public sector projects for their constituency and give their opinion on cultural and social sector affairs (Verney, Papageorgiou 1993: p.112)

11. The thirteen regions included: Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Central Macedonia, Western Macedonia, Thessaly, Epirus, Ionian Islands, Western Greece, Sterea Ellada, Peloponnese, Attica, the Northern Aegean Islands, the Southern Aegean Islands and Crete.

12. For example, in the area of East Macedonia and Thrace, the regional council would consist of the three prefects from the area of Thrace and the two prefects of the area of Eastern Macedonia.

13. Decentralisation was vital as part of the Europeanization process. The lack of a second tier of local government created difficulties for the country's participation in the Committee of Regions (CoR). However, as highlighted by Christophilopoulou, an extraordinary coincidence allowed Greece's participation without the requirement for any further changes. The translation of the European document refers to representatives of local government and regional administration instead of the term 'regional self-government', which is the exact translation from the English term 'regional authorities', and the French term 'collectivites regionales' (Christophilopoulou 1997: p.52). It is worth noting that more traditionalist members of both PASOK and ND hesitated with the concept of further decentralisation while the more modernist section of both parties supported it (ibid. pp.52-53)

14. The enlarged prefectures consist of the president and the council. The president is elected directly from the local electorate in the same elections for the second tier. The council consists of all the members of the prefectural councils (Chlepas 197: p.126).

15. This quotation is from the official document: 'Ioannis Capodistrias' Programme, (Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation, 1997: p.2)

# Chapter 3

## Regional Policy: the European Dimension

### 1. Introduction

The following chapter focuses on the way European regional policy has been shaped since the establishment of the EEC/EC/EU[1]. Regional policy and regional funding are examined first, with reference to the Greek regional and local government restructuring and, second, with regard to the influence these have had both on the area of Western Thrace and Muslim/Christian relations. Some of the issues raised here are further elaborated in Part III of the thesis.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section examines the main events that have occurred during the short history of European integration and led to an established regional policy. Although regional disparities were recognised at the time of the Treaty of Rome and the creation of the EEC, it was not until later that a more comprehensive plan for a European regional policy emerged. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) represents this more organised effort. As membership increased, the need for further action to tackle regional differences became more evident.

It was not until the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 that the Committee of Regions (CoR) was established as one of the main bodies to promote the interests of the various regions of the member-states. The CoR was accompanied by structural funds, which were distributed to the regions most needing modernisation. Although CoR has an advisory role, it has become a forum for all the European regions and their policy agendas.

The task of any European regional programme is difficult and has not been without its critics given the lack of common regional systems across the

European member-states. In fact, there is a diversity of regional/local government systems ranging from highly centralised systems to federal ones. Most countries during the 1990s introduced new systems or added new components to their existing regional/local governments in order to manage their structural funds in a more effective way.

In Greece, decentralisation can be considered as part of a general Europeanization process as show below on page 92. In 1981 Greece entered the EC but membership was a controversial issue, and this was reflected both in the political parties and in public opinion. Due to international developments together with the prospect of Greece receiving generous EC funding, Greek political parties became more pro-European as did public opinion.

The modernization of Greek political structures and public administration has, however, proved to be a difficult task. The cultural division between the modernizers and the traditionalists in the Greek political parties (and Greek society in general) has constrained the Europeanization process. Decentralisation, which coincided with the wider Europeanization process, has taken place in Greece to some extent (see chapter 2) and provided a modernised regional/local government. Despite the obstacles and limitations, greater regionalism has had positive effects as a system of management and administration and as a channel for furthering inter-European/inter-regional relations.

For the area of Western Thrace, Greece's membership of the EU has been seen as beneficial by members of the Muslim minority both with respect to the Europeanization process and the regional reform that followed during the 1990s. The European Union represents a new supranational forum for the Muslim population, their calls, mainly on the issue of ethnic recognition, bypassing the Greek state while raising public and governmental awareness of issues relating to Muslims of Western Thrace, across Europe. There is also a trend within the Muslim minority (following Greece's rejections of ethnic recognition) to assume a 'European' identity in addition to their religious status.

Finally, the recent regional reforms enabled greater co-operation between the Christian and Muslim communities and opened up opportunities for greater Muslim participation at the local level.

## 2. The EU regional policy

The idea of a 'Europe of Regions' entered European politics at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s with the passing of the Single European Act in 1986 and the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The concept of European regionalism and of the protection and promotion of regions features, however, from the beginning of the formation of the EU (then the EEC) in the 1950s[2].

Following the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) with the Treaty of Rome (1957), regional policy was under consideration but there was no specific part in the Treaty dedicated to the issue. The Treaty in general (more specifically Article 2) recognised regional disparities and the need for the promotion of harmonious development programmes in order to narrow the existent gap (Adrikopoulou 1995: pp. 143-144). For this purpose, the European Investment Bank (also established in 1957) provided loans to modernise the regions that lagged behind.

Further initiatives were introduced when the Commission presented a report to the Council in 1969 concerning regional development in Europe. The Paris summit of 1972 established the necessity for regional policy as a vital part of the further development of the EEC. In the following year the UK, Ireland and Denmark were admitted as members. Both the UK and Ireland favoured regional policy as a way to cope with de-industrialisation and to counterbalance the costs of the common agricultural policy (Garmice, cited in Paraskevopoulos 1999: p.61).

Following these steps, in 1975, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was established as part of a more organised effort to even out the regional differences across the member-states. The emphasis remained on

national regional policies assisted, rather than being replaced by these proposed by the European Community (EC). (Adrikopoulou 1995: p.149). Despite this, considerable assistance was given to countries whose GDP was below the Community's average.

The creation of the ERDF can be considered as a further move towards the development of EC regional policy. The new structure for regional policy within the EU remained more or less the same until the 1990s. That is, the ERDF became the EC's main regional funding body while further measures were introduced to bring about better co-ordination between the EC member states and regional and local authorities. Extra funds were set aside to assist new member states (Bullman 1997: p.11).

In the early 1980s a further enlargement of the EU took place with the admission of Greece in 1981. In 1985 the EC introduced (via regulation 2088/1985) the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes (IMPs) to help the regions of Greece, Italy and France[3]. The IMPs were accompanied by substantial financial resources (of about 6.6 billion ECUs) that aimed to prepare vulnerable economies for the entrance of Spain and Portugal to the EC in 1986.

The establishment of the IMPs was important also for the EC regionalization process as it led to the adoption of an integrated approach towards regional development. First, the regions of the member states had to include comprehensive planning in their development agenda, which in many cases had previously been absent. Second, a partnership was initiated between the authorities at all three levels: regional, national and the EC. Finally, the participation of local officials and interest groups was encouraged in the decision-making process for the regional economic and social policies (Bianchi 1993: p.49).

## 2.1 The Single European Act and the Treaty on European Union (TEU)

In 1985 a White Paper was published that defined the programme for the completion of the Single Market. Regional policy was once more considered an important aspect of the Single Market and was officially established as one of the Community's policies in the Single European Act (SEA) of 1987 (Adrikopoulou 1995: pp. 149-150). Article 130 (a-d) of the Single European Act states that regional policy is considered part of the economic and social cohesion of the European Community. For example, article 130c defines the task of the ERDF as to 'redress the principal regional imbalances in the Community through participating in the development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind in the conversion of declining industrial regions (www.cor.eu.int/sqsu/sq_en_intro.html: accessed December 2001).

The three funds allocated to assist regional policy – the ERDF, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the guidance section of the Agricultural and Guarantee Fund (AGGF) – were also known as structural funds. All three structural funds received significant resources from the period 1987-1993 and again for the period up to 1999. In 1993 an additional Cohesion Fund was established (Bullman 1997: p.19).

The new reforms were not limited to the economic sector. In 1989 a major reform was introduced which in addition to further economic decisions, undertook a general review of the decision making process of EC regional policy. These reforms sought to strengthen the three-sided partnership of the Community/nation-state/region in drawing-up, financing and monitoring the Community Support Frameworks (CSFs) (ibid.).

Moreover, the new reforms aimed to distribute resources according to regional geographic position (funding priorities) while the issue of regional dimension was also considered. For example major objectives included the financing of less developed regions whose GDP was below 75% of the Community's average, for regions in industrial decline, regions with long-term

unemployment, the employment of young people, the adjustment of agricultural structures and the development of the rural areas. Regions rather than the nation-states constituted the main beneficiaries of the three funds. The introduction of the CSFs looked towards long term financing rather than the funding of specific individual projects proposed by the member states. This was another indicator of the long term approach the European regional policy.

Since the Single European Act, many member states have transferred significant sectors of policy-making to the EC, one sector being regional policy (Leonardi 1993: p.3). As the aid was passed through to various regions in Europe, each of these established a direct representation in Brussels or Strasbourg (Bullman 1997: p.13). In this respect, 'national governments could no longer exclude sub-national institutions, groups or forces from becoming entirely engaged within the European integration process' (ibid.). Over the years a number of organisations[4] were established that comprised regional or local government authorities in different member states in order to promote their common interests. In response to this sub-state dimension the EC both established the Consultative Council of Regional and Local Authorities in 1988 (which was involved in structural policy) and also opened EC offices in different regions throughout the member states.

Further developments with regard to regional policy followed the Treaty on European Union which was part of the Maastricht Treaty (signed in 1992 and which came into force in 1993)[5]. As part of the Maastricht Treaty, the Committee of Regions (CoR) was formed as an 'official response to local and regional authorities' demands for representation within the EU' (CoR website: www.cor.eu.int/sqsu/sq_en_intro.html: accessed December 2001). The establishment of the CoR[6] was supplemented by the creation of the Cohesion Fund, which aimed to provide financial aid for the transport and environmental infrastructure for member-states whose GNP was below 90% of the EU average. The countries that benefited from such funds were Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Greece (Adrikopoulou 1995: pp. 149-150).

At present the CoR consists of 222 members who are appointed every 4 years by the Council of the European Union. Members can be re-appointed. The role of the elected representatives is a) to defend their immediate interests in the Community policy-making process and b) to disseminate information about all EU activities to the people they represent[7] (Paraskevopoulos 1999: p.68).

The establishment of the CoR remains a major breakthrough in European regional policy. Although CoR has not yet received any decision-making powers, either from the Treaty of Maastricht or from the Treaty of Amsterdam, it has promoted more democratic and transparent procedures in the EU decision-making processes and in the management of the structural funds. At the same time CoR has promoted the interests of the less developed member-states and their regions in the EU.

The creation of CoR was not only an important step for the EU, it has also brought about challenges to the existing structures of government within the member states. Despite these developments, a common structure of regional/local policy throughout the member-states has yet to be achieved and we cannot therefore assume the existence of a coherent third-level[8] of politics within EU. Despite obstacles, to a degree, reforms did take place in member states, and as we have seen in the previous chapter, Greece introduced new reforms to its local and regional government system.

The bringing of third-level politics to the EU political agenda has also introduced a new trend for the future development of the EU. A balance between EU and nation-state policies can further promote the scope of decentralisation and regionalization, enabling a more even development of regional policy within the EU while narrowing the gap between the existing and future EU regions.

2.2 EU Regional Policy and sub-national local government systems

Before considering again the issue of coherence in EU regional policy, it is important to mention the different approaches towards regional and local

government system that each member-state has developed throughout its history. It can be argued that sub-national institutional structures differ considerably from one state to another. Some countries have a full structure of regional government organised on sub-regional or provincial levels, such as Spain, Italy and France. Other countries are more centralised such as Greece and Ireland while in the case of UK, the Conservative government moved towards greater centralisation.

A typology of the level of regionalism in each country is analysed by Bullman (see table 1)

Table 1: Regional systems of government in EU member states

| Classic Unitary | Devolving Unitary | Regionalised | Federal |
|---|---|---|---|
| Denmark | France | Italy | Austria |
| Finland | The Netherlands | Spain | Belgium |
| Greece | Portugal | | Germany |
| Ireland | | | |
| Luxembourg | | | |
| Sweden | | | |
| United Kingdom | | | |

Source: Bullman (1995:57)

As can be seen in the above table, there are four categories of governmental system in the EU. It should be noted that the classification within Table I for Greece refers to the system prior to the 1994 local government reforms. Likewise, the classification for UK refers to the situation prior to Scottish devolution.

The first of the four categories identified in the early 1990s is the classic unitary state system where sub-national governments exist only at the local level while regional units, where they are present, are only for administrative purposes and are subordinate to the central state. The second category consists of states that have introduced limited reforms for elected regional authorities above the

local level, with this regional level enjoying a certain degree of constitutional protection and autonomy. In the third category, there is a directly elected tier of regional government with constitutional status, authority and legislative powers. Finally, there are the federal states where power is shared by the co-existence of sovereignties where the regional tier exists in its own right and cannot be abolished or reconstructed by the federal government.

Table 1 also depicts the degree of regionalization present within the member-states. For example, Greece was the most centralised state in the EU as it lacked a second tier of government prior to the introduction of the 1994 changes. Within the same category, it is interesting to note that Ireland also had a very weak sub-national system of government (Leonardi 1993: p.7). This last point is an example that regionalism, or lack of it, is directly related to specific national-state traditions. Using the case of Greece, as seen in the previous chapter, centralisation has been linked to specific circumstances related to the development of clientelism and to external relations. Thus, on the eve of EU membership, Greece was a highly centralised state. In the same way the UK's regional system (and its devolution) can be argued as being related to the long historical circumstances between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The same differentiation as to the degree of regionalization in existence within these particular areas applies to the second category where the three countries concerned each have their own pattern of decentralisation. For example, in Portugal devolved government applies only to the islands of the Azores and Madeira. Similar examples can be found in most countries (for a further discussion on the subject see Bullman 1997: pp.4-7).

Since the early 1990s, states have started slowly to reform their regional/local government systems as exemplified by the study of Greece in the previous chapter. Regional reforms were introduced in the UK from 1997 resulting in the creation of the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh National Assembly and the semi-autonomous Assembly of Northern Ireland. The three

bodies in addition to the Greater London Authority and the English regions form the regional level of government within the UK. Similarly, Sweden also strengthened its regional system in 1995 by transferring responsibilities from its counties to the directly elected county councils (both at regional level) (Bullman 1997: p.6).

These are but a few examples of the variety of sub national systems existing within EU member states. It should be highlighted that the efforts taken by member states to introduce further regulations within their administrative structures were, for the main part, to accommodate the new EU regional policies and to promote a more effective management of the structural and cohesion funds[9].

To recap, regional development has been recognised as an issue for further development by the EU from the beginning (then EEC). For more than twenty years, the only step taken to tackle this was the allocation of specific funding for the regions of member states. As the EU started to enlarge, regional disparities became more obvious which combined with the growing need for the adoption of a more consistent policy. From the middle 1980s the EU has strengthened its regional policy and in 1993, with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, the Committee of Regions (CoR), accompanied by a specific allocation of funds, was established as an advisory body for the promotion of regional interests within the EU.

The creation of the CoR and the efforts being made towards encouraging European regional development revealed the radically different systems of regional government (or its absence) adopted across the member states. This unevenness posed an obstacle to the funding and management of resources. As a consequence, many national governments proceeded with regional and local government reforms in an attempt to manage EU funding. Following this restructuring, it can be argued that today, the purpose of the regions in the European Community is twofold. First, regions have became areas where political, economic and social decisions are discussed and decisions made and

second, the regions themselves function as actors at the national and EU level to promote their specific interests (Keating 1998: p.18).

It should be noted however, that although the 1990s are viewed by many as the era of 'the Europe of regions' with the introduction of a multilevel government system in the EU, this is also only a period of transition. It is not possible to judge the future role of regional/local government in European policy-making; but there are two trends sketched out by its sceptics and supporters.

There are a number of institutions working for the promotion of stronger third level representation within the EU, namely, the Committee of Regions (CoR), the Assembly of the European Regions (AER) and various associations accompanied by the Regional Information Offices (RIOs) set up in regions to directly represent the EU. Despite their establishment, however, as highlighted by Jeffery, there is an argument that regional policy within the EU remains weak and its future advancement is debatable (Jeffery 1997: pp.206-207).

The major criticism concentrates on the question of how far regionalization has taken place and what role regions play in the EU. In general it is argued by some sceptics that regional policies in the EU are weak and the role of the central state far from diminished. More particularly, the CoR is only an advisory body with limited influence for both itself and the regions it represents. In addition the existing diversity of regional/local government systems across the EU member states becomes an obstacle to CoR's ability to define its identity and scope as an institution. Similarly, the AER has a limited role following the establishment of CoR in the Maastricht Treaty. Likewise, the RIOs represent the physical presence of the EU in the regions acting as a direct link between the two levels (supranational and regional). However, as the structural funds are channelled through the central state the region continues to be dependent on the national government (ibid.).

Another criticism disputes the effects of regionalism in general (even in their present weak form). In addition to the argument concerning the dangers attached to the weakening of the central state (particularly relevant for the study of the Greek case), there is a reference to 'regional centralisation'. This happens in larger regions, when after decentralisation, the power of the central state simply moves to the regional capital. In this case regional government ceases to be near to the people and assumes the role of the central government. Further, regionalization has brought about a confusing structure of government in the European member states where disputes occur over overlapping jurisdictions between the state and the regions (Write 1998: p.46).

Despite these drawbacks, there are some optimistic views on European regionalism coming mainly from people involved with the regional institutions (Jeffery 1997: p.207). They claim that European regional institutions are recent creations only just developing into their future role. Furthermore, until recently the role of regions had no recognition as being part of a system of government. Despite the weakness of the European institutions, the region has been promoted as an alternative and modernised form of government.

Following the introduction of EU funding during the 1980s, a study of the regions in European Community[10] found that the less centralised states showed higher economic and social development. In more centralised states the centre and the area around the centre appeared to benefit the most, creating centre-periphery disparities. With the decentralisation of both decision-making and responsibility it was found that the periphery also benefited (Leonardi 1993: pp.267-269). It can be concluded therefore, that the EU regional policies aimed at reducing the disparities among the regions both at European and national levels.

To summarise, there are arguments both for and against regionalization as well as a sceptical view as to the degree that regionalization could potentially be achieved. However, rapid developments in this area have only occurred within the last decade and while the above criticism has some validity, the

creation of CoR, as an EU institution has become an important factor in promoting regional policies within the EU member-states. The evidence for this is prominent in the case of Greece who proceeded to the restructuring of its local government system, acknowledged in both relevant literature and the interviews of the present study. Essentially, regionalization was promoted by the EU regional institutions as an attempt to modernise existing patterns of government and to accelerate growth in all geographical parts of the EU as integration grew closer. As new institutions and networks are formed throughout the EU, regions have tried to crystallise their new identities. Although the central state is still the major level of government, the existence of a supra level and the strengthening of the regional initiative gives rise to further questions for researchers on nationalism and ethnicity. The issue concerning the position of minorities within these new structures is but one case of this.

## 3. Greek Regional Policy: the European Dimension

3.1 Europeanization process

Regional reforms in Greece as we have already seen took place after the country's entrance into the EU. In this context decentralisation/regionalization is part of the wider Europeanization process in Greece. Here, 'Europeanization' is not a mere acceptance of basic EU principles, rather it is the internalisation of EU logic and policies and their incorporation into domestic policy. At the same time it entails the ability of central governments to set national policies into a wider EU context (Ioakimidis 1996: p.33). As a result of this internalisation is the redefinition of territorial political relations, the creation of new European political networks, the rise of new demands and pressures and new European ideological trends and conflicts (ibid.).

Europeanization as a process has featured in Greece from the initial preparations for membership of the EC in 1975 and continues to the present day. In general terms, EU membership has been a controversial issue in Greece and

was well reflected in the political life of the Greek society. As seen earlier, PASOK emerged as the main opposition party in the late 1970s and later came into power in the early 1980s. During the opposition years and early years in power, PASOK was against EU membership on the grounds that it believed Greece would be forced to assume a peripheral role and as a result would have been exploited (Featherstone 1994: p.159). During this time, the ND party became largely pro-European, the Communist Party (KKE) opposed EU membership for ideological reasons while the Euro communist party (KKE es) was ready to accept EU membership with certain conditions (for example, for the promotion of a European labour issue).

During the 1980s the political climate changed as PASOK claimed victories in both the 1981 and 1985 elections. Attitudes towards EU membership started to take a more positive view. While the ND policy appeared to be consistently pro-European, PASOK's stand also changed after full membership took place in 1981[11]. Moreover, PASOK later used EU membership as a symbol for its own modernisation (Featherstone 1994: p.159). Following international developments in Eastern Europe and the new philosophy of perestroika, KKE also shifted its policy towards a more pro-European approach. KKE-es, which has in the meanwhile dissolved, together with some members of the KKE established Synaspismos, which continued to support Greece's membership to the EU.

Public opinion also moved along similar lines. Statistics indicated that in 1981 and 1984 only about 34% of Greeks were in favour of EU membership. By 1987 this percentage increased to 58% and in 1991, just before the Maastricht summit, 73% of the Greek population thought that EU membership was good for Greece (statistics from Eurobarometer, highlighted in Featherstone 1994: p.155).

Despite initial reservations, the Europeanization process is perceived to have had a positive 'modernising' effect on many aspects of Greek society[12]. As Bendix noted some years ago, the interpretations of 'tradition' and 'modernity' are largely subjective (Bendix 1966). One very important issue closely

connected with the Europeanization process is that of modernisation, and most notably (and of particular relevance to the present thesis), modernisation of the political structure and public administration. In other words, as a result of EU policies and economic development aid has boosted efforts for administrative decentralisation, promoting a more democratic and efficient system of government and encouraging opinion towards less statist public policies (Featherstone & Yiannopoulos 1995: p. 251).

Modernisation again has proven to be a difficult and controversial task in Greek society where elements of the modern and traditional society still co-exist (see also chapters 2 and 4). In the restructuring efforts undertaken by the political parties, for example, this division has held back the reforming processes whilst at the same time allowing for clientelism to remain as a means for attracting electoral support. Accordingly, the conflict between the Europeanists/modernizers and the traditionalists (who resist change in the name of Greekness) has had a limiting effect on Europeanization (Ioakimidis 1996: p.44). This is highlighted by Mouzelis who argues 'the extent to which EU integration will affect Greece's future modernisation and how emerging postmodernist attitudes of the young will finally be shaped and institutionalised, depends primarily on what will happen within the party system itself' (Mouzelis 1995: p.27).

3.2 EU and Greek Regionalism

Within this wider framework of Europeanization the introduction of regional policy and local government in Greece can be seen as forming part of a general effort to modernise the system of government. In the middle of the 1980s, the Greek government introduced 13 regions as administrative units for the implementation of the EU Integrated Mediterranean Programmes (IMPs). The new regions were not in all cases defined according to their historical geographic borders but they were created in order to fulfil this particular role. Western Thrace for example, due to its small size, was merged with two prefectures of

the Macedonian region and thus led to the creation of the region of Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace.

The reality, however, about IMPs proved to be problematic for the decentralisation efforts in that at their initial stage most decisions were taken by the central government[13]. This seems to partly justify the point made earlier about the weak role of the EU regions in policy making. Yet this is not entirely the case, as IMPs have opened the way towards greater decentralisation in Greece although the motive remained primarily financial, that is for Greece to absorb EU funding. Thus, local agencies (like the EETAA: the Hellenic Agency for Local Government and Local development) were given the chance to participate in the organisation and implementation of EU funded programmes. Furthermore, local control of the IMPs at a prefectural level has shown a greater degree of effectiveness than that implemented by the central government (Papageorgiou & Verney 1993: p.154)

The initial regional transformations did bring some confusion to the existing sub-national structures of government. The new role of the regional directors has taken some responsibilities from the prefect. As the role of the regional directors increased, the role of the prefects started to diminish and the prefectures became centres of co-ordination for local investment, keeping only a few of their traditional functions. (Christophilopoulou 1997: p. 47).

The EU indicated the need for further decentralisation as, in its view, the structural funds programmes were not managed and implemented adequately by the Greek public sector. In addition Greece could not participate in the newly established bodies such as CoR as the country lacked a second tier of government (ibid.). As seen in the previous chapter, both the 1994 reforms with the establishment of the prefecture as a second tier and the strengthening of the first tier that followed sought to improve the regional situation in Greece. Moreover, the extended EU-assisted co-operation of regions among the member-states has benefited Greek local government by the specialist knowledge it has acquired from European counterparts. Knowledge of this type

is invaluable in terms of the long-term effects it may have on the political culture of the Greek local authorities (Verney 1994: p. 176).

It can be argued therefore that despite the sceptics' views, regional processes within the EU framework have brought about a revolution in Greece's administrative and public policy system. Although the EU regional system as a whole is seen as weak, in the Greek experience the regional/local government system has been strengthened. In addition, the view that EU regionalization has brought conflict between existing levels of regional/local power with destabilising effects is certainly true for the Greek case as was seen from the discussion in the previous chapter and is briefly highlighted here. But what these disputes have shown for the Greek case is the need for greater decentralisation. In some cases the disputes and competition are still present in Greece,[14] but in general, as concluded from the present research in the area of Western Thrace, both Muslims and Christians have taken a positive view towards both decentralisation and the EU regional dimension.

## 4. The Muslim minority of Western Thrace and the EU regional policy

### 4.1 Europeanization process and regional reforms in Western Thrace

EU regional policy as part of a wider process of Europeanization in Greece has brought changes to many aspects of Greek society. The new regional reforms and EU funding are essentially aimed at reducing regional disparities within the EU member states and effectively within Greece itself. For the area of Western Thrace, Greece's EU membership has had an additional effect of bringing a new dimension to ethnic politics and Muslim/Christian relations. The effects are twofold. First, there is the introduction of the Europeanization process itself with the establishment of the EU as a supra-national body of politics and authority[15] and, second, there are the new regional/local authority reforms which themselves gave a new meaning to local politics (and the local electorate). The two issues,

as we shall see later, often interconnect. The subject of EU membership and the Muslim minority is further examined in Part III of the present thesis.

It has to be noted that the EU as it stands today does not facilitate ethnic minority claims. Rather its influence is indirect and, as a supranational body, can raise awareness about minority entitlements. In addition to the EU triggered regional and local government developments in Greece that benefited local democracy and representation for the population of Western Thrace, the EU itself has addressed particular issues for minority rights. Namely, the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights, which was officially proclaimed in December 2000, lays down the equality before the law of all people (Article 20), prohibits discrimination on any ground (Article 21), and requests the Union to protect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. The European Commission's actions in the field of external relations are guided by compliance with the rights and principles contained in this Charter.

Furthermore it is worth mentioning briefly that the internationalisation of the issue of the Muslim minority of Western Thrace was mainly influenced by international organisations such as the Council of Europe[16] and the European Court of Human Rights, as well as the human rights organisation, Helsinki Watch. As an example of this, Dr Sadik Ahmet (see Appendix 1), petitioned the European Commission of Human Rights in 1995 declaring that Greece had violated his right of free expression. The Commission forwarded the case to the European Court of Human Rights.

The EU also supports the Council of Europe and the Amsterdam Treaty stresses EU support for the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Accordingly, as declared by the Treaty, "the EU has the power to take appropriate action to combat discrimination...based on sex, race or ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability, age or sexual orientation" (www.europa.eu.int/abc/cit_en.htm, accessed 24/07/02; see also note 16 of the present chapter). The Amsterdam Treaty gave the appropriate powers to the

European Court of Justice to ensure these rights and freedoms by the European Institutions (ibid).

Many Muslims initially felt that the EU was essentially for the benefit of only Christians, but increasingly this opinion has changed – although it should be noted that the view still exists among some members of the Muslim community who see the EU is a 'Christian' organisation. Membership of the EU is seen nonetheless increasingly as beneficial to the Muslim population as it provides an additional guarantee both for human rights and for the principles of progress and democracy at the local level, which are promoted by the European environment.

This is also the view expressed in interviews with local Turkish press people. On the question of human rights (which is not the main concern of this thesis), the editor of a local journal stated that 'discrimination has stopped because of the EU. With the European idea better days (for the minority) will come...in terms of human and minority rights' (Interview, M. Moumin, Komotini, 2002). Similarly, another local newspaper editor commented that the Commission has played an important role in Greece finally abolishing in 1998 the controversial Article 19 by exerting pressure on the Greek Foreign Minister (Interview, A. Dede, Komotini, 2002). And although the Lausanne Treaty still legally defines the Muslim minority's position, 'there is a general feeling that together with Athens now there is also Brussels' (Interview, T. Kapza, Xanthi, 2002).

In fact, the declaration of legal equality and equal citizenship (see also p.133 note 5) and the removal of all restrictions on the Muslims in Greece in 1991 occurred during the same period of regional restructuring. This is also confirmed in the Human Rights Watch report on 'Positive Steps by the Greek State' on the issue of Muslims in Western Thrace. It is stated that 'in 1994, to bring Greece in line with EU standards, the government instituted the election of previously state-appointed provincial governors and municipal councils. In meetings with Human Rights Watch, the elected governors appear more open to

consider the needs and requests of the Turkish minority, upon whose votes they depend. More importantly, they recognise the mistake of the past state policy of discrimination against the Turkish minority and appear willing to use development funds to improve infrastructure in minority regions' (www.hrw.org/reports/1999/greece/Greec991-05.htm, accessed July 2001).

The current favourable climate for the position of the Muslim minority in Thracian society and the improvement of Christian/Muslim relations are not, however, exclusively due to EU integration, as will be seen in later chapters. Instead, a combination of factors can be found. This belief is also shared by some Muslims: "Progress has been achieved as a result of the promotion of EU human rights and regional policies, the democratic forces within Greece and the efforts of the Turkish minority itself" (Interview, M. Moustafa, Komotini, July 2001).

Throughout the history of the region, Christian/Muslim relations were influenced or determined by the general Greek/Turkish state relations, as can be seen in Part II of the thesis. Since the second half of the 1990s there has been a favourable climate between the two countries. For some Muslims, the European Union has played an important role in this improvement: 'many younger generation minority people believe that the European Union opened the road for better relations between Greece and Turkey...there is the general view that when Turkey enters the EU there will be no more problems in Western Thrace' (Interview, H. Moumin, Komotini, 2002).

The current friendly relations between the two countries also feature in local press reports, both Turkish and Greek. One example can be found in the front-page article on the European future of Turkey in the Turkish weekly, *Trakya'nin Sesi*, 24/07/2002. Another is an article in the Greek daily, *Embros*, 22/7/2002 where the twinning and economic co-operation of the town of the Xanthi with the Turkish town of Biğa is seen as part of the European orientation of the two countries. Also, in an article by N. Kardritzke in *Le Monde diplomatique*, June 2000, entitled 'Greece's earthquake diplomacy', it is

mentioned that 'both sides are now actively encouraging relations at the level of civil society, which were previously restricted. Almost 130 Greek and Turkish non-governmental organisations are involved in this new co-operation. Mayors in Eastern and Western Thrace are even in the process of establishing a 'euroregion' on both sides of the Evros/Meric river, a venture that would have been unthinkable a year ago' (www.mondediplo.com/2000/06/06Greece, accessed July 2002)

It was argued, in both interviews and informal conversations that the new opportunities presented by the EU have allowed for greater Muslim participation in all sectors of Greek society. EU funding has further contributed considerably to the upgrading of the area as seen in Part III of the thesis. This development has been of particular benefit to the minority population, as much of this infrastructure was constructed in areas solely inhabited by Muslims. In general, according to the opinion of the Turkish journalist A. Dede, there is a feeling that the standards of living of the local population have increased considerably in the last ten years mainly due to the EU (Interview, A. Dede, Komotini, 2002).

The recent developments in the area highlight the need for new requirements and skills for the local workforce. Established agricultural jobs (like the traditional way of cultivating tobacco or traditional farming methods) that are the main occupations of the Muslims have started to diminish as more intensive farming and agricultural techniques take their place. Under these circumstances, although money has been given for the support of agriculture, there is an anxiety among the Muslim population that they are not in a position to compete and survive in this new situation. This is the main dissatisfaction with EU regulations that the local population expresses.

In this respect, the new economic conditions that the Europeanization process seeks to impose in order to create a more vital and competitive economic environment dictate the need for further vocational training. The lack of appropriately qualified Muslims is widely acknowledged, as is the need for further education and training for the Muslim community in general. Following

the recent educational changes made by the Greek government (see chapter 6 for more on the issue of education), an increasing number of Muslim students have sought to pursue a university education. As a Muslim member of the prefectural council stated, "higher education is needed for the Muslims as a means to participate in both Thracian society and the CoR" (Interview, E. Hasan, Komotini July 2001). And the editor of the monthly cultural/literature journal, *Şafak*, expressed the view that more is needed to improve Muslim education. As it stands at the moment, minority people do not read a lot due to low levels of education: 'when we can read more then we can become more European' (Interview, M. Moumin, Komotini, 2002).

Clearly, there appear to be benefits for Western Thrace from the Greek EU membership. The strengths of the region lie in its geographical position and the local diversity of cultures it encompasses (this point is fully elaborated later). There is a belief, however, that more emphasis is placed by the EU on the economic sector than on the social. As well as the need for better education and vocational training, Dr Moustafa suggested that the development of social, cultural and 'discrete' minority policies for the EU regions could further enhance diverse societies like Western Thrace (Interview, M. Moustafa, Komotini, 2001).

The need for better information concerning the EU, EU programmes and EU process of funding was emphasised in the interviews. Muslims in the area have a vague yet positive view of the European Union but lack more particular knowledge. And this reflects the fact that it is 'mostly the young and educated people that are more pro-European' (Interview, H. Moumin, Komotini, 2001). It was suggested by Mr Kapza, one of the interviewees, that a greater increase of awareness of EU issues through seminars, schools, TV programmes or local press would be beneficial for the Muslim population and enable them to increasingly feel more European citizens (Interview, T. Kapza, Xanthi, 2002).

The circulation of more information is also seen as the responsibility of the local press. The editor of *Trakya'nin Sesi*, A Dede, (Komotini, 2002) stated

that his paper tries to keep people informed of EU developments and takes a pro-European stance. Examples can be found in the *Trakya'nin Sesi* article on the EU and EBLUL (30/01/2002); in the same paper, on p. 3, the article on the EU and America; and during the World Cup, the article of 03/07/2002 entitled 'Şerefle şanta' claims that football is a way of improving the status of 'us as Turks' in the EU. The journalist/philologist H. Moumin (Komotini, 2002) believes that the cultural/literature journal *Şafak* contributes to a more European literature especially after the introduction of contemporary articles adopting a postmodernist type of literature. The notion of introducing familiarity with the European Union and its institutions is the subject of an article by T. Kapza in the local paper *Gündem*, entitled 'The European Union and its Structure' (T. Kapza, Xanthi, 2002).

Finally, as European integration draws closer, the acquisition of a 'European identity' (rather than national identity) is considered as advantageous by a small section of the Muslim society. A study entitled 'Turkish in Western Thrace' carried out by the Research Centre of Multilingualism for *Euromosaic* in 1997 found that 10% of the respondents felt European, 80% felt Turkish and 10% Greek (www.uoc.es/euromosaic/web/document/turk/an/e1/e1.html, accessed July 2002).

Although the term 'European' has a wide meaning, this percentage is perceived as realistic (Interview, T. Kapza, Xanthi, 2002) or one that even underestimates feelings (Interview, A. Dede) Komotini, 2002). More specifically, it was argued in the interviews that a European identity is perceived mainly by young, educated, both male and female Muslims in civic terms (European passport, easier access to other EU countries, common human rights). In ethnic terms, as in the case of the Greek national identity as we see later in the thesis, the identity of the local population is an amalgamation of both Eastern and Western elements (Interview, A. Dede, H. Moumin, Komotini, 2002 and T. Kapza, Xanthi, 2002).

Increasing ethnic (Turkish) awareness among the Muslims, as we shall see in Part II, did lead to demands for an ethnic (Turkish) recognition at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. While the issue proved to be highly controversial and a testing ground for both Greek and Turkish nationalism, this new trend has emerged among some younger Muslims who are keener to assume a 'European' rather than Turkish or Greek identity.

Among young Muslim professionals and politicians there is a belief in 'a contemporary European education, which respects ethnic origin, religion, language, usage and customs within the framework of the constitution' (Aarbakke 1997: p.39). This would enable the Muslim minority to take control of its own education and affairs in general and outside of the Greek-Turkish bilateral framework. This is also the claim in the article by Ekrem Hasan in the local paper *Ileri* 05.02.1993 (ibid). Similar views are expressed by Ibrahim Onsunoglou who sees a modern European orientation for the Muslim minority, for example, in his article on education in the local paper *Trakya a'nin Sesi*, 30.01.1997 (ibid).

Support for this trend is partial but better education and further information can be seen as routes to increasing agreement. (Interview, T. Kapza, Xanthi, 2002). Nevertheless, the existence of such a trend cannot be completely overlooked as similar patterns can be expected to occur in the future among other national minorities especially following a possible EU enlargement. Moreover, the regional restructuring of Greece provides new channels for Muslim participation in both the local society and the EU regional forums. As with their Christian counterparts, Muslim representatives can also share their experiences with other EU regions and the other minority populations in them, as we shall see further in Part III.

# 5. Conclusion

The increasing awareness of the role of the region as an additional tier of government has taken its course over forty years since the establishment of the EEC in the late 1950s. Since then, hesitant steps have been taken mainly in the form of the EEC's financial assistance towards reducing regional disparities among the existing member states. As more countries join, the need for further EEC regional policy has become more evident. However, real developments in regional policy occurred during the 1990s with the establishment of CoR after the Maastricht Treaty.

The general role of the CoR was to act as an intermediate between the various regions and the EU while the introduction of further financial assistance via the structural funds aimed at upgrading the regions across Europe with a view to bringing about greater equality in future competition. The task of the CoR has been limited by the variety of regional and local government systems across the EU states, many of which have already proceeded to introduce the changes in line with EU expectations.

The introduction of EU regional provisions have been brought criticism and approval. On the one hand it has been argued that regionalism is still weak and the limited advisory role of the CoR still allows room for central state intervention in the regional affairs. In addition, the new regional structures have had a destabilising effect as problems of policy jurisdiction have risen. On the other hand, a more positive view of EU regionalism has pointed out that these are only initial steps and the CoR is only a young institution setting up future principles of EU regional policy.

For a highly centralised state like Greece, EU regional policy introduced rapid changes in the system of public policy and administration. The Europeanization process in general has caused controversy between the modernist and traditionalist wings in the Greek political parties. There was

wider acceptance of the EU integration during the 1990s, a time which also coincided with the developments in Eastern Europe and the receipt of increasing EU funding. It was during this time that the inability to manage and implement the EU programmes was attributed to the weak regional/local government system of Greece. In this respect, greater regionalization was desired and achieved to a certain degree following the 1990s local government reforms. It can be argued therefore that despite the limitations EU regional policy faces, the case of Greece illustrates that it has been a driving force for greater regionalization.

Finally, the Europeanization process has influenced the attitudes and the position of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace. The EU (together with international institutions), in addition to the promotion of ethnic minority policies, also represents an external supranational forum where new identities can be formed. The entrance of Greece into the EU, as shown above, has provided extra security for the Muslim community. More particularly, increased decentralisation has increased democratic procedures, allowed greater communication between the Muslim and Christian communities and more participation in both local issues and EU regional forums.

It can be argued therefore, that for centralised societies such as Greece, the EU regional programmes have been beneficial not only in terms of financial assistance but also in the effort to modernise the system of government. EU regional policies can also be of influence for local ethnic/religious minorities by the provision of a neutral body to which minorities can appeal. Although these can be seen as contributory factors for the development of EU regions, the need for greater social (rather than simply economic) planning at the regional level has been stressed. This last point will be fully elaborated in Part III.

**Notes**

1. The European Economic Community (EEC) was created in 1957 with the Treaty of Rome. From the beginning of the 1970s the term European Community was used. Finally, the European Union (EU) was created after the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.

2. The concepts of regionalism/pluralism/federalism have been present in European thought from Althusius and natural law philosophy in the 17th century, to Proudhon's anarchist views and the integral federalists after the Second World War (see Bullman 1997: p.3)

3. The IMPS were distributed in the following way: 14 regions in Italy, 7 in France and 6 in Greece plus an extra one for information and technology for the whole of Greece (Bianchi 1993: pp. 68-69).

4. These organisations include: the assembly of European Regions, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (the most important European local government lobby), the Association of Regions of Traditional Industry, the Association of European Border Regions and the Association of Frontier Regions (Bullman 1997: pp.13-14).

5. From the 1st of November 1993 the European Union replaced the European Community. However the institutions and policies under the EC became the basis for the EU.

6. In general terms, the CoR is an advisory body whose functions, prior to the Amsterdam Treaty (which came into force in 1999) lay in five areas: economic and social cohesion, education, vocational training and youth, culture, public health and trans-European transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure. After the Amsterdam treaty, the CoR became responsible for more areas, important to local and regional authorities. These include transport policy, guidelines for employment policy, incentives to

promote co-operation between member states for employment, social provisions, implementing decisions concerning the European Social Fund, support measures in the field of general training and youth, relocation training, support measures in the cultural field, support measures in the health sector, expansion of trans-European networks, specific structural policy action outside the scope of the Funds, definition of the tasks, objectives, organisation and general rules of the structural funds, setting up of the Cohesion Fund, implementing decisions in respect of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and finally environmental policy (CoR website pp2-3)

7. The 222 members include: 24 members each from Germany, France, Italy and UK, 21 members from Spain, 12 each from Belgium, Greece, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Sweden, 9 each from Denmark, Ireland and Finland and 6 from Luxembourg.

8. This is a term first used in the context of the German Länder and their role in the EU policy making. Later it was widely used to describe the sub-national authorities (SNAs) involvement in EU policy-making (Jeferry 1997: p.213)

9. It has been suggested by Write that greater regionalization is the result of three factors: the level of the state, the level of the market and the level of society. Changes like an ideological shift against the state and in favour of the market or individual, budgetary restrictions, fragmentation of public delivery, changing attitudes on church, family, trade unions or political parties are all factors that impact upon local government and inter-governmental relations (Write 1998: pp.40-45)

10. The study is entitled: The European Community, Regions and European Integration: A Comparative Study of Policy Sectors in Preparing for 1992, Leonardi (ed.) 1993 The Regions and the European Community

11. In an abridged version of events, after winning the election PASOK requested from the EU that certain revisions be made to the original terms of entry – such as on agricultural and regional aid. The EU agreed to the suggestions and PASOK was happy to accept EU membership (Featherstone 1994: p.159).

12. An analysis and evaluation of Greece's entry to the EU is beyond the purpose of this thesis. However, highlighting developments can contribute to a better understanding of the evolution of the structure of regional-local government policy in Greece and the way Muslim/ Christian relations in Western Thrace have been affected.

13. The IMPs were based on the principle of additionality. That is, some national funding was required in order to complement the EC funding and most of the EC contribution was to be paid retrospectively. Therefore, money had to be found from the national budget leading to centralised decision-making and administration of the programmes (Parageorgiou&Verney 1993: p.143).

14. For a further discussion on the effects of regionalism in Greece, see the article in the daily *Kathimerini*: 'The first assessment of Capodistrias' January 14, 2001, pp.8-9.

15. As European integration becomes reality, the issue of a European (supra national) identity has become the subject of many studies. The possibility of a new supra-national identity either to replace or complement the national or ethnic identity of European citizens is not as straightforward. The acquisition of such a new identity might depend on other factors such as shared history, culture or territory (Guibernau 2001: p.262). The prospect exists, however, that the EU will become a new body of appeal for citizens who feel that their rights are not covered sufficiently by their nation state (ibid.: p.261). For a short discussion on existing trends in the study of national identity and supra-nationalism see Smith 1998: pp.216-218.

16. Among other issues Article 14 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms states that the rights and freedoms laid down in the Convention should 'be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status'. Greece signed the Convention in 1950 and ratified it in 1974 (for more information see http://www.unhcr.md/article/conv.htm)

**PART II**

# Chapter 4

## Theoretical Approaches towards minorities: the case of Greece

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## 1. Introduction

This chapter looks at theories of nation and ethnicity in relation to the Muslim minority in Greece. The aim is to provide a theoretical framework for the subsequent chapters on historical, political and educational issues for the region of Western Thrace.

The term 'minority' appears throughout the chapter and refers to the general concept of minority populations in terms of ethnicity, religion or culture. Although the term 'minority' can refer to any group of people with distinctive social or behavioural characteristics, it is used here only with references to the above cases. Moreover, the general term 'minority' is always in reference to modern European society unless specified. When comments are directed specifically to the case-study group the terms 'Muslim minority' or 'Greek Muslims' or the 'Muslim minority of Western Thrace' will be adopted.

Emphasis is placed on theories of nationalism, nation building and ethnicity. The assumption adopted in the following pages is that ethnic minorities cannot be fitted or harmonised with the process of nation-state formation mainly due to historical circumstances and the socio-political situation of the minority group itself. Further, the study of minorities is an interdisciplinary subject presenting interest to many analysts. Here, a socio-political approach is used, based on both objective and subjective criteria for defining the main characteristics of the Muslim minority in Greece. Objective criteria include those features a collectivity should possess in order to qualify as

a nation, while subjective criteria define the notion in relation to its members' sense of belonging.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals specifically with definitional components of a minority group and attempts to apply them to the study of Western Thrace. These definitional components are examined both in terms of the Muslim minority itself and the Greek/Christian majority. The reason for this duality is that whatever the actions of a minority group, they will always be either in reaction to or collaboration with the majority group.

The first part of the section outlines the legal definitions of minority groups, adopted by various international organisations during the last century, with respect to the general trends towards minority groups. The case of Greece in respect to the above organisations is examined including the particular agreements signed by Greece and the way Greece's attitudes towards minorities were shaped by these agreements.

The second part of the section focuses on socio-political concepts of minorities and their application to the Muslim minority in Greece. Three levels of analysis, based on Barth's notion of 'ethnic boundaries' are used: civic, ethnic and religious. These three levels reveal the way Muslims interact with the Greek society on one hand, and how tolerant the Greek society is towards the Muslims on the other. This analysis also provides some information on the ethnic as opposed to the religious consciousness of the Muslims, the role of the elites in shaping it and the way this process relates to the Greek state experience.

The second section pays particular attention to minority relations to the nation state. The concepts of territory and culture are used as examples of objective and subjective criteria respectively of nation/ethnicity and nation-state building. These concepts can be applied to the case of minorities within modern states and compared with legal definitions of minorities outlined in the earlier

section. Finally, the case of Greece is examined on the basis of what has been argued in the section.

In general, the chapter will attempt to show first, the limitations of the legal definitions and second, the complexity of issues surrounding minorities. This is especially true for the case of the Muslim minority in Greece as other factors such as a relatively homogenous state, three ethnic groups (Turks, Pomaks and Rom – sharing a common religion) and interstate relations, influence the way the Muslim minority perceives or is perceived by the Greek/Christian majority group.

## 2. Section I: Defining minorities

Any study regarding the present and future status of minorities or minority rights is confronted with questions of conceptual clarity. There is a wide spectrum of academic approaches and legal, governmental and international definitions relating to minorities.

Broadly speaking, two trends can be discerned in the general bibliography of minorities. The first deals with theoretical and methodological issues, focusing on criteria that constitute a minority and factors that affect its behaviour. These factors include the complex relations between ethnicity, nationalism and racism.

The second trend concerns more international aspects of minorities. Thus, minority behaviour in the international arena is considered as well as the role minorities play in nation building, ethnic conflict, secessionism and sovereignty. In this light minorities are examined in terms of their importance in international politics, and also in regard of the importance international policies have played for their survival.

Considering the above trends, the purpose of this section is to arrive at a working definition of minorities that will be applicable to the study of the Muslim minority in Greece. This attempt will be pursued on two levels. First, as the Muslims of Greece are subject to international agreements, the study of the Lausanne Treaty is examined together with separate treaties signed between Greece and Turkey concerning the issue. Second, existing academic literature on the subject of ethnic minorities and minority nationalism is explored.

## 2.1 Legal Definitions

The end of the Cold War allowed for the development of new antagonisms and drew attention to problems relating to nationalism and ethnic minorities. However, the issue of ethnic minorities is not exclusively a twentieth century problem; it has preoccupied international relations since at least the 1640s with the Peace of Westphalia (Jackson-Preece 1998: 55). But not until the early twentieth century, with the collapse of the empires and the formation of new nation-states were minorities treated more in terms of ethnicity rather than religion as had been the case previously.

After the First World War, the League of Nations accepted that there was a link between international peace and minority welfare. The establishment of the League of Nations System of Minority Guarantees sought to grant civil and political equality and a minimal cultural protection for the minorities at an international level. (Jackson-Preece 1997: p.346). These guarantees were more relevant to the new states that emerged after the defeat and collapse of the Ottoman, Habsurg and Hohenzollern Empires in 1919 (ibid.). Part of the System of Minority Guarantees included the Treaty of Sevres (1920) and the treaty of Lausanne (1923) and covered protection of minorities (Stavros 1995: p.2). Both Treaties relate to the present study of Western Thrace. The League of Nations System of Minority Guarantees did not produce impressive results as many participating states were highly critical (Jackson-Preece 1997: p.346) and reluctant to accept minority responsibilities. Consequently, the System of Minority Guarantees became inoperative after the League of Nations collapsed.

The only treaty that has survived to today is the Lausanne Treaty signed between Greece and Turkey.

After the Second World War the international community placed particular emphasis on the protection of individual human rights. Although national minority rights were included under this heading, there were no specific provisions for their protection. Indeed, minority rights and world peace appeared to be incompatible as, after the outcome of the Second World War, the international community viewed minorities with suspicion with respect to state sovereignty. The reason for such mistrust towards minorities came form the fact that some minority leaders collaborated with the Nazi aims in opposition to their host nations. Broadly speaking and for the purpose of the present study, the most important agreements were sponsored by the Council of Europe (COE), the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), and The United Nations (UN) (Jackson-Preece1997: p. 347).

The end of the Cold War and the political developments that followed brought national minorities to the centre of European and international discourse. New efforts to elaborate national minority issues were made by the UN, COE and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), previously known as CSCE. All three organisations focused both on the issues of state sovereignty and national minority-collective rather than individual rights. The attempt to balance the two is reflected in the following agreements.

*2.1.1 The case of Greece*

Greece has signed most of the agreements promoted by the international and European organisations. However, the Lausanne Treaty (1923), signed by Greece and Turkey, is the only document that has defined the national minority framework in the two countries[1]. Other agreements signed by Greece include the UN Charter of 1945, the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the European

Convention on Human Rights (1950), the CSCE Helsinki Act of 1975, and the CSCE Charter of Paris in 1990.

According to Herakleidis, the official position of Greece concerning the status of minorities is defined primarily within a strict legal framework (Herakleidis, 1997: pp.216-218). Therefore, the existence of a national minority is a legal matter defined either by the state's legal system or by international agreements. It is only in this way that the obligations and duties of a state towards its minorities' populations are guaranteed. Additionally, for Greece minority rights are like human rights, individual and not collective. In other words, minority rights are part of human rights.

Within this framework, Greece supports the idea that an ethnic/national/religious minority should have the right to preserve its distinct identity. But at the same time the members of a minority should have the right to be assimilated if they so wish. In addition, the members of a minority should co-habit with the majority in the same region or area in order to benefit from provisions made by the state such as teaching in the minority language or provision of religious services (ibid.).

Bearing this framework in mind, it is not surprising that Greece only recognises one minority in its territory, the Muslims of Western Thrace and resists any calls for change in the Muslim minority's status. As the demands from members of the Muslim minority grew during the 1980s combined with an increasing awareness within the international community of the Muslim issue, many started to dispute the adequacy of the Lausanne Treaty's provisions[2]. Some experts shared the view that the Lausanne Treaty had served as a particular approach to regional problems occurring during a specific historical period. What had become clear from the various discussions of the Treaty was the need for its review (Stavros 1995: p.24).

In general it can be argued that unwillingness to deal with issues concerning national minorities is not limited to Greece. The same attitudes are

adopted by international organisations. As a result, agreements are produced adhering to strict legalistic terms based either on concepts of state sovereignty or protection of minority groups. The following analysis aims to show the inadequacy of such perceptions and the need for a more socio-political approach.

## 2.2 Socio-political concepts of Minorities

A legal framework can never be adequate to understand the complex issue of ethnic minorities. As has been described, the Muslim minority of Western Thrace is recognised as a religious group guaranteed the same equal citizenship rights as the majority Greek /Christian population. However, this group of people consists of three ethnic categories, each of which possesses distinctive cultural features. We can therefore talk of a group of people or legal entity with a common religion, different ethnicity and different cultural characteristics among themselves.

Three levels of analysis in this section is pursued in order to arrive at a working definition for the Muslim minority: civic, ethnic, religious. Drawing on Barth's well-known thesis on 'ethnic boundaries', these three levels can act as 'social boundaries', as a process of defining, maintaining and generating ethnic groups. As Barth argues, 'an ethnic boundary canalises social life – it entails a frequently quite complex organisation of behaviour and social relations' (Hutchinson & Smith 1996: p.79).

### 2.2.1 The Civic level

The civic concept of nation first emerged in Western Europe (Hutchinson 1994: p.17), and focused, mainly, on the creation of an independent territorial state whose membership would be based on equal citizenship. The emphasis is therefore on a territorial integrity (Smith 1991: p.82) that requires the active participation of its members. In this sense the nation and national integration is inclusive to the 'extent that it becomes a unit of identity and loyalty...that

citizens recognise one another as belonging together in a subjective, internal sense...' (Brubaker 1996: p.81)

In order to explore attitudes of civic affiliation of the Muslim minority to the Greek State, the meaning of 'Greekness' will be briefly examined. Early Greek nationalism was influenced by the French Revolution and the Enlightenment (Veremis 1983, Kitromilidis 1990) but despite these civic perceptions the Greek nation was eventually defined in terms of common ancestry (ibid.) culture and language (Diamantouros 1983, Kitromilidis 1990). The Great Idea (*Megali Idea*) of liberating the *irredenta*[3] became a reference, a milestone for the shaping of Greek national consciousness. Genealogy and common culture descending from a glorious ancient past, and the integration of the Byzantine period, became a prime conception of the Greek nation. These new nationalistic ideals stood in contrast to the ecumenical character of the Orthodox Church,[4] but the 'single minded efforts of the state resulted in ethnic parochialism engulfing the Church of Greece' (Veremis1997: p.39)

Although the Greek State came into being in 1832, only after 1923 did it acquire the territorial shape that we know today. Continuous conflict with neighbouring countries - also in the process of nation-state building - resulted in the reinforcement of ethnic, territorial and cultural values as a unique part of the Greek identity. To a large extent 'national identity heritage' contributed to the shaping of contemporary Greek identity. International politics, such as the break up of Yugoslavia and the controversy over FYROM on the one hand, and closer European integration on the other (Triandafyllidou & Paraskevopoulou 2002) contributed to the re-invention or rediscovery of the genealogical conceptions of the Greek nation. As Tsoukalas argues, we have been 'witnessing an increased fetishisation of Greekness' with strong ethno-biological and genealogical connotations (Tsoukalas 1993: p.57). In other words increased emphasis has been placed on the idea that only people born Greeks can claim true 'Greekness'.

After exploring some of main features that compose perceptions of Greekness, two questions come to mind. First, how does the Greek state perceive its only legally recognised Muslim minority and second, to what extent do members of the Muslim minorities perceive themselves as members of Greek civic society?

The answer to the first question is fully elaborated in the later section on ethnic/religious minorities and the state. Briefly however, the Greek state feels most comfortable with the legal attribution of civic characteristics to the Muslim minority, defined either by national or international law[5]. It is felt that this is the only way that minority rights can be defined and, at the same time establish the duties of a state towards these groups. (Herakleidis 1997: p.21). For this reason, Greece has always been reluctant to accept an ethnic status for the Muslim minority and likewise, the existence of ethnic groups such as Jews, Rom and others (ibid.: p.233).

Regarding the civic identity of the Greek Muslims, its very foundation is a matter of controversy. On one hand the Muslim minority's civic identity is stressed at the expense of their ethnic one. On the other, Muslims are excluded from certain parts of the Greek society. According to Smith, the components of a nation's civic model are a historic territory, a legal political community, legal-political equality of members and common civic culture and ideology ensured by a public system of education and the mass media. (Smith 1991: p.11). These components can be found as part of the Greek nation alongside other ethnic facets.

If we apply the above components to our study, the complexity of issues surrounding the question of civic identity starts to appear. Firstly, the concept of an historic territory might not be as clear in all cases. For the case of Western Thrace however, there is a strong affiliation to the land by all its inhabiting groups, strengthened by the controversy between Greece and Turkey whose victories prior to 1923 were based on the idea of recapturing an 'enslaved land'. Even today there is a feeling, or a belief, among the Muslim population that

Western Thrace was given as a gift to Greece, and among the Greek/Christian population that the territory was liberated.

Second, the concept of legal-political equality is complicated in respect to the civic status of the Muslim minority. For the Christian population all civic duties are performed by state institutions. However, for the Muslims, certain civil duties such as divorce and inheritance issues are performed by the religious authority of the Mufti.

Third, despite occasional violations, which Muslims protested about, the Muslim minority appears for the most part, to enjoy equal rights with the Christian population. But even in this respect an exclusionist element can be found. For example, Muslim conscripts were not allowed to carry guns, instead being allocated to secondary and unarmed services (Marangoudakis & Kelly 2000: p.10). Although this practice has recently stopped, as a result overall changes in the army, policies and attitudes in general regarding the Muslim minority are not yet clear.

Finally, a segregated educational system leaves no room for a shared culture. Some of the curriculum the Muslim students follow is the same as in the Christian schools. However, whilst the existence of separate schools satisfies the terms of the Lausanne Treaty, it also contributed to widening the gap in Western Thrace society.

In summary, it can be argued that the emphasis on the definition of the civic status placed upon the Muslim minority by the Greek State is far from realistic. Christian membership of the Greek nation fulfils all of Smith's civic characteristics while Muslim membership in comparison seems 'incomplete' in terms of civic affiliation.

*2.2.2 Ethnic level*

Ethnic recognition of the Muslim minority has been demanded since the 1960s by some of its members. Further demands followed during the 1970s and reached a peak in the 1990s with the organisation of massive demonstrations and the public burning of primary school books provided by the Greek government. As in the case of the civic level, the issue of ethnicity raises further complexities, especially as Western Thrace is the arena where Greek and Turkish nationalist aspirations are tested.

In contrast to the type of 'civic' society developed in Western Europe, Eastern Europe has experienced an 'ethnic' type where a nation is perceived as a community of common descent (Smith, 1991: p.11). This difference is very important as it influences both the nationalist ideology and the way individuals relate to the nations (Mouzelis 1994: p. 38). Thus, in the case of Greek society, the establishment of the state took a different form from that of Western Europe. The 'modern' form of society was unable to replace the 'traditional' and both coexisted together in an unbalanced relationship. (ibid. p.39)

As for the 'ethnic' position of the Muslim minority in this amalgamation of a 'modern/civic' and a 'traditional/ethnic' state of Greece, we need to distinguish between the terms of 'ethnic category' and 'ethnic community'. To adopt Smith's definitions an ethnic category is a unit of population with very little self-awareness and consciousness that they form a separate collectivity, although they can be perceived as such by outsiders. An ethnic community by contrast can be argued to share certain characteristics such as a collective proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more differentiating elements of common culture, an association with a specific 'homeland' and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population. (Smith 1991: pp. 20-21)

The Muslim minority of Western Thrace is divided into three ethnic groupings, the Turks, which constitute the largest part of the Muslim community

(48%), the Pomaks (37%) and the Muslim Rom (17%).[6] Taking into account first the recent calls from Muslims to change the status of the Muslim minority from a religious to an ethnic status, and second Smith's highlighted differences between types of ethnic groupings, a possible change in legal status is a complicated issue for two reasons.

The first, as has been argued previously, is that Greece is a state where civic identity is weak. The Christian population of Western Thrace, as in the rest of Greece, has not only a civic but also a developed sense of ethnic affiliation towards the state. This affiliation is maintained and reinforced through the uneasy relationship between Greece and Turkey. The long conflicts and disputes, the destruction of Greek irredentism and the birth of the modern Turkish state have confirmed the role of the Turks as the hostile 'other' for Greece (Triandafyllidou & Paraskevopoulou 2002). This type of perception inevitably leads to a hostile atmosphere and suspicion among the Western Thrace population. And, as opposed to Billig's banal nationalism, the flag usually "waves" in Western Thrace, acting as a reminder of national independence. These patriotic sentiments are expressed in local and national celebrations commemorating Greece's liberation from Turkish rule.

The second reason relates to the terms of ethnic category and ethnic community which are both applicable as far as the ethnic composition of Western Thrace is concerned. The Turkish population can be characterised as an 'ethnic group' identifying themselves as ethnic Turks and regard Turkey as their homeland. The situation is not so clear in the case of the Pomak and Rom groups who, it can be argued, are better described by the definition of an ethnic category than an ethnic community. Neither possesses a written language nor a particular affiliation to the land, although the Pomaks are considered more as an autochthonous population, and neither have historical/mythical literature or traditions, invented or otherwise, praised by Pomak or Rom philologists. Instead, both groups tend to identify with the same demands raised by the Turkish elite, which is happy to incorporate them.[7] This identification is further

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reinforced by the Muslim minority educational system where the Turkish language is taught to students regardless of their ethnic origin.

In summary, the strong concept of ethnic affiliation towards a nation is present both in the Christian and Muslim communities, maintained and reinforced by both internal (perceptions of Turks as hostile others) and external (Greek-Turkish relations) factors. In addition, the application of concepts of ethnicity to the Muslim minority group raises questions that only point to the complexity of the issue beneath simple affiliation.

### 2.2.3 Religion

As religious identities preceded ethnic or national ones, religion has played an important role in the later formation of the nation-state and the populations that inhabit them. After the eighteenth century, nationalism replaced great religions as the primary legitimation of the social order (Hutchinson 1994: p. 68). South Eastern Europe is no exception.

Ottoman religious policy remains a major factor determining the historical developments of the Balkan people (Stavrianos 2000: p.105). Under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, the population was organised into religious rather than ethnic communities. The development of the millet system provided a degree of religious freedom initially to Armenians and Christians, and at later stage, to Jews and Roman Catholics (Koppa 1994: p.64). Despite occasional violence and discrimination, the various religious minorities enjoyed greater freedom than those in Western Christendom, for example Huguenots in Catholic France and Catholics in Anglican England.

The Millet policy, according to many historians, accounted for the longevity of the Ottoman Empire. In addition, mass conversions were not practised and occurred only in a few areas in the Balkan Peninsula including Albania, Bosnia and the Pomak population in Thrace (Stavrianos, 2000: p.106). In the long run, it could be argued that the millet system contributed to the

preservation of the cultural characteristics of Balkan populations. (Koppa 1994: p.64, Stavrianos 2000: p.107).

In relation to the study of Western Thrace, religion is the only common and officially recognised characteristic among the members of the Muslim community. One question to be addressed is what relationship exists between religion and ethnic affiliation in the Muslim minority. This question has become more relevant since the call from the Muslim minority to change its status from a religious to an ethnic one. An answer can only be given with reference to the historical developments in the region from the beginning of the twentieth century till today. This is examined in detail in subsequent chapters but the relationship between religion and the Muslim minority can be divided into two broad periods, from 1923 to the 1960s and from the 1960s to the present day.

As part of the Ottoman Empire, all members of the population were categorised according to their religion. This theocratic concept of membership was challenged by the collapse of the Empire. As in the case of Greece, Turkish nationalists had to appeal to deeply traditional and religious communities for support. Kemal Atatürk tried to introduce a secular, westernised view of nationalism. These attempts were not always successful as small towns and villages resisted change, retaining strong Islamic loyalties. (Smith 1991: p.104, Kastelan 1991: p.311). This was also the case in Western Thrace. The religious leadership was sceptical of Kemalist reforms and remained attached to the Old-Muslim and theocratic characteristics of the Ottoman Empire (Athens Academy 1994: p. 39). In this context, the members of the Muslim minority were satisfied being referred to a 'Muslim minority', the official description used by the Lausanne Treaty to characterise the Muslim community.

After the 1960s a new secular, Turkish-educated political leadership emerged within the Muslim minority. This new leadership represented a new 'modernist' ideological trend within the Muslim minority. Closer connections with Turkey were gradually pursued in terms of communication, movement of population, and education. This 'opening-up' of the Muslim minority was

accompanied by demands for Greece to recognise the Muslim minority as an ethnic rather than a religious community.

What we have therefore been witnessed during the second half of the century is the progressive replacement of the old Ottoman religious values by a secular nationalist/ethnicist affiliation. As Balibar argues, the ethnic identity can incorporate the religious consciousness and to some extent, it can succeed in replacing it (Balibar 1988: p.147).

## 3. Section II: General Comments on the Nation State

There is a controversy in academic thought as to when nations emerged. Theories of nation-state formation can be divided roughly into two main trends. On the one side there are the 'modernist' accounts supporting the notion that the nation emerged at the same time as the state in the modern era and developed through processes of modernisation following the end of the French and American Revolutions. The process of modernisation refers to the rise of industrialism, modern bureaucratic institutions, a common mass education system, a state army, and 'high culture'. On the other side there are the 'primordialist' and some 'perennialist' theories arguing that nations preceded the formation of state. This is more the case in Eastern Europe and some Asiatic countries. The emphasis of these theories is on ethnicity, myths, values, religion or language. Another approach is that of ethno-symbolism. Ethno-symbolists accept the existence of an ethnic past of the nations and look at the way modern nationalisms have rediscovered the symbols, myths and memories of the past in order to promote ethnic and national attachments to their nation (Smith 1998: p.224).

Despite these differences on the birth of the nation there is an agreement that the state and ultimately the nation-state in its present form (Smith 1998: p.71) was the product of modernity but also the 'producer' of modernity. After the ideological influence of the French Revolution, which replaced dynastic

loyalties with the idea of popular sovereignty, nationalism and nation building gained ground. The old system of empires and dynasties started to disintegrate and gave way to a new form of political organisation, the 'state-nation' or 'nation-state' depending on where the emphasis lies.

More could be said on the theme of the state and nation in both political and cultural approaches that shape the various theories of nationalism. However, that is beyond the scope of this chapter. But a focus on two particular features of the nation-state, territory and culture, both representing 'objective' and 'subjective' criteria, can be of further benefit to the study of minorities.

3.1 Territory

The concept of territory is important in both modernist and primordialist theoretical perspectives. A 'clearly demarcated territory' is part of Gidden's (Smith 1998: p.71) definition of what constitutes a nation, while for Anderson 'the nation is imagined as limited' due to its boundaries (Anderson 1991: p.7). The nation for 'Modernists' is then a specific territory inhabited by legally equal citizens.

For the primordialist, the idea of territory has a special meaning for the people. It is more than a geographical area determining the borders of their nation. It is their 'homeland', a historically unique land where the ancestors lived and are buried. This homeland could also be a 'sacred' place where holy people and heroes 'walked and taught, prayed and died' (Smith 1997: p.14) and therefore became a place of pilgrimage.

The idea of territory as the nation's homeland helped to define the borders of the new nation-states in the modern period. But this process of state building was not always peaceful and most of Europe was mapped into distinct states through wars, alliances and other manoeuvres (Tilly in Hutchinson & Smith 1994: p.253). According to Smith 'the modern world is one of national competition and warfare; as a result, military factors and militarism assume an

increasingly central role in the distribution of resources and the formation of political communities and identities'. (Smith 1998: p.71). These military confrontations have often created minority populations and defined majority/minority relations within a state. This has been the case in the Balkan Peninsula at the beginning of the century and can be witnessed even today, for example in Yugoslavia, where more than one state claims particular territories while ethnic secession movements develop in others.

## 3.2 Culture

As in the case of territory, culture is a determinant feature of nation states both from a modernist and primordialist point of view; as 'reinvented' in the first case and as 'rooted' in the second. For both versions the aim is the same: the reinforcement of a common culture to be shared by all members of the community.

For Gellner, the introduction of a 'high' culture is an essential part of the modern industrial state. This 'high' culture is based on mass education, literacy and standardisation. A cultivated 'high' culture aims to eliminate the 'low', regional cultures of the agrarian pre-modern societies to create room for a common mass culture based on the above characteristics. As culture pre-existed nations, nationalists use cultural elements or re-invent them for their own purposes. The aim is to create a feeling of unity. For Anderson it is for this feeling of brotherhood/unity for which so many people are willing to sacrifice their lives (Anderson 1991: p.7); the project of political nationalists.

Hutchinson looks at the recurrent forms of cultural nationalism and argues that the cultural nationalistic movements take on a more organic form of the nation. Thus, nations are natural formations 'evolving in time and it is to history their members must return to discover the triumphs and tragedies that have formed them and the lessons they may draw for the future' (Hutchinson 1994: p.44). The aim of cultural nationalists is therefore to reinforce the

traditional element within the society and evoke love for a common culture and inheritance that members naturally share.

## 3.3 State and Minorities

In most cases the majority of the population that is the dominant ethnic group is the one that gives a name or a cultural charter to the state (Smith 1991: p.39). Although there are some exceptions to this pattern – for example in apartheid South Africa where it was the Afrikaner minority governing – in Europe the majority populations established their power in their state 'homeland' and applied a majority culture within its boundaries. In states where ethnic ties are strong, as for example in Greece, the dominant culture of the state is that shared by the ethnic majority. Even in countries that claim a more multicultural approach and emphasise a more civic attachment to the state, heritage of the dominant culture can be detected (English in Britain or Castilian in Spain).

What therefore is the position of minorities in the modern state system in terms of territory and culture? Most of the concepts that aim to identify minorities in present day states have been borrowed from the theories of nationalism and nation building. But if we consider, as Jackson-Preece suggests, minorities as 'ethnonations who have failed to secure the ultimate goal of ethnic nationalism – independence in their own nation-state – and consequently exist within the political boundaries of some other nations' (Jackson-Preece:1998: p.29), then these concepts can also be useful for the study of minorities.

## 3.4 Territory and Minorities

Territory either as the geographical area of the state or as a homeland, is important for minorities. As in the case of the majority population, territory also defines the 'home' of a minority in the new state. However, the status of this 'home' depends upon historical preconditions and the cultural heritage of the minority.

We can therefore identify two types of a minority's territory. First, in civic terms, the territory is a political unit where the minority lives and enjoys equal citizenship rights. This concept applies to immigrant communities or dispersed minorities such as Jews or Rom, or minorities that have been excluded from a population exchange. The second type is territory as a 'homeland'. Although the concept of territory as a 'homeland' is central to the primordialist explanations of nationalism there is, nevertheless, a common usage of the term 'homeland' both by scholars and people. This second type includes more localised and 'indigenous' groups of people such as the traditional area of Greeks in Albania, traditional area Kurds in Turkey, or the area of Vlachs or Pomaks in Greece and Bulgaria.

The importance of the concept of territory as an objective characteristic can also be found in the international agreements that cover the rights and the protection of minorities. Some examples of the territorial factor in the definition of minorities are as follows.

According to the League of Nations' definition (1919) a minority is:

'that part of the <u>permanent population of the state</u>, which, linked by historical tradition to a determined portion of the territory and having a culture of its own, cannot be confused with the majority of the other subjects because of the difference of race, language, or religion' (Jackson-Preece 1998: p.30).

For the League Council in 1930 a minority is:

'by tradition...a group of persons <u>living in a given country or locality</u>, having a race, religion, language and traditions in a sentiment of solidarity, with a view to preserving their traditions, maintaining their form of worship, ensuring the instruction and upbringing of their children in accordance with the spirit and tradition of their race and rendering mutual assistance to each other (ibid.)

For the United Nations Sub commission of Minorities Resolution, as pursued by the Capotorti study in 1976:

'A minority is a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population <u>of a state</u> in a non-dominant position, whose members – being <u>nationals of the state</u> – possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or languages'. (Rozakis 1996: p.96)

Finally, according to the Council of Europe Copenhagen Document (1990) - excluding immigrants, migrant workers and refugees - minorities are defined as:

'separate or distinct groups, well defined and <u>established on the territory of a state,</u> the members of which are nationals of that state and have certain religious, linguistic, cultural or other characteristics which distinguish them from the majority of the population'.

Certain of the above definitions put more emphasis on objective whilst others stress subjective characteristics. But in all of them, the territory of a state is considered to be the minority's 'home' in civic terms while any further attachment to the land is not specified with the exception of the first definition which adopts more objective characteristics). The question of rights is a central problem for the adoption of international standards for minority rights. That is, the rights of states, minorities or individuals should be balanced in all situations so they do not conflict with each other (Jackson-Preece 1997: p. 351). For example, while some groups would argue for the preservation of the national minorities some states would be more preoccupied with the maintenance of territorial integrity and the supremacy of the sovereign state's rights. (ibid.).

3.5 Shared culture and minorities

The adoption of a common/shared culture by the state allows little room for any alternative cultures to develop. We should note here the difference between an alternative counterculture movement such as a youth movement, which also deviates from the mainstream culture, and a cultural ethnic movement. The counterculture movement is an outcome of reaction to mainstream culture, whereas the cultural features of an ethnic movement, which pre-existed a state culture, are quite separate from it.

According to Gellner's account of 'high' and 'low' cultures, minority culture (when the minority lacks political or economic power) can be considered as deriving from agrarian 'low cultures' that could not be absorbed by the mainstream culture. Minorities are implicitly excluded by the above pattern of a standardised culture. In general terms, however, the way minorities are perceived in contemporary societies relates (as mentioned above) to the ethnic/civic attachment of the citizens to the state and, to an extent, to the state's culture. In western European societies there is more emphasis on a civic model of society. An immediate question thus is 'how civic is the culture adopted by Western European states'.

In countries with a more ethnic attachment to the nation-state (as in Greece or Eastern Europe), minorities are perceived, by nationalists, not to be part of an "organic" nation. Since members of these groups are not part of the majority they cannot share any special bond with the rest of the population. This second view, although more inclusive for the members of the dominant ethnie, is exclusive towards minorities as it is based on an ethnic sense of belonging – i.e. through ancestry, language or special cultural bonds.

In terms of the minority definitions adopted by international organisations listed above, both the civic and cultural elements have been taken into consideration. This is especially evident in the League of Nations more objective definition. The later definitions list more subjective features. Although

they include both the features of a territory and common culture, legal definitions do not include the historic conditions or external factors such as inter-state conflicts that can determine the minority's behaviour and future.

3.6 The case of Greece

For Rozakis there is only one level of tension between minority groups and the Greek state: this lies in the fact that Greece, after the Balkan Wars, has achieved a high degree of population homogeneity in terms of ethnicity and has therefore become intolerant to other populations. (Rozakis 1993: pp. 9-31) This is true to a certain degree but cannot be considered as the only reason with respect to the Muslim minority which is officially recognised by Greece.

With end of the Balkan Wars, the borders of the Balkan states were once again re-defined (see chapter 5). Populations of different ethnicities found themselves outside their state-boundaries. As a partial solution to this problem, population exchanges were agreed by the European powers. In Greece two population exchanges took place. The first in 1919 with the Treaty of Neuilly between Greece and Bulgaria, and the second in 1922 following the Treaty of Lausanne between Greece and Turkey. The Lausanne Treaty excluded the Muslim population of Western Thrace and the Greek Christian population in Istanbul. As a result, from the 1920s till the present day, Greece has had a relatively homogenous population of Greeks both in terms of ethnicity and in terms of religion. The extent of this homogeneity is debatable however, as there are other groups such as the Jewish communities of Thessaloniki and Athens, the Vlachs, Armenians and others. It is only under a legal definition that recognition as a religious minority could be given to the Muslims of Western Thrace.

Attitudes towards minorities in Greece are closely related to the historical circumstances leading to the formation of the modern Greek state and to Greece's relationships with its neighbour states, as it will be elaborated in a

later chapter. Both of these factors can be examined in both territorial and cultural levels.

*3.6.1 Territory*

Greece within its present borders is considered to be the Greek 'homeland' by the majority of the population. This concept of 'homeland' was reinforced by early Greek nationalists whose aim was to present a continuity in terms of population and ethnic integrity from antiquity to the time of the Greek Revolution. So the starting point was when Greece was the Greece of Pericles, of fifth century Athens that gave civilisation to the rest of Europe; a glorious past, a golden age. The Byzantine Empire was incorporated (reluctantly by some intellectuals) into this historical continuity as a successor to classical Greece. In terms of territory, Greek nationalists made it their mission to liberate, not to occupy, territories that Greek populations used to inhabit. This aim found expression in the Great Idea, was begun with the retrieval of lands inhabited by Greeks and ended with the defeat of the Greek army in Smyrna as the outcome of the Greek-Turkish War in 1922.

For the Muslim minority, Western Thrace is their 'home' and most importantly, an area adjacent to the state which the dominant ethnic group of Turks considers as its 'homeland'. But the region itself is considered as much of a 'homeland' for the Muslims as it had been during the Ottoman times. For many Muslims, Western Thrace is not a Greek homeland but a gift from Turkey after the Balkan Wars. The Pomak population is 'indigenous' (with all the limitations of such a term) to the area extending to regions of south Bulgaria (for more details see chapter 5 and Appendix 1).

Perceptions here of territory as a 'homeland' are similar among the Christians and the Muslims. That is, both groups believe Western Thrace to be their 'homeland' each pointing out to different historical circumstances to justify their claim. The troubled Greek-Turkish relations over the years and the fact that the region is so close to the Turkish borders cultivates a climate of unease

although, at present, a positive attitude prevails in both communities will be seen in Part III.

### 3.6.2. Culture

As was seen in section I of this chapter, Greece is an ethnic-state with a deeply embedded idea of 'Greekness' within its society. This is due in part to the existence, over many years, of a homogenous population, and to the fact that the traditional element was not successfully replaced by modernity. In this particular situation a more ethnic religious attachment to the state existed on the one hand contrasted by strong clientelistic networks on the other. In addition, uneasy relations with neighbouring countries, especially Turkey, enhanced the perception of Greekness in this context.

As has been argued before, minority culture is not well regarded by the state as it 'deviates' from the standardised common culture. For the Muslims of Western Thrace, a large proportion of whom identify with Turkey, their culture can be seen as a 'double deviation', in that it is not only excluded by the mainstream culture but is also identified with the culture of the 'enemy'. Again this element could contribute to the uneasiness of the Greek state towards the Muslims.

### 4. Conclusion

There are three conclusions that can be drawn from the preceding discussion for the Muslim minority in relation to Greece.

First, legal definitions, although useful for the protection of minorities are not adequate representations of what constitutes a minority. It can be argued that the legal definition represents a snapshot of the minority, adopted without due consideration of its history and its socio-political and cultural position.

Second, different types of nationalism have different effects on minority populations. In the case of Greece where the civic state is weak in comparison to the stronger Greek ethnic identity, there is a weak civic attachment in the relationship of the Muslims to the Greek state. On an ethnic level, the majority's strong ethnic attachment to the nation is also reflected in the position of the dominant ethnic group of Muslims. The only difference being that the attachment lies within the borders of another state. On the religious level, we can witness a progressive replacement of religious identities by secular/ethnic ones among the members of the Muslim minority. This pattern, however, is not unknown to the process of nation building and had also been experienced by the Greek/Christian population during the last century.

Finally, both in terms of territory and culture as objective and subjective criteria of defining a nation or a collectivity of people, there are different perceptions as to the idea of 'homeland' and a 'shared' state culture. Again, historical processes and interstate relations when combined can offer an account of the difference of affiliations and the tensions occurring from such affiliations.

**Notes**

1. Some of the articles included in the Treaty are:

*Article 1*

As from May, 1923, there shall take place a compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of Muslim religion established in Greek territory.

These persons shall not return to live in Turkey or Greece respectively without the authorisation of the Turkish Government or of the Greek Government.

*Article 2*

The following persons shall not be included in the exchange provided for in Article 1:

a) The Greek inhabitants of Constantinople

b) The Muslim inhabitants of Western Thrace.

2. The Lausanne Treaty has been argued (by the Muslims) to be inadequate in the answers it given to the new demands of the Muslim minority in terms of status and educational issues

3. The *irredenta* included all lands inhabited by Greeks. Greekness was defined in terms of language, culture, historical memories and religion. In terms of territory it included Macedonia, Thrace and other northern regions south of the Donau, the Aegean islands, Cyprus, Asia Minor and parts of Anatolia. (Kitromilidis 1990: pp.43-45)

4. Religion was a main factor of identification in the Ottoman Empire.

5. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'the basic guiding principle of the policy followed by Greek Governments in recent years, vis-à-vis the handling of minority issues have been those of moderation and consensus. This has been especially true since 1991, when the Government solemnly reaffirmed the principles of *'isonomia'* i.e. equality before the law and *'isopoloteia'*,

equality of civil rights in relation between Christians and Muslims'. Official web-site of Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

6. The Rom population also inhabits other areas of southern Greece but they are a Christian population excluded from the Lausanne Treaty.

7. The information is provided by the official web-site of the Turkish Foreign Ministry and concerns the issue of minorities in Greece. The emphasises is on the violation of human rights in Greece and Greece's denial of the recognition of other minorities such as the Vlachs, Jews, Rom and, of course, the controversial case of the Slavomacedonians.

# Chapter 5

## Historical Background of the Muslim Minority

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### 1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to give an historical review of the region of Western Thrace and of its population which consists of Christian and Muslim citizens of Greece. Western Thrace became part of the Greek State in 1923 with the signing of the Lausanne Treaty between Greece and Turkey. The Lausanne Treaty also defines the status of and provides the terms for the Muslim minority which was excluded from the compulsory exchange of populations that took place at the time between Greece and Turkey.[1]

The term 'minority' here is used with the reference to the Muslim population of the area which had been defined by the Lausanne Treaty in religious and civic terms. As will be argued the Muslim community consists of three ethnic groups. For this reason, the concepts of 'ethnic group' and 'ethnic category', examined in the previous chapter, will be used throughout this historical background.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first part portrays the general characteristics of the region with emphasis on the Muslim population. This portrayal includes both the natural and the civil elements of the area and provides statistical information concerning the fluctuation of the population inhabiting the region (Muslim and Christian).

This section also examines the ethnological structure of the area with particular emphasis on the Muslim minority. Although a detailed analysis of the subject is beyond the interests of the present thesis, some information is provided as part of the regional profile of the Muslim minority. As will be

explored, three separate ethnic groupings can be identified – the Turks, the Pomaks and Rom - each of which has a separate language and culture.

Finally this section looks at the contemporary characteristics of the Muslim minority population today. It is argued that the society of Western Thrace is segregated in terms of ethnicity and ethnic affiliations. As a result, the Muslim minority is a relatively isolated and poor community in terms of residential areas, education, economy and employment. Most Muslims have a more rural and traditional way of life in comparison to the Christian population. There is also class differentiation within the Muslim community, which corresponds to the three ethnic categorisations.

The second section of the chapter focuses on the important historical moments of the region - from its incorporation in the Greek state until today – and how have these affected the Western Thrace population in socio-political terms. The section is divided into four sub-sections.

The first examines the events that led to the signing of the Lausanne Treaty. This involves a brief overview of the two Balkan Wars and the First World War, which led to the Greek-Turkish War. Major themes for this period include on the one hand, the Greek expansionist plan of the 'Great Idea'[2] (*Megali Idea*), and, on the other, the Turkish efforts to homogenise its population and create a modern Turkish nation-state.

The second examines the Lausanne Treaty, and the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey that followed. More specifically, this part will concentrate on the decisions taken in Lausanne and the Treaty's most important articles for the Muslims of Western Thrace[3] as well as on the consequences of the exchange of the respective populations, especially in Western Thrace.

The third consists of an overview of the significant historical facts from 1920 to the present day concerning the Muslim minority, including their

minority status of within Greek society. The time frame spans three main periods that show the patterns of change of Muslim minority identification and ethnic affiliation:

1. 1920s-1940s: when relations between Greece and Turkey are initially unsettled but gradually improved with the signing of a Greek-Turkish Friendship Treaty in 1930. The Muslim minority, during this time under a religious leadership, did not seek closer relations with the modern and secular Turkish state.

2. 1940s-1960s: the most important events of this period included the Bulgarian occupation in the Second Word War, the Greek Civil War, Greek and Turkish membership of Nato, the Greek dictatorship and when Greece and Turkey developed friendly relations during the 1950s. Over the twenty-year period there is gradual shift of Muslim support in favour of the 'Modernist' movement which was ideologically closely related to Turkey and Turkish nationalism.

3. 1970s to the present day: although the first decade of this period is important for Greece itself (with the issue of Cyprus and the transition to democracy), the 1980s witnessed the formation of Muslim parties and a rising demand for ethnic self-determination of the Muslim minority. Greece initially responded to this new challenge with strict reference to the legal framework of the Lausanne Treaty and the Greek constitution but later during the 1990s introduced reforms to tackle some of the educational problems faced by Muslim students. During this period, the Greek regional restructuring and closer integration with EU presented new challenges for the Muslim minority/Christian majority relations. These two issues will be more fully explored in later chapters.

## 2. Section I: General characteristics of the region

2.1 Geography

The region of Thrace can be defined both culturally and geographically. In cultural terms it is been described from ancient times as the land of the 'Thracians'[4], but due to its geographical position, (at the crossroads between Europe and Asia) many populations have inhabited the area over the years. The Western Thracian boarders also varied in different periods, but generally the central reference point for the geographical definition of Thrace has, from the time of Herodotus (5th century BC), always been the Haimos (Balkan) mountainous range.

After the treaties of Berlin (1878), Sèvres (1920) and Lausanne (1923) and the establishment of the state boundaries between Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey, Thrace was divided into three sections. Eastern Rumelia or Northern Thrace (now southern Bulgaria), Eastern Thrace (the European section of Turkey) and Western Thrace, the north-eastern part of Greece.

The Thracian section of Greece, today, borders the region of Macedonia to the west and is demarcated by the river Nestos[5]. To the east and north-east, it is separated from Turkey (Eastern Thrace) by the river Evros and from Bulgaria, in the north, by the mountain range of Rhodopi and a stretch of the Evros river. The natural southern boundary is the north Aegean, called the Thracian Sea, the coastline of which extends from the Nestos estuary to the Evros estuary. Its surface area covers 8,547-km, of which 4,018-km form the plains, while the rest, 2,208-km, is upland and 2,352-km mountainous. Politically, the region is divided into the three prefectures of Xanthi, Rhodopi and Evros. Recent changes in the Greek Regional system have incorporated the administrations of Western Thrace and East Macedonia into one regional unit with a government appointed Regional Officer.

In economic terms the land itself is very fertile due to the rich hydrographic system - many rivers, lakes. This aquatic ecosystem is an important factor for the economy of Western Thrace, presenting the opportunity to develop fish-farming. The possibility of eco-tourism could also be considered, as it is rich in natural wildlife, including rare species of birds, plants and fish that are already protected by international conventions. The mineral wealth of this region also remains unexploited.

Despite its natural wealth, the region is considered to be one of the poorest in Greece and the EU. Western Thrace, relatively scarcely populated (about 3.5% of the total population in Greece), is also one of the least economically developed as it produces only 2.5% of the gross national product (Athens Academy: 1994 p.18). This is blamed partly on its geographical isolation and party on the highly centralised policies followed by the Greek government. The economic features of the area will be examined in subsequent chapters, however a brief section on the economy is provided here as part of the region's profile.

2.2 Demography

Prior to the signing of the Lausanne Treaty (1923) and after the Muslim population constituted the majority in Western Thrace. In the three prefectures, out of a total of about 200,000 people, 120,000 were Muslims. Available data from the time shows the ethnological composition of the Muslim population as follows:

**Table 2:** Division of Muslim Minority before the Lausanne Treaty

|  | Xanthi | Rhodopi | Evros | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turks | 30,327 | 50,000 | 10,571 | 90,899 |
| Pomaks | 14,824 | 8,000 | 675 | 23,499 |
| Rom | 500 | 1,500 | 506 | 2,506 |
| Circassians |  | 2,000 |  | 2000 |
| Total | 45,652 | 61,500 | 11,752 | **118,904** |

Source: Data has been collected from K.G. Adreadis: The Muslim minority of Western Thrace, 1956

After the signing of the Lausanne Treaty and the exchange of populations in 1923, many Christian Greek refugees were relocated in Western Thrace. The Muslim population remained in Western Thrace under the terms of the Treaty. The next two censuses of 1928 and 1951 were the only ones[6] to provide statistical information on religious and linguistic characteristics. The 1928 census shows that a total of 303,171 people resided in the area of Western Thrace, one third of who were Muslims (Athens Academy 1994: p.45).

Similarly the 1951 census shows that in terms of religion there were about 112,665 Muslims and in terms of language, 92,443 Turkophones, 18,671 Pomaks and 7,429 Rom (Rozakis 1996: p. 98). In Western Thrace there was a 6.4% decrease in population due to the Bulgarian occupation during the Second World War and the civil war that followed (Athens Academy 1994: p.45). For the Muslim minority the figures show a similar decrease for the same reasons as for the general population.

**Table 3:** Muslim minority in 1951 census

|  | Xanthi | Rhodopi | Evros | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turks | 23,086 | 40,564 | 3,446 | 67,096 |
| Pomaks | 18,722 | 7,213 | 1,860 | 27795 |
| Rom | 425 | 1,860 | 2,831 | 5116 |
| Circassians | 12 | 20 |  | 32 |
| Total | 42,245 | 49,657 | 8,137 | **100039** |

Source: K. Vakalopoulos: History of Northern Greece, Thrace, 1993

After this period it is estimated that there were about 120,000 Muslims in the area of Western Thrace (Rozakis 1996: p. 99). In a European Commission report on linguistic minorities a similar estimate is given (see Table 4).

**Table 4**: Estimates of Christian/Muslim population in Western Thrace (1988)

|  | Xanthi | Rhodopi | Evros | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Christian Greeks | 46,800 | 51,000 | 144,000 | 241800 |
| Turks | 11,000 | 46,000 | 2,000 | 59000 |
| Pomaks | 25,000 | 12,000 | 2,000 | 39,000 |
| Muslim Rom | 6,000 | 9,000 | 7,000 | 22,000 |
| Total | 88800 | 118,000 | 155,000 | **361,800** |

Source: Linguistic Minorities in the European Community, European Commission 1990

According to the Athens Academy report (1994) there are an estimated 105,000 Muslims in Western Thrace – this figure including Muslim immigrants abroad who also hold Greek citizenship (ibid. p. 47).

<u>2.3. The ethnography of the area</u>

As has been mentioned above, Western Thrace is, in geographical terms, at the crossroads between Europe and Asia. This location is reflected in the social characteristics that the area has exhibited throughout its history. Today, except for the traces of ancient civilisations, it is the region where Islam and Christianity co-exist; Greek, Turkish, Slavophone and Rom languages are spoken and cultural characteristics from various ethnic groupings show their influence in many forms of social life.

Since 1923, a Greek Orthodox Christian majority and a Muslim minority have inhabited Western Thrace. This Muslim population was exempt from the compulsory exchange of population between Greece and Turkey and its existence is defined within the bilateral terms of the Lausanne Treaty that will be examined later in the chapter. Despite a common religion, the Muslim minority of Western Thrace is a diverse community in terms of ethnic origin, language and culture and consists of three ethnic groupings: the Turks, the Pomaks and the Muslim Rom. More detailed analysis on the three ethnic groups and the complexity surrounding the question of ethnicity in general is provided in Appendix 1.

*2.3.1 Turkish population*

The Turks populating Western Thrace descend from groups such as the Ottoman and Sunni Turks who came to the area during the expansionist wars of the Ottomans against the Byzantine Empire, and before the fall of Constantinople. During the Ottoman Empire they were politically superior in the ranks of the administration. As well as controlling the bureaucratic machinery, the Ottomans were also the military class of the empire. In other words, they were directly involved in the mechanism of power. Being the descendants of such high social classes during the Ottoman Empire, sections of this group today inhabit the most prosperous areas in the towns of Xanthi and Komotini, as well as the most fertile areas of agricultural land. (Panagiotidis 1995: p.25)

Another group within this category that has played an important role in the recent history of Western Thrace is the Circassians. Originally coming from the Caucasus, from an area called Circassia, many immigrated to Asia Minor and Thrace after the Russians took over the Caucasus in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although Muslim in religion, many Circassians fought on the side of the Greeks during the 1918-1922 Greek -Turkish War. After the withdrawal of the Greek army and the events that followed in Asia Minor, many Circassians fled to Western Thrace. In the early 1920s, the Circassians - possessing high educational and administrative skills - were influential members of the Muslim community. Their presence created an anti-Turkish climate which brought about objections from Turkey and they were eventually removed from the area after the signing of the Greek-Turkish Treaty of Friendship in the 1930s (ibid. p.29).

Today, there is a developed solidarity among the Turks of the Muslim minority. Being the largest group within the Muslim minority, Smith's concept of an 'ethnic community' can be applied. That is, the members share a common name, shared historical memories, one or more differentiating elements of common culture, an association with a specific 'homeland' and a sense of solidarity (Smith 1991: p. 21).

*2.3.2 Pomaks*

Much research has been done in the area of Western Thrace concerning another ethnic grouping of the Muslim minority, the Pomaks who are Muslim by religion, Slavophone in language, and with a distinctive cultural tradition.

Many researchers, historians, social anthropologists and social scientists use Herodotos's (5th century) writings and the surviving elements of Pomak culture and language, to suggest that the Pomaks are an autochthonous group and have inhabited the area from ancient times. As for the term 'Pomak' itself, there are two interpretations of its origin. Some believe that the word comes

from the ancient Greek word "pomax" which means someone that drinks a lot (a feature common in ancient Thrace). Another explanation comes from Bulgarian scholars, who argue that the word is derived from "pomagats" which means helper.

The Pomaks, as often seen in the literature, have always lived on high ground within the region in order to avoid invasions. The same holds true for today, as most villages on the mountainous parts of Xanthi and Rhodopi are inhabited entirely by Pomaks. However, the Pomak population is not unique to Western Thrace. A larger group that shares the same characteristics can be found in South Bulgaria, the area that borders Greece and Turkey.

In terms of population today, the Pomaks in Greece form the second largest group within the Muslim minority. There is a Pomak language (*pomaktsou*), but it is only an oral one and therefore is only taught informally in the family home and spoken in Pomak villages. Pomak society is in essence a deeply religious and rural community with distinctive cultural features and traditions. Even today, in some villages (like Myki or Sminthi in the prefecture of Xanthi) women are dressed in a local type of costumes not to be found in other parts of Greece.

Despite being a distinctive group, there is little evidence of a strong Pomak ethnic consciousness in Greece[7]. The Pomaks tend to identify most with the Turkish population and support Turkish calls mainly because the two groups have much in common: the same religion (both are part of the Muslim minority and the terms that define it), the same political representatives and the same educational system.

*2.3.3. The Muslim Rom*

There are historical sources to show the existence of Rom groups throughout Thrace (not only the Greek part) during the Byzantine Empire, but there is little information about their social life and their relation to the Christian population

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during this time. There is evidence suggesting that some converted to Christianity but their faith was never strong and they continued their own social and cultural life (Zegkines 1994: p.60).

Ottoman sources reveal many references to the Rom of Thrace. These sources are usually governmental papers dealing with administration, taxation or census matters. During this time some of the Rom became Muslims, but others remained Christian. This information comes from a source stating that the Muslim Rom who chose to live in Christian neighbourhoods had to pay the same taxes as the other Christian population.[8]

Today, in Greece there are both Christian (Greek Orthodox) and Muslim Rom. It is only the latter group that is recognised by the Lausanne Treaty. The Muslim Rom is the smallest group of the Muslim minority. As in the case of the Pomaks, the Rom population possesses its own language (*Romany*) which does not have a written form. The Rom live in both urban and rural areas, share the characteristics of a general Rom culture and do not actively become involved with Muslim minority issues and demands. It can be argued that the Muslim Rom population does have a sense of common ethnicity and many cultural characteristics shared with both the Christian Rom in Greece and other Rom population in the Balkans. For example, the Greek Rom accepted the internationally recognised ethnic name 'Rom' which was proposed during the 1990s. Additionally, the Rom Association of Macedonia and Thrace (consisting both of Muslim and Christian Rom) held its annual conference in the prefecture of Xanthi in 2001 in order to consider issues relating to the Rom position in the Greek society (Embros, daily of Xanthi: 8.10.2001)

## 2.4. General characteristics of the Muslim minority

As has been seen previously in the chapter, the formation of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace from the Lausanne Treaty to the present day is the result of three factors. These are, the religious status determined by the Lausanne

Treaty, the increase in secularisation as connections with Turkey drew closer and finally the relations between Greeks and Turks.

Despite ethnic affiliations and national attachments, the Muslim minority today constitutes a separate community with its own social, cultural and economic characteristics. Their weak civic identity on the one hand, and the weak Greek civic identity [9] on the other, means that the Muslim community is not fully incorporated into Greek society. As a result the Christian and Muslim populations of Western Thrace coexist in two parallel societies.

The two communities (Christian and Muslim) are segregated in a number of ways that leads to further isolation of the Muslims. First, in terms of different religion and education, as has been mentioned previously. Second, in terms of geographical location; the area of Western Thrace is, in general, relatively isolated but the Christians live in urban towns or villages with easier access to the centres. The majority of Muslims in contrast live in more mountainous and isolated villages, which in many cases, have no asphalt roads and where, if there is snow, there is no access even for an ambulance or a doctor[10]. Finally, the local economy is supported mainly by traditional methods of farming and by a segregated market system of small shops. This 'ethnic' choice of consumption not only separates the communities but also does not allow for further economic development (Athens Academy 1994: p.36).

The social status of the members of the Muslim communities is lower than that of the Christian and education appears to be the most important cause of this. The linguistic problems, the hard agricultural work and relative poverty give little opportunity to Muslims students to further their education and this is reflected in Muslim levels of employment. During, the farming season many children help their parents and do not attend school on a regular basis. Many children finish their education in primary schools and seek seasonal on farming employment as a means of living. In a newspaper article about Western Thrace, it was estimated that, overall, about 72% of the population in Western Thrace have not completed the nine-year term of compulsory education in comparison

to 57% for the whole of Greece. It is suggested that the higher percentage in Western Thrace is due to the educational difficulties encountered by Muslim students. (Daily, *Ta Nea*: 20-10-1997, see also National Census 1991)

Furthermore, the social divisions within the Muslim minority show the same patterns as during the Ottoman Empire. Hence, the Pomaks are mainly employed in agricultural and pastoral jobs and confined to smaller rural communities that tend to follow more traditional forms of life. However, the decline in agriculture, seen especially in the fall in demand for tobacco, has changed this pattern for the Pomaks who now seek seasonal work in other towns outside Western Thrace and tend to be employed in the most health-hazardous occupations.

Turkish inhabitants are comparatively more affluent. Some, descending from an administrative class during the Ottoman time, retained their financial and social position, enabling them to further their education. The occupations of this urban Muslim class vary from professional positions to ownership of small shops. Even those in agriculture own the more fertile areas of land in the plains and reside in villages far more accessible in terms of transportation than the mountainous Pomak villages.

Finally, the Rom population lives both in towns and in the countryside. Their occupations are mainly seasonal or they are involved in small trade: a pattern of employment echoing that of the Christian Rom living elsewhere in Greece. The Rom live in distinctive neighbourhoods and are less affiliated to the other members of Muslim community.

## 3. Section II: Important Historical Moments of the Region

### 3.1 Western Thrace: From the Balkan Wars to the Lausanne Treaty

Apart from its geographical location, a series of historical events have determined the composition and identity formation of the Western Thrace

population today. The region became part of the Greek state in 1923 with the signing of the Lausanne Treaty by Greece and Turkey. Moreover, the Lausanne Treaty not only established the physical borders between the states but also sought to determine the fate of the populations in both countries at the time by the compulsory population exchange between the two countries that took place immediately afterwards. Under the agreement, however, the Greeks in Istanbul and the islands of Imvros and Tenedos (Turkey) and the Muslims of Western Thrace (Greece) were characterised as non-exchangeable and were required to remain. This decision was reached between Kemal Atatürk and E. Venizelos (the respective Prime Ministers of each state at the time) so that the two groups could form the bridge for future Greek-Turkish relations, at least this was what was officially argued[11].

### 3.1.1 The two Balkan Wars

In 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress, also known as the 'Young Turks', began their revolution in Turkey to save the declining Ottoman Empire. When eventually successful, they proceeded with policies of 'centralisation and Turkish hegemony' (Stavrianos 2000: p.528). The Young Turks' nationalist victory coincided with the awakening of nationalism in the Ottoman ethnic populations. Influenced by the nationalist ideal on the one hand and feeling threatened by this new Turkish nationalist government on the other, the leaders of the Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian national minorities unified for the first time against the Ottoman regime. Their example was soon followed by the governments of the Balkan States (Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece), which by secret treaties of alliance, one after the other declared war against Turkey in October 1912 (Castellan 1991: pp.515-520). This was the only successful entente between the Balkan countries. This First Balkan War was short and decisive; when the armistice was declared in December 1912, the Ottoman Empire had lost all its European territories except Constantinople (now Istanbul).

The disagreement between the allied countries over the division of the newly gained territory and, specifically, the division of Macedonia and Thrace, resulted in the Second Balkan War (1913). In the heated negotiations between the allied countries, Bulgaria felt disadvantaged by the proposed territorial divisions and driven by its internal political climate, decided to attack (Crampton 1983: pp.421-422). Serbia and Greece, joined by Montenegro declared war against Bulgaria, who within a month asked for an armistice (July 1913)[12]. The Treaty of Bucharest (1913) ended the hostilities of the Second Balkan War. Western Thrace (Gioumouldjina with a stretch of Aegean coast extending to Dedeagach) was retained by Bulgaria allowing her an outlet to the Aegean Sea[13] (ibid.). In an attempt to fully integrate the new area around 50,000 Bulgarians emigrated to Western Thrace. Consequently, during this time the population of the province was very mixed - the largest group being the Greek, Bulgarians and Turks (Stavrianos 2000: p. 579)

In November 1916 Greece entered the First World War on the side of the Allies and Associated Powers. Bulgaria, on the other hand, fought on the side of the Central Powers as it had been promised part of Serbia. After the defeat of the Central Powers, Bulgaria was required to cede part of its territory, including Western Thrace. Article 48 of the Neuilly Treaty however, stated that "the Principal Allied and Associated Powers undertake to ensure the economic outlets of Bulgaria to the Aegean Sea" (the Neuilly Treaty). The terms of the Treaty of Neuilly (27 November 1919) signed between the Allies and Bulgaria also required an exchange of Bulgarian and Greek populations. From 1919 until the Lausanne Treaty (1923), Western Thrace was governed by Greece[14].

The end of First World War found Greece with many internal problems and divisions, mainly between royalists and anti-royalists fuelled by the interference of the Allied Powers. The result of the domestic discord and of the dominance of the 'Great Idea' as the national state ideology, was the Greek army's offensive near Ankara in 1921[15]. The Greek-Turkish conflict ended with the defeat of Greece and the events that followed became a reference point for modern Greek history and modern Greek identity.

*3.1.2 The Lausanne Treaty and the Exchange of Minorities*

Following the Greek defeat, the Turks demanded the return of Eastern Thrace to Turkey. These demands were accompanied by the advancement of the Turkish army to the area. When they met with the British troops, tensions rose. Finally, the Mudanya Armistice was agreed (October 1922) and marked the beginning of the talks in Lausanne.

The Lausanne Treaty signified the end of the Greek irredentist project and the birth of the modern nation-state in Turkey. The terms and conditions that were agreed between Greece and Turkey in 1923 defined the physical borders[16] of the two states and decided the fate of the populations that, until then, although ethnically diverse, cohabited in the same areas. The Treaty is still in force today and provides protection for the Muslim and non-Muslim populations of Greece and Turkey respectively who were exempt from the exchange and establishes a policy framework to be followed by the governments.

More than a million Greeks from Turkey and about 400,000 Muslims from Greece were exchanged (Clogg: 1995 p.107). Most of the Greek refugees settled in Western Thrace and Macedonia. In both areas the Christian Greeks had been a 'minority' in terms of numbers after the Balkan Wars. For example, in Western Thrace only 20% of the total population were Greek while, as the 1928 population census shows, after the exchange the percentage increased to 60% (ibid. p.109). Most of the Greek populations (with the exception of about 100,000 each in Albania and Turkey, 110,000 in the Dodecanese and 310,000 in Cyprus) resided within the borders of the Greek state which had now become one of the most homogenous countries in the Balkan Peninsula. In order to preserve and further enforce this homogeneity, any reference to small minority populations such as Slavomacedonians, Albanian and Vlachs remained a sensitive issue.

Section Three of the Lausanne Treaty, entitled the 'Protection of Minorities', and Articles 37-45 deal with the minority populations exempt from the exchange and are based, as has been mentioned above, on a bilateral reciprocity of mutual obligations between Greece and Turkey. The provisions include a general framework for the protection of minorities and specific guarantees for religious and linguistic freedoms (Rozakis 1996: p.103)

## 3.1.3 General Provisions

According to Article 37 of Section III:
'Turkey, and (Greece respectively)[17] undertake that the stipulations contained in Articles 38 to 44 shall be recognised as fundamental laws, and that no law, no regulation, nor official action shall conflict or interfere with these stipulations, nor shall any law, regulation, nor official action prevail over them'. (The Lausanne Treaty, 1923)

Under this general framework Article 44 provides guarantees for the implementation of clauses under Section III. It is therefore required that:

'Turkey, and Greece agree that, in so far as the preceding Articles of this Section (...) shall be placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations. They shall not be modified without the assent of the majority of the Council of the League of Nations (...) Any member of the Council of the League of Nations shall have the right to bring to the attention of the Council any infraction or danger (...) and that the Council may thereupon take such action and give such directions as it may deem proper and effective in the circumstances. Turkey and Greece further agree that any difference of opinion (...) shall be held to be a dispute of an international character under Article 14 of the Covenant of the League of Nations (...) and be referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice. The decision of the Permanent Court shall be final and shall have the same force and effect as an award under Article 13 of the Covenant.' (the Lausanne Treaty, 1923)

*3.1.4 Specific provisions*

More particular provisions include rights of citizenship, education and religion. Some of the provisions under Article 39 include free movement and immigration, equal civil and political rights, equal possibilities of employment, freedom of speech and press and commercial activities.

Articles 41 and 42 deal specifically with educational and religious freedoms. 'In the matters of public education, the respective governments undertake the obligation to assure that in geographical areas (towns and districts) where a considerable proportion of the members of the minorities live, appropriate facilities are established allowing the instruction of their respective languages in primary education (Article 41). The respective Governments are also obliged to grant public funds in the same areas to promote education, religion and charity concerning the minorities' (Article 42) (Rozakis 1996: p.104)

To summarise, the Treaty of Lausanne opened a new chapter for Greek-Turkish relations, marking the abandonment of the Greek 'Great idea' and the beginning of a Modern Turkish state. The new geographical borders, the legally defined existence of respective minorities and international factors (for example the case of Cyprus) became a vital part of the historical developments that followed. The strengthening of ethnic homogeneity in Greece (as well as homogenising efforts in Turkey) contributed to new perceptions of national identities in both countries and constituted each other as the 'external Other'. These perceptions have influenced identity formation of the Muslim minority of Western Thrace through the historical events that will be briefly examined in the following section.

Within the framework set by the Lausanne Treaty, the Muslim population shared the area of Western Thrace with the Christian Greek majority. Muslim attitudes and loyalties from 1923 to today developed in relation or response to the consolidation of Greek and Turkish nationalism. Far from static, this is an ongoing process of identity formation, which takes place within an amalgamation of ethnic and religious preferences.

Accordingly, two major ideological trends within the Muslim minority can be identified as major forces of change. The first is the 'Old-Muslim' tradition whose elites remained faithful to the old theocratic values of the Ottoman Empire, opposing Kemal's secular nationalism. The second is the 'Modernist' movement that actively exerted its influence on the minority's political beliefs after the 1950s, reflecting the hostile Greek-Turkish relations at the time. A new secular, Turkish-educated political leadership emerged from within the Muslim minority and gradually pursued closer connections with Turkey. This 'opening-up' was accompanied by demands for Greece to recognise the Muslim minority as an ethnic rather than religious community (see also chapter 7).

Three periods of Greek-Turkish relations reveal these ideological changes and the respective demands of the Muslim minority:

*3.2.1. 1920-1939*
The beginning of this period was marked by increasing movements of the population in Western Thrace. First, the Bulgarians that inhabited the area in the aftermath of the Second Balkan War returned to Bulgaria in accordance with the Neuilly Treaty. Second, with the outcome of the Greek Turkish war, many Greek refugees were settled in the area boosting the Christian Greek population from 20% to about 60% of the total population. Third, approximately 106,000 Muslims remained in the area as part of the bilateral terms of the Lausanne

Treaty. The exchanged Greek populations of the time were impoverished, tired and bitter having experienced successive wars for almost a decade.

The remaining Muslim population was organised into the three communities of Xanthi, Komotini and Didimotiho, all governed by three conservative Muslim Muftis who remained faithful to the Sacred Law of Koran (*Seriat*). This religious attachment entailed the partial rejection of the reformist nationalist programme in Turkey. The judiciary power which came from the Islamic Law was applied by these three Muftis who received a salary from the Greek state. As the chapter on education will show in more detail, there were about 101 primary and secondary schools for the education of Muslim students. The Turkish and Greek language became the official teaching languages (with the exception of the Arabic language used for the Koran and religious education) in the Muslim schools and the Turkish language books were to be sent from Turkey.

The fact that the minority elite did keep its distance from Turkey resulted in a good relationship with the Greek state. But the economically advantaged Muslims from urban areas and especially those in Komotini already had closer relations with Turkey, favoured Atatürk's reformism and were more suspicious of the Greek state.[18] Wishing, however, to preserve their previous wealth and status, they adapted to the new situation (Athens Academy 1994: p.97). The mass support for the religious leadership came from Muslims inhabiting more rural areas, who belonged economically to a lower agricultural class and who were more devoted to the traditional religious values.

The influx of the refugee population created practical problems for their accommodation in Greece.[19] Many of the refugees were given temporary shelter in Western Thrace and Macedonia. Muslim as well as Christian houses were used for this purpose. Recent memories from the wars and different social and cultural backgrounds made cohabitation difficult and required the strong presence of the police (Ladas 1932: pp.476-485).

As a result of increasingly strained relations, Turkey brought the matter before the Mixed Committee of the League of Nations, accusing Greece of taking advantage and abusing Turkish property. Greece defended itself but more accusations were to follow and in 1925, neutral members of the Committee came to the region to observe the situation more closely and recognised the difficulties of sheltering the refugees – many of them were placed temporarily with local Turkish families - while disturbing the religious values of the Muslims. In 1926, Greece and Turkey came to an agreement over the situation and by 1928 Greece had removed all the refugees from Muslim properties (ibid.). The other major point of disagreement was, as has been mentioned above, the case of the 150 Circassians that had fled Asia Minor and had settled in Western Thrace with the aid of the Greek government (Nikolakopoulos 1991: p.181). As part of the Ankara Agreement (1930) signed by Greece and Turkey, these Circassians were removed and a short period of Greek-Turkish friendship followed.

In summary, the 1923-1930 period was important for Western Thrace. The exchange of populations, the arrival of the Asia Minor Greek population and the rise of modern Turkish nationalism all presented new challenges for the region and its Christian and Muslim population. In ideological terms, the rural and deeply traditional Muslim society remained attached to the 'Old Muslim' values while new 'Modernist trends' started to appear.

### 3.2.2. 1940s-1960s

During the Second World War, Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace were occupied by Bulgaria. Forced efforts at assimilation were made for both the Christian Greek and Muslim populations. There are reports that these efforts were more insistent in the case of Pomaks who were considered to be of Bulgarian descent. In addition, during the ensuing Greek Civil War many Muslims left the country to return in 1949 when it was over. With the end of the war Western Thrace was returned to Greece and from the 1950s onwards friendly relations developed between the two countries. In 1975, Bulgaria declared that it had no territorial ambitions for any Greek territory.

In the early 1950s relations between Greece and Turkey were on favourable terms when both countries became part of NATO in 1952. A more flexible policy towards the Muslim minority was adopted by the Greek state[20]. For example, some changes occurred in Muslim education: the Turkish language became compulsory in Pomak schools, the 'Jelal Bayar' secondary school opened in Komotini and was allowed to use the label 'Turkish school' and from the 1960s onwards, school teachers trained in Turkey were employed in the Muslim schools (Athens Academy 1994: p.40).

Another important development in this period was the increasing number of Muslim students from Western Thrace in Turkish universities. There are two reasons why the Muslim students chose to continue their tertiary education (see chapter 6) in Turkey: familiarity with the Turkish language rather than Greek and second, Turkey provided incentives for the Muslims from Western Thrace, such as easier entrance or scholarships for university study. Consequently, a Turkish-educated, secular Muslim *intelligentsia* returned to Western Thrace and increased the support for the 'Modernist movement' that sought to homogenise the Muslim minority and called for the recognition of an ethnic rather than religious Muslim status.

In summary, this period started with friendly relations between Greece and Turkey, although this proved to be short-lived due to the Cyprus issue. During this time the Greek government followed a more flexible policy, especially towards for the Muslim primary and secondary education. As a result, from an ideological perspective, a new Turkish educated group increased the 'Modernist' support within the Muslim minority.

## 3.2.3 1970's to the present day

During the military dictatorship in Greece (1967-1974), freedom of movement was restricted for both Muslims and Christians. However, further suppressive measures against the Muslim minority were then introduced. Members of the minority community boards, previously elected under the provisions of Decree 2345/1920 (which relates to the election of minority representatives), were dismissed and replaced by non-elected members (selected by government agencies), who were prepared to act against the interests of the Muslim minority[21]. In addition, Sarakatsani Greeks from other regions were given financial incentives to move to the area and increase the Christian population (World Directory of Minorities 1997: p.124)

Whilst the aim of previous governments was to incorporate the Muslim population into Greek society, these new measures succeeded in excluding and isolating them. Despite the collapse of the dictatorship, some repressive measures were still in operation up until the mid 1990s. For example, until 1995, much of Western Thrace was a restricted militarised zone for reasons of national security. This zone, bordering Bulgaria, included many Pomak villages whose members needed special permission for travel and, even then, villagers were restricted to an area of 30 kms from their residence. The same policy was in force for visitors who also needed the special permits, issued by the police. Although the restricted zone was abolished in 1995, the long time that it was in force contributed to negative feelings amongst the local groups.

A combination of factors led to the mobilisation of the Muslim minority and to demands that took on a more international character during the 1990s. Factors such as the restrictive measures, the new 'Modernist' Muslim elite and the restructuring of the Greek regional system, led to the unification of the Muslim minority. The Muslims expression of their grievances took the form of demonstrations and the public burning of schoolbooks provided by the Greek government during the beginning of the 1990s.

*3.2.4 Reasons for conflict*

The conflict evolved around two main issues: religion and education. In the case of religion the issue of controversy was the appointment of the Mufti.[22] When the last appointed Mufti of Rhodopi (1943) died in 1986, the Greek state appointed a new Mufti (in accordance with Greek law). The 'Modernist' Muslim elite, who enjoyed mass support at the time (see in the later chapter on Muslim politics), mobilised the population against the appointment and elected an unofficial Mufti who was subsequently imprisoned for obstructing the law of justice.

The controversy also spread to the issue of *vakoufia*. This is religious property administered by a committee of Muslims who are appointed by the Greek state. Muslims claimed that these appointments were made without prior consultation with the Muslim community and as a result the property was mismanaged. Greece insisted on its policy for the state appointment of the Mufti. (See also Appendix 1)

The other controversy related to the issue of Muslim education, a subject that is considered as a separate chapter. Briefly, however, there were two issues that led to Muslim demands during the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. The first concerned the Special Pedagogical Academy for the training of Muslim teachers. The representatives of the Muslim community argued that the purpose of this Academy was to replace the Turkish teachers, and perceived it as a means of assimilating the Muslims into Greek society. The second concerned the issue of schoolbooks. The Greek government had appointed a group of academics in the 1990s to prepare new school textbooks for the Muslim schools in order to replace the old ones written in the 1950s. This angered the Muslim minority who refused to use books not coming from Turkey and again accused Greece of an assimilationist policy.

Both issues (of conflict) have a more symbolic meaning for the Muslim minority: a demand for cultural self determination that - given the gradually developing physical and ideological links with Turkey shown in this overview -

becomes a demand for ethnic self-determination. In both cases the mass reaction against the Greek state appointments emphasised the unity of the community with its own distinctive identity.

The issue of religion faded away but the issue of education remained as the primary concern of the Muslim community (another indicator in itself of growing national/ethnic identification over religious identity). Recent reforms (1995) by the Greek state included a special university entrance process to enable Muslim students to study in Greek universities. The Muslim community reacted to the educational laws by abstaining from Muslim schools for five days. As Baltsiotis argues this was contradictory to previous complaints of the Muslim minority that they were excluded from the Greek universities. (Baltsiotis 1998: p. 320)

There are two other areas in which the Muslim minority showed its dissatisfaction. First, towards the end of the 1980s a large number of Pontian Greeks from the ex-Soviet Union arrived in Greece and were accommodated in Western Thrace. The newcomers, themselves a previous ethnic minority, had a developed Greek ethnic and Greek Orthodox religious identity. Their placement in the area was perceived as an attempt to boost the declining Christian population of the area at the expense of the Muslims.

Finally, there has been a movement in recent years by Christian Greek associations and individuals to reassess the Pomak cultural life with emphasis on its distinctiveness and ancient autochthonous origins. Again the Muslim community perceives this as an attempt to dissolve its unity. (ibid.).

In summary, the period from the 1970s till today has witnessed the unification of the Muslim minority and the transformation of their religious identity through demands for ethnic self-determination. The Muslim community, under the influence of the 'modernist' ideology, expressed their wish for ethnic recognition through their dissatisfaction over religious and educational issues. As shown in this brief historical overview, the process of changing identities

was gradual and was closely connected to Greek-Turkish relations over the last century.

## 4. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the main historical events that shaped the society of Western Thrace in the relatively short period from 1923, when it became part of the Greek state to the present day. The first part concentrated on general characteristics of the region such as the geography and demography of the area. With regard to the Muslim minority, a brief account was given of the ethnological composition and social position of the Muslim citizens in Greek society. Factors such as the region's short history within the Modern Greek state, Greek-Turkish relations and the existence of cultural diversity, have served as a basis for identity formation in Western Thrace for both the Christian and Muslim populations.

The focus of the second part of the chapter was to explore the most important periods of the 20$^{th}$ century in the area of Western Thrace in relation to the Muslim minority and the challenges posed for the Greek state. It was shown that identity formation is an on-going process closely connected (in relation or response) to these historical developments.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the present chapter.

First, the location of Western Thrace, although geographically isolated from the other Greek regions, is relatively important for both strategic and economic reasons. Consequently, as we have seen, all the neighbouring countries had territorial ambitions for the area. Although at the present moment Western Thrace is placed among the poorest regions in the EU, its natural wealth and geographical position are assets for future development. In addition, recent developments such as the new political realities in Bulgaria and the possibility for Turkey's entry to the EU could bring new economic and social expansion in the area.

Second, there is no accurate statistical information on the present size of the Muslim population as the last census that included religious affiliations was taken in 1951. Nevertheless, it is estimated that out of a total of 360,000 people in Western Thrace, around 120,000 are Muslim citizens who live mainly in the prefectures of Xanthi and Rhodopi. The Muslim minority today is a unified group in terms of its national loyalties and affiliations. But as for ethnic background, three groupings can be identified: the Turks, the Pomaks and the Muslim Rom. What unifies the three groups is religion, which also defines their existence and the framework of policies that affect the Muslim society (according to the Lausanne Treaty).

Third, the Muslim society is relatively isolated from the Christian one. It can be argued that both communities coexist in parallel societies. This isolation is demonstrated in the differences between their residential areas, levels of education, economic activity and social status, including class differences and rural/urban divides. These cleavages can be also found within the Muslim community itself. For example, the Pomaks tend to live in more rural areas than the Turks and Rom and the Turks are usually more prosperous than the other two groups.

Finally, two ideological movements can be distinguished within the Muslim minority, both of which determined the later demands of its members for ethnic self-determination. Both relate to Greek-Turkish relations and the historical circumstances that encouraged their development. Until the 1950s the Muslim elite was attached to the traditional and religious values of the Ottoman empire. This 'Old Muslim' trend was satisfied with the religious definition granted by the Lausanne Treaty and focused on the satisfaction of religious rights.

Active since the 1930s, a 'Modernist' trend has become the leading force in Muslim minority affairs. There was a gradual change in identification patterns with more focus on a rising ethnic consciousness. By the 1990s the previous

religious identity had been replaced by demands for ethnic recognition. These demands were reflected in Muslim dissatisfaction with religious and educational policies.

**Notes**

1. There is reciprocity of the terms in relation to the Christian Majority that was also excluded and remained in Istanbul.

2. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the 'Great Idea' was the main ideological force of the newly created Greek state for most of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The main aim was to liberate all regions which were inhabited by Greek-speaking Christian Orthodox populations and have not been included in the independent Greek state. The Great idea reflected the prophecies for liberation, well known during the Ottoman empire (Clogg 1995: p.50)

3. And subsequently for the Greeks that remained in Turkey, a subject beyond the interests of the present study

4. At the time of Herodotus all people who lived south of the Haimos and Rhodopi ranges including the Aegean, Propontis and Macedonia were called Thracians. The people on the north of this border were considered as 'barbarians' (Delopoulos 1994: p.351).

5. This is an unchanged boundary since the era of Macedonian domination in the 4th century BC.

6. According to Rozakis there are three reasons that the question of language and religion are not included in recent censuses. First, as an effort by the Greek state to integrate the population into one linguistic and religious body. Second, due to Greek conservatism which stems from the limited mobility of a large part of the population and from the relative isolation of the country. Third, the fact that some of the minorities, like the Muslim one, have been identified with the territorial claims of neighbouring countries. (Rozakis 1996: p.98)

7. Recent efforts, mainly from Christian Greeks, have been made to highlight and support a Pomak culture for example to create a written form of Pomak language or collect folk songs and poetry which is mostly condemned by the Pomaks (the same efforts have been made for the Muslim Rom).

8. More on these sources are mentioned in the study of the Rom by Zegkines (1994).

9. Three examples show a weak civic identity of the Muslim citizens as mentioned in the previous chapter. To recap, first, for the Christian population all civic duties are performed by state institutions. For the Muslims, certain civil duties such as divorce or inheritance issues, are performed by the religious authority of the Mufti (although legally such duties can be pursued by the Greek civil institutions). Second, some Muslim conscripts were not allowed to carry guns, instead being allocated to secondary and unarmed services. This practice has recently stopped but overall, in the army policies and attitudes regarding the Muslim minority are not yet clear (Marangoudakis & Kelly 2000: p.10). Third, a segregated educational system leaves little room for a shared culture. Some of the curriculum is common for both Muslim and Christian students: however, the existence of separate schools satisfies the terms of the Lausanne Treaty, whilst widening the gap in Western Thrace society. There have been recent changes – what the government calls 'a positive discrimination' system – to encourage the entrance of Muslim students into Greek universities. These changes, as in the case of the army, coincide with the state's recent efforts to strengthen a Greek civic society that is also weak in comparison to other European societies.

10. Lack of access is not a problem only confined to Western Thrace, as many Aegean islands and other mountainous areas also face similar problems.

11. It can be argued that another reason for this agreement was an effort to keep alive the expansionist ideas of both sides concerned.

12. While the Serbo-Bulgarian tension was escalating, Rumania also started to march towards Sofia and Turks advanced its eastern border taking once more Adrianople. In the outcome of this war, Bulgaria was in a very weak position (Crampton 1983: pp.422-423)

13. The north part of Macedonia was annexed to Serbia, Greece gained Thessaloniki and north Epiros (today southern Albania) and the port of Kavala in the eastern part of Macedonia.

14. In 1920 the Treaty of Sèvres was signed between Greece and the Ottoman empire according to which Smyrna was to be administered by Greece for five years and could be annexed to Greece if the people decided so. In addition, the Treaty annexed to Greece the area of Eastern Thrace which together with Western Thrace gave Greece entire control over the Aegean coastline. (Stavrianos 2000: p.581). However, Turkey never ratified the Treaty.

15. During the First World War the 'Great Idea' was not the predominant ideology that united the Greeks. In contrast it became the source of a deep disagreement also known in modern Greek history as *Ethnikos Dihasmos* (*National Schism*). The controversy lay over the issue of Greek participation in the First World War. The National Schism of 1915-16 had left deep divisions within the Greek society: divisions that also reappear in the later period of the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) (Clogg 1995: p.153). The issue of National Schism affected the position of ethnic minorities who were viewed with suspicion as their vote protested against Greek nationalism and was perceived as a threat to Greek sovereignty (see also chapter 7). (Mavrogordatos 1983: p. 238).

16. Greece was unable to put forward any further claims in Eastern Thrace; the borders of the two countries converged at the river Evros, and remain the same today. The total area of Thracian territory incorporated by Greece was 8,586km$^2$. According to the terms of the treaty the two countries were

under mutual obligation to maintain a demilitarised zone of thirty kilometres wide on either sides of the borders. (Svolopoulos 1994: p.268).

17. It should be noted that all provisions and obligations refer to non-Muslim populations of Turkey. Article 45 highlights the same obligations for Greece: The rights conferred by the provisions of the present Section on the non-Muslim minorities of Turkey will be similarly conferred by Greece on the Muslim minority in her territory.

18. Even during the 1920s there were members attached to Turkish nationalist ideals, but they did not have the degree of influence of the religious elite.

19. The Asia Minor Greeks faced many problems adapting to Greek society. Most were impoverished as they left everything behind, some spoke only Turkish or Greek dialects and many lost members of their families during the war. Most importantly, the refugees carried the memories of their lost land for many decades after their arrival, which prolonged their incorporation into Greek society.

20. The good relations were disturbed in the middle of the 1950's. The increasing conflict over Cyprus and the involvement of British and American diplomacy led to the persecution of the Greek minority in Istanbul (Clogg, 1995: p.159). In fear for their lives many Greeks fled Turkey. By 1990 only about 3,000 Greeks resided in Istanbul and a few hundred in Imvros and Tenedos (ibid.: p. 224) and this means that the Lausanne Treaty terms for population reciprocity have been undermined. These events however did not have an impact on the Muslim minority in Western Thrace (Alexandris & Paresoglou 1994: p.820). As Herakleidis argues, Greece was very careful in handling the situation of the Greek minority in Istanbul and did not seek to adopt similar measures against the Muslims in Western Thrace in 1955, as well as in later crises. (Herakleidis 1997: p.233)

21. One example is the appointment of the Rom Muslim (Ahmed Damatoglou) as a Mufti of Didimotihon (in the prefecture of Evros) in 1973 and a non-Muslim as a chairman of the council for the administration of religious organisations in the prefecture of Xanthi. (Poulton, 1993: p.184).

22. The Mufti has judicial duties such as over family or inheritance matters and is responsible for the appointment of the imams (clergy) and the management of religious property (*vakoufia*).

# Chapter 6

## Education of the Muslim Minority

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## 1. Introduction

Education is a significant feature of every modern state, playing an important role in the creation of a common national identity above any other 'sub-identity' based on class, locality, religion or language. For this reason it can often be observed that educational issues feature prominently in political agendas. Moreover, primary importance is given to education with the creation of new states or in international agreements signed by states (Smith 1991: p.118).

In most cases, national identity is closely related to the values of the major/dominant ethnic group and education is the vehicle for the formation and perpetuation of their ethnic identity (Fragoudaki 1995: p.15). Ethnic or religious minority groups in a society can often find themselves outsiders as far as this side of education is concerned. For the same reason, education often becomes the object of grievance and dissatisfaction for members of ethnic or religious minorities. Minority education can become a point of unification where particular ethnic or religious identities are formed and preserved.

In Greece the education of the Muslim minority, which is common for the three ethnic groups (Turks, Pomaks and Rom), is defined by the Lausanne Treaty (1923) and other subsequent agreements between Greece and Turkey. Despite the existence of these agreements, Muslim education has proved to be a subject of controversy. There have been complaints from members of the Muslim minority about an increasing 'Hellenisation' of the Muslim minority education system on one hand and the inadequate quality of education on the other. There are differing views on Muslim education between the two ideological trends, the 'Modernists' and 'Old Muslims'[1]. The subject of Muslim

education is not only a Muslim concern but is often featured in existing academic literature concerning the Muslims of Western Thrace (see Appendix 1).

The present chapter explores Muslim education by concentrating on three issues. First, the various agreements between Greece and Turkey and their articles will be examined. Briefly, the major document for the definition of Muslim minority education is the Lausanne Treaty. The 1923 Treaty was followed by the Educational Agreement of 1951 (initiated by the Council of Europe), the Vienna report of 1967 and the Educational Protocol of 1968. Since 1968 there have been no further agreements between the two counties regarding the education of the Muslim minority but successive Greek governments have introduced legislation in attempts to modernise the educational system.

The chapter next examines the structure of Muslim education at primary, secondary and tertiary level. The educational agreements between Greece and Turkey cover only primary schools. This section discusses the effects and complications of this arrangement as many Muslim students continue their secondary and tertiary education in Turkey.

Following this, the chapter then concentrates on particular problems faced by the Muslim students in the present educational system. Significant factors are poor linguistic skills, compounded by bilingualism, trilingualism, and the low level of education in the Muslim community in general. Moreover, the difference in pedagogical style of the Greek and Muslim teacher creates controversial attitudes towards authority. Finally, despite education being compulsory for all students for nine years, most Muslim female students finish their education in primary school after six years. Neither the Greek state nor the Muslim leadership is especially proactive in challenging this situation.

In general terms, the aim of the chapter is to show that due to state agreements and the structure of the Muslim minority educational system, Muslim students today face problems that become an obstacle to their personal

and career development and subsequent status in society. The agreements were the result of particular periods in Greek-Turkish relations rather than the outcome of fruitful efforts to improve the education of the respective minorities. Recent regulations and initiatives such as the scheme for 'positive discrimination' in the entrance criteria for universities, the abolition in 1995 of the special licence in the mountainous area have brought positive results as more Muslim students started to attend higher education. However, these can be viewed only as initial steps and further actions are required both from the state and the Muslim minority to overcome these obstacles.

## 2. Treaties and Agreements concerning the Education of the Muslim Minority

Muslim education since the mid-1980s has became the object of grievances between the members of the Muslim minority and the Greek authorities. These grievances were triggered by the authoring and circulation of books in the Turkish language by the Greek state instead of those supplied by Turkey as had been the case until then. The Greek government justified its actions by arguing that the books from Turkey took such a considerable time to arrive that the students' curriculum suffered as a consequence whilst the Muslims perceived it as an effort of assimilation. Demonstrations followed and the Greek-produced books were publicly burned.

This was the most extreme incident that expressed the opposition of the Muslim minority to the Greek government[2]. Looking at the short history of the area it can be observed that educational issues have been consistently the subject of talks, agreements, treaties and regulations signed by Greece and Turkey at various historical moments. All these shaped the structure of the Muslim minority educational system and the equivalent Greek educational system in Turkey.

The signing of the Lausanne Treaty in 1923 constituted the Muslim minority in Western Thrace - and at the same time the Greek population of Istanbul, Tenedos and Imvros - as a legal entity. The various articles of the Treaty were designed to protect the basic rights of the two respective minority populations with regard to their cultural, linguistic and religious freedom and survival.

Articles 37-45 of the Treaty specified particular issues that needed to be guaranteed protection. According to Articles 40 to 42, both Greece and Turkey were obliged to provide adequate facilities for Muslim/Christian children (respectively) to be educated in their native language. However, the state could also include its official language in the school curriculum as a compulsory lesson where it was deemed important. In areas inhabited by minority populations, both states were to contribute economic assistance to the educational establishments. In addition to these provisions, minority populations had every right to set up and manage any charitable organisations, religious or private educational establishments that were privately funded and used the minority's own language (see also chapter 5).

Whilst the provisions of the Lausanne Treaty established the basic principles for the education of the minority populations in Greece and Turkey, they were not adequate to cover all future issues and therefore further agreements that followed were based on the reciprocity clause[3]. The first attempt by Greece and Turkey at the creation of a legal framework for the Muslim minority in Greece was in the 1930s. Following the agreements in the area of Western Thrace, the Greek language was introduced as compulsory in Muslim schools for certain lessons. It was also during the thirties that the Muslim schools in Greece started to carry the label 'Turkish' schools and were characterised as such by the Prime Minister, Venizelos[4].

More serious consideration was given to the issue of education after the Second World War. Three separate agreements were reached between Greece and Turkey during that period.

*2.2 The Educational Agreement of 1951*

In April 1951, Greece and Turkey signed a five-year Educational Agreement (*morfotiki simfonia*). During this period there were equal numbers of minority populations in both states: the Greek population in Istanbul and Muslim minority population in Western Thrace. The year after the agreement took place both Greece and Turkey became part of NATO[5]. This agreement which was signed in a brief period of détente between the two countries was significant in establishing a Turkish education system in Western Thrace (Anagnostou 1999: p.161).

In addition, it should be noted that the agreement took place not as a Greek-Turkish initiative to solve the educational problems of their respective minorities but instead under the guidance of the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Council of Europe. On the 5th of November 1949, the Committee of the Foreign Ministers of the Council of Europe advised the states' members of the Council to establish educational agreements. Responding to this in Ankara in 1951, Greece and Turkey proceeded to sign the agreement. A committee composed of two Turkish and two Greek members was set up to enforce the agreement. As well as meeting at least once annually to discuss any progress, this committee met every time there was a problem (Panagiotidis 1995: p. 27).

The proposals of the 1951 Educational Agreement (ratified in 1952 in Greece) included the establishment of educational institutions, the exchange of instructors, students and teaching materials, the establishment of scholarships and the teaching of the Greek/Turkish language, history and literature in the respective educational establishments. It was proposed that each country should establish cultural institutions and youth centres and promote the free circulation of books and other publications.

The most important part of this agreement for the future of the Muslim education in Greece was the introduction of the Turkish language using the Latin alphabet which came to gradually replace (until the 1970s) the commonly used Arabic language and alphabet (Tsitselikis 1996: p.352). This feature reflects the ideological trends within the Muslim community itself. As we have seen, during the 1950s, the influence of the 'Modernist' wing started to increase. This more secularised ideological trend within the Muslim minority encouraged closer links with Turkey and campaigned for the introduction of Turkish language in primary schools. For the first time the Pomak and the Rom populations were taught Turkish as the main language of the Muslim minority. This is often viewed in the existing literature as a turning point for the future unification of the Muslim minority.

*2.3 The Vienna Report 1968*

The Vienna report (*ekthesi tis Viennis*) came after the critical time in the Greek-Turkish relations during the 1950s and 1960s. Although it is not a treaty as such with binding clauses it is nevertheless seen as being an important first step towards the 1968 educational protocol that sought to improve general relations between the two countries (Panagiotidis 1996: 27). In 1968 the foreign ministers of Greece and Turkey agreed each to appoint a representative who would investigate the particular problems of the two states with special emphasis on the minorities. The representatives would then report to their governments.

The two representatives explored the existing problems and proposed solutions for the areas that needed further investigation. On the issue of education, the need for minority languages to be used freely in the school curriculum was highlighted along with the serious lack of school books in minority languages in the Muslim minority community of Western Thrace and that of the Greek minority of Istanbul, Tenedos and Imvros. Additionally, the reinstatement of state teachers (Greek and Turkish respectively in minority schools) who were removed during the turbulent years in the 1960s was

proposed. Finally, it was agreed to prohibit the use of labels or the organisation of school events that would be insulting to the 'religious or ethnic consciousness of the Greek and Turkish people' (ibid.: p.28). In real terms this last suggestion was aimed at the removal of controversial labels such as the 'Turkish school' in Western Thrace.

*2.4 The Greek -Turkish Educational Protocol of 1968*

The Vienna proposals were considered and approved by the foreign ministers of Greece and Turkey at their meeting in London on 27th of June 1968. This report led to the 1968 Educational Protocol (*Morfotiko Protokolo*) signed by the dictatorial Greek government and the then Turkish government. The 1951 Agreement contained few articles that were legally binding and most merely suggested what was thought best for the minority population rather than committing the states to formal obligations.

According to the 1968 Protocol for the Muslims of Western Thrace, the use of the Greek and Turkish languages, suggested in the 1951 Agreement, was officially established. More particularly Turkish was agreed upon as the working language for most subjects with the exception of history, geography and the Greek language. The study of the environment was added to the list of Greek-language taught lessons at a later date (a more detailed examination of this subject list and working languages will take place later in the chapter). Educational materials and books in Turkish were to be sent and distributed by Turkey - or Greece for the Greek minority in Turkey - after an initial approval from the Greek State. Finally, the Protocol governed issues of discrimination in the classroom of both Muslim and Greek students respectively. Teachers were given guidelines for their behaviour in the classroom and were not permitted to remark or comment on sensitive issues.

Again, as in the case of the 1951 Agreement, the 1968 Protocol also marks an ideological change within the Muslim population in Western Thrace. The establishment of the Turkish language as a second working language in the

classroom for all sections of the Muslims minority (Turks-Pomaks-Rom) can be identified with the aims and aspirations of the 'Modernists' who emphasised the provision of a more secular, state-based education (in this case the Turkish state). It was from that point on that a more ethnically unifying educational system was to follow.

## 2.5 From the Protocol to today

Both the 1951 Agreement and the 1968 Protocol can be considered to be the initial steps towards a legal framework for the education of the Muslim minority. A further step taken by the Greek government in 1969 was the establishment of a Special Pedagogical Academy in Thessaloniki offering a primary school teacher training course for Muslim students. The creation of this Special Academy gave students the opportunity to continue their higher education in Greece (although only for the profession of primary school teacher), upgraded the quality of teachers training and most significantly aimed at reducing the number of the Turkish teachers employed in the Muslim schools of Western Thrace[6]. (Tsitselikis 1996: 350)

In addition to the opening of the Special Academy, further laws were introduced from 1977 onwards, which gave a more clarified structure to Muslim primary education. Two of the most important were law 694/77 and law 695/77. The first defined the establishment of Muslim schools as part of Muslim education as public (i.e. a state provision) with accordance to the Lausanne Treaty. It also sets the criteria for opening Muslim schools and their general management and inspection. The second, law 695/77, referred to the legal framework for the employment of Muslim teachers including the trained teachers in the Special Academy (ibid.).

After 1991, the thrust of the general policy towards Western Thrace and minority issues changed[7]. Educational policy was also reviewed and changes took place with the introduction of law 2341/95. As seen above, a system of 'positive discrimination' was introduced enabling Muslim students to continue

their education in the Greek universities and technical schools. According to this system the Muslim students were required to pass the general university exams, but the method of admission was more advantageous for them than for Greek students. Muslim students were encouraged to follow Greek tertiary education instead of going to Turkish universities, which until 1996 had been almost the only option for Muslim students. This encouragement, on one hand, gave more opportunities to Muslim students from various economic backgrounds to achieve the same educational standards as Christians. On the other hand, attendance in Greek universities aimed at reducing the Turkish nationalist influence on the members of Western Thrace[8]. The effects of these reforms are examined later in chapter.

## 3. The Structure of the Muslim minority Education

### 3.1 Pre-school Education

Pre-school education in Greece is provided by nursery schools and attendance is compulsory. The duration of studies is for two years from age of $3^{1/2}$ to $5^{1/2}$.

According to the official publication on the Greek educational system, the role of nursery schools is "to help infants develop physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially within the context of the wider purpose set by primary and secondary education"[9]. Increasingly pre-school education is regarded by education specialists as highly beneficial for preparing children to enter school life.

Pre-school education for Muslim students is not part of the above educational agreements and therefore is not provided as part of the Muslim educational system. The main reason for this exclusion is that pre-school education was not widely available at the time of the treaties for either community. However, when nursery schools were established for the Christian population all over the country no steps were taken for a pre-school Muslim education.

The opening of nursery schools in the Muslim educational system is considered to be, by both Christians and Muslim teachers of particular benefit as an introduction to the bilingual education that follows in primary schools (Tsitselikis 1996: p358). Despite the perceived benefits until recently there had been reluctance to raise the issue. For example some members of the Muslim community took the view that the introduction of nursery schools would be as part of an assimilation process - as can be seen in the letter of Nazim Reficka, Editor of a local newspaper[10] (cited in Panagiotidis 1996: p. 102).

For the Greek government too, the establishment of nursery schools posed practical problems such as the issue of qualified Muslim nursery school teachers (already a controversial area for primary education as we shall see later). It should be mentioned however, that pre-school education appears increasingly in the demands of the Muslim minority and featured in all interviews of the present study. Today there are about 185 nursery schools established in Muslim areas following the demand of local parents. However, nursery schools are part of the Greek/Christian mainstream educational system and the instruction language is therefore Greek[11]. In this way, bilingual education is not being introduced to students.

3.2 Primary Muslim Education

Today there are about 230 Muslim minority primary schools in Western Thrace and the student attendance starts at $5^{1/2}$ years old, as in the case of the Christian students. The ethnic composition of these schools can be divided into four categories: schools where the students are predominately Turkish, schools with mainly Pomak students, schools with Rom children and finally mixed schools where Muslim students from all three ethnic groups attend (Kanakidou 1994: p.72-73). Table 5 below shows in more detail the distribution of Muslim schools of each category in the three prefectures of Western Thrace. The ethnic composition of schools depends mainly on the geographical distribution of the Muslim population.

**Table 5:** Ethnic Composition of Muslim primary schools

| Ethnic Composition | Xanthi | Rhodopi | Evros | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turks | 32 | 78 | 8 | 118 |
| Pomak | 38 | 26 | 9 | 73 |
| Rom | - | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Mixed | 6 | 28 | 1 | 35 |
| **Total** | **76** | **135** | **21** | **232** |

Source: in Panagiotidis 1996: p.39

*3.2.1 Classes and Language*

As we have seen previously, according to educational agreements signed by Greece and Turkey (1951, 1968), Turkish and Greek were established as the teaching languages in Muslim primary schools. Turkish was treated as the mother tongue and Greek as the official language. Following the above agreements further laws were passed from 1968 onwards and provided a specific curriculum, teaching timetable and schoolbooks for Muslim primary schools.

Accordingly, subjects such as history and geography are taught in the Greek language, and the subjects of religion, arithmetic/geometry and natural history are taught in Turkish. Books for subjects taught in Greek are provided by the Greek State and are the same as the ones circulated in Christian schools all over the country. For the subjects taught in the Turkish language, the books are provided by Turkey, and since the 1990s, as we have seen, by Greece.

The following two Tables provide more analytical information about the classes taken by Muslim primary School students.

**Table 6:** Hours per week spent in Greek language lessons

| Subjects | Primary School Year | | | | | | Total hours per week |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | |
| Greek language | 11 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 62 |
| History | - | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| Geography | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| Civic education | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Environment | 2 | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | 6 |
| Singing lessons | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 3 |
| Physical education | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 3 |
| **Total** | **14** | **14** | **15** | **16** | **16** | **16** | **91** |

Source: The data is from the Kanakidou study, 1994: pp. 83-91

**Table 7: Hours per week spent in Turkish language lessons**

| Subjects | Primary school Year | | | | | | Total hours per week |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | |
| Religion | - | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 14 |
| Turkish language | 8 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 46 |
| Maths-Geometry | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 18 |
| Natural history | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| Handicrafts | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| Singing Lessons | ½ | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 | ½ | ½ | 3 |
| Physical education | ½ | 1/2 | 1/2 | ½ | ½ | ½ | 3 |
| **Total** | **13** | **18** | **17** | **17** | **17** | **17** | **99** |

Source: The data is from the Kanakidou study, 1994: pp. 83-91

In primary schools, Muslim students come into contact formally with the Greek language for the first time – this is especially true for those students who come from more isolated areas of the countryside or mountain villages. Lack of pre-school education also delays the introduction to the Greek language and makes the process more abrupt.

As can be observed in Table 6, the number hours for the Greek language lessons remains fairly stable throughout the years. By comparison, the hours spent in Turkish language lessons increase after the second year and remain the same until the end (Table 7). Combined, the hours taught in each language are approximately the same (i.e. the students are taught only a few more hours in Turkish language). However the students face linguistic difficulties in the Greek taught subjects. From the very beginning, due to lack of background knowledge of Greek the educational material cannot be completely covered, a situation that the effects of which are seen in later years. For example, when the subject of geography taught in Greek is introduced in the 4th year, Muslim students can lack a fundamental vocabulary such as 'river' or 'lake'. The Christian teacher therefore experiences difficulties in the classroom (Kanakidou, 1994: p.90). The same problems arise when history and civic education are introduced.

There is also a problem with the Greek books that are distributed in Muslim schools. As it has been mentioned earlier, the books for the Greek taught lessons are the same as the ones in Christian schools for national curriculum. These books are therefore designed for students who have first, Greek as a mother tongue and are familiar with the Greek alphabet (ibid.: 85) and second, do not receive a bilingual education. This difficulty with the books combined with the obstacle of covering the appropriate material in each year as laid down by the ministerial guidelines is repeated throughout primary school. Most importantly, this incomplete education reflects upon the performance of Muslim students in secondary schools, as we shall see later.

*3.2.2 Teaching Staff*

According to the Treaties, Christian teachers are responsible for the lessons taught in Greek and Muslim teachers responsible for lessons in Turkish. In total there are about 320 Christian teachers and 420 Muslim teachers teaching in the Muslim primary schools of Western Thrace in 1996 (Panagiotidis, 1996: p.48).

Muslim primary school teachers are divided into two categories on the basis of their citizenship. The first category covers teachers of Turkish citizenship, whose number is defined by the Foreign Ministry. This is organised as part of the Lausanne Treaty and the reciprocal arrangement which is in place for an equivalent number of Greek teachers to teach in Greek schools in Turkey. In the second category are teachers who are Greek Muslim citizens who can be graduates of three different educational establishments: pedagogical colleges / universities in Turkey, the Special Pedagogical Academy in Greece, and special Muslim religious schools (Kanakidou 1994: p.76, Panagiotidis 1996: p.48).

The following Table shows the composition of Muslim primary school teachers in Western Thrace:

**Table 8:** Composition of Muslim primary school teachers (1996)

|  | Christians | Greek Muslims | | | Turkish Citizens teachers | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Special Pedagogical Academy | Graduates from a Turkish Academy | Graduates from Religious Schools |  |  |
| Total | 348 | 247 | 93 | 81 | 9 | 778 |

Source: the data is provided in Panagiotidis 1996: p. 48

The graduates from the Turkish academies usually take a more 'modernist' view of the Muslim minority affairs. The graduates from religious schools are mainly employed privately and usually become Imams (local Muslim priests) in the villages. In the past, graduates from the religious academy were members of the 'old-Muslim' wing of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace, attached to more traditional values and conservative views and ideologically opposed to the 'Modernists'.

The establishment in the 1970s of the Special Pedagogical Academy in Thessaloniki and the placement of its graduates in Muslim minority schools for teaching lessons in the Turkish language had two specific aims. First, to replace teacher-graduates of Turkish academies who had little Greek education, and second to replace the 'Old Muslim' religious teachers whose education was mainly theological. These religious teachers were called upon to teach all lessons, even the sciences. Overall, the Greek state aimed to reduce the number of teachers with a Turkish nationalist bias. As a result of this ideological goal, initially some members of the Muslim minority did not always welcome graduates from the Special Pedagogical Academy and were suspicious of the teachers. The issue of the Special Pedagogical Academy still remains controversial (see Appendix 1).

## 3.3 Secondary Education

Secondary education in Greece consists of two levels. The *gymnasium* lasts for three years and is compulsory for every student between the ages of 12-15. The role of the *gymnasium* is to provide a general education at a high level. The *lyceum*, the second level, is also for three years for students between the ages of 15-18 and is not compulsory. Education in the lyceum is more specialised and is designed to prepare students for university entrance examinations.

Neither the Lausanne Treaty nor any of the other treaties that followed gave a legal framework for Muslim secondary education. The Greek government had to deal with the problem of Muslim secondary education from the 1960s onwards when the demand arose. It was also at that time that nine-year compulsory education was introduced as a minimum requirement at an international level (Tsitselikis 1996: p. 357).

Today the following type of schools provide secondary education for Muslim students

a. Two Muslim minority *gymnasiums* and *lyceums*: The Tzelal Bayar gymnasium in Komotini opened in 1952 and the Muslim minority gymnasium in Xanthi opened in 1965.

b. Two religious schools, one in Rhodopi and the other in Echinos (in the prefecture of Xanthi)

c. Five mainstream secondary (*gymnasium* and *lysium*) schools in the mountainous areas of both Rhodopi and Xanthi. All lessons are taught in Greek with exception of religion, which is taught in Turkish.

In the first category, the two schools are private and function in the same way as other private schools in the country (Kanakidou 1994: p.77). The first Muslim secondary schools opened in 1952 in Rhodopi and the second in 1965 in Xanthi. Lessons are taught for equal hours in both languages and are staffed with both Muslim and Christian teachers.

The two religious schools function in the same way as other religious schools in Greece. The emphasis is on theology but other lessons are taught as well. The duration of the study here is five years. In the past, graduates from these schools used to be employed as teachers in Muslim schools. In many cases, they also became the imams of the village. Since 1978, the law concerning their job eligibility changed. Graduates can now only be employed under private contracts rather than the civil service contracts that ordinary teachers (both Christian and Muslim) hold, and knowledge of Greek language is a prerequisite.

The aim of opening the five mainstream secondary schools in the mountainous areas was twofold. That is, to provide more school positions for the Muslim students while making the Greek mainstream education more attractive to Muslims. The establishment of these schools was accompanied by a new system of university entrance requirements particularly favourable to the Muslim students.

In general terms however, the lack of a defined policy on secondary education has led to some gaps in Muslim education. Many Muslim students choose to continue their education in Turkey. Low standards in Greek language, due in part to the difficulties experienced in primary school education, poorly equipped schools and other pedagogical shortcomings, as will be discussed later in the chapter, cannot prepare adequately the Muslim students for Greek university entrance. A Turkish university therefore is often the only other option open to Muslim students[12].

## 3.4 University Education

There are two possibilities for those Muslim students once they have completed their secondary education and who want to continue to further education in Greece. First, they can choose to enter into the national exam system and compete for places under the general entrance examination system, with the recently introduced more favourable terms. Accordingly, Muslim students can enter universities through a quota system rather than solely on their performance in written examinations. The same system applies to immigrant and repatriated students.

The second option for Muslim students is to study at the Special Pedagogical Academy in Thessaloniki. Graduates from this Academy can be employed as teachers in Muslim minority primary schools. The duration of study at the Academy is two years and is considered particularly low in comparison to the equivalent teacher training courses for Greek mainstream schools which last four years. Other two-year teacher training courses existed until the beginning of the 1990s but considered inadequate and they were replaced by a four-year course. Despite this decision, the Special Pedagogical Academy for the training of Muslim teachers remains a two-year course (see Appendix 1).

Graduates of the Special Pedagogical Academy have also the option to transfer on to other university departments following the completion of their

two-year course if they so wish. In addition, due to high demand and also as part of the law governing Muslim priests[13], the Special Pedagogical Academy has included a department for Muslim Religious Studies to meet the educational requirements of Imams.


## 4. Section III: School Attendance and Problems faced by Muslim Students

### 4.1 Schools attendance

As has been mentioned above, school attendance is compulsory for all children for nine years, from primary school to the first level of secondary education (*gymnasium*). Statistics from the three prefectures of Western Thrace show that in fact primary school attendance by Muslim students is quite low and continuation to secondary education is even lower. On the next page, Table 9 shows in detail the number of students registering in Muslim primary schools in the years between 1984 and 1986.

Table 10 shows the numbers of students graduating from the Muslim primary schools six years later. The data provided includes details from the three different prefectures and levels of attendance are arranged according to gender. The low number of students in the Prefecture of Evros results from only a fraction of Muslims (mainly Rom and Pomaks) inhabiting the area. It is worth mentioning that most Muslims in Rhodopi are Turks whereas more Pomaks inhabit the area of Xanthi (for more details see chapter 5 and Appendix 1).

Considering the data in Table 9, it is clear that of the students registering in Muslim minority primary schools, only about 70% actually graduate (Table 10). To take for example the years 1986-87, 2028 Muslims students were registered in Muslim primary schools in all three prefectures. From that number only 1467 actually graduated in the years 1991-92.

The percentage for girls is lower with only 68% in the data provided graduating from the primary schools. The reason for this gender distinction in school attendance lies principally in the values of traditional Muslim society. Girls entering adulthood are considered to be ready to assume the role of women with the result that only a small part of them continue their education.

The data does not reveal great differences among the prefectures. Both in Xanthi and Rhodopi, only 70% of the students registered in primary education actually graduate. In the prefecture of Evros, the percentage of Muslim students leaving school earlier is higher, but one explanation for this is that Rom children are less likely to follow formal education than the other two ethnic groups (Panagiotidis 1996: p. 42).

**Table 9: Registration in Muslim Primary Schools in the period 1984-1987**

| Prefecture | 1984-85 | | | 1985-86 | | | 1986-87 | | | Total | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | Total |
| Evros | 65 | 54 | 119 | 89 | 63 | 152 | 80 | 88 | 168 | 234 | 205 | 439 |
| Rhodopi | 556 | 526 | 1082 | 648 | 575 | 575 | 562 | 771 | 1033 | 1766 | 1572 | 3338 |
| Xanthi | 391 | 403 | 794 | 412 | 406 | 406 | 429 | 398 | 827 | 1232 | 1207 | 2439 |
| Total | 1012 | 983 | 1995 | 1149 | 1044 | 2193 | 1071 | 957 | 2028 | 3232 | 2984 | 6216 |

Source: Co-ordination Office of Minority Schools, Ministry of Education provided in Panagiotidis 1996: p.41

**Table 10: Graduation from Muslim Primary Schools in the period 1989-1992**

| Prefecture | 1989-90 | | | 1990-91 | | | 1991-92 | | | Total | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | Total |
| Evros | 34 | 31 | 65 | 48 | 47 | 95 | 57 | 37 | 94 | 133 | 115 | 254 |
| Rhodopi | 439 | 367 | 806 | 411 | 329 | 740 | 396 | 352 | 748 | 1246 | 1048 | 2294 |
| Xanthi | 325 | 296 | 621 | 300 | 303 | 603 | 335 | 290 | 625 | 960 | 889 | 1849 |
| Total | 798 | 694 | 1492 | 759 | 679 | 1438 | 788 | 679 | 1467 | 2345 | 2052 | 4397 |

Source: Co-ordination Office of Minority Schools, Ministry of Education provided in Panagiotidis 1996: p.41

## Table 11: Registration in Secondary Greek Gymnasiums

| Prefecture | 1990-91 | | | 1991-92 | | | 1992-93 | | | Total | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | Total |
| Evros | 9 | 1 | 10 | 17 | 3 | 20 | 20 | 4 | 24 | 46 | 8 | 54 |
| Rhodopi | 64 | 30 | 94 | 88 | 41 | 129 | 114 | 57 | 171 | 266 | 128 | 394 |
| Xanthi | 92 | 59 | 151 | 103 | 65 | 168 | 146 | 79 | 225 | 341 | 203 | 544 |
| Total | 165 | 90 | 255 | 208 | 109 | 317 | 280 | 140 | 420 | 653 | 339 | 992 |

Source: Co-ordination Office of Minority Schools, Ministry of Education

## Table 12: Registration in Secondary Muslim Gymnasiums

| | 1990-91 | | | 1991-92 | | | 1992-93 | | | Total | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | Total |
| Evros | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Rhodopi | 98 | 30 | 128 | 102 | 31 | 133 | 92 | 34 | 126 | 292 | 95 | 387 |
| Xanthi | 19 | 18 | 37 | 37 | 18 | 55 | 31 | 15 | 46 | 87 | 51 | 138 |
| Total | 117 | 48 | 165 | 139 | 49 | 188 | 123 | 49 | 172 | 379 | 146 | 525 |

Source: Co-ordination Office of Minority Schools, Ministry of Education

As highlighted in the Panagiotidis study, school attendance for Muslim students in secondary schools drops dramatically. Most students appear to finish their formal education in primary school. Tables 11 and 12 show the levels of secondary school registration of Muslim students between 1990 and 1993 (see Tables 9 and 10). Data is provided for both Greek mainstream education and Muslim minority schools at secondary level. Gender and residential distribution are two factors included in the statistics.

Comparing Tables 10, 11 and 12, the data shows that only 34% of the students in total graduating from primary schools between the period 1989 to 1992 actually registered in secondary education. Following the previous example, in the period 1991-1992, 1467 students graduated from Muslim primary schools. Combining the numbers from Tables 11 and 12 it is apparent that only 592 students registered in secondary education. A percentage of Muslims followed secondary education in Turkey. There is no concrete data showing how many students choose this option but the percentage is not high. It can therefore be concluded that less than half of Muslim students enter secondary education.

As far as female secondary education is concerned, the data from Tables 11 and 12 shows that only 23% of girls register. This figure is half of the 44% level reported for boys registering in secondary schools. The values of the traditional Muslim society again largely account for the difference. For example, the onset of puberty prohibits women mixing with men. Under these circumstances girls are hesitant or are not allowed by their parents to continue their education in mixed secondary schools. As there are no single sex schools in Greece, it is not possible to establish whether more girls would be encouraged to continue if there was such a provision.

Attendance in mainstream secondary schools and Muslim minority secondary schools is of equal numbers in Rhodopi. In the case of Xanthi, more Muslim students follow the mainstream secondary schools. One reason for this

difference is that there are more Pomak people inhabiting the mountainous areas of Xanthi and the only Muslim minority secondary school is situated in the town of Xanthi, this would make commuting from these villages to the Muslim schools very difficult. As a consequence the students attend the five mainstream secondary schools operating within their immediate areas.

Data from the three prefectures shows that there is little difference between Xanthi (36%) and Rhodopi (34%) with regard to numbers of students attending secondary education. In contrast, in the prefecture of Evros, only 21% of Muslim students continue their education to the secondary level. This again illustrates that Rom children are less likely to attend secondary schools.

The above figures for school attendance reveal that less than half of the Muslim students register for secondary education, despite a nine-year period in education being compulsory. There is not the same detailed data for Muslim students graduating from secondary schools. Table 13 shows the percentages of Muslim students that follow the 9 years of compulsory education in the prefecture of Rhodopi only.

**Table 13:** Progress of Muslim students in the Prefecture of Rhodopi

| 1986-87 | 1991-92 | 1994-95 |
|---|---|---|
| Registered in the 1$^{st}$ year of primary school | Graduated from primary schools | Graduated from Greek mainstream secondary schools |
| 1033 | 748 | 121 |

Source: Data from Panagiotidis 1996, p. 45

Although definite conclusions cannot be drawn from the above table, the data clearly indicates the low percentage of students that actually graduate from secondary schools.

## 4.2 Problems faced by Muslim Students

As it has been mentioned previously in the chapter, according to Greek-Turkish agreements made in 1951 and 1968, the Turkish language was established as the mother tongue for the Muslim minority and Greek as the official language. The educational system was accordingly adapted with some of the subjects in primary school being taught in Turkish. This move highlighted the development of the closer connections between the Muslim community and Turkey on the one hand and on the other, the unification of members of all three ethnic groups under a 'Turkish identity' (see Appendix 1). Thus, under the new legislation, Pomaks and Rom were taught in Turkish. The teaching of Turkish to the Pomak population was also favoured by Greece as a means of discouraging any possible contacts of the (slavophone) Pomaks with the then Communist Bulgaria (Anagnostou 1999: p.165)

The way the educational system functions today however, means that Muslim students from all three ethnic groups face language problems. In addition to the social segregation between the Muslim and Christian societies these problems stem further from three factors. The first of which is the existence of bilingual education. Language matters become especially complex for Pomak and Rom children when in addition to their own language they are exposed to a trilingual environment. Second, their family environment and rural social background have been traced as contributory factors to their poor linguistic skills during school years. Finally, the different pedagogical style between Christian and Muslim teachers highlights the lack of knowledge and practice of education in a multi-lingual, multi-cultural environment.

### 4.2.1 Bilingual Education

The incorporation of bilingual education in Muslim primary schools aims to safeguard the linguistic rights of the Muslim minority. In school students are introduced formally to the two cultural environments which surround them and in which they will be expected to operate as individuals in the future.

Bilingual education is achieved by teaching lessons in two languages, Greek and Turkish. To recap, although Turkish language lessons are taught for only few more hours than Greek lessons in reality Muslim students are more familiar with the former. As Turkish is the language spoken outside school and most families tend to watch Turkish channels on the television (via satellite dishes), the actual time Muslim students come into contact with Greek is very limited.

There is another factor that places the Greek language in a secondary position is the duration of school terms. The total number of school days is 170 as defined by the Ministry of Education. Muslim religious holidays reduce the total number of days spent at School by about three extra weeks. Moreover, Muslim schools are not open on Fridays and although there is a special arrangement to open on Sundays, in reality only the Muslim teachers attend. The presence of a Greek teacher is therefore quite limited.

Already from the third year in primary schools there are indications of linguistic difficulties. When the lessons of Geography and History are introduced, taught in Greek, the majority of Muslim students, as we have seen earlier can only use basic words and tend to have a mechanistic grasp of the Greek language. But there are problems with the teaching of the Turkish language too. Most lessons taught in Turkish are technical and require only the basic Turkish which Muslim students are familiar with anyway. In addition, books for Modern Greek and Modern Turkish language are written for native speakers - for mainstream education of the two countries - and therefore are not adapted to the needs of a bilingual education.

For Pomaks and Rom the case is even more complicated. Pomak and Rom languages do not have a written form. The Pomak language, '*pomahtsu*', can be considered to be the main feature of the Pomak identity today;[14] it is what distinguishes the group in terms of history, culture and origin. Linguists argue that *pomahtsu* is a variation of Slavic with elements from Greek and Turkish

languages. The Pomak language is widely used among the Pomak population within Greece and Bulgaria.

The other spoken language is *Greek Romany* which is spoken both by Christian and Muslim Rom[15]. *Romany* is influenced by Medieval Greek, Modern Persian, Armenian, and Turkish languages. There is evidence that the Rom language has started to be replaced by Turkish (i.e. a language shift) especially in the area of Rhodopi.

The 1951 Agreement and the 1968 Protocol define Turkish as the main language of the Muslim minority. As a result, both Pomaks and Rom experience trilingualism: Pomak or Rom languages in the social environment, both Turkish and Greek in schools. There has been dispute as to the negative affects of these agreements which aim to unite Muslims from the three ethnic groups into one entity. However, little attention has been paid to the educational problems of this system.

Muslim students show particularly low performance in education. Language is considered to be one obstacle for their development and educational achievement. In addition, the Pomak and Rom languages are threatened with extinction.

*4.2.2 Poor linguistic skills*

Children from various backgrounds develop different linguistic skills, which could affect their later performance in education. The concept of early linguistic skills influencing school performance is applicable in the case of Muslim minority students in Western Thrace, especially for those Muslims inhabiting countryside areas.

In general, the overall percentage of the educated population in Western Thrace remains low in comparison to other regions, as can be observed from Table 14 below. It should be added that the overall low economic performance

(in both domestic and EU levels) of the region of Western Thrace, as we have seen in previous chapters, is also reflected in the educational level of the local population.

**Table 14:** Education Level of Population in the Greek Regions, 1991

| Regions | Higher Education Degree (%) | Without a Secondary Education Degree (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Attiki | 10.3 | 42.2 |
| Macedonia | 5.4 | 60.6 |
| Peloponnese | 4.7 | 62.9 |
| Sterea Ellada | 4.5 | 63 |
| Crete | 5 | 63 |
| Aegean Islands | 4.4 | 64.8 |
| Thessaly | 5 | 66.5 |
| Epirus | 5 | 68.6 |
| Ionian Islands | 4.1 | 67.8 |
| **Western Thrace** | **4** | **72.2** |

Source: National Statistics Records: Census 1991

Problems arising from bilingualism and trilingualism and the low level of education in the social and family environment of students contribute not only to a limited vocabulary among Muslim students but also, in many cases, to the incorrect usage of language. These are the causes which lie behind why Muslim students show low performance in primary schools and why they are not adequately prepared to follow secondary or higher education. Furthermore, the current legal framework of Muslim education presents an obstacle to its upgrading. As a result, Muslim students receive an inadequate education in both Turkish and Greek languages (Tsitselikis 1996: p.374) in order to fulfil the legal requirements while the real issue of Muslim education remains overlooked.

*4.2.3 Pedagogical Style*

Significant information concerning Muslim minority primary education comes from the research into pedagogical style conducted by Kanakidou in Western Thrace at the beginning of the 1990s (Kanakidou, 1994: pp. 85-92).

Kanakidou found that Muslim teachers follow a teacher-centred method of education emphasising their position as 'teacher' which is based on their age, position in the religious community and the knowledge of the Koran that they possess. In contrast, the Christian teacher uses a student-centred method which is based on teacher-student interaction.

Some of the differences in teaching styles observed included the attitude of students when the teacher entered the classroom. In the case of the Muslim teacher all students stood up, whereas for the Christian teachers, students were more relaxed and remained seated.

The study mentions that while teaching, the Muslim teacher asked very few questions, including, for example, 'is two and two four?' or 'do I go to the town by bus?' In contrast the Christian teacher would ask 'how do I go to town' or 'what is the colour of the apples'?

This lack of consistency in teaching style highlights the inadequacies of an inexperienced multicultural education provided to Muslim students. This poses an additional problem of cultural clash to the students at primary level. Furthermore, the difference in teaching styles reflects to an extent the gap between teacher training courses in mainstream Greek Educational Academies and the Special Academy of Thessaloniki where most Muslim teachers are trained.

## 5. Conclusion

Today, the Muslim minority of Western Thrace has lower levels of educational achievement in comparison to the rest of the population. Of the students registering in primary schools, only 70% graduate and from this number less than half progress to secondary education. Figures given earlier reveal that a significant part of the Muslim population does not posses the basic secondary level certificate.

It can be concluded therefore that the present bilingual educational structure provided for the Muslim students is inadequate and functions as an obstacle to their progress. Female students in particular appear to be affected the most by this situation. As has been argued, the strict traditional values of the Muslim society combine with the shortcomings of the present educational system to discourage female school attendance.

To summarise, the first part of the chapter explored the important Treaties and Agreements signed by the Turkish and Greek governments from the 1922 until today: the Lausanne Treaty, the 1951 Educational Agreement, and the 1968 Educational Protocol contain the legal definitions which still inform present-day Muslim education. The Lausanne Treaty guaranteed the right for Muslim schools to exist, while the other two agreements established Turkish as the official teaching language in Muslim minority schools.

The second part looked at the structure of Muslim education at all three levels: primary, secondary and university. More particularly, the detailed curriculum for six year of primary school education was examined as well as the ethnic composition of the Muslim primary schools in three prefectures.

The third part dealt with the specific problems faced by the Muslim students. Data provided revealed the low school attendance among the Muslim population, the small number of girls in education and the low percentage of graduates from both primary and secondary schools. Language appears to be the

main obstacle and accounts primarily for the low attendance. Again the problem of language arises as a hurdle to be overcome for the trilingual Pomak and Rom students.

From a critical examination of all the information, it can be argued that the legal framework has acted as an obstacle to the development of a functional modern educational system. First, the focus of the Treaties on primary education has only served to create problems for the introduction of nursery schools in Muslim society, part of which questions its benefits. In addition, the present structure of primary education does not equip students adequately to pursue a secondary education. As a result less than half primary school graduates register in either Muslim minority or Greek secondary schools.

Second, bilingual teaching has been introduced in Muslim primary education in order that Muslim people are not deprived of learning in their language. Although Turkish people are taught in their mother tongue, Pomak and Rom are deprived of this right. Students from these two groups have to learn two languages which are new to them, Greek and Turkish. Considering the overall low level of education which already exists in Pomak and Rom society, the teaching of two additional languages makes attendance in Muslim primary schools for students from these two groups very difficult.

Finally, gender divisions also influence school attendance. Statistics show that girls are much less likely to graduate from primary schools and even less likely to continue to secondary education. This is especially the case in rural areas where traditional values are stricter than in urban centres. No significant efforts have been made by either State, local Muslim communities or by the Gender Equality Committee to tackle this problem.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from the above findings is that there is a real need to redesign and upgrade the educational system of the Muslim minority. Priority should be given to the specific requirements of the Muslim students rather than to the Turkish or Greek states' interests. In order to

begin this process, points for consideration include the introduction of nursery schools, the circulation of books designed for bilingual education and the provision of more appropriate teacher training courses.

**Notes**

1. As we have already seen, there is an ideological difference among the Muslims of Western Thrace. To recap, this difference originates from the time Kemal Atatürk introduced secularised changes in order to modernise Turkey. The 'Old-Muslim' leadership of the Muslim minority at the time opposed these changes as threatening to the traditional values of the Muslim society and distanced itself from the Turkish influence. From the 1960's onwards the 'Old-Muslim' leadership lost its popularity as a new more influential movement arose, the 'Modernists'. The new leadership ideologically representing Turkish nationalism sought closer links with Turkey.

2. Part of the Muslim protest was to publicly burn the new books and refuse to send their children to school. These protests coincided with increasing demands to change the status of the Muslim minority into and an ethnic one. It is worth mentioning that these demands did not include recognition for a Pomak or Rom ethnicity.

3. As we have seen earlier in the thesis the framework of the Lausanne Treaty is based on a reciprocity clause (*ritra amiveotitas*) according to which both the Muslims in Greece and the Greeks in Turkey are dependant on the mutual obligation of Greece and Turkey to preserve each other's cultural identity. In the case of education therefore, all agreements have a bilateral character.

4. 1930s was the period of Greek-Turkish friendship agreed by the two Prime Ministers, Venizelos and Atatürk. Part of this friendship agreement was the renaming of schools from 'Muslim' to 'Turkish'.

5. As seen before, despite the temporary 'friendship' between the two states more turbulent years were to follow. Thus, it was during this time that the problem in Cyprus started to move to the centre of the political arena, and

the Turkish government systematically began to persecute the Greek minority in Istanbul (Helsinki Watch Report 1992). Greek Cypriot demands for unification with Greece grew due to the increasingly threatening climate with Turkey. It was this time that Britain and America, Greece and Turkey started to get involved with the issue and caused the division of the island later (Clogg 1995: pp.161-162).

6. The establishment of the Special Pedagogical Academy in Thessaloniki also came at close to the time when the 'Modernists' became the influential group replacing the 'Old-Muslim' theocratic tradition. Most of the Turkish universities trained Muslim teachers were influenced by the values of the Turkish state, the inspiration of the Modernist movement. It can be argued therefore that the Greek government partly followed these actions precisely to avoid strengthening the neo-Turkish nationalism among the members of the Muslim minority. The Turkish trained teachers included Muslims of Western Thrace that continued their studies in Turkish universities, and Turkish citizens teachers transferred from Turkey according to the 1951 Educational Agreement.

7. During the mid-1990s the whole approach of the Greek government towards the Muslim minority changed. Economic investment was encouraged by the Greek state aiming at the upgrading of the whole region. There were more efforts to approach the Muslim minority. Policies such as allowing free entrance to the Pomak territory (a special licence had previously been required in the past) providing more secondary schools, opening medical centres were introduced. There are various reasons for these policies, most important of which is the geographical position of Western Thrace. The changing situation in the Balkans can transform the region into an economic centre. Second, is the increasing influence of Turkey in the Muslim community of Greece that contributed to the changing attitude of the Greek state.

8. Baltsiotis 1997: p.329.

9. Official Educational Report, European Commission: p.2.

10. Naxim Refica argues that the refusal by the Muslim local government to accept the establishment of Nursery schools has disappointed a large part of the Muslim community that believes to the educational value of such schools. 'Aile Birlik' daily local Newspaper, August 1991, cited in Panagiotidis 1996.

11. Dikaiomatica, Electronic journal for Human Rights, 2001: p.1

12. However, not all students are welcomed by the Turkish government. The Editor of the Muslim newspaper 'The voice of Thrace', A. Dede in his article 'Caught between states' argues: "It is the policy of Turkey. If you support their policy, your child can study there. Otherwise not.", Internet: (www.armory.com accessed February 1999)

13. In accordance to law 182/24-12-1990

14. Sella-Mazi, 1997: p.379.

15. Christian Rom (100,000-200,000 in number) live in various parts of Greece. The Muslim Rom (about 25,000) inhabit the area of Western Thrace. Zegginis, 1994: p. 10

# Chapter 7

## Political Parties in Western Thrace

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### 1. Introduction

This chapter analyses political developments in Western Thrace in the period from 1923 to 1990, beginning with the signing of the Lausanne Treaty and ending with the aftermath of the creation of the independent Muslim political parties. The political and electoral behaviour of the Muslim minority is closely examined and compared with that of the Christian community. The data analysed in the following pages concerns mainly Pomak and Turkish political participation as there is insubstantial data about the voting behaviour of the Muslim or Christian Rom. In addition, the chapter concentrates on national election results as they better reveal ethnic sentiments. Local government was only a weak institution in Greek politics (until recently) and therefore could not provide a forum for Muslims to express such sentiments.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides an historical background of political life in Western Thrace from the 1920s to the end of the Second World War, beginning with a reference to the pre-1923 period. The aim is to consider particular factors for differentiating between the Muslim/Christian communities and their role in local political life.

The main argument is that the cultural and ethnic differences of the population in Western Thrace resulted in a division within local society that is also reflected in the local politics. The increasing replacement of the 'Old-Muslims' by a more Modernist friendly leadership (the two main ideological trends within the Muslim community[1]) played an important role in Muslim voting behaviour throughout this period. Whilst historically, and even today, the Muslims of Western Thrace express themselves politically through the existing

Greek national parties (with the exception of the 1980s), they have nevertheless followed their own patterns of voting.

Specific data from the time is analysed and comparisons are made between Christian and Muslim votes as well as the Pomak and Turkish voting results. The section looks at: a. attitudes of Greek parties during the 1910s and 1920s towards minorities, b. brief history of local politics before Western Thrace became part of Greece, c. the period between the wars with an emphasis on the first political split among 'Modernists' and Old-Muslims, d. the re-establishment at the local level of the Old-Muslims.

The second section examines the contemporary electoral behaviour of the Muslim minority. Domestic and international political developments in the 1980s brought about the establishment of Muslim parties for the first time in the prefectures of Xanthi and Rhodopi. Data from the election results of the period in which these parties participated is detailed and analysed.

The Muslim parties' vote diminished after the April 1990 elections and they did not participate in the following elections that took place in 1994. The reason for this decline was the introduction of a change in the electoral system according to which a party could elect an MP only if it collected more than 3% of the national vote. This system was introduced in many European States at that time (as seen in Germany, for example, which has a 4% minimum average) and has affected all small parties. Subsequently, Muslim politicians stood again as candidates for the major Greek parties.

## 2. Section I: Historical Background

### 2.1 Greek political parties and ethnic minorities 1913-1930: a general outline

After the redefinition of the Greek national borders following Greece's defeat in Asia Minor, many exchanges and movements of population took place.

However, minority populations remained within the Greek state as can be seen in the following table:

**Table 15:** Ethnic Groups in Greece in 1930

| Language | Orthodox | Catholic | Protest. | Muslims | Israelite | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Greek | 5,716,100 | 27,747 | 3,867 | 2,623 | 9,090 | 96 | 5,759,523 |
| Turkish | 103,642 | 327 | 760 | 86,506 | 17 | 2 | 191,254 |
| Slavo-Macedonian | 81,844 | 68 | 11 | 2 | 58 | 1 | 81,984 |
| Spanish | 28 | 58 | 41 | 72 | 62,999 | 2 | 63,200 |
| Armenian | 31,038 | 1,432 | 16 | 10 | 10 | 2 | 33,631 |
| Vlach | 19,679 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 0 | 19,703 |
| Albanian | 95 | 59 | 17 | 18,598 | 3 | 1 | 18,773 |
| Bulgarian | 20 | 0 | 0 | 16,755 | 0 | 0 | 16,775 |
| Romany | 3,853 | 0 | 1 | 1,130 | 0 | 14 | 4,998 |
| Russian | 3,177 | 49 | 14 | 3 | 40 | 12 | 3,295 |
| Italian | 98 | 2,878 | 18 | 1 | 203 | 1 | 3,199 |
| English | 201 | 274 | 1,605 | 1 | 15 | 2 | 2,098 |
| Other | 1,751 | 2,577 | 1,235 | 307 | 316 | 29 | 6,248 |
| Total | 5,961,529 | 35,182 | 9,003 | 123,017 | 72,791 | 162 | 6,204,634 |

**Source:** Statistics Centre of Greece, 1930, p.98

The trends within the Greek political parties towards ethnic minorities started to form during the pre-1923 period. It was during these turbulent years for Greece that the ethnic minority vote played an important part in Greek political developments. Ethnic voting patterns came to be the concern for the three main Greek political parties at the time: Venizelists, Anti-Venizelists and the Communist party.

Venizelism (Liberalism) was principally the driving force behind Greek irredentism and the Greek ambitions towards the new territories during and after the Balkan Wars. The party sought to bring social reforms and capitalist modernisation to the Greek state (Castellan, 1991: p.545). Towards ethnic minorities, the Venizelist stand is often presented as a contradiction. On the one hand, the party guaranteed and respected minority rights and could draw the support of the Muslim minority vote, for example in Western Thrace as we shall

see later. On the other hand, Venizelist nationalism, expansionist plans and desire for Greek homogenisation were perceived as a threat to the interests of minorities, resulting in support for the Antivenizelist party, as for example, in the case of Macedonia (see in 2.2.1 of the present chapter). (Mavrogordatos, 1983: pp.230-231)

The Antivenizelist party (Conservative party) was no less nationalistic than the Venizelists. Although it never questioned the consolidation of the territories won by Greece, from early stages it was nonetheless reluctant to participate in Venizelists' nationalist aspirations. Deriving their support mainly from the South of Greece, the Antivenizelists were sceptical of Venizelos's social and economic reformations and represented a more traditionalist force, suspicious of rapid changes (Clogg, 1995: p. 95). Even during the interwar period, their reluctance to participate in the materialisation of the Great Idea attracted the support of the ethnic minorities (Turks, Bulgarian and Jews) of North Greece who were dissatisfied with the settlement of refugees in their region (Mavrogordatos 1983: p. 231).

A third party that came to influence Greek politics (although with marginal support) especially during the interwar period was the Communist party (KKE) (Mouzelis 1978: p. 26). Minority rights were incorporated in party policy and following the Third International, KKE opposed the division of both Macedonia and Thrace. For the minorities themselves, the party in 1925 argued '... under the pretext of the national defence of the Greeks, land is taken away from the minorities to be given to the Greek refugees, and a systematic colonial and Hellenisation policy is generally pursued...' (quoted by Mavrogordatos 1983: p. 233). This position cost the party a considerable share of its support and by 1935 the emphasis had shifted towards the equal treatment of minorities instead of regional unification for Macedonia and Thrace.

## 2.2 Political behaviour of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace between the period 1913-1955

This section deals with data from political developments, especially concerning the electoral behaviour of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace in the period 1913-1955. The aim is to map the social factors that influenced local political life and the developments that led to the formation of the political leadership within the Muslim minority.

In brief, the main argument can be summarised as follows. Cultural and ethnic differences reinforced by the memories of the first twenty troubled years of the previous century in the Balkan Peninsula as well as the Greek domestic political situation can be seen as the basis for the differentiation between the two communities. This differentiation led to the gradual isolation of the Muslim minority from Greek political life and political parties (as we shall see in the second section of the chapter). The electoral behaviour of the Muslim voters during this period was influenced by its increasing attachment to the political and nationalistic ideologies of Turkey, but also by the Greek political situation.

### 2.2.1 The pre-1923 period

Although Western Thrace was not part of the Greek state, it is useful to look briefly at the regional political situation in the period before the signing of the Lausanne Treaty (1923). Muslim participation in politics was as active as in forthcoming years of the century, especially in the area of Greek Macedonia where more than half a million Turks lived prior the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey (Pentzopoulos 1963: pp.125-140, Clogg 1995: p.89)
2
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The question of ethnic minority voting patterns came to be of crucial importance in Greek politics during this time. As there was a continuous war occurring in the area, Greece was involved in fighting for territorial integrity, expansion and survival. The vote, therefore, of minority populations loyal to the

enemy nations (i.e. Turkey and Bulgaria) at times proved to be unfavourable for the interests of Greek nationalism (Mavrogordatos 1983: p.237).

A good example that reflects this situation are the elections of 1915, when not surprisingly all minorities in the area of Macedonia voted against Venizelos and therefore against the war. Although the overall outcome of the elections was not influenced and Venizelos won, ethnic minorities were perceived by Venizelists as an obstacle to Greek nationalism and sovereignty (see also note 14, Chapter 5) (ibid. p.238).

For the area of Western Thrace a system of political representation started to appear in the 1910s, albeit not very sophisticated and without continuity. The key moments as highlighted by Nikolakopoulos can be summarised as follows (Nikolakopoulos 1991: pp. 173-174).

a.  The establishment of an autonomous political administration after the Treaty of Bucharest (28.7.1913). The new autonomous area was called the 'Democracy of Gioumouldjina'. Autonomy was granted when the Greek army withdrew its forces following the revolt of some inhabitants of Western Thrace. Turkey, which did not sign the treaty, assisted in the revolt. The autonomous government consisted of five Turks, one Greek, one Armenian and one Jewish representative. The 'Democracy of Gioumouldjina' was dissolved after a Turkish-Bulgarian agreement (1913), when Turkey withdrew its army and allowed Bulgarian occupation in October 1913.

b.  Elections took place in 1914 during this first Bulgarian occupation. The 'Turkish Muslim MPs of Western Thrace in the Bulgarian Parliament' as they called themselves, in 1918 sent a message to the French General D'Espery and asked the Allied Powers to occupy Western Thrace with the participation of the Greek Army.

c.  In the period of Allied government from 1919-1920, the Higher Administrative Assembly was established and consisted of six Greeks, five Turks, two Bulgarians, one Armenian and one Jewish representative. Its president was Greek, elected by the Greeks and the Armenian representative

and assisted by the blank vote of the Jewish representative and one of the Turkish representatives. During this period there was a movement supported by both Turks and Bulgarians for the establishment of autonomy in the region.

d.  In May 1920, Western Thrace (and also for a brief period Eastern Thrace) came under Greek occupation. In the elections of 1920, Antivenizelists won the majority of seats with the assistance of the Macedonian ethnic minorities' vote. In Thrace however, the situation was different and most Muslims voted for the Venizelos party. Consequently, twenty Turkish candidates were elected as MP's with the party of Venizelos. Soon after, these elected Turks left the Venizelists and with Turks from other parties supported the Antivenizelists (Mavrogordatos 1983: p.238). One explanation for this move can be found in the ideological difference between Modernists and Old Muslims.

Two significant factors can be determined as having influenced later political developments within the Muslim minority. First, we witness the formation of a political leadership within the Muslim minority. Second there are the internal differences among the members of the Muslim minority which resulted in the election of a Greek president in the Higher Administration Assembly during the period of Allied occupation (1919-20) (Nikolakopoulos 1991: p. 176).

## 2.2.2 The Period between the Wars

The following two tables present trends within Muslim and Christian voting patterns during 1926-1936.

**Table 16:** Muslim voting in Western Thrace 1926-1936 (% of valid votes)

| YEAR | Anti-Venizelos Party | Venizelos Party | Agriculture Party | Communist Party | Others |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1926 | - | 93.14 | 0.57 | 5.89 | 0.40 |
| 1928 | 26.37 | 37.18 | 35.69 | - | 0.76 |
| 1929 | - | 100.00 | - | - | - |
| 1932 | - | 86.3 | 6.64 | 3.61 | 3.42 |
| 1933 | - | 71.89 | - | 2.92 | 25.19 |
| 1936 | 36.28 | 49.38 | 4.85 | 9.49 | - |

Source: data from Mavrogordatos 1983: p.245

**Table 17:** Christian Votes in Xanthi and Rhodopi 1926-1936 (% Valid Votes)

| Year | Conservative (Anti-Venizelos) Party | Venizelos Party | Agriculture Party | Communist Party | Others |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1926 | 9.7 | 65.9 | 6.1 | 18.2 | - |
| 1928 | 4.6 | 86.0 | - | 6.8 | 1.0 |
| 1929 | - | 91.4 | - | 8.5 | - |
| 1932 | 10.0 | 73.3 | 4.7 | 12.0 | - |
| 1933 | 20.5 | 62.6 | - | 16.6 | - |
| 1936 | 25.0 | 57.9 | 8.6 | 8.4 | - |

Source: data from Nikolakopoulos 1990-1991: p.178

By comparing the data from the above tables two main trends can be determined within the Muslim minority's political behaviour during this period - the first being observable after the incorporation of Western Thrace into Greece. Initially there was popular support for the party of Venizelos which started to diminish from 1934 onwards after the anti-Venizelos party took power. Secondly, the internal fragmentation of the Muslim minority into two main streams is visible: the 'Modernists' versus the 'Old-Muslims'.

Furthermore, as we have seen, minorities were treated with suspicion in Greek political life. For this reason, most of the main political parties avoided creating any political organisations or networks among the members of

minorities as they were not considered to be a completely equal part of the Greek political life (Nikolakopoulos 1991: p.176).

Minority votes did exert influence in the final outcome of the elections, giving a boost to Antivenizelism. It was within the interests of the Venizelists in 1923 therefore to make the allowance for both Muslims in Western Thrace and Jews in Thessaloniki to vote in separate electoral colleges (this policy had existed before 1923). For Western Thrace the separate college included Turks and Pomaks who were at the time mainly traditionalists. The separate colleges were abolished after the 1930s, ceasing for the area of Western Thrace in 1934 (Mavrogordatos 1983: p.239, Dodos 1994: p.64). The existence of such separate electoral colleges did play a role in the gradual establishment of an autonomous political consciousness within Muslim minority.

The above tables also show that for this period the majority of both Christians and Muslim voters supported the Venizelists mainly for the reasons explained: i.e. for Christians (the majority of whom were refugees from Asia Minor) due to their attachment to the Venizelist aspirations and for the Muslims, opposition to Atatürk's reforms. However, after the 1930s, while Venizelist support remained among the Christians, there was a drop among Muslim voters. It was in 1933 that Antivenizelists took power and their increasing support among the Muslim voters reflected the ideological division described earlier.

Tables 16 and 17 also indicate that there was limited support for the Communist party amongst both Muslims and Christians, although this support was considerable higher among Christians. This affiliation to the Communist party came largely from the tobacco industry and its highly unionised workers. Well-developed clientele and patronage networks[3] within the minority in turn accounted for the low support amongst Muslims.

The Agrarian party, established in 1922, played only a minor role in Greek political life (Mouzelis 1978: p.93). There was limited support from the Christian population. The occasional high Muslim support for the party (and in

the same way for the category 'others' in Table 16) can be explained by the standing of independent Muslim candidates.

There was also a differentiation between Pomak and Turkish voting patterns. For example, in the area of Xanthi the political structure of the parties followed the lines of the differentiation between the Pomak (mainly, Old-Muslim supporters) and the Turkish populations (increasingly Modernists). The representation of the two groups became clear in 1932 when for the first time two Pomak politicians stood: one an independent candidate, and other, a candidate for the Agrarian party.

The results from the 1932 elections show the Turkish-speaking population and the Pomaks as completely separate: the Pomak candidates collected 72.2% of the votes in the Pomak areas of Xanthi and only 20.7% in the town of Xanthi and the Turkish-speaking villages. In contrast, the Turkish candidate in the Pomak area collected 22.5% of the votes while in the town and in Turkish speaking villages he collected 67.1% (data from Nikolakopoulos 1991: pp.183-184). Pomaks however, also tended to vote in personalistic/patronage way and eventually gave their support to 'Modernists'. Later on, many became supporters of Turkish nationalism (Mavrogordatos 1983: p.265) and have remained with the 'Modernist' wing until today (see previous chapters and Appendix 1).

To summarise, it can be argued, that the major feature of the period between the wars for the Muslims was the internal fragmentation between the old-Muslims and the 'Modernists'. As we have seen previously, the influence of the old-Muslims was exerted on the more conservative members of the minority and was supported by the Greek administration. 'Modernists' were influenced by Kemal and the increasing Turkish nationalism and used the jargon of modernisation, expressing their opposition on issues affecting the Muslims such as education.

During the period between the two World Wars and after the Second World War, the development of Turkish national consciousness was identified with the changes introduced by Kemal. At this time the Greek administration[4] in Western Thrace by supporting the 'Old-Muslims' appeared to endorse old-fashioned traditions, the Arabic alphabet and a strict religious life according to the Koran. Despite these trends, the existing data also suggests that during the interwar period Muslims sided with the winning party (Venizelists initially and anti-Venizelists after 1933), desiring to remain on good terms with successive Greek governments.

### 2.2.3 The post Second World War and Greek Civil War period: 1945-1955

As we have seen Greece came out of the Second World War and the Civil War (1946-1949) as the only Balkan country without a communist government. Nevertheless, the country was far from democratic and the society very divided. The political situation that followed was reminiscent of the National Schism (1915-16) (Clogg 1995: p. 154).

To give a general outline of the political life at the time, in the national elections that followed, two new parties participated: a. on the right *Ellinikos Synagermos* (ES) and b. on the left the *Eniaia Democratiki Aristera* (EDA)[5], the front for the illegal Communist party. In 1951, ES won the elections and with a change in the electorate system, its victory was guaranteed in the 1952 elections and won 82% of the seats. From then onwards the right was in power until 1963 (ibid.).

National parties[6] during this period also included: *Laiko Komma* (LK – Popular Party) and *Komma Phileftheron* (KPh-Liberal Party) both conservative/centre, the Ethniki Rizospastiki Enosis (ERE – National Radical Union which replaced the ES, the *Ethniki Proodeftiki Enosis Kentrou* (EPEK – National Progressive Centre Union) and the conservative *Synagermos Agroton kai Ergazomenon* Party (SAE – Rally of Farmers and Workers). This latter party

was nationally insignificant (about 1.2% of the national vote) but enjoyed particular support in Xanthi due to the popularity of the local candidate.

With the end of the Second World War, the area of Western Thrace gained independence from Bulgarian occupation[7]. It was during this period that the ideological movement of the 'Modernists' emerged as the most powerful section within the Muslim community. Support for the 'Modernist' was expressed in the elections of 1950 and 1951 when Muslim candidates attached to this ideological wing attracted the largest proportion of the votes (about 50%-60% of the total Muslim vote in all three elections) and were elected as parliamentary representatives for the Muslim minority. The 'Modernist' candidates for the above elections stood with the Liberal party (KPh) and the Popular party (LK) at a time, as we can see in Table 18, when both parties had lost support among the Christian population[8] (Nikolakopoulos 1991: pp. 186-190).

'Modernist' members were also elected to the Muslim Minority Association (DEMP) which dealt with the management of Muslim property, showing once more the internal ideological changes within the Muslim community. In the 1950s elections for the executive council, Modernists both in Xanthi and Rhodopi won seats with almost 60% of the Muslim vote (ibid.).

The following Table 18 shows in more detail the comparative results of Christian and Muslim vote for the major parties (on the Centre and Right) in the area of Western Thrace in the 1950 and 1951 elections. The main feature of the 1951 elections is the change in the electorate system from proportional representation to 'reinforced' proportional representation (Clogg 1987: p.26) which favoured the Right. For this reason we have an increase in support for ES.

**Table 18:** Comparison of Muslim and Christian vote (1950, 1951) for the major political Parties

|  | Election 5.3.1950 | | Elections 9.9.1951 | |
|  | Christians | Muslims | Christians | Muslims |
|  | % | % | % | % |
| KPh | 12.6 | 44.5 | 15.4 | 27.5 |
| EPEK | 22.6 | 5.0 | 30.4 | 16.3 |
| LK | 11.3 | 17.8 | 9.1 | 25.9 |
| ES | - | - | 15.3 | 9.0 |

Source: Data from Nikolakopoulos 1991: p.195

Despite this growing popularity for the Modernists it would be misleading to assume that the 'Old-Muslims' lost their power completely. On the contrary, the 'Old-Muslims' were still popular especially in the area of Xanthi. In the 1952 elections the Muslim candidate for SAE gathered just a few votes less than the ES 'Modernist' candidate, as can be seen in the following table. (Similar results for the SAE candidate in Xanthi had been obtained in the 1951 elections, Nikolakopoulos 1991: p. 188).

**Table 19:** Parliamentary Elections 1952 – Electoral region of Xanthi

|  | Christians | Muslims | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| ES | 3,666 | 4,518 | 8,184 |
| SAE | 4,389 | 3,288 | 7,677 |
| EPEK | 2,378 | 311 | 2,686 |
| Total | 10,433 | 8,117 | 18,550 |

Source: data from Nikolakopoulos 1991: p.194

This support for the 'Old-Muslims' can be seen also in the area of Rhodopi where the 'Modernists' lost the leadership of the Muslim minority. The main reason for this development was the establishment of the religious association 'Renaissance of Islam' (*Intibah-Islam*) whose leadership was attached to the traditional 'Old-Muslims'. The candidate for the ES party in the 1952 elections was drawn from this association. The ES won the 1952 elections

and continued to be re-elected until 1967, thus preserving the 'Old-Muslim' votes.

The political mobilisation of the old-Muslims was also assisted by external factors. First, with encouragement from the general Western Thracian administration and second by the election of the Democratic Party in 1950 in Turkey which weakened the power of the Kemalists. This last factor gave the opportunity to the old-Muslims to look for ideological and political association with the newly elected party and created two new tendencies within the *Intibah-Islam*. On the one hand, part of the Muslim minority relied on the support of the Greek State and on the other, there were those who looked for support to Turkey. But in general, following the overall good relations between the two states at the beginning of the 1950s the two tendencies did not create any hostilities at the time (Nikolakopoulos 1991: p197).

Thereafter the support of the 'Old-Muslims' remained popular within the Muslim minority for the period 1952-1967. Greek-Turkish relations during this period went from initial friendship to a trying phase over the issue of Cyprus and the persecution of the Greek minority in Istanbul. Both 'Modernists' and the 'Old-Muslims' condemned Turkish aggression but by 1965 a split appeared in the Modernist support with the creation of an extreme Turkish nationalist movement also backed by Turkey (Dodos 1994: p.37).

## 3. Section II

### 3.1 The post-dictatorship Muslim voting behaviour

The collapse of the dictatorship marked a new era in Greek political life with the reestablishment of democracy. The first democratic elections took place in 1974. The main parties that participated were: *Nea Demokratia* (ND-conservative party); *Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima* (Pasok –the socialist party); an alliance of centre parties, the newly recognised *Kommounistiko Komma Ellados* (KKE –

communist party) allied with other smaller left wing parties, and the National Front Party (known then *Ethniki Demokratiki Enosi* - EDE).

In the area of Western Thrace all political parties included Muslim candidates. The main feature of this period is that the majority of Muslims supported their candidates in ND but also in EDE. The latter gathered about 13% in Xanthi and 6% in Rhodopi. It is noteworthy that the national share of EDE was just over 1% (Dodos 1994: p.31). The same pattern was followed in the 1977 elections when the National Front (now known as *Ethniki Parataxi* – EP) achieved its highest result since the 1950s gaining 11.8% in Thrace, as we can see in the following table (Featherstone 1987: pp. 46-48).

The electorate profile of the region is shown in the following table for the election results in Western Thrace compared with the national average during the period 1974-1981.

**Table 20:** Election results in Western Thrace and National average, 1974-1981

|         | 1974 | | 1977 | | 1981 | |
|---------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|
|         | W.Th | Nat | W.Th | Nat | W.Th | Nat |
| ND      | 55.1 | 54.4 | 46.4 | 41.9 | 41.6 | 35.9 |
| PASOK   | 26.6 | 20.5 | 20.5 | 25.3 | 47.2 | 48.1 |
| CU      | 9.5  | 13.6 |      |     |      |     |
| EDK     |      |     | 17.1 | 12  |      |     |
| UL      | 2.8  | 9.5 |      |     |      |     |
| KKE     |      |     | 2.9  | 9.4 | 4.6  | 10.9 |
| KKE (es)|      |     |      |     | 0.7  | 1.3 |
| NF      | 10.2 | 1.1 | 11.8 | 6.8 |      |     |
|         |      |     |      |     |      |     |

Source: Data from Featherstone 1987: p.46 and Dodos 1994: p. 31

**Notes:** a. the table uses National Front for both the 1974 and 1977 elections although in fact it is EDE in the first elections and NF in the second b. KKE and KKE (es) – European left party after its split from KKE in 1968 – participated together as the United Left in 1974 elections but separately in subsequent elections c. The same in true of the Centre Union (CU) which changed into

*Enosis Demokratikou* Kentrou (EDK) d. the reason that some data is not provided is either because the party or union of parties did not participate in the equivalent elections or because the percentage it received was insignificant.

This Muslim preference for the National Front parties appears contradictory; after all the ideology of these parties was based on extreme nationalistic aspirations with racist connotations. If we take a closer look however, this result is not so unexpected as it seems. We have seen earlier examples of Muslim support towards currently powerful parties as well more personalist/patronage voting patterns.

It can therefore be argued that Muslim support for the NF stems from these two factors. On the one hand, Muslims could fear voting against the party that 'governed' (under dictatorship) Greece for seven years and on the other they showed their support to their local candidate. In addition, it should be noted that memories of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus were still fresh and generated significant anti-Turkish propaganda in Greece (see p. 166).

For similar reasons the Muslim minority elected two Muslim MPs who stood for the ND Party, the most popular party at the time. When PASOK's popularity started to rise in 1977 the Muslims of Xanthi elected an MP from this party. The second Muslim MP in the 1977 election was from NF who was elected in Rhodopi (Dodos 1994: p.32). As we can see, while it was the Muslims of Xanthi in 1974 elections that gave a high proportion of their vote to the NF, in 1977 the support for this party came from Rhodopi. In 1981 when PASOK won the elections Muslims in Rhodopi elected one MP from ND and one from PASOK (ibid.). Again this irregularity in Muslim voting patterns can be attributed to the lack of ideological attachment of Muslims to Greek political parties.

## 3.2 The creation of Muslim parties

The next important period for the political representation of the Muslim minority starts with the 1985 elections and continues until the election of the two Muslim independent candidates in 1989. The main feature of this period is the creation of the short-lived Muslim parties, first in Xanthi and then in Komotini.

Initially, this appears to be a turning point in local political affairs but we have seen that in the past Muslims voted in separate electoral colleges or stood as independent candidates. Muslim voting patterns, throughout the century however indicate that there was little ideological attachment to the parties for which Muslims voted.

Therefore, although we can say that there was always an ethnic division in the voting behaviour of the population in Western Thrace, this period represents a more organised effort to prove this point. The creation of the Muslim parties also signifies the promotion of a more unified and more ethnically aware Muslim population. Since the 1970s the terms 'Old Muslims' and 'Modernists' are rarely used, indicating the change to an ethnic self-definition.

The first Muslim party was created in the area of Xanthi under the name 'Eirini' (Peace) and its candidates had previously stood in national elections for different parties. At the same time in the electoral area of Rhodopi, there was an independent Muslim candidate who had also participated in previous elections in major Greek parties.

The newly created Eirini party collected 16.8% of the vote and the independent candidate of Rhodopi 14% (Dodos 1994: p.32). The results were not adequate for the election of an MP. As the party attracted little support, most of the Muslim votes went to the other Muslim candidates that stood for the national parties the PASOK candidate in Xanthi and the ND candidate in Rhodopi.

The *Eirini* Party dissolved after these results but the idea for separate Muslim parties was not abandoned altogether. In the second elections of 1989[10] the *Empistosyni* Party (Trust) participated in Rhodopi and successfully elected an MP for the prefecture. In the following elections of 1990 another Muslim MP was elected in Xanthi for the newly established *Pepromeno* Party (Destiny).

The following two tables detail the election results for Muslim parties in contrast to the two main national parties, i.e., ND and PASOK in the period 1989-1990.

**Table 21**: Election results for ND, PASOK and *Pepromeno* 1989-1990, Xanthi

| Prefecture of Xanthi – Election Results | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | June 1989 | November 1989 | April 1990 |
| ND | 44.1 | 47.6 | 40.86 |
| PASOK | 34.9 | 29.76 | 28.43 |
| Pepromeno | 14.5 | 18.06 | 25.53 |

Source: Data from Dodos 1994: pp.44-50

Note: an average of 25% is needed for the election of an MP

**Table 22**: Election results for ND, PASOK and *Empistosyni* 1989-1990, Rhodopi

| Prefecture of Rhodopi– Election Results | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | June 1989 | November 1989 | April 1990 |
| ND | 34.06 | 39.8 | 36.1 |
| PASOK | 31.3 | 29.6 | 27.66 |
| Empistosyni | 27.7 | 24.66 | 29.53 |

Source: Data from Dodos 1994: pp.44-50

Note: an average of 25% is needed for the election of an MP

The above tables show there is a gradual increase of support for *Pepromeno* during this period. In Rhodopi there is a small decline in Muslim votes in the second election[11] that increases again to almost 30% in 1990. Not all

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of the Muslim vote went to these parties, for example in areas with entirely Muslim population there was support for the other two parties who also included Muslim candidates[12].

Muslim support for these two parties came at a critical moment in the national elections. As we have seen, in all three elections there was no clear majority, a fact that also explains the regularity of the elections. In 1990, ND won the elections but gained only 150 out of the 300 seats in the Parliament (Clogg 1997: p. 264). This increased the suspicion towards the Muslim MPs; by not being ideologically tied to the main parties, they could act independently.

The role of the Muslim MPs this time was more significant. Increasing calls were made for an ethnic rather than religious recognition of the Muslim minority; a shift that would have meant including the Pomaks and Rom under Turkish ethnicity. Muslim candidates both during their electoral campaign and after their election reiterated the issue of ethnicity and demanded the right to be recognised as Turks rather than Muslims. This created an upheaval in the Greek political life at the time leading to a conviction that was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1989. One of the Muslim MPs later appealed to the European Commission of Human Rights.

Since then the Greek electoral system has changed in a way unfavourable to small parties (with the introduction in 1990 of the 3% vote threshold). Afterwards, both Muslim parties were dissolved and did not participate in the following national elections of 1993. Thereafter, Muslim candidates again stood for national parties and have been elected accordingly.

Before concluding this section it is worth considering the international developments that influenced matters to a certain degree. At the end of the 1980s the international political landscape changed radically with the collapse of Communist countries. During the same time European unification intensified. Both events gave emphasis to issues of ethnicity, nationalism and minority

rights and representation, and the consequences affected the Balkan Peninsula in the disastrous events that followed during the 1990s.

In the Bulgarian region neighbouring Western Thrace, the local Turkish minority that also included Pomaks and Rom likewise intensified its own calls. As a result, a policy of 'regenerative process' was introduced during the 1980s in order to contain what was perceived as a Turkish threat (the Bulgarians fearful of a repeat of the Cyprus crisis). The severe treatment of the Turkish population in Bulgaria and the regenerative policy were condemned by the Islamic Conference Organisation, the European Court of Justice and the UN (Crampton 1994: pp.383-384).

Against this background the Muslims of Western Thrace also intensified their call for ethnic recognition, disputing the terms of the Lausanne Treaty as outdated. This growing ethnic consciousness was expressed in everyday life through the issues of education and religion and found its political expression in the above mentioned Muslim parties.

## 4. Conclusion

This chapter has considered the voting behaviour of the population of Western Thrace from the beginning of the century until 1990. It has examined and compared data from various elections during this period and has looked at the processes that led to the creation of minority parties in the electoral areas of Xanthi and Rhodopi.

The main features of Muslim political life can be mapped onto the two ideological trends of 'Old-Muslims' and 'Modernists' that influenced Muslim affairs and voting behaviour throughout the century. In post-dictatorship Greece Muslims became more unified with a developed ethnic (Turkish) consciousness. The results of this unification were seen in late 1980s and early 1990s in educational, religious and political aspects and led to the creation of *Eirini*, *Empistosyni* and *Pepromeno*: the short lived Muslim parties.

The establishment and success of the Muslim minority parties revealed a new voting profile for the Muslim population during this period, although the electoral history of the area revealed examples of similar character. The election of the Muslim MPs came at a critical electoral period for Greece when no party gained an absolute national majority. In turn, these events triggered a political debate and further stirred passions in Western Thrace's local politics (as we have seen, similar examples can also be found during the 1910s).

The events that took place during this period in Western Thrace cannot be seen independently of international developments. With the collapse of Communism and the further unification of the European Union, issues of nationalism and ethnicity became current once more in the European history. Furthermore, the measures introduced by Bulgaria proved to be destabilising.

**Notes**

1. The Old-Muslims opposed contemporary Turkish developments, whereas the 'Modernists' were directly influenced by them.

2. Macedonia before the Balkan Wars had been inhabited by many nationalities (Greeks, Turks, Bulgarians, Slavomacedonians and Jews) and this was partly the reason behind the bitter fighting for control over the area between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. In the area of Macedonia that became part of the Greek state after the Balkan Wars, Greeks became the majority population only after the departure of Turks and Bulgarians and the settlement of about 600,000 Greek refugees from Asia Minor following the Lausanne Treaty. (Pentzopoulos 1963: pp.125-140). For the area of Western Thrace, the total Greek population comprised only 20% of the total population which was primarily Muslim before the exchange of populations. After 1923, the percentage of Greeks increased to 60% following the settlement of the refugees from Turkey (Clogg 1995: p. 109).

3. Some of the local *agas* exerted power over the agricultural and tobacco-factory working population. There are reports that this particular elite co-operated with the Greek industrialists and functioned as 'spies' for the tobacco industry (Nikolakopoulos 1991: p.183)

4. In an effort to weaken the power of the 'Modernists' and to strengthen the old-Muslims, the Greek government re-located to Western Thrace certain Circassians and Turks who had co-operated with the Greek government in Asia Minor and had joined forces with the Greek army in 1922. The most important of them was the last religious leader of the Ottoman Empire, Moustafa Sambri. When he came to Xanthi, Moustafa Sambri mobilised the Muslim priests and established a small centre for the old-Muslims. However, with the improvement of Greek-Turkish relations in 1930, Ismet Inonou asked for 150 'unwanted' members of the Muslim minority to be re-located to a different part of the country. Venizelos, the Greek Prime Minister at the time, accepted. Despite the removal of those old-Muslims, their influence

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remained and some fanatical members of the old-Muslim ideology continued to live in the area. These people later became the leading officers of the 'Old-Muslim' organisations that they went on to establish.

5. After the end of the Civil War the political system was against the communists. The official Communist Party was banned until 1974. EDA therefore had very limited room to manoeuvre (Featherstone 1987: p.35)

6. For more on the Greek Political parties of this period see Clogg 1987: pp. 22-26.

7. For the period of Bulgarian occupation there is no data to show political developments in the Muslim minority population. It seems to be, however, that changes did occur in the political structure of the Muslim minority. During 1941-44 Xanthi and Rhodopi belonged to Bulgaria and the Treaty of Lausanne was not therefore valid. (Nikolakopoulos 1991: p.185)

8. From 1946 to 1951, the progressive elements within the Christian population expressed themselves politically through EPEK (the centre/left party) whose support among Muslims was very limited.

9. From 1958 onwards there was some support for EDA in Western Thrace. One of the candidates was a Muslim, Kerim Sali. However, the percentage of the vote for the party was too low to be considered here.

10. There had been an election earlier in 1989 but as there was no clear majority the elections had to be repeated later in the year. Again, there was no majority leading to a coalition government (*oikoumeniki kyvernisi*) and elections were repeated again in April 1990.

11. According to Dodos, there were administrative efforts in the November 1989 elections to undermine the candidacy of the *Empistosyni* party. Efforts included the increase of Christian votes by the electorate transference of army departments, taking advantage of Christian soldiers' vote, and the

rejection of candidacy due to administrative faults (Dodos 1994: p.68).

12. For example in the area of Xanthi, the areas consisting of entire by Muslim populations gave 31,5% for ND, 26% for PASOK and 37,8% for *Pepromeno* in the July 1989 elections. In the 1990 elections, when the candidate for *Pepromeno* was elected the voting pattern in Muslim areas was: 18,4% for ND, 11.2% for PASOK and 67.2% for *Pepromeno*.

# PART III

# Chapter 8

## Regional Policy and The Muslim minority of Western Thrace

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## 1. Introduction

This section of the thesis attempts to bring together some of the findings from the previous parts in order to understand the effects of the recent regionalism on the population, both Christian and Muslim, of Western Thrace. The main belief that will be highlighted throughout the chapter is that, in the short-term, Greek regional restructuring caused grievances in terms of local and ethnic perceptions of the population. In the long term however, greater regionalism has brought financial (new incentives) and political (higher participation) benefits to the local population.

Most of the findings in this chapter are supported by already existing data from official organisations, interviews with local representatives of the regional structure who were contacted during the study and relevant quotations from political speeches. In addition, as the last decade (1990s) witnessed the establishment of subnational structures, the chapter will concentrate on this period unless otherwise stated.

The chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section considers the regional policy in Western Thrace in terms of economic viability, new administrative structure and the culturally diverse human factor. More specifically, in the last decade there has been significant investment in the area with some successful results; in particular, Western Thrace is no longer characterised as the poorest European region.[1] However, the still weak administration and the particular character of the population call for future

research, planning and training in order for the region to benefit in the best way from the development programmes.

The second section of the chapter focuses on the regional policy with respect to the Muslim minority population. As has been already mentioned in Part II, the historical memories, geographical position and mixed population of the area have given grounds for the development of both Greek and Turkish nationalism. In addition to strong ethnic affiliations, the different religions have also played a role in maintaining and fuelling contradictions within the society.

The beginning of 1990s witnessed the peak of these social differences, which also coincided with the time of regional restructuring in Greece. The chapter highlights the way the two issues were connected and expressed in the press at the time and draws a comparison with feelings held today. Moreover, this section shows how ready the Western Thracian society was to accept the regional changes and the European challenges presented at the time.

The final section of the chapter concentrates on the two concepts of regionalism as analysed in Part I: democratic representation and the effects of centralisation/decentralisation. These two concepts are examined as to their applicability in the case of Western Thrace and the way the local population is affected by their benefits or otherwise. In addition this part draws some conclusions with respect to the need for a regional social policy which takes into account the ethnic level of diverse communities such as Western Thrace.

## 2. Section I: Regional Policy and Western Thrace

### 2.1 Economy

One of the major effects of regionalism in the area of Western Thrace are the new high levels of investment the area has attracted. However, it would be a mistake to assume that regionalism alone is the main factor for economic

prosperity. There have been recent changes overall in Greece that have influenced such developments. First, membership of the European Union has brought extra funding from the European structural funds - a substantial amount of which is used for assisting the Greek regions.

Second, the collapse of Communism in the Balkan states[2] has given Greece a new role in the Balkan Peninsula and has enabled more development in the otherwise neglected Northern Greek regions. More particularly, in neighbouring Bulgaria, Greek economic investment has increased to reach almost 100 million dollars and around 700 Greek companies operate within the country (Athens Academy 1994: p.73). Although most of this investment originates from the area of Thessaloniki, the geographical position of Western Thrace accompanied by the development of the necessary infrastructure presents a future potential for the area as a whole (ibid: pp. 78-80).

Finally, the recent good relations between Greece and Turkey (although still cautious, especially as a solution to the Cyprus issue has yet to be found), also means further economic expansion, something particularly true for the north-eastern regions.

As has already been argued in previous chapters, Western Thrace is located in an area of strategic importance for Greece. From the end of the Second World War to the mid-1990s this geographical position had negative effects on the economic development of the area and contributed to its relative isolation with analogous consequences for the local population. This was especially true for the Muslims (the 'Other' within), who due to historical circumstances and their association with Turkey, Greece's traditional enemy, found themselves in a less privileged position.

In general, the local population, which is relatively smaller than other regions, ethnically and religiously diverse (with problems stemming from this diversity as we have already seen in Part II) and not adequately educated, has had difficulties meeting the new economic conditions. Additionally, the

previously negative climate has meant that many young and university-educated people (both Muslim and Christian) who would otherwise have been an asset for Western Thrace, did not return to the area after completing their studies (Interview, Komotini July 2001). This was partly due to the unemployment levels (of about 7%) among mainly young and university educated people (Athens Academy 1994: p17).

Apart from the particularity of the local population, the study of the development of Western Thrace conducted by the Athens Academy in 1994, noted three other factors responsible for the relative 'backwardness' of Western Thrace (Athens Academy 1994: pp.1-5). First, there is a sense of historical threat perceived in different ways by each section of the population as mentioned earlier in Part II. Overall this leads to segregated markets and the generation of less capital than in other areas. In some of the interviews which were conducted as part of this thesis it was mentioned by both Christian and Muslim interviewees that Muslims tend to invest their money in Turkey partly because of this threat and partly because of deprivation. Many Christians for the same reason tend to invest in land or property in other areas of Greece.

Moreover, this idea of 'threat' is often emphasised as an obstacle to further development. For example, one of the problems for investment in Western Thrace highlighted by Mr Romaios, the deputy Minister of Economy at the time, is 'the feeling of insecurity created by the national problem of the (Muslim) minority and the proximity with Bulgaria and Turkey. .... Perhaps this is the number one problem faced by businessmen in Thrace' (Romaios 1994: p.60).

A second factor is not unique to Western Thrace but is applicable to most Northern Greek regions. The underdevelopment of such regions is partly due to the intensified investment and development of the Athens-Thessaloniki axis, which took place after the Second World War. At later stages priority was also given to overall regional development. However, Western Thrace still remained relatively isolated mainly due to its border with Turkey and the then Communist

Bulgaria. As the Athens Academy study phrases it, Western Thrace remained a 'border economy'. (Athens Academy 1995: p.10)

Finally, the lack of local infrastructure does not allow the area to take advantage of seasonal profits. For example, the lack of a proper road system or seaside/mountainous resorts fail to attract the mass tourism achieved in other areas of Greece. In this respect however, as we have seen in the area's profile, Western Thrace does have the capacity for future development in this direction especially with regard to the rich ecosystem and relatively unspoilt environment that the region possesses.

Despite these factors of negative development and contrary to the common view, Western Thrace did receive economic incentives from the Greek state, especially during the 1970s (Anagnostou 1999: p. 109). The main reason for such assistance was again the sensitive situation characterising Western Thrace as a region for which aid was a 'national priority'. Being mainly an agricultural economy, the idea was to boost the secondary and tertiary levels of production. These public efforts came in the form of public investment, agricultural loans and special projects as well as subsidies for industrial investment.

The relative 'backwardness' of the region was advantageous for such investment. Although the infrastructure was - and still is to an extent – poor[3] the region possesses favourable labour-market conditions: cheap labour, lack of unionisation, non-skilled labour etc. As Adrikopoulou argues, the low-cost and controllable character of labour in the region is considered as a major asset for capital investment (Adrikopoulou, 1987: p.9). Furthermore, the local social structure and its fragmentation (in terms of class and ethnicity) was considered as another asset for future investment in the area for the same reason (ibid.).

The fact remains however that the economic upgrading of the region was not achieved by the mid-1990s. According to the 1991 National statistics records on economic performance, Western Thrace is the least economically advanced

region in Greece as it produces only 2.5% of the Gross National Product (GNP). The following figure shows its declining share of GNP for the period 1981-1991.

**Figure 1:** Western Thrace 1981-91: share of GNP



**Western Thrace 1981-91: share of GNP**
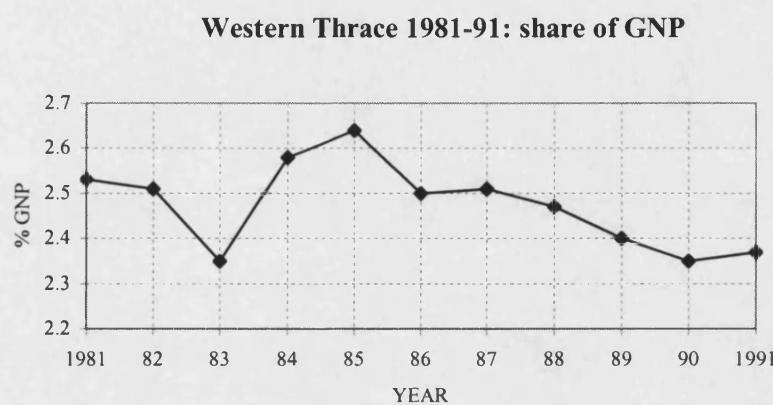
**Source:** National Statistics, Section of National Accounts, 1992 data from Athens Academy: 1994 p.19

As can be observed in the figure, the first half of the 1980s showed an increasing share of GNP in the region of Western Thrace, but after 1985, there is a continuous decrease. In actual fact, even at its peak, the share of Western Thrace in the Greek GNP was low at only 2.65%.

In terms of economic levels, the economy of the Western Thrace depends mainly on primary production such as agriculture, dairy farming and fisheries. Secondary and tertiary levels are less significant despite state policies aimed at higher industrial investment. In terms of data, according to the National Statistics figures, the Regional Gross Product derives from: 40-45% primary sector, 28-30% secondary and 30-32% tertiary. The following table also reveals the stagnation of the industrial sector.

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**Table 23:** Distribution of employment in Western Thrace 1981-91 in %

| Year / Economic sector | 1981 | 1986 | 1991 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Primary Sector | 63.6 | 55.3 | 50.6 |
| Secondary Sector | 15.5 | 15.7 | 16.3 |
| Tertiary Sector | 20.8 | 29.1 | 33.1 |

Source: National Statistics Service 1992

According to the above data, there is a slight decrease in employment in the primary sector, which seems to have been absorbed by the tertiary sector. For the secondary sector there is only a very slight increase in terms of local employment.

To summarise, the economic performance of Western Thrace up until the mid-1990s seems to follow an ambivalent trend. On the one hand, the region presents low levels in its share of the Gross National Product and on the other special state assistance was provided for its development. The arguments for both cases concentrate on the issue of the region's geographical position. Thus, although there are low levels of development because of the region's 'physical' isolation combined with Greece's external relations, opportunities for investment were encouraged precisely because Western Thrace was designated as a region of 'national priority'.

There are several reasons for the relative failure of such development projects. Briefly, the end of the subsidy programmes by the mid-1980s in combination with the poor infrastructure led to the closure of many newly created factories.[4]

But most importantly and more relevant to the purpose of the present thesis, there has not been adequate economic planning in order to attract more appropriate investment. As Anagnostou argues "(grants)…channelled to projects often unrelated to the needs of the regional economy, and to unaccountable investors who often failed to contribute to the latter, the allocation of resources

as such distorted development. Indicative of the fact that grants have been allocated on premises unrelated to regional conditions and economic needs, is the persistent problem of extremely low completion rates of state-subsidised private investment projects" (Anagnostou, 1999: pp.109-110).

This lack of planning led to the sort of investment that the region was not prepared to absorb and was based on a lack of understanding of the social conditions of the regions of society and more particularly those of the Muslim minority. As an ex Muslim MP said in an interview, Thrace does not have a tradition either of industrial production or the infrastructure to support it (Interview, Komotini 2001). Instead the region could have benefited further by supporting the culturally diverse local population, as well as subsidising the internal market.

## 2.2 Regional Policy and Administration in Thrace

The regional changes that took place in Greece during the last ten to fifteen years introduced the different system of government and democratic representation fully explored in Part I. Largely due to the European cohesion policy and its emphasis on sub-national levels of government, Greece sought to reorganise its territorial structure and reconfigure the centre-local power dynamics.

Briefly, according to the new system there are two levels of local government. The first level includes the election of mayors and municipal councillors for each municipality (Dimoi) in every prefecture. The second level includes the election of one prefect and the prefectural council for each prefecture. In addition there is the state appointed Regional Governor who is responsible for the entire region in terms of budget and economic development. Before the 1990s the first level was the only elected tier of local authority and its power was very limited, while the prefect, who had most of the authority was state appointed.

Part of the new system for local government was the administrative re-arrangement of the Greek regions. Under this scheme, Western Thrace joined Eastern Macedonia as one regional body (Perifereia Anatolikis Macedonias & Thrakis). Today, this new region consists of the three Thracian prefectures plus two from Macedonia: Xanthi, Rhodopi, Evros, Drama and Kavala. The reason for this re-arrangement was the move to attract higher economic funding for the enlarged area. Despite recent efforts to develop the region, East Macedonia/Western Thrace is still one of the poorest European regions in terms of Gross Domestic Product.[5]

For Western Thrace there have been few changes relating to the first level of local government. In order to create sufficiently large municipalities for the election of mayors, many of the villages joined together to become one administrative body. Today, there are six municipalities in Xanthi, nine in Rhodopi and thirteen in Evros. There are only a few communes left (communes were part of the old local government system under which they had very limited power).

At the second level, the number of the prefectures remained the same (three), each represented by one elected prefect. However, in the case of Western Thrace and more specifically Xanthi and Rhodopi, the law of prefectural self-government was modified (law 2218/94, Article 40) to enable the creation of 'enlarged prefectures' (*dievrimenes nomarhies*). Accordingly, Xanthi was joined with Kavala and Rhodopi with Evros. Some argue that this rearrangement was for the area to attract more funding. There is, however, the argument that by following this path there would be a very limited possibility of electing a Muslim prefect.[6]

It is important to note, as has been previously mentioned, that regionalism and the drive for regionalism were concerned with economics and specifically to facilitate investment in the region. On the other hand the introduction of tiers of local government were not specifically connected with economics. They were the result of political and administrative modernization

associated in the minds of Greek political elites with the process of Europeanization.

The culturally diverse population of the area presented a challenge for the newly formed regional policy for two reasons. First, the formation of the new municipalities bought together Christian and Muslim populations. As we have seen earlier, with the exception of the mixed population in the towns or large villages (*komopolis*), most villages are inhabited solely by either Muslim or Christian populations. For example in Xanthi most of the mountainous area is inhabited by Muslims. With the new obligatory merging of municipalities and communes (law 'Capodistrias' 2539/1997) came the creation of ethnically mixed administrative areas. For the first time at the local level people were called on to cooperage and elect a representative for their area.[7]

There was also a challenge for the local government candidates – Christian or Muslim – who had to approach the local community and attract votes from both communities. The new manifestos and political campaigns had to take place in such a way as to represent this diversity. In the 1998 elections Muslim and Christian mayors were elected to represent mixed communities, one in Xanthi and the other in Rhodopi, while a few municipal councils consisted of mixed members.

The same two reasons also apply in the case of the prefect and the prefectural council whose role is the economic, social and cultural development of the area. The fact that this is now an elected body means that it is in the interest of the candidates to include policies attractive to all sections of the population. For example in the interviews – with officials from both levels – the diversity of the population was emphasised both as an advantage for the area and as a fact which would play a major role in future development. In addition this tier of government is open to both Muslim and Christian candidates; in 1998, although no Muslim prefect was elected, a number of Muslims were elected to the prefectural council.

These challenges however advantageous or not for the local population, are certainly of interest to the social scientist. Western Thrace's society is not a straightforward case for policy or policy-making in terms of the diverse religious and ethnic affiliations. As we have seen in previous chapters, it is an arena where Greek and Turkish nationalisms are tested and therefore any institutional change or introduction of new policy creates a controversy that implicitly or explicitly refers to the ethnic factor as evidenced by the rival political platforms mentioned above. As with the economy, the politics of ethnicity are present in every aspect of the local society. It is not therefore the regional policy that creates oppositions, it is rather a vehicle to express them.

## 3. Section II: Regional Policy and the Muslim minority

Until the mid-1980s when it was first discussed and the 1990s when it materialised, local government in Greece was almost non-existent. There were the prefectural divisions but these were mainly decentralised forms of central power rather than bodies of regional authorities. As chapter two indicated, the municipalities and communes were the only elected forms of local government but their activity was very limited as all their actions and budgets were under the management and control of the prefect. During this period for both the areas of Xanthi and Rhodopi (as in the rest of Greece) a prefect was appointed by the state while the mayors and the president of the communes were locally elected. In Muslim villages, therefore, there was elected Muslim presidents and in Christian villages, a Christian counterparts. The prefect was always Christian.

Western Thrace was treated as an area of strategic importance by the state and as has been mentioned before, there was an evident lack of any long – term planning for the region's economic and social development. In the absence of regional policy-making bodies two central institutions came to play an important role in terms of inter-ethnic relations, both constantly reinforcing the existence of different communities. The first was the Office of Cultural Affairs, a unit set up by the Greek Foreign Ministry to handle all Muslim minority

issues. Many complaints have been made by the Muslims against the operations and the role of this unit. The most serious accusation put forward concerned the development of a strong local network (a clientele) which became an obstacle for the everyday transactions of Muslim citizens.

Examples of such difficulties experienced by Muslims included obtaining driving licences, buying property and receiving planning permission for their houses, all of which were coupled with the existence of restrictions of movement for the population of the mountainous areas that were lifted only in the last decade. Another example was the existence of Article 19 of the Citizenship Law, which allowed the withdrawal of Greek citizenship if the person concerned left the country with no intention of returning. Under this law a Greek Muslim who decided to reside in Turkey for many years could lose his/her Greek citizenship. This law was also abolished during the last decade.[8]

The second institution that played an important role in the issue of ethnic relations of the area was the Turkish Consulate in Komotini. The Consulate's existence and involvement in Muslim minority affairs supported the demands being made for the ethnic self-determination of the Muslims. In addition to the ethnic Turks there was an effort to include the Pomaks and Rom under the term 'Turkish identification' – a move that found general acceptance in the two communities. The Turkish Consulate granted many scholarships to Muslim students for university education in Turkey and it was generally viewed as being the manipulating power behind any Muslim demands. Moreover, its existence determined the Muslim minority as the 'voice of the other' associated with the enemy state.[9]

During the years from the 1920s onwards and especially after the 1960s, the Muslim minority was transformed from being a religious community attached to the old Ottoman values to an ethnically-aware community demanding ethnic recognition. As already mentioned the argument revolved around religious and educational issues but underneath was an increasing ethnic consciousness. Taking advantage of Greece's EU membership, the Muslim

leaders appealed to the European anti-racism forums to increase awareness about the Muslim issue in Western Thrace.

The reasons for this shift can be found, in part, to be due to historical circumstances and in part due to the extremely centralised power exerted by the Greek government which encouraged the isolation of the two communities but also of the region as a whole. Through the years, the gap between centre and periphery had widened, leading to a weak local administration unable to express the real problems faced by the local population. As local government had no authority over the decision-making processes, power over social/ethnic issues was left in the hands of central government and it was either due to its physical distance from the area or to political interests that central government allowed the problem to perpetuate. Greek-Turkish relations were another obstacle for the development of more fruitful ethnic relations in the region. The Cyprus problem, the persecution of the Greek minority in Turkey during the 1950s, and the constant suspicion of irredentist Muslim plans only served to complicate the situation further.

The lack of democratically elected representation at local level was experienced by both Christians and Muslims. Christians, through membership of various associations or political parties could have their voices heard to a higher degree than the Muslims. The latter were the ones who were deprived and hesitant to form or become members of groups and associations whilst at the same time having little involvement with the existing political parties. (This conclusion was borne out by both the existing literature and the interviews). Therefore, it can be stated that the Muslim views were not adequately represented in Greek society. Considering the social gap between urban and rural Muslims, the linguistic difficulties (at all levels as shown in the chapter on education), as well as the low educational levels among the Muslim population, the task of making one's voice heard became almost herculean. It was partly as a consequence of this that the Turkish Consulate and the local Muslim elites actively took up the role of intermediaries.

Furthermore, as we have seen in chapter 2, there was (and still exists) a high degree of clientelism existed within Greek society, political parties and political authorities which the highly centralised state enabled to continue and flourish. This clientelism became a fertile ground for the perpetuation of nationalistic feelings fuelled occasionally by Greek-Turkish relations. Traditionally, in both Greece and Turkey political networks and nepotism in all aspects of political and social life was the typical way for an individual or a group to conduct their affairs. The new administrative structures and modern political reality, guided particularly by the EU, have left the Greek state with the huge task of eliminating the old system and introducing more transparent methods of the policy-making and its implementation. As we have seen in the theoretical section for regional policy, clientelist systems existed in both Italy and France but new structures were introduced in order to limit their power. The Greek state is now called upon to introduce this degree of accountability.

During the 1990s as the new regional reforms were introduced by the government both the Christian and Muslim communities were quick to show their strong opposition. Despite the general approval of Greece's EU membership, there was strong objection to the state's decentralisation attempts. From the Christian point of view a decentralised state was a weak state and therefore Western Thrace was under threat. As Papagiannis argued in his editorial column in *Topiki Aytodioikisi* journal, "hysterical voices were heard for 'the general destruction of the state' on the one hand and 'parapolitics' on the other, and 'we are going for elections and...it is not time to disintegrate the state' and that 'decentralisation and human and minority rights' became a maximum national threat". He continued "... true democratisation process (but even the basic modernisation) involves the further re-structuring of the self-government in all levels of social political and economic life and the abolition of the power-monopoly centres" (Papagiannis: September 1994: p.3).

Many newspaper and magazine articles during that period depicted this notion of 'threat' and argued accordingly. For example an article entitled 'Superficial, useless and nationally dangerous' argues that the new reform of

prefectural self-government could enable the election of a Turkish prefect with serious consequences for the region (Oikonomikos Taxydromos 7.7.94: p.35). Objections were even raised against the enlarged prefectures as a creation for the benefit of the Christians. Hence when it came to prefectural self-government law it was argued that the 'joining together of the Rhodopi and Evros prefecture would lead to the Turkification of the second' (ibid.: p33).

Within the Muslim section of population, the reactions were similar. For the general Muslim population the new reforms were to be mistrusted especially after the introduction of the 'enlarged prefectures'. Their reservations were justified considering certain of the Christian reactions. However, the more radical opinion of Turkish nationalists was very similar to that of Christian nationalists: they feared the opportunity of closer co-operation between the two communities, which they perceived as a threat to their influence. As a consequence, the Turkish nationalists argued against the reforms. (Anagnostou, 2000).

In general, opposition to the reforms has been expressed all over Greece mainly because of local vested interests and the breakdown of previously well established local structures and relations. The new system also aimed to distribute power at different levels through elections and to introduce more transparency to the methods of local government operations. This attempt at modernising and upgrading an archaic system of local government inevitably raised controversy.

What was different in Western Thrace – although not unexpected – was the reference to the ethnic issue that seemed to undermine most of the affairs of Western Thrace. When asked whether the Thracian population was ready to accept the regional changes, most interviewees thought that the population was ready but not adequately informed. Most thought that Western Thrace had coped much better with the new regional policy structure than other areas in Greece although there were ongoing controversies over the way the obligatory merging of various communes and municipalities took place.

Despite these local oppositions, decentralisation was favoured by business and by political parties who defended the EU policies. The new profile of PASOK (during the 1990s) as a pro-European and pro-modernisation party proceeded with the changes. Significant funds were allocated to Western Thrace with the introduction of the new development law 2234/94. As a consequence special subsidies were allocated for the promotion of investment in Thrace in all three levels of production. (Romaios 1994: p.62). The region of Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace benefited substantially from EU funding, much of which was given for the development of the infrastructure. Western Thrace attracted about 12% of the 1st European Community Support Frameworks funds for the period 1989-93, the third largest portion after the areas of Attica and Central Macedonia (Oikonomikos Taxydromos 25.2.93: p.67). This funding was further supported by a supplementary subsidy of the $2^{nd}$ European Community Support Frameworks for the years 1994-1999 (European Commission 1995: p.15). The municipalities and prefectures received substantial amounts of extra funding and those with a mixed population were assisted with an additional fund (interview, Xanthi, July 2001).

The affairs of the Muslim minority have been transferred from the Foreign Ministry to the Ministry of the Interior while the role of the Cultural Affairs Office has diminished. And as Simitis, the current Greek Prime minister, emphasised in one of his visits to the area, "the Greek state will guarantee the participation of both Christians and Muslims in the process of regional development. As part of this development Thrace will become the example of equality, multicultural activities, religious freedom and participation in the common prosperity ... the local society can only exist, co-habit and progress peacefully with respect for the different cultural and religious models and traditions" (Komotini, 2.5.96). To a large degree this terminology of multiculturalism, cultural diversity, its benefits and the protection of the different cultural traditions, has entered into the language of the local press, of the official representatives and of the people of Western Thrace and has featured in all the local interviews conducted for this study. (There is a plethora of

examples for the current increasing use of 'multiculturalism' in the region. To name but a few: the local daily Paratiritis in Komotini, published also in Turkish is committed to promote the 'multicultural element' of the region, the local Delta TV programme entitled "multi-cultural Thrace every Tuesday", the local daily Chronos' article of 21/10/1999, and the daily Eleftherotypia 6/4/2001)

## 3.1 Managing ethnic relations

In order to look at the present day situation, three aspects of social life will be examined: first, economic development; second, both levels of local government; and third, the Muslim minority. All three have been analysed above as being the main components contributing to the regional policy in this area that focuses on social aspects and inter-ethnic relations.

### 3.1.1 Economy

In the area of economic development there has been a marked improvement during the last years. The European Union developmental funds of the $1^{st}$ and $2^{nd}$ European Community Support Frameworks were aimed at particular areas of development for the region. Initially these were the exploitation of the region's geographical position and the improvement of its transport infrastructure connection it to its neighbours, Bulgaria and Turkey, and the rest of Greece. Specific finance was allocated for the opening of new international and domestic roads, and the modernisation of airports and seaports.

The most important public work was the construction of the Egnatia motorway that runs for a total of 687 kilometres beginning at the Turkish border (Kipoi) and continuing throughout most of North Greece, finishing at the Egoumenitsa port of Epirus where ships depart for Italy and other Mediterranean ports. Local roads have been constructed and/or improved reducing time and costs of transportation but also greatly enabling the region to come out of its isolation. In addition to the road system, funding has been given for the

improvement of industrial zones, support for small-medium enterprises (SME) and for the exploitation of the area's natural resources.

The second aim included the development of the primary level of production which traditionally for this region was agriculture (tobacco, cotton, sugar beat). However, the area has also the natural environment for extensive dairy and fish farming. To support these industries an irrigation system totalling 435 km in length, including a dam has been constructed. Roads for agricultural purposes were built and money was given for specific public works to support the cultivation of fruit trees and flowers.

The third aim involved the development of tourism, the protection of the natural environment and the increase of the standard of living for the residents. Funds were specifically allocated for the encouragement of alternative forms of tourism such as mountaineering, therapeutic spas, walking, and cultural and historical pursuits. Local historical institutions and the protection and promotion of archaeological areas were also singled out to receive financial support. To raise the standard of living, money was set aside to provide environmentally friendly treatment of waste, sewage system and the building of modern hospitals. Particular treaties such as the Treaty of Ramsar were drawn up to protect the local environment where rare species of flora and fauna are to be found.

The final aim of the EU programmes was the education and employment/training of the local population. Funding including the construction of specialist high schools, for example, for music and technology, and the enlargement of the Democritus University whose departments are dispersed within the three prefectures in Western Thrace. Special educational programmes were offered to people with special needs and to the new population of Pontian Greeks who were being settled in the region following the collapse of the Soviet Union.[10]

The construction of the new infrastructure gave a fresh impetus to the area, reflected in a slight change to the region's economic position in terms of its Gross Regional Product (GRP). Before this change Western Thrace had previously been one of the five poorest European regions (precise figures have been provided above). Whilst it is no longer on that list the area is still amongst some of the poorest in Europe and Greece (European Commission 1999: p. 17). Another indication of the positive but relatively slow progress is the degree of decrease in size of the region's population. According to European statistics there was a 0.8% decrease between 1981-1991 and this decrease seems to continue to today (ibid.). It could be argued however that as most of the public works are either only nearing completion or have just been completed, it is too early to judge the future regional prosperity based on the new infrastructure.

Whatever the cause there is a new optimism expressed in the interviews, informal discussions with local people and in the local and national press. Both Muslim and Christian local government representatives express the hope that Western Thrace will begin to play an important role in the future economic/social and cultural affairs of the Balkan Peninsula, Asia Minor and the newly created Black Sea states.

3.1.2 Regional Policy

Both levels of local government are newly established and are still undergoing changes to their composition and function. General arguments about external threats or a weakened Greek state are no longer at the centre of political debate and do not feature in mass media reportage. Instead, to a large degree both the Thracian and the wider Greek society have come to appreciate the positive effects of a local government system, which for the moment mainly derive from the economic benefits they are experiencing. Present day emphasis is placed on ways to improve the existing institutions and overcome the current operational obstacles.

Decentralisation was a policy followed by the Greek state as part of a general effort towards the country's modernisation. As Mouzelis argues, the introduction of new institutional frameworks coincides with the creation of a new political climate in Greece. The general approval of closer Greek integration with the EU, together with the political changes in East Europe and the demise of New Right liberalism affected the trends in Greek society (Mouzelis1995: 29). In this context a new environment free of political/party or ideological interests where political power is also exercised from 'below' offers new prospects for the Greek society. However, what is fundamental to the success of this process is the break-up of the present well-established system of clientelistic and populist ways of contact. (ibid.).

The tremendous regional disparities that exist today in Greece are the inheritance of a highly centralised power and clientelistic network that defined the shape of the state and the form of political authority. This archaic system of power relations managed to survive the 170 years of the independent Greek state. (Topiki Aytodioikisi, journal, 1999: p12). As a result most of the development took place around the region of Athens which also absorbed almost half of the population.

The new local government reforms signify only the first steps towards a framework of institutional pluralism where the different levels of power interact in the policy-making process. Although decentralisation was achieved to some degree, further planning is needed for its realisation. In a study of the new reforms undertaken by ISTAME[11] and highlighted in a Kathimerini newspaper article, it is emphasised that there are many problems currently created by the increased power of the local government. To name two, local antagonisms have developed, and an inability to manage the public money due to either corruption or mismanagement has emerged. (Daily, Kathimerini 16/2/01). Although most of the interviewees disagreed with this article, they confirmed that whilst there were problems and obstacles to be overcome these were 'early days yet' to be talking of an advanced, decentralised system.

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Prime Minister Simitis acknowledged, in his speech addressing the 1998 Panhellenic Prefects meeting, the importance of local government and the need for further steps to be taken. He argued: '...we feel justified because we contributed to the change of the states and public policy image, introduced the prefectural administration and we extended the participation of society in the political and administrative system, we promoted the participatory democratic administration while limiting the traditional centralisation...for a modernised, upgraded, participatory and effective prefectural self government more needs to be done. (Prime Ministerial speech, 22.5.98).

In the area of Western Thrace there is general satisfaction with the reforms. The main reasons for this of course are the economic benefits received by the region and the distribution of funding, some of which went to the prefectures but a large amount went, for the first time, to municipalities. Responsibility for the financial management of these funds, which are directed towards the particular needs of each area, rested with the mayors. Problems still existed, however, such as the lack of appropriately trained people that the local authorities need. The question of course remains what will happen when the EU structural funding comes to an end. Whatever the outcome, the area of Western Thrace does fulfil some of the requirements (mainly with regard to the new infrastructure) for further development.

As to the prospects for the area as a whole, there is optimism in connection with the important role Western Thrace will be called upon to play. Decentralisation and a modernised form of public administration, together with the diminished climate of 'Turkish threat', enables the area to prepare for future challenges. This optimism exists at all three levels of policy-making (EU, Greek central government and Western Thrace local authorities) and there is the belief that the geographical position of the area will secure future economic and social prosperity.

## 3.2 Regional Policy and the Muslim minority

Within the Muslim minority, despite initial suspicions about the reforms, the general view is that there is a definite improvement both for the area of Western Thrace and for the Muslim population. Although local government (at both levels) cannot interfere with major issues concerning the Muslims – including education, the election of the Mufti and the management of the religious property – they feel their community has benefited from the reforms especially in the economic sector. As with the Christian population the reorganisation of the municipalities has not satisfied everyone, in as much as some Muslims would have preferred the formation of an extra Muslim populated municipality.

There are today Muslim mayors and Muslim members in both the municipal and prefectural councils. The increased power of these bodies gives more authority to the opinions and ideas of their members. In addition - and perhaps as a result of higher participation in the society – the Muslim community has recognised the degree of educational disadvantage found within the Muslim community and there have been more calls for the upgrading of the educational system. On this last point, it has been observed that the increasing Islamic influence, which calls for stricter religious Muslim education, is in conflict with the modernised section of the Muslim community (Interview, Komotini July 2001). It will be interesting to follow this situation as it develops over the next few years.

In this new political environment both the Christian and the Muslim community have become closer and now take common decisions on local issues. A positive step, which to a large extent has been attributed to the European Union, is the increasing acceptance by both Christians and Muslims of the multicultural character of the region as an asset for its future development. The advantages deriving from this cultural particularity have been positively depicted by the national press. For example, an Eleftherotypia article on an arts exhibition of primary school students from Thrace that took place in the

Parliament is entitled: 'Thrace, History and cohabitation' and highlights the following: "Christians and Muslims lived, live and will live peacefully in Thrace, writes Impade Oskan under his painting from Komotini. Katerina Florokati, from the primary school of Dialambi draws a Christian church and a Muslim minaret" (Daily, Eleftherotypia, 6.4.01).

Despite the general positive atmosphere the relations between Christian and Muslim communities remain tense. An important observation can be made regarding the two mixed municipalities: the one in the prefecture of Xanthi with a Christian mayor and the other in the Rhodopi with a Muslim mayor. Despite the present positive climate, both communities show that the climate of mutual suspicion, ethnic antagonisms and nationalistic platforms still exists. The problematic long-term coexistence, and the differences between religions (there are very few mixed marriages) have all contributed to a gap that is not easy to narrow.

Two examples illustrate the ongoing tensions in the mixed community. The first is found in the case of the mixed municipality in the prefecture of Xanthi. Funding has been given for the creation and operation of public kindergartens; however Muslim families do not send their children despite encouragement. Added to which there are efforts from within particular sections of both the Christian and Muslim communities to keep the populations apart and any attempt to counter this raise complaints. Christians within the same area even commented on the fact that a Muslim minaret figured in the official municipal poster for a local festival. And an ethnic disagreement arose following other efforts to improve a local road used by school children when actions of both Muslims and Christians led to the involvement of the Turkish consulate and local newspapers. (Interview, Xanthi, July 2001)

Similar problems are faced by the other mixed community in the prefecture of Rhodopi. In the municipal initiative, a cherry festival was organised as a way of marketing the fruit to both external and internal markets. The festival did not have a strictly commercial character and was accompanied

by cultural events such as music concerts. Some of the participatory groups were from Turkey and performed contemporary Turkish music. The event, although unique and multicultural, received negative reviews from the local press mainly because of the extensive use of the Turkish language. In addition, most of the coverage concentrated on the cultural events while neglecting the cherry marketing campaign. (Interview, Komotini July 2001).

These are but a few examples of the difficulties faced today with regard to the Muslim minority. As a local journalist emphasised, more work is needed in the mixed areas. The active participation of the younger generation could solve many of the obstacles and more information could be made accessible to all people. An important omission is that some of the positive steps being taken in the area are not covered in the Turkish-speaking press. For example a large fund was provided by the state for the redecoration of Muslim schools, but this regional development effort was not featured in the Turkish-speaking press (interview, Komotini 2001) while only selective information appears in the Christian newspapers. In short, the local press remains to a large degree nationalistic. (Interview, Komotini 2001).

To conclude, the present situation indicates that despite the regional efforts, the new state policies for equality and the relative calm in external relations, there are still areas where tensions easily develop. Moreover, there are still sections of both communities that fuel any possible tension at local expense as illustrated in the above examples. The need to strengthen the local civil society is very appropriate in the case of Western Thrace given the "authoritarian or despotic tendencies of the huge state bureaucracy and the self-serving, particularistic orientations of the major parties" (Mouzelis 1995: p19). A shift towards a more civic rather than ethnic identity, which is among the modernisation plans of the current government, could encourage greater participation in both local and wider society.

However, this last effort has met with great opposition, as shown by the example of the proposed changes to the national ID cards announced last year by

the government. The new cards would not contain information on the religious beliefs of the individuals as do the current ones. There was great controversy in Greece about the issue, focused on the undermining of the Greek ethnic identity which is closely connected with Orthodoxy. In contrast, the move was considered positively by non-Orthodox groups – such as Catholics, Jews and Muslims – who felt discriminated against as Greek citizens.

The present form of local government could play a positive role in such developments as it allows policy-making from 'below'. Despite criticism the institutions of the local and regional governments could bring higher co-operation among ethnically diverse societies: "local government, even with the enlarged prefectures, has a determinant role in peace. It is a cell of democracy; here problems could be expressed and solved" (Papandreou, Foreign Minister, Komotini: March 2000).

## 4. Section III: Democracy – Decentralisation – centre-periphery relations

Continuing the analysis of the present situation with regard to ethnic relations and local government, this section will concentrate on the two most important issues in the literature of regionalism: democracy and decentralisation. As local government in Greece has only developed in the last ten years it is difficult to accurately evaluate the significance of the two concepts. This is an area of study that for the Greek reality marks fundamental changes in terms of the distribution of power and the modernisation of the political institutions within present day Greece. Nevertheless, there are current trends that can act as indicators for the future.

Although reservations about the future integrity of the Greek state were expressed at the time that the new institutional changes were discussed, today's attention, as we have seen, is concentrated on ways of further improving the system. That in itself constitutes an example of the general acceptance and, to an extent, approval of the intermediate forms of government. There is strong criticism expressed that local government does not fulfil its role adequately but

whilst there are discussions for ways to improve on this there are no calls for abolition. For example, according to a recent study on the evaluation of the local government system "...the new reforms of the prefectural self-government and the 'Capodistrias' programme (the new changes introduced for the first tier of local government i.e. the municipalities) become acceptable as a mature institutional achievement, but what is not acceptable is their effects on important areas of the political system. In short they (the new reforms) have not been consolidated". (in Daily, *Kathimerini:* 16.2.01)

## 4.1 Democracy

The concept of democracy is embedded in the institutions of local and regional governments. Both are cases of intermediate policy making institutions. To draw a parallel with the concept of civil society, local government is the intermediate level between central government and the people; its role is the decentralisation of the political government. The new bodies are more directly accountable for their actions to the people they represent. In addition, local government, due to the smaller scale society for which it is responsible, has the opportunity to take greater notice of public opinion. In this way it can be argued that the people have greater access to participate in the decision-making mechanisms affecting them.

For the area of Western Thrace, as in the rest of Greece, the initial reactions against the new self-government institutions have not been repeated despite the fact that there was an extra ethnic factor of concern. Here, local government becomes not only the intermediary between the central government and the people but it also acts as a regulator of local ethnic issues. This role is not an easy one as because of the rapid developments, there is not enough experience within local government to either deal with minority/majority issues or to avoid the nationalistic traps involving particular interests.

Although still at an early phase, the sort of democracy offered by the local government, has, in general, been applicable to the local population, both Christian and Muslim. As the local self-government candidates need the wider

support of the community special efforts are made to include policies which are attractive to all. For the local population too, it is the first time for greater participation in the issues of society and the recognition of each other's thoughts and ideas. Therefore, it can be argued that although the new reforms are not the cause of the present positive relations (it is rather a result of a combination of factors as has been mentioned above), the new form of local government today has provided the means for greater co-operation between the Christian and Muslim communities in Western Thrace.

4.2 Decentralisation

Decentralisation in Greece is a process that involves two concepts, the first of which is 'physical' decentralisation, a term describing the movement of population from the centre to the periphery. This is an important issue for Greece and more specifically Athens, where almost half of the population is concentrated. This concentration of the populace followed years of highly centralised policies and an emphasis on the economic development of the centre. As the centre prospered more people started to move inwards from the regions, mainly in search of employment, creating on the one hand very congested living conditions within the capital and on the other perpetuating the system of underdevelopment for the regions. In an effort to find a solution to the problem the previous Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou introduced, specific measures to encourage decentralisation but these met with low levels of success.

The second form of decentralisation includes the government and its institutions and is closely related to the current government whose main aim is the modernisation of the Greek state and its administration. It is not simply a matter of an ideological trend, it is rather a requirement for Greek society as it becomes a more integrated member of the European Union. Part of these efforts was the introduction of the new local self-government reforms[12].

Western Thrace has experienced the negative effects of a population highly concentrated in the centre. Geographically isolated, the area witnessed a

mass wave of both external and internal emigration not only from university educated students but also from other sections of society. Employment and not ethnicity was at the heart of the population movement. Both Muslim and Christian people emigrated to Germany and Australia during the 60s and 70s and in the case of the Muslims also to Turkey. On the eve of the new changes, at the beginning of the 1990s, Thrace was the poorest and most sparsely populated region of the European Union. It is due, in part to this reason, that there is still some difficulty in catching up despite the new economic incentives.

In parallel to the notion of civil society, a truly decentralised system means the dissemination of political, economic and social sectors from 'above' to 'below'. (Mouzelis 1997, Topiki Aytodioikisi November-December 1999: p.31). According to Mouzelis this form of decentralisation protects the citizen from "the state despotism...avoid the monopoly control of ...a small political elite...employees are involved in the decision-making of a company, unionisation is strengthened with the development of consumer associations...the socially marginalized people...have also 'positive' rights such as in employment, health, education...and in the cultural area there is the protection of ethnic, religious or other minorities from the possible tendency for the majority to impose its own cultural values". (Mouzelis 1997: *To Vima*).

In all four respects discussed above, there seems to be some improvement as all issues, to one degree or another, are part of the local government system. These benefits are also enjoyed by the Muslim community whose cultural identity, as already seen, is being promoted as an asset for the distinctiveness of the region. The centre/periphery dynamics have been displaced from 'above' to 'below' to a certain extent. However, there are still some issues concerning the Muslim minority such as education and religion that are under the jurisdiction of the central state. As a consequence of this situation, and in contrast to other regional areas, Western Thrace has a continued connection with central government.

In a long run however, the decentralisation process combined with closer European integration will give a new dimension and substance to minority/majority relations not only in Greece but also in other European countries. What is different in Greece is the relatively high homogenisation of Greek society and the recent efforts for modernisation. The outcome of both is a notable lack of experience in dealing with a growing multicultural society.

At a European level the argument for the Muslims still remains their ethnic recognition. Uneasiness about the use of the appellation 'Turkish' among the Greek political parties continues despite recent favourable comments by the Foreign Minister, who in an interview used the term 'Turks' in relation to perceptions of the Turkish origin population of Western Thrace (Interview in *Klik* Magazine, August 1999).

There are difficulties in predicting the future of ethnic relations in Western Thrace. As the thesis has shown, the issue depends upon not only Greek domestic policies but also: a. on general political developments in the Balkan Peninsula and b. Greek-Turkish relations[13]. However, both EU membership and recent reforms on local government provide an additional forum for the two communities to co-operate. Furthermore, there is opportunity for greater Muslim involvement in Greek society while the supra-national level of the EU provides an alternative to the antagonistic nationalist traditionalism and historical past of both Greece and Turkey. This is particularly true with regard to questions concerning ethnic recognition, which are beyond local government powers.

To conclude, the European Union has been the main driving force behind the attempts for greater decentralisation in Greece. For areas like Western Thrace with mixed populations, both the local and the EU supra-national levels of governance can function as an alternative for greater participation in the first case, and self-identification in the second. At present, increasingly Muslim society accepts the EU's role in upgrading the area of Western Thrace whilst at the same time a small part goes even further and is happy to accept as an identity 'European citizenship', as shown previously.

## 5. Conclusion

The main aim of the this chapter was to synthesise the theoretical concepts and the practical research findings in order to give a fuller account of inter-ethnic relations and the role of local government in the area of Western Thrace. Regional reforms and the political expression of a rising ethnic consciousness in the form of Muslim protests peaked at the same time that Greece achieved greater integration with the European Union.

From the 1980s onwards, European Structural Funds were allocated to Greece in preparation for EU membership on equal terms with other nation states. To effectively absorb the funds the government had to accelerate and modernise the archaic system of local government. During the 1990s reforms were introduced to form the new levels making up the local government tier. As seen in Part I, three levels were created within this tier: the regional level with an appointed Regional Director, the prefectural level with the election of a prefect and prefectural council, and the municipal level with again the election of a mayor and municipal council.

Western Thrace as a region was initially the poorest in the EU and still remains one among the poorest today and it was as a consequence was given increased funding for economic and infrastructure upgrading. There was another reason for the allocation of extra funds, the regions' geographical position at the eastern part of the European Union could be beneficial in any future EU expansion.

The new regional reforms, although welcomed by those sections of society that had long campaigned for decentralisation, were not without their critics in the area of Western Thrace. Once again Greek nationalistic voices warned about the weakening of the state and the Turkish threat. Muslims were suspicious of the reforms while nationalistic sections fearing the possibility for closer Christian/Muslim interaction also opposed the reforms.

Regardless of the initial reactions the need for the EU's structural funds outweighed these concerns and the government proceeded with the reforms. Since that time a decade ago, the situation in Western Thrace has changed significantly and the relations between the two communities have taken a new, more positive turn. Greek-Turkish relations improved and policies favoured by the Muslims were introduced. As has been argued, although it was not the regional policy that brought the changes in Christian-Muslim relations, the policy changes determined the new framework of co-operation between the two communities.

There are several conclusions to be drawn from these observations. First, in economic terms there have been rapid developments in the whole of the area. The new improved infrastructure favours both communities in terms of transportation, public health and agricultural public works. Although this improvement does not guarantee in the short term the economic prosperity and the social upgrading of the region, it nevertheless gives greater opportunities in the long run.

Second, at the community level there have been efforts for closer co-operation. On the one hand the municipal and prefectural candidates have to attract Muslim votes in order to get elected and on the other, involvement in local issues brings the people together. There is also a general acceptance of the beneficial aspects of multiculturalism. However, these are but the first steps as has been illustrated by the examples above, and this is not an easy task. More work is needed in the ethnically mixed areas of the region if greater communication is to be achieved (see also Th. Tsikas' article in Aygi, daily newspaper, 1/8/99).

Third, efforts for greater regionalism coincided with the attempts being made by the present government for the modernisation of society, namely the strengthening of the weak civil society. To succeed in that effort, reform of the political institutions is not enough. Decentralisation of political power and institutions has to be accompanied by economic, social and cultural

dissemination. Although all of the above issues are included in the regional reforms of Greek society as a whole, for Western Thrace greater consideration needs to be given to the element of ethnicity for it to contribute to higher forms of both democracy and decentralisation.

Fourth, for the Muslim minority the decentralised role of local government and the existence of the supra-national level of EU politics present new opportunities for representation. On the issue of greater participation in everyday issues concerning local society – such as health, schooling, employment opportunities, programmes for people with special needs etc. – local government can be the vehicle for acknowledging Muslim views. On other issues beyond the authority of local government the Muslims can refer – and increasingly do – to the EU. Bypassing the traditional forms of either Greek or Turkish identity, EU citizenship becomes an acceptable alternative.

Finally, the short time which has elapsed since the establishment and operation of local governments, gives future opportunities to social researchers. The three levels of government, local-state-EU, together with the social issues of ethnicity and nationalism are areas that can be usefully explored further in social, political and economic terms.

**Notes**

1. In the 1991 European Union regional statistics, Western Thrace does not constitute one of the poorest regions in Europe. Although there has been a major investment in the area recently, it is nevertheless noteworthy that Western Thrace and Eastern Macedonia were joined together into one regional unit. This latest statistics are based on the results of the economic performance of this 'new' region.

2. Excluding the temporary negative effects of the war in the former Yugoslavia and the reorganisation of the newly created states such as FYROM.

3. Poor infrastructure in the area includes elements such as the lack of a functional road system and transportation and the lack of irrigation systems which are vital for agriculture and ports.

4. Some factories opened only to take advantage of the subsidies and some could not continue to exist due to high costs of fuel for the transportation of products.

5. Eurostat recently published statistics showing the gap in prosperity between the 211 regions of the European Union in 1998. Based on per capita GDP, the ten least well-off regions are: Epirus (Greece, whose per capita GDP is a mere 42% of the Community average), Reunion (France, 50%), Extremadura (Spain, 50%), Guadeloupe (France, 52%), the Azores (Portugal, 52%), Western Greece (53%), the Peloponnese (Greece, 53%), Guiana (France, 53%), East Macedonia and Thrace (Greece, 55%) and the Ionian Islands (Greece, 56%).

6. The population in both prefectures of Kavala (Eastern Macedonia) and Evros (Western Thrace) is Christian. Therefore there is always going to be a Christian majority.

7. Co-operation used to exist for the national elections as both Muslims and Christians elected candidates from the main parties – with the exception of the short period in the 1980s when the two Muslim parties were formed and participated in the elections.

8. See Anagnostou 2000: p.16 note 5.

9. The first page of the Turkish Foreign Ministry official website stated that Greece denies the existence of minorities – not only Turkish ones – and violates Human rights.

10. As has been mentioned in previous chapters, the reasons for locating the Pontian Greeks in the area was to boost the declining numbers of the Christian population. As expected there was a controversy over this issue. Muslims felt that they were being marginalized and the local Christian population was not particularly happy for this accommodation due to cultural differences. The issue of the Pontian Greeks is quite complicated and therefore is only briefly mentioned where appropriate in the present thesis.

11. ISTAME: Institute for Strategic and Development Studies, Andreas Papandreou. The study highlighted in the Kathimerini article (Daily, *Kathimerini*: 16/02.2001) is entitled: 'reforms in the Local government – Effects in administration and the political system'.

12. For the decentralisation of power, in addition to the general criticism levelled at operational and financial management, there is still one further substantial issue that needs to be addressed: the existence of the state appointed Regional Director. Although his/her role is the general regional budget management, there is some controversy over the appointment. At the moment the Regional Director is seen as an extension of the central government.

13. The present optimism in the region should be approached with a certain caution for three reasons. First, as I have argued in Part II of the thesis, Muslim/Christian relations in the area are directly affected by the Greek-Turkish relationship. The present situation is another reflection of Greek and Turkish foreign policies that are less hostile to each other, especially with the lifting of Greek objections to Turkish EU entry. Second, due to EU funding there is considerable investment in the region at present. This is beneficial for all sections of the population. However, the region is still one of the poorest in the EU, improving only slightly in comparison to its previous economic performance. When the EU funding expires there can be some scepticism about the future of the region's ethnic relations. Finally, there is the international picture. As the recent events in the Balkans have unfolded, ethnically or religiously divided communities can experience serious instability with potentially disastrous results.

# Conclusion: Ethnicity and Regional Policy

The increasingly closer European integration has had a major impact on Greek domestic and foreign politics. As one of the most homogenous countries in the EU, the Greek state has assumed a 'social primacy' with an exclusive national identity (Featherstone 1996: p.14). The traditional/ethnic affiliation to the Greek state coexists, and sometimes overpowers, the modern/civic attachment that is more common in northern European countries. This attachment strengthens Greekness in ethnic, religious and linguistic terms (Stavros 1996: p.117).

Such a homogenous and inclusive social environment has proved to be problematic for the small number of minorities that exist within the Greek state. The European Union can provide a new political forum for citizens' appeals and a new European identity that, although still at early stage and not without its sceptics and critics, is one that the citizens can adopt.

At the same time, this relative homogeneity, combined with the development of an intense insecurity arising from historical circumstances and collective memories, has weakened the call for greater regionalism in Greece, as we saw in the second chapter. In fact, higher decentralisation has often been perceived as threatening to Greece's territorial integrity (Verney 1994: p.167). As closer European integration became a reality, the promotion of EU regional policies influenced the recent development of stronger regional policies and local government systems in Greece. During the 1990's significant changes took place that resulted in the restructuring of the Greek regional map and way of governance.

As emphasised in the introduction, the purpose of this thesis was to assess the recent regional developments in the area of Western Thrace where ethnic divisions and conflicts have been witnessed since the time the territory became part of the Greek state. More specifically, the thesis considered the way the three levels of government – regional, nation-state and European Union –

have affected the Muslim population and Muslim / Christian relations in the area.

Four questions were asked in the introduction upon which the succeeding chapters were based on and explored. To recap briefly, they were first, the extent to which EU regional policy influenced the national and sub-national levels of government. Second, the extent to which the greater regional power has brought higher participation, direct democracy and decentralisation for the area of Western Thrace. Third, the kinds of challenges that EU regional policy brings to ethnic relations in Western Thrace. Finally, how far a social policy which is more sympathetic to the sensitive issues and problems of the Christian/Muslim populations has been adopted for the area.

With respect to the first question, as explored in Part I, a centralist tradition can be found in Greece from the time of its formation as a modern state in the 1830's. Until recently the only sub-national units of government were the prefecture, an extension of central government administration with appointed officials and the municipalities and communes, which although represented by a directly elected committee, had very little power. Two reasons can be identified for this centralism. First, an increased sense of external threat was countered by a powerful centre and second, a developed clientelistic system meant that most demands were met through access to various patrons in the central administration.

The influence of the European Union and its strong support for greater regionalism and decentralisation has had a considerable impact on Greek governance. Although most of the regional policy changes that followed were introduced in order to take the opportunity and better manage EU regional structural funds, they have nevertheless changed the Greek system of governance.

Despite the current weaknesses and obstacles there are now three tiers of government in Greece, all democratically elected: the first level of local

government represented by the mayors and the municipal council, the second level represented by the prefectures and the prefectural councils and finally, the regions which can be regarded as decentralised forms the central government. Greece still remains overall a central state as most decisions are taken by the central government but these reforms represent the beginning of a greater decentralisation of political power.

For the area of Western Thrace - and to focus on the second question - the development of elected local governments in both municipal and prefectural levels has had a significant effect. The impact of the change was explored in the third part of the thesis. Although decentralisation can be seen as beneficial for most regions in Greece (there are still some opposing the reforms, for example in regions of Crete), in Western Thrace, with the existence of the Muslim minority population, regional reforms shed a new light on Christian majority / Muslim minority relations.

First, as has been argued in Part II and Part III, the existence of a Muslim minority in the area of Western Thrace has created an atmosphere of dispute between the two communities. Fuelled by the foreign policies of both Greece and Turkey, the region became an arena where both Greek and Turkish nationalisms met and were tested. The introduction of the new policies at the end of the 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's became another source for such ethnic controversy, which was reported by the media at the time. Later, the policies became more acceptable and both Christians and Muslims now participate in local politics.

Second, the financial benefits brought to the area by the EU structural funds have created relative economic prosperity for the population. The newly improved regional infrastructure - together with the active participation of both Muslims and Christians in the local issues encouraged by decentralisation - has brought a new optimism to the area. Both sections of the population argue for the greater opportunities and the new role that the region will play in the changing situation in the Balkans.

Third, on a smaller scale, the administrative unification of villages under the Capodistrias Programme, as analysed in Part I, has created mixed-population municipalities represented by common municipal councils. Although there are only two at the moment, one with a Muslim mayor and one with a Christian, their experience as 'multicultural' areas reflects the issues of majority/minority relations at a social level. Some of these issues were explored in Part III.

To summarise, it can be argued that the newly created institutions of local government, accompanied by the present boost to the regional economy, despite drawbacks, have enabled the two communities in mixed population areas to concentrate on and participate together in common local goals. This emphasis on civil processes can be seen as a first step to dialogue and co-operation. However, as the findings of the research have shown, the 'ethnic question' is still a strong element in both sections of the population and further effort is needed to approach it. That view is supported, as has already been mentioned in Part III, by most of the local government representatives.

This conclusion leads to the third question asked in the introduction of this thesis. EU Regional policy has influenced the process of restructuring local government in Greece. Nationalist voices were raised from both Muslims and Christians against the regional reforms. From one side some Christians were hostile to the idea and argued that the new system would enable the Muslims to achieve more power and authority. From the other, some Muslims were likewise adverse to the changes fearing the closer co-operation and interaction between the members of the two communities. However, the benefits brought by the reforms to both communities outweighed these and any further complaints.

The European Union did not bring only regional reforms that benefited the Christian/Muslim society of Western Thrace. As the union drew closer and Greece became a full member, the EU (together with international Human Rights organisations) was seen by Muslims as a 'second' forum to express their grievances - most prominent among which was the matter of 'ethnic' recognition

as opposed to their 'religious' identity as defined by the Lausanne Treaty (see Anagnostou 1999: pp.122-128).

In addition, for many Muslims of Western Thrace the idea of a 'European identity' and 'European citizenship' became increasingly attractive alternatives to that of 'Greek Muslims' as characterised by the Lausanne Treaty and insisted upon by Greece. However, as a 'European identity' is not yet established, the campaign over 'ethnic' recognition still remains, albeit weakened in comparison to the 1980's demands, as mentioned in Part II.

From the Greek state's point of view the terms of the Lausanne Treaty define the status and conditions of the Muslim minority. Ethnic recognition is being hampered for the complicated reasons explained in Part II. The multicultural character and terminology of the European Union, as well internal political factors, have resulted in more Muslim-minority-friendly policies. These policies were analysed in the same section of the thesis. At a local level the term 'multiculturalism' has been adopted by local people and institutions alike and has entered the official language of the local government representatives. Often there is a 'desire' to promote this multicultural element of Western Thracian society.

To recap, for the Muslims of Western Thrace, the European Union is an institution to address in order to legitimate their claims for 'ethnic' identification. At the same time, European regional policies, which promoted political decentralisation in Greece, are viewed now as favourable by both Muslims and Christians (despite the initial reactions as we have seen in previous chapters). The new system of local self-government enables the Muslim population to further their economic, political and social development by directly participating in the decision-making mechanism of the local society.

Despite these optimistic overtones in the local community, as Part II and Part III of the thesis have shown, Western Thrace is a complicated society in terms of ethnic composition and religious affiliation. The lack of a consistent

policy plan for the area, the effects of Greek-Turkish relations on the population and the relative economic deprivation are all factors that could contribute to future instability. Even in more cosmopolitan states with greater civic attachment to the nation, true multiculturalism can be a debatable concept. In more ethnic societies, like Greece, that are also relatively homogenous, it is problematic to apply the term multiculturalism, even to the Christian/Muslim area of Western Thrace.

This leads to the fourth question of the need for further social research and assessment of the needs of the local population. Many of the existing studies concentrate mainly on economic realities and policies or folkloric elements of the Western Thracian society while sociological research is quite inadequate. Local government institutions can be seen as appropriate bodies for initiating such research for two reasons. First, both levels of local government are closer to the people and their everyday problems and second, they have more experience of the mixed populated areas.

On a broader scale, specific funding for the social development of mixed communities like Western Thrace can be advantageous for the Greek society as a whole. As has been mentioned throughout the thesis, ethnicity is not the only divisive force in the local society of Western Thrace. There are also cleavages stemming from the urban-rural divide, religious tensions and the class structure. These divisions occasionally find expression in ethnic demands and claims. Social development can contribute to the easing of these tensions.

Overall it can be argued that the future development of the European Union can provide a supra-national opportunity and a possible forum for minorities to legitimate their claims and grievances. European Union regional policies can be a vehicle for closer co-operation and interaction in societies like Western Thrace.

# Appendix 1: Issues of controversy

To summarise the various issues highlighted throughout the thesis, there are three areas that have created controversy in Muslim/Christian relations in Western Thrace: the issues of ethnicity and ethnic recognition, Muslim religious matters, and Muslim education. Ethnicity is, however, the dominant feature of Muslim minority politics in relation to the Greek state and has been prominent since the 1950s. Consequently, calls for educational and religious changes also reflect the issue of ethnicity.

**Ethnicity**

As seen in chapter 4 of the thesis there are three ethnic groups that comprise the Muslim minority of Western Thrace: the Turks, the Pomaks and the Muslim Rom. The groups are distinguished from each other in terms of language, culture and ethnic background. What the three groups have in common is the religion that also legally defines their status according to the Lausanne Treaty (1923).

The relation between the three groups contributes to the changing attitudes of the Muslim minority and its demands for a Turkish ethnic recognition. The ethnic constitution of both the Turkish and Rom groups is quite straightforward but there is some ambivalence and controversy over the ethnic origins of Pomaks.

The Pomak population mainly inhabits the mountainous villages of Xanthi, with a fewer number living in the villages of north Rhodopi. In total the Pomak population accounts for approximately one third of the present Muslim population of Western Thrace (Athens Academy 1994: p.47). The location of the Pomak villages, close to the Bulgarian borders (see map), contributed to the relative isolation and underdevelopment of the area and the population. Restrictions on movement were imposed on both locals and visitors as part of national security concerns for Pomak collaboration with communist Bulgaria.

These fears were in part explained by the existence of a large number of Pomaks (about 220,000) that inhabited south Bulgaria. (Konstantinov 1997: p.33) These restrictions were only recently abandoned.

During the 1950s there was an improvement in Greek-Turkish relations and some agreements on Muslim minority educational matters followed. As Bulgaria was considered more of an enemy at the time (following the Bulgarian occupation of Western Thrace during the Second World War), Greece agreed to adopt the Turkish language in all Muslim schools and Pomaks were categorised as 'Turks', a policy also strongly supported by Turkey. (Poulton 1997: p 85)

Since that time, Greek and Turkish relations have undergone many changes, often turbulent as has been highlighted in Part II. During the 1980s and 1990s there were increasing demands from Pomaks to be recognised as Turks, which sparked a debate over their ethnic origins. Similar debates were also taking place in Bulgaria that regarded the Pomaks as being of Bulgarian descent due to the closeness of the Pomak language to Bulgarian. In Greece, the Pomaks were proclaimed as the ancient (hellenised) Thracians who converted to Islam during the Ottoman Empire. Equally, the Turks claimed a Turkish origin for the Pomak population (Turkish Pomaks) as a pre-Ottoman nomadic tribe that came to inhabit the area of Thrace (the geographic area now divided between Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey). (Konstantinov 1997: 36)

Today, many Pomaks living in Greece, especially the younger generation, tend to identify with the Turkish group and consider themselves as Turks. While there was some prejudice in the past from the Turks who regarded the Pomaks as an inferior people (Poulton 1997: p 85), since the 1930s there has been intermarriage between Turks and Pomaks, notably in more mixed populated areas. This tends to strengthen the Turkish identity within the Muslim minority. All Greek attempts to distinguish 'ethnic' groups within the Muslim minority are sceptically regarded by the minority's members as attempts to break up its solidarity (Anagnostou 1999: p. 230)

Recent initiatives (in the late 1990s) by the Greek government have sought to improve Muslim education, to encourage the entrance of the Muslim students to Greek universities, to lift restrictions on property acquisition by Muslims and to expand the economic activity for both Muslims and Christians in the area. The issue of Turkish ethnic recognition is still present in the Muslim minority political agenda but is not as strongly voiced – Greece is also more relaxed with the 'unofficial' use of the term Turkish for the Turkish origin Muslim minority population. In addition, there is a view albeit weak among some members of the Muslim minority that the acquisition of European identity that has accompanied the strengthening of the EU could bring an alternative solution to the debate over ethnicity.

**Religion**

The Lausanne Treaty safeguards the rights of Muslim religion in Western Thrace. There are about 258 mosques and 78 religious institutions functioning. The administrative authority for all religious matters lies with the Mufti (the Muslim religious leader), who is also responsible for marriage/divorce matters, inheritance issues, pensions, the appointment of imams (clergy) and the management of the vakoufia (the religious property) (Rozakis 1996: p.106, Anagnostou 1999: p.212).

Religion became an issue of dispute between the Greek government and the Muslim community of Western Thrace over the issue of the selection of Muftis. Under the 1991 Law the Greek government appointed with consultation of some members of the Muslim community, two Muftis for a ten-year term. The appointment of the Muftis was not accepted by all Muslims. A large section of the Muslim community (mainly from the modernist movement) reacted and claimed the right to a community selection of the Muftis and proceeded to elect alternative Muftis. The 'unofficial' Muftis have been subsequently convicted by Greek courts for obstructing the law. (Department of State Human Rights Reports for 2000: 2001: p10-11). The Greek government insisted on the

appointment arrangements and justified its actions by arguing that as the Muftis perform some judicial duties they need to be government appointees, a practice also followed by Muslim countries.

As the Mufti has further administrative responsibilities, the controversy included the management of the *vakoufia*. The religious property is managed by a twelve- member appointed committee. Through the years, the replacement or new appointments of members to this committee by the Greek government, it is argued by some Muslims, took place without any prior consultation of the Muslim minority. As a result, there were complaints of property mismanagement resulting in a lose of value (Anagnostou 2000: p.213).

**Education**

The issue of Muslim education has been examined in detail as a separate chapter in the second part of the thesis. To recap briefly the controversies between the Muslim minority and the Greek state are focused primarily on two issues. First, is the role of the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki, which was largely perceived by the Muslim community as an effort by the Greek government to control Muslim affairs. Consequently, the graduate teachers although also members of the Muslim minority and residents of Western Thrace, were often viewed with suspicion by their fellow members. The issue of this Special Academy faded however during the 1990s due to wider reforms introduced by the Greek government for Muslim education and when it became clear that the government had been unsuccessful in isolating the teachers from Turkish influence.

The second educational issue of controversy is that of school textbooks in the Turkish language. During the 1990s the Greek government proceeded in the authoring, publication and distribution of Turkish language textbooks for the Muslim schools. It was claimed that Turkey failed to upgrade the books (as they were written in the 1950s) and therefore the Greek government took the initiative to do so itself. Noteworthy was the absence of Muslim academics or pedagogues from the committee that initiated the project.

The books were immediately rejected by the Muslim minority and many protests were organised in response. As concluded by the interviews, some of the voices pointed to the cultural bias of the books, for example the use of Christian names instead of Muslim ones, and some expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that the Muslim community was excluded in the writing of the books. But the main opposition was focused on the fact that the books came from Greece and not from Turkey.

In the cases of both religion and education the controversies continue although diminished in tone. This is partly due to a more tolerant approach by the Greek government and greater participation of the Muslims in local authority councils. The optimism for the new approach can be summarised by V. Papandreou's (the current Minister of Interior) statement on the reforms of Muslim education:

"the policy that has been followed in recent years aims at the equal incorporation of the (Muslim) minority in the local society without the exclusions and distortions of the past. With particular interventions we have made it possible to lift the reasons that led the minority to the margins of the social developments in Thrace" (from Eleftherotypia 7/05/2001).

What both cases highlight however, is the increasing realisation of ethnic self-consciousness and call for self-determination. The call for an ethnic as opposed to the existing religious recognition is an evident part of such demands. It can be concluded therefore that the last part of the 1980s and the 1900s have witnessed a prominence placed by the Muslims on the importance of the self management of Muslim minority affairs.

# Appendix 2: List of Interviewees and List of Questions

The interviews took place in the area of Xanthi and Komotini during summer 2001. In addition to the formal interviews the thesis benefited from the opinion of many informal conversations with both Christian and Muslim local population. The interviews were unstructured and the list of questions that follows is only a reference guide to the questions involved.

## List of Interviewees

1. **Mr Panagiotis Sgourides,** MP for Xanthi and Second Speaker of the Greek Parliament
2. **Mr Mehmet Ahmet,** MP for Rhodopi, and previous member of Prefectural Council
3. **Dr Moustafa Moustafa,** previous MP for Rhodopi
4. **Mr Georgios Paulides,** Prefect for the prefecture of Xanthi
5. **Mr Georgios Papadrieles,** Mayor of Komotini
6. **Mr Erdogan Sait,** Mayor of Sostis, Rhodopi
7. **Mr Vasilios Tsolakides,** Mayor of Vistonida, Xanthi
8. **Mr Ekrem Hasan,** member of the Prefectural Council and ex-Deputy Mayor of Komotini, Rhodopi
9. **Ms Dilek Habip,** Sociologists and Journalist in the local daily Observer, Rhodopi
10. **Mr Serif Mehmet,** T.V. Journalist for ET3 (National Greek Television 3)
11. **Mr Sami Karambougioukoglou,** Journalist for ERA (National Greek Radio)
12. **Mr Abdulhalim Dede,** proprietor and chief editor of the local weekly paper, Trakya'nin Sesi
13. **Mr Tzemil Kapza,** editor/journalist of the local weekly paper, Gündem
14. **Mr Moutzahit Mümin,** proprietor and chief editor of the monthly cultural/literature journal Şafak
15. **Mr Hakan Mümin,** philologist/linguist/journalist for the monthly cultural/literature journal Şafak

# List of Questions

## Regional Policy and the Muslim minority

1. The recent decentralisation reforms have given political power and increased responsibilities to local government. Do you believe that there is room for greater regionalism in Greece?

2. In the region of Western Thrace the new reforms met the reactions of both Muslims and Greeks. Do these reactions continue?

3. For many years there was 'strategic policy' followed in Western Thrace. In what ways did this policy influence the development of the region with particular reference to minorities.

4. In comparison to other Greek regions do you believe that there has been enough incentives in Western Thrace? If yes are they adequate?

5. Are these incentives only for the economic development? What do you believe the incentives should be for the social and cultural development of the region?

6. Do you believe that all incentives and economic assistance received already by the region of Thrace has been used adequately?

7. For the Muslim minority these last years the state has taken some steps towards its social upgrading. Do you believe these steps are adequate?

8. How are these steps perceived by Muslims themselves?

9. What do you believe contributed to the development of nationalism (both Greek and Turkish) in the area?

10. Do you believe that the existence of nationalistic movements in the area create an obstacle to decentralisation?

11. How the new decentralised reforms are perceived by the Muslims/Christians?

## EU and the Muslim minority

1. What do you believe is the position of Thrace in the 'Europe of Regions'?

2. In general terms how do you perceive EU policies in relation to the minority population?

3. How does the minority population perceive the EU. Does the minority feel part of the EU?

4. How do Muslims/Christians feel about Greek EU membership and why? Do they believe they have some benefits? In what area: political, social, cultural, financial? Specify.

5. What are the positive/negative effects of Greek EU membership for the local population?

6. In your opinion what is the percentage of Muslims who are pro-European? How do you evaluate the 1994 Euromosaic statistics?

7. When did pro-European attitudes start to appear within the minority?

8. To what extent does the minority population feel European citizens? In what area of their lives?

9. Is there a particular part of the population that feels more pro-European? That is according to age, gender, profession, educational level.

10. Do you believe that the EU provides extra legal protection for the minority? What do the people believe on that issue?

11. How do Muslims/Christians perceive a possible Turkish EU membership?

## General Questions for regional policy

1. With the introduction of the new decentralisation reforms do you believe that there is greater transparency in the level of political and economic development procedures?

2. Do you believe that there is greater democracy after the new rights and responsibilities attributed to local government or do think that further emphasis is needed on this issue?

3. In general what sort of problems does local government face today in terms of a. competitiveness, b. management, c. lack of qualified personnel, d. financial control of the overall budget.

4. How do you think these problems can be resolved: by greater state intervention or greater decentralisation?

5. In the area of Western Thrace do you believe that local government represents the voice of the people overall?

6. Do you believe that the idea of equality – *isonomia* – is strong enough? Do you believe for example that all of the population of Western Thrace has equal access to mass media, local government departments etc.?

7. Do you believe that the people of Western Thrace (in comparison with other parts of Greece) was ready to accept decentralisation? If yes, to what degree. If no, what should be done in order the people to have a better understanding of the new reforms.

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