

Re-imagining Greek Identity in an Era of Mass Migration

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Abstract

Greek nationalism emerging out of the Enlightenment stressed the primordial belief that Modern Greeks are the descendents of the Ancient Greeks. This type of nationalism was exclusionary and repressive towards foreigners, yet is pervasive in contemporary Greek immigration policy. Greek immigration is incredibly important today because in 2010 alone, 90 percent of detected illegal immigrants in the European Union entered through Greece, a large percentage of these being Muslim immigrants. In this paper I contend that political rights must be granted to Muslim immigrants that call Greece their home, for ethnocultural differences should not preclude political, economic or social integration. Individual characteristics of the members of the community should not determine whether they are worthy of political rights or not. Terms for immigrants should rather be defined in political and institutional terms rather than in ethnic and cultural; only through recognizing the ability for Muslims to participate in the political and economic life of the Greek state can peaceful coexistence materialize. This paper, thus, is particularly significant because it exposes the Greek path dependency on a flawed immigration policy and suggests ways for reconciling national identity in an era of mass migration.

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I. Introduction

Culturally and geographically, Greece is at the rare crossroad of Eastern and Western civilizations. Ancient Greeks established the foundation for which democracy and Western ideals were to sprout and flourish in later centuries. At the same time, Eastern influences emanating from the Islamic Golden Age and Greece's Middle Eastern neighbors significantly contributed to Greek history. Because of the location on the southern tip of Europe, Greece was subject to considerable influence from the Eastern world before the Ottomans established their control of the region. Although the Modern Greek state was not founded until 1832, Greek nationalism emerging out of the Enlightenment emphasized primordial ethnic ties to both the Ancient Greeks and Byzantines, producing a highly exclusive Greek national identity.

Hundreds of years of Ottoman domination struck fear in the hearts of Greeks who longed for independence and freedom from Muslim control. Greek revolutionaries sought to distinguish themselves from their Muslim overlords during the Greek War for Independence and as a result, they did not try to draw attention to the influence of Muslims and immigrants on the development of Greek culture. The type of Greek nationalism that continued through the 19th century and spanned to the present day advanced an ideology of Greek ethnic and cultural superiority.

While a homogenous Greek national identity might seem plausible if Greece were an isolated country, it is not. The influx of illegal immigrants from the Balkan states, the Middle East, and North Africa constitute a serious threat to Greek ethnic and cultural homogeneity. In response to the massive inflows of illegal immigrants since the 1990s,

Greece, and arguably the European Union in general, has responded with exclusion and repression. The Modern Greek state overwhelmingly excludes minority Muslim immigrants from citizenship, work and employment, and freedom of religion. The state uses institutionalized racism and intolerance to advance a mission of ethnic homogeneity, regardless of the fact that the Greek census increasingly reflects greater diversity and heterogeneity.

The inflow of illegal immigrants in Greece and the EU will not stop naturally. Greece and the EU must be able to reconcile the phenomenon of massive migration flows onto their continent or violent clashes between ethnic groups will continue. Policies of exclusion and intolerance are not going to ameliorate the problems associated with illegal immigration. Accordingly, I argue that the Greek nation must integrate and include Muslim immigrants into the community and grant them political and work rights. Current approaches to dealing with the phenomenon of illegal immigration have failed and continue to propagate a myth of Greek national identity that excludes Muslim immigrants. Because of this, I contend that Greek national identity must be reimagined and incorporate diversity within a unified Greek state. There are many policy gaps that must be filled, such as incredibly inefficient naturalization processes. Along with policy, the historical cultural linkages between Greeks and Muslims need to be revisited to foster peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Greek society. Silver bullet solutions to illegal immigration—like demolishing immigrant camps or deporting immigrants immediately when they are found—have not proven efficacious. Rather, a gradual approach to dealing with illegal immigration that is multicultural and inclusive should be considered. Recognizing that immigrants can provide benefits to a host society and that

Greek and European identities shift over time may alleviate the antagonism between Greeks and Muslims.

II. The Formation of Greek National Identity

“The reputation, name, and appearance, the usual measure and weight of a thing, what it counts for—originally almost always wrong and arbitrary,...—all this grows from generation unto generation, merely because people believe in it, until it gradually grows to be part of the thing and turns into its very body. What at first was appearance becomes in the end, almost invariably, the essence and is effective as such.”ⁱ

--Freidrich Nietzsche

The idea that Greeks today are the descendents of the Ancient Greeks presupposes that Greek nationalism is over two thousand years old. Greek nationalism, however, did not form until the Greek revolutions against the Ottoman Empire. In 1821, after hundreds of years of Ottoman rule and a few decades of Albanian revolutions against the Ottoman Empire, the Greeks, composed of Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians, led a nationalist uprising in order to create an autonomous Greek nation-state.ⁱⁱ The Greek War of Independence was largely drawn on religious lines—Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians frequently massacred Greek-speaking Muslims.ⁱⁱⁱ Numerous Europeans came down to help Greece, even though all European states denounced revolution, which they saw as infectious and a potential threat to their own nation.^{iv} As the Greek revolution continued, a greater philhellenic movement emerged to help Greece obtain its independence. France, Britain, and Germany—the ‘Great Powers’—supported the Greek fight for independence and subdued the crippled Ottoman Empire. Russia, an Orthodox Christian state, felt obliged to aid a fellow Orthodox community against a Muslim overlord.^v British banks, which propped up British commercial power, distributed loans

to Greek revolutionaries in exchange for a provisional role in defining the borders and control of Southern Europe and the Mediterranean.^{vi}

Classically educated Europeans revived the memory of Ancient Greece and pressured their governments to aid the Greeks. As Benedict Anderson notes, “Exalted by the philhellenism at the centres of Western European civilization, they [European scholars] undertook the ‘debarbarizing’ of the modern Greeks, i.e., their transformation into beings worthy of Pericles and Socrates.”^{vii} Throughout the duration of the 1821-1832 war, Greeks used the philhellenic movement as propaganda to gain more allies. Artists such as French Romantic Eugène Delacroix fueled the Greek propaganda machine across Europe. Delacroix’s painting “Massacre at Chios” (1824) depicted Greek civilians about to be slaughtered by Turks, invoking an image of the Greeks as victims of Muslim Turks. Another poignant piece was “Greece Expiring on the Ruins of Missolonghi” (1825), which displayed a Greek woman willing to kill herself before being subject to tyrannical Turk rule. Both paintings reflect the common artistic and cultural support behind Europe’s support for the Greek War of Independence (see Appendix A for these paintings). Greece also drew support from famous authors such as Lord Byron, whose death in Greece during the revolution eventually became a prominent symbol of the Greek War of Independence. He, however, died of fever and not Ottoman aggression.

Many thinkers and authors of the Enlightenment, which for Greece took place during the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century, involved themselves in the Greek movement for autonomy. Adamantios Korais, a Greek humanist scholar often credited with laying the foundation of Modern Greek literature, wrote numerous tracts about the Greek uprising. At the concurrent time of his rallying, Greeks experienced

several decades of failed revolutions against the Ottoman Empire. To him, Modern Greeks were the heirs to Classical Greece; he posited that Europe owed its culture to the Greeks. Korais called for the support of European powers in freeing the Greek people. In a speech to a French audience in Paris in 1803, he proclaimed:

For the first time the nation surveys the hideous spectacle of its ignorance and trembles in measuring with the eye the distance separating it from its ancestors' glory. This painful *discovery*, however, does not precipitate the Greeks into despair: We are the descendents of Greeks, they implicitly told themselves, we must either try to become again worthy of this name, or we must not bear it.”^{viii}

Rigas Feraios—labeled by Dimitris Livaniotis ‘The Greek Thomas Paine’ and recognized as a national hero—paralleled Korais’ reasoning and “regarded all the inhabitants of the Balkans ‘as people descended from the Greeks.’”^{ix} Korais and Feraios’ work reflected an enlightened thinking that deemed Greek culture and history as “not just “European,” but “European *par excellence*.”^x

The Greeks finally won their independence in 1832 and began to formulate their national identity. At the same time, the establishment of the Greek state marked the end of the partnership between the Ottomans and the Greeks. Phanariots, which represented a small caste of Greek ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire, no longer were relevant. The Ottoman government removed the phanariots from their ambassador posts and accordingly, Greeks began to separate themselves more from the Eastern world. By the end of the Greek War for Independence, Greeks had already “adopted the Byronic view of themselves which had previously been a rather ignorant fancy of foreigners. They saw themselves increasingly as descendents of the Ancient Greeks and increasingly as a modern European nation.”^{xi} While the Ancient Greeks should be credited for establishing Western political ideals like democracy, they themselves did not practice

much religious or cultural tolerance. Foreigners or ‘barbarians’ were treated with the utmost contempt. Famous Greek orator Demosthenes once said that the Macedonian King Philip II was “... not only no Greek, nor related to the Greeks, but not even a barbarian from any place that can be named with honors, but a pestilent knave from Macedonia, whence it was never yet possible to buy a decent slave.”^{xii} A Modern Greek national identity modeled around Ancient Greece certainly included an element of exclusivity, but if the Modern Greeks were to actually defer to the Ancient Greeks, religious and cultural tolerance claims would be near impossible.

The time period from the War of Independence to the end of the 19th century was pivotal in the formation of Greek national identity. Late 19th century Greek historiographers constructed a narrative founded on Greece’s classical past, continued with Christianity and the Byzantine Empire and concluded with Greek subjugation to the Ottomans and the national resurrection from 1821 to the present.^{xiii} Greek identity entailed a primordial belief that nations are ancient and natural. As such, Greek identity was understood through common ancestry, cultural traditions and religion. With a common ancestry, cultural traditions and Orthodox religion, the Greeks carved out a very particular identity. To Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas, “this triple self-definition provided also for a triple boundary that distinguished Greeks from their neighbours to the west (Roman Catholic) and east (Muslims and Jews) because they were Christian Orthodox, and from those in the north (the Slavs) because of their claim to classical Greek culture.”^{xiv}

Ethnic and racial difference played a vital role in defining Greek identity. During the drafting of the 1844 Greek constitution, Prime Minister Ioannis Kolletis and King

Othon expressed a nationalist agenda that would include all ethnic and Orthodox Christian Greeks in the Modern Greek state. As a result, an irredentist conception of Greek nationalism came to fruition—the “Megali Idea” (The Great Idea). This dream aimed at including all ethnic Greek inhabited areas under the Greek nation-state. The Megali Idea hoped to revive the Byzantine Empire, meaning incorporating the lands from the Ionian Sea to the West, to Asia Minor and the Black Sea to the East, and from Thrace, Macedonia and Epirus to the North, to Crete and Cyprus to the South. (See Appendix A for map of Greece) Constantinople would be the capital and the new state would span two continents and five seas. This nationalist vision dominated Greek foreign relations from the War of Independence in the 1820s through the Balkan Wars at the beginning of the 20th century. The Treaty of Sèvres, a peace treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Allies at the end of World War I, never made it past Greek nationals. Rather, they opted to sign the Treaty of Lausanne, which revised the Treaty of Sèvres and redefined the Greek borders to appease Greek nationals. After the Greco-Turkish War from 1919-1922, the Great Fire of Smyrna in 1922, and the Treaty of Lausanne—which also exchanged populations between Greece and Turkey in 1923—the Megali Idea started to lose its prominence. From the War of Independence to the 1920s, however, Greece, with the help of the British and other Great Powers, expanded its state by five times.^{xv}

World War I and II enabled Greece to further align itself with greater European identity and away from a Balkan or Eastern identity. As William St Clair recalls, “One of the Governments, in the 1930s I believe it was, cut down the palm trees in Omonia Square, because palm trees were thought to give too Eastern a flavour to the capital city of Greece.”^{xvi} Post-World War II Europe witnessed Western powers shaping the political

ideology of Eastern European countries. Greece, on the Southeastern tip of Europe, was no exception. The British could not afford a communist takeover in Greece and thus assumed a role in assassinating communist leaders and weakening the communist stranglehold in Greece. After banning the communist party in Greece and sealing the borders from East to West, in places like Thessaloniki, the Eastern engine of Soviet Union communism shut off. In this reshaping of Greek identity, “Greece was eventually assigned to the West.”^{xvii}

In the post-communism and post-junta era in Greece, the Greek education system sought to take part in shaping the national identity of young Greeks. Although the education system of the 1990s and 2000s sometimes referenced issues of cultural diversity (such as the need for preserving diversity within the context of multicultural Europe), the topics often reified national identity and excluded non-Europeans; 22 out of 34 history topics had a national focus.^{xviii} Greek schools taught history, naturally dominated by the Greek nationalist identity, for nine years of mandatory schooling and considered it equally, if not more important, than mathematics, science and Greek language.^{xix} Curricula that emphasized common Greek heritage and history hegemonized national school education. Daniel Faas aptly concluded that the “main purpose of the reformed history curriculum still lies in the development of national consciousness and citizenship, with Europe and multiculturalism being only marginally addressed.”^{xx}

The marginalization of Muslim immigrants in particular is complemented by the rise in Greek nationalism and the perception that the Greeks are of a superior race. This perception stems from the belief that Greeks founded Europe and were responsible for foundational Western ideals like democracy. This type of thought is problematic for two

reasons. First, connecting Modern Greek national identity to that of the Ancient Greeks and the Byzantines is an unjustified assertion. Historians such as Jakob Fallmerayer contend that Modern Greeks do not have a drop of blood of the Ancient Greeks in their veins.^{xxi} While Fallmerayer's logic is highly controversial and has met relentless criticism, the idea that Modern Greeks come from the same lineage as the Ancient Greeks must also be questioned. Other than language, the strongest similarity to Ancient Greece is Modern Greece's geographic location. Nevertheless, the Modern Greek state did not exist in continuation from the Classical period or the Byzantine Empire; the Greek nation-state was not truly founded until 1832. By this time, the Greek population experienced ethnic mixing and extensive years of Ottoman domination. When the Enlightenment came around, Greece already began to align itself with a European, rather than a Balkan or Eastern, identity.

Secondly, throughout history Muslims have been intertwined in the narrative of the Greek state and the formation of its national identity. During the Ottoman Empire, for example, Greek phanariots held high positions as ambassadors to the Ottoman government. At the end of the 18th century, Muslim Albanians also took prominent positions in the semi-autonomous Greek governance structure. Albanians, which are commonly recognized today as "criminals," "dangerous," "thieves," and other pejorative names in Modern Greece, were also some of the first to against the Ottoman Empire.^{xxii} As the evidence shows, the current conception of Greek national identity does not draw attention to its interconnected history with Muslims.

Greek national identity can trace its roots to the Greek War of Independence that situated ethnic Greeks within a region defined by ancestry, culture and religion. While

Greek nationalism only newly appeared during the Age of Enlightenment, Greeks traced themselves back to the Ancient Greeks and Byzantines, claiming to be descendents of both groups. Such a revival of Classic and Byzantine heritage made way for Greeks to define themselves exclusively and at the same time claim ties to Western civilization and Europe. By doing this, the Greeks have shored up claims that Greeks were influenced by Eastern culture. Defining Greek national identity paved the way for Greeks to mistreat Muslims and other immigrants that have found their home in Greece and the European Union.

III. An Era of Mass Migration

“Greece’s religious and linguistic minorities have been a very sensitive matter, the Muslim minority being protected by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, and others disregarded and ignored. This ‘sensitivity’ has been described by a Greek analyst of political culture, Nikiforos Diamantouros (1983: 55), as an indication that the process of national integration has remained incomplete. The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the re-shuffling of nations and borders in the Balkans have brought minority matters to the top of political agendas in Greece’s immediate neighbourhood and in Greece itself.”^{xxiii}

--Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas

The phenomenon of illegal immigration during the past two decades has redefined the political and nationalist agendas of Greece and other members of the European Union. An exceptionally high number of immigrants have escaped persecution and political instability in countries to the South and East of Europe, such as Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq, seeking refuge and asylum in the European Union. Since the second half of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, Greece encountered a significant inflow of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe. In 1991, Greece passed the Law 1975, also called ‘Entry, exit, sojourn, employment, removal of aliens,

procedure for the recognition of refugees and other measures'. This law attempted to restrict immigration and facilitate the removal of illegal immigrants in Greece. Despite an extensive delay, Greece adopted its first regularization program in 1998.^{xxiv}

By taking refuge in Europe, there is hope for work, employment, education, rights, and a quality of life that their home country could not provide. A significant number of these migrants cross the Greek-Turkish border illegally and either settle in Greece or travel to another European nation. Frontex, the EU border patrol organization reported in 2010:

Due to the exceptionally high numbers of migrants crossing the Greek-Turkish land border illegally, Greece now accounts for 90% of all detections of illegal border crossings to the EU. In the first half of 2010 a total of 45,000 illegal border crossings were reported by the Greek authorities for all their border sectors. Greece currently estimates that up to 350 migrants attempt to cross the 12,5-km area near the Greek city of Orestiada every day.^{xxv}

The fact that *90 percent* of illegal migrants into the EU come through Greece explains why Greek immigration is so integral to all of Europe. This is further compounded by the fact that the Greek government and populace have consistently suspected the Turkish army in aiding immigrants to cross into Greece. According to Frontex, the EU border guard agency, Greek border guards have constantly seen Turkish army personnel aiding people crossing the Greek-Turkish border illegally.^{xxvi} The issue of illegal immigration has become so severe that ex-Prime Minister George Papandreou claimed, "Greece does not control its own borders."^{xxvii}

European governments, and Greece in particular, are weary to allow increased immigration flows because of worries of immigrants taking native jobs, increasing crime, increasing disease, and flooding European culture. Athens Mayor Giorgos Caminos recently admitted, "I'm losing my city. Something has to happen fast. It's starting to look

like Beirut in the 1970s.”^{xxviii} In several schools in Greece with high concentrations of foreign students, Greek students have dropped out.^{xxix} Their parents claiming that too much diversity in the classroom may result in the lowering of the education level.^{xxx} Along with decreasing the quality of education, Greeks have pointed to increased levels of disease due to increased immigration flows, which has complemented the rise in disease and poverty as a result of the Greek financial crisis.^{xxxi} According to the Greek publication *Ethnos*, “Deputy Minister of Health Mr Michalis Timosides noted the dramatic rise in the number of cases of AIDS, tuberculosis and hepatitis B and C which is the result of the increase of prostitution by illegal immigrants.”^{xxxii} Greeks fear that immigrants are not contributing to society, but only creating harm and extra expenses on the Greek state. Minister of Health Mr. Andreas Loverdos recently claimed that the cost of medical care for illegal immigrants in 2010 was close to 140 million euros.^{xxxiii}

Illegal immigration to Greece may not have an end near in sight, but there still is hope for amnesty for some illegal immigrants. Recently, the Greek government’s Ministry of Employment drafted a bill, which could result in amnesty for illegal immigrants. The bill refers to workers in agricultural, livestock, nurses, domestic workers, and those that represent many of the unskilled labor jobs.^{xxxiv} The bill would legally provide temporary legal resident to illegal immigrant workers that have been in a stable employment for at least a year.^{xxxv} Workers could stay for six months and their employer and the state would record their employment, increasing the ability to track immigrants in Greece and the EU.^{xxxvi} This bill, which would be implemented on December 1st 2012, shows the potential for integration of immigrants in Greece. Other measures have complemented this bill, such as the bill drawn up by the Ministry of

Interior that would reduce the number of years required by an immigrant to live in Greece—legally or illegally—in order to be eligible for a temporary residence permit from twelve years to ten.^{xxxvii} Before discussing how the Greek government acts repressive and hinders integration, which is at the core of my argument, it is important to look at the mechanisms of illegal immigration.

The mechanisms of *illegal* immigration are three fold. First, the lack of legal migration channels in Greece makes it so migrants are forced to illegally sneak across the porous Greek border. While Frontex has expanded its patrolling on the Greco-Turkish border the past several years, the Greek border remains permeable and susceptible to illegal immigration. The second mechanism is overcomplicated, bureaucratic, time-consuming and inefficient procedures for applying for naturalization, employment or prolonging permits. Chaotic naturalization processes not only add an extra expenditure on the state, but they also make it more possible for immigrants to be excluded, deported and subject to abject brutality by police officers. Thirdly, informal economies (both prevalent and less extensive ones) provide ample employment opportunities for migrants who remain irregular and prevent migrants from finding regular jobs and thus maintain or regularize their status. Without the ability to seek formal employment opportunities or obtain citizenship status, and political rights for that matter, illegal immigrants are forced to informal economies, such as the drug trade or criminal networks. The confinement to informal economic activity furthers the image of the immigrant as a dangerous Other. This reinforces a vicious feedback loop: immigrants are denied access to the political and economic community, then they engage in criminal or illicit behavior, causing them to be ‘otherized’ and discriminated against by Greeks, and thus are unable to have a chance of

gaining any rights.

IV. Greek Reactions to the Illegal Immigration Phenomenon

“Illegal immigration is a bomb on the lap of Greek society”^{xxxviii}

--The Minister for Citizen's Protection, Christos Papoutsis

For immigrants in Greece, obtaining political rights—essentially citizenship and the ability to particulate in political life—is extremely difficult and near impossible. An incomplete legal framework for immigrants makes peaceful integration and coexistence of immigrants and Greek citizens almost unattainable. Muslims are unable to find formal work and escape the racist and intolerant attitudes towards Muslims in Greek society. When describing Muslim immigrants in Greece, it is important to include that many are both asylum seekers and domestic workers. 54.2 percent of non-citizen immigrants in Greece reported that work and employment was their primary reason for migration.^{xxxix} Many of these workers also seek asylum from oppression in their home states, explaining the substantial influx of immigrants from Afghanistan and Somalia.^{xl} Because the number of legal Muslim immigrants is so low, this analysis will pertain directly to illegal Muslim immigrants and apply it to the concentric circles which these immigrants involve themselves, which means the analysis will touch on both legal and illegal immigrants, as well as asylum seekers and migrant workers. Migrant workers, which are seasonal in nature, are not systematically disadvantaged as much as asylum seekers because they often enter and leave Greece frequently and do not seek permanent residence or work. However, because they form part of the Greek community and society for at least a

significant portion of the year, their rights and status must be analyzed in the greater picture of illegal immigrants seeking to either work and/or reside in Greece.

Citizenship and Legal Framework

The current legal framework in Greece originated in 1991 with the Law 1975, which consisted of limited measures to regulate immigration. The Law 1975, also known as the Law on Aliens, differentiated Greece from Italy and Spain, who enforced periodic regularizations of undocumented migrants since the mid-80s. Immigration law that materialized in the early 1990s consisted of many inefficient and often conflicting measures to deal with illegal immigrants. This law—characterized by Georgios Antonopoulos as “an ‘anxious’ quest of decrees with deterrent and ‘repressive character’”—reflected broader attitudes and the dominant ideology in Western European states like the Netherlands and Germany, where multiculturalism that includes Muslims is not the norm.^{xli} Former British Prime Minister John Major demanded “a strong perimeter fence around Europe,” one that would work towards a creation of a “Fortress Europe.”^{xlii} The idea of “Fortress Europe” prescriptively entailed making stringent criteria for immigrants to obtain a visa and limiting the list of countries whose nationals are obliged to have a visa when entering the EU.^{xliii}

While tight immigration policy may contribute to European unison and solidarity, the Greek Law of 1975 was extremely unclear and instantly created thousands of immigrant criminal offenders. It had no measures attempting integration, but rather “facilitated their exclusion via the informal and secondary labour market, with all the implications this may have had for the creation of a serious migrant crime wave.”^{xliv}

Subsequent improvements on this law attempted to align Greek policy with greater EU policy, which was repressive and criminalizing in nature:

- The Interministerial Decrees of 1992 created a list for undesirable aliens;
- The Law 2404 of 1996 ratified a Greek-Albanian agreement on Albanian people coming into Greece for a season basis, but did nothing with migrants already living in country;
- The Presidential Decrees 358 and 259 of 1997 established a process of temporary legalization by obtaining a white card that would lead to the obtainment of a limited green card, but when it was implemented, it made it impossible for legal entry (many migrants were not recorded, and “75% of those recorded were not able to obtain a green card);”^{xlv}
- The Law 2622 in 1998 gave the border guards “flesh and bones,” establishing a central and several peripheral police services to guard the borders and deter illegal entrance.^{xlvi}

These laws set the precedent for Greek immigration policy in the 1990s, the first decade of a rapid flow of illegal immigration in Greece and the EU. The final stage of these laws, which largely revised and added on to the Law 1975 of 1991, materialized into the law 2910 of 2001. This law expanded the rights of illegal immigrants, including giving the right to detainees to be spoken to in their language and improving the quality of migrant regularizations. Deportation procedures were still in line with international standards, reflecting a brutish nature towards immigrants. The law also created a nine-year education obligation for migrant children. On face the Law 2910 seemed to be an improvement on the previous decade of immigration policy.

Like its predecessors, however, there were serious flaws. Immigrants under the law had to possess a passport or other internationally recognized travel documents accompanied by a visa, requirements that essentially bound the migrants to the state that was persecuting them. The law continued to advance that immigration should be considered a national security threat. Immigrants were depicted as a threatening ‘Other’ that carried disease and criminality with them. In response to this conjured image that

stereotypes all Muslims as threatening, Greek government enacted repressive immigration laws nationally and locally. Antonopoulos furthers: “Repression remains a main theme of the new legal framework of migration in Greece, and the delegation of some powers and responsibilities to the local government as well as the creation of the Commissions for Migrations will only displace the exercise of repression to a different field.”^{xlvii} In addition, the right to family unification was not respected, and many new laws reinforced the status of immigrants as second-class workers and not habitants of the community. Law 2910 came with severe enforcement—Greek police operations soon began to apprehend and deport immigrants in swift and arbitrary sweeps of places suspected to harbor illegal immigrants.

The legal framework established in Greece functions in a broader network of EU and international policy on immigration. Greek immigration policy is particularly affected by the EU’s Dublin II regulation, which aims to “identify as quickly as possible the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application, to establish reasonable time limits for each of the phases of determining the Member State responsible, and to prevent abuse of asylum procedures in the form of multiple applications.”^{xlviii} This policy determined which state ought to evaluate asylum seekers who seek refuge and possibly a visa or green card. Nevertheless, the Greek government has dedicated very little resources and maintains its reluctance to accept international obligations for dealing with asylum seekers.^{xlix} In 2007, 25,113 asylum applications were filed in Greece; out of over 20,000 asylum cases in 2007, only eight persons were given permanent residence permits—representing 0.04 percent of the applicants—while only 155 applications—representing 2.4 percent of the original cases—were granted.¹ Greeks

have tried to thwart illegal immigrants from obtaining citizenship; Deputy Minister of Interior Ms. Theodora Tzakri admitted that in the last five years more than 70,000 official document forms for (ex-post facto) legalized immigrants have been stolen from multiple public offices.^{li}

Because Greece is the entry point of a considerable number of illegal immigrants, it is central to EU immigration policy and European human rights norms. Greece has attempted to align itself with its European allies and international institutions (e.g. the UN) in order to receive support to protect the Greek borders. As a result, the Greek government signed the 1951 UN Refugee Convention (with its protocol from 1967), ratified the 1950 Euro Convention on Human Rights, as well as the UN and Euro Anti-Torture Convention, the 1966 UN Conventions on Civil, Political, Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. These conventions and treaties synchronized Greek human rights and immigration policy with EU policy. EU immigration directives, such as the Qualification Directive, Procedure Directive, and the Reception Directive were meant to harmonize EU asylum policy across its member-states by creating a unitary policy on how to define, treat, and receive illegal immigrants in Europe. Greece, however, only incorporated the Reception Directive into Greek law, choosing to disregard the other directives of EU immigration policy. Without a full incorporation of the conventions and EU legal stipulations into Greek law and measures to enforce the conventions of Europe and the international community, it is difficult to fully believe these agreements will have a lasting and permanent effect in Greece.

The Greek Presidential Decree of 1999 attempted to guarantee asylum seekers the right of access to asylum determination procedure. The Decree used the conditions of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees to justify a host country taking on the refugees that were escaping persecution. However, this type of treatment proved the exception, rather than the rule. Lawyer Marianna Tzeferakou of the organization Greek Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants says that the “truth may be bitter, but it must be told.”^{lii} To border patrol and Greek immigration and naturalization services, “everybody is considered an illegal immigrant. We know of only few [asylum] applications out there,” she said.^{liii} The police more often than not arrest or deport all new detected immigrants, including asylum seekers and vulnerable individuals, such as victims of torture, human trafficking, genocide and environmental degradation in Somalia, Iraq, Sudan, and Afghanistan. Before they have the ability to try to submit an asylum application in Greece, these immigrants are issued automatic deportation orders, without a hearing or examination of their protection and rights, functionally denying them all access to the asylum determination procedure.^{liv}

Racism and Institutional ‘Otherization’

The harsh and repressive nature of Greek immigration policy serves to exclude and segregate, rather than include those that wish to join the Greek and EU communities. Enforcement using the Greek police only exacerbates the tensions prevalent in the issue of illegal immigration. Before the 1990s the Greek populace did not even recognize crime as a legitimate concern. Today the dominant view among the Greek citizenry and political institutions is that crime is increasingly threatening as more flows of Muslim and other immigrant groups enter the state. The Greek Ministry of Public Order published

several telling statistics in 2005 about the percentage of crimes committed by immigrants.

They found that immigrants:

- accounted for 27.6 percent of known offenders for theft/burglary,
- 24.9 percent of known offenders for vehicle theft,
- 24.2 percent of known offenders for animal theft,
- 33.8 percent of known offenders for robbery,
- 34 percent of known offenders for rape,
- and 31.8 percent of known offenders for homicide.^{lv}

A later study conducted by Panteion University reported that 57.15 percent of all crimes in Greece are committed by foreigners.^{lvi} Prisons are also overwhelmingly populated by immigrants, who in 2002 represented 45.9 percent of the Greek prisons, and in 2004 were 42.3 percent constituted by Albanians.^{lvii} Statistical data like this reinforces the debate in Greece of immigration as a social problem rather than a phenomenon or issue.

Such data largely ignores the positive contribution made by immigrants to Greek society, such as mitigating the country's declining population and providing work in vital sectors of the economy like agriculture, where the shrinking Greek labor population cannot provide sufficient workers. This is largely because the Greek population does not see the immigrants as part of their community, but rather see them as "dangerous minorities within Greek soil."^{lviii} Although they inhabit the same land as Greeks, immigrants are considered second-class and recognized as a distinct community that can never coexist with cultural Greece. This characterization of immigrants led to the "ghettoization" of some areas, such as predominantly Muslim communities that inhabit segregated slum-like areas in major Greek cities, like the Muslim ghetto that currently exists in Omonoia in central Athens.^{lix} Xenophobic discourses reaffirm a Greek national identity, while simultaneously diminishing Albanian, Muslim and other different migrant groups to the status of animals or beasts. When Georgios Antonopoulos interviewed

several police detectives at central Greek police stations, he found that the Greek detectives and high-ranking officials compared the status of an Albanian immigrant to that of “animal[s],” a metaphor that can function to support the detectives as fully human.”^{lx} This type of attitude created the conditions for racialized violence against immigrants, such as in May of 2011. In May, the stabbing of a 44-year old Greek man by three robbers (two Afghanis and one Pakistani) incited rallies against criminality and several cases of racial violence by Greek residents.^{lxi} Groups of Greeks attacked numerous immigrants in the areas surrounding Victorias Square and Kotzia Square in Athens.^{lxii}

Part of the problem is the identification of Muslim immigrants with criminality and irrationality. Over the past two decades, Islam has been identified in Europe as a threat to European social values. All liberal democratic regimes in Europe respect the private exercise of religion as a fundamental human right, but European societies frequently hinder the right to public and collective free exercise of Islam. As Fatima El-Tayeb writes, it is based on the grounds that Islam is “an ‘un-European’ religion.”^{lxiii} This attitude surfaces despite the fact that over the last century most of the Muslim migration to Europe has been by the “most unambiguously, even aggressively, secular among all “culturally Muslim” nations.”^{lxiv} Religious intolerance or the obstructions to public expression of religion established by the Greek government serve to perpetuate an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy between Greek citizens and immigrants that call Greece their home. Chairman of the Muslim Association of Greece Naim El-Ghandour, a naturalized Greek citizen who arrived in Athens thirty-eight years ago from Egypt, said,

Muslims - and I’m not just talking about immigrants, because there are also second- and third-generation immigrants, as well as Greeks, who are Muslim -

feel like second-class citizens because of their religion,” he said. “Why should all these people be made to feel like this? I’m optimistic that things will now start to change. It is also very important for us to have an official imam [to lead prayers at the mosque].”^{lxv}

As much of the literature on Greek national identity suggests, self-understandings of Greek identity are monocultural and monoreligious. Migration-related diversity, as well as normative and institutional protections for minorities, is ignored. Greek’s Ottoman past, argues Triandafyllidou and Gropas, haunts Greek identity and independence, which is reflected in the current tense relations with neighboring Turkey and the uneasy perceptions of Muslims.^{lxvi} It is no wonder, therefore, why Athens and the entire Attica region have not a single mosque. Provisions for a mosque date to 1880 and were rediscussed in 1913, and then in 1934 framed as a way to improve Greek-Egyptian relations. In 1985 a group of Sudanese Muslims asked for a temple in the Goudi area in central Athens; the Greek Orthodox Church quickly rejected them. Arab states have lobbied the Greek government to create a mosque to accommodate increasing inflows of Muslim immigrants in Greece in the past thirty years. In 2004 this topic was pressured even further by the desire to have a public discussion of official places to worship during the Athens Olympic Games. The Greek government and the Greek Orthodox Church, nonetheless, perpetually hindered proposals at building a mosque in Greece’s cultural center and biggest metropolitan city. Muslims have sought other ways to practice their religion, such as by practicing in prayer rooms--which are located in a variety of places from private apartments to basements and shops. Without a formal worship and prayer temple, Muslims are confined to practice their religion in extremely private locations.

The Archbishop Christodoulos officially says he is in support of a mosque, but the Church frequently obstructs the establishment of mosques in Athens. Greek news sources stress the national security aspect of Islamic fundamentalism and the risk involved with accepting Islam in Greek public society. On April 30th, 2006, EKathemerini, one of the most prominent and well read of Greek newspapers, wrote: “Because we agree with the establishment of a mosque in Athens, but we do not intend to allow the creation of an international centre for educating terrorists (or at the very least fanatic enemies of our Western world).”^{lxvii} Some Greek public officials, such as ex-Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis, reflect a more progressive approach to religious tolerance in Athens. She believes that there should be a timely establishment of a mosque in central Athens because it represents as a wider dialogue between Europe and the United States on one hand and Muslims on the other hand. Refusal to build a mosque only serves to reaffirm Samuel Huntington’s ethnocentric view of the world in *Clash of Civilizations*; to him the world is divided in multiple ideologically clashing cultural groups, which also insinuates that the West will inexorably clash with Islam. To progressive politicians and those that support integration—and to some extent multiculturalism—the Greek state ought to respond to immigrant’s religious needs as a historic duty and a responsibility to demonstrate the democratic credentials of the Greek state. This type of progressive thinking has led to plans in the summer of 2011 to build a mosque in Athens out of the former naval building in Eleonas.^{lxviii} This move absolutely reflected progressive thinking, but the Muslim population, however, viewed this act as only a temporary solution since it is cannot accommodate the estimated 120,000 Muslims in Athens.^{lxix}

Ethnic stereotypes are much more likely to develop in those heterogeneous societies in which several impediments to inter-ethnic group communication exist. This is certainly the case in Greece, where Muslim immigrants are confined to undesirable status. As P. van der Berghe argues, there are many reasons why this is true in Greece.^{lxx} First, significant portions of the Muslim immigrants see Greece as transitory and not necessarily their permanent home. Very few converts to Islam in Greece are around to bridge the gap between Muslim immigrants and the host country.^{lxxi} There also exists a significant portion of Muslims in the Western Thrace region of Greece, some of who are politicians and muftis. They have not, however, shown interest in supporting religious organizations of Muslim immigrants, preferring instead to try to maintain their integration among Greeks in their region.^{lxxii}

Exclusion of Muslim immigrants emerges in a greater trend of racialization in Europe that defines the Eastern ‘Other’ as biologically inferior. This type of ethnicization—that defines the boundaries what is considered proper and important, and what is considered foreign and inferior—places minorities outside the national Greek and larger European community.^{lxxiii} Although immigrants are integral parts of the social fabric of Greek society and many European societies, they are continually distanced from the political and social community of the places they call their home. Jef Huysmans believes that immigrants are not separated from the historical record of European history; they are in fact not foreigners that belong somewhere else and which the “so-called original inhabitants” can reasonably hide from their memory.^{lxxiv} As El-Tayeb argues, this exclusive national identity is a “dialect of memory and amnesia” because these minorities are fundamentally European.^{lxxv} El-Tayeb elucidates on this idea:

...though rarely mentioned, race is present whenever Europe is thought, recalling a dynamic that Susan Suleiman identifies in the continent's historical (non)memory of the Holocaust: To forget is human, but amnesia is an illness—or worse still, an alibi. The question can then be formulated as follows: if forgetting is salutary as well as inevitably, both individually and collectively, under what conditions does it become a reprehensible amnesia? (Suleiman 2006, 217)^{lxxvi}

This type of memory loss further bolsters up an imagined national identity that ultimately is mythical and not fully true to the historical account. As David Campbell argues, the construction of such a social space creates “an axiological dimension in which the delineation of an inside from an outside gives rise to a moral hierarchy that renders the domestic superior to the foreign inferior [...] resistant elements to a secure identity on the “inside” are linked through a discourse of “danger” with threats identified and located on the “outside.”^{lxxvii} Creating this inside versus outside between original habitants and immigrants to Greece only further creates discourses of fear and makes it impossible for Greeks and Muslims to peacefully coexist.

Muslim Immigrants in the Greek Workforce

Even though Greek society is not tolerant of Islam and has Otherized the Muslim culture and way of life, Muslim immigrants represent a significant portion of the work force in Greece. The majority of non-Greeks citizens come to Greece for economic reasons: 54.2 percent of them reported that work and employment was their primary reason for migration.^{lxxviii} Albanians are a significant percent of this population, representing 57.5 percent of all migrants.^{lxxix} Incidentally, many Albanian migrants, often irregular and seasonal in nature, are of Greek descent due to the history of mixing between Greeks and Albanians to the North.^{lxxx}

Ioannis Cholezas and Tanos Tsakoglou recognize that there is some negative side to illegal immigration in Greece. Illegal immigrants helped expand a largely informal economy, and substituted some Greek unskilled and semi-skilled workers.^{lxxxii} In turn, this exacerbated income inequality and slowed the wage growth for those with low skills.^{lxxxiii} While there ought to be some legitimacy granted to the idea that illegal immigrants inflict some negative impacts on the economy, these illegal immigrants are not going to disappear from the workforce in one fell swoop of the immigration police. Focusing on the positive impacts of illegal immigration is critical because acknowledging that immigrants can contribute to the economy gives hope for peaceful coexistence and cooperation between diverse cultures. Cholezas and Tsakoglou also find several positive impacts of illegal immigration on the economy: an increase in GDP growth rate, revitalization of the agricultural sector and many small and medium enterprise, and dampening of inflationary pressures.^{lxxxiii} Cholezas and Tsakoglou conclude that inclusion of immigrants into the formal economy would have more positives than negatives, but they do not address if would reduce additional illegal immigration, which raises many more questions about how to really slow immigration flows.^{lxxxiv}

The inability to be recognized by the formal economy inhibits illegal immigrants from contributing to the Greek society they often call home. Normal labor laws and regulations have not protected several immigrant jobs, such as domestic service. Domestic services, like housemaid and nanny jobs, are categorized as family business, which leaves regulation up to individual employers. In this line of work, un-skilled labor that does not require formal education or citizenship papers is commonplace. Consequently, Greek employers have been frequently cited for their racist treatment of

Albanian migrant women.^{lxxxv} As Pothiti Hantzaroula writes, “one has to be Greek or ‘at least’ Christian Orthodox in order to enjoy a minimum of acceptance. The massive baptizing of Albanian adults and children and the change of names to Christian ones are not strategies of adaption but a result of coercion, reminding us the colonial practices of ‘Christianizing the savage negro soul’ (fanon 1967: 142).”^{lxxxvi} Because non-Greek or Christian immigrant workers have little power in the formal economy, they are confined to labor services in either the informal market, such as in illicit smuggling markets and trades, or jobs that are not fully protected by Greek laws or institutions.

Concluding Thoughts

The conditions are thus set for immigrant communities, and particular Muslim immigrant communities, to be isolated and cut off from the vein of the political community and society that hosts them. Conforming to EU and international standards on the rights of political asylum seekers and refugees becomes much harder in a Greek society that refuses to empower large swathes of its diverse populace. Being part of a Muslim culture does not preclude one from working or contributing economically and politically to a society. Greek immigration policy, however, never seeks to integrate immigrant communities into the larger Greek national community. Nationalism and national identity seeks to exclude those not considered ethnically or religiously Greek. The increasing impact of Greeks economically and socially, nevertheless, has made the problem of an entirely Greek economy, informally and formally, impossible. While illegal immigrants still permeate the Greek borders in mass, national economic activity might not be entirely linked to a purely Greek populace; the growing number of illegal immigrant populations must be increasingly considered.

V. Solutions

“This is a landscape where the historical remainders never add up to the seamless wholes and where the meaning of ethnoscape no longer relies on ethnicity as strong multiculturalism defines it. As world upon world turns, this too is part of the ongoing labor of imagination, which is not confined to diasporic public spheres alone.”^{lxxxvii}

--Leslie Adelson

The failed immigration policy in Greece that rests on exclusion and repression necessitates revisiting multiculturalism and integration. Namely, the growing heterogeneity in Greece means a monocultural and monoreligious national identity and political community is much more difficult to enforce. Practices of multiculturalism are important because they stress the interconnectedness of human beings, no matter which nation they identify with. The notion of the ‘lottery of birth’ carries particular weight because what life we are born into—whether one is born to a wealthy family in California or to parents in the slums of Mumbai—is completely random. The lottery of birth concept posits that since no one has any autonomous decision in choosing where and what life they are born into, they are not to be held responsible for something that is beyond their control (such as being extremely rich or devastatingly poor). Consequently, a conceptual rethinking about how we approach those that come from disparate socioeconomic origins and cultural traditions is integral in today’s globalizing and increasingly pluralistic world.

Multiculturalism is defined as the doctrine that several different cultures, rather than one unitary national culture, can coexist peacefully and equitably in a single country. Diversity within unity is at the core of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism recognizes heterogeneity in society and unlike common Greek attitudes towards including other

ethnicities and cultures, it accepts diversity as a positive attribute of society. The Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, which exchanged ethnic Greek and ethnic Turkish populations, is the antithesis of this type of multicultural thinking. The population exchange and type of European nationalistic and racialized rhetoric evident in the Treaty of Lausanne, however, proved to be uncharacteristic of many sections of Greek history.

Since the Islamic Golden Age and through the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, Greek civilization experienced a multitude of cultures interact, coexist, and contribute to the development of Greek identity. The Phanariots during the Ottoman Empire prove this case aptly. Christian translators were originally used to help the Ottoman government structure communicate with outside nations. Phanariots assumed this role and later became foreign ministers of the Ottoman Empire. Almost all were Greek and claimed to be part of the old Byzantine nobility. Phanariots rose to relevance during the course of the 18th century, when the Ottomans started to value them as foreign negotiators to the Empire. These Phanariots ruled the Ottoman-owned region of Moldavia and Wallachia (Romania today) and also resided in the chief Greek quarter of Constantinople, where the Ecumenical Patriarchate is located. While loyal to the Ottomans, they represented the linkage between Greek Christians and the Ottoman Muslims.

The Phanariots only represent one small historical example of the connection between Greeks and Muslims. The case of cross-cultural exchanges in the Eastern Mediterranean, primarily in Istanbul, and the sharing of shrines better demonstrates the potential of Greek-Muslim coexistence. Senior researcher at the CNRS, the Laboratoire d'Ethnologie, Dr. Maria Coucoucli dedicated most of her academic work to the sharing

of worship spaces between Christians and Muslims. According to Coucoucli, Islam and Christianity have coexisted peacefully for nearly a millennium. Her research provides a keen insight into the relationship between Greeks and Muslims on Europe's Southeastern corridor. Sharing of culture between Greeks and Muslims is a very little known facet of life in the post-Ottoman Mediterranean world. It offers a sharp contrast to the fanaticism and intolerance that stereotypes relations among religious groups in the Middle East and Western Europe.

Native Balkans, Anatolians and Christian and Islamic groups of mainland Greece have shared collective pilgrimages, which is a prevalent cultural practice in both religions. Christians and Muslim Turks also attend common festivals, such as the Reanu Festival on Prince's Island near Istanbul on April 28th. These shared cultural traditions have allowed for a shared understanding of identity—often both Greeks and Turks claim warriors of both the Ottoman and Byzantine Empires whom they cannot decipher the difference.^{lxxxviii}

Both Christians and Muslims have oriented themselves around many shared idols. St. George and the Virgin Mary have become “the most synchronic idols in the Holy Land,” said Coucoucli.^{lxxxix} The image of St. George is particularly important because his icon accompanied Christendom in traveling from the Balkans to Anatolia. Shrines to St. George attracted Muslim men and women, as well as numerous Christian pilgrims. To this tune, the great number of Muslim pilgrims in Orthodox Christian churches has pleased the priests in Istanbul.^{xc} Greek Orthodox Church goers in Istanbul have the same view—they go to St. George because he grants people everything, from housing and health. Celebrations to St. George have led to multicultural explorations in areas where

Greek Armenian or Greek Jews had half of the cities' populations, exhibiting the capacity for different religious groups to have interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural exchanges.^{xci}

What these experiences of multiculturalism explain is the ability for diasporas to merge and different cultures to mix. It is this type of 'creoloization' or 'cross-fertilization' that allows for pluralist and multiculturalist societies to thrive. As Robin Cohen argues, the idea of 'creolization' and 'cross-fertilization' functions as an alternative to exclusionary based nationalist identity formation.^{xcii} Creolization theory first took off in the fifth century when Portuguese and African cultures interacted on Santiago, one of the islands of Cape Verde. Creolization happens when "participants select particular elements from incoming or inherited cultures, endow these with meanings different from those they possessed in the original culture, and then creatively merge these to create totally new varieties that supersede the prior forms."^{xciii} Good examples of this type of cultural mixing include Brazil, South Africa, and the USA; Swedish social anthropologist Ulf Hannerz goes as far as to suggest that "we all live in a 'creolizing world'."^{xciv} Europe has always been changing and its populations frequently mix, define, and redefine themselves. Although most European states defined their borders by the end of the 20th century, the flow of immigrants from previous colonial possessions and refugees from failed states increased the diversity of previously ethnic homogenous states. Theodor Adorno famously claimed that "the concept [of 'Europe'] is located in a historically constellation of elements; it refuses definition."^{xcv} In an increasingly globalizing world, Adorno is correct.

Moreover, multicultural solutions must instill lasting and systematic change in Greece and the EU if they are to be effectual. This can only happen through emphasizing

civic nationalism, rather than ethnic nationalism. Multicultural nationalism is possible, especially when civic duties among individuals in the community are stressed. Providing political rights is the most vital step in order to access the benefits of increasing immigrant populations. In short, the Greek state ought to separate the political and cultural life of its residents. That means that the individual characteristics of the members of its community should not be an inherent determinant of political rights and the ability to participate in the workforce. The identity of the political community is located in its political structure and the voice of the polity. Bhikhu Parekh argues that the terms for immigrants should “be defined in politico-institutional rather than ethno-cultural terms, in terms of the institutions, values and mode of public discourse that its citizens can be expected to share as members of a community, rather than their psychological and cultural characteristics such as their habits, temperament, attitude to life, sexual practices, customs, family structure and hobbies.”^{xcvi} If individuals are born into a society or have lived there for generations, exhibiting their loyalty and willingness to contribute to the community, then they have demonstrated their worthiness for political rights. “This is why the term second or third generation ‘immigrant’ is deeply misleading. One might be the son or daughter of an immigrant but not an immigrant oneself, and one’s ancestral origins cannot define one’s current political identity or affect the quality of one’s citizenship.”^{xcvii}

This type of thinking echoes the republican ideals of the Ancient Greek ‘polis’, which aimed at the happiness of the people and a partnership among equals that participated in political life. The Ancient Athenian government was designed to ensure equality and give power to those that made up the strength of the polis.^{xcviii} To

Athenians, it was far more democratic for a large number of citizens to take part in a rotation in running public affairs than long-serving public officials that could use their power for personal advancement or to victimize others.^{xcix} Aristotle used the metaphor of the human body to describe the polis: "The polis is prior in the order of nature to the family and the individual. The reason for this is that the whole is necessarily prior to the part. If the whole body be destroyed, there will not be a foot or a hand."^c As such, if the Modern Greeks suggest that they are the descendants of Ancient Greeks, they might want to understand that the power of the 'polis' or state is located in the ability of the polity to participate in political life. It is true, however, that the Athenian state was hostile to foreigners and the voting electorate excluded three-quarters of the population—comprised of women, slaves and metoikoi. Nevertheless, the idea that the strength of the polis is derived from the political participation of its polity can be a valuable way of viewing immigrants as part of the political community without otherizing them because of ethnic or cultural differences.

The national identity of Greek community should include minority members of the society, including Muslim immigrants. Allowing Muslim immigrants to participate in the political life allows them to identify with a national communal identity and to contribute to it in the short and long-term. In terms of immigration policy, political rights include faster mechanisms to seek naturalization and citizenship in Greece and in Europe. Political rights that allow for asylum and refuge in Greece, as well as being protected by human rights and labor laws, is at the core of this solution.

The nation can still be a reference point for cultural unification, around a national sports team for example, but it should not limit political identification. Some European

thinkers like Jürgen Habermas posit that national identity could be fragmented under the European Union and thus multicultural, while politically it could be united under a shared political culture.^{ci} As Jef Huysmans argues, European states should not ignore the pressures of those hoping to immigrate or seek asylum. Theorists like Chantal Mouffe and Michael Walzer invoke the concept of self-determination in order to justify states choosing who they want to include and exclude. As a democratic concept, however, Huysmans purports that self-determination

includes the right to preserve one own's political culture, the democratic right of self-determination includes, of course, the right to preserve one's own *political* culture, which includes the concrete context of citizen's rights, though it does not include the self-assertion of a privileged *cultural* life form. Only within the constitutional framework of a democratic legal system can different ways of life coexist equally. These must, however, overlap within a common political culture, which again implies an impulse to open these ways of life to others. (Habermas 1992: 17—emphasis in original).^{cii}

Instead of defining citizens as passive takers of responsibilities and rights by the government, immigrants should become active political subjects who can improve public life and participate in the political sphere. This republican approach to citizenship fosters civic engagement and active political deliberation in order to create a national political identity. It creates the conditions for a flourishing political life and a vibrant democratic culture.

Opening up citizenship includes allowing for a broader and more subjective understanding of citizenship. This view sees citizen's rights not as a way to project and assert a cultural or ethnic identity, but to approach difference as a “process of affiliation’.”^{ciii} Part of the process of integration is filling policy gaps. This process includes adding more legal entry channels, banning unrealistic legal requirements for citizenship, establishing more resources for monitoring permits and appealing to

authorities, and addressing informal economies (eliminate over-regulated access to professions, more resources in monitoring new forms of labor, increase incentives for regular employment). There should also be joint movements and research between EU countries and non-EU countries in the surrounding regions to deal with the phenomenon of illegal migration. Ignoring illegal migration and trying to separate Muslims from mainstream European society clearly cannot be a long-term solution.

Increasing heterogeneity in Greek society means that policies of exclusion and segregation are likely to only perpetuate conflict between groups and lead to an unstable and fractured societal order. Multicultural solutions that recognize that individual characteristics and habits should not preclude political rights ameliorate the issue of increased immigration, while also allowing Greeks to retain their ethnic heritage that they claim. Civic nationalism should be emphasized, while ethnic differences should be downplayed. Many Muslims have called Greece their home for multiple generations and considering the interconnectedness between Islam and Greeks, there is potential for peaceful coexistence between the two groups.

V. Conclusion

As the 21st century progresses and technological advances metastasize the rate of globalization, more immigrants will be seeking asylum in Greece and the EU. The issue of illegal immigration challenges the notion of a culturally and ethnically homogenous Greek society. Greek national identity, which birthed in the 1820s as a brainchild of the Classical Age, the Byzantine Empire, and the Enlightenment, must be reimagined and reconciled to deal with the rapid shifts in its population base. The response of Greece

and the EU to the phenomenon of increasing illegal immigration has been repressive and exclusionary. This type of response prevents coexistence and ignores the fact that these asylum seekers and refugees often are escaping draconian and authoritarian regimes, as well as persecution, in their home countries; the potential for work and rights in Greece and Europe often presents itself as a bright vision to immigrants because many of their native countries are the hotbeds for political instability, violence and environmental degradation.

The exclusionary nature of Greek and European identity is problematic in the larger picture of human rights, immigration and refugees. It ignores that Muslims had a part in the formation of Greek identity and that historically Greek and Muslims have coexisted peacefully. Despite the fact that Greeks have had a partnership with Muslims from the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, the current Greek emigration policy amplifies racism and otherization towards Muslim immigrants. Muslims are denied political rights in the form of citizenship and work and employment and do not have access to public freedom of religion (e.g. mosques in Athens). The Greek citizenry and government officials wrongly treat immigrants and rarely allow them to gain temporary or permanent status. The inability for immigrants to legally obtain citizenship or legal rights in any form reflects the neglect for EU and international conventions (like Geneva Convention) on the rights of asylum seekers and refugees.

Conceptualizing what it means to be Greek does not necessarily mean that immigrants need to be denied access to political life. Multicultural solutions that stress diversity within unity are the most appropriate ways to address the phenomenon of mass migration into Greece and the EU. This is because they contribute to the economic life

and often live in Greece for generations upon end. Enabling them to join the formal economy and have privileges such as citizenship rights only further enhances the ability of illegal immigrants to participate in public life and contribute. By continuing to exclude them, and ignoring the mutually beneficial historical linkages between Muslims and Greeks—the cross-cultural exchanges on the Eastern Mediterranean, for example—then Greek immigration policy will continue to be rigid and obsolete. Accepting integration and making the processes to obtain political rights, as well as making it easier to detect illegal immigrants, is the best strategy for Greece and the EU in the long run. If Greece or the EU will accept and include, or continue to deny and exclude remains to be seen. One thing is for sure: there is not going to be a natural and instantaneous end to illegal immigration. Greece will have to deal with it one way or another. The question is—will it risk alienating and segregating immigrants that consider themselves part of the community or will the government accept and integrate them as part of the social fabric? Only time will tell, but action must be taken before it is too late.

APPENDIX A: The Paintings of Delacroix & Map of Greece



Massacre at Chios (1824) by Eugène Delacroix^{civ}



Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi (1825) by Eugène Delacroix^{cv}



Ionian Sea: to the west of the pink-colored islands; Thrace: white; Macedonia: red; Epirus: yellow; Crete: blue; Cyprus: not shown, but it is located southeast of Turkey.^{cvi}

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- ^{xii} Demosthenes, "Third Philippic, Section 31" (Speech, 341 B.C.).
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- ^{xiv} Triandafyllidou and Gropas, "Constructing Difference: The Mosque Debates in Greece," 960.
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