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“Ne çektiyse hep bu cahilliğimizden çektik”
“Whatever we suffered was because of our illiteracy”

The Development of Minority Education
at the
South-easternmost Corner of the EU:
The Case of Muslim Turks
in
Western Thrace, Greece

Ali Huseyinoglu

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations

Department of International Relations

University of Sussex

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Declaration

I, Ali Huseyinoglu, hereby declare that:

This thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Parts of this work have been published as:

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Signature: _____

Abstract

This study focuses on the Muslim Turkish minority in Greece and the development of its educational rights. It starts with the 1923 Lausanne Treaty that established the minorityhood of the Muslim ummah for the former Ottoman territory and explores various aspects of Minority education between then and the end of the 2000s.

While doing so, it treats these rights as individual rights with a collective aspect; some of the individual rights of minorities can only be enjoyed together with others. Also, it draws a direct correlation between the Minority's education and its rights. That is, in the case that the education level of the Minority was high, there was less discrimination against members of the Minority, since they had the linguistic skills, educational background and self-confidence to fight against violations of their rights by the host country, Greece. Also, it emphasizes the involvement of external actors in the development of Minority education in Western Thrace.

Concerning the development of Minority education, this study argues that minorities' rights are not only 'given' by host states but also 'claimed' by members of minorities through various struggles at the local, national and international level. Also, as well as the Minority and the Greek state, various external agents, such as Turkey and the European Union, are also involved in the struggle between the Minority and the Greek state over the former's education. The impact of these agents on the survival of the Minority's educational rights was immense, particularly from the 1980s onwards. It was primarily the inclusion of these external actors that pushed Greece to change its discriminatory policy against the Minority in 1991.

This study demonstrates that a number of the individual rights emanating from the Minority's Greek citizenship have only been recognized since 1991. Nonetheless, I conclude that in spite of some improvements, the Minority's difficulties in the realm of rights with collective aspects, such as education of Minority students in a bilingual environment, persist.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	2
Abstract	3
Table of Contents	4
List of Tables	9
Acknowledgements	10
Abbreviations.....	12
Translation and Transliteration Notes.....	15
Usage of ‘the Minority’ term	16
Chapter 1: Introduction	20
1.1 The transformation from an advantaged Muslim ummah/community in the Ottoman Empire into a disadvantaged minority in the Greek periphery	20
1.2 Mapping the field	22
1.3 Reviewing the literature on the Minority and Minority education.....	26
1.3.1 <i>Greek Sources</i>	26
1.3.2 <i>Sources in Turkish</i>	29
1.3.3 <i>Similarities and differences between Turkish and Greek Sources</i>	30
1.3.4 <i>My contribution to the literature on Minority education in Western Thrace</i>	31
1.4 The starting point: Identifying the main research theme and the necessity of an interdisciplinary understanding.....	32
1.5 A synopsis of Minority education in Western Thrace.....	35
1.5.1 <i>Education: A means to struggle against rights violations in Western Thrace?</i>	38
1.6 Structure of the Thesis	41
CHAPTER 2: Theoretical and Historical Consideration of Minorities in Europe.....	45
2.1 Introduction.....	45
2.2 Defining the concept of minority	47
2.3 Liberalism and integration of minorities	51
2.4 The Social Constructionist understanding of minorities.....	52
2.5 Problematizing minorities and their rights in the context of modern Greece.....	53
2.5.1 <i>‘Old’ minorities vs. ‘Newcomer’ Immigrants</i>	56
2.5.2 <i>‘Unrecognized’ minorities: The case of the Macedonian minority in Northern Greece</i>	58
2.6 International protection of minority rights in Europe: Historical Approach.....	60
2.6.1 <i>Development of minority rights under the League of Nations</i>	61
2.6.1.1 Promoting minority education under the LoN	63
2.6.2 <i>Failure of the League’s System of Minority Protection</i>	64

2.7	A shift from collective to individual: Rights of Minorities during the Cold War years	67
2.7.1.1	Minority education under the UN regime of Cold War years.....	69
2.7.2	<i>The Post-Cold War Years and the revitalization of minority rights at the international level</i>	71
2.7.2.1	The rebirth of minority education in the post-1990s.....	75
2.8	Minority-state-homeland relations through the lens of Brubaker	82
2.8.1	<i>Explaining the Triadic Nexus Theory: Nationalizing states, national minorities and external national homelands</i>	82
2.8.2	<i>Securitization of minority-related issues</i>	85
2.8.3	<i>A missing fourth actor? The Triadic nexus and Minority education in Western Thrace</i>	87
2.8.3.1	“Blood is more important than passport”: The growing impact of Turkey in promoting the trilateral model in Western Thrace.....	88
2.8.3.2	“Turkey is our ‘motherland’ and Greece is our ‘homeland’”	91
2.9	Conclusion	92
CHAPTER 3: Methodology.....		94
3.1	Introduction.....	94
3.2	My autobiography: The significance of Childhood Memories.....	95
3.2.1	“My” identity vs. “Your” identity.....	95
3.2.2	“My” school vs. “Your” school.....	96
3.2.3	<i>A football match between “Little Greeks” and “Little Turks”</i>	97
3.2.4	<i>Secondary and Higher Education in Turkey</i>	98
3.3	Puzzling over the Interdisciplinary framework: Is the local also international?.....	100
3.4	Methodological Accounts	104
3.5	Going back to the region where you come from: Fieldwork experiences as a native researcher.....	104
3.5.1	<i>The dichotomy of Insider and Outsider</i>	105
3.5.2	<i>My struggle with problems and dilemmas as a native researcher</i>	107
3.6	Talking to research participants as an insider researcher	111
3.6.1	<i>Communicating with the outsider researcher: A matter of disappointment and insecurity</i>	112
3.6.2	<i>The restoration of democracy in 1974 and its aftermath: “Don’t remind us of the 1980s!”</i>	114
3.6.3	<i>Identification of the Minority: Turks, Muslims or a combination of both?</i>	115
3.6.4	<i>“The 1923 Lausanne Treaty is our own constitution”</i>	118
3.7	Conclusion	119
CHAPTER 4: Emergence of Minority Education in Western Thrace		120
4.1	Introduction.....	120
4.2	The process of “minoritization”, homogenization and Hellenization in Western Thrace: The Lausanne Treaty and its immediate aftermath	121
4.3	Historical background: Education of the Ottoman Muslims in Western Thrace before 1923	124
4.4	Traditionalists vs. Modernists: A clash of values and ideas	125
4.5	Laying the foundation of Minority education in the light of the schism between Traditionalist and Modernists during the interwar era	129

4.5.1	<i>Types of Minority Schooling</i>	129
4.5.2	<i>Minority teachers of the Turkish Curriculum</i>	133
4.5.3	<i>Textbooks</i>	134
4.5.4	<i>Greek teachers: Teaching Greek to Minority students</i>	135
4.5.5	<i>The structure of Minority families</i>	137
4.5.6	<i>Greek neglect of Minority education in the 1920s</i>	139
4.6	<i>The Greco-Turkish rapprochement of the 1930s</i>	141
4.7	<i>The Metaxas dictatorship and the introduction of the Surveillance Zone in Northern Greece</i>	142
4.8	<i>World War II and the Bulgarian occupation of Western Thrace</i>	145
4.9	<i>Bulgarian Occupation (1941-1944)</i>	146
4.10	<i>The Greek Civil War (1946-1949)</i>	149
4.10.1	<i>Minority education during the Greek Civil War: The Communist Response</i>	150
4.10.2	<i>Minority education during the Greek Civil War: The Royalist response</i>	152
4.11	<i>Conclusion</i>	155

CHAPTER 5 : The increasing Greek rule over issues Minority education (1949-1967)

		158
5.1	Introduction	158
5.2	1950-1955: Golden years of Greek-Turkish relations and new initiatives in Minority education in Western Thrace	159
5.2.1	<i>The election of muftis and members of waqf boards</i>	159
5.2.2	<i>The 1951 Cultural Agreement between Greece and Turkey.....</i>	160
5.2.3	<i>The opening of the first Minority Secondary School</i>	162
5.2.4	<i>Law 3065/1954: Introducing the first comprehensive legal regulation about Minority education.....</i>	163
5.2.5	<i>Heading to Turkey to become a teacher at a Minority primary school.....</i>	164
5.2.6	<i>Teachers of Turkish citizenship arriving in Western Thrace.....</i>	166
5.2.7	<i>Emphasizing the teaching of Greek: A significant step forward from the Greek state</i> 167	
5.2.7.1	<i>Minority teachers' fluency in Greek</i>	168
5.3	The '6-7 September Events' in Istanbul and the worsening of Greek-Turkish relations 170	
5.3.1	<i>Turkish or Muslim schools: Problems with denomination</i>	172
5.3.2	<i>Administrative problems concerning religious schools.....</i>	173
5.3.3	<i>The absence of the Minority in secondary and tertiary education</i>	175
5.4	Minority education under the control of the Co-ordinating Council of Thrace (CCT) 176	
5.4.1	<i>Playing the 'Pomak card' in the Surveillance Zone.....</i>	179
5.4.2	<i>Teasing out the differences between Modernists and Traditionalists.....</i>	181
5.4.3	<i>The beginning of protests from Minority parents.....</i>	182
5.4.4	<i>Downgrading the 'Turkishness' of the Minority primary schools</i>	183
5.5	Conclusion	186

CHAPTER 6: From the Beginning of the 1967 Junta Regime until the End of the 1980s

.....		187
6.1	Introduction	187
6.2	The Advent of Military Rule in 1967	187

6.2.1	<i>The 1968 Cultural Protocol between Greece and Turkey</i>	188
6.2.2	<i>Textbooks</i>	188
6.2.3	<i>Increasing role of Greek vice-heads</i>	189
6.2.4	<i>Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki (EPATH) and EPATH teachers</i>	190
6.2.4.1	Formation of a new schism within teachers of the Turkish curriculum: EPATH teachers vs. Others	193
6.3	The language of instruction for the Turkish curriculum.....	195
6.4	Law No.1109/1972 and increasing Greek control of Minority education.....	198
6.4.1	<i>School Boards</i>	198
6.4.2	<i>From ethno-national to religious denomination of Minority schools</i>	199
6.5	Changing the balance between the Turkish and Greek Curriculum	199
6.6	The Greek impact on the Minority's secondary education	200
6.7	Opening of new Public Secondary Schools (Gymnasiums)	203
6.8	Higher Education	204
6.8.1	<i>The DIKATSA issue</i>	206
6.9	The Greek state's increasing penetration of the Minority's autonomy between the 1950s and the 1980s.....	207
6.9.1	<i>Land Expropriations</i>	207
6.9.2	<i>Getting driving licences and building permits</i>	208
6.9.3	<i>The official denial of ethnic Turkish identity</i>	209
6.10	The 1980s: Growing international concern over the violation of rights in Western Thrace.....	214
6.10.1	<i>Resistance from the grassroots takes a European dimension: The Minority's elites lobbying in Strasbourg and Brussels in the 1980s</i>	215
6.10.2	<i>The Islamic World</i>	217
6.10.3	<i>The Role of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs)</i>	218
6.11	Conclusion.....	219

CHAPTER 7: Questioning the continuities and changes in Minority education in the post-1991 era 222

7.1	Introduction.....	222
7.2	The declaration of the change in Greek minority policy in 1991.....	223
7.2.1	<i>29 January 1990 and its immediate aftermath: Political mobility in Athens</i>	223
7.2.2	<i>Mitsotakis's visit and the declaration of the 'New Minority Policy'</i>	224
7.3	Zenginīs Books: A Greek 'failure' to prepare Turkish textbooks	225
7.3.1	<i>1-5 February 1993: Boycotting Turkish textbooks printed in Athens</i>	226
7.3.1.1	Minority teachers and litigation in the ECtHR.....	228
7.4	EPATH and its teachers.....	233
7.5	The introduction of the '0.5% quota': A breakthrough in Minority tertiary education	236
7.5.1	<i>Minority students at Greek universities after 1996</i>	239
7.5.2	<i>Additional promotions for Minority students at Greek universities</i>	240
7.5.3	<i>Talking with Minority Students at Greek universities</i>	241
7.6	Minority students at Turkish Universities.....	243
7.6.1	<i>Abolition of the restrictive measures for Minority graduates arriving from Turkey</i>	245
7.7	Programme for the Education of Muslim Children (PEM).....	246

7.7.1	<i>Minority Criticisms of the PEM</i>	250
7.8	Growing numbers of Minority students in secondary education	251
7.8.1	<i>Minority Medreses</i>	251
7.8.2	<i>Public Secondary Schools</i>	256
7.8.2.1	Introduction of the Turkish language course at public secondary schools: A complete failure? 259	
7.9	Continuities in problems of Minority education after 1991	260
7.9.1	<i>Nursery Education</i>	260
7.9.2	<i>Primary Education</i>	263
7.10	Conclusion	265
CHAPTER 8: Conclusion		266
BIBLIOGRAPHY		276
APPENDICES		331

List of Tables

Table 1.	Population data for Western Thrace, based on Ethnicity and the Settlement of Asia Minor Refugees.
Table 2.	Educational data for the Muslim Turkish Minority (1939-1963).
Table 3.	Total number of Muslim Turkish students at Celal Bayar and Muzaffer Salihoğlu Minority Secondary and High Schools between (1982-1988).
Table 4.	Muslim Turkish Students of Western Thrace entering Greek universities (1996-2009).
Table 4a.	Muslim Turkish students entering Greek Universities (2006-2008).
Table 5.	Students from Greece entering Turkish universities via YÖS (1997-2008).
Table 6.	Number of Muslim Turkish students at the Religious School, Medrese-i Hayriyye, in Komotini, (2001-2009).
Table 7.	Number of Muslim Turkish students at the Religious School in Echinos-Xanthi (2001-2009).
Table 8.	Number of Muslim Turkish Students at the Celal Bayar Minority Secondary and High School in Komotini (2001-2009).
Table 9.	Number of Muslim Turkish students in the Greek secondary education, Rodopi Prefecture (2002-2009).
Table 10.	Numbers of Muslim Turkish students at pilot Turkish courses in four public secondary schools in Komotini and Xanthi (2007-2010).

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Abbreviations

AEB: Eleftherios K. Venizelos Archives

ABTTF: Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe

AEKSTMS: Archive of Foreign, Technical and Minority Schools', General State Archives (Kavala)

AKK: Konstantinos Karamanlis Archives

AYE: Diplomatic and Historical Archive-Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs

BTMMMMC: Union of Medrese Graduate Muslim Teachers of Western Thrace

BTTOB: Turkish Teachers' Union of Western Thrace

BTDD: Western Thrace Turks Solidarity Union

CCT: Co-ordinating Council of Thrace

CEE: Central and Eastern Europe

CEFOM: Culture and Education Foundation of Western Thrace Minority

CoE: Council of Europe

CSCE: Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe

DAGM/BCA: General Directorate of Turkish State Archives/Prime Ministry Republican Archives

DAGM/DDB: General Directorate of Turkish State Archives/Documentation Centre

DAGM/BOA: General Directorate of Turkish State Archives/Ottoman Archives

DUTH: Democritus University of Thrace

EC: European Community

ECHR: European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

ECtHR: European Court of Human Rights

ELIAMEP: Hellenic Foundation for Hellenic and European Policy

EPATH: Special Pedagogical Academy in Thessaloniki

EPMMTH: Education of Muslim Minority Children in Thrace

EU: European Union

FCNM: Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

FEK: Greek Official Gazette

GATH: Governor General of Thrace

HCNM: High Commissioner on National Minorities

HDIM: Human Dimension Implementation Meetings

HRW: Human Rights Watch

ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICJ: International Court of Justice

INGOs: International Non-Governmental Organizations

IR: international Relations

KEMO: Minority Groups Research Centre

LoN: League of Nations

MEPs: Members of the European Parliament

METU: Middle East Technical University

MFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MP: Member of Parliament

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

OIC: Organization of the Islamic Conference

ODIHR: Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

OSCE: Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

PACE: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

PCIJ: Permanent Court of International Justice

PEM: Education of Muslim Children

PMC: Permanent Mixed Commission (between Turkey and Greece)

TNA: The National Archives of the UK

TRNC: Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

TTA: Turkish Teacher Academy of the Turkish Republic

UN: United Nations

UNESCO-CDE: Convention against Discrimination in Education

YÖK: Turkish Higher Education Council

YÖS: University Entrance Examination for Foreign Students in Turkey.

XTU: Xanthi Turkish Union.

WTMUGA: Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association

Translation and Transliteration Notes

In this study, all of the titles of non-English sources are given in their original form, either in Turkish or Greek. But in order to make the English speakers to understand the content of these sources, all of the non-English titles are also translated into English. All translations from Turkish and Greek are mine unless otherwise stated.

As for transliteration, all words used for Greek and Turkish names of the authors, journals, newspapers and archive names are rendered in Latin transliteration in order to enable their pronunciation by non-Turkish and non-Greek speakers. Those toponyms transliterated for the first time are also followed with their Turkish versions as they were referred to by the Minority members.

Usage of ‘the Minority’ term

It is a fact that ‘the Minority’ I refer to in this research was created in 1923 and that it survives until this day. It is also the only group in Greece that has a minority status officially recognized by the Greek state. However, there are several points that this project wants to underline while referring to ‘the Minority’.

First of all, this group of people who became citizens of Greece after the region’s official incorporation into Greek territories have an institutional and legal framework based on the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty. The creation of the minorityhood was established during the Lausanne meetings as both Greece and Turkey accepted their kin to be granted exemption from the Turkish-Greek population exchange. The process of its institutionalization has persisted until this day although the official treatment of Greece towards this group of Greek citizens and their rights varied depending on different internal and external variables that I will elaborate on throughout this project.

Secondly, it is for ease of reference while mentioning the community under study. Finally, while referring to the Minority as a single and institutional categorization of people, it is useful to underline that this study follows the Social Constructionist understanding and does not adopt a primordial attitude towards these people and its rights.

Looking from the historical framework, neither Greece nor Turkey ever questioned the existence of a minority in Western Thrace. Also, they referred to the presence of this community at various national and international platforms. Meanwhile, representatives of the minority used their title of minorityhood differently at local, national and international platforms. But contrary to the continuous references by Turkey concerning a ‘Turkish’ minority as well as Minority representatives labelling the Minority either as ‘Turkish’ or ‘Muslim Turkish’, Greece from time to time applied different policies regarding the official identification of the Minority of Western Thrace.

That is to say, from the 1920s until the early 1970s, the official Greek discourse kept referring to a ‘Turkish’ or ‘Muslim’ minority in Western Thrace with Greek officials using both terms interchangeably. Nevertheless, since the mid-1980s, any

reference to a 'Turkish' minority in Western Thrace has been refused by the Greek state: the Minority is 'Muslim', composed of three different subsets, i.e. those of Turkish origin, Pomaks and Roma.

Historically speaking, this research shows that in the past there were major ideological differences between and within members of the Minority especially in the first decades after 1923. The transfer of ethnic, cultural and religious reforms introduced in Turkey under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk resulted in the formation of a great schism within the Minority between the Modernists and Traditionalists. It began at the level of the elites but in a short period of time it transferred to the level of the locals of the Minority in Western Thrace.

Greece, as the host nation, seemed to support both groups and their followers. But looking from a deeper perspective this study emphasizes that Greece sided more with the Traditionalists who favoured the continuity of the Islam-centred Ottoman life for the Minority vis-a-vis the Modernists who were struggling for the reconstruction of a new Minority identity based on secular Islam promoted by Turkey. This clash between the two camps within the Minority faded in 1970s and gradually disappeared. In time, most members of the Minority started to affiliate themselves with the ethnic, religious and cultural values promoted by the neighbouring Turkey.

Parallel to this disappearance, Greece had already started to refer to an ethnic Pomak and Roma community particularly after the worsening of bilateral relations with Turkey on Cyprus in the mid 1950s. As is underlined in this study, Greek journalists started to write about the ethnic Pomak identity inside the Minority. They emphasized the necessity to separate Pomaks from ethnic Turks parallel to the official Greek statements mentioning the necessity for ethnic differentiation of the Minority in Western Thrace. This policy climaxed in 1991 when the highest representative of the Greek government, the Greek Prime Minister, declared that the Minority of Western Thrace is not Turkish but Muslim composed of three constitutive groups, i.e. people of Turkish origin (no usage of the term 'Turks'), Pomaks and Roma.

At this point, it is useful to note some of the primary reasons why this research refrains from referring to the Minority under study as a 'Muslim group composed of three distinct ethnic groups', as Greek officials repeatedly stipulated after 1991:

First, my fieldwork enabled me to confirm my interpretations from my pre-fieldwork experience in the region as a member of the Minority. That is, there used to be major ideological differences between and within the constituent groups of the Minority in the past, especially in the first decades after 1923 (see Featherstone et.al. 2011:52). But such differences were eradicated over the decades. In this context, especially the discriminatory Greek measures between 1967 and 1991 – which had been applied to Turks, Pomaks and Roma – made a major contribution to strengthening the unity of the Minority population and its affiliation with Turkish identity and Turkey. Eventually, as of today, the vast majority of the Minority members in Western Thrace do not define themselves only as ‘Muslims’; they reject being defined only as a religious minority. Rather, they signify that they are Turks, belong to the greater Turkish nation and define Turkey as their kin-state while underlining their Greek citizenship.

Second, similar to the evaluation of my informants as well as that of some Greek scholars (see Mavrommatis 2008:62), this study argues that splitting the minority into three different parts is a Greek policy of *divide ut empera* or *divide ut regnes*, which deliberately aims to break the cohesion and unity of the Minority. However, in spite of the insistence of the Greek state officials, since 1991, this policy of making the Minority members feel or believe that they belong to three different ethnic groups with a common religious denominator, Islam, has proven to be ineffective.

In contrast to the Roma, Greek state authorities tried hard from mid 1950s onwards to construct a separate Pomak identity for those Pomak-speaking Minority members living predominantly in the highlands of Western Thrace close to Bulgaria. As Kostopoulos (2009:255-258) shows in his excellent book, various efforts of the Greek state, such as encouraging Greek scholars to write books about the distinct Pomak culture or supporting the Greek Army’s efforts to prepare Pomak-Greek dictionaries, were not successful in creating a minority within the minority in Western Thrace. Also, he aptly underlines that the same officials refrained from showing similar sensitivity about the survival of Slavophone and Vlach-speakers in Northern Greece.

Reading the book of Kostopoulos, I similarly wish to argue that the Greek state has never been determined and sincere enough to support the basic principles of linguistic pluralism in Northern Greece, a region that has historically been inhabited by

a variety of ethnic and linguistic communities. The main aim of Greek officials in doing this was twofold. On the one hand, it was to assimilate the already existing linguistic groups whose mother tongue was different from Greek. On the other hand, it was to divide the Minority under study into three groups and construct a new minority within the Minority in Western Thrace.

The former policy was quite successful, as most of the linguistic groups such as Vlachs or Slavophones could not transfer their mother tongues to the younger generations. Identifying themselves with the religion promoted by the Greek state, i.e. the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ, also contributed to the disappearance of their linguistic differences from the majority population of Greece. But the latter policy was not successful; today, the vast majority of Pomak-speaking Minority members define themselves together with the ethnic Turkish identity and belonging to the Turkish nation.

To conclude this section, I want to underline that each time I refer to the Minority as a single category I do not ignore the fact that minorities are not homogenous groupings. Also, some members of the Minority may prefer not to be identified with either Turkish or Muslim identities while some others may completely reject the minorityhood that they are entitled to. During my stay in the field, I concluded that there is still a small number of the Minority members who identify themselves as 'Greeks', 'Muslims', 'Pomaks', 'Roma', or a combination of any of the these terms while rejecting being identified as 'Turks'.

As a result, while referring to the 'Muslim Turkish' minority throughout this project I want to underline that I take into account and respect several preferences of some Minority members who identify themselves in different ways to other members of the Minority. Nevertheless, as of today, such an ongoing internal differentiation does not create a distortion in the broader picture of the Minority, whose members predominantly identify themselves with Greek citizenship, ethnic Turkish identity and Islam promoted by Turkey. Thus, this study argues that the Greek insistence on the existence of a 'Muslim' minority in Western Thrace has not fully managed either to discourage or prevent 'the last Ottomans of the Balkans' from identifying themselves also as ethnic Turks since 1991.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The transformation from an advantaged Muslim ummah/community in the Ottoman Empire into a disadvantaged minority in the Greek periphery

In the beginning of the 20th century, the dissolution of long-lasting empires after the First World War and the emergence of new nation states had a great impact on the lives of different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups across the European continent. As a result of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, the newly-formed nation states in Europe in particular, started to promote their own nationalization projects. In pursuit of this cause, most of them tried to get rid of minority groups, members of whom differed from the majority society in terms of ethnicity, language, religion and culture. Eventually, a vast number of these people either left their historic lands or accepted being governed by regimes that were ‘alien’ to them.

In the case of south-eastern Europe, Greece and Turkey agreed to swap their Turkish and Greek populations using religion as the criterion, i.e Orthodox Turkish nationals swapped with Muslim Greek nationals, during the Lausanne Meetings between 1922 and 1923. Therefore, approximately 1.5 million Orthodox Greeks arrived in Greece, while half-a-million Turks¹ were resettled in different parts of Turkey. In addition to this, both countries also made an exchange of populations with Bulgaria in the early 1920s (Pallis 1925:8). As a result, these exchanges of populations contributed to the homogenization of both Greece and Turkey.

Indeed, the compulsory exchange between Greece and Turkey was seen by some to constitute an example for other European countries, which tried to cope with the problems of kin left on the other side of borders after the map of Europe was redrawn in the late 1910s. But on the other hand, the exchange process turned out to be a complete nightmare for those who had to leave their own lands and continue their lives on the other side of the Aegean Sea (see Ladas 1932; Hirschon 2003; Clark 2007). Their adaptation to their new lands was such a long and painful process that reflections of this past phenomenon are still obvious on both sides of the Aegean.

¹ Divani (1995:234) notes that among the Turkish exchangeees, there were also 2,993 Tsam Albanians, Albanian-speaking Muslims from the Epirus region, who were defined ‘appropriate’ to be exchanged and left to Turkey.

The only exemptions to the population exchange between Greece and Turkey were the Muslim Turks of Western Thrace and Orthodox Greeks living in Istanbul and on the islands of Imbroz (*Gökçeada*) and Tenedos (*Bozcaada*). Both countries reciprocally agreed on a group of their brethren, each numbering approximately 130,000 in 1923, to be exempted from the population exchange, to continue living in their historic homelands. And, they also agreed to sign an international document, the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty. Articles 37 to 45 (see Appendix I) provide protection of both minorities' rights under the guarantorship of the League of Nations (LoN). After its ratification, the Lausanne Treaty entered into force on 25th of August, 1923, after it was published at the Greek Official Gazette (FEK A' 238, 25.8.1923).

Through the Lausanne Treaty, both Turkish and Greek communities were actually given the right to continue living in their lands only if they agreed to accept their new 'minority' status. Some of them rejected it and preferred to leave the region. But the vast majority of both groups agreed either voluntarily to remain or had no other chance than continue living under a new 'minority' identity. Thus, the process of the minoritization² of Turks in Western Thrace and Greeks in Istanbul that started in 1923 constitutes the starting point of this project. Since then, Muslim Turks of Western Thrace have lived as citizens of Greece, whose rights have been (partly) protected under the Greek Constitution, and under various treaties and conventions that Greece signed and ratified.

Before the establishment of a minority regime in Western Thrace, the region was governed by the Ottomans, under which individuals were categorized by religion. In this context, Turks in Western Thrace belonged to the majority Muslim ummah/*ümmet* who had relatively more advantageous positions under the Empire compared to other non-Muslim groups. In this context, Turks of Western Thrace also enjoyed the benefits of belonging to the majority Muslim community under the Ottoman regime.

In demographic terms, Turks also constituted the majority of today's Western Thrace and Southern Bulgaria. According to the 1922 map prepared by the Western Thrace Committee in French and Ottoman, Turks constituted 84% of the aforementioned region, while Greeks made up only 10%. The rest of the population was

² I borrow this term from Jane Cowan (2001), who introduced it within the discipline of anthropology while elaborating the formation of a Macedonian minority in Greece, which I mention in the coming chapter.

composed of Bulgarians, Vlachs, Armenians, Jews and others. Besides, 86% of all movable and immovable properties belonged to Turks while the Greeks owned 6%. Also, 96% of the tobacco production and 86% of the remaining agricultural production belonged to the region's Turks (See Appendix II).

The map prepared in 1922 also helps us to have a clear idea of how demographic figures changed over the intervening decades. As Western Thrace became a Greek territory and accepted the large influx of Asia Minor refugees after 1923, the long-lasting domination of the Turkish Muslim community in Western Thrace was finally challenged. Thus, a new page was opened for Turks in Western Thrace signalling that the 'privileged' majority of the Ottoman period had turned into a 'disadvantaged' and 'disliked' minority in post-Lausanne Greece. In fact, this would be case for other historical, national and imperial minorities in Europe under the new League of Nations regime of the interwar period.

Before giving a synopsis about the core theme of this research project, Minority education in Western Thrace, let me first provide some basic characteristics of the region and the Minority under study so that the reader has a basic picture of Western Thrace and the Minority.

1.2 Mapping the field

Western Thrace, one of the ten regions of Greece, encompasses an area of 8,575 square kilometres in the northeastern margins of the Greek mainland. It is bordered by the Maritza River in the East and the Nestos River in the West, the Rodopi Mountains in the North and the Aegean Sea in the South. Both the Rodopi Mountain range and the Maritza River also constitute national borders with Bulgaria and Turkey respectively. It is a border region lying in the Greek periphery, approximately 700km away from Athens and 250 from Thessaloniki. The region is composed of three prefectures, Rodopi (*Rodop*), Xanthi (*İskeçe*) and Evros (*Meriç*) with their main cities Komotini, Xanthi, and Alexandroupolis respectively (See Appendix III for the map of Western Thrace).

Other than the three main cities and some towns, where Turks and Greeks live together, most of the villages are composed exclusively of Turks or Greeks. Therefore,

communication and interaction between the two communities sharing the same region is also geographically limited.

The vast majority of Turks live in the prefectures of Rodopi and Xanthi. In the Evros prefecture, they live mainly in mountainous villages close to the Bulgarian-Greek border and there are only a few Turks living in the towns and cities of the prefecture close to the Turkish-Greek border. This is because the Greek state accepted those lands as constituting a strategic buffer zone for the country against any eastward expansion of Turkey. Therefore, after 1923, most Minority members living in localities next to the Meritsa River – generally compulsorily but sometimes voluntarily – left their houses and migrated to Turkey. Therefore, with the passage of time, the section of the Evros prefecture bordering Turkey was freed from a majority presence of the Minority.

Besides Western Thrace, there are also some Turks living in Thessaloniki and Athens, most of whom migrated from Western Thrace in the 1970s and 1980s, mainly for economic reasons (see Tseloni 1984; Karatsani and Avramopoulou 2002; Antoniou 2005). Moreover, there are some Muslim Turks in the Dodecanese Islands, Rhodes and Kos, whose presence dates back to the Ottoman conquest of these two islands. As these islands, called as *Oniki Adalar* in Turkish, were annexed by Greece in 1947, Turks living in these islands became citizens of Greece. Nevertheless, unlike the Turks living in Western Thrace, the 1923 Lausanne Treaty does not guarantee their rights. Therefore, it has primarily been up to mercy of the Greek state whether to promote survival of Turkish and Islamic identities on these two islands or not³.

Regarding the demography of Western Thrace, it is worth noting that the exact size of the Minority population is still unknown, because the last official census that included criteria of religion and mother tongue was conducted in 1951. Since then, no official statistical data has been published about the demography of the Minority, which actually paved the way for the politicization of demographic figures by different parties; as Dimitras (1991:140) puts it, by excluding the mentioned-above criteria Greece actually could eliminate any possible reference to the existence of ethnic or national

³ Over the years after 1950, the Greek state applied various measures of discrimination against Turks in both islands. For example, the teaching of the Turkish language halted in the early 1970s, and Turkish children still do not have the right to learn their own mother tongue. As a result, a number of Turks gradually left both islands and migrated to Turkey. Thus, Turkish Muslim presence in the region eradicated over decades. In late 1940s, Turks were numbering around 12.000 but as of 2010 approximately 3000-4000 Turks remained on both islands (Tsitselikis 2009: 151).

minorities in Greece from neighbouring countries wishing to play the role of ‘motherlands’.

In this framework, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials habitually mention figures of around 100,000 while their counterparts at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs refer to 150,000 Turks living in Western Thrace. According to the latest official figures of 2011, the total population of the region is stated as 369,430 (EL.STAT 2011). And the highest local Greek administrative authority, Region Office of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, estimates that the population of the Minority is around 140,000-145,000 by 2011 (REMTH 2011). So, roughly speaking, Minority members constitute more than a third of the Western Thracian population.

Regarding the economic profile, a great number of Minority members are dependent on agriculture, particularly tobacco and cotton. Most of them own their farmlands, on which both women and men generally work together as families. But in recent years, tobacco prices have continued to decrease in parallel with EU policies for the gradual abolition of EU subsidies for tobacco cultivation in Greece. Thus, in the coming years it is foreseen that a number of Minority families will either stop cultivating tobacco and try alternative crop cultivations such as asparagus, or quit working in the Greek agricultural sector. However, both of these options seems quite difficult for a community the majority of whom are skilled primarily in tobacco growing.

Along with agriculture, some Minority members work as doctors, lawyers, architects and teachers, and there are also some small and medium-scale industries owned by Turks. These jobs are occupied primarily by Minority men due to the low educational level of Minority women. However, as the numbers of Minority girls continuing to secondary and higher education have been increasing since the 1990s, today a correspondingly increasing number of Muslim Turkish women are employed in the private sector across Western Thrace.

In terms of geographical location, Western Thrace lies at the margins of both the European continent and the Greek mainland. It constitutes the southeastern borders of the European Union with Turkey. It is also the northeastern region of the Greek mainland bordering with Bulgaria and Turkey. The region is closer to major cities like Istanbul and Sofia than Athens.

It is also on the main trade route of Turkish products exported to Europe. However, despite its geostrategic location and proximity to both neighbouring countries, Western Thrace is still among the least developed regions of Greece. Why? One of the main reasons was the existence of the Turkish minority, which discouraged Greece from investing in the region for a long time before 1991. Especially within the Europeanization and modernization process of Greece between 1975 and 1990, Greek investment in Western Thrace remained quite low given that the Minority could benefit from the economic progress of the region (Akadimia Athinon 1995:52-53). Moreover, due to its underdeveloped character, until recently Western Thrace had been perceived as one of the 'exile' places where most Greek public sector workers, like teachers, doctors or soldiers, would prefer not to serve.

Moreover, most of the Minority members were not allowed by local Greek authorities to make any kind of investment in the region between late 1960s and early 1990. That is, the vast majority of Turks were farmers earning a reasonable amount of money from tobacco and cotton production. Nevertheless, local Greek authorities forbade them to buy any movable or immovable properties either from their kin or from Greeks of the region. Thus, a great number of them felt the need to invest in various cities in Turkey. Although Greece tried after 1991 to change the economic fate of the region by promoting new investments funded by various EU development programs after 1991, underdevelopment and unemployment in the region persisted in the post-Cold War years. Especially with the recent economic crisis in Greece, it is anticipated that the worsening economic conditions will make everyday life difficult for both Turkish and Greek inhabitants of Western Thrace.

Consistent with being an agrarian community and living in an underdeveloped Greek periphery, the educational level of the Minority remains very low compared to the average level in Greece. As analysed throughout this study, most members of the Minority, including the younger generation of 2000s, are still not fluent in Greek. Also, their level of illiteracy and dropout rates from the ten-year compulsory education system remain very high, as a number of Minority students stop education after six years of primary education.

Having provided basic information about Western Thrace and the Muslim Turkish minority, the next section informs the reader about this project's starting point its main themes.

1.3 Reviewing the literature on the Minority and Minority education

Defining the research topic, I started to focus on various materials written in Turkish, Greek and English. The literature review that I had made for the master's thesis was clearly insufficient for a deeper analysis of Minority education in Western Thrace before and after 1991; but during my fieldwork I had the chance to visit archives, libraries and research centres in Greece, Turkey and the UK.

Regarding sources published in English, there are some books, articles and doctoral dissertations that focus exclusively on Western Thracian Minority issues. (De Jong 1980; Kamoza 1982; Aarbakke 2000; Demesticha 2004; Yağcıoğlu 2004; Chousein 2005; Abdurrahman 2005; Papanikolaou 2007). Most of other sources either elaborate issues of the Minority within the broader framework of minorities in Greece (Poulton 1993; Mavrogordatos 1983:226-271; Clogg 2002; Anonymous 2002a), or relations between Greece and Turkey (Bahceli 1990; Oran 1991; Niarchos 2005).

1.3.1 Greek Sources

In the Greek literature, pre-1991 academic studies on the Minority were very limited. Muslim Turkish minority issues were a taboo in Greek academia. Also, those scholars who wrote about Minority issues tried not to contradict the general line drawn by the official policy makers of the Greek state, because those issues were categorized as amongst the 'nationally-sensitive' issues of the Greek state. In this framework, they defined the Minority as Muslim, as Greek officials did when referring to the Minority in Western Thrace. According to these scholars, there was no discrimination in Western Thrace. Therefore, minority and majority inhabitants of the region were living in peace and harmony (see Andreadis 1956; Greek Information Services 1965). Although some of these sources were written in the 1980s, during which Greece's discriminatory measures against the Minority members peaked, hardly any major criticism was raised

against those Greek measures violating the rights of the Minority population (see Gonatas and Kidoniatis 1985).

1984 was the first time an article appeared in a leftist Greek journal taking a stand against the official Greek hard line and criticizing Greek policies that discriminated against the Minority in Western Thrace (Kalatzopoulos and Pitouropoulos 1984). From 1984 until the early 1990s, some Leftist writers and journalists continued occasionally to tease out various issues of the Minority, to criticize how Greece violated the rights of the Minority, and to blame it for failing to integrate the Minority into Greek society⁴.

Turkish minority issues ceased to be a ‘taboo’ for Greek scholars in the early 1990s. In fact, the situation reversed completely. That is, the proclamation of the official policy change in 1991 provided a completely new area to study, because almost no ethnographic or sociological research had been carried out in the region for the previous couple of decades. Thus, Greek researchers diverted their attention to Western Thrace and started producing more work on the Minority and the region. Nevertheless, the majority of those Greek scholars still found it preferable not to adopt a critical approach when they wrote about ‘nationally-sensitive’ topics, such as Greece’s minority policy in Western Thrace. They still needed to ‘be patient’ while dealing with the issues of the Minority.

Elaborating the growing Greek literature on the Minority after 1991, I discovered that there were a few studies dedicated to Minority education in Western Thrace (Panagiotidis 1996; Tsitselikis 1996; Kanakidou 1997; Vakalios et.al 1997; Tsitselikis and Baltiotis 2001; Kalantzis 2004; Askouni 2006; Tsioumis 2007a, 2007b; Dragona and Frangoudaki 2008; Mavrommatis 2008). All other Greek scholars dealt with the Minority’s educational matters either as a subset of Minority issues (Tsitselikis and Christopoulos 1997, Asimakopoulou and Christidou-Lionaraki 2001), or as part of Greek-Turkish relations (Alexandris 1991; Heraclides 2002; Rizas 2003).

Along with books, *Συγχρονά Θέματα* [Modern Issues] was the first academic journal which devoted a special issue to the Western Thracian Minority, in 1997. Since then, some articles about Minority education have continued to appear, albeit rarely, in

⁴ Some of these articles were translated into Turkish and reproduced by the Turcophone weekly newspaper (see Giahni 1988; Anonymous 1988; Tsagkaris 1988).

various Greek academic journals (see Matana, 2005; Notaras 2008). Of all the Greek newspapers reporting about issues of the Minority, *H Avγή* [The Dawn], prominent to be affiliated with the Greek left, became the first nationwide Greek daily newspaper to dedicate a special tribute of 16 pages on various matters of the Minority in which different themes of the Minority were elaborated (Anagnosis 2006).

Reading various Greek materials published after 1991, I concluded that the number of Greek studies adopting a critical approach to minority issues in Greece had started gradually to increase. In this context, a series of studies published under the Minority Groups Research Centre (KEMO)⁵ tried to problematize the concept of a minority and did not refrain from touching ‘nationally-sensitive’ issues, such as the rights of minorities and immigrants in post-Cold War Greece⁶. In this framework, in the 2000s, some younger Greek researchers writing on Minority issues took a similarly critical approach towards Greek policy on Western Thrace (Yagcioglu 2004; Iliadis 2004; Papanikolaou 2007).

I also belong to this class of critical researchers in Greece, who feel themselves not bound to the official policies of the Greek state. Additionally, despite belonging to the Turkish nation, I do not feel myself obliged to follow the official interpretation of the Turkish state either. Therefore, some arguments raised in the following chapters will certainly contradict the official policies of both Greece and Turkey, while some others will agree with them. I adopt a critical stance and sustain it throughout this study; but I am aware that the criteria defining whether or not a study is ‘critical’ are quite ambiguous and controversial.

Since minority-related issues, like education, are still perceived as ‘nationally-sensitive’ by Greek officials and politicians, the majority of Greek scholars and journalists writing about different minority issues in Greece still prefer to follow the official line of the Greek state (see Kottakis 2000; Panagiotidis 1995). Thus, while reading Greek books and articles about the Minority, I frequently felt myself puzzled by the contrast between the images of the Minority I belonged to and the images presented by the vast majority of Greek scholars and journalists.

⁵ For more information KEMO Online (2012) .

⁶ Some of the series of books published under KEMO are as follows: Tsitselikis and Christopoulos 1997; Baltiotis et.al. 2001; Christopoulos (2008); Tsibiridou (2009).

That is to say, Greek sources generally criticized the discriminatory Greek measures between 1975 and 1991, yet glorified Greek Minority policy after 1991. They also stressed the peaceful coexistence between the two communities, and portrayed the Minority as if it had fully realized its human and minority rights. However, such images of a Minority constructed through the studies of the majority of Greek scholars contrasted with mine, constructed during my stay in the field: major socio-economic gaps; limited interaction between the Turkish and Greek inhabitants of Western Thrace; a mutual lack of trust between the Greek state and the Minority; continuities of discriminatory Greek policies, particularly in the realm of group-based minority rights. Thus, the previously-mentioned ‘distorted’ and ‘half-true’ image in most Greek scholars’ studies of the Greek scholars became one of my primary motives in deciding to write my doctoral thesis about Minority education in Western Thrace.

1.3.2 Sources in Turkish

In contrast to the Greek sources, Minority issues were very popular in Turkish literature until the 1990s. A number of books and articles published in Turkey covered various issues of the Minority, emphasizing how Turks were suffering under the discriminatory Greek policies before the 1990s (Aydinli 1971; Ozguc 1974; Turkes 1971). Also, with the support of the 1980 Junta regime in Turkey, a film was even prepared presenting Greek atrocities against the Turks in Western Thrace⁷.

Nevertheless, the concern of Turkish academia gradually diminished. Contrary to their Greek counterparts, Turkish scholars have shown a limited interest in issues of the Turkish Minority since the beginning of the 1990s (Eren 1997; Demirbas 1996; Oksuz 2006). Some of them had Western Thracian family backgrounds, but they continued their academic careers at Turkish universities studying Minority issues (see Cin 2003, 2009; Kelaga 2005; Cavusoglu 2007).

Along with those in Turkey, some members of the Minority also published books in Turkish in the 2000s in Western Thrace (Dede 2003; Hursit 2006; Ali and Huseyinoglu 2009). But all of these books and articles in Turkish were still few in number when compared to the ones published in Greek.

⁷ I had the chance to watch the trailer of the film dating to 1983 . After watching it, it was obvious that this film was designed to exploit and increase Turkish citizens’ sensitivity about the plight of their co-ethnics in Western Thrace in the 1980s. The trailer is available at http://www.sinematurk.com/film_fragman/6370/Turkiyem&no=0 [last accessed on 1.9.2010]

Elaborating different written materials in all three languages, this section will move on to underscore some basic commonalities and divergences between Greek and Turkish sources on issues of the Minority across the Aegean Sea.

1.3.3 Similarities and differences between Turkish and Greek Sources

First of all, in both Turkish and Greek literature, matters of the Muslim Turkish minority are still eclipsed by the Cyprus Problem and the Aegean Sea, thus remaining in third place in studies about Greek-Turkish relations.

Secondly, one of the basic differences between Turkish and Greek studies on the Minority is related with their scope and aim. For example, the ones printed in Turkey generally highlight the ongoing violation of rights by the Greek state in the region, as well as major problems that the Turkish Minority still faces. But studies in the Greek language deal more with the developing character of the region after 1991, which emphasizes how the life of the Minority has gradually been getting better.

Thirdly, the way Turkish and Greek scholars elaborate Minority issues mostly goes hand in hand with Turkish and Greek state policies, respectively. In this context, it is common to see a Greek or Turkish scholar who avoids challenging the official policy of its state while explaining Western Thracian issues.

To illustrate, taking the example of identification, since the early 1990s, Greece has referred to a ‘Muslim’ minority in Western Thrace. Hence, Greek officials still do not welcome any reference to a Turkish minority in Western Thrace. Thus, from the 1990s onwards, the vast majority of Greek scholars studying Minority issues in Western Thrace have preferred to identify the Minority as ‘Muslim’. Similarly, since the early 1920s, Turkey has referred to a Turkish minority in Western Thrace. Therefore, almost all of the studies in the Turkish literature identify the Minority of Western Thrace as ‘Turkish’ rather than Muslim.

Lastly, writing about Minority issues in Western Thrace, the great majority of Turkish and Greek academics use sources published in their own language as well as those in English. Only a few Greek researchers use Turkish sources printed either in Turkey or Western Thrace (see Demesticha 2004; Malkidis 2005), while the ones printed in Turkey generally do not consider how issues of the Minority are perceived

and interpreted by their Greek colleagues on the other side of the Aegean. Therefore, it is anticipated that Turkish and Greek scholars' reciprocal lack of knowledge about how the 'other' side perceives issues of the Minority is likely to persist in the near future.

1.3.4 My contribution to the literature on Minority education in Western Thrace

After evaluating the similarities and differences in the literature about the Minority, I identified two major gaps that I believe I will partially fill with this study. Firstly, as I mentioned above, most of the Greek and Turkish scholars were not aware of each other's studies about the Minority. Compared to these scholars, being fluent in both languages enabled me to use both Turkish and Greek sources throughout this study, thus contributing to wider understanding of the growing discourse on the Western Thracian Minority in the recent decades.

Secondly, after reading both Greek and Turkish studies about my case study, I realized that a significant part of the literature was still missing, i.e. the Minority press. With a few exceptions (Aarbakke 2000; Bonos 2008), the vast majority of academic studies in all three languages made almost no reference to newspapers that have been printed by the Minority members since the early 1920s. In my opinion, newspapers were among the most useful sources for seeing how educational policies decided by governments in Athens and Ankara were actually perceived, interpreted and represented by the Turkish minority at the local level. Therefore, during the research in the field I made in-depth research on Turcophone newspapers printed in Komotini and Xanthi, to which I frequently refer in Chapters 4 to 7.

Thus, the stress that I put on the Minority's voice through Minority newspapers on the one hand, and interviews with my research informants on the other, form the two main bases for providing the 'view from within', which constitutes the major contribution of this project to the growing discourse of minority studies in the Balkans and Europe.

Taking into account this review of the literature, this chapter finishes with an explanation of my fieldwork experience in Western Thrace.

1.4 The starting point: Identifying the main research theme and the necessity of an interdisciplinary understanding

Before beginning my PhD in Sussex, I had already written a master's thesis about continuities and changes in the Minority policy of Greece in Western Thrace after 1991. During my research, I came across a variety of Turkish and Greek sources reflecting on different issues in Western Thrace. Ranging from religious freedom to denial of ethnic Turkish identity, I drew up a broad framework indicating changing and unchanging aspects of the Minority issues in Western Thrace before and after 1991. In my PhD, I have tried to develop this study, by choosing one of the issues of the Minority. I wanted to go deeper, analyse and write my DPhil dissertation on a single topic.

After consideration, I decided to write about Minority education in Western Thrace. As my starting point, I chose to analyse the close link between education and (dis)advantage. But some basic questions also came up:

What were the main reasons for a minority group to be in a disadvantaged or underprivileged position within the society?

To what extent were these reasons interrelated?

And what were the consequences of being disadvantaged for the minority communities?

Confronting myself with possible answers to such questions, I remembered the principal arguments of my parents, which were frequently repeated whenever Minority-related issues were discussed either inside our house or at family gatherings:

“Whatever we suffered from Greek administrations was due to our illiteracy”

“If we were more literate, Greece would not feel so free to violate our rights”.

Such arguments indicated possible links between disadvantage, education, discrimination, nationalism and violation of rights, all of which had implications for the survival of the Minority.

However, were they peculiar to my case study or applicable to other imperial and national minorities in Europe? As I moved from the local to the regional level, I confirmed that (with some exceptions) the existence of a direct correlation between

education and rights of minorities was a Europe-wide phenomenon. That is, where the educational levels of minorities were high, there was less discrimination against members of those minorities, since the latter had the linguistic skills, educational background and self-confidence to fight against violations of their rights by the host countries.

Seeing the strong link between the education and the rights of minorities, I decided to study matters of education in Western Thrace within the broader discourse of minority rights. While doing so, this study seeks to show that minorities' rights are not only 'given' by host states but also 'claimed' by members of minorities after various struggles at the local, national and international level. The former refers to those rights provided by the Greek state from the very beginning, such as access to bilingual Minority primary schools after 1923. The latter refers to those rights won through the Minority's collective struggles against the Greek state at national and international/intergovernmental platforms (see Papanikolaou 2007). As Stammers (1995:508) puts it, given that human rights is a socially constructed concept then it needs to be studied within its own context. The redistribution of modern Turkish textbooks in the early 2000s, after half-a-century of Minority struggle with the Greek state authorities, which I analyse in Chapter 7, is a good example showing the reader how rights can be demanded by minorities.

Elaborating the both given and claimed educational rights of the Muslim Turkish minority, this study emphasizes that external agents are also involved in the struggle between the Minority and the Greek state over the former's education. From time to time, these agents – such as Turkey, the European Union (EU) or the Council of Europe (CoE) – played different roles in different situations relating to the Minority's educational autonomy. They either pushed the Greek decision makers to stick to those bilateral and international treaties that Greece signed and ratified, or they played the role of international platforms where Minority representatives raised their concerns and criticisms against the discriminatory measures of the Greek state. In both cases, their impact on the survival of Minority's educational rights was immense. The roles and actions of the external actors will be clearer in the coming chapters where I deal with the local, international-interstate and transnational actors affecting levels of Minority education in Western Thrace. But suffice it to say here that, similar to the political scientist David Laitin's (1998:11) argument, changes in 1991 were actually products of

various processes between a range of human agents, such as politicians, elites, or minority rights activists, who played various roles in the formulation and reformulation of minority rights policies at local, national and international levels.

Before finishing this section, I want to underline that this project is an interdisciplinary study combining basic concepts of international relations (IR) with those of anthropology regarding the educational rights of minorities. It also includes history as various materials from Greek, Turkish and English archival sources are used while explaining the initial decades for the emergence of bilingual education in Western Thrace after 1923. The interdisciplinary understanding that I apply throughout this project plays a vital role in linking the local developments in Minority educational issues with those occurring at the international level and vice versa.

Thus, I studied the education of a minority group at the local level, in which external agents such as Turkey or the EU also operated. It became apparent that I needed a combination of social sciences that would help me show the intertwined relationship between local, national and international actors in the context of Minority education in Western Thrace. Given that I had an IR academic background, I and my supervisors agreed that it would be useful if I carried out my case study using an interdisciplinary framework combining IR with Anthropology. But how? How useful was to combine both IR and Anthropology to explain my case study?.

While thinking on my research, I concluded that the Anthropological approach enabled me to identify the Minority's views on education and its struggle for the improvement of it at the local level while the IR provided me to consider the distinction between the insider and outsider agents in the context of Western Thrace. Rather than acting isolated one from the other, I concluded that both disciplines jelled in a coherent way since there was a mutually-constitutive relationship between the local and international agents.

For instance, the increasing attention of the international community on issues of Western Thrace did not develop unilaterally; it came in 1980s as representatives of the grassroots and diaspora organisations of the Muslim Turkish minority started to pay more frequent visits to Western Thrace. The inclusion of these outsider actors also affected relations between the Minority and the Greek state at the local level. That is to say, until early 1990s the Greek state promoted the regulations violating rights of the

Minority. But it couldn't ignore the growing international criticism raised in the 1980s and eventually declare a new minority policy in 1991. This example was only one of those indications how coherently both disciplines jelled in the context of the Minority under study.

Along with the disciplines of the IR and Anthropology, I also include History to the interdisciplinary structure of this research. For the purpose of constructing the narrative of my research and developing it in a historical way, I used archival material that I found in Athens, Ankara and London as well as Turcophone newspapers of the Minority dating to the Cold War years. I reflect more on the interdisciplinary structure of this project in Chapter 3.

Having made clear the starting point of this project and the close link between education and minority rights, next, I provide an overview about the formation and development of minority education in Western Thrace, where I also include a section about the intertwined relationship between minorities' struggles for rights and education.

1.5 A synopsis of Minority education in Western Thrace

Before being incorporated into Greece in 1923, there were neighbourhood schools, *Mahalle Mektepleri*, across Western Thrace, particularly at localities inhabited by Muslims. At these schools, the students were taught basic courses in Arabic, arithmetic, Islam and religious practices. Therefore, they mainly functioned as the first step for those students who would continue their education (Cihan 2007:12). The next step was either *Rüşdiye* and *İdadiye*, an equivalent to today's last three years of primary school and high school; or religious school, *medreses*, where students were prepared primarily to work as imams at the mosques of Western Thrace (*Akin* 16.2.1984, 25.2.1984).

In short, it appears that the Ottoman schooling system provided basic religious education for the Muslim Turkish students of Western Thrace. Indeed, the existence of these school buildings and other basic educational infrastructure actually helped the Greek state to introduce bilingual primary education across the region after 1923. Along with the existing ones, new schools were opened by the Greek state in Western Thrace

and the system of education gradually changed from a religious one to a more secular one after 1923.

However, Greece did not cope so effectively with the fundamental problems of the Minority, including those in the realm of Minority education. As reflected later in this study, Greece founded itself in a period of turmoil between the mid-1920s and the late 1940s: The military regime of Metaxas (1936-1939), the Second World War (1939-1943) and the Civil War (1946-1949) deeply affected proper functioning of the Greek state apparatuses across the country.

In this context, Greece had almost no extra energy to spend on the development of Minority education in Western Thrace. By the time some rules and regulations on Minority education were introduced, it was already the 1950s. But these never managed to solve any fundamental problems in Minority education, simply because the main idea behind them was to increase Greek control over various demands of Minority education, both inside and outside of Minority schools. The emergence of this major Greek impact on the Minority's educational affairs, and its gradual development over the years, becomes evident in Chapter 5.

As a result, Minority primary and religious schools between the 1950s and the end of the Junta regime in 1974 continued to operate with a mixed and complex curriculum where the quality of both Turkish and Greek education remained quite low. Also, the dropout rates of Minority students from primary education were quite high. In addition, the Greek language was not properly taught in all bilingual Minority schools. Thus, this study contends that the Greek state did not show strong determination to cope with the fundamental problems of Minority education between the 1950s and 1970s.

As is clarified in Chapter 6, the Greek unwillingness to deal effectively with matters of Minority education turned into a policy of ignorance and indifference between 1974 and 1989. Although democracy returned to Greece in 1974 after eight years of the military regime of 1967 and Greece an EC/EU member in 1981, it took more than a decade for respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law to include the Minority in the early 1990s. In this period, Greece opted for numerous discriminatory measures and policies of administrative harassment that sought to disempower and make everyday life unbearable for the Minority members, which would eventually encourage them move out of Western Thrace. In this way, the policy

aimed to reduce the Turkish Muslim presence in Western Thrace, thus contributing to the demographic Hellenization of the region.

In this framework, education turned out to be one of the key instruments of the Karamanlis and Papandreou governments between 1974 and 1989. A number of laws passed in this period met with a strong reaction from Minority members, on the basis that they violated the educational autonomy of the Minority, as well as their rights emanating from the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, the 1951 Cultural Protocol and the 1968 Cultural Agreement signed between Greece and Turkey.

The policy of absolute Greek control over various Minority issues in the 1970s and 1980s started to change in the early 1990s. Due to increasing local criticisms from members of the Turkish Minority, as well as those coming from the international community throughout the 1980s, Greece had no choice but adopt a new Minority policy in Western Thrace. Finally, having accepted that the pre-1990 Greek governments' Minority policies had been discriminatory, the Greek Prime Minister introduced the new minority policy of Western Thrace in May 1991 (*Paratiritis tis Thrakis*, 15.5.1991).

The new policy did not directly tackle the fundamental problems of Minority education. Nevertheless, as the conditions of everyday life started to improve in Western Thrace, for both Turkish and Greek communities of the region, Greek governments started to show great awareness of various Minority education issues for the first time since 1923. In this perspective, some regulations introduced by Greek governments not only contributed to increasing the overall level of education among Minority students, but also encouraged Minority families to focus more on the education of their own children.

From a broader perspective, the Greek state's aforementioned increasing restriction of the Minority's educational freedom after the 1950s resulted in a transformation of the character of Minority education from a 'private' system into a 'sui generis' one. As a result, Minority education in today's Western Thrace, which is supposed to be private, is neither private nor public; it is actually a combination of both, but the Minority's power and impact on most educational matters remains very limited. Rather, it is still the Greek state that primarily covers Minority schools' expenditures and has the major power and authority over Minority education in Western Thrace,

which actually contradicts the principle of freedom of education enshrined in Articles 40 and 41 of the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty.

From the mid-1990s onwards, Greece introduced a few regulations and EU-funded programs, e.g. the 0.5% special quota system and the Program for Education of Muslim Children, which were intended to improve Minority education in Western Thrace without fixing fundamental problems in the Minority education system. Some of these initiatives were highly welcomed and accepted by the Minority, while others got almost no support. As of the present day, the pace of development in the Minority's education is slow, while a number of fundamental problems in Minority education still remain unsolved. I reflect more on these problems and their reflections on the Minority's everyday life in Chapter 7.

Providing a brief summary about the development of Minority education, next, I question the connections (if any) between the education and the rights of minorities in the context of Western Thrace.

1.5.1 Education: A means to struggle against rights violations in Western Thrace?

A study of the history of the Minority under the Greek administration after 1923 shows that Muslim Turks generally interpreted education as one of the key instruments defining their socio-economic and political well-being inside Greek society: the more the level of education and the greater the fluency in Greek, the higher the probability of having better living standards. For the same purpose, the Turcophone Minority press, frequently encouraged Minority parents to educate their children. I came across multiple such references to the necessity of Minority students' education while analysing Minority newspapers and journals during my field research.

Along with the Minority press, it was the elites of the Minority who had a significant impact on the development of Minority education in Western Thrace, especially by influencing the interpretation of education by parents of the Minority for their own children in Western Thrace. Given that I make frequent references to the role of Minority elites in Western Thrace throughout this thesis, allow me to provide some information about the basic characteristics of this group of people.

First, since 1923 Minority elites always constituted a small portion of the Minority, roughly between the 10% and 15% of the total Minority population in Western Thrace. Second, this group was not fixed but rather a circumstantial formation in a way that most of its members keep changing in the passage of time. Therefore, apart from a handful of famous Minority families, e.g. Galip, Hatipoglu, it was rare to see that the elite status was inherent, passing from the grandfather or father to son.

Third, the level of education was one of the main indicators for the elites. Looking closer at their profiles, they were mainly journalists, MPs, heads of the Minority associations, clergymen (*din görevlileri/din adamları*), and teachers whose overall level of education and knowledge of the titular language, Greek, was higher than the average level of the Minority members. In particular, it was a frequent phenomenon to find a Minority MPs also printing a Turcophone newspaper in Western Thrace in which he had the opportunity to disseminate his own ideas as well as those of his political party.

Fourth, there were major controversies within the group of Minority elites. During the interwar era, most of them were divided according to their ideological values, i.e. Modernists and Traditionalists, as well as by their strong affiliations with the host and homeland nations and nationalisms, i.e. Greece and Turkey. Nevertheless, such schisms within the group of the Minority elite gradually disappeared throughout the Cold War years in favour of the Modernists. In spite of contradictory ideas within this group of elites, most of its members today, seem to take positions closer to the official lines of Turkey than the ones promoted by the Greek state when they interpret different matters of Minority issues, including education, in Western Thrace.

However, in practice, most Minority parents never put great emphasis on their children's education between the 1920s and 1970s. Being predominantly an agrarian community, most of them preferred their children to stop education after finishing primary school and help them either on the farm or with their livestock. Consequently, only a small minority of Muslim Turkish students had the opportunity of a secondary or higher education in Greece or Turkey.

Impressions about the Greek authorities' growing influence over matters of Minority education after the 1950s resulted in major counterarguments from Minority elites who had the primary control over matters of Minority education since 1923. Thus,

more criticisms were raised against Athens particularly from the Modernist faction of the Minority; Greek state was blamed for some of its policies to become absolute power on matters of Minority education, control every phase of it, and keep Minority students relatively illiterate with a low-level fluency in both Turkish and Greek.

Nevertheless, parallel with the deterioration of everyday life for the Turkish minority between 1974 and 1991, the Minority's sensitivity towards education seems to increase. In this process, prominent local Minority figures of the 1970s and 1980s were a significant inspiration to Minority parents; almost all of those fighting for Minority rights at the local, national and international level were high school or university graduates primarily from Turkey.

In the post-1974 atmosphere, Minority families emphasized the correlation of education with better living standards and an end to human and minority rights violations of the Greek state apparatuses in Western Thrace. Thus, they put greater emphasis on education of their children more than ever after 1920s. In this manner, they encouraged their children to finish secondary and tertiary education, and start their own professions either in Greece or in Turkey. This was one of the main ways that they could 'save the future of their children' and fight against Greek discriminatory policies that aimed to keep Minority members illiterate, discriminated, disadvantaged and ghettoized.

As conditions improved for the Minority after 1991, so the Minority's trust in some policies of the Greek state in Western Thrace gradually increased. The end of basic human rights violations in the region enabled Minority members to start seeing their future and that of their children more on their historic land than anywhere else. In this framework, their emphasis on the education of their own children also improved. They started to spend more money on the educational needs of their children, for example sending them to language schools or providing special courses at home.

During my stay in the field, I concluded that education remained the first priority of Minority families and elites when they reflect upon continuities and changes in post-1991 Western Thrace. Given that violations of individual rights with collective aspects persisted, in contrast to the ending of basic human rights violations, Muslim Turks continued to promote Minority education as an effective weapon in the fight against ongoing rights violations by the Greek state apparatuses in the region.

In this section, I gave a brief overview of how the correlation between education and human rights developed in the context of Western Thrace from the early 1920s until 2010. Next, I finish this chapter by outlining the structure of the thesis, explaining how various Minority education issues will be elaborated in the coming chapters.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis seeks to explore the development of the Minority education under the Greek administration of Western Thrace, from the incorporation of the region into Greek territories in 1923 until 2010. It is composed of eight chapters.

Chapter 1 begins with a brief introduction to the formation of the Minority regime in Western Thrace after 1923, when the region was given to Greece under the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. Then it gives basic information about general characteristics of the region and the Turkish Muslim minority in Western Thrace. After that, it provides a synopsis of Minority education in Western Thrace from 1920s until 2000s. Lastly, it draws the structure of the project explaining how the case study will be elaborated in the coming chapters.

Before dwelling on issues of Minority education in Western Thrace, Chapter 2 first analyses basic conceptual and theoretical debates about minorities and their rights in the European context. It particularly deals with various discussions about the educational rights of minorities with an emphasis on primary education, because primary schools are generally the first institution where basic concepts like identity, ethnicity, religion, national consciousness and nationalism are taught to the younger generations.

However, where these schools are attended exclusively by students belonging to a minority or minorities, as in this study, then teaching of these concepts can result in controversies between the families and the state. Therefore, there is a theoretical discussion of the intertwined relationship between the aforementioned concepts, which lays the foundations necessary to elaborate further reflections on the growing Greek involvement in Minority education in Western Thrace after the 1950s.

Finally, this chapter gives a brief summary of the existence of minorities in the context of Greece. Minorities are not fixed but socially constructed and/or deconstructed

groupings of people, so elaborating different minority regimes in Greece sheds light on Greece's broader minority policy after 1923. By illustrating the Greek state's application of different policies towards various minorities, this chapter contributes to understanding how relations between the Western Thracian Minority and Greek decision makers were negotiated and renegotiated over time.

Chapter 3 is about the methodology of this project. It begins by explaining the starting point of this academic project and the reasons why I chose to study the Minority's educational regime, which has been developing since 1923. Then, it considers my research experience in the field as an insider who is widely supposed to have better access to information and informants. But talking to members of the community that you come from, the insider researchers, including myself, generally face a number of problems and dilemmas. As I reflect in this chapter, there are both advantages and disadvantages of doing research at home. Still, my experience in the field, which I explore in this chapter, helped me to see how continuities and changes in the realm of Minority education before and after 1991 were perceived and reflected by the Minority members at the local and international level.

The first three chapters provide the fundamental theoretical and methodological basis of this project. Therefore, in Chapter 4, I start making a deeper analysis of the main theme of this project, Minority education in Western Thrace. This chapter focuses on various issues in Muslim Turkish students' primary education between the 1920s and 1940s. This was a period during which the Greek state had to deal with a number of major internal problems and military interventions, the Italian and Nazi invasions, and finally the great schism during the Greek Civil War that ended in 1949. Therefore, Greece could not devote much energy to coping with the Minority's problems. Thus, it indicates that Greek state apparatuses, both local and national, had almost no impact on the development of Minority education issues until the early 1950s. Doing so, Greece actually promoted the educational autonomy enshrined in the Lausanne Treaty.

Contrasting with the Greek silence on Minority education before the 1950s, Chapter 5 examines the revival of Greek control over Minority education in Western Thrace. As order was restored in Greece after 1949, Greece started to increase state power over Turkish Minority issues.

The desire of the Greek state to regulate Minority education in Western Thrace met with a strong reaction from the Minority, who had primary control over its administration. However, with the introduction of new laws and regulations, Greek authorities started to have a greater say in Minority education issues that were supposed to be ‘private’ according to the 1923 Lausanne Treaty.

Therefore, the period after the 1950s also shows the growth of Greek nationalism and the promotion of Greek national consciousness at Minority primary schools. In this context, the chapter seeks to analyse the basic reasons for and consequences of the gradually-increasing power of the Greek state over various issues of Minority education in Western Thrace between the early 1950s and the end of the military regime in 1974. It also seeks to understand the reaction of the Minority’s elite and parental community to the increasing Greek say on issues of Minority education.

1974 is a significant point, representing the beginning of a seventeen-year-long period in which Greek violations of the Turkish minority’s human and minority rights peaked. Conditions for Minority survival in the region were even worse than those under the Junta Regime (1967-1974). From 1974 until 1991, Turks of Western Thrace were deprived even of basic human and citizenship rights, like the ability to get a driver’s license or repair their houses. In the realm of education, a number of laws were introduced that reinforced the increasing state intervention in Minority education, which caused instances of disagreement and friction between the Greek state and Minority members.

In this context, Chapter 6 analyses manifestations of the growing Greek hegemony over Minority education between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s. It also focuses on the increasing reaction from the Minority not only at the local but also, for the first time, at the European and international level. Within the broader internationalization of Western Thracian issues as a result of Minority lobbying throughout the 1980s, this chapter adopts also a top-down approach and draws attention to the involvement of regional and transnational actors, like the EU and international human rights organizations, in various issues of Minority education in Western Thrace.

1991 marks a watershed in the Greek minority policy of Western Thrace: Greece started to restore rights to the Minority that had been violated for decades. After 1991, all of the human rights violations gradually came to an end – though there are still major

problems with group-based minority rights, such as (denial of) ethnic identity, freedom of religion and education. Therefore, taking previous chapters into account, Chapter 7 studies diverse issues of Minority education between 1991 and 2010.

This study finishes with Chapter 8, in which various conclusions determined during the project are brought together and evaluated. Taking the whole picture of Minority education into account, some predictions are also made about the future.

Taking 1991 as a turning point in the minority policy of the Greek state in Western Thrace, this research has two main aims: Firstly, it questions to what extent the regime of Minority education in Western Thrace was affected by the Greek state's change in policy on Turkish Muslim minority issues after 1991. And secondly, it examines the role of internal and external agents in the development of the Minority's educational regime before and after 1991.

Studying continuities and changes in Minority education in Western Thrace before and after 1991, this study argues that although a number of human rights violations ended after 1991, fundamental problems in the realm of Minority education persisted. In fact, Greece introduced some positive policies, programs and affirmative actions in the 1990s and 2000s. They were partly effective fighting against the high dropout rates from the ten-year compulsory education, encouraging Minority students finishing secondary education and enabling the Minority students having an easier access to Greek universities. Nevertheless, they could not remedy fundamental problems that Minority students still face especially at both nursery and primary levels of education, both of which constitute the 'backbone' of Minority education in Western Thrace.

As of 2011, although the overall level of Minority education continues to improve, a number of fundamental problems regarding Minority's educational issues still await solution by Greek authorities. Unfortunately, those authorities still haven't shown strong, collective determination to solve the remaining problems in Minority education. They neither pretend to collaborate nor talk with Minority members over matters of Minority education, nor prefer any kind of inclusion of external third parties like Turkey. Thus, this study foresees that the fundamental problems in Minority education are likely to persist, which will also contribute to complicating minority-state-homeland relations in the southeastern periphery of Europe.

CHAPTER 2: Theoretical and Historical Consideration of Minorities in Europe

2.1 Introduction

Looking from an IR perspective, the international protection of minority rights might give the general impression that standards introduced by the international community are universal in character and cover all minorities' rights. Nevertheless, this is not the case in reality, since 'minority' is still an ambiguous and contested concept interpreted in different ways, by different actors, in different contexts.

Contrary to the dominant primordial approach adopted by some state officials and members of minorities, this study does not treat minorities as eternal, given or fixed entities. By following a Social Constructionist interpretation of minorities, it rather deals with 'a minority' as a relational, multidimensional and circumstantial categorization of citizens, who are products of dynamic interplays not only between internal and external actors but also within them.

Given that minorities are socially constructed, they have a beginning and an end. In fact, the history of minorities in Europe is full of stories concerning the appearance and disappearance of minorities depending on changes at all local, national and international levels.

Adopting the Social Constructionist interpretation of minorities, this chapter aims to discuss the main conceptual and theoretical issues about minority rights in Europe⁸. It is composed of two main parts: The first part looks at what particular forms of theorization of ethnic and national minorities are more useful for explaining my case study. It goes on elaborating different debates about minorities and their rights in the context of Greece.

The second part deals with the evolution and historical development of the minority rights issues across Europe over the past centuries. Particularly, it emphasizes

⁸ Territorially-speaking, I do not refer to the area within the official boundaries of today's EU, but to the wider European region that comprises some non-EU member countries in the Balkans. For a historical understanding of minorities in Europe see Panayi (1999) and Alcock (2002).

minorities' educational rights, and questions how various state and non-state actors have contributed to the promotion of minority education since the establishment of the League system of minority protection at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. In this wider context, it brings together the historical development of Minority education in Western Thrace and questions the applicability of the sociologist Rogers Brubaker's triadic nexus theory to fundamental issues of Minority education in Western Thrace after 1923.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, there are two main aims of this research: to question continuities and changes in Muslim Turkish minority education and to analyse the role that local, national and international actors played in this process before and after 1991. As the title of this chapter indicates, these two aims are studied bringing together the theoretical and historical sections of this chapter.

That is, the first section of this chapter provides a theoretical basis on which to study the historical development of Minority education. It outlines the role of education in minorities' assimilation into or integration with the majority. In this context, it elaborates how the Greek state used education as a political tool, while pretending to be concerned about the minorities' rights. In particular, it refers to Greek policies that used Minority education either to isolate it from the Greek majority or to contribute to its gradual disempowerment within the Greek society from the 1920s until 1991. Given that the increasing Greek power over the Minority's educational issues could achieve neither the assimilation of the Minority nor the removal of it from Western Thrace, then, this section goes on to say how Greece started to use education for various policies targeting the gradual integration of the Minority after 1991. Some theoretical discussions about the close link between the assimilation-integration dilemma and minority education will provide the necessary theoretical framework to analyse how and why, after 1991, Greece changed its policy on the education of Minority students in Western Thrace.

Taking these discussions into account, the second part of this chapter is based on the dynamic interplay between internal and external actors, who altogether had a great impact on regimes of minority education across Europe. By analysing Brubaker's Triadic Nexus Theory developed in 1996, this chapter also seeks to question its applicability in the context of Western Thrace before and after 1991. It contends that Brubaker's theory is very powerful at explaining the trilateral relations between and

within the three main actors of the nexus, i.e. the national minority, the nationalizing state and the external national homeland. However, it misses a fourth actor, which is the international community that has directly or indirectly been involved in various matters of Minority education in Western Thrace since 1923. Thus, by adding a fourth actor in the context of Western Thrace, this research also seeks to contribute to academic studies arguing for the necessity to transform the Triadic Nexus Theory into a quadratic one.

2.2 Defining the concept of minority

In the discipline of IR, the emergence of minorities is generally traced back to the beginning of the 17th century. Ryan (1995:200) gives the example of the Treaty of Vienna (1606), which included conditions for the treatment of the Protestant community in Hungary. Sovereign states formed under the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia were largely feudal entities. In this period, it is not possible to talk about existence of nation states or national minorities given that the principles of nationalism emerged and flourished in the 19th century particularly with the breaking up of the empires across Europe.

Thus, until the French revolution of 1789, the concept of minority was mainly used referring to the religious groups, because religion was the most important criterion to differentiate between members belonging to different communities in a given sovereign state in Europe. Thus, where a territory was ceded by a sovereign, either state or prince, some guarantees were provided for those groups following a religion different from the prevailing one of the new ruling power.⁹

In the 19th century, as the notions of nation state and nationalism developed in Europe, other criteria such as race, language and nationality started to be used for defining minorities and their rights. Nevertheless, the lack of a universal definition of a minority would persist throughout the 20th century. The League of Nations (LoN) provided various rights to subject nationalities under the League system of minority protection. Although the concept of a minority found a suitable basis to flourish under the auspices of the League of Nations, it could provide no definition for the term 'minority'. There might be several reasons for this failure. However, the most fundamental one was that the League mechanisms were not concerned with all

⁹ J.F.Douparc (cited in Rosting 1923:643, footnote.6), a member of the then League Secretariat, noted that from the Treaty of Oliva (1660) until 1815, seven treaties had been signed that provided such rights for groups living on ceded territories. See also Preece (1998:56-57); Macartney (1934:158).

minorities residing in League countries. Rather, they dealt with specific minorities, living generally in smaller and weaker League members (Preece 1998:17).

As the minority protection system of the League was seen to be discredited after 1945, minority rights started to be treated under the domain of universal human rights promoted by the United Nations regime. Thus, the lack of a universal definition for the concept of ‘minority’ continued during the Cold War years. For example, Article 27 of the 1966 UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) referred to the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities; but it did not provide any definition of what a ‘minority’ was (ICCPR 1966).

In the post-Cold War era, interstate, international and transnational organizations started to emphasize rights of national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities more than they ever had since 1648. Meanwhile, in addition to the UN’s attempts, the Council of Europe also tried to define the concept of minority under Recommendation 1134, adopted by its Parliamentary Assembly in 1990 and under its Venice Commission in 1991 (Henrard 2000:27; Preece 1998:22). Similar to such institutional attempts, some experts and scholars also provided individual definitions for the concept of a minority.¹⁰

Nevertheless, despite all of the above-mentioned attempts, there is still no universally-accepted definition of the term ‘minority’. Rather than insisting on providing a universal definition, the main tendency of interstate and transnational organizations in Europe since the end of the Cold War has been not only to protect and promote the rights of minorities at the national and international level, but also to encourage their member countries to protect their own minority citizens’ rights.

In spite of the lack of a universal definition, it should be underlined that, today, the widely-accepted and frequently-cited definition of the term “minority” is drawn from F. Capotorti, who served as a member of the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination, a place where debates over the identification of minorities took place frequently during the Cold War years (Henrard 2000:20).

According to his definition (from 1977), a minority is as follows:

“a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the State – possess ethnic, religious or linguistic

¹⁰ For example, Max Van Der Stoel, the first OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, provided his own ‘working’ definition in the mid-1990s (see Max van der Stoel’s Lecture 2002). Furthermore, some academics like I. Claude (1955), J. Laponce (1960), C. Macartney (1968), T. Modeen (1969) and P. Thornberry (1991) also provided definitions of the concept of a minority. See Preece (1998: 23-27).

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 language”¹¹.

On elaborating the main points of Capotorti’s definition, which combines objective criteria such as numerical size and citizenship with subjective criteria like the intention to protect their distinct characteristics, it is useful to underline that there are some exceptions contradicting Capotorti’s criteria.

First of all, minorities are generally numerically smaller in relation to the overall population of a given country. But the numerical size of minorities can also differ. Some minority communities are larger in number, like the Turks in Bulgaria numbering around 1.7 million, while some others are smaller, like the Turks in Western Thrace with an estimated population of 150,000.

Along with the size of minorities, citizenship is also used as a significant indicator when identifying people belonging to minorities. For instance, stateless peoples generally cannot enjoy either citizenship or minority rights (if any) provided by the law. In fact, they have some basic rights emanating from their stateless status; but these are even less than minimum citizenship rights.

During the fieldwork, I was told that there were still some members of the Turkish Minority living as stateless persons. These people were previously stripped of their Greek citizenship under Article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Law (in force between 1927 and 1998) but they continued living in Western Thrace with special ID cards provided only to stateless people living in Greece (see Kostopoulos 2003:64). After 2000s, Greece started to restore citizenship to some stateless Minority members. In 2006, the Greek Ministry of Interior announced that 60 stateless members of the Minority had the right to get their citizenship back (*Xronos*, 30.12.2006). As of 2011, it is officially estimated that there is a small number of stateless Minority members residing in Western Thrace (Response of the Greek Delegation 2011).

Secondly, minorities generally indicate a sense of solidarity and intention to preserve the characteristics that distinguish them from the majority community. Many show a strong determination to transfer their values to younger generations for the continuity of their survival. However, it is also important to underline that some members of minorities struggle against the cultural practices and traditions of their own

¹¹ F Capotorti quoted in Thornberry (1989:87).

communities, while some others chose to leave their communities or assimilate voluntarily within the majority culture.

Thirdly, members of minorities generally have disadvantaged, underprivileged and non-dominant statuses inside majority societies. Their status might change depending on variables like ethnicity, religion, race, education, language or class, thus limiting their interaction with the majority community. Depending on context in which minorities survive, this may also contribute to the isolation and ghettoization of minorities in the long run.

However, it isn't always the case that majorities have a dominant status over minorities. There are some exceptions where minorities either dominate or have better living standards than majorities. South Africa is a good example where the white minority had a dominant position compared to the black majority, although the Apartheid regime officially ended in 1994.

Similarly, there are some small Jewish communities in Europe whose members have higher positions than some majority members of the given country. Nevertheless, characterizing urbanized and professionalized European Jews as 'dominant minorities' is merely oversimplification.¹²

To conclude the elaboration of the concept of a minority, it is useful to note that people belonging to minorities can either identify themselves or be categorized by different local, national and international actors, through multiple variables such as ethnicity, religion, nationality, and/or language. As Jenkins (2008:6) correctly puts it, a person can be as A in one context but B in another. Given that there is still no universal definition for the term 'minority', defining and/or categorizing minorities in particular contexts can be a complicated matter, with disagreements between the identifier and the identified, as it has been for the minority under study. This study underlines that the fundamental reason behind this ambiguity in the definitions of minorities and their rights can be explained using the Social Constructionist understanding, with which I develop the concept of minority in the following sections.

¹² Jews in Europe have generally been ghettoized and discriminated against due to measures implemented by the decision-makers of the relevant state. For instance, they were generally banned from being landowners by European countries and their access to all kinds of occupations was generally prohibited due to their Jewish origin. Thus, they tended to move to the urban cities and specialize in professions like medicine, finance or trade. As they had limited job opportunities, a number of those Jewish families trying to find new routes in urban places also emphasized education of their children for survival of their future generations.

2.3 Liberalism and integration of minorities

As I explain systematically later in this chapter, issues of minority rights started to be discussed more loudly at the European level after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of Yugoslavia. In this context, theoretical debates about minorities and their rights also developed in the disciplines of social science.

In the Liberal school, Charles Taylor became the pioneering philosopher emphasizing the significant link between the collective rights of minorities, diversity and integration. While developing a communitarian critique of Liberalism, Taylor focused on two different modes of politics that promoted diversity inside societies: the politics of equal dignity and the politics of difference.

According to Taylor, although both of them were based on the principle of equality, their main application process and outcomes were totally different; while the former treated all people in a ‘difference-blind fashion’, the latter emphasized the necessity of particular rights for the minorities (Taylor and Gutmann 1992:40). Confronting some political philosophers of the Cold War years like Dworkin (1977) and Rawls (1999), who supported equality of all citizens promoted through nation-states’ difference-blind policies, Taylor emphasized that states should not only promote rights for all of their citizens, but also recognize and promote the diversity of minority cultures living on sovereign territories of these states (Taylor and Gutmann 1992:40).

Following Charles Taylor, Will Kymlicka, himself a Canadian political philosopher, became one of the pioneering figures of the Liberal school, emphasizing the development of group-based minority rights. In his book, *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, he contended that it was a misconception to argue that group rights and individual rights were clearly separated from each other, because every individual right had a collective aspect. For instance, it was an individual right for a person to speak his/her own mother language. But instruction of students in mother tongue was a collective right since people could practice and develop their languages only if they spoke to each other. Similarly, Kymlicka mentions that a person underlining his/her belonging to a nation, ethnicity or religion could not form an association on individual basis. This individual right could only be exercised collectively (Kymlicka 1995b:35-44).

To explain the complicated rhetoric between the rights he introduced two new concepts, which are ‘internal restrictions’ and ‘external protections’. For Kymlicka, the former, used for protecting the internal group cohesion, should be very limited to leave members of a minority group free to question their own values and beliefs. But on the other hand, minority cultures should also be given some ‘external protections’, because where they lack group rights, minority cultures can find themselves vulnerable to threats coming from the majority culture (Kymlicka 1995b:35-44).

Despite his contribution to the development of theories about the integration of minorities and their rights since the mid-1990s, Kymlicka’s interpretation of minority-state relations is still criticized by social scientists for overemphasizing the ‘stability’ of group character, and thus failing to “grasp the complex, countervailing pressures, evolving situationally and historically, on individuals caught in the dynamic of minority politics” (Cowan 2006:14).

Similar criticisms of Kymlicka’s static understanding of minorities’ internal dynamics generally come from those scholars following Social Constructionist interpretation of minorities. The next section sheds light on Social Constructionism and its contribution to minority studies after the 1990s.

2.4 The Social Constructionist understanding of minorities

Similar to Kymlicka’s work, until the emergence of the critical approach within IR in the early 1990s, scholars belonging to the two main schools of thought, i.e. Realism and Liberalism, used to treat minorities as fixed and pre-determined communities who were supposed to have different ethnic, religious, cultural or linguistic characteristics from the majority. They advocated international mechanisms implementing laws that were general in character and applicable to all citizens of their member countries. Thus, theoretical debates about construction and deconstruction of minorities and their rights were almost nonexistent within the discipline of IR before the 1990s.

Contrary to the two mainstream interpretations of IR, the Constructivist school began challenging the simple interpretation of minorities in the discipline of IR. Alexander Wendt’s pioneering study, *Anarchy is What States Make of it*, introduced the

idea that power politics and the relations between agents and structures are not fixed or predetermined. Rather, they depend on the behaviour of states that affect the construction of international structures (Wendt 1992, 1999). Thus, contrary to the Realist and Liberal schools of thought, Constructivists treat international relations and its actors as socially constructed.

In fact, Wendt's theorization of IR had more to do with nation states in the international system than with minorities at the local level. But there is still a growing trend among IR scholars emphasizing how contextual, ambiguous and contested are some concepts like sovereignty, state, culture, nation, boundary and identity (Lapid and Kratochvil 1996; Finnmore 1996; Albert et al. 2001; Kratochvil 2011).

Parallel to the social constructivist thinkers in IR, anthropologists and sociologists continued to play significant roles in the development of the Social Constructionist understanding in disciplines ranging from law to gender studies. By adopting a critical stance towards the concept of a minority, they preferred not to treat minorities as eternal groupings. Rather, they adopted a more 'fluid' understanding about the concept of a minority. Thus, they emphasized minorities as socially-constructed groups. Therefore, depending on variables at the local, national and international level, it was possible for minorities to be deconstructed, and so it was possible for minorities to disappear (Brubaker 1996; Laitin 1998; Cowan 2001, 2006).

In this section, I reflected on the broader theoretical framework for the concepts of a minority and of minority rights. Next, I will apply the aforementioned theoretical discussions to a consideration of the more general situation of minorities in Greece.

2.5 Problematizing minorities and their rights in the context of modern Greece

“In this country (Greece) if you speak about minorities, you are asking for trouble”
(Dimitras 2008).

The emergence of the Greek state began with the 1821 War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire. In time, Greek national territories enlarged north and eastwards, finally arriving at its present size after the incorporation of the Dodecanese

Islands in 1947¹³. However, the formation of the Greek nation state and of a homogeneous Greek society through the indoctrination of Hellenism and Orthodox Christianity was a long and multifaceted process, since Greece was frequently faced with ethnic and religious communities, like Muslims, Turks and Jews, living in its newly-obtained territories of Macedonia and Western Thrace.

Being one of the new nation-states of the 19th Century, the Great Powers obliged Greece to care for and ensure the continuity of ethno-religious and cultural diversity on its new and old sovereign lands. For this purpose, Greece signed agreements for protection of the rights of religious minorities across the country. For example, the Treaty of Constantinople (1881), Treaty of Athens (1913), Treaty of Sevres (1920) and the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) obliged Greece to protect the religious rights of its Muslim nationals residing in newly-ceded territories, which contributed to the survival of Islam across Greece.

Contrary to these treaties, various policies of national homogenization intensified across the country. Over time, Greek institutions started to promote the essential values of the Greek nation and nationalism among Greek citizens, aiming to bolster national homogeneity and unity. Within this framework, fundamental Greek institutions – particularly schools, churches and army – played a major role in increasing national consciousness and linguistic uniformity among ethnic and non-ethnic Greeks living within the borders of Greece. (Kitromilides 1989:159-166; Kymlicka and Patten 2002:37-40). This was a product of the development of nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe, where “the progress of schools and universities measures that of nationalism, just as schools and especially universities became its most conscious champions” (Hobsbawm 1996:135)¹⁴.

In fact, the ground-breaking attempt to homogenize Greece came after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. As the First World War finished, the new map of Europe was redrawn, as a result of which large movements of communities occurred across the continent. Either voluntarily or compulsorily, millions of people had to move

¹³ The dates and territories of Greek territorial expansion are as follows: Ioanian Islands (1863), Thessaly (1881), Epirus and Macedonia (1913), Thrace (1923), and the Dodecanese Islands (1947). For a useful map showing the process of this expansion see Map of Greece (1832-1947).

¹⁴ Also, see Anderson (2006:71).

from one place to another. In this context, Greece agreed to two major population exchanges – one with Bulgaria (1919-1927), and the other with Turkey (1922-1923).

Comparing the official Greek censuses of 1920 and 1928, Pallis (1929:546) shows how these population exchanges contributed to the homogenization and Hellenization of the country: the number of Turks and Bulgarians decreased from 770,000 to 103,000 and from 139,000 to 82,000 respectively while the number of Greeks increased from 4,458,000 to 5,817,000. And, after the population exchange between Greece and Turkey that was supervised by the Minorities Section of the LoN, more than 1.2 million Greek-Orthodox Turkish nationals were exchanged with approximately 400,000 Greek nationals of Muslim religion (Pentzopoulos 2002:69; Hirschon 2003:13-23; Kontogiorgi 2006:73). Besides Turks, there were also considerable numbers of Slavic-speakers, Jews, Tsam Albanians, Armenians and Vlachs living in 1920s Greece. But the Greek state never accepted that these groups constituted a major threat to the national unity of the country.

In the aftermath of the population exchanges, Greek state institutions sped up their promotion of the essential values of the Greek nation, culture, language and Orthodox Christianity across the country. In spite of the numerical inferiority of minorities in Greece, Greek Prime Minister Venizelos, inspired by the Wilsonian idealism reflected in the minority supervision scheme of the LoN, introduced a new institution responsible for minorities living in different parts of Greece.¹⁵

The Inspector's Office for Minorities, *Επιθεώρησης Μειονοτήτων*, lasted only for five years before Venizelos lost the elections in 1933. Yet this short-lived institution seems to have been a clear indication that Greece under Venizelos intended to tackle the problems of its minorities. With the advent of the military regime under the Metaxas (1936-1949), the human and minority rights of all Greek citizens were restricted, regardless of their ethnic or religious identities. Afterwards, the Italian invasion of Greece in 1939, the outbreak of the Second World War followed by Germany's invasion of Greece in 1941, and finally the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) all contributed to the socio-political and economic turmoil in Greece. Thus, throughout the 1930s and

¹⁵ Along with a variety of rights given to the Turkish minority, the Greek state also provided autonomy for some other major non-ethnic Greek communities during the interwar years. For instance, Law 2456/1920 (FEK A'173, 2.8.1920) gave collective rights to the Jewish community in order to preserve their educational, religious, cultural and linguistic autonomy.

1940s, the local and national Greek authorities were unable to deal with minority issues effectively.

In the mid-1940s, another wind of demographic change blew through the country during Nazi Germany's invasion. Greek Jews, the majority of whom were settled in Thessaloniki and its surrounding cities, were deported to Germany where they were massacred in concentration camps. According to the official census of 1928, there was a total number of 62,999 Jews, both Sephardims and Romaniots, in Greece. This number would decline to 9,865 in the early 1950s, showing to what extent the Jewish existence was exterminated by the Nazi control of Greece in 1940s (Mazower 2004: 421-461; Bowman 2009:239-244; Fleming 2010:110-145).

Along with the Jewish community, the Tsam Albanians, Muslim Albanians of Greek citizenship living predominantly at the Epirus region, were forced to leave the country in the mid-1940s on the basis that they had collaborated with Italian forces and enemies of Greece during the Second World War. Thus, the number of Greek citizens of Jewish and Albanian descent was dramatically lower after World War II.

Looking at the period between the 1920s and the 1950s, it appears that the two population exchanges in the 1920s and the elimination of Jewish and Albanian communities in the 1940s played a significant role in the homogenization of Greek society. The only exceptions were the Muslim Turks concentrated in Western Thrace and the Dodecanese islands (Rhodes and Kos) and the Slavic-speaking Macedonians living in Northern Greece. But owing to the numerical inferiority of both communities compared to the total population of the country, issues about minority rights never constituted a primary concern for the Greek state during the interwar years.

2.5.1 'Old' minorities vs. 'Newcomer' Immigrants

Throughout the Cold War years, Greece continued following the international community and dealt with the rights of minorities in Greece under the general rubric of universal human rights. Numerous consequences of this phenomenon will be mentioned in Chapter 5, where I study the development of Minority education in Western Thrace in the 1950s and 1960s.

Debates over minorities and their rights in the context of Greece were once more resumed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when large numbers of immigrants

started to arrive in Greece, mainly from the Balkans and Eastern Europe in addition to those from North African and South East Asian countries. In a short period of time, Greece, a country of emigration in the 1960s and 1970s, had turned into a country of immigration. Although there aren't any exact official figures, scholars estimate that there are around 1 million immigrants, including the undocumented ones and those Greeks repatriated from the former Soviet-bloc countries¹⁶ (Triandafyllidou and Veikou 2002:190-192; Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2009:961-962).

Thus, Greece has become a country where the proportion of its immigrant population to its native and naturalized population is higher than any other country in Southern Europe. (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008:49) This influx of immigrants and their concentration in urban centres has been interpreted by the majority of Greeks as a significant threat to the Christian and Hellenic composition of Greek society.

From a theoretical perspective, since the early 1990s, there has been a growing trend among scholars studying minority and human rights in differentiating between minorities and immigrants or, as it is sometimes said, between 'old' and 'new' minorities. The former refers to those groups who have been living in the same territories for a long time, like national, imperial or historical minorities, while the latter is used for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers who arrived in particular circumstances in recent times.

Will Kymlicka is among the pioneering political philosophers who differentiates minorities and ethnic groups from migrants. While developing his own liberal theory on minorities, their rights and minority-state relations, Kymlicka (1995a, 2001) defines national minorities as long-lasting, distinct and self-governing societies while immigrants are those groups that have left their own homelands and migrated to another state. Therefore, national minorities tend to demand more rights than immigrants, because they try to resist assimilation within the majority culture by binding themselves together with their own 'societal cultures', a culture both distinct from and resisting the dominant majority culture.

¹⁶ Pontic or Pontian Greeks are also referred as 'repatriated Greeks'. They are people of Greek descent who arrived in Greece after the dissolution of the Soviet Empire. For a collection of essays dedicated to different aspects of Pontic Greek repatriates in post-Cold War Greece, see (*Journal of Refugee Studies* 1991).

Using this term, Kymlicka (1995a:76-80) talks about a culture on a defined territory that provides its members with a way of life with a full range of human activities in socio-economic and educational life, while immigrant cultures are those that are generally integrated with the majority culture. In order to strengthen his argument, he also gives an example from his country, Canada, where he makes a clear distinction between the rights of French Canadians and those of Greek immigrants in Canada. For Kymlicka (ibid.:46), members of the former group have the right to demand education in their mother tongue because they are a national minority. But the Greek community does not have such a right due to their immigrant status.

Kymlicka's theorization of the aforementioned differentiation between national minorities and immigrants, as well as the hierarchy of their rights, is seen by some critics as highly flawed and problematic. As Parekh (2000:108-109) underlines, some criteria that Kymlicka uses for this differentiation, such as territorial concentration or historical presence, are highly subjective and controversial. Using such criteria might also help the researcher to ignore the basic notion of context.

This research does not intend to go into deeper theoretical discussions about the categorical difference between minorities and immigrants. But suffice it to say here that both minorities and immigrants are treated in this study as socially-constructed communities. As boundaries between and within these groups are ambiguous and contextual, from time to time, distinguishing minorities from immigrants can turn into to a complicated issue.

At this point, I want to clarify that Greece is among those countries that differentiates between newcomer immigrant groups that arrived in the country after the 1990s and the historical minority in Western Thrace. It recognizes different rights, and implements different programs for each group's integration into Greek society.

2.5.2 'Unrecognized' minorities: The case of the Macedonian minority in Northern Greece

From an official Greek point of view, the Minority under study in this thesis is the only recognized minority in Greece. Their rights are asserted in the Greek Constitution, the 1923 Lausanne treaty and other bilateral and international conventions that Greece signed and ratified.

Nevertheless, looking beyond the official discourse on minorities in Greece, it is obvious that there are different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups inside Greek society, like the Slavic-speaking Macedonians, Vlachs, Arvanites, Roma, Jews, Old Calendarists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholics and Evangelicals¹⁷, who contribute to diversity and multiculturalism in Greece in the 21st century. But all of them belong to what a Greek scholar calls as 'unacknowledged' issues of the Greek law: "In case we are familiar with them, we also know that we shouldn't speak about them. Unfamiliarity is even better" (Christopoulos 2008:10).

Among these groups, it is only some members of the Slavic-speaking Greek Macedonians¹⁸ based in the city of Florina (*Lerin*) arguing for the existence of a second national minority in Greece, the Macedonian minority. These self-identified Macedonian activists are mainly organized around the political party, Rainbow (*Vinozhito*), and the non-profit organization, Home of Macedonian Culture. For two decades, they have been lobbying various national and international organizations to make Greece accept and recognize Slavic-speaking Macedonians as a 'national minority' and provide them with group-based rights, like the ones provided for the Turkish Muslim minority of Western Thrace.

The struggle for the minoritization of Slavic-speaking Macedonians living in Greece, which started in the early 1990s, still continues; yet today, it seems that not only the Greek state but also the vast majority of Slavophone Macedonians reject the identity of an ethnic Macedonian minority (Cowan 2001:166; Karakasidou 2002:148). Rather, they feel themselves to be part of the Greek *ethnos* and identify themselves as *ντόπιοι* [locals] or *ντόπιοι Μακεδόνες* [local Macedonians] (Cowan 2000; xiv).

Having summarized the main theoretical debates on the concept of minority rights and its consequences for minorities in contemporary Greece, the next section seeks to question how minority rights, with a special focus on the educational rights of minorities, have been internationalized and how various local, national and international

¹⁷ Some other smaller groups are Mormons, Trakatroukides, Gagauzs, Buddhists, Scientologists, Baha'is and devotees of polytheistic Hellenic religions. For more information about minorities in modern Greece see Mavrogordatos (1983); Pollis (1992); Divani (1995); Stavros (1995); Tsitselikis and Christopoulos (1997); Clogg (2002); Mavrommatis (2006).

¹⁸ For a historical analysis of the ethnic, political and cultural issues of the Slavic speakers in Northern Greece, see Michailidis (1996); Mackridge and Yannakakis (1997); Karakasidou (1997); Cowan (2001); Danforth and Van Boeschoten (2012).

actors played significant roles in this process of internationalization of minority rights at the European level.

2.6 International protection of minority rights in Europe: Historical Approach

In the discipline of IR, the development of international protection of minority rights in Europe is generally traced back to the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia. The emergence of new nation states in the 19th and 20th centuries and the promotion of nationalism across Europe resulted in the creation of new ethnic, religious and linguistic minority groups. However, in those centuries, modernization, urbanization and industrialization helped centralization of the power including its acquisition of control over education. Also, the national unity of the multi-ethnic sovereign states was generally linked to the eradication of small nationalities, since the latter were widely perceived as internal threats to the unity of the states. Thus, Nation-states built their own national cultures on one language, one ethnicity and one religion. As a result, those of their citizens with cultural practices differing from the national culture were treated as ‘others’ that the nation state should, one way or another, get rid of.

It was believed that, in this way, national homogeneity would persist and the sovereign nation-state would survive. Therefore, most of the nation-building projects across Europe aimed to dismantle or assimilate those groups differing from the majority in terms of ethnicity, religion, language or culture. Henceforth, assimilation was unavoidable for a number of small nationalities during the processes of state formation across Europe. Yet, in the event that the minority was large in number and strong enough to resist nation-states’ assimilatory policies, then sovereigns preferred to see those groups either dissimilated¹⁹ or isolated, kept quiet without any major complaints. In terms of Eriksen (2002:126), these were “unmeltable minorities...who stand out through their ‘Otherness’ and thereby confirm the integrity of the nation through contrast”.

It was in the 1815 Final Act of the Congress of Vienna that minorities, for the first time, were defined as national groupings. Therefore, minority rights were also

¹⁹ According to Brubaker (1996:93), dissimilationist policies are applied when nationalizing states do not aim to assimilate national minorities, but rather to prevent or exclude them from getting higher positions within majority society.

extended to ethnic and national minorities. This international guarantorship of minorities was further developed with the 1878 Congress of Berlin, which is widely accepted to be the most important of all international assemblies dealing with minority rights in Europe prior to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference (Macartney 1934:159,166; Claude 1955:6).

In fact, none of the international documents adopted before 1919 dealt with minority issues as a matter of collective international concern; nor did they function effectively enough to prevent the assimilation of small nationalities. Rather, it was the Great Powers under the Concert of Europe that took responsibility and guarantorship for the provision of rights to persons belonging to ethnic, national and religious minorities. In this sense, treaties signed with the Great Powers forced some new European states like Romania, Bulgaria or Serbia to guarantee protection of minorities living in these countries. And that protection clause was set by the Great Powers as a precondition for recognition of newly-formed nations as independent and sovereign nation-states (Fink 1995:197; Cowan 2003:272; Mazower 2004a:381). However, these types of relations between major and minor European states and their impact upon the survival of minorities would completely change with the establishment of the League of Nations in 1919, which I elaborate in the following section.

2.6.1 Development of minority rights under the League of Nations

The beginning of the 20th century marks the formation of the most influential institutional system for international protection of minority rights, i.e. the League of Nations. During the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, 15 new successor states born from the ruins of the multiethnic and multid denominational Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and Prussian Empires were forced to sign certain treaties for their international recognition as nation-states of post-war Europe²⁰. Known also as the ‘Minorities Treaties’, signed between 1919 and 1924, these texts promoted protection of minorities and their rights in the new successor states of Europe, and prevented them from becoming potential victims of discrimination by the officials of those successor states (Azcarate 1946:125).

²⁰ These were Albania; Austria; Bulgaria; Czechoslovakia; Estonia; Finland; Germany; Greece; Hungary; the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes; Latvia; Lithuania; Poland; Romania; and Turkey. (Cowan 2010: 271)

In fact, the significant novelty introduced by the League's bureaucrats in Geneva was to make those treaty-bound states, or 'minority states' as they have been called by IR scholar I. Claude (1955), accept that their obligations to protect the rights of minorities were of international concern (Cowan 2007:549). Thus, for the first time, rights of persons belonging to minorities were put under the protection, guarantee²¹ and supervision of an international mechanism seeking the restoration and preservation of peace and order in Europe in the post-World War era.²²

Under the LoN, the definition of the minority concept was broadened to encompass persons belonging to racial, religious and linguistic minorities.²³ Also, minority states were obliged to promote not only individual rights but also group rights for members of minorities. Thus, some group-based rights were bestowed upon minorities, like free use of and primary education in their mother tongue, freedom of administration of charitable organizations, and freedom of religion (Malloy 2005; Cowan 2010: 270-271).

Moreover, for the first time, minorities were given the right to petition, individually or collectively, at the international level. Petitioners could submit their petitions to the 'minority petition procedure' of the League. In the event that the Minorities Sections of the LoN's Secretariat accepted their applications, then the case continued within the procedure of the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ).²⁴

In fact, the League's minority protection regime seemed to have a dual purpose. On the one hand, it would protect the rights of minorities and prevent them either developing or joining separatist movements inside the newly-formed nation-states. On the other hand, provision of those rights for minorities would also reduce possible

²¹ Preece (2005:13-14) underlines how crucial is the semantic difference between 'minority rights' and 'minority guarantees' while elaborating the history of minority rights in Europe. Giving the example of the shift from the League's language of 'guarantees' to the UN's language of 'rights', she emphasizes that 'guarantees' cannot exist without a guarantor state or organization but 'rights' are normative entitlements referring to the right holder. In this respect, given that the Lausanne Treaty of the League regime is still in force it is possible to talk about 'minority guarantees' and 'guarantor states' in the context of Western Thrace.

²² As it had been the case for new nations in the 19th Century, treaty-bound states were also forced by the international community to sign minorities treaties as the price of their international recognition as sovereign nation-states of the post-World War I era (Cowan 2007:548; Mazower 1997:50).

²³ Mazower (1997:52) mentions an estimated number of 35 million minority inhabitants in interwar Europe. And only 8.6 million of them lived in Western Europe, while the remaining ones resided in Central and Eastern European countries.

²⁴ For more information about minority petitions and the procedure of their evaluation, with a special emphasis on the 'violent language' used by petitioners, see Cowan (2003:271-291; 2007)

justifications from external protector states, primarily the kin-states of minorities, for intervention in the domestic issues of host countries on the basis of arguments of ill-treatment of their kin. In this way, any major conflict between the League members on the basis of minority self-determination, which was likely to endanger the international peace and stability, would be eliminated and the balance of power mechanism of the post-World War I era would be safeguarded. In this way, the League's minority protection scheme aimed to provide "minimum enforcement of (minorities) treaties without inciting minorities or alienating their governments" (Fink 1995:200).

2.6.1.1 Promoting minority education under the LoN

Minority educational rights were among those group-based collective rights included in the Minorities Treaties signed at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. Thus, for the first time, minority education was treated as a matter of international concern under the minority protection system of the League. Within this framework, education in minority languages was introduced in territories with concentrations of historical minorities and ethnic groups. For instance, according to Articles 8-10 of the Polish Treaty signed between the Great Powers and Poland²⁵, Polish citizens belonging to religious, linguistic and 'racial [sic]' minorities were given the right to establish and manage their own schools and organizations where they could be taught in their mother tongues and enjoy freedom of religion. Similar rights were also extended to the Jewish minority in Poland under Article 10 (Anonymous 1919).

However, a significant problem emerged between the League member countries and minorities, regarding who would be counted as minority children and, thus, who would have the right to attend minority schools. Was who had the right to attend to minority language schools the nationalizing state's decision, or was it the children's parents' choice? In other words, was being a minority member a matter of fact or a matter of will?

This problem still persists between states and minorities, because there is still no universally-accepted definition of the concept of a minority. Some countries prioritize 'objective' criteria like numerical size, non-dominant position citizenship or mother

²⁵ This treaty later functioned as a model for the drafts of the Minorities Treaties by the Committee on New States, and for the Protection of Minorities established at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference (Mazower 1998:52).

tongue; others prefer to emphasize only ‘subjective’ criteria such as willingness to protect their distinct ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics; still others use both subjective and objective criteria when defining minorities (Pentassuglia 2002:57-58; Thornberry 1993:175-176).

In the debate concerning the Case of Upper Silesia²⁶ Schools (1928) the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) had underscored the subjective criteria and concluded that belonging to a minority was not only a matter of fact but also a matter of will (Preece 2005:131). This actually implied that states should not unilaterally determine whether their nationals have a minority status or not. Rather, they should leave their nationals free to identify and affiliate themselves with a particular minority, nation, mother tongue or religion.

From a broader framework, the educational issues of minorities under League supervision were frequently open for manipulation not only by the host state but also by kin states of the minorities. In other words, due to the ‘hypocrisy’ between members of the League that I mention in the next section, countries showed an unwillingness to provide special educational rights for their hosted minorities, while simultaneously complaining about the violation of the rights of their kin in other hosting states. Therefore, although minority education was emphasized in various Minorities Treaties, this study underlines that minorities’ education could not be promoted effectively under the League minority protection scheme.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, the League of Nations was discredited in the Western World. It was proven to be ineffective for the protection of international peace and order and of minority rights in Europe. The next section provides a brief analysis of why the League minority protection system failed.

2.6.2 Failure of the League’s System of Minority Protection

One of the primary reasons for the failure was that minority protection under the League system involved a double standard. That is to say, contrary to the principle of equality of states, only treaty-bound members of the League had responsibilities towards protection of minorities and their rights. For their part, the major powers of the

²⁶ For controversies between Germany and Poland over the region of Upper Silesia during the Interwar era see Kamusella and Kacir (2000:92-126).

League were not willing to accept any kind of outside intervention in their domestic affairs, because minority rights were largely perceived as a threat to their sovereignty and independence. Instead, they preferred to solve problems with minorities on a bilateral basis with other League members (Claude 1955: 124). An IR scholar puts this European hypocrisy within the League system as follows:

“The victors of 1919 imposed the great new liberal ideal of national self-determination and its concomitant national minority rights on the successor states of their defeated rival empires while they had no intention of applying it to themselves or to their own colonial possessions” (Preece 1998: 93).

Taking the aforementioned double standards into account, the Minority States, as Claude calls them, felt more discriminated against and humiliated within the League’s minority protection mechanism. Hence, they showed more scepticism of and reluctance to engage in the minority protection scheme of the League, arguing that rights for members of racial, religious and linguistic minorities could infringe the basic principle of equality between citizens. This is what Cowan (2010:286) calls “the dynamic of mirrored asymmetry”: when minorities demanded more rights and justice under the League system and Minority States responded that they, as treaty-bound states, were being discriminated against by the major powers and were being put in an unjust position within the LoN.

Given the subordinate positions of Minority States *vis-à-vis* the major actors of the League, they were unable to convince the latter to introduce a universal regime of minority rights protection common to all League members. Consequently, as treaty-bound members gradually lost their trust in the League of Nations, they showed increasing reluctance or indifference in applying minority rights provisions enshrined in Minorities Treaties (Robinson et. al 1943:264).

Also, the League minority protection scheme failed to control relations between minorities, treaty-bound countries and kin states within the League. In the 1930s, minorities’ petitions against the treaty-bound states gradually increased, complaining about their ineffective application of Minorities Treaties. In particular the nation-seeking minorities of interwar Europe, who hadn’t been given the right of self-determination, developed their affiliation with their neighbouring kin-states. They also submitted petitions to the minority petition procedure of the LoN where their arguments

against the host nation generally got the strong support of their kin-states (Cowan 2003:278-280; Fink 1972; Claude 1955:34).

In this framework, it seemed that all three parties – minorities, minority states and kin-states – had their own reasons to be unhappy and to complain about the minority protection scheme of the League. As the League mechanisms failed to find solutions for disagreements between these three sets of actors over the applicability and sustainability of Minorities Treaties, so some kin-states felt emboldened to get involved in the domestic affairs of their neighbours, on the basis of the plight of their kin. Yet such an action from the kin-state would definitely endanger not only the legitimacy of the LoN but also international peace and order in Europe.

In this context, some major powers that were formerly members of the LoN continued to use their ethnic brethren to intervene in the domestic affairs of some treaty-bound League members. For example, after leaving the League in 1934, Germany increased its complaints against the League's minority protection scheme on the basis that German minorities – numbering around six million in various countries of East, Central and Southern Europe – were suffering under the administration of Minority States (Fink 1995:201).²⁷

Cases such as the 'real' or 'imagined' plight of the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia²⁸ or the German minority in Poland²⁹ served as a pretext for Nazi Germany to intervene in both countries in late 1940s. But Hitler's basic aim was more than the protection of the rights of the German minorities *per se*. Thus, mocking basic principles of the protection of minority rights, Hitler managed to manipulate the existence of ethnic German minorities and make the largest ethnic minority in Europe turn into a 'fifth column' serving the expansionist policies of Nazi Germany throughout the 1930s (Mazower 2004:386).

In the above-mentioned triadic relationship, the LoN failed to prevent Germany from intervening in the domestic affairs of some League members, thus driving a nail

²⁷ For more on active German involvement in matters of the League's minority protection regime between 1926 and 1933 see Fink (1972).

²⁸ I use this term in quotation marks since it is mentioned that the Germany minority was not actually suffering. Instead, they were both politically and economically powerful (Cowan 2003:142).

²⁹ It was noted that almost 30% of all petitions to the League mechanism came from members of the German minority in Poland, stating their discontent with their treatment by Polish authorities (Robinson cited in Preece 1998:84).

into its own coffin. But it is more important to underscore that Nazi Germany's turning German minorities in LoN countries into 'pawns' in its expansionist and nationalist program would actually discourage the international community from providing group rights for minorities under the new international regime of the post-World War II era.

Although the League of Nations and its minority protection scheme were abolished with the eruption of World War II, it still acknowledged as the first institution dealing with protection and promotion of minority rights at the international level. It introduced a variety of instruments and methods that contributed to the development of minority rights at the international level. Thus, this study treats the League of Nations not only as the beginning of the internationalization of minority rights in the post-World War I settlement of Europe, but also as the fundamental source of inspiration and knowledge for the international community about the necessity of protection of minority rights at the international level in the post-Cold War era.

2.7 A shift from collective to individual: Rights of Minorities during the Cold War years

After the Second World War, the international community, disillusioned with the League experiment for maintaining international peace and stability, totally dismissed the minority protection scheme of the League of Nations. Thus, Minorities Treaties came to an end, while minority rights issues started to be managed as aspects of universal human rights through the United Nations (UN). Mazower (2004:390) notes that the UN Secretariat examined whether the minorities treaties were technically still applicable in the mid-1940s; it concluded that circumstances had substantially changed between 1939 and 1947 making the League's minority protection regime cease to exist. However, the present study emphasizes that together with the 1920 Declaration of Finland regarding the Aaland Islands (Bilder 1992:63) the only exception to the cancellation of Minorities Treaties is the 1923 Lausanne Treaty. It still plays significant roles in defining Greek policy over the Minority issues in Western Thrace. Although it was signed almost 80 years ago, the Lausanne Treaty still has a great impact on the survival of Muslim, Turkish and Minority identities in Western Thrace.

Highlighting the principle of non-discrimination, UN members at the Paris Peace Conference in 1946 agreed on two basic points about minority issues after the World

War II. Firstly, there was no need for particular rights for certain minority groups when universal human rights were considered to be basic and applicable to all individuals, both majorities and minorities (Claude 1955:133,211; Kymlicka 2007:29).

Thus, it was agreed that both the defeated and the victorious states of World War II should treat their populations equally regardless of their ethnic, religious and cultural origins. This is obvious in the UN Charter (1945) and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), in which there are no references to minorities and their rights. Similarly, Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, drafted in 1948, emphasized that rights and freedoms should be enjoyed without any discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, language, religion or association with a national minority (ECHR 1948).

Secondly, it was agreed that the international community should not be responsible for the resolution of conflicts concerning national minorities in Europe. Rather, these should be resolved bilaterally between the kin-states and the host states. This is what Claude (1955:143) calls the “de-internationalization” of minority issues under the new UN regime of the Cold War era.

Under the UN regime, member states were supposed to treat all their nationals equally regardless of their ethnic, religious or linguistic differences. Thus, when individual human rights were applied to all citizens, it was believed that there would be no need for further group-based minority rights. Nevertheless, it became evident in the 1960s that the UN’s commitment to universal human rights could not solve problems in the treatment of minorities and the protection of their rights. Thus, the term ‘minority’ start to be emphasized officially by the UN when the first official inclusion of this term in international texts appeared in 1966 under Article 27 of the UN’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

According to Article 27, persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities “should not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion or to use their own language” (ICCPR 1966). In International Law, this text is widely accepted to be the first regulation on protection of minority rights that is universal in character and legally binding, and the only treaty dealing exclusively with issues of minorities and their rights until the introduction of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons

Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities in 1992 (Preece 2005:171).

Parallel to the ICCPR, the members of the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) signed the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, according to which the participating states had the responsibility to protect minorities. According to the Principle VII of the Helsinki Final Act:

“The Participating States on whose territory national minorities exist will respect the right of persons belonging to such minorities to equality before law, will afford them the full opportunity for the actual enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and will, in this manner, protect legitimate interests in this sphere” (CSCE 1999:8).

2.7.1.1 Minority education under the UN regime of Cold War years

Within the aforementioned context of the development of minority rights during the Cold War era, matters concerning minorities' educational rights were interpreted under the rubric of universal human rights. Therefore, the UN dealt with the educational rights of people belonging to minorities according to the general principles of equality and non-discrimination. For example, Article 26 of the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that everyone has the right to education, and parents are given the right to choose what kind of education their children should follow. Similarly, Article 2 of Protocol I of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) stresses that no person shall be denied the right to education (ECHR 1948).

Along with Article 27 of the ICCPR (1966), Article 30 of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of Child also refers to the rights of minorities as part of the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms in a given state (CRC 1989). Since minorities' educational rights were largely determined under universal principles of non-discrimination and equality, none of the aforementioned UN documents adopted during the Cold War had special references to minorities' educational rights, except the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO-CDE).

Article 5 (c) of this Convention allows for the establishment and maintenance of separate schools and institutions for minorities based on religious or linguistic reasons if the necessary consent of the state is given:

“It is essential to recognize the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools and, depending on the educational policy of each State, the use or the teaching of their own language”. (UNESCO-CDE 1960)

Nevertheless, given that the 1960 Convention granted host states the final say over the functioning of these schools, it strengthened the position of these states as primary actors deciding on the future of education of their minority nationals (Cullen 1993:148; Dinstein 1976:119).

In fact, academic concerns about minorities and their rights started to develop in the 1970s and 1980s at both the national and the international level. Scholars studying law, gender, ethnicity, identity and nationalism started to deal extensively with various aspects of minorities and their rights. Meanwhile, members of minorities across Europe also started to use various international mechanisms to raise their voices about their needs and rights to survive inside the majority societies.

However, state practices of the Cold War indicate that most of the UN members within the Western camp were generally inclined to be less enthusiastic to treat minority-specific rights separate from universal human rights. Also, the international community let them determine who would be officially recognized as a ‘minority’ or not. The lack of an international enforcement mechanism was another significant motivation for European countries to turn a blind eye to minorities’ issues. Altogether, these developments contributed to a limited development of minority rights across Europe during the Cold War era.

Concluding this section, this study emphasizes that UN members could neither forget nor disregard the experiment of the minority protection system under the LoN. Their anxieties as to whether minority issues could once more endanger international peace persisted throughout the Cold War period. Although they assumed that minority-related problems could be resolved when individual human rights were applied equally to all citizens, the revival of minority-based conflicts in post-Soviet Yugoslavia and other post-Communist states in the early 1990s alarmed the international community, and pushed it to break its silence on the issues of European minorities.

2.7.2 The Post-Cold War Years and the revitalization of minority rights at the international level

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the USSR resulted in the emergence of new countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Meanwhile, the ethnic cleansing and slaughter in the former Yugoslavia – and rising nationalist movements and intolerance towards minorities elsewhere, particularly in the Balkans and the CEE region – shifted the attention of the Western World towards minority issues in the Balkans and Europe. Otherwise, it would have been difficult for the West to perceive how the reawakening of minority-related and inter-ethnic conflicts in the early 1990s could have posed a direct threat to peace and stability in Europe.

As violence erupted in the Balkans after the breakup of the Yugoslavia, the international community, which had ‘played the ostrich’ and underemphasized protection of minority rights throughout the Cold War years, fully accepted that principles of individual human rights were insufficient to protect the rights of minorities across Europe. Therefore, they immediately started to emphasize minority-specific rights in order to cope with inter-ethnic tension, particularly in the region of Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). In this framework, various international and supranational organizations, like the United Nations (UN), Council of Europe (CoE), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), European Union (EU) and international human rights organizations started immediately to work on new standard-setting procedures³⁰, which marked the re-internationalization of minority issues in Europe approximately 40 years after the LoN³¹.

Starting with the UN, the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities was adopted in 1992, according to which minorities have rights that can be exercised both individually and collectively with other members of the minorities without any discrimination (UN General Assembly 1992; Thornberry 1995). Although it is criticized for its vague wording – such as ‘appropriate measures’, ‘wherever possible’ – both the 1992 UN Declaration

³⁰ For a detailed analysis about the standard-setting process between 1990 and 1995 see Preece (1997).

³¹ As the supervision of minority rights attained an international dimension in the 1990s, Cowan (2007:545-556, Cowan and Brown 2000:1-14) became among the pioneering scholars to revisit and re-evaluate minority supervision under the League of Nations. Adopting a relational approach, Cowan draws links between the two post-imperial moments in Europe, i.e. the 1920s and the 1990s, to cope with the emergence of minority-related problems in spite of contextual differences at all local, national and international levels.

and Article 27 of the ICCPR (1966) are widely accepted as two groundbreaking documents in the internationalization of minority rights (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000:531-532; Preece 1997:349).

Besides the 1992 Declaration, the UN Working Group on Minorities, which was later renamed as the UN Forum on Minority Issues, was formed in 1995. Since the mid-1990s, it has been providing a significant platform for minorities to raise their voices at the international level (Eide 2004: 55-71).

In addition to the UN, the CoE adopted the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereinafter the ECRML) in 1992 to preserve linguistic diversity in Europe and to protect those lesser-used and critically-endangered minority languages facing possible extinction in the near future (ECRML 1992).

Furthermore, it introduced the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM 1995; Weller 2005) in 1998, which is prominent as the first comprehensive instrument regarding the protection of national minorities in the post-Cold War era. The FCNM actually confers upon minorities a number of rights as well as duties. Like the 1992 UN Declaration, it also safeguards the collective usage of individual minority rights. However, the FCNM is also criticized for its vague wording and references, for subjective terms like “where appropriate” or “within the framework of national law” (Gilbert 1999b:63).

Along with the FCNM, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) still functions as one of the most influential mechanisms of the CoE. By giving the right of individual petition to citizens of member countries, the ECtHR has contributed to finding solutions for the problems of minorities in CoE member states. However, since exhausting all local remedies is still a precondition for a case to come before the ECtHR, some minority-related cases may take a long time to reach the Court. During the fieldwork, it was emphasized that the case about dissolution of the Xanthi Turkish Union (XTU) based on bearing the term ‘Turkish’ in its title started in early 1983. And it took more than twenty years for the XTU to exhaust all local remedies within the Greek judicial system and finally apply to the ECtHR in 2005.

In addition to the UN and CoE, the CSCE (renamed as OSCE in 1995) also adopted some measures for the international protection of minority rights in the post-

Cold War era. For instance, the 1990 Copenhagen Document gives persons belonging to national minorities different rights, which can be used individually or collectively (CoE 2007: 13-16). Also, the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), established in 1992, is tasked with warning member countries and enabling them to deal with minority-related disputes very early on (see Brenninkmeijer 2005; CoE 2007:35-43).

In the second half of the 1990s, the HCNM also cooperated with independent experts on various matters of minority rights. Thus, three sets of guidelines for the protection of minority rights in the OSCE area were adopted: the 1996 Hague Recommendations Regarding Educational Rights of National Minorities, the 1998 Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of Minorities and the 1999 Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities (CoE 2007: 45-96; Van der Stoep 2003:505-512).

In addition to the HCNM, Human Dimension Implementation Meetings (HDIM), organized annually by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE-ODIHR) since the early 1990s, still provides an important platform for minorities and member states to come together and discuss their problems.

In spite of its contribution for the protection of minority rights, the main criticism raised against the OSCE is that decisions taken at this intergovernmental organization are not legally-binding. Therefore, they generally do not go beyond suggestions or advice for the OSCE member states (Thornberry 1994: 17-18).

Along with the aforementioned organizations, the European Union emerged as another significant actor dealing with minority rights issues in the 1990s. But its contribution to standard-setting for minority rights throughout the 1990s was relatively limited. It rather preferred to use norms introduced and developed by the CoE or OSCE. For example, basic OSCE texts were borrowed during the preparation phase of the 1993 Copenhagen Document (European Council 1993). Still, the EU never provided a definition of the concept of a minority. Rather, EU members were left to determine for themselves, which group would be accepted as a 'minority' and to whom minority rights would be provided. Similarly, during the evaluation processes of the candidate countries from CEE, the European Commission also referred frequently to various texts

introduced previously by the CoE, UN and OSCE (De Witte and Horvath 2008:377; Hughes and Sasse 2003:6).

In 1993, for the first time, the EU demanded that candidate countries protect the rights of persons belonging to minorities according to the Copenhagen Document. However, the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam that amended the Maastricht Treaty (1992) avoided making any reference in Article 6(1) to ‘protection of minorities’ while referring to the founding principles and common values of the European Community like rule of law and liberty (Hughes and Sasse 2003:10). In this manner, the EU actually enacted its own ‘hypocrisy’ regarding the treatment of minorities, reminding us of the ‘hypocrisy’ between the League members of the interwar era, which I mentioned earlier.

That is to say, on the one hand the EU demanded that candidate countries fulfill the criteria about the protection of minorities living on their soil. But on the other hand, it was indifferent as to whether or not present EU members protected the rights of minorities living in their territories (De Witte and Horvath 2008:378).

In other words, EU organs seemed highly concerned and insistent about candidate countries’ compliance with minority rights standards enshrined in the 1993 Copenhagen Document. As Kuzio (2001:145) notes, they showed little concern about various minority rights violations in existing EU member countries. Thus, the EU demanded that candidate countries comply with higher standards of minority rights, which already-existing members would not easily accept (Cowan 2007:555; Hughes and Sasse 2003:8-9).

As I mentioned above, standards for protection of minorities had never been equally applicable to all EU members until the Lisbon Treaty entered into force on 1 December 2009. According to Article 1a of the Lisbon Treaty:

“The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail” (EUR-Lex 2007).

Therefore, minority rights have been subsumed within the EU *acquis communautaire*, which required that provisions for minority rights protection were applied to both the candidate countries and the 27 members of the EU. As the Lisbon

Treaty was introduced in 2009, it may be too early to analyse its impact on minority rights protection within the EU. However, it seems to constitute a significant turning point for the EU in promoting minority rights within the EU.

Sketching the broader framework of internationalization of minority rights in post-1990 Europe, the next section explores the contribution of the aforementioned organizations to the development of minority education across Europe in the post-Cold War period.

2.7.2.1 The rebirth of minority education in the post-1990s

Previously in this chapter, I showed that the quietness of the international community regarding minorities' rights during the Cold War years was also noticeable on minorities' educational issues. But starting from the re-internationalization of minority issues in Europe in the beginning of 1990s, most states in Europe who used to deal with the education of minorities within the liberal approach also started to adopt new policies based on the communitarian understanding of minority education. In this respect, they started working on different strategies so as to accommodate and promote educational autonomies of minorities.

In Europe, different models have been used to protect education in the minority language, such as introduction of courses in the minority language at public schools, bilingual education in both languages, and monolingual education in the minority language (Baltisiotis and Tsitselikis 2008:59-61). Taking into account basic principles of contextuality, it was obvious that there was no 'one-size-fits-all' type of educational models for states that would serve for the survival of minority languages and their cultures through education. Thus, dilemmas about communitarian and liberal types of schooling as well as other matters about education of minority children could easily occur within those parties having a say on education of minorities, e.g. state officials, local administrators and minority parents. In this respect, different inter-governmental, supranational and non-governmental organizations in Europe develop different models regarding accommodating of minority languages and cultures, which would not only strengthen the basic principle of equal access to education for both minority and majority students but also contribute to the overall cultural and linguistic richness across the European continent.

In the beginning of the 1990s, the CSCE's Copenhagen Document (1990) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992), for the first time in history of education of minorities³², provided persons belonging to minorities the right to establish and maintain their own educational, religious and cultural institutions and organizations. These instruments also encouraged member states to take the necessary measures in order to ensure appropriate conditions for minority members either to be taught in their mother tongue or to learn it (UN General Assembly 1992; CoE 2007:13-16).

The European Union's emphasis on the educational rights of minorities was established in 1993 under the general principle of the 'protection of minorities' enshrined in the Copenhagen Document. In this respect, EU mechanisms continued to support the individual policies of candidate states targeting the development of the educational levels of their minorities. Nevertheless, the EU's major contribution to minority education came through the process of its eastward enlargement in the 2000s. According to the 1993 Copenhagen Criteria, one of the preconditions for Ex-Soviet candidate countries for their entry into the EU was that their institutions had to meet the educational and linguistic needs of minorities, particularly the Russophone ones (Adrey 2005:457-466).

The EU's contribution to the general standard-setting process for the development of minority education in Europe seems quite limited. That is to say, the Copenhagen Criteria deals mainly with minority issues in the candidate countries. And the 2009 Lisbon Treaty stipulates that all 27 EU member states should respect the rights of minorities. It lacks any specific reference to the educational rights of minorities and it is applicable only when the EU law applies.

Rather than establishing a common policy on the education of minorities, the EU continues to support the national policies of its members that target the development of minority education. Therefore, it is inevitable that the treatment of minorities and the promotion of their rights continue to vary, not only between the old and the new members of the EU but also within those groups. The role of the EU in promoting minority education will be interrogated in Chapter 7, where I analyse the Program for

³² In fact, persons belonging to minorities of race, religion or language were provided with some educational rights during the interwar years. However, these rights were applicable only to those minority members living in countries whose governments had signed Minorities Treaties under the LoN.

Education of Muslim Children in Western Thrace-Greece, a project 80% of which has been supported by the EU since 1997.

The Council of Europe turned out to be one of the most effective standard-setting mechanisms for the protection of minorities in the wider Europe. As I previously underscored, the FCNM, together with the ECRML, became among the first and foremost international legal standards in the realm of minority rights and minority education. Education of national minorities is highly emphasized by the FCNM; it is the only issue to which the Framework Convention devotes three separate articles, Article 12-14 (FCNM 1995).

Along with promoting education of minorities through the FCNM, CoE went one step further and enabled the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter the Advisory Committee) to produce commentary about state practices under the FCNM. In 2006 (eight years after the FCNM had entered into force), the Advisory Committee's first choice was to deal with the theme of education, analyze the FCNM's impact on the educational autonomy of minorities as well as the level of its applicability by the states party to the FCNM (AC-FCNM 2006).

In the beginning of the commentary, the Advisory Committee underlined that their focus had been on how member states that ratified the FCNM balanced the development of minorities' characteristics with their integration with the majority society in which they lived. They added that state parties reporting on their own models and structures of accommodating education had generally emphasized education in the minority language at primary and secondary education; only a few of them had taken similar initiatives at the higher education. For example, South East European University in Tetovo-Macedonia and Abo Akademi University in Turku-Finland continued providing education in minority languages of Albanian and Swedish respectively, while the demands of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania-Romania were addressed with the inclusion of the courses instructed in the Hungarian language at the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca (*ibid.*).

Reading the commentary of the Advisory Committee, I derived some general guidelines from the FCNM (particularly Article 12-14) and those state reports submitted to the CoE mechanism from member countries that ratified the FCNM. They seem to

provide a useful inventory not only for countries tackling the accommodation and preservation of minority education but also for grassroots and international NGOs which are developing different strategies and tools fighting against the disappearance of minority languages and cultures through education.

First, minorities should have both rights to education and rights in education. That is, the basic human right regarding access to education should be strengthened by some other rights that would give the opportunity for minority members to have a say on their own educational matters, e.g. administration of minority schools, defining the curricula, etc.

Second, no minority education should prevent or underemphasize learning and teaching of the official state language. Still, states should not ignore that providing education only in the official language, especially at pre-schools and primary schools, could discourage some minority parents from sending their children to those schools, thus blocking the access of minority pupils to basic compulsory education.

Third, education of minorities should be emphasized at different levels given that education is essential and subservient for the enjoyment of some other rights as a citizen and member of a Minority in a given context, e.g. right to assembly.

Fourth, basic data about the general education system of a given country should be supported by analytical information about the minorities, their characteristics and their educational matters such as school attainments and dropout rates of minority students, their access to secondary and higher education, (if any) involvement of the kin-state, etc. The Advisory Committee underlines that while collecting data about education of majority and minority communities, states party to the FCNM had generally underemphasized gender-based information in their state reports. Therefore, the differences in education between the two genders between and within minorities and majorities of the same country should not be ignored.

Fifth, parties concerned with the education of minorities, such as parents, students, heads of schools, teachers, should be aware of roles, duties and responsibilities. State authorities should hear their voices and consult them so that the latter could feel more comfortable participating effectively in decision-making processes about the education of minority children.

Sixth, states should not only promote the principle of intercultural education at those schools where minority and majority students attend together. They should also extend it to those schools accommodating only minority or majority students so that students belonging to minority and majority cultures would be given the chance to learn about each other (*ibid.* ; see also Thornberry 2007:339-342). In my opinion, this would also lower the level of any kind of prejudice towards the ‘internal other’ and strengthen mutual understanding and tolerance, which would constitute a significant step for interactions between members belonging to different ethnicities in a given context.

In fact, before the FCNM and ECRML introduced by CoE, another major tool for providing basic guidelines to those countries accommodating minority education at the primary level, either in a liberal or communitarian, had been promoted at the UN level. In 1999, a Four-A-scheme had been developed based on the human rights perspective seeking to improve the overall quality of both majority and minority education particularly in the realm of primary education. According to the Preliminary Report of the first Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Ms. Katarina Tomasevski, submitted to the UN Commission on Human Rights, states should provide compulsory primary education at schools that should exhibit four key features of A: Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability (Tomasevski 1999).

First, states should provide sufficient amount of schools for all children of school age. Therefore, children living in dispersed rural areas should be ensured that primary schooling is available for them. Along with school buildings, states also should focus on the availability of relevant school materials, teachers, and other basic requirements for the proper functioning of these schools. In doing so, the gender imbalance about the enrolment in primary schools should be particularly emphasized given that the non-availability of schools generally results in parental decisions on impeding their girls from schooling.

Second, states should ensure access to the available schools to all students under the principle of non-discrimination. Also, these schools should be physically accessible for all pupils. That is, disabled children as well as those without citizenship of the country in which they reside, e.g. illegal migrants, should be guaranteed that they have access to education. Moreover, primary schooling should be economically accessible; families should not face economic difficulties that will prevent them from sending their

children to primary education. In particular, states should pay attention to those families who show unwillingness to send their daughters to primary schools since they see no economic rationale for investing on the education of their daughters. Therefore, primary school education should be free to all pupils regardless of their sexual, religious, ethnic and cultural differences.

Third, education at the primary level should be acceptable to both schoolchildren and their parents. Ranging from the content of textbooks, language of instruction, parental control of the administration of school to implementation of rights of children, states should provide minimum criteria for functioning of all primary schools.

Fourth, primary school education should be adaptable in a way that it can respond to the changing needs of the students and their parents. In this context, revision of school of textbooks and curricula as well as educating teachers in lines with the changing needs of the school children would help the overall development of education at the primary level (ibid.).

Acceptability and Adaptability were two of the 4As where Tomosevski referred to rights of persons belonging to minorities. She had underscored that since the League of Nations, minorities have had the right establish, control and administer their own schools where instruction is made in their own languages. She had also added that states have been spending massive efforts to eliminate any kind of prejudicial references at school materials towards females, members of different minorities and migrants since the early 1990s (ibid.).

This research underlines that in the 4As scheme developed under the UN, the first two features fits more to the liberal understanding of minority education while the next two ones to the forefront when different models about education of minority students are based on the philosophy of communitarianism.

Along with the interstate organizations that I referred to above, some independent and interdisciplinary research centres in different parts of Europe, some of which I mention next, also continue developing different strategies, guidelines, training schemes and projects from which states seeking to accommodate minority rights and minority languages can benefit.

For instance, Mercator Network composed of five research and documentation centres across Europe provides expertise, information and documentation for states about the linguistic diversity within the European Union. They develop different research projects that focus not only on how the regional, minority, lesser-used and endangered languages are tackled by the EU member states and people speaking these languages, but also emphasize immigrant languages and linguistic needs of immigrants arising from globalization since the early 1990s.

In particular, the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning a part of the Fryske Akademy in Leeuwarden-Holland provides information and expertise for the EU member states in matters multilingual education and language learning. In this respect, it keeps working on preparation of regional dossiers regarding minority language education in different EU regions. As of 2011, a total number 43 dossiers have already been prepared indicating the preservation of the linguistic diversity within the EU (Mercator Online 2012). Related to this research project I want to underline that the dossier about Turkish in Western Thrace was also prepared in 2003, a project that was supported by the Fryske Akademy and the European Commission (Mavrommatis and Tsitselikis 2003).

Along with the Mercator Network, the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), founded at one of the German cities inside the German-Danish border region, conducts policy-oriented research and provides expertise, information as well as documentation for states about various issues of minorities in Europe in five main clusters, i.e. justice and governance, politics and civil society, conflict and security, culture and diversity, and citizenship and ethics (ECMI Online 2012).

To conclude, as I mentioned above different governmental and non-governmental agents in Europe have been emphasizing the provision of expertise and knowledge as well as the production of different models of education of minorities since the beginning of the post-Cold War era. Based on liberal and/or communitarian philosophical basis, such models seek to ensure that the overall quality of education provided to minority and majority students in a given context remains good. Provided that no education model is ever perfect, states applying these models still need to tackle various dilemmas and complexities within their own national educational systems

originating from the development their own models about educating their minority and majority communities.

Evaluating the development of minority protection in Europe under the LoN, UN, CoE, OSCE and EU, it becomes clear that all of the above-mentioned institutions have been playing different roles in the development of minority rights, including educational ones, across Europe. Because these organizations have different merits and priorities in dealing with minority issues, they interpret minority-related issues differently. For example, the OSCE generally emphasizes the concept of security and focuses more on the securitization of minority issues; in contrast, various EU mechanisms manage minority issues as part of the promotion of multiculturalism and diversity inside the EU, in a process that aims to strengthen European identity. As a result, although it is not possible to claim the existence of complete consistency between these institutions on various minority issues, this study underscores that, together, they have contributed to the development of minority rights in post-Cold War Europe.

Having analysed the internationalization of minority rights in Europe, this chapter finishes with theoretical discussions about the Triadic Nexus Model of Brubaker, on which I develop the main theoretical framework of this study.

2.8 Minority-state-homeland relations through the lens of Brubaker

2.8.1 Explaining the Triadic Nexus Theory: Nationalizing states, national minorities and external national homelands

In the 20th century, the map of Europe underwent two periods of significant revision, following the First World War and the breakup of the Soviet Union; new ethnoculturally-diverse nation states emerged across the continent. In these nation-building processes of post-imperial and post-socialist Europe, masses of people flowed across the countries' newly-drawn borders. Some people had to leave their historic lands while some others remained in situ and started to be governed by regimes that were foreign to them.

Members of imperial minorities who continued living in these newly-formed states – such as Turks in Bulgaria and Greece, and Hungarians in Romania and Slovakia – turned into minorities in the 1920s; but they continued to affiliate themselves with the nation of the neighbouring country rather than the one they were living in. Similarly, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, approximately 33 million people belonging to different ethnic groups found themselves being treated as ‘internal others’ by their ‘host’ nation (Brubaker 1995:108).

Exploring state-minority relations in the context of post-imperial and post-Soviet Europe, it is insufficient to focus only on nation-states as the main providers of rights to minorities living inside their own national domains. It is equally important to consider members of national and imperial minorities, who have been struggling to promote their individual and collective rights at all local, national and international levels since the interwar years.

Regarding the dyadic relations between nation-states and members of minorities, Rogers Brubaker, an American sociologist, developed a theoretical framework in the 1990s that added a ‘third’ actor, thus transforming it into a triadic model. According to his understanding, the third actor was the ‘kin-state’ of the imperial or national minority, which fought for the rights of ethnic brethren living outside of its territory.³³

Inspired by the prominent example of interwar Germany’s involvement in the domestic affairs of its neighbours, which was the basis of Hitler’s claims of the mistreatment of Germany’s co-nationals, Brubaker developed his ‘Triadic Nexus Theory’ using the case of 1990s Yugoslavia.

His model of the minority-state-homeland relationship assumes three major agents: nationalizing states, national minorities and external national homelands. ‘Nationalizing states’ is a term introduced by Brubaker, referring particularly to the post-imperial states of the interwar era and the post-Soviet states of Central and Eastern Europe.

Using the term ‘nationalizing’, he explains that the nationalizing state in which national minorities exist is a “state of and for a particular ethnocultural ‘core nation’

³³ For a compilation about the trilateral relations in the context of Europe see European Commission for Democracy through Law (2002).

whose language, culture, demographic position, economic welfare and political hegemony must be protected and promoted by the state” (Brubaker 1996b: 431). Talking about nationalizing states, he also remarks that the nationalization policies of states are not fixed. Rather, these are complex and dynamic efforts defined through clashes between dominant actors or elites of the society, who struggle over influence on the nationalizing state’s policies (Brubaker 1995:112-114).

Similar to nationalizing states, he interprets national minorities as fluid political entities rather than fixed and static collectivities. According to Brubaker, there is a continuous power struggle between the elites of national minorities over formation of policies regarding the minority members. He gives an example about the Sudeten Germans during the Interwar years, in which some activists of Sudetenland preferred to cooperate with the Czechoslovak government, while another faction rejected it and tried to strengthen ties with their kin-state, Germany (Brubaker 1996:61).

Regarding minorities’ internal disagreements, Brubaker underlines the three main characteristics of the ‘multiplicity of stances’ minority elites take when speaking about the minorities they represent.

Firstly, they affiliate themselves with an external homeland different from the one they live in. Secondly, they demand that their host nationalizing state recognize them as belonging to a different nation. And thirdly, following their recognition, they claim certain cultural and political rights such as local or regional autonomy (Brubaker 1996:60).

Similar tensions, which he mentions, also occurred between the elites of the Minority under study over the education of Minority students in Western Thrace during the interwar years. As I analyse in Chapter 4, both traditionalist and modernist elites tried to exert influence over matters of Minority education, to keep it under their control during the interwar years. This shows how Brubaker’s argument for a multiplicity of stances within the Minority elite fits in the context of Western Thrace during the interwar era.

Alongside nationalizing states and national minorities, external national homelands constitute the third actor in Brubaker’s triadic model. Due to kin relations developed between national minorities and external homelands, the latter generally

plays the role of the ‘guarantor’ protecting the rights of their co-nationals living in other countries. As is the case for nation-states and nationalizing minorities, so external national homelands/kin-states’ policies on their ethnic co-nationals living abroad vary through time and by context (Brubaker 1996:66). As Kemp (2006:112) underlines, kin states may base their interests on the plight of the kin minority, the nostalgia for the imperial past, populism, or historical antagonism towards the nationalizing state.

While explaining the basics of his theory, Brubaker frequently underlines the significance of the dynamism of the relations between these three actors. Building on Bourdieu’s notion of ‘relational field’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 94-98), he argues that these three actors should not be imagined as static and unitary agents, but rather as fields of continuous contestation not only between but also within themselves. They compete to defend the rights of a given minority and monopolize its legitimate representation at local, national or international level (Brubaker 1996:61,67-69; Brubaker 1995:118-120). Thus, he emphasizes that analysing only the relations between nationalizing states, national minorities and external homelands is insufficient to understand the triadic relations. For him, it is also necessary to examine the contestations among those actors.

Explaining the basics of Brubaker’s theory of Triadic Nexus, I will briefly analyse the close link between the concept of security and minorities. This will help the reader to understand some of the basic dynamics between the Minority, Turkey and Greece developed throughout this research.

2.8.2 Securitization of minority-related issues

In light of the aforementioned Triadic Nexus model, it is necessary to explore the ‘securitization’ of minority issues. Since the interwar years, the survival of national minorities, particularly the nation-seeking ones as well as those fighting either for secession or unification with their neighbouring kin-states, have generally been interpreted by nation states as a major threat to their sovereignty and survival³⁴. Especially with Nazi Germany’s exploitation of its ethnic brethren to achieve its expansionist aims in the 1930s, nationalizing states’ decision-makers perceived any

³⁴ Even at the national level, it is possible for members of the majority to feel their identities threatened, which can result in ‘societal insecurity’, as was the case in different European countries after the immigration phenomenon of the post-1990s (Wæver 1995:67).

kind of interaction between members of national minorities and their homelands as a significant threat to state security and power. This notion of a threat contributed to the construction of an image of national minorities as potential ‘Trojan horses’ or ‘internal Significant Others’³⁵.

In the contemporary era, a number of countries in the Balkans and Europe continue to be concerned about the aforementioned link between state security and national minorities when formulating policy on the minorities living on their soil. Therefore, the primary actors of the post-Cold War international system, states prefer to make minority rights “subservient to national interest and security within the states, and to international peace and stability within the society of states” (Preece 1998:165).

In fact, some supranational and intergovernmental organizations, particularly the OSCE, made efforts in the early 1990s to ‘de-securitize’³⁶ state-minority-homeland relations, thus contributing to the development of reciprocal understanding and cooperation between these three agents in post-Cold War Europe. For this purpose, they adopted different texts and conventions that aimed to preserve ethnocultural, religious and linguistic diversity across Europe on the one hand, while assuring the territorial integrity of their member countries on the other.

Similar efforts to discourage nation-states from interpreting minority-related issues within the security discourse proved not to be fully effective during the standard-setting process for minority rights between 1990 and 1995. Two main camps of European states emerged, with different priorities and preferences. As it is underlined, some countries like Germany, Austria and Hungary supported the provision of collective rights for territorially-concentrated minority groups, which would promote their cultural, religious and educational autonomy. However, some other countries like Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Slovakia prioritized the preservation of their territorial integrity, and their national security, unity and ideology (Preece 1997).

³⁵ The term ‘internal others’ is commonly used for members of any ethnic group who do not belong to the nation of the majority society. However, Triandafyllidou (2001:34-37) uses the term ‘internal Significant Others’ to refer to ethnic minorities in Europe whom members of the majority consider to pose threats to the territorial integrity or cultural unity of the states in which they live. Similarly, she uses ‘external Significant Other’ to refer to the external kin-state of their ‘significant Internal Other’.

³⁶ For more information about Constructivist debates concerning the ‘securitization’ and ‘desecurization’ of minority rights issues, see Roe (2004); Jutila (2006).

Thus, it can be contended that the international community actually failed to make nation-states detach the concept of security fully from issues regarding minorities in post-Cold War Europe. This is one of the main reasons why the Greek state and the majority of Greeks treat issues about the Minority of Western Thrace as ‘national’ or ‘nationally-sensitive’ issues.

Although Brubaker developed his triadic theorization upon new minorities of the post-Soviet era, many researchers have found it a powerful tool in understanding other historical, national and imperial minorities who adopted minority status after the demise of multiethnic and multi-religious empires in Europe after the First World War. Therefore, in most of the social sciences dealing with the minority rights discourse, one frequently comes across references to the Triadic Nexus.

I treat Brubaker’s model as a source of inspiration for this project. It provides a general set of ideas on which I base the main theoretical argument of this study that seeks to explain the changes in relations between and within actors in Minority education in Western Thrace since 1923. Therefore, in the next section I question the appropriateness of his model in the context of Western Thrace.

2.8.3 A missing fourth actor? The Triadic nexus and Minority education in Western Thrace

As the Triadic Model’s popularity increased after the mid-1990s, so studies emerged testing its applicability in different case studies. Brubaker (2006) mentioned his theory when studying the Hungarian minority living in Romanian region of Transylvania; Kemp (2006) used it for explaining the Act on Hungarians Living in Neighbouring States³⁷. Similarly, other scholars like Laitin (1998), Smith (2002) and Pettai (2006) applied Brubaker’s theorization in the context of Russian-speaking

³⁷ Commonly known as the Status Law, it was supported by more than 90% of Hungarian parliamentarians. The main aim of the new law was to encourage Hungarians living abroad to promote their culture, ethnicity and language. Because the 1920 Treaty of Trianon shrank the former Austria-Hungarian territories around 70%, more than 60% of ethnic Hungarians suddenly found themselves outside of the national territorial boundaries of the Hungarian state. The Status Law seemed to target major ethnic Hungarian minorities living in Hungary’s neighbours, like Slovakia and Romania.

However, as Hungary faced a major reaction from both of the above-mentioned countries, then a fourth party was added to the trilateral dispute. Kemp introduces international law and international institutions like the CoE, OSCE and EU as the fourth dimension to Brubaker’s triadic nexus model. For him, the international community developed four basic criteria to be respected when the kin state opts for a unilateral decision to protect its kin living abroad: territorial sovereignty; *pacta sunt servanda*; positive relations with neighbouring counties; and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights. (Kemp 2006b:121-123).

minorities living in the post-Soviet countries of Eastern Europe, particularly Estonia and Latvia.

Eventually, most of them emphasized that there was a need to transform it into a ‘quadratic’ model, by adding the international organizations as the fourth actor in relations between nation states, national minorities and national homelands. Different case studies across Europe revealed the growing role of supranational and intergovernmental organizations like the EU, NATO, the CoE and the OSCE, which played noteworthy roles in the protection and preservation of national minorities.

In fact, looking deeper in Brubaker’s model I realized that involvement of the international community in minority-related issues was not a new phenomenon of the post-Cold War years. As Cowan (2007:546-547) highlights after drawing parallels between the post-First World War and the post-socialist periods, supranational involvement was actually introduced after 1919 through League of Nations supervision of Minorities Treaties.

Assessing the growing literature on treatment of Europe’s national minorities and realizing the usefulness of Brubaker’s model to explain my case study, I decided to base the main theoretical framework of my case study on the Triadic Nexus model. Initially, it seemed quite a robust explanation of the trilateral relations between the Muslim Turkish Minority, Greece and Turkey over the development of Minority education in Western Thrace between the 1920s and 1970s.

Let me first briefly explain how Brubaker’s model explains my case study, then consider whether I need to add a fourth actor to explain the trilateral relations of states, minorities and homelands in the context of Western Thrace.

2.8.3.1 “Blood is more important than passport”: The growing impact of Turkey in promoting the trilateral model in Western Thrace

As I elaborate in detail in Chapter 4, Greece founded its minority protection scheme on the basis of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, which introduced the bilingual schooling system for Minority children. Thus, they started to learn modern Turkish and the new Turkish alphabet alongside the Ottoman script. In addition, Greece signed two bilateral cultural and educational agreements with Turkey between the 1950s and 1960s,

which had a positive impact on development of modern Turkish language education in Western Thrace. These acts show how Turkey was involved in matters of minority education from the very beginning of Western Thracian Muslims' minoritization process.

Greece was already an independent country after 1821. But it gradually expanded its territories towards the north and east throughout the 19th century. The Greek territorial integrity was almost completed with dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after the World War I. As a nationalizing country of the interwar period, Greek statesmen³⁸ devoted lots of time and energy to various projects intended to nationalize and Hellenise the country. The official language, culture and religion of the country started to be promoted across Greece, at the same time as political, economic and social spheres started to be nationalized.

Nevertheless, some major ethnic groups with a long history in the region felt that their ethnic, cultural and religious survival was threatened by Greece's nationalizing policies. Thus, these groups' elites felt the need for an external protector country that would care for their survival under the Greek administration. For instance, members of the Minority started to perceive Turkey as their kin-state and major protector country. Albania and Romania would be perceived in similar ways by the Tsam Albanians and some Vlach-speaking groups of Northern Greece respectively³⁹.

Highlighting that the blood of these people was more significant than their passports, Turkey and other kin-states of imperial minorities in interwar Europe started to establish strong transborder kinship and ethnonational ties with their co-nationals living in neighbouring countries. Thus, they started to play the role of the external homeland. As they began focusing on protection of the rights of their co-nationals on now-foreign soil, already-strong ties between national minorities and their kin-states were reinforced.

³⁸ I deliberately use this gender-specific expression to show the vast majority of decision makers of the interwar Greek state were composed of men.

³⁹ Romania tried to play the role of kin-state for some Vlach communities in Greece in the first half of the 20th Century. In 1913, Venizelos had signed an agreement with Romania that paved the way for the opening of Romanian schools and churches for these Vlach communities (Poulton 1993:190; Kahl 2003:210). However, Romania under the post-Second World War Soviet regime ceased to deal with Vlachs in Greece. Thus, Vlachs' religious and linguistic autonomy was terminated in the early 1950s (Tsitselikis 2004:114-115). As a result, most of these Vlach communities do not accept Romania as an external homeland.

In the aforementioned context of the interwar years, Turkey started to form ethnonational and kinship ties with the Muslim Turkish minority immediately after 1923. Thus, issues related to the Western Thracian minority started to be mentioned frequently by Turkish politicians, especially MPs in (Turkish) Parliament. During my research in the State Archives of the Turkish Republic in Ankara, I found evidence of this politicization in official documents, like parliamentary questions emphasizing the worsening living conditions of Turks under Greek administration in Western Thrace (DAGM/BCA 1923).

Turkish politicians' growing concern over Minority issues in the post-Lausanne era was actually fuelled by updates from the Turkish Consulate General in Komotini. Opened only one year after the Treaty of Lausanne, the Consulate's primary duties were to serve the Turkish nationals of the region. In addition, it also played the role of an 'observer' closely watching the Greek treatment of the Minority in Western Thrace and reporting to Ankara. In this way, the Turkish state was kept up-to-date with their co-ethnics, whom they had voluntarily left outside the new Republic of Turkey.

In the early 1930s, Venizelos and Atatürk's personal friendship was also reflected in the states' bilateral relations. During the interwar years, both countries actually preferred to solve problems related to the Western Thracian minority at the bilateral level, such as distribution of *établi* certificates that I mention in Chapter 4. This minimized Turkey's potential encouragement of its kin to send petitions from Western Thrace to the LoN, and its own complaints to the LoN about discriminatory Greek policies in Western Thrace. This was probably the main reason that, during my field research, I found no material, either in Greek or Turkish, referring to any Western Thracian Minority application to the minority petition procedure of the League in Geneva in the 1920s and 1930s. Turkey's bilateral relations with Greece worsened in the mid-1950s, which had consequences for Minority life in Western Thrace.

In this dyadic relationship between Greece and Turkey, members of the Muslim Turkish minority frequently found themselves being caught between two mutually-antagonistic nationalisms; that of the host nation in which they live, and that of their external homeland. On the one hand, they were citizens of Greece; but they did not identify themselves as part of the Greek nation. On the other hand, they affiliated

themselves with the nationality of the external national homeland, Turkey; but they were not citizens of that country.

2.8.3.2 “Turkey is our ‘motherland’ and Greece is our ‘homeland’”

Understanding the interaction between Turkey and the Muslim Turkish minority is essential for studying Minority education in Western Thrace; and talking to Minority members in the field helped me to understand how Turkey was perceived among the Minority members. The conclusion that I drew was as follows:

The Minority’s affiliation with Turkey is quite apparent in the ‘gendered’⁴⁰ terminology that they use in everyday language. While speaking about Turkey and Greece, most of the Muslim Turks tend to differentiate between them and underline that they have two ‘lands’; they use the term ‘Anavatan’ [motherland] for Turkey and ‘Vatan’ [homeland] for Greece. The latter implies their imperial, historic and native existence in Western Thrace, while the former refers to an external country with which they have strong ethnic, national and kinship links. Therefore, the vast majority of the Turkish minority, today, perceive Turkey as their kin-state and homeland, and the primary external guarantor of their survival in Greece.

Similar to Brubaker’s arguments about the existence of dynamic and contextual relations, the trilateral relations between and within these three actors were never fixed or primordial. As such, Greek policymakers have adopted various laws and regulations to promote Greek national identity, language and culture through Minority primary and secondary school curricula⁴¹. Similarly, the demands and arguments raised by members of the Minority have changed depending on the demands and priorities of the Minority’s elites. Thus teachers, together with politicians and journalists, have turned out to be the primary socio-cultural and political entrepreneurs of the Minority, who had considerable power to lobby Minority parents about their children’s education. Similarly, Turkey’s

⁴⁰ Regarding the growing discourse of gender in studies about ethnicity, nationalism and governance, see Pateman (1988); Yuval-Davis et. al. (1989:1-14).

⁴¹ As I illustrate in Chapter 4, numerous Greek policies to promote Greek language and culture and Orthodox Christianity among Turkish students started in the 1920s. But because Greece entered a period of social, political and economic turmoil between the advent of the military regime in 1936 and the end of the Greek Civil War in 1949, these policies could not function effectively until the 1950s. Therefore, Greece could not devote sufficient time and energy to the development of the aforementioned values inside and outside Minority schools. However, as explored in Chapter 5, the Greek influence in various realms of the socio-economic, educational and political life of the Minority would resume in the early 1950s and increase over the Cold War years.

policies regarding matters of Minority education in Western Thrace have also changed depending on its relations with Greece and the changing educational needs of Minority students; but Turkey has never refrained from playing the role of the external homeland of the Minority in Western Thrace since 1923.

In this context, Brubaker's triadic model for relations between Greece, Turkey and the Turkish minority was very useful in analysing different issues of Minority education in Western Thrace. However, when elaborating developments in Minority education that started with the development of the internationalization of Western Thracian issues in the early 1980s, a major fourth actor, the international community, needed to be added to Brubaker's model.

Along with the Minority, Greece and Turkey, it has been the international community that has still been having a significant influence over Greek policy on minority education in Western Thrace since the 1980s. Therefore, the last part of the Chapter 6 is devoted to this internationalization, where I explore the increasing role of the fourth actor in promoting the educational rights of the Western Thracian minority, and underline my support for the growing arguments that Brubaker's Triadic Nexus should be transformed into a quadrilateral model with the addition of the international community as the fourth actor.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented an analytical study of the concept of a minority, and of the international protection of minority rights in the European context. Contradicting European standard-setting mechanisms' static interpretations of minorities and their rights, it highlighted social constructionist scholars' presentation of the complexities and ambiguities behind 'minorities' and 'minority rights'.

Following the same approach, this chapter went on to focus upon the phenomenon of minorities in Greece. Within this framework, it underlined how minorities were historically constructed, and how Greek treatment of minorities living within Greece's borders changed over decades. In particular, it gave a brief introduction to the Minority under study and elaborated how different actors played various roles in

the Minority's education system. It did so by explaining the Triadic Nexus Theory of Brubaker, upon which the main theoretical framework of this research project is built.

As has already been underlined in this chapter, ever since the establishment of the League of Nations, the international community has had a tremendous impact on standard-setting and minority rights protection at the international level. Even so, its impact has varied according to the specific cases. As a general rule, though, it is still nation-states that are the main actors in the application of national and international norms for protecting minorities living within their territories. Therefore, the fate of minorities largely depends on the minority policies of individual countries.

In the case of the Western Thracian Minority, along with the international community, it is equally important to take into account Turkey, a country that has been playing a significant role in the development and promotion of Minority education in Western Thrace since 1923. Therefore, it becomes highly useful to refer to Brubaker's tripartite model while analysing educational regime of the Minority, which I start doing in Chapter 4; there, I indicate why it is essential to transform it into a 'quadratic' mode of relations after the 1980s by adding the increasing role of the international community as the fourth actor.

Having analysed various theoretical discussions about minorities and their rights in the realm of education, the next chapter focuses on this project's methodology.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the methodological framework for studying Minority education in Western Thrace. It is composed of three main sections. Firstly, it starts with a brief explanation of my personal story, a short autobiography of a Minority child who grew up in the turbulent 1980s in Western Thrace, dealing with various consequences of ethno-religious, educational and cultural division in a town cohabited by Turks and Greeks. My own story – from early childhood until the beginning of doctoral studies – constitutes one of the fundamental reasons why I focused on the education of the Muslim Turkish minority in Western Thrace. Put it differently, the reason I have done this research and the way I have developed my argument has a lot to do with who I am.

The second part of this chapter provides a review of literature in Greek, Turkish and English regarding the Minority and minority education in Western Thrace before and after 1991. While doing so, it identifies the commonalities and differences between those researches, and situates this study within the broader literature. Thus, this study tries to fill some gaps in the literature and to contribute to the growing discourse of minority rights in Europe and the Balkans.

The third section of the chapter is devoted to my fieldwork experience in Western Thrace. Taking into account my identity as a member of the Muslim Turkish minority, it seeks to explain the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider researcher in the field. In addition to conducting semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, and participant observation in the region, I also visited Athens, Ankara, Thessaloniki and Istanbul, where I did some archival work and research at libraries and research centres. There, I also had the chance to meet some Greek and Turkish academics and hear their opinions on Minority education in Western Thrace. Thus, my stay in the field helped me to broaden my scope and develop my knowledge of the core theme of this research project.

3.2 My autobiography: The significance of Childhood Memories

3.2.1 “My” identity vs. “Your” identity

In various social sciences, researchers dealing with case studies at the micro level generally begin their arguments by describing their initial interactions with the people in the field. Unlike them, I never had the chance to have first-time meetings with the people on which this research is based. Being born as a member of the Muslim Turkish minority, I found myself included in the story that this study tells from the beginning of my childhood.

Before going to the town school, I was not aware of expressions of the identities to which I was entitled, i.e. Turkish, Muslim, Greek and Minority. I was born as a Minority member and as citizen of Greece. But once I started attending the bilingual Minority primary school in my hometown and interacting with my Greek friends in our mixed neighbourhood, I started to grasp the abstract notions of my identity: I was speaking a different language, following a different religion and practicing a different culture from that of my Greek friends. Those characteristics of mine were not generally welcomed by majority society. This was mainly related to its association with Turkey, the Ottoman Empire and Islam.

That is to say, first of all, I was born as an ethnic Turk in Western Thrace, a region that was left outside the borders of modern Turkey as a result of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty. Turkey cultivated its relations with the Minority over the years. This strengthened the official Greek interpretation of Turkey as a potential threat from the East. Secondly, my personal identity was linked to the Ottoman Empire that was often cited as ‘400 years of slavery’ by the majority of Greek society.

And thirdly, my religion made it difficult to see myself as a part of the Greek majority. Although Greece preferred to refer the Minority as ‘Muslims’, the image of Islam was never very positive in the eyes of the Greek society, which was founded upon the fundamental values of Orthodox Christianity. And Islam was generally correlated with backwardness, introversion and isolation from mainstream Greek society and culture.

As a result, feeling ‘other’ inside the wider Greek community of my hometown turned out to be an ordinary part of my everyday life during my childhood in the 1980s,

from which there was no escape. Thus, I gradually became aware that I had to bear the burden of Turkish, Muslim and Ottoman associations, which in the minds of the Greek majority were quite negative. At this point, my Minority primary school and my family became the main places where I learned the primary markers of my identities, which distinguished me from the Greek majority children of the town.

In fact, growing up in the 1980s, I and the vast majority of my generation had not faced direct discrimination by the Greek authorities, due to our young age. However, most of us had heard various stories from our parents and relatives about possible reasons why Minority members continued to suffer ongoing Greek policies of oppression, ghettoization, isolation and discrimination. Although we were citizens of the same country, no such measures were applied to the local Greek population of the region. Why? What possible reason could there be for Greece to discriminate between Turkish and Greek inhabitants of the same region?

Along with highlighting Turkish and Muslim identities, I remember my parents and relatives citing the high rate of illiteracy as the primary reason for their disadvantaged position in Greek society. As I noted in Chapter 1, not being fluent in Greek was coupled with a low level of education, which together contributed to a lack of self-confidence, and strong Minority reactions against the discriminatory policies of the Greek state, which continued until the 1980s.

In this context, the Greek state took the opportunity to exert more pressure and control on the Minority, thus reinforcing the disadvantage of the Minority in the northeastern periphery of Greece. As a result, I remember our families and relatives' discussions finishing as follows: "We were not given the chance to study when we were young. But we will do our best to educate our children." As I mention in the following sections of this chapter, putting more emphasis on the education of their children – especially after 1974 – would actually turn into a significant instrument in the hands of the Minority to end the disadvantaged and discriminated-against status of the Minority.

3.2.2 “My” school vs. “Your” school

In most of the Turkish villages and districts, there were only Minority schools, attended exclusively by Minority students. In mixed localities where Greeks and Turks lived, like my hometown, there were both Minority primary schools and public primary

schools. Although there were no legal restrictions prohibiting Minority pupils from attending public primary schools, almost no Turkish families sent their children to these schools on various grounds, which I will explain now.

Minority primary schools continued to function as the key institutions where the various values of Turkish culture and Islam were transferred from generation to generation. This was the primary reason why parents of Minority children preferred Minority schools. Being attended exclusively by Turkish students, these schools were accepted as ‘our’ schools, in which we felt comfortable speaking ‘our’ language and learning ‘our’ culture as well as the basics of Islam.

However, there were many disparities between the Turkish and Greek primary schools of my hometown. I and most of my Turkish friends particularly envied the modern building of the Greek primary school, with spacious classrooms and a big playground for Greek pupils. Our school was very dilapidated, with crowded classrooms. Thus, I remember numerous instances when I asked my parents: “Why do Greeks have a better, bigger and more modern school than us?” Their general response was always the same: “It is because they are Greeks and we are Turks”. This was only one sign for me and my generation of how the Greek state behaved differently towards Greek and Turk populations sharing the same region, as citizens of the same country.

3.2.3 A football match between “Little Greeks” and “Little Turks”

As Greek-Turkish relations worsened over the Cyprus dispute after Turkey’s intervention in the island in 1974, so relations deteriorated between the two components of the Western Thracian community. Therefore, polarization between Turks and Greeks of Western Thrace started to become more evident in everyday life. As it is analytically studied in Chapter 6, the two communities minimized their interactions throughout 1980s. And, being born in the late 1970s, I had the chance not only to observe but also to experience the effects of this polarization, which helped me to learn more about the basics of Greek nationalism and how to interact and communicate with my Greek friends.

In mixed localities, the ‘imagined’ but socially-real boundaries between Greeks and Turks were much more obvious than in villages inhabited only by Turks. Thus,

notwithstanding our young age, both the Turkish and the Greek children of my town were quite aware of the identity markers that distinguished between ‘us’ and ‘them’. For us, the identities that we were entitled to were primordial and fixed: we were the Turks and they were the Greeks of Western Thrace. To illustrate the impact of the nationalistic rhetoric for both sides, I want to give an example from my own childhood.

In the town, we used to play football together with our Greek friends, but the formation and names of both teams was noteworthy: each team was formed exclusively of Turks or of Greeks, under the names of the ‘Little Turks’ [Ελληνάκια] and the ‘Little Greeks’ [Τουρκάκια], respectively. No teams were mixed, and most of us were aware of the implications of our team names.

In the given context, I remember football matches going beyond a game and generally ending with arguments and even scufflings between the two teams. Thinking of those years, it seems that those matches were played in the spirit of Turkish and Greek soldiers, fighting to win the war between the two countries. This striking example was yet another indication of how negative relations were between the communities in the 1970s and 1980s.

3.2.4 Secondary and Higher Education in Turkey

Besides my childhood memories, a second reason why this project examines Minority education in Western Thrace is related to my experience of secondary and higher education in Turkey.

It was June 1989 when I graduated, at the age of 11, from the Minority primary school; it was time, together with my family, to consider what to do next. I remember long discussions with my parents about my refusal to leave my hometown. This conflicted with their efforts to convince me that, if I wanted to become an educated person, then the only option was to leave them and go to Turkey for secondary and higher education. This was because the university entrance exam in Greece was very competitive, and for the last five decades only a handful of Minority students had managed to enter a Greek university.

From a broader perspective, I was not alone in the hard choice that I and my family made about going to Turkey for secondary and higher education in the early 1990s. This had been the case for almost all families who wanted to educate their

children and provide them with better living standards. As well as hearing various Minority families' stories of sending their children to Turkey for educational purposes, I myself was one of those Minority students to witness Minority families' struggles to send their children to schools in Turkey.

Finishing secondary and high school in Istanbul, I was enrolled in the Department of International Relations at Middle Eastern Technical University (METU). During the undergraduate studies, I preferred to read and write about Greece rather than elsewhere. Therefore, I chose elective courses on Greece, Balkans and EU. Apart from coming from Greece, I also had basic education in Greek from the primary school that I had finished in Greece, which helped me follow debates in Greece.

In time, it became apparent that my personal affiliation with the Minority in Western Thrace started to merge with my growing academic interest in the region. Henceforth, I decided to stay for graduate studies at the same department, and write a master's thesis about continuities and changes in various issues of the Minority before and after the 1990s; it formed a strong basis for my current research project (Chousein 2005). But until my experience as a soldier in the Greek Army, I was still unsure exactly what I would study if I were enrolled in a doctoral program/Ph.D.

During the compulsory military service, I gradually witnessed how important the knowledge of Greek and advanced level of education could be for members of the Minority in the wider Greek context. Looking at the profiles of my local Turkish friends, the vast majority of them had very low educational backgrounds. Most of them were graduates of Minority primary schools and they still had problems communicating in Greek.

Thus, in such a Greek and Orthodox Christian environment, where Greek nationalism thrived, a number of the Minority soldiers felt alienated. Thus, they preferred to spend time together rather than with Greek soldiers. The strong link that I observed between education and their interaction with their Greek friends enabled me to see how speaking the titular language and the level of education affected relations of minorities with majority members in a given context.

Besides the two main reasons that I stated above, I considered myself well-placed to focus on education because I had felt its influence on my personal life before

and after 1991. That is, I grew up in the 1980s and spent six years in the Minority primary school of my hometown. Afterwards, I had the chance to observe the struggle of Minority students studying at secondary and higher education in Turkey for more than a decade. Also, I was fortunate enough to experience not only the growing willingness and determination of Minority families to educate their children in the 1980s and 1990s, but also the intertwined connection between Minority education and the survival of Muslim and Turkish identities in pre-1991 and post-1991 Western Thrace.

As a result, my ‘quest for self-knowledge’ – as Mascarenhas-Keyes (1987:190) calls it – was the primary motivation behind my writing about Minority education. This was a personal quest, greatly influenced by my childhood memories, developed during my undergraduate studies in Ankara, and fulfilled by my writing a doctoral dissertation about Minority education in Western Thrace.

3.3 Puzzling over the Interdisciplinary framework: Is the local also international?

After defining the core theme of my project, one critical puzzle remained to be solved – the interdisciplinary framework within which I wanted to establish my project. I would be writing a dissertation in International Relations; but my IR background was insufficient to combine the micro with the macro level. Thanks to the guidance of my supervisors, I started to discover how relevant were the disciplines of anthropology and sociology in studying minority issues in IR.

Also, I realized how, in the context of my case study, the ‘local’ was also ‘international’. That is, minority education in Western Thrace needed to be studied combining both local and international levels, since it was an international treaty which introduced minority education in Western Thrace, and it was mainly the international community that promoted minority education’s survival for decades. Thus, I concluded that there was a close link between the local and international dimensions of my case study that were mutually constitutive. That is, there were significant elements of the international that already constituted the local and vice versa. Within this mutually-constitutive framework, which becomes clearer in the following paragraphs, it was still

possible to talk about the direct impacts of action by particular actions regardless of their functioning at the local or the international level.

Nevertheless, there was still a significant point that I needed to clarify:

Where does the international dimension actually lie in the whole story that this study is dedicated to, i.e. the development of minority education in Western Thrace?

Recalling my childhood memories, and my research participants who kept underlining the importance of the Lausanne Treaty to the fate of the Minority, I concluded that the international dimension that I wanted to combine with my local fieldwork experience was actually lying at the very heart of my case study and deeply embedded in all primary, secondary and higher levels of Minority education after 1923.

That is to say, the Minority regime in Western Thrace started when different parties, including Greece and Turkey, signed an international agreement. The Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923 constituted the first and foremost international text introducing as well as guaranteeing the Minority's survival in Western Thrace. And it is still the treaty most frequently cited by Turkish and Greek politicians, scholars and Minority elites when referring to minority rights in Greece. However, it would not be correct to talk only about the Lausanne Treaty while dealing with the international aspect of the Minority's educational system. There were some other significant external actors within the international community that had a tremendous impact on the promotion and survival of Minority education until this day.

In this multiplicity of actors, I focus particularly on Turkey, the EU, OSCE, UN and CoE, and international human rights organizations. Although all of them played different roles, all contributed, one way or another, to the continuation of Minority education in Western Thrace. Let me begin with Turkey, the staunchest supporter of the Muslim Turkish presence in Western Thrace.

Turkey, as an external actor, has never refrained from playing the role of the homeland and kin-state of the Minority. Moreover, the opening of the Turkish Consulate General in Komotini in 1924 helped the Turkish state to get accurate and up-to-date information on its kin in neighbouring Greece.

Also, it is the Republic of Turkey that signed and ratified the 1951 Educational Protocol and the 1968 Cultural Agreements with Greece, thus strengthening the involvement of Turkey in the educational and cultural affairs of its co-nationals. Lastly, Turkey also served as the main route to education of Minority students, particularly between the 1960s and 1990s, when their friends could hardly finish public Greek secondary and high schools.

Secondly, the late 1980s witnessed the inclusion of international human rights organizations in matters of Minority education in Western Thrace. Organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International paid several visits to the region, and prepared various reports about Greek minority issues. These reports not only informed the international community on the latest developments in Western Thrace, but also enabled them to criticize Greek handling of the Western Thracian Minority's issues at different regional and international platforms.

Thirdly, it is the EU and other intergovernmental organizations that have been playing significant roles in matters of Minority education in Western Thrace since the 1980s. In spite of Greece's EU accession in 1981, EU mechanisms only became more actively involved in Minority issues in the early 1990s. Until that time, the EU was unable to go beyond telling its member state to stop the violation of rights in Western Thrace. Therefore, the first major EU intervention in Minority education came in the second half of the 1990s, in the form of support for a comprehensive program to fight fundamental problems in the Minority's primary education.

Besides the EU, the CoE and OSCE functioned as significant intergovernmental platforms, where Minority members had the opportunity to raise their voices against ongoing Greek measures in Western Thrace. For instance, in the early 1980s, local Minority elites started to visit different intergovernmental and supranational organizations where they had the chance to make their own complaints against Greece. And considering the role of Turkey as the kin-state, I was not surprised to see that the Minority's international lobbying was generally supported by Turkey. Also, such lobbying by the Minority's elites at European institutions since the 1980s has also encouraged European MPs, foreign media organs and international human rights organizations to visit the region and prepare reports about the Greek treatment of the Muslim Turkish minority. In Chapter 6, I provide a detailed analysis on the role of these

international actors in Minority education and their interconnectedness with Minority elites.

Before finishing my discussion of the external actors involved in matters of Minority education in Western Thrace, I want to note that the above-mentioned external agents do not act independently of each other. Although their priorities and preferences differ, they usually collaborate within the broader international structure in which they function. Therefore, when they tackle issues of Minority education in Western Thrace, it is common to see one of these organizations, that both Greece and Turkey are members of, refer to one of the others' texts or documents.

Going deeper in intertwined and mutually constitutive relations between the local and international actors in my case study, I perceived the existence of a quadratic relationship between Greece, Turkey, the Minority and the international community. This was a dynamic and contextual type of relationship. Seeing its appropriateness to my case study, I decided to build the main theoretical framework of this study on the Triadic Nexus Theory. But I also add a fourth actor to it, i.e. International community, while dealing with discussions about internal and external actors of Minority education in Western Thrace.

Although the impact of the international on the local (and vice versa) varied, the two levels' connection has been present in Minority educational matters from the very beginning of the formation of a minority regime in Western Thrace in 1923. Henceforth, while dealing with local developments in the realm of Minority education in Western Thrace, the macro international level and its actors are referred to frequently throughout this study.

Having explained the origins of this project, how it developed through the passage of time and the main puzzles that I faced before making the decision to write about Minority education, the next section comprises the literature review of this project, which helped me to expand my knowledge and adopt a broader framework when studying Minority education in Western Thrace.

3.4 Methodological Accounts

While reviewing the literature on the Minority, I realized that methods used scholars were almost the same: Some scholars paid visits to the region and made observations about the Minority. Some of them visited for the first time while others either lived in the region or paid frequent visits to it. Some local Greek scholar also referred to their childhood experience. But as I explained in chapter one, most of the Greek and Turkish scholars couldn't use each other's books or articles given that only a few of them knew the language of the other side.

This study differs methodologically from other studies in some ways: First, it uses both Greek and Turkish sources together. Second, it often provides autobiographical information since I was born and brought up as a Minority member. Third, it reflects my fieldwork experience in the field as an insider researcher. Unlike most scholars in the discipline of IR, I decided to add fieldwork to the methodology of my thesis. Therefore, I spent a year in the field where I did semi-structured interviews, participant observation. Next section provides detailed information about my fieldwork in Greece.

3.5 Going back to the region where you come from: Fieldwork experiences as a native researcher

Between September 2008 and August 2009, I spent approximately a year doing fieldwork⁴² in Western Thrace. My hometown was 15 kilometres from Komotini and 20 from Xanthi. Therefore, I spent most of my time in these two cities and used home primarily as a place to sleep.

I did semi-structured interviews with Minority elites associated with various issues in Minority education, like MPs, former politicians, presidents of Minority associations and journalists. I also interviewed some ordinary families and undergraduate students about the past and present of Minority education. Most of them preferred our conversations not to be recorded but they allowed me to take notes. A number of them invited me to their own places so that I also had a chance to observe

⁴² Having an IR background I had only a little knowledge about fieldwork before beginning my doctoral studies. After reading on basics of the discipline, I applied some methods, like semi-structured interviews and participant observations in the field.

their personal lives. Moreover, I participated in a variety of cultural events organized by the Minority, where I had the chance to hear about Minority interpretations of various issues in Western Thrace.

Since the main focus of this project was on Minority education in Western Thrace, most of my questions were related to the education of Minority children. Nevertheless, as education was closely linked with some other issues in Western Thrace, such as ethnicity, identity and minority rights, so most of my informants kept referring, consciously or unconsciously, to some of the Minority's other fundamental problems. Their talking about their own issues actually helped me to see a broader picture of how my informants comprehended Minority education issues as part of their everyday lives.

Before getting into the details of my fieldwork, let me mention the general dilemmas faced by insider and outsider researchers.

3.5.1 The dichotomy of Insider and Outsider

Before elaborating my identity as a native researcher in the context of Western Thrace, I want to clarify that the usage of the term “native” is still contested within the social sciences. In the first half of the 20th Century, white European and North American scholars' fieldwork in black and indigenous communities in different parts of the globe started with Malinowski's famous work dating back to 1922 (see Malinowski 1978). This trend of going to the field and conducting research was later followed by other anthropologists and ethnographers.

Meanwhile, insider scholars studying their own communities also emerged, thus blurring the fine line between the researcher and the researched (Jackson 1987:1-14). And after the pioneering study of R.K. Merton (1972), when the number of natives doing anthropology at home had increased, the primordial understanding of the concepts of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ researchers started to be questioned (Peirano 1998). Since then, different criteria such as ethnicity, religion, race, class and gender have widely been used to define the boundaries between an insider and an outsider in various social sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, folklore, gender and migration studies.

Looking at the growing literature on the insider/outsider debate, it seems that neither concept is fixed or primordial. Rather, they are “ever-shifting and permeable

social locations that are differentially experienced and expressed by community members” (Naples 1996:84). That is to say, it is possible for non-natives, deeply involved in the everyday lives of the community that they study, to turn into insiders or “go native” as it is termed by social anthropologists (Wagner 1981:17). Similarly, the opposite is also possible. For the sake of getting a wider point of view in the field, native researchers sometimes try to become ‘outsiders’ in their own communities.

In sociological terms, Simmel (1950:402) calls this insider-outsider shift “the unity of nearness and remoteness of the stranger”. Similarly, Mendez (2009:86) underlines that there is a continuous negotiation and renegotiation of the “insiderness” and “outsiderness” of the researcher depending on the context. In fact, it is evident that researchers experience the constant construction and deconstruction of their identities while communicating with their research participants in the field. Thus, the status of an insider and outsider is neither static nor predetermined. It emerges depending on the interaction between the researcher and the research participants, as well as the socio-political situation in which this interaction occurs (Kusow 2003:597).

In fact, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural commonalities are among the main advantages of native researchers studying their own communities. However, being a native researcher does not always mean that you will have better access to research participants or you will elaborate your case study better than the outsider researchers. Some outsiders can sometimes have access to data and information that the insider cannot. Still, the outsider should keep in mind that minority communities, particularly ones living in small and isolated localities, have developed a number of self-protective strategies for communicating with outsider researchers (Zinn 1979:212-213).

In fact, rather than having an insider identity per se, you have a level of “insiderness”, constructed in the minds of your informants as a result of the ongoing interaction between you and your subjects during your fieldwork. It should be underlined that it is not only the researcher who observes the participant during the fieldwork. It is also the latter who closely observes the former, which underlines the existence of a two-way interaction between the researcher and the participant. Therefore, as Labaree (2002) contends, methodological and ethical dilemmas of an insider are not predetermined. Rather, they are hidden and circumstantial.

In spite of being a member of the community, the insider may find that research participants may keep asking him or her a number of questions, especially on political and controversial issues, generally to locate the researcher within the community. Therefore, the level of “nativeness” of the insider is primarily defined by the community members, depending on the answers that the insider gives. In particular, if the insider’s basic beliefs diverge from those of the research participants, then it is likely that the latter will probably limit their interaction with the researcher, or even terminate it completely. Thus, the ‘insider’ turns into an ‘outsider’ in the eyes of the research participants, or transforms into a kind of “suspicious insider” as happened to Kusow (2003:594) during fieldwork in his own Somali immigrant community in Canada.

Having talked about the insider-outsider dilemma in the field, next I provide a detailed analysis of my own experience as a native researcher.

3.5.2 My struggle with problems and dilemmas as a native researcher

In the context of Western Thrace, I define myself as an ‘insider’ or ‘native researcher’. I was born and bred in the region, practice the same religion, speak the same Western Thracian idiom⁴³ of Turkish, and share the same culture with members of the Muslim Turkish minority. Although I finished secondary and higher education in Turkey, I still live in Greece together with my family and have not migrated to Turkey or other European countries. Therefore, I am neither a ‘returning native’⁴⁴, nor a ‘semi-native’, hybrid, or ‘halfie’.⁴⁵

During the fieldwork, I felt that my respondents generally interpreted my continuous residence in the region as if I was also sharing the same faith with all other Minority inhabitants of the region. I felt that this actually strengthened my native character in the eyes of my informants. Some of them treated me as one of their friends,

43 While talking with Minority elites, I preferred to speak Turkish with an Istanbul accent; but while communicating with ordinary members of the Minority, I deliberately spoke Turkish language with the Western Thracian accent. One of the reasons to do so was to make my respondents feel closer to me. Another was that it was my own dialect, which made me feel more comfortable while speaking Turkish in Western Thrace.

44 Grahame and Grahame (2009:308) mentions those as ‘returning native’ those who grew up in X community, lived for a long years abroad, and eventually turns back to study the community of X.

45 Abu Lughod (1991:137) uses the term “halfie” to refer to those whose identity is mixed on the basis of migration, overseas education or mixed marriages between different cultures.

brothers, or even their own children who had not left the “battlefield”⁴⁶ and still struggled on, “surviving under the Greek flag”⁴⁷.

While some others even expressed how proud they felt about my success to do a PhD in the UK, and still others congratulated me for studying education, one the most fundamental and sensitive issues of the Turkish minority.⁴⁸ As a result, they opened not only their personal spaces to me, like their houses or offices, but also their hearts. Thus, I felt that I was perceived as a “really real”⁴⁹ Muslim Turkish member of the Minority by my respondents, which gave me the unique opportunity to hear more about their individual stories, as well as their prospects for the near future.⁵⁰

Being a native researcher in the field, I did not face basic problems – in entering the field, adapting or communicating – which an outsider would face when approaching the Minority. Having insider knowledge on issues of Minority education in Western Thrace actually helped me not only to facilitate the research process, but also to establish a rapport with my informants in the field. Nevertheless, since both insiders and outsiders have to cope with various problems during fieldwork, I was still ready to face some fundamental obstacles and ethical-methodological dilemmas emanating from my insider status:

First of all, from the very beginning of this project I was certain that I needed to balance my emotions with my research in the field. As I mentioned above, in spite of

46 The term “battlefield” is still used by members of the Turkish minority to refer to the clash of ideas, interests and demands between the Greek state and the Minority in Western Thrace. On the one hand, Turks demand the safeguarding of rights emanating from the Greek constitution, as well as those from bilateral and international treaties that Greece has signed and ratified. On the other hand, Greece still insists on having absolute control over Minority issues, so it still violates a number of group-based minority rights in the realms of education, religion and identity. The usage of the “leaving the battlefield” expression refers to those Minority members who cannot resist discriminatory Greek policies and permanently leave Western Thrace.

47 Talking to Turks in the field, I heard this phrase so many times, which in Turkish is [Gavur/Yunan bayrağı altında yaşamak]. After our conversations, I concluded that it was used for any kind of struggle between the Greek state and the Minority in Western Thrace. However, its main implication was that Turks in the region should do their best to perpetuate their presence in Western Thrace without being assimilated into the majority culture of the host nation.

48 In fact, since 1923 the number of Minority students writing a PhD about any issue of the Minority has been quite low. And most of them chose to pursue their academic professions at universities at Turkish universities.

49 I borrow this term from De Andrade (2000:283), who uses it for native Cape Verdian ethnographers making research in their own Cape Verdian American Community in New South England.

50 Although my personal way of thinking diverged when exploring some basic issues of Minority education, I tried not to highlight them during our conversations. I tried to let the participants state their own arguments, because it was certain that an argument between me and my informants would limit my interaction with them thus affecting the productivity of my fieldwork.

being a member of the Minority, I never faced major problems with Greek state apparatuses in Western Thrace that could have made me prejudiced against Greece. Nevertheless, as I stated earlier in this chapter, my generation of the 1980s grew up hearing various stories from our families about how negative the treatment of the Greek state was towards the Turks in Western Thrace in the past. Therefore, the general image of Greece constructed in our minds was not very positive. It is for this reason that I deliberately tried to leave aside my emotions during my stay in the field, and rather try adopting a neutral stance dealing with issues related to my case study. Here, I was in a similar position as Brayboy, an American Indian, who worked hard to find the balance between being a good researcher and a good “Indian” while making ethnographic research in his own indigenous Navajo community (Brayboy and Deyhle 2000: 164).

Thus, when I was in the field I frequently tried to act like an outsider, as if visiting the region for the first time. It was like showing my informants that I was wearing several hats at once (*ibid.*, 165) – that of a friend, a relative, a coethnie and a researcher. But renegotiation of my porous insider and outsider identities never became easy. It was highly difficult and painful, but not totally impossible, to act as an “outsider” in the community you still belonged to. Although this was not welcomed by some of my research participants, like friends and relatives, I frequently felt the need to balance my own personal narrative that was inevitably affected from my insiderness with my analysis and observation during my stay in the field; in the community, as Narayan (1993: 679-682) notes I acted as a hybrid of the personal and the professional.

Wearing my researcher hat, I started asking my research participants basic questions about various issues of the Turkish minority, as if I had little knowledge. Some of my respondents showed a great reaction on the basis that I already knew the possible answers that they might give. But in doing so I was actually trying to problematize and puzzle them with my questions, to make them think in a broader perspective and to provide me a variety of answers, which would altogether contribute to the development of my knowledge of issues in Western Thracian Minority education.

This method of switching hats generally worked with many of my interviewees. However, because education was among the most sensitive and highly-politicized issues of the Minority, most of the answers that I got were very sharp, direct and accurate, leaving almost no space for the researcher to disagree overtly.

Secondly, some of my respondents were also keen to ask what I thought about particular issues in Minority education. Since education of the Minority was highly politicized and sensitive not only for the Minority but also for the Greek state, they wanted to hear my own position on Minority educational matters.

In the beginning of the fieldwork, because of my previous knowledge, I assumed that I would agree with all of my informants' basic ideas. As I started to develop my knowledge during my stay in the region, I gradually realized that my ideas and arguments, with some exceptions, converged with most of those raised by my informants. Therefore, I confirmed that the 'imagined' picture of Western Thrace that I constructed before the fieldwork was very close to the one drawn by my interviewees. This was also another indication that, as an insider researcher, I was not far away from the realities of Minority education in Western Thrace.

Thirdly, it is also difficult for native ethnographers to balance their roles as fieldworkers with the expectations of the community members. This becomes a major problem for the insider researcher when their ideas converge with the research participants'. In this case, the researched community may even start treating the researcher as one of their representatives, voicing their demands at different national and/or international platforms. However, as it was the case for Ergun and Erdemir (2010:18), being treated in this way is not something that either insider or outsider researchers would choose, because this could endanger the overall academic quality of the research project.

From time to time, I also felt the aforementioned treatment while talking to my respondents in Western Thrace. Some of them overtly expressed their wishes that this project could somehow contribute to the solution of some fundamental problems in the realm of Minority education in Western Thrace. But while communicating with my respondents in the field, I deliberately tried to distance myself from being seen as an advocate of the Muslim Turkish minority.

Fourthly, I needed to talk to Greek officials in the region as well as those in Athens in order to access the official data and institutional documents about issues of Minority education in Western Thrace. However, I had not previously contacted any Greek authority about Minority issues; and after the stories of my childhood I had not

got a very positive image of Greek officials in either Western Thrace or Athens, where decisions about the Minority were taken.

Henceforth, as I arrived in the field I initially felt slightly uncomfortable approaching the local Greek authorities about my project. Especially during my stay in Athens, where I also did my archival research in the library of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I wondered how I would be treated on the basis that I was focusing on issues of the Minority, most of which were still accepted as ‘national’ and ‘sensitive’ issues in Greek society.

Similar feelings also prevailed in Komotini and Xanthi, when I first visited the offices of the Greek authorities responsible for Minority education in Western Thrace. Therefore, I thought that my identity as well as my research topic might discourage some Greek officials from helping me when collecting official data from Greek institutions. This also reminded me of Greek researchers’ similar anxieties when conducting fieldwork on Minority issues (see Ioannidou 2009:69) However, contrary to my expectations, most of the Greek institutions tried their best to help me carry out research in Komotini and Athens. This made me feel more comfortable during the rest of my fieldwork.

Explaining the main problems that I had to cope with as an insider, this chapter finishes by underlining some of common concerns emphasized frequently by the informants, which helped me to grasp the wider picture of the development of Minority education in Western Thrace before and after 1991.

3.6 Talking to research participants as an insider researcher

Although conversations with my informants revolved around issues of Minority education, there were five main issues that they wanted me to take into account before telling me about the development of Minority education in Western Thrace.

Firstly, they underlined why they felt uncomfortable talking to non-native researchers doing research in Western Thrace. Secondly, they emphasized the period after the restoration of democracy in 1975, in order to signify how Greece continued to violate their rights until the late 1980s, even if it had become an EU member in 1981. Thirdly, debates about the identity of the Minority were frequently underscored. And

lastly, the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 was quite popular; most of them often referred to the Lausanne Treaty while interpreting issues related to Minority education.

3.6.1 Communicating with the outsider researcher: A matter of disappointment and insecurity

Being interviewed by researchers was not a new phenomenon for the members of the Muslim Turkish Minority. Parallel to the change in the Greek Minority Policy of 1991, Greek researchers were started to do fieldwork in different parts of the region in the 1990s and 2000s. Especially the mountainous section of the region attracted the attention of researchers towards the late 1990s. In addition to the dense Minority population, numbering around 40.000 (*Ortam* 22.12.1992) it was hard to make research at the highlands since it was a surveillance zone controlled by the Greek army between 1936 and 1998. In this respect, it was perceived as an ‘oasis’ for research by the Greek and Turkish academics.

With the growing Greek academic interest in the Minority, some of my informants seemed to be quite relaxed about answering my questions as they had been interviewed so many times before. In her fieldwork notes, a Greek anthropologist, A. Papanikolaou (2007:77), quotes a Minority woman explaining that “I am used to being interviewed. I have given interviews to journalists, researchers, and people who were doing their Ph.Ds”.

While some of them felt comfortable and experienced talking about themselves, most of my interviewees underlined that they were actually disappointed about outsider researchers regardless of his/her ethnicity, nationality, class or gender. When I asked for some reasons, the vast majority of them replied as follows: “Although they ask us questions and we reply them, they insist on writing not what we say but what they want, think or believe”. The Turkish expression “Kendi bildiklerini okuyorlar” [to write what you believe, not what you observe] was the main criticism, particularly directed at Greek scholars and journalists who conducted research on the Minority.

Similar criticisms of non-Minority researchers were probably a consequence of a written or oral knowledge developed amongst Minority members over decades. Talking to my respondents, I realized that they were actually more optimistic about the appearance of outsiders in the 1990s, who were anticipated by the Minority elites to

contribute to the fostering of international sensitivity towards the region, which could help to stop Greece violating rights of the Muslim Turkish minority. However, towards the late 1990s it became apparent that the increasing number of academic studies on the Minority had no significant impact on Greek violations of minority rights in Western Thrace in the 2000s. Thus, most of the Muslim Turks rejected being treated as ‘guinea pigs’, and preferred to stay away from non-native researchers visiting or staying in Western Thrace.

In fact, my fieldwork experience in the region helped me to conclude that the vast majority of the Turkish Muslim minority still have little understanding of the academic works written about them, especially those prepared in Greek or English. Nor did they seem to want non-Minority outsiders to comment on minority-related matters in Western Thrace. As of today, most of the Turks in Western Thrace still hesitate to talk to outsiders, particularly to Greek researchers who are widely supposed to have a prejudiced attitude towards Minority-related issues. In this context, it was a big surprise to me that even the younger generation of the Minority, such as the university graduates or those still enrolled at universities in Greece or Turkey, do generally refrain from reflecting on Minority issues when asked by non-Turkish-speaking researchers visiting Western Thrace.

Besides the aforementioned disappointment, my interviewees also emphasized the security dimension of talking to non-native researchers. In fact, talking to a foreign researcher has been a security concern for small and isolated communities more generally. Since the Muslim Turkish minority lives in a border region, the possibility of treating outsiders as a possible ‘spy’ or ‘agent’ of Greece or any other country, including Turkey, is still quite high. They gave me some examples from the past when some people who approached them as researchers were, later, revealed to work for secret services trying to collect information about the Minority in Western Thrace. Therefore, most of them tried to keep their distance from researchers approaching them in the field.

Regarding the security concern, Papanikolaou (2007:67-68) explains that she came across instances when she felt she was perceived as the ‘agent’ of the Greek Information Service, *EYII*, by some Minority informants. In fact, attributing such titles to researchers was not peculiar to Minority members about members of the Greek

majority. For example, some members of the local Greek majority of the region treated Vemund Aarbakke, a Norwegian historian, as an ‘agent’. As he puts it (2000:15), where a foreigner comes to the region, carries out research and interacts with Minority members, he would probably be tailed by the Greek Civil Police during his stay in Western Thrace.

As well as for Minority members, the presence of a foreign researcher in Western Thrace has also been a matter of concern for the local Greek Police. Non-native researchers coming to the region for the first time generally approach Greek local authorities and explain the main purpose of their presence. However, most of them still cannot escape from the vigilance of the Greek civil police. It is common for a foreign researcher to be tailed by the Greek Civil Police during the fieldwork in Western Thrace.

During my presence in the field, I remember a similar story of an outsider researcher carrying out research in Western Thrace. One day, she met me in a café and burst into tears because Greek Civil Police continuously followed her wherever she went inside and outside of Komotini. In addition to feeling highly uncomfortable, she was astonished and horrified how this type of harassment could happen in an EU country, which was also prominent for being the cradle of democracy.

After listening to her, I tried to explain to her that this was not a unique case. The region was one of the border regions of Greece, and Minority issues were still accepted as ‘sensitive’ for the Greek state. Therefore, it was common to hear stories about the Greek Civil Police tailing foreign researchers in Western Thrace. What I suggested her was to approach him and explain what her main research was about, as well the purpose of doing research in Komotini. Two days later, she met me again and explained that, after talking to him, she was followed less frequently.

3.6.2 The restoration of democracy in 1974 and its aftermath: “Don’t remind us of the 1980s!”

Talking about Minority education in Western Thrace, a great number of my interviewees began their stories with the 1967 Military Regime. Nevertheless, almost all of them underlined that conditions in Western Thrace deteriorated in the post-Junta period. Although the Colonels’ Regime ended in 1974 and democracy returned Greece,

the violation of human and minority rights gradually increased with the Karamanlis government of 1975 and peaked under the PASOK administration during the 1980s. Thus, Minority members living in all three prefectures of Western Thrace had to live under discriminatory Greek measures until the beginning of the 1990s.

Recalling the 1980s, most of my informants emphasized that democracy returned to Athens in 1975; and Greeks became EU citizens after the country's accession in 1981. However, it took until 1991 for democracy to arrive in Western Thrace. Therefore, according to the majority of my informants who referred to the 1980s as a 'turbulent decade', this was a period full of stories of distress and misery under the Greek administration and being discriminated against by it, which I elaborate deeper in Chapter 6.

Henceforth, explaining their stories of the pre-1990s, most of them showed fierce anger not only towards the Greek state, but also to the European Union. For them, the EU did almost nothing to stop Greece violating their individual and collective rights for almost a decade between 1981 and 1991. Although the EU and other transnational organizations increased their involvement in the region after the 1990s, Turkey was the main force pressing for the survival of Turkish and Muslim identities in Western Thrace throughout the 1980s. This automatically helped strengthen relations between the Minority and Turkey, the foundations of which had been laid with the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.

3.6.3 Identification of the Minority: Turks, Muslims or a combination of both?

As it becomes apparent in Chapters 4 to 7, effects of the official naming of the Western Thracian Minority on different issues of Minority education were tremendous between the 1950s and 1991. Official changing of school names, some Minority students' arguments with their Greek teacher at the public Greek secondary schools on Turkey and 'Turkishness' of the Minority, singing silently the Turkish national anthem during the Greek national-day celebrations are only a few examples for the strong link between identification and education of the Minority in Western Thrace.

According to Greek officials, from the 1920s until the 1970s, Minority members were referred to either as 'Turks' or as 'Muslims'. From the 1970s until the early 1990s,

Greece officially recognized the existence of a 'Muslim' minority in Western Thrace. And from 1991 onwards, Greece repeated its reference to a 'Muslim' minority in Western Thrace that was composed of those with Turkish descent (no usage of the term 'Turk'!), Pomak and Roma. Unlike Greece, Turkey's official reference to the Minority has never changed. Since the early 1920s, Turkey has referred them either as 'Turks' or 'Muslim Turks'. The latter is preferred by only a handful of Greek scholars who follow a critical approach to minority issues in Greece.

Given the two different official viewpoints over their own identities, some basic questions still remained:

- How did my informants define themselves?
- Was the identification a matter of controversy between the Minority and the Greek state? If yes, what were its effects on Turkish language and cultural education in the bilingual curriculum of Minority primary and secondary schools?

First of all, the great majority of my informants had a primordialist attitude towards their own identities. Contrary to the growing literature emphasizing how identities are constructed and deconstructed depending primarily on contextual changes, most of the research participants used three main terms to identify themselves: "We are of Turkish ethnic origin, following Islam and we are citizens of Greece as well". Mentioning the three main characteristics of their identities, they still underlined that they felt themselves more affiliated with their Turkish and Muslim identities than their Greek one.

Within this framework, they preferred themselves to be identified as either 'Turks' or 'Muslim Turks'. This was also one of the main reasons why they sent their children to Minority primary schools. As I previously highlighted, these schools were 'their' schools, where the values of Turkishness and Islam were transferred to younger generations of the Minority. Therefore, the Minority interpreted these institutions as if 'guaranteeing' the Minority's survival in the region.

Indeed, neither of these terms was invented as a result of disputes over the official identification of the Minority between Turkey and Greece. They were actually inherited from the Ottoman Millet system, which used both 'Turk' and 'Muslim'

interchangeably to refer to its Muslim ummah⁵¹. Similarly, one year before the region becoming a Greek territory, the term ‘Turkish Muslims’ was also used by the Committee of Western Thrace when visiting the 1922 Lausanne meetings, *Comite de la Thrace-Occidentale*, in reference to the majority members of today’s Western Thrace and southern Bulgaria (See Appendix II). Similarly, the vast majority of the Minority press that I looked through covering the period between the 1930s and 2010 referred to the Minority either as ‘Turks’ or ‘Muslim Turks’.

In fact, looking from a broader perspective, it is obvious that the dyadic interpretation of the Minority seems to be a useful method for the identifier and the identified, a compromise between the two official identifications of Greece and Turkey. It is the easiest way not to irritate either the host country, Greece, or the kin-state, Turkey.

Going deeper into the everyday conversation of Minority members, it seems that Greece’s insistence for identifying the Minority as ‘Muslim’ after 1991 contrasted with the Minority’s self-identification, and was rejected by Minority members. As Zaimakis and Kaprani (2005: 79, footnote.1) note, one does not hear Minority members defining themselves as Muslims in their everyday life. Similar to these scholars’ observations, none of my research informants referred to themselves as ‘Muslims’; all of them identified themselves as ‘Turkish’ or ‘Muslim Turkish’.⁵² As it is underlined by Christos Rozakis (1996) and Nicos Mouzelis (2006), two well-known Greek professors of law and sociology respectively, one could actually speak of an ethnic Turkish minority whose members show willingness to preserve their characteristics contrary to those Greek arguments about the existence of a Muslim minority. At this point, Rozakis (ibid., 103) further emphasizes that any reference to the religious elements of the minorities in Western Thrace and Istanbul based on religious denomination used at text of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty “did not automatically reduce them to religious minorities which deserved protection of their religion and only that.”

As a result, the Greek official denial of ethnic Turkish identity in Western Thrace after the 1980s seems to have been counterproductive: Minority members started

⁵¹ In his book, Karpas (1985:70) notes that most of the European sources published in the 19th Century accepted Muslims living under Ottoman rule in the Balkans as having ethnic Turkish origins.

⁵² During my stay in the field, I also observed some Minority members as identifying themselves as ‘Pomaks’, ‘Greek Pomaks’, ‘Roma’ or ‘Greek Muslims’. But their numbers were very small compared to others identifying themselves as ‘Turkish Muslim’ or ‘Turks’.

to affiliate themselves more with the ethnic Turkish identity in the region. Thus, I categorize the Minority, whose members have been residing on their historic territories since the Ottoman times in Western Thrace, as ethnic, ethnoreligious, national and imperial. Also, I use both terms, ‘Turks’ or ‘Muslim Turks’, interchangeably when referring to the Minority.

3.6.4 “The 1923 Lausanne Treaty is our own constitution”

Besides emphasizing their affiliations with ethnic Turkish identity, my informants kept referring to a treaty signed in the early 1920s while speaking about Minority education in Western Thrace. They so frequently referred to 1923 that it made me question how an international text adopted almost 80 years ago could remain significant in the eyes of the Minority.

The section between Article 37 and Article 45 of the Lausanne Treaty mentions the rights of Muslim and non-Muslims in Western Thrace and Istanbul respectively (see Appendix I). Covering a wide range of issues from religion to education, it constitutes one of the fundamental international texts protecting the survival of both Turkish and Greek minorities exempted from the Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey in the early 1920s.

It was significant to see my informants treating the Lausanne Treaty as their own “constitution” and one of the key instruments guaranteeing the Minority’s survival in the region, its resistance to assimilation into Greek culture. Though signed decades ago, the 1923 Lausanne Treaty seemed to be highly popular in the Minority community, even more than the EU and CoE apparatuses for the protection of minority rights.

In fact, talking to people in the field, I concluded that most of the ordinary Minority members were not much interested in the text of the Treaty. Some of them even treated it as bilateral treaty signed between Greece and Turkey. Nevertheless, they still kept attributing significance to the Lausanne treaty while speaking about matters of Minority education.

To cut a long story short, talking to people and looking through various Minority newspapers, I realized that the popularity of the Lausanne Treaty has never disappeared in Western Thrace since 1923. And, it has been deeply involved in the history of the

Minority lying at the core of various minority issues in Western Thrace. Although almost all other treaties for the protection of minorities under the League of Nations, i.e. the Minorities Treaties, became null and void after the League of Nations system collapsed with the outbreak of the Second World War, the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 continues to play a key role in the issues of the Minority in Western Thrace.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided the main methodological framework with which to understand Minority education in Western Thrace, and sheds light on how and what kind of problems an insider faces when making research inside the community that he belongs to. It emphasizes the how this project started and developed in the first two years of my doctoral studies, underlining the impact of making fieldwork on the direction and content of a dissertation.

In this chapter, I also underlined the dilemmas, challenges and advantages of doing fieldwork for researchers with an IR background. Moreover, I provided a review of the literature in all three of the major languages. I identified some gaps that this study aims to partially fulfil; and I explained how I hope to contribute to the growing literature on minorities in the Balkans and Europe. Together with Chapter 2, these constitute the fundamental theoretical and methodological bases on which I will build my case study on Minority education in Western Thrace.

Lastly, this chapter argued that it is extremely useful and challenging to do fieldwork and see how the community thinks, acts and interprets issues about themselves at the local level. My experience showed me that doing fieldwork is a very powerful way to make things clearer, if also sometimes even more complicated, in the minds of the researcher. Even though I was a member of the Minority under study and I had a previous knowledge of my research subject, from time to time I felt myself puzzled and even challenged during my stay in the region. However, this enabled me to interpret educational issues of the Minority from a broader perspective than another insider or outsider researcher who had not done any kind of fieldwork in Western Thrace.

CHAPTER 4: Emergence of Minority Education in Western Thrace

4.1 Introduction

Having established the theoretical and methodological bases for this study in the previous two chapters, this chapter has two main aims. Firstly, it seeks to explain how the regime of Minority education in Western Thrace was established and how it evolved between 1923 and the end of the Greek Civil War in 1949. Secondly, it aims to show the reader how the lack of Greek state authority in various realms of Minority education contributed to Minority elites' control over education inside and outside Minority schools until the end of 1940s.

This chapter first considers how were the Ottoman Muslim millet's initial years of adaptation to a new status as a minority within majority Greek society. Next, it reviews the predecessor to Minority education, the education of Western Thracian Muslims under the Ottoman Empire. Then, it provides a detailed analysis of the first decade of bilingual education in Western Thrace; and it underlines the role of Greece and Turkey in the formation of the Minority schism between Modernists and Traditionalists, and its impact on Minority education.

This chapter frequently refers to the official 1929 and 1930 reports⁵³ of the Greek Inspector of Minorities (hereinafter the Inspector). The Inspector prepared them after visiting the region and talking to both Minority and majority Greek elites on various issues of the Minority, including education. Few official sources address interwar Minority life; so these archival reports, prepared on the order of the Greek Prime Minister, help to paint a broader picture of the socio-economic, political and educational life of the Minority between 1923 and 1930.

After analysing the first decade of Minority education in Western Thrace, I go on to explain Minority education under the military dictatorship of Metaxas, one of the Greek leaders who tried to use mass education to unite all Greek citizens, regardless of

⁵³ Both reports were prepared on the order of Venizelos, who wanted to understand the Minority's living conditions and problems.

any difference in mother tongue or religion, against enemies of the country. Also, he was the first to emphasize teaching Greek at Minority schools in Western Thrace after 1923.

After the Metaxas period, I analyse Minority education in Western Thrace during the miserable decade between 1939 and 1949. This was a period of war, famine and misery for all Greek citizens, which began with World War II and the German and Bulgarian occupation, and culminated in the Greek Civil War (1946-1949). While explaining the key issues in Minority education between 1923 and 1949, this chapter also analyses the different roles that Greece and Turkey played in the promotion of the Lausanne Treaty-based system of bilingual education in Western Thrace.

4.2 The process of “minoritization”, homogenization and Hellenization in Western Thrace: The Lausanne Treaty and its immediate aftermath

Both Turkey and Greece were struggling to throw off the heritage of a multi-ethnic traditional society and build a mono-ethnic state instead (Clark 2006:216)

By the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, the population exchange between Greece and Turkey had already come to an end. New minority regimes were created in both Western Thrace and Istanbul (including the islands of Imbroz and Tenedos) on the basis that both countries exempted around 120,000 of their co-nationals from the exchange of populations. Thus, both of these communities continued living on their soil but governed with a nation foreign to them.

The first decade after 1923 was very difficult for the Muslim Turkish population for a variety of reasons such as official change of their statutes, homogenization and Hellenization of Western Thrace.

First of all, their status rapidly fell from that of a ‘majority ummah’ and ‘advantaged’ population to that of a ‘minority’ and ‘disadvantaged’ one. They found themselves governed by people with a different language, religion and culture. Although their prior ‘Ottoman’ identity was very obvious in their everyday lives, and conversations with Greek locals, one thing was certain: Greeks, who constituted the

minority population of Western Thrace during the Ottoman period, replaced the Ottomans and became the new governors of the region. This dramatic change was exacerbated by nostalgia for the ‘good old days’ under the Ottoman regime. Such factors constituted the main impediments to the integration of this imperial minority with Greek majority society after 1923.

Second, along with the status change, Greece made a significant step towards changing the demographic structure of Western Thrace. As is obvious from official figures presented in a top-secret document of the Governor General of Thrace (GATH) in Table 1 below, Asia-Minor refugees were settled especially at those places where the Minority population was dense; the two main cities of the Rodopi Prefecture received the highest number of refugees in 1923 where the vast majority of the Muslim Turks lived

Table1: Population data for Western Thrace, based on Ethnicity and the Settlement of Asia Minor Refugees (AYE 1923).

Prefecture/ Sub-region	Greek	Turk	Arme nian	Bulgarian	Jew	Refugee	Total
Rodopi Prefecture							
Komotini	11,386	50,081	1,183	6,609	1,112	33,770	104,108
Xanthi	18,249	27,882				18,613	64,744
Evros Prefecture							
Alexan/polis	9,228	2,705		9,102		17,518	38,553
Soufli	11,517	5,454		1,117		14,211	32,299
Didimotiho	21,759	3,213				9,649	34,621
Orestiada	22,087	6,072				11,677	39,386
Total	94,226	95,407	1,183	16,828	1,112	105,438	314,235

Similarly, Vergopoulos (cited in Ozkirimli and Sofos 2008: 150-151) noted that of all the 145,758 Asia Minor refugee families (578,824 individuals), 59% of them were settled in Macedonia and 31% in Western Thrace. As a result, the settlement of Asia Minor refugees changed the demography of the Thracian and Macedonian regions where there used to live a number of communities with ethnic, religious, cultural and/or linguistic characteristics different from the majority Greek society.

There were two main reasons for concentrating settlement in these two regions of Northern Greece: first, both regions were considered ‘fragile’ and ‘nationally-sensitive’ borderlands because of their adjacency to neighbouring countries. Secondly, there were autochthonous Vlach-speaking communities, Slavic-speakers and Muslim Turks whose ethnicity, culture and religion was different from the prevailing ones that Greece was promoting across the new and old lands of the country.

Thus, homogenization of these regions by settlement of Asia Minor refugees would strengthen the Greek presence and minimize possible threats for the national unity and sovereignty of the country. In this respect, it wasn’t strange to me seeing exchange of official documents between Greek state apparatuses in Athens and Western Thrace about the necessity to increase the Greek demography through settlement Asia Minor refugees especially in Komotini, Xanthi and Sappes (*Şapçı*) regions where majority of Muslim Turks lived (AYE 1927).

Third, parallel to the homogenization of the population, which would be followed by the ‘Hellenization’ of Western Thrace through the settlement of the Asia Minor refugees, Greece wanted to erase traces of the Ottoman and Bulgarian pasts from Northern Greece. For this purpose, the Greek state appointed various committees whose responsibility was to replace all non-Greek place names with “better-sounding” Greek ones. Thus, a number of Slavic village, town and street names – even some family names – were replaced with new Greek ones in Greek Macedonia (Karakasidou 1993:3). In Western Thrace, Greece followed a similar process. The changing of Turkish toponyms started in 1928 and continued for a long time (see Demetriou 2006: 305)⁵⁴. But since the Lausanne Treaty obliged Greece to protect the Muslim Turkish

⁵⁴ The last official changes of toponyms that I found dated back to 1978, when the Municipality of Komotini adopted a decision to change 60 names. In its press release, it noted that any use of the non-

community and its distinct characteristics, it was more careful in Western Thrace than it was in Greek Macedonia. Therefore, Greek state apparatuses acted in a more responsible manner in dealing with Minority matters than they did regarding those of the Slavophone Greeks of Northern Greece. In both cases, this was what Ozkirimli and Sofos (2008:149-150) underlined – a ‘campaign of cultural terror’ intended to homogenize Northern Greece and free it from its Slavic and Ottoman past.

The Minority policy of Greece in Western Thrace should not be dealt with separately from broader Greek treatment of minorities during the interwar period. As I showed in Chapter 2, Greece had a dual policy regarding the treatment and accommodation of non-Greek ethnic and linguistic communities. On the one hand, it introduced policies intended to tackle minority issues across the country. On the other hand, different state institutions like schools, the army and the Church continued to promote national consciousness, the values of the modern Greek nation and unity between Greek citizens belonging to different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups.

In this respect, school became one of the most significant state institutions, where younger generations could be indoctrinated with the ‘one nation, one flag and one language’ ideology. This would also make Greek children identify more with Greek ethnicity and culture, and Orthodox Christianity.

In the above-mentioned climate of post-1923 Western Thrace, the Greek state introduced a new educational regime for the Muslim Turkish minority. The introduction of a bilingual primary education brought a variety of problems and challenges for the Minority, Greece and Turkey, all of which are analysed in this chapter.

4.3 Historical background: Education of the Ottoman Muslims in Western Thrace before 1923

Before Western Thrace became a region of Greece in 1923, Muslim students used to be taught in Ottoman and Arabic languages under the modern *Tanzimat*-era Ottoman education system (Cihan 2007; Fortna 2002). There were neighbourhood schools, *Mahalle Mektepleri*, in nearly every place Muslims lived. At these schools, children received basic instruction in Islam and religious practices; so, they functioned

Greek versions for any official purpose was strictly forbidden (*Xronos*, 4.2.1978). For a full list of Turkish and Greek names of Minority settlements see Jong (1980a).

as stepping stones to the *medreses*. There were other primary schools that provided elementary arithmetics in addition to courses in Arabic and Ottoman.

After *Mektep*, the next step for Minority students was *Rüşdiye*, equivalent to the last three years of primary schools today. This was followed by *İdadiye* and *Sultaniye*, equivalent to today's high schools. Lastly, there were *medreses*, graduates of whom became preachers and imams at mosques across the region. By the time of the 1920-1923 Ottoman-Greek regime change, there were one *İdadiye*, one *Rüşdiye* and six *Medrese* in Komotini; one *Rüşdiye* and two *Medrese* in Xanthi; and one *Rüşdiye* and three *Medrese* in Alexandroupolis (*Akin*, 16.2.1984, 25.2.1984).

In short, before Western Thrace became a part of Greece, there were sufficient schools to provide a basic academic and religious education to the Muslim Turkish students of Western Thrace. Also, in terms of school buildings, the infrastructure for the bilingual education system was almost ready by 1923.

Before mapping the general structure and characteristics of Minority education in Western Thrace after 1923, it is essential to analyse the emergence and development of the great schism inside the Minority, because the controversies between Traditionalists/Anti-Kemalists and Modernists/Kemalists had a great impact on the following four decades of the Minority's educational, socio-political and educational development. Then, the reader will have a clearer picture of the impact of this schism on Minority education issues in Western Thrace between the 1930s and 1970s.

4.4 Traditionalists vs. Modernists: A clash of values and ideas

In the aftermath of the Lausanne Treaty, the socio-economic and cultural life in Western Thrace did not immediately change. Due to the long Ottoman reign in the region, Muslims' lives continued to be defined primarily with basic values of Islam. In this context, Minority families were large and patriarchal. In theory, women dealt with the housework, while men worked to earn money; however, in practice, the vast majority of Minority men and women worked together on their farmlands.

The basic characteristics of the Ottoman lifestyle in Western Thrace started to change in the late 1920s, when the first reforms were introduced in Turkey by its founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Under his leadership, Turkey introduced a series of

social, political, economic and cultural reforms regarding the modernization, secularization, democratization and Westernization of the country (Lewis 1968, 1999; Landau 1984; Mango 1999).

In the late 1920s, the impact of the Kemalist reforms in Turkey also started to be felt in Western Thrace, with the formation of a new group of political and religious elites. Inspired by the Kemalist reforms, on the one hand they started to criticize various Ottoman values. On the other hand, they moved to introduce and promote the Kemalist reforms in the Minority's everyday life. This was a clear sign of the opening of a schism inside the Minority (see Huseyinoglu 2012).

For instance, Modernists supported the introduction of education in the new Turkish alphabet instead of the old Ottoman script. Also, they encouraged people to wear modern European hats instead of the Ottoman "fes/fez". Thus, they tried to deconstruct the Minority's existing identity, which was based on Islamic and Ottoman values, and to reconstruct a new secular, Turkish and Kemalist identity.

Nevertheless, the formation of a Modernist group, critical of basic Ottoman principles, met with a strong reaction from the majority of Western Thracian Muslims, who had established firm affiliations with Islam during the Ottoman period. Consequently, the vast majority of Minority members in the 1930s followed the Traditionalist elites.

In fact, the Minority's already-strong attachment to Ottoman and Islamic values was strengthened when Greece gave refuge to some Ottoman elites who had come from Turkey before 1923. These were a group of Ottoman religious and political elites who had fled Turkey before its official proclamation of independence and settled in neighbouring countries. Prominent, with the nickname *Yüzellilikler/150'likler* [the Hundred and Fifties], it was a group of 150 members of the Ottoman Caliphate's elite. Turkey declared them *persona non grata*, due to their opposition to the ideals of Atatürk and to the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Fifteen members arrived in Greece and thirteen of those were settled in Western Thrace (Dede 2009:2). The most prominent figure was Mustafa Sabri, who had served as the last *Şeyhulislam*, the highest religious authority in the Ottoman Empire. Sabri became the leader of the Traditionalists and his presence in particular fortified the existing bonds of the Minority with the values of the recently-dissolved Ottoman Empire and Islam, thus contributing

to the increasing number of Minority members siding with the Traditionalists against the Modernists.

The leader of the Modernists was Mehmet Hilmi, a journalist, and a staunch supporter of the Kemalist reforms. Both groups had their own newspapers, *Yeni Ziya* and *Yarın* respectively, through which they disseminated their interpretation of the Minority's socio-cultural norms and values. This schism began within the elites; but in a short period of time, it enveloped the ordinary local Minority members. Thus, the schism became increasingly apparent in Minority life.

From a broader perspective, it seems that although the schism was a phenomenon limited to Western Thrace, both Greece and Turkey exacerbated the division significantly. Greece was initially very supportive of the ideas of the Traditionalists. As Clark (2006:217) correctly underlines, the Greek state believed it would make itself more secure if it promoted the continuity of an 'old-fashioned' Muslim community than if it encouraged a 'modern' ethnic community with ties to Turkey. While supporting the Traditionalists, Greece did not completely ignore the demands of the Modernists. Thus, from the late 1920s onwards, it also supported the policies and arguments of the Modernists vis-à-vis the Traditionalists. In 1928, Greece first accepted one of the Modernists' fundamental demands, by allowing the usage of the Turkish Latin alphabet in Minority primary schools; it was introduced in Hrisa (*Kireçciler*), near Xanthi (Hursit 2006: 125).

Thus, analysing the attitude of Greece regarding the Minority's schism, this study contends that Greece, in one way or the other, followed a policy of balance and tried to satisfy the needs of both groups in Western Thrace. But looking from a broader perspective at the period up to the 1970s, Greece tended to side with the Traditionalists rather than the Modernists.

Turkey, however, clearly took the side of the Modernist group and supported the development of modern and secular Turkish values instead of Ottoman and Islamic ones. Turkey seemed to be satisfied with the Modernists' introduction and advancement of its values in a region beyond its borders. The Turkish Consulate General in Komotini, an institution of the kin-state Turkey, played a notable role in the promulgation of modern Turkish values in the Minority community. Therefore, since the late 1920s, Greek officials have often considered the Turkish Consulate the

epicentre of Turkish propaganda in Western Thrace, as well as the main source of support for the Modernists until the 1970s (AEB 1929:22;AKK 1959d). Nevertheless, this was not something unique the Minority under study. As Dimitras (1998:66) correctly puts it, the elite of the Greek minority in Albania were highly influenced by the Greek embassy in Tirana as well as the Greek Consulate in Gjirokastra where major population of Greeks lived.

Before closing the discussion on the formation and promotion of the schism, I want to underline that the two neighbours managed to resolve major problems left over from the exchange of populations in the second half of the 1920s. Also, cooperation across the Aegean increased with the 1930 Ankara Agreement and reached such a level that the Greek prime minister, Venizelos, proposed Atatürk for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1934 (Kirlidokme 1998).

In this atmosphere of rapprochement between Greece and Turkey, the prime minister of Turkey felt comfortable demanding that his Greek counterpart remove the members of the dissident group, *YüzEllilikler*, from Western Thrace, since Turkey was not comfortable with their presence there. In return, Venizelos wanted the removal of Papa Efthim, the leader of the Turkish Orthodox Church in Istanbul, and his 27 supporters, whose presence was damaging the unity of the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul. In the end, Greece removed the members of *YüzEllilikler* but Papa Efthim and his followers were never ousted from Turkey (Alexandris 1991:95; Divani 1995:189).

The schism did not end when the last Ottoman elites were forced to leave Western Thrace; but the Modernist camp did gain supremacy over the other. Thus, ethnic Turkish identity and the values of modern Turkey were able to flourish in Western Thrace. That is why some Greek scholars treat the removal of the *YüzEllilikler* from Western Thrace as a ‘false’ concession, underlining that Greece chose to enable the gradual transformation of a Muslim minority into an ethnic Turkish one (Alexandris 1992:188).

4.5 Laying the foundation of Minority education in the light of the schism between Traditionalist and Modernists during the interwar era

Before going into greater depth on the initial decades of transformation from a traditional and religious education to a modern and secular one, it is worth noting that all debates in this chapter are related to Minority primary schools and *medreses*; the first bilingual minority secondary school opened in 1954 while Sarioglu (2004:64) emphasizes that the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul had nine of these schools in 1924 serving for the educational needs of the Greek students.

The Greek state first passed a law regulating Minority education in 1924. Under Article 2 of Law 3179/1924 (FEK A' 186, 7.8.1924.), which regulated teachers of both the Turkish and the Greek curriculum, students' parents elected the Minority teachers of the Turkish curriculum, while the Greek state appointed their Greek colleagues; Minority teachers still needed the consent of the GATH.

In addition, in compliance with Greek Law 2345/1920 (FEK A'148, 3.7.1920), Law No.2781/1922⁵⁵ and Article 41 of the Lausanne Treaty, Greece started to provide financial aid to these schools without altering their status as private schools. In the 1929-1930 academic year alone, reportedly about 4,489,000 drachmas of economic aid was distributed to Minority primary schools, religious schools and mosques in Western Thrace (AEB 1930:11). Similarly, the Inspector noted that, between 1923 and 1930, the Greek state provided in excess of 2 million drachmas of economic aid a year to Minority educational and religious institutions, like schools and the offices of the muftis (AEB 1928:45-46).

4.5.1 Types of Minority Schooling

When Western Thrace became a Greek territory in 1923, most of the existing school buildings were converted into primary schools, while some new ones were constructed by the Greek state in localities with large Minority population. According to statistics from Greek archives, there were 267 Minority schools in Western Thrace in 1925-1926. More than two-thirds of these schools were located in the prefectures of

⁵⁵ FEK A, 84, 4.6.1922. According to this law, the three minority communities in Thrace – Turkish, Jewish and Armenian – would get economic aid from the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs; in this law, the Minority is officially referred to as an 'Ottoman Community'.

Rodopi and Xanthi, where there was a relatively dense Minority population; and in the same school year, there were 6,326 Minority students. However, education was not implemented properly in some Minority primary schools, because some small villages were unable to finance their local schools; and, after 1922, the army had requisitioned some other schools as temporary accommodation for Asia Minor refugees (AYE 1926).

Finishing primary education, Minority students had the chance to continue to religious schools/*medreses*. In 1925, it was noted that there were 16 *medreses* for those families who wanted to continue the old Ottoman tradition of religious education. 11 of these were located in the two main cities of the region, Komotini and Xanthi, while the remaining ones were in the highlands of both Rodopi and Xanthi prefecture (Andreadis 1956: 74). There was no major change in the number of Minority primary schools; but most of the *medreses* were gradually closed. Thus, by 1939, only four *medreses* were open and all of them were confined to Komotini (Tsitselikis 2003:50).

Along with the newly-formed Minority primary schools and the historic *medreses*, a third type of schooling was also introduced in 1928. Called ‘Minority private schools’, these institutions were few in number; and none of them lasted more than five years. Nevertheless, they contributed significantly to both Minority parents’ and Greek state officials’ understanding of the necessity of instruction in the new Turkish alphabet, thus strengthening the increasing attachment of the Minority to Turkish-promoted culture and Islam.

Religious schools used Arabic and Ottoman scripts while the Minority primary schools had mixed instruction – some courses of the Turkish curriculum were taught in Turkish, others in Ottoman. Both types of schooling were under the control of the Traditionalist elites and their followers. As a result, some of the Modernist elites and their followers had reportedly stopped sending their children to Minority primary schools. Instead, they provided special classes in Turkish alphabet at home, or sent their children to the Jewish School in Komotini (AEB 1929:8).

Rather than sending their children to Minority educational institutions governed by Traditionalists, Modernists applied to the local Greek authorities for permission to open Turkish-only private schools. In 1928, the application was approved, and the first school was opened in Komotini.

In the first academic year, only seven students were enrolled at the school; but in a short period of time, as Modernists increased their influence on ordinary members of the Minority, so the number of students increased. Thus, two more schools of this type were opened in Xanthi and Oreon (Interview with one of the first seven students, Hasan Hatipoglu; *Akin*, 24.8.1970; Ustun 1971; Tounta-Fergadi 1994: 173). This type of schooling, albeit short-lived, constituted one of the first major disagreements between Modernists and Traditionalists over Minority education.

The first major reaction against the establishment of these schools did not come from those Greeks who were against Turkey's involvement in Minority matters; rather, it came from the region's most senior religious figures, all of whom had been appointed by the Greek state. Three muftis and the heads of the Muslim communities in Komotini, Xanthi and Didimotiho (*Dimetoka*) wrote a letter, which emphasized that the revolutions and changes in Turkey had happened regardless of Turkish citizens' will; and that the Muslims of Western Thrace should not accept the use of the Turkish alphabet in Minority primary schools. For them, Turkey had no right to lead the Minority away from its traditional life. They explicitly stated that the GATH should reject any Modernist measures that would threaten traditional Islamic life in Western Thrace (AEB 1928b).

Some Minority families in Komotini had reactions similar to those of the Traditionalist elites. Referring to themselves as the "Old Turks of Komotini"⁵⁶, they wrote a letter complaining about GATH's discriminatory policy. Signed by 20 people from four districts of Komotini, the letter emphasized that the GATH had given permission to the Modernists to build their own schools, but the GATH had not replied to the Traditionalists' application to build their own private religious schools, where education would only be in Arabic and Ottoman (AEB 1934).

In time, as Modernists' demands to educate their children in modern Turkish were satisfied, there was no need for private Minority schools. Thus, all of these schools either closed, or transformed into state Minority primary schools, which were

⁵⁶ *Palaiotourkoi Komotinis* [Παλαιότουρκοι Κομοτηνής]. The traditional elites gradually stopped identifying themselves with variations of the term 'Turk' in 1930s. Instead, following Greece's official policy, they called themselves as 'Muslims'. However, as noted, in the 1930s some Greek MPs still referred to the Minority as 'Ottoman' in Parliament; and some officers referred to Minority soldiers serving their compulsory military service as 'Ottomans' as well (see *Trakya*, 11.5.1959, 7.9.1959).

administered by school boards (in villages and towns) or waqf committees (in the three major cities of the region).

This example shows that, although Greece overtly supported the Traditionalists sometimes it sided with the Modernist camp, like when it accepted some of their educational demands. Nevertheless, one could ask why Greece acceded to Modernists' demands for the Turkish curriculum, when it knew that this would further Turkey's influence over Minority life?.

I found two main answers. First, Greece tried to balance both camps' demands, and not to side only with the Traditionalists, because satisfying only the Traditionalists' demands would probably have made the Modernists more vulnerable to Turkish influence. Second, the personal friendship between Venizelos and Atatürk, and the Turkish-Greek rapprochement of the early 1930s, motivated the Greek state to have friendly relations with the Modernists in Western Thrace too.

From a broader perspective, this research underlines that, although private Minority primary schools existed for less than half a decade, their existence pushed the Greek state into implementing the modern Turkish curriculum at all Minority primary schools across Western Thrace. This change definitely made the Minority, both Modernists and Traditionalists, familiarize themselves with the new state language, alphabet and culture of their kin-state; and it made the new Republic of Turkey get more involved in education of the Minority.

The camps' clash over education was not limited to the use of the Turkish alphabet. Modernists tried to mimic most of the fundamental educational changes in the mass education system of Turkey, thus endangering the historic structure of the Muslim community's education, based on the teaching of Islam.

For instance, major disputes also erupted over the weekly official day off work. Traditionalists insisted that Friday was the holy day for all Muslims, thus the weekly holidays for Minority students should continue to be Fridays and Saturdays. However, the Modernists insisted on changing it to Saturdays and Sundays as it was in Turkey. (Andreadis 1956:18-19) In a short period of time, most Minority schools accepted Sunday as the weekly holiday; but until the early 1990s, a small number of schools continued to close on Friday. More examples of the effects of this clash follow.

4.5.2 Minority teachers of the Turkish Curriculum

There were two types of teachers at bilingual Minority primary schools. Greek teachers were responsible for classes on the Greek language and those courses on the Greek curriculum. Minority teachers were responsible for courses on the Turkish curriculum, which were taught using either the Ottoman script or the modern Turkish alphabet. All Minority teachers enrolled at schools administered by waqf boards in the three main cities of the region were paid from the budget of those boards; but the salaries of their colleagues in smaller towns and villages, which were administered by school boards, were paid by the students' parents. As for the Greek teachers of the Greek curriculum, they had status of civil servant so their salaries were paid either by the Greek state or the Municipalities.

Moreover, Greece allowed both school and waqf boards elect teachers for the Turkish courses. There was no examination or defined criteria for these Minority candidates; they were not even required to know or speak Greek, as their language skills were not examined. Along with the freedom to select teachers, these boards also had the freedom to determine the curriculum (AEB 1930:5).

A number of Minority villages had a 'teacher's room' built next to the mosque. This provided a common space in which villagers could congregate, and it was used primarily for social gatherings, especially in the evening. Cafes were not widespread in the region, so these places served as important common spaces for the villagers to socialize, and discuss their ideas and problems together with the teacher, who was assumed to be more literate than the villagers (*Trakya*, 14.2.1955).

This study contends that Minority teachers were also a significant part of the schism between the two camps. Depending on their faction, some of them instructed Turkish courses in the Turkish alphabet while others used the Ottoman script. Also, alongside with their teaching duties, the Minority, Greece and Turkey usually considered teachers to be the most appropriate actors for disseminating the Modernists' or Traditionalists' values.

In fact, in the early 1930s, only a handful of Minority teachers affiliated themselves with the Modernists; most of their colleagues actively promoted the Traditionalists' values. In spite of the small number of Modernist teachers, the Inspector

still emphasized that Greece should be watchful of all Minority teachers in general, because it was possible for Turkey to use them as ‘agents’ for the dissemination of Kemalist values (AEB 1928:34).

4.5.3 Textbooks

For the initial decades after the 1920s, all the Minority’s primary school textbooks, including those of the Greek courses, were imported from Turkey. In that period, some of the Greek curriculum’s ‘nationally-sensitive’ courses, e.g. geography and history, were taught in Turkish. Therefore, all textbooks used in Minority primary schools were imported from Istanbul; nonetheless, before they were circulated to Minority students, they were all checked by officials of the Greek Ministry of Education⁵⁷ (AEB 1930:5).

In this review process, the Coordinator of Minority Schools (hereinafter the Coordinator), who was the highest local authority regulating Minority education, had a unique style of censorship: he liked to tear up the pages of the Turkish textbooks if there were idioms, expressions or pictures related to Turkey or Turkish culture. However, this method had a negative psychological impact on Minority students as well as their families: it made them curious about the content of the missing pages. Therefore, after his visit to the region, the Inspector suggested to the Greek Prime Minister that the Coordinator should immediately stop tearing up pages from Turkish textbooks.⁵⁸ He also added that Greece should gradually stop importing Turkish textbooks. Instead, new Turkish textbooks should be published in Athens (AEB 1928: 36-37). However, the censorship method of the Greek officials would not change and Greece would continue importing books from Turkey for the following decades until the 1960s.

Up to now, I have focused on the establishment and development of the Turkish curriculum, as well as its intertwined connections with the internal schism between

⁵⁷ In this study, I use this expression referring to the Ministry. In fact, the official name was Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. In 2009, it was renamed as Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs (Decision 2876/2009, FEK B’2234/7.10.2009).

⁵⁸ This method of censorship was not confined to the interwar era. In fact, it continued until 2000, when new Turkish textbooks arrived from Turkey, thus satisfying the demand of Minority members that had been rising since the 1950s. In the 1960s, one Minority student at the medrese of Komotini, curious about the pages missing from Turkish textbooks, had the chance to check his teacher’s original, uncensored copy. Comparing it with his textbook, he found out that the missing page, censored by Greek officials, included information about the Anatolian region, the Turkish flag and Atatürk’s mausoleum (Haksas 2006:16).

Modernists and Traditionalists. Next, I will shed light on the Greek curriculum, and conditions for the teaching of the Greek language.

4.5.4 Greek teachers: Teaching Greek to Minority students

The Greek curriculum constituted one of the two parts of bilingual education provided to Muslim Turkish students at Minority primary schools after 1923; Greek teachers only taught the Greek curriculum.

According to the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, Greece was responsible for teaching Greek at Minority primary schools. It was anticipated that Greece would gradually make teaching of the Greek language obligatory at all Minority primary schools. In fact, from the 1920s until the 1950s Greece applied various policies to teach Greek across the country (see Katsikas and Therianos 2007:136-187). In this way, it also aimed to foster citizens' Greek national consciousness, regardless of their ethnic, religious or cultural origins. The main exception was those Minority primary schools in Thrace – with the exception of the Metaxas dictatorship, no Greek state apparatus made a major attempt to teach Greek to Minority students.

This becomes clear in the Inspector's 1929 and 1930 reports, which were presented to the Greek Prime Minister. During his visit to the region, the Inspector reported that the standard of Minority schools' Greek language education was very low. Let alone the teaching of 'nationally-sensitive' courses like history and geography in Greek, even the basic Greek language course was absent from the vast majority of Minority primary schools. According to his observations, there were only a few Minority schools, situated in Komotini, Xanthi and Alexandroupolis where Greek was taught properly; the Inspector noted that, by 1929, only 20 of the then 241 Minority primary schools in Western Thrace provided Greek language courses (AEB 1928:41-42).

In this context, the Inspector also provided a striking example of his deep sorrow during his visit to the Central Minority School of Komotini. According to his statements, in the fifth-year class, only two students managed to communicate with him in Greek; none of the others could even understand Greek.

For him, there were two main reasons these children could not learn their country's official language: firstly, because the Greek state could not meet the demand for the Greek curriculum courses, the Greek language courses were taught only a few hours a week.

Secondly, and more importantly, the teaching method was inappropriate for Minority students learning Greek, a language they never spoke at home or amongst themselves. Therefore, he emphasised that Greek should not be taught using the same textbooks distributed to all Greek students across the country, because the Minority students and their families might not welcome the references to Orthodox Christian ceremonies and issues. In addition to the problems with the teaching method, he found out that Minority students had to use Greek names when practicing the conversations in the textbooks. Therefore, the Inspector stressed that the state should change not only the method but also the materials for teaching Greek (AEB 1928:38-43).

Similar complaints would be raised later in the mid-1940s by A. Papaevgeniou (1946: 19), the then General Inspector of Foreign and Minority Schools (hereinafter the General Inspector) who would call Jewish and Muslim minority schools' Greek teaching methods "inappropriate".

In spite of such complaints at the highest level, it would take more than half a century for the Greek state to prepare and distribute Greek language books at Minority primary schools in a systematic way. Then, under the EU-funded PEM Programme (1997-2013) that I focus on in Chapter 7 (and for the first time since 1923), Greece approved the distribution of new Greek textbooks that enabled the teaching of Greek as a second or foreign language to those Minority students enrolled at Minority primary schools.

Along with the inappropriate teaching methods, the Inspector also reported the inability of the local Greek apparatuses to tackle the absence of Greek teachers at Minority primary schools, and their indifference to it; he frequently criticized state institutions like the GATH and the Coordinator for turning a blind eye to this absence. In his opinion, this indifference would result in the formation of false perceptions or misunderstandings in the Minority community, particularly in the Modernist camp, that Greece deliberately prevented Minority students learning Greek (AEB 1928:41).

The problems raised by the Inspector would largely prevail until the end of the Greek Civil War, thus denying the vast majority of Minority students between the 1920s and the 1950s any official opportunity to learn the Greek language during their six-year education at Minority primary schools.

Before ending this exploration of the first decade of Minority life, I want to briefly mention the structure of Minority families, which is closely linked with the education of the schoolchildren.

4.5.5 The structure of Minority families

There were no major changes in the structure of Muslim Turkish families after they became citizens of Greece: they were (still) normally large families, whose members lived either in the same house or in the neighbourhood; and most of them owned no land. In fact, land was very fertile and convenient for cultivation; but it was mainly owned by big Greek and Turkish landowners. Thus, despite their historic presence in the region, the vast majority of the large Minority families worked for Minority landowners, particularly in tobacco and cotton production. In this respect, the number of children was generally equated with an increasing work force and a greater income for the family. Therefore, Minority families tried to have as many children as possible; but due to diseases like smallpox, a number of their children died at an early age. For instance, my grandmother had 11 sisters and brothers; but only she survived beyond early childhood.

Commenting on the economic condition of the Turkish Minority in the 1920s, the GATH prepared a confidential report that emphasized the huge gap between the living conditions of Greece and Turkey's respective minorities. According to the report, the 150,000 Greeks of Istanbul were almost ten times richer than the 100,000 Turks of Western Thrace (AEB 1929a:1).

Contrary to the low economic profile of the Minority in general, Minority waqf boards, particularly the ones in the three major cities, owned a significant number of properties. The main income from these waqf properties was spent on the socio-economic wellbeing of the Minority, e.g. financial aid to Minority schools, caring of Minority orphans, etc. In 1929, it was reported that the Minority waqfs had 357 properties and annual revenue of 600,000 drachmas. The same source emphasized that

the total value of waqf properties in Komotini (*Gümülcine*), Xanthi (*İskeçe*), Alexandroupolis (*Dedeğaç*), Didimotihö (*Dimetoka*) and Orestiada (*Kumçiftliği*) was around 7,000,000 drachmas (AEB 1928:17).

Being a predominantly agrarian community, most of the Minority families did not see any great value in their children's education; they were generally indifferent to their children's educational needs. In some Minority areas, Minority primary schools remained closed for a long time; and this did not bother either the Greek state or the local Minority families. In fact, a number of Turkish students were pulled out of school even before finishing, as their families needed them on the farm. Reportedly, a number of families did not allow their children to complete each academic year – when agricultural work started in April, they stopped sending their children to school. Instead, they made them work with the rest of the family (ibid.,25-26).

In short, Minority families expected their children to finish primary education, then become farmers, help their families with their livestock, and get married before they reached 20 years old. Thus, it seems to me that most of the Minority families saw Minority primary school as a place where they could leave children not yet ready to help their families on the farm.

In fact, Modernist and Traditionalist Minority families shared the tendency not to allow their children continue to secondary and higher education either in Greece or Turkey. Nevertheless, Modernist families were emphasizing education of their children more than those of Traditionalists (ibid.,32). Still, this could not prevent the region of Thrace scoring first with the 73.42% illiteracy rate in 1928 across Greece while the average was 46.05% (Tsoukalas quoted in Katsikas and Therianos 2007:147).

It is worth reiterating that primary and religious schools were the main destinations of Minority students in the 1920s. Given Minority families' social and economic circumstances, almost no Minority students went on to secondary education. Therefore, most lacked a secondary school diploma and were not fluent in Greek. Unsurprisingly, the Inspector's report noted that the Greek state had only appointed 15 Minority members appointed as gendarmes (AEB 1928:53).

In fact, looking at education in Greece more generally, it seems that the educational underdevelopment was not limited with the Minority in Western Thrace.

Due to the socio-political and economic turmoil in Greece, there were not many Greek students in secondary and higher education either. For instance, only 19% of Greek primary school pupils were reported to go on to secondary education; between 1925 and 1935, only 0.17% of them passed the university exam (Papadakis quoted in Katsikas and Therianos 2007:164). Therefore, as it is underlined matters of minority education should not be tackled as separate enclaves but as a part of the broader educational regimes (Guide to Minorities and Education 2007:18).

4.5.6 Greek neglect of Minority education in the 1920s

According to the Inspector's analyses, the malfunctioning of the local Greek authorities, which were supposed to have a say on Minority education, worsened the Minority's education problem. In practice, local Greek institutions, the GATH and the Coordinator of Minority Schools all implemented the principle of educational autonomy by turning a blind eye to the primary needs of the Minority education system. Some schools had not functioned properly, other schools had had no teachers, and some students had been educated under unhealthy conditions in dilapidated school buildings since 1923; yet the Coordinator still chose not to intervene and take the necessary measures to solve existing problems in different realms of Minority education.

For instance, problems concerning the Minority students of Didimotiho and its surrounding villages had been reported to the Coordinator by Minority members for three consecutive years in the late 1920s. However, he never visited the town to speak with Minority families, nor did he act to solve problems that their children faced at the primary level (AEB 1930b:12). Similarly, it was the same person who gave Minority teachers the impression that the compulsory submission of official documents, like their curriculums, was optional. Also, he accepted official documents prepared exclusively in Turkish, and used a bilingual stamp for official purposes rather than a Greek one (AEB 1928: 35,41).

As well as the Coordinator, some Minority NGOs like the Turkish Teachers' Union of Western Thrace (BTTTB) were free to use bilingual stamps on their official letters (AEB 1933). In addition to the Turkish language, some Greek shopkeepers also used some symbols of modern Turkey, like the Turkish flag, in order to attract more Minority customers. For example, one of the Greek patisseries in Xanthi, *Στογιαννιδής*,

apparently prepared and sold a huge quantity of sweets wrapped in the Turkish flag to members of the Minority during the Eid al-Adha of 1929 (AEB 1929:26). Such observations indicate that the ethnic, cultural and religious values promoted by Turkey were of no great concern to those Greek local officials responsible for various Minority issues.

One of the main reasons for this official ignorance was the small number of Modernist families compared to the large number of Traditionalists following the Ottoman way of life in the formerly Ottoman territory. Yet, similar issues about the official ignorance of the Greek state apparatuses at the local level, which he observed during his stay in the region in late 1920s, enabled the Inspector to conclude that the two highest local Greek authorities, i.e. the GATH and the Coordinator should gradually increase their control over Minority education without infringing the educational autonomy of the Minority (AEB 1928:67).

Similar concerns about strengthening state control over the Minority's issues were also raised by officials of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In his report to Venizelos about the minorities in Greece and Turkey, Sakellopoulos interpreted the ignorance of local Greek authorities as an indication that Greece was fully protecting the rights of the Minority. He emphasized that Greece actually granted more rights to its Minority citizens in Western Thrace than the ones enshrined in the 1923 Lausanne Treaty. Blaming Turkey for the isolation and/or 'Turkification [sic]' of the Greek Minority in Istanbul, he proposed to Venizelos that Greece should immediately introduce new measures that would on one hand increase state control and power over Minority issues, while on the other restrict certain Minority rights (AEB 1930a:1-4)⁵⁹.

As I explain next, Greece's relations with Turkey would develop in the 1930s. It would effect the solution of some Minority problems. However, Greek state apparatuses' ignorance of fundamental problems in Minority education would continue.

⁵⁹ Such references about Greece's giving more autonomy to the Minority than the one enshrined in the Lausanne Treaty could be found at different Greek reports (see Greek Information Service 1965; ELIAMEP 1993).

4.6 The Greco-Turkish rapprochement of the 1930s

The development of a personal friendship between Atatürk and Venizelos in the late 1920s was followed by a series of friendship and cooperation agreements between Turkey and Greece between 1926 and 1933.

First of all, ongoing problems with the process of population exchange between Greece and Turkey were gradually solved. For instance, there were major debates about the definition of the title of “established/établi” for people who were exempted from the population exchange. In the positive atmosphere of their bilateral relations, the countries even agreed to bring the case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and ask for an advisory opinion about the content and scope of the term “établi” (TNA 1925:25-26). Thus, in 1930, Minority newspapers reported that Greece had started to distribute “établi” certificates, which was an official proof of the historical presence of the Minority in the region (see *Inkilap*, 5.9.1930).

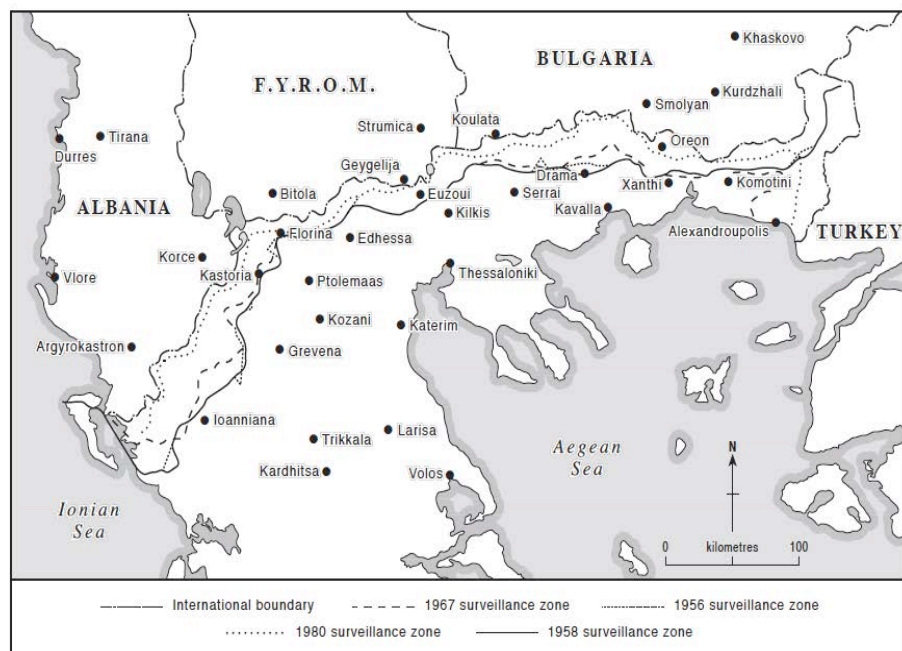
As part of the Greco-Turkish rapprochement, the Greek authorities started to return the Western Thracian Muslims’ property that it had temporarily requisitioned to house Asia Minor Greek refugees (AEB 1930c). For this purpose, under Venizelos, Greece agreed to pay 150,000 pounds to Turkey to compensate those members of the Muslim Turkish minority who had been deprived of their properties in the 1920s. However, although the League of Nations had identified 119 Minority properties taken illegally and suggested Greece return them to their rightful owners, the Greek governments did not return these properties, mainly because of local pressure from the newly-settled Asia Minor refugees (Clark 2006: 213-214).

Compared to its effect on problems arising from the Turkish-Greek Population Exchange, the Greco-Turkish rapprochement, which lasted until the advent of the Metaxas dictatorship in 1936, had relatively limited impact on issues of Minority education. That is, Minority teachers without any kind of pedagogical training continued to teach at Minority primary schools. As the Inspector noted in late 1920s, among those schools’ 277 Minority teachers, only 24 had been trained to teach. The others were mainly graduates of primary schools or *medreses* (AEB 1928:32). Also, Minority schools’ lack of technical equipment and a common, bicommunal curriculum continued to affect the quality of education provided (Anonymous 1933:8). As for Greek language education, courses continued to be offered mainly in the cities and

towns of the region by no more than 20 Greek teachers! (AEB 1928:41-42). Thus, the vast majority of Turkish children living in villages across the region continued to be deprived of Greek language skills. Seeing the importance of teaching Greek to Minority students on the one hand, and the insufficient number of Greek teachers in Minority schools on the other, the Inspector also believed that Greek Army reserve officers in Western Thrace should teach Greek until Greek teachers arrived (AEB 1930b:19).

4.7 The Metaxas dictatorship and the introduction of the Surveillance Zone in Northern Greece

The political and social turmoil in the first half of the 1930s resulted in the advent of the military dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas in 1936. Then all Greek citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin or religion, faced new authoritarian measures, which made their everyday lives even harder. The dictatorship introduced rules and regulations intended to unify Greek citizens against the common enemy, Soviet Union. Due to this “enemy from the north”, Metaxas fortified all of Greece’s northern borders, increased the military presence, and established the Surveillance Zone. The figure below shows the boundaries of the Zone (which covered a 15-45km-wide strip), and how those boundaries changed over time until they were eventually abolished in the mid-1990s (Map cited in Labrianidis 1999:82).



As I stated above, the main point of the Surveillance Zone was to defend the Northern borders of the country. Therefore, the Army closely scrutinized the everyday life of the Zone's inhabitants: those living within the Zone were given special ID cards; nobody was allowed to enter without a special pass from the local police station; and between 12am and 5am, nobody was allowed to travel between villages within the zone (Labrianidis 2001:90-91). Thus, all Greek citizens who stayed in the northern Greek border regions were treated as if they were kind of prisoners in one of the biggest open-air prisons in Europe.

It is important to note that Greece also used the military zone for political purposes. As is visible from the map, the areas governed by the Greek Army were inhabited by large ethnic minority groups like Slavophone Greeks, Tsam Albanians, Vlachs and Turks. According to the General Inspector, the overall population of Northern Greece in the late 1930s was 2,380,434. Only 210,591 of them belonged to different ethnic groups – 134,288 Muslims, 58,767 Jews, 9,754 Armenians and 7,782 Vlachs; altogether, they constituted 3.5% of the Greek population (Papaevgeniou 1946: 44).

Despite the small size of these groups, the Metaxas dictatorship used the enclaves not only to buffer against the Communist threat, but also to control these

‘nationally-sensitive’ groups, who resided primarily in Northern Greece. The Zone would eventually stop functioning as a buffer zone countering the Communist threat from the Northern neighbours of Greece; and it would be abolished everywhere in Northern Greece except Western Thrace. From the 1970s until its complete dissolution in the mid-1990s, the Zone would be primarily used by the Greek state to control members of the Minority living in the highlands of Western Thrace (Labrianidis 1999:85).

Along with the introduction of the Surveillance Zone, Metaxas also established two basic institutions for the improvement of education across the country. The General Inspectorate of Foreign and Minority Schools, established in 1936, increased state control of non-state schools, while the Organization for Publication of School Textbooks, introduced in 1937, contributed to an increase in the number of textbooks being printed in Athens (Tsioumis 2008: 333; Dimaras cited in Katsikas and Therianos 2007:171). Thus, the Metaxas dictatorship managed to increase its influence over all types of schooling across the country.

Compared to previous Greek governments, Metaxas differed in the way that he made a considerable effort to promote the Greek language, increasing the national consciousness and unity of Greek citizens against the Communist threat from the North. In case of a war, he wanted all Greek citizens to be prepared to fight together as a nation against those forces invading Greece. Thus, teaching Greek across the country turned out to be one of the key elements to increasing Greek unity.

In this respect, the Metaxas regime prioritized the teaching of Greek to Minority students in Western Thrace. Emergency Law 818/1937 made the Greek language compulsory for Minority teachers for the first time after 1923. Even if they taught in Turkish, all Minority teachers were obliged to know Greek. (Aarbakke 2000:130) Besides, the number of Greek teachers at Minority primary schools increased. Ten years’ later, their numbers would have increased from 20 (in 1930) to 172 (in 1940), thus enabling more Minority students to learn Greek at the primary level (AEB 1928:41-42; AYE 1952:9). As for the Turkish curriculum, Metaxas increased state control over those Turkish textbooks published in Turkey and distributed at Minority primary schools (see Tsioumis 1998:428, 1998a:153-156) To sum up, the Metaxas

regime's laws and regulations on education mainly tried to advance the Greek curriculum in bilingual Minority primary education.

With the eruption of World War II and the Italian invasion in 1939, Greece would enter a period of social, economic and political turmoil and poverty. As I will now elaborate Athens would set aside dealing with minorities' problems, and devote itself to the fights against Italian, German and Bulgarian invasions.

4.8 World War II and the Bulgarian occupation of Western Thrace

When World War II broke out and Italian forces invaded Greece, Greek citizens, including members of the Minority, fought against Mussolini's forces. Due to the lack of statistical data, no exact information exists about the number of Minority soldiers fighting against Italy. According to a Turkish source, there were 16,600 Turks fighting against the Italian army, 2,600 of whom were killed and 1,850 wounded (Aydinli 1971: 393-395). However, these precise figures seems to be quite exaggerated, as the Greek Army Headquarters' report recorded a total of 15,572 Greek soldiers who either died or went missing during World War II; among them, the recorded number of Minority casualties was not more than 56 (quoted in Featherstone 2011: 72-77).

While referring to the World War II years, it is worth noting my informants' emphasis on the Minority's participation in the defence of Greece. Linking it with the Minority's loyalty to Greece, they seemed highly proud when discussing how Muslim Turks had sacrificed themselves for the independence of their country. The Minority's sense of loyalty to Greece during World War II has also been noted by other scholars conducting research in Western Thrace (see Featherstone 2011:78).

During the Second World War, disorder across the country also (albeit only slightly) affected Minority education in Western Thrace: a few Minority schools were temporarily closed, but the vast majority of them continued functioning. Official statistical figures for the 1939-1940 academic year indicate that 270 Minority schools operated, serving the needs of 11,338 students. These figures were almost the same as the ones published in 1935, when 300 schools served the needs of 12,000 Minority students (Papaevgeniou 1946: 24-25). This shows that the functioning of Minority primary schools was not significantly affected, despite the country being at war with

Italy. However, as I mention in the next section, major problems about Minority schooling would develop during the Bulgarian occupation of Western Thrace in 1941 and the gradual “Bulgarization” of social, political and economic life across the region.

4.9 Bulgarian Occupation (1941-1944)

Greece’s victory against the Italians was followed by its invasion by the Axis Powers in 1941. Greece was too weak to defend the country against Hitler’s expansionism. Nazi forces invaded Western Thrace; afterwards, Bulgaria took over control of Western Thrace and Eastern Macedonia, as German forces moved southwards towards Athens. This signalled the beginning of a new era in the administration of northeastern Greece.

In fact, this was the second time in the Twentieth Century that Bulgarian forces had controlled Western Thrace. The first time was between 1913-1918: when the short-lived Provisional Government of Western Thrace (*Garbi Trakya Hükümet-i Muvakkatesi*) came to an end in 1913, the control of the region was transferred to Bulgarian forces, who ruled for six years. After the second Bulgarian invasion of the region in 1941, the region was declared the southernmost province of Bulgaria and named as *Belomorie*. Occupying Bulgarian forces immediately started to increase Bulgarian influence over everyday life in Western Thrace. Initially, Bulgaria tried to increase the ethnic Bulgarian population, so Bulgarian-speaking families were imported and settled, primarily in the houses of Greek and Turks who had fled after the invasion. Kotzageorgi (cited in Featherstone 2011:108) noted that, by 1943, the total number of Bulgarians settled in Western Thrace had reached 92,523.

Western Thracian Greeks preferred to migrate to other parts of Greece, while the Turkish minority found refuge in Turkey. It is estimated that around 60,000 Greeks and 12,483 Turks left the region during the Bulgarian occupation; but most of them returned when Greece regained control in the mid-1940s (Tsioumis 2006: 486-487; *Trakya*, 3.8.1959).

The process of the “Bulgarization” of Western Thrace, which started with demographic change, continued with changes to aspects of everyday life, one of which was education. As a matter of fact, education all over Greece was severely affected by

the Axis occupation. Thus, the 1940-1941 academic year lasted only three months, while the one after did not last 20 days; and only 719 out of 8,345 Greek schools across the country remained intact, while all of the others were damaged, burnt or destroyed by the Axis forces (Katsikas and Therianos 2007:180).

Looking more closely at education in Western Thrace during the Bulgarian occupation, it becomes evident that the Bulgarian administration also used education as an instrument for fostering Bulgarian national identity amongst the Greek and Turkish locals. In this respect, all Greek public schools were closed and Greek teachers functioning at the Minority schools were replaced with Bulgarian teachers imported from Bulgaria. Furthermore, the teaching of Greek and its use for official purposes were prohibited; it was replaced with Bulgarian (Tsioumis 1998:429; Kostopoulos 2009:46; Featherstone 2011:113). Moreover, Jewish community schools stopped functioning as Bulgarian soldiers rounded up Jews and delivered them to the Nazi forces. But Armenian community schools continued to function normally because local Armenians, in general, were reported to collaborate with the Bulgarian administration (see Featherstone 2011: 120-123)

Unlike the Jewish and Greek schools, the Muslim Turkish schools continued functioning under the Bulgarian regime, but they were reorganized: Greek-language courses started were taught in Bulgarian; and Minority students were taught more about Bulgarian history, language and culture. This reminded me of stories from my childhood, about Minority members who had been obliged to learn Bulgarian, a new language with which they would never have identified themselves to which they would never have felt attached. Apart from the transformation of the Greek curriculum into the Bulgarian one, there was no major Bulgarian interference in the Minority's education; local Muslims were allowed to teach Turkish courses using either the Turkish alphabet or the Ottoman script.

Looking at Minority education under Bulgarian occupation through the prism of the Modernist-Traditionalist debate, it seems that the Bulgarian administration in the region, like the Metaxas dictatorship, tried to satisfy the demands of both camps. For instance, before the Bulgarian occupation, Minority students' graduation diplomas were bilingual, generally prepared in Greek and Ottoman; but this was completely changed by the Bulgarian authorities, who preferred the use of Bulgarian and modern Turkish

(see Appendix IV). On the other hand, as Batibey (1976:52) underlined, it was the same administration that replaced those Modernist teachers of the Turkish curriculum with Traditionalist ones. In short, for the sake of unity within and between different ethnic groups residing in Western Thrace, Bulgaria tried to respond to the educational needs of both the Modernist and the Traditionalist factions of the Minority.

Under the Bulgarian regime, almost all of the Minority primary schools, *medreses* and mosques continued to function normally, although the Bulgarian regime generally appointed their own Muslim administrators. As Featherstone (2011:129) notes, at the end of the day, Bulgarian treatment of Minority issues was inconsistent and disorganized. It actually varied mainly due to the arbitrary attitude of the Bulgarian officials in smaller localities inhabited by Muslim Turks, as well as the persistence of violence and disorder across the region. Even Pomak-speakers, who had been anticipated by Bulgarians to side with the *Belomorie* administration due to their linguistic proximity, were frequently exposed to violence and repression by the Bulgarian authorities.

Thus, Featherstone (2011:129) seems right to conclude that the Bulgarian regime failed to get the support of the Minority, including that of the Pomak-speakers. Looking at the 20th-century Bulgarian occupations of Western Thrace from an alternative perspective, this study also argues that those two bitter experiences have prevented Bulgaria from playing the role of kin-state to those Pomak-speaking members of the Minority since the 1940s.

After two years of German and Bulgarian occupation, groups of Greek militias – mainly composed of Greek communists under the National Liberation Front, EAM-*Εθνικό Απελευθερωτικό Μέτωπο*; and its military wing, the Greek People's Liberation Army, *ΕΛΕΣ* – started their resistance against and attacks on the Axis Powers. Most of them lived in the highlands and conducted guerrilla warfare. With the defeat of Nazi Germany in various parts of Europe, the EAM attacks climaxed, and eventually both German and Bulgarian forces left Greece.

Under the conditions that I have discussed, the Bulgarian regime could not last for more than two years. The Greeks' nationwide resistance against Axis forces would bear fruit in the mid-1940s, when both the German and the Bulgarian occupation of

Greece would come to an end. Then, it would be time for the darkest period of modern Greek history, the Greek Civil War.

4.10 The Greek Civil War (1946-1949)

Bulgarian forces had completely abandoned Western Thrace by 14 September 1944. From that time until 12 February 1945, the EAM forces controlled it. However, socio-political turmoil persisted across the country, and civil war broke out in 1946. For three consecutive years, Greek society remained divided into two main camps, Leftists/Communists vs Rightists/Royalists; the schism was so deep that it was common to find two males from the same family on opposite sides of the war, one in the national army and one in the Communist forces, fighting and killing each other. During my childhood, I used to hear about those Greek families whose children had tried to kill each other.

In this broader picture of national schism across Greece, members of the Muslim Turkish minority did not engage in any separatist activity or attempt unification with motherland Turkey, both of which would have violated Greek state sovereignty in the region; but they did not actively participate in the fight between the Royalists and Communists either. In fact, they tried to remain neutral towards both factions. However, the general tendency of the Minority was to cooperate with Athens rather than the Communist insurgents.⁶⁰

Considering possible reasons for the Minority's passive attitude, it seems to me that a number of Minority families could not actually grasp the ideological basis for the clash. Most of them continued to live in remote localities isolated from the Greek majority, and they were relatively unaffected by what happened at the national level. Also, their level of education and their participation in the socio-economic life of Western Thrace were greatly limited. Under these circumstances, the priorities of the Minority were mainly to find ways to survive in the region regardless of the military power of the moment, whether it was Royalist or Communist. Therefore, those Minority members in the highlands tried to stick to the rules set by the Communist bandits; those in lowlands, governed by Athenian officials, preferred to side with the National Army.

⁶⁰ For a unique study of oral history from members of the Minority who experienced the Civil War, see Ali and Huseyinoglu (2009).

Still, neither the highland nor the lowland Minority community was ideologically affiliated with either of the two factions controlling their historic lands.

In fact, obeying the rules of the regime did not provide a significant advantage to the Muslim Turks; they were kept under the close and continuous scrutiny of both the Royalist and the Communist regime. That is to say, Minority members were suppressed by the National Army for assisting the Communist insurgents at night; and likewise, the Communist forces oppressed them for supporting the national army during the day. Thus, this thesis underlines that, between 1946 and 1949, members of the Muslim Turkish minority, both in the lowlands and the highlands, were caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. That is, they could not evade the double mistreatment of forces controlling Western Thrace that made everyday life quite difficult for the Minority; and because the main land route from Thrace to Turkey was very dangerous due to the constant clashes between the national forces and the left-wing militias, they could not easily migrate to Turkey.

In these circumstances of the civil war, Royalists and Communists continued to use Minority schools as places to disseminate their ideologies to Minority students. In the next two sections, I will deal with the Royalist and Communist responses to the educational needs of the Muslim Turkish minority.

4.10.1 Minority education during the Greek Civil War: The Communist Response

Left-wing Communist militias placed importance on the education of Minority students. In his report to the Greek Ministry of Education, M. Minaidis, the Coordinator of Muslim Schools in Western Thrace, stated that around 100 Minority schools were under the control of the Democratic Army. At those Minority villages under the control of Communist forces, the ethnic Turkish character of the Minority was promoted through Turkish-language instruction; Communists also prepared and distributed Turkish-language primers on Communism to Minority students. Instruction in Ottoman script was strictly prohibited (AYE 1948; AYE 1948c). The Communists also published Turkish-language leaflets and newspapers. Prepared in Bulgaria and distributed in Western Thrace, this Communist propaganda aimed to prevent the Minority migrating to the lowlands under Greek state control, to exploit existing local Minority support, and

to encourage others to side with the Democratic Army against the Royalists. One of the pieces of propaganda stated as follows:

“Those joining the Democratic Army and those who know us well know that, in our army, equality does not remain in theory; it is a matter reality indeed. Those Turkish youth joining us observe that it is possible for Turks to reach the highest ranks in both the Democratic Army and the government. Then, they are reminded that in the Fascist Greek Army, Turks can only feed horses and become servants.” (ibid.)

Similarly, the most prominent left-wing leaflet distributed regularly in Communist-controlled areas of Western Thrace was *Savaş* (War). Printed in Bulgaria using the modern Turkish alphabet, *Savaş*⁶¹ aimed to show Communist support for the survival of the ethnic Turkish identity of the Minority. For the sake of increasing Minority participation in the left-wing militias, *Savaş* usually referred to peace, democracy and rights for the Minority, while condemning both Greece and Turkey as fascist countries under the rule of the USA.⁶²

There are no official data on the number of Minority fighters in the Communist forces; the only reference is to a group of Minority paramilitaries under the leadership of a Communist from Turkey, Mihri Belli. Well-known by his nickname, Kaptan Kemal, he was the highest-ranking Democratic Army official with responsibility for Communist policy over the Minority in Western Thrace; he was also the editor of the *Savaş* newspaper (Belli 1998).

During his stay in the region, Belli formed a small Minority army; it was named as the *Osmanlı Ordusu* (the Ottoman Army), and it had no more than 500 members (Featherstone 2011:204). Still, there is a lack of information as to whether people volunteered or were forced to fight. But the latter is more likely to occur – Minority members who lived in the mountainous Communist-controlled lands had no other option but to cooperate with the Democratic Army, since any kind of disobedience was likely to result in the death penalty.

In spite of various attempts to get Minority support – some of which I described earlier – at the end of the day, it became obvious that the Communists failed to gain Minority support; the Democratic Army elicited almost no participation or support, even from those places under Communist control. None of the Communist propaganda

⁶¹ Six leaflets of the *Savaş* Newspaper dating on 25.11.1947, 20.12.1947, 10.1.1948, 16.2.1948, 10.3.1948 (AYE, 1948a).

⁶² *Milliyet* (a magazine printed in Turkey) quoted in AYE (1948b).

inside and outside of Minority schools within the Communist-controlled highlands made Minority locals feel closer to the ideals and goals of Communism.

4.10.2 Minority education during the Greek Civil War: The Royalist response

Despite the turmoil of the Civil War and the great schism across the country, the Greek state always tried to keep Minority schools open in all three prefectures of Western Thrace. This becomes obvious when one looks at the official statistical data that I assembled from the archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, most of which were confidential reports, as well as some Greek books (see Table below)

Table 2: Educational data for the Muslim Turkish Minority (1939-1963).⁶³

Academic Year	Number of Minority Primary Schools	Minority teachers of Turkish curriculum	Majority teachers of Greek curriculum	Students
1939-1940	270	264	172	11,386
1946-1947	287	320	12	17,392
1947-1948	252	304	21	11,546
1951-1952	292	366	59	12,806
1954-1955	279	385	190	13,478

⁶³ Figures for 1939 cited in Papaevgeniou (1946:24-25). The ones belonging to 1946, 1947 and 1952 (AYE 1948b; AYE 1952a). The data for 1954 cited in Andreadis (1956:15). The ones for the 1958-1959 period (AKK 1959) and for the 1962-1963 period (AYE 1963).

Academic Year	Number of Minority Primary Schools	Minority teachers of Turkish curriculum	Majority teachers of Greek curriculum	Students
1958-1959	289	355	154	13,400
1962-1963	286	376	197	13,151

One of the main reasons to keep Minority schools open was to protect Minority areas against Communist penetration and use the schools as places to promote the Greek state's anti-Communist propaganda. In this respect, although reportedly most of these did not function properly due to the Civil War, e.g. starting the academic year two or three months after September (AYE 1948), Athens still insisted on keeping these places open, as well as showing interest in the educational needs of the Minority.

For instance, taking into account the fact that teaching of Turkish courses without Turkish textbooks persisted until World War II, the Greek state decided to publish its own Turkish-language textbooks in the new Turkish alphabet in 1946 (Tsioumis: 1998: 430). However, the Minority elite complained about this decision, taken unilaterally by Greek state officials, pointing out that none of the Minority teachers had been involved in the preparation process (*Trakya*, 9.12.1946).

Furthermore, some lowland Minority primary schools did not operate properly during 1947 because they were used as shelter for a number of highlanders who had escaped from Communist bandits; the Greek state requisitioned Minority properties as refuges, including Komotini Turkish Primary School, which accommodated around 50 families. Thus, 1,300 Minority students started school late; but this loss of courses was compensated at the end of the academic year, with several extra weeks of classes (*Trakya*, 10.11.1947, 29.12.1947, 21.6.1948).

Moreover, despite some state attempts to deal with problems within the Turkish curriculum, the Greek state failed to promote Greek language education in Minority schools. This could be observed from the statistics for Greek teachers in the Table 2: in

under ten years, teachers of the Greek curriculum plummeted from 172 to 21, thus lowering the overall level of Greek among the Minority.

In fact, the Greek Civil War represents a significant turning point in Minority education. For the first time since 1923, Greek state apparatuses in Western Thrace and Athens showed great determination to act in coordination on matters of Minority education: they both agreed that all of the Minority's social and educational issues should be under the complete control of Greek state apparatuses, or else Greek policies would work against the national interest (Tsioumis 2007b: 631).

In this respect, the highest local Greek authority responsible for Minority education, the Coordinator of Minority Schools, gradually developed its ties with the General Inspectorate for Minority and Foreign Schools in Thessaloniki and the Greek Ministry of Education in Athens. Thus, they significantly strengthened ties between local and national Greek actors, and thereby increased the overall impact of Greece on matters of Minority education.

However, the Greek state apparatuses' determination faced a strong reaction from Minority elites. Formed mainly by the Turkey-backed intelligentsia of the Modernist camp, they started to oppose the Greek state's increasing control over Minority education. In their official remarks, they usually pointed out that the Greek state's increasing interest in and control over Minority education actually infringed upon the educational autonomy guaranteed by the 1923 Lausanne Treaty.

For instance, they argued that it was the Minority waqf and school boards who had absolute power in defining the curriculum of Minority schools and choosing appropriate Turkish teachers for their schools. They made it clear that Greek state officials should not reprise any "Metaxas-type" authoritarian measures, like banning the teaching of Turkish at some Minority primary schools or threatening some Turkish teachers who wanted to use the new Turkish alphabet (Tsioumis 2007b: 626-628).

From the mid-1940s until today, Greece has never backed down and accepted such arguments from the Minority elites. On the contrary, it has continued to increase state power over Minority education. In the long run, increasing Greek hegemony has alienated the Minority schools. It has actually transformed them from a private institution into a unique *sui generis* educational system, in which Greek state

apparatuses have become the primary actor, with complete control over both primary and secondary Minority schools. In this respect, this research argues that the period of the Greek Civil War represents the beginning of Greece's absolute control over Minority education, which still today prevails in Western Thrace.

4.11 Conclusion

Having analysed the emergence and first decades of Minority education, I will draw some basic conclusions in the following paragraphs that will shed light on not only the formation but also the development of Minority education in Western Thrace after 1923.

First of all, it was very difficult for members of the Turkish Muslim minority to adapt themselves to the changing environment of Western Thrace. Various aspects of the Minority's Ottoman, Turkish and Islamic way of life continued to be very vibrant after the 1920s. Also, most of them felt no major need to become familiar with the Greek culture or learn the Greek language since many Greeks, particularly the Asia Minor refugees settled in the region, were able to speak the Turkish language

One of the real-life examples that I was told in the field might indicate the wider Minority attitude towards the Greek administration of the region during the interwar years: one day, an elderly member of the Minority went to the office of the Nomarch in Komotini. As he could not speak Greek, he tried to communicate in Turkish. Some of the Greek officials who could speak Turkish asked him, "Ahmet Aga, you have been living as Greek citizens for the last three decades and you still cannot speak Greek. Why?" He responded in a very determined manner: "We thought that you the Greeks were living in Western Thrace temporarily; that the day would come and you would leave our territories. How could we know that you would stay and govern us for such a long time!"

Looking at the emergence and development of the Minority regime from the 1920s until the 1950s, this project underscores that clashes of values and ideas between the Traditionalist and Modernist camps had significant impacts on various aspects of Minority education. Although Modernists emphasized the education of their children

more than Traditionalists, Minority families in general were never keen on the education of their children.

The Minority's indifference was coupled with the Greek state apparatuses' ignorance of problems in Minority education. Moreover, as the Inspector underlined in the late 1920s, there was a significant lack of cooperation and coordination between different state authorities in Western Thrace and Athens. As a result, there was no uniform Greek state policy on Minority issues (AEB 1929:4). This lack of policy continued until the mid-1940s, when the first official steps were taken to develop coordination between national ministries and local Greek authorities in Western Thrace.

Secondly, the lack of coordination should not be evaluated in isolation from the general conditions of Greece between the 1920s and 1940s. As I mentioned earlier, Greece was in turmoil in this period and it had to cope with numerous internal problems. Katsikas and Therianos (2007:139) underline that in the years 1920-1928, the Greek government changed 34 times, and the Greek minister of education changed 24 times, which was 'chaotic' for all Greek citizens' education.

In the period of Greek turmoil during the interwar years, it was not easy for Greece to tackle even basic problems raised by Modernist or Traditionalist members of the Minority. Also, Greece had to devote more time and energy to the settlement of Asia Minor refugees throughout the 1920s. Then Greece had to resist Italian and German invasions during World War II, which made Muslim Turkish minority issues of low priority in Athens.

In the realm of education, there was strong competition between members of both camps to achieve more power and have a greater say. Since there was no common curriculum or programme for all Minority primary schools, members of these two camps were left alone to administer their local Minority primary schools. As a result, educational facilities turned into arenas where Traditionalist values competed with Modernist ones; and both groups tried to impose their core values on younger generations.

However, things would start to change when the Greek state intervened in and started to control every issue in Minority education. This will be explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5 : The increasing Greek rule over issues Minority education (1949-1967)

5.1 Introduction

The end of the Greek Civil War represented a new beginning for minority-state relations between Athens and Western Thrace. Recovering from the wounds of the schism across the country, Greece also began devoting more time and energy for tackling issues of the Muslim Turkish minority in Western Thrace. It also developed its relations with Turkey bilaterally, which affected the introduction of new measures for the improvement of Minority education in the 1950s. In this respect, some new laws and regulations were introduced for the first time after 1923, in order to meet the long-lasting educational demands of the Minority. The measures included enabling elections for muftis and waqf boards; opening the first Minority secondary school; and signing a cultural agreement with Turkey.

Nevertheless, with the worsening of Greco-Turkish relations after 1955 combined with the Greek state's major interference with the Minority's educational, Greek officials in Athens and Western Thrace became the primary actors and increased their power and hegemony vis-à-vis the Minority elite after the 1950s. This signalled the beginning of the end for the Muslim Turkish minority's educational autonomy. Greek control increased throughout the 1960s, as every single Minority issue came under the complete control of a secret organization established by the Greek state.

Therefore, this chapter aims to analyse how Greek state apparatuses got more deeply involved in Minority education for the first time after 1923, and what measures they took to promote the bilingual education of the Minority in Western Thrace. While doing so, it frequently refers to relations between Greece and Turkey, because the ups and downs of their relations usually had a direct or indirect effect on the Minority's educational autonomy.

For this reason, the chapter begins by addressing the immediate aftermath of the post-Civil War Greece. Then, it highlights the evolution of Greek-Turkish relations and

their impact on new measures for the educational and cultural development of the Turkish minority throughout the 1950s. In this context, it also shows the repercussions of atrocities against the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul (hereinafter ‘the 6-7 September Events’) and problems over Cyprus. The chapter finishes with an analysis of the role of the Greek secret organization, CCT, providing some answers as to how and why this secret organization was founded in 1959, and to what extent it affected Minority education in Western Thrace until its abolition in 1969.

5.2 1950-1955: Golden years of Greek-Turkish relations and new initiatives in Minority education in Western Thrace

From the beginning of the 1950s until the ‘6-7 September Events’, relations between Greece and Turkey were quite positive and fruitful for both parties. At the international level, both countries sided with the Western bloc and joined to NATO together in 1952. At the local level, a number of breakthroughs were achieved regarding issues of Minority education in Western Thrace, hence the frequency of the term ‘for the first time after 1923’ in the following paragraphs. Now, I will briefly elaborate the main developments that contributed to the development of Minority education in 1950s.

5.2.1 The election of muftis and members of waqf boards

In the Ottoman *millet* system, waqfs were a part of the Ottoman school system. Headed by the mufti, waqf boards controlled all of the medreses and some of the primary schools in Komotini, Xanthi and Alexandroupolis. As I emphasized in Chapter 4, waqfs had significant revenues from movable and immovable properties; therefore, they could cover all of the schools’ expenses. In this respect, they were vital to the functioning of *medreses* and primary schools in the three main cities.

With the inclusion of Western Thrace into Greece, waqfs continued to function, but with a significant obstacle. That is, in spite of Article 40 of the Lausanne Treaty, which protected the Minority’s right to establish, manage and control its own charitable, religious and educational institutions, the Greek state started appointing the muftis and members of the waqf boards. Thus, until the beginning of the 1950s, these institutions were governed by appointed, primarily Traditionalist religious elites.

In fact, in the late 1920s, the Inspector had noted the necessity to allow Muslims to elect their muftis and waqf board members. For the Inspector, it was completely wrong to appoint Muftis and waqf board members, because such actions were a clear violation of the Lausanne Treaty. For him, the Greek state should not be afraid of elections for these posts, because most of the Minority candidates were Traditionalists, so there was almost no chance for Turkey-backed Modernists to win (AEB 1928:18). Put differently, if elections had taken place, then Greece would not only have created an image of itself as the protector of the Lausanne provisions, but would also have enabled Greek-friendly, Traditionalist religious elites to be elected to these positions.

However, despite strong reactions from the Modernists and recommendations from the Inspector, Athens made no move towards elections for heads of mufti offices and waqf boards in the 1930s. As Featherstone (2011:115-116) notes, Bulgarian forces followed a similar policy of appointing the religious elite during their occupation of Western Thrace in the first half of the 1940s: Muslim elites from inner Bulgaria were imported and appointed as muftis and board members of waqfs, which indirectly contributed to the promotion of the Bulgarian language and culture at Minority primary and religious schools.

Almost three decades after 1923, in the early 1950s, post-Civil War Greece gave the Minority the green light for elections of the waqf board members. Thus, Turkey and the Modernists achieved one of their basic educational and religious demands.

5.2.2 The 1951 Cultural Agreement between Greece and Turkey

Besides allowing the elections of religious elites, Greece also signed the 1951 Cultural Agreement with Turkey. For the first time after 1923, Greece showed real determination to develop bilateral cooperation and exchange in cultural and educational matters with Turkey, and vice versa. In the text, both countries agreed to promote the exchange of academics, to grant scholarships, to encourage scientific and cultural research projects, to correct history textbooks, and to enable the free circulation of

books⁶⁴. However, it was still criticized for its vague wording and non-legally-binding provisions (Baltsiotis 1997:322).

In fact, this agreement did not foresee any regulation of the education of minorities in Western Thrace and Istanbul; but its indirect contribution, through the promotion of cultural exchange between the two countries, was very important for the improvement of Minority education in Western Thrace throughout the 1950s. The example of Turkish textbooks may clarify the argument.

One of the major novelties of the 1951 Agreement was the formation of the Permanent Mixed Commission (PMC). Composed of an equal number of Turkish and Greek members, its mission was to promote and control the application of those provisions stipulated in the 1951 Agreement. Although the PMC was not very effective in promoting bilateral cultural and educational exchange, it solved one of the long-standing problems of the Minority school system, i.e. the distribution of Turkish textbooks at Minority primary schools.

Until the meeting of the PMC in 1955, the issue of Turkish-language textbooks was very complicated. As I elaborated in Chapter 4, the majority of these books were imported from Turkey and used by Modernist teachers. The remaining Turkish textbooks, which were written in Ottoman script and used by Traditionalist teachers, were printed in Greece (*Trakya*, 22.1.1951). From time to time, Turkey donated supplementary textbooks for Minority students, as more and more Minority primary schools switched from Ottoman script to the Turkish alphabet.

Greek officials accepted some of the books from Turkey, but either censored or totally rejected others, because symbols of Turkey or Turkish nationalism – such as the picture of Mustafa Kemal or mathematical calculations with Turkish liras – were found inappropriate for Minority students. For instance, in the 1946-1947 academic year, Turkey sent two full wagons of textbooks for Minority students; but Greek officials

⁶⁴ It was ratified with Law 2073/1952, FEK A' 103, 23.4.1952. It lasted for half a century, then was abolished with the signing of the Cultural Cooperation Agreement in Athens in 2000.

accepted and distributed only 14,963 of the 49,653 books, and sent the rest back (AYE 1950; AYE 1950b)⁶⁵.

Therefore, stressing that it was impossible to completely prohibit Turkish textbooks, the Coordinator, M. Minaidis, suggested that Greece should prepare and distribute its own supplementary Turkish-language textbooks; he added that any censorship of these materials was absolutely wrong (AYE 1950a).

Thus, for the first time in 1955, the PMC met in Istanbul to discuss the education of minorities in Western Thrace and Istanbul. Amongst other issues, they agreed that Turkey would prepare new textbooks specifically for the Minority students in Western Thrace, and Greece would do the same for its kin in Istanbul. While doing so, both sides agreed not to use labels, pictures or documents that were unacceptable to the other party (*Trakya*, 17.1.1955). Thus, the major problems stemming from the Turkish curriculum's textbooks were solved temporarily⁶⁶ as new books were distributed at Minority primary schools in the late 1950s.

5.2.3 The opening of the first Minority Secondary School

In the positive atmosphere of the 1951 Cultural Agreement, reciprocal visits between Greeks and Turks at the highest level motivated Greece to take further steps to improve bilingual education in Western Thrace. The Queen of Greece decided to establish the first Minority secondary and high school in Komotini after 1923; she announced the idea on a visit to Istanbul on 13-14 June 1952, and asked the Turkish prime minister whether she could name the school after him (*Trakya*, 16.6.1952)⁶⁷. Not only Turkey but also the Modernist faction warmly welcomed Greece's decision; contrary to the Traditionalist faction, they were emphasizing the development of

⁶⁵ Some Minority newspapers (see *Trakya*, 17.12.1956) underlined that during the Turkish-Greek rapprochement (1950-1955), Greek authorities were relatively flexible about control of the content of books imported from Turkey. So, most of the books sent by Turkey were approved and distributed.

⁶⁶ After distribution of these textbooks, neither Greece nor Turkey would agree in the following decades for revision and modernization of these textbooks. Thus, Minority students attending to Minority schools between 1960s and 1990s would use Turkish textbooks or photocopies of these books dating back to the 1950s. This problem with Turkish textbooks would be solved in 2000 when Greece would accept distribution of new Turkish textbooks prepared in Turkey. I provide a detailed analysis about these developments in detail in Chapter 6 and 7.

⁶⁷ On this issue, A Turkish diplomat, Haluk Bayulken, noted that the establishment of this secondary school was "more due to the personal interest and benevolence of His Majesty the King of Greece than to the measures generally conceived to improve educational conditions of Turks in Western Thrace with specific relations to the contractual undertakings", (Bayulken 1965:156)

instruction in the Turkish alphabet and Greek language education at primary and secondary levels of Minority education.

Clearly, the Turkish name of the school itself indicated the Greece's determination to advance Greek-Turkish cooperation on the education of their kin across the Aegean. Greece drafted Law 2203/1952⁶⁸ in order to establish and administer this school, and equated its status with that of Greek secondary school; According to Article 4 of this law, it was also decided that, for the first five years, the Turkish Ministry of Education would send the teachers of its Turkish curriculum. The main reason was that no Minority member had those qualifications to teach Turkish at the secondary level – this constitutes another indication of how low the Minority's overall educational level was in the 1950s.

5.2.4 Law 3065/1954: Introducing the first comprehensive legal regulation about Minority education

The first major law regulating issues of Minority education was introduced in 1954. Composed of 13 long articles, Law 3065/1954 (FEK A' 239, 9.10.1954) is still accepted by both Greek and Turkish scholars to be the first significant Greek measure regulating Minority education after 1923.

As explained in Chapter 4, there was no common curriculum for Minority schools before the introduction of this law. Nor were there criteria for the Turkish courses' teachers. Also, there were no regular tests of the teachers' fluency in either Turkish or Greek. In sum, for three decades after signing the 1923 Lausanne Agreement, Greece did not introduce a comprehensive law to properly regulate bilingual education in Western Thrace.

In this respect, Law No.3065/1954 introduced the first regulations that were intended to create a universal educational policy. Article 1 clarified the necessary requirements for opening 'Turkish minority schools [sic]'⁶⁹. Article 2 enabled the preparation of a common and analytical curriculum for all Minority schools. Ministerial

⁶⁸ The Celal Bayar High School was established according to the Law 2203/1952 (FEK A' 222, 15.8.1952). Some of its articles were modified by the Law 2567/1953 (FEK A' 240, 3.9.1953).

⁶⁹ This was the official term for Minority primary schools.

Decision 149251/1958⁷⁰ introduced the first analytical program for the Turkish curriculum; the only Greek course at these bilingual schools was the Greek language course. Articles 3 and 4 dealt with technical issues like exams and the transfer of schoolchildren between classes. Article 5, 6 and 7 established regulations for school boards and teachers, while Article 8 listed the public holidays applied at Turkish minority schools. The remaining five articles specified the duties of the Coordinator of Turkish Schools.

Along with introducing this law, Athens continued to allocate economic aid to Minority schools. In the 1950-1951 academic year alone, the Greek state provided 130 million drachmas for Minority education in Western Thrace (*Trakya*, 14.5.1951). In addition, for the first time after 1923, in 1953, Greece allowed Turkey to give direct monetary assistance to Minority schools to cover their educational and cultural needs; however, the Prefect still had to approve the acceptance and distribution of the money (*Trakya*, 15.12.1959). The school boards warmly welcomed similar economic aid from either Turkey or Greece, because it contributed not only to the Minority's socio-cultural life but also to the Minority's educational autonomy.

5.2.5 Heading to Turkey to become a teacher at a Minority primary school

The practice of Minority students leaving Western Thrace for secondary and higher education in Turkey dates back to the early 1930s (*Trakya*, 18.8.1952). The Turkish state had two main educational schemes for its kin: the first one gave Minority students the opportunity to study at secondary and high schools in Turkey without obliging them to return to Western Thrace after their studies; the second one aimed to satisfy the Minority's demand for Turkish teachers at Minority primary schools. It is worth noting that the gendered division in the flow of Minority students to Turkey prevailed for a long time, because the vast majority of Minority parents tried to prevent their daughters studying in Turkey (Anonymous 1964:5-6).

Under the first scheme, Minority students went on to secondary education in Turkey after passing the state exam, *Devlet Parasız Yatılı* [Free Public Boarding School Education]. All the students' expenses were covered by the Turkish state; but these

⁷⁰ FEK B' 162, 4.6.1958. After six years, it was translated into Turkish by the BTTÖB, and distributed to the Turkish teachers in order to improve their understanding of it. (*Akin*, 7.11.1964)

students were not obliged to return to work in Western Thrace, so most of them stayed in Turkey (DAGM/BCA 1952).

Under the second scheme, the Turkish Consulate General in Komotini assisted Turkey in organizing annual examinations for Minority students; Turkey gave the successful students scholarships the possibility to study at Turkish Teacher Academies (TTAs). Here, Turkey's main purpose was to educate its kin and send them back to Western Thrace to be teachers of the Turkish curriculum at bilingual Minority primary schools.

In 1930, the first group of nine students, qualified to study in Turkey, left for training at TTAs. However, only five of them returned to Western Thrace and taught Turkish. When World War II erupted in 1939, four of those five fled to Turkey; only one of them continued to teach after the Second World War (*Akin*, 27.4.1984). Also, from 1941 to 1946, no Minority student attended to TTAs (*Trakya*, 22.11.1954).

Thus, although the idea of training Minority students as teachers and sending them back to Western Thrace dated back to the 1930s, the socio-economic and political turmoil of the country throughout the 1940s prevented the scheme from functioning properly. Thus, by the early 1950s, only a handful of Minority teachers at Minority schools had received teacher training; the rest of their colleagues were graduates of either *medreses* or primary schools, showing Turkish primary school teachers' low educational level.

As I noted above, the opening of the first Minority secondary school in Komotini in 1954 actually revealed the low educational profile of the Minority teachers in Western Thrace. The Greek and Turkish authorities found none of them eligible to teach students at the secondary level, because none of them was a university graduate with teacher training; therefore, both countries agreed that teachers from Turkey would teach the Turkish courses at the school for the next five years. Seeing the need to improve the teachers' knowledge of the Turkish language, both countries organized various seminars and workshops for Minority teachers in the summer (Haliloglu 1958; Anonymous 1964; Baltali 2012:137,140, 162).

In the mid-1950s, taking a significant step in the struggle against Muslim Turkish teachers' poor knowledge of Turkish, Turkey and Greece agreed on a new,

more systematic training scheme for Minority students: Turkey would provide scholarships for members of the Muslim Turkish minority; in return, after their education at TTAs, these students would be obliged to teach Turkish courses at Minority primary schools in Western Thrace.

The first exam to choose Minority teacher candidates was made in January 1955. Only 20 of the 63 candidates won a place at TTAs (Hursit 2006: 163); and 14 of those (hereinafter TTA teachers) 20 returned to teach at Minority primary schools in the 1960-1961 academic year (*Trakya*, 28.3.1961). This flow of potential teachers from Western Thrace to Turkish TTAs continued until the late 1960s, when Greece opened the Special Pedagogical Academy in Thessaloniki (EPATH) and started prioritizing the appointment of its teachers over those of TTAs (hereinafter TTA teachers). The formation and functioning of the EPATH, and its graduates and their contribution for development of Minority education, will be explored in Chapter 6.

5.2.6 Teachers of Turkish citizenship arriving in Western Thrace

Along with the Minority teachers going to Turkey and coming back to Western Thrace, a new group of teachers at Minority primary schools emerged from 1923 onwards, when school and waqf boards started to hire teachers of Turkish citizenship on a yearly basis. The Greek state allowed the importation of teachers of Turkish with Turkish citizenship because it considered the Minority's educational autonomy to cover choices of teachers. However, the number of these teachers remained quite limited for some decades during the interwar era, because only large towns' and cities' school boards could afford all of those teachers' expenses.

As the Modernists increased their influence over Minority families, so Minority students' parents increased their demand for the importation of teachers from Turkey; Minority representatives made their first collective application to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1947 (*Trakya*, 7.11.1955).

Five years later, their demands were satisfied, with an agreement between Greece and Turkey during Venizelos's February 1952 visit to Ankara. For the first time after 1923, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter the Greek MFA) promoted the Turkish Minority's right to hire teachers of Turkish citizenship for their

primary schools. As a result of meetings between Greek and Turkish officials, both parties agreed to provide 25 of this type of teacher, *Μετάκλητοι*, to minority schools in Western Thrace and Istanbul, at no extra cost to the Minority school boards; each country paid the teachers it sent to the other.⁷¹

The first year, 24 teachers arrived; and teachers arrived every year regardless of Greco-Turkish controversies over issues of Minority education. But they never exceeded 35 in one year and never allowed to teach at Minority schools within the Surveillance Zone (*Trakya* 8.10.1956, 10.8.1953, 15.11.1954; Hursit 2006:176-178).

5.2.7 Emphasizing the teaching of Greek: A significant step forward from the Greek state

As I briefly mentioned in the last section of Chapter 4, Greek archival records indicate that Greek officials responsible from Minority's issues agreed in the beginning of the Greek Civil War that necessary steps should be taken for the promotion of the Greek language at Minority schools. However, in spite of their willingness, no major step could be taken, because Greek authorities needed to spend all of their time and energy on the national schism caused by the Civil War.

With the end of the Civil War in 1949, the officials focused again on matters of the Minority's educational autonomy. For instance, discussing Minority education at one of their meeting in 1949, they decided to strengthen the Minority's Greek curriculum; the lack of Greek teachers meant the vast majority of Minority schools had not had Greek courses since 1923 (Tsioumis 2008: 339).

For this purpose, Greece prioritized the appointment of Greek teachers to Minority schools, so that Minority students could learn the language of their state; most of the empty positions were soon filled. Thus, in the late 1950s, for the first time after 1923, 'nationally-sensitive' courses like history and geography were taught in Greek (Haliloglu 1957a, *Trakya*, 21.1.1957). However, the methodology and textbooks for teaching of the Greek curriculum were still criticized, primarily by Modernists, on the grounds that they were inappropriate – Minority students were still taught with the same methodology and textbooks used by Greek students (*Trakya*, 21.1.1957; *Akin*, 19.7.1957).

⁷¹ Decision No. 1936/1952 of the Greek Ministry of Education cited in Mavrommatis (2008:385).

5.2.7.1 Minority teachers' fluency in Greek

Besides emphasizing Minority students' learning of Greek, Greece also showed greater concern about Minority Turkish teachers' fluency in Greek. Thus, in the early 1950s Greece organized exams to test their Greek language proficiency: only 10% of around 300 Minority teachers passed the first exam in 1953 (*Trakya*, 28.9.1953). This showed that the vast majority of Minority teachers who taught the Turkish curriculum were not fluent in written and spoken Greek. Since teachers were considered 'educated' members of the Minority, it is clear that uneducated Muslim Turks, most of whom living in small, Minority-only areas, had an even poorer knowledge of Greek.⁷²

It is worth noting that, although requirements for Minority teachers' fluency in Greek were prioritized in the 1950s, they were imposed during the Metaxas dictatorship. As I emphasized in Chapter 4, Metaxas emphasized the teaching of Greek across the country, particularly in minority localities, where the population spoke a language other than Greek – for example, Turkish in Western Thrace, and Vlach, Macedonian or Bulgarian in Northern Greece.

The first exams to test Minority teacher candidates' Greek were conducted in 1939 (*Trakya*, 21.9.1953). One year later, Article 29 of Emergency Law No. 2517/1940 (FEK A'266, 31.8.1940) made teachers' fluency in Greek a legal requirement. During the 1940s and 1950s, Greece occasionally applied this law and conducted the language tests for Minority teachers at Minority schools across the region (*Trakya*, 5.10.1953); but as I show in the coming paragraphs, generally, Greece did not stringently apply this law in Western Thrace.

This study underlines that a possible reason for this flexibility around Minority teachers' proficiency in Greek was that the vast majority of these teachers had almost no experience of higher education in Turkey or Greece. They were either graduates of *medreses*, or had finished only primary school in Western Thrace, so they were not accepted as potential threats to the Greek state's hegemony over Minority education in Western Thrace.

⁷² By 1958, almost 80% of the Minority population was reported to live in the villages numbering more than 250. And, 85% of these villages were not mixed, domiciled exclusively by Minority families (*Trakya*, 8.12.1958).

This flexibility came to the fore in the early 1960s, when the number of Minority graduates from TTAs started to increase. Again, Greece obliged all Minority teachers take the Greek language exam, and only allowed those who passed to work at Minority schools.

Consequently, Turkey introduced Greek language courses at the Turkish Academy of Istanbul in the 1960s. I interviewed one of those who attended these language courses, Sami Toraman, who emphasized that all Minority students at teaching academies across Turkey were assembled at this school during the summer period, and taught Greek by teachers from the high schools of the Greek minority in Istanbul. Thus, once they graduated from Turkish academies and returned to Western Thrace, they would not face significant difficulties passing the Greek proficiency exam, and would be able to teach at Minority primary schools. However, it became apparent that, despite the basic Greek courses in Istanbul, only a handful of these teachers managed to pass the exam. Thus, the Greek authorities either made the exam easier or they ignored it (Anonymous 1964:7-11).

Confidential reports in Greek archives indicate that Greece put importance upon testing Minority teachers' proficiency in Greek; but it never stuck to this rule, never consistently excluded those Muslim Turkish teachers who lacked proficiency in Greek. For example, in the 1962-1963 academic year, only 10 of the 344 Minority teachers passed the exam (AYE 1963a). If Greece had excluded non-Greek-speaking Minority teachers, the vast majority of Minority teachers would have been excluded, which would have exacerbated the Greek state's difficulties in supporting the Turkish curriculum at bilingual Minority schools.

Nevertheless, from a broader perspective, although Greece agreed with Turkey on the necessity of Minority students' training at the TTAs, it continued to be cautious about those Minority teachers educated in Turkey, because Greek state officials expected these teachers to align with Ankara and promote Turkish cultural values across the region.

This study contends that, in the 1960s, the Greek state renewed its emphasis on the Greek language test for Minority teachers for two possible reasons: firstly, they could function as Greek assets to limit and control the Minority outflow to TTAs, as well as the inflow of TTA graduates; and secondly, since Greece had made it more

difficult for the TTA graduates to work at Minority primary schools, parents hesitated to send their children to the TTAs. I argue this because I believe Greece preferred to collaborate with those Minority teachers who had graduated from *medreses* and affiliated themselves with the Traditionalists, rather than with TTA teachers who affiliated themselves with the Modernists.

Having talked about the overall development of bilingual Minority education in Western Thrace, as well as its relation with the Greek-Turkish rapprochement of the first half of the 1950s, next, I will elaborate upon why and how this cooperation ended with the eruption of violence against the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul. I will also question how this deterioration affected the educational autonomy of the Muslim Turkish minority in Western Thrace.

5.3 The ‘6-7 September Events’ in Istanbul and the worsening of Greek-Turkish relations

Half a decade of mutual cooperation across the Aegean ended with atrocities against the Orthodox Greek minority of Istanbul on 6-7 September 1955. Violent actions against Greeks, organized by Turkish mobs, began on 6 September after news about an explosion at Atatürk’s house in Thessaloniki. Rumours about the bombing of Atatürk’s house spread quickly around the city, though there was no major damage; its window was smashed.

Within hours, mobs angry about what had happened in Thessaloniki attacked Greek property in Istanbul; Greek houses and churches were either damaged or set on fire, and their shops were looted. In recent years, documents in Turkish archives have revealed that the ‘6-7 September Events’ against the Orthodox Greeks of Istanbul were actually organized actions intended to purge the city of its Greek inhabitants (see Guven 2005). In the long run, this aim was achieved, as the vast majority of them did leave Istanbul in the 1960s and 1970s, thus paving the way for the gradual abandonment of the city by the ‘last remnants of Hellenism in Istanbul’ (Heraclides 2002:311). As of today, according to the Greek MFA the total number of Greeks in Istanbul, Imbroz and Tenedos, is no more than 3.500 (Greek MFA Online 2011).

While violence climaxed in Istanbul, silence prevailed in Western Thrace. There was no immediate retaliation against the Turkish minority for what had happened in

Istanbul. Still, those Turks living in mixed localities with Greeks, like Komotini, felt threatened. Therefore, they preferred not to get out of their houses for a couple of days following the 6th of September (the head of Gendarmerie in Komotini quoted in Vrionis 2007:548-549). Looking at the Minority press after 7 September 1955, it becomes clear that Minority elites condemned the atrocities against the Greek Minority. Pointing out that they too had minority status under the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, they condemned the violence and wholeheartedly shared the sorrow of the Greek Minority (*Trakya*, 12.9.1955). The only protest against the pogrom of the Greeks of Istanbul took place in Komotini on 20 September 1955; there were no counter attacks on the Muslim Turkish Minority by Greek mobs (*Trakya*, 26.9.1955).

As Goudelis (1991:13) notes, atrocities in Istanbul destroyed the Venizelos and Atatürk's dream of Turkish-Greek friendship. However, although these events resulted in a deterioration in relations between the two countries, some Greek archival reports indicate that Greece preferred the continuation of Greek-Turkish cooperation of a type similar to that of the first half of the 1950s (AKK 1957).

However, contrary to the Turkish and Greek states' efforts to maintain Turkish-Greek cooperation, there began to be major debates between the local Greeks and local Turks of Western Thrace, causing tension between the two communities and damaging peaceful co-existence at the local level. Triggered by the '6-7 September Events', some local Greek authorities, as well as the local and national Greek press, criticized Greek treatment of the Minority in Western Thrace. For the first time, in a series of articles on Western Thrace, Athenian media criticized the denial of Turkish ethnic identification; the cultural schism inside the Minority between Pomaks and Turks; the promotion of ethnic Turkish identity and anti-Greek sentiment by the Turkish Consulate General in Komotini and teachers with Turkish citizenship at Minority schools (*Trakya*, 30.7.1956, 7.1.1957; Basiliou 1956)⁷³.

From a broader perspective, it becomes obvious that Turkish-Greek relations already negatively affected by the '6-7 September Events' would get even worse when tension between Turkish and Greek Cypriots that emerged in early 1950s over Enosis, i.e. unification of the island with mainland Greece, caused disagreements between the Cypriot communities' "motherlands". Greece and Turkey would continue to clash over

⁷³ For series of articles by Kostas A. Basiliou see *To Vima*, 9-11-12-13.9.1956.

Cyprus after Turkey's intervention in Cyprus in 1974 and the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in 1983. However, these also put a heavy burden on the survival of the Muslim Turkish minority in the following decades – in case of a deterioration in Greek-Turkish relations over Cyprus, Greece refrained neither from using the principle of reciprocity enshrined at the 1923 Lausanne Treaty nor retaliating by increasing state pressure on the Minority. However, throughout the 20th century this principle served for both Turkey and Greece as an easy and useful option “to avoid the crucial question of how to accommodate pluralism and avoid questioning the excesses of the fervent nationalism upon which both had built their antagonistic national identities” (Tsitselikis 2012:116). In this respect, how Greece used the Minority as a ‘pawn in the chessboard of Greek-Turkish relations’ until 1991 will be discussed in Chapters 6 where I emphasize the multifaceted quadrilateral relations between the Minority, Greece and Turkey by adding also the fourth actor, the international community.

Looking back at Minority education after 1955, it seems that both Greece and Turkey cooperated on the promotion of bilingual education in Western Thrace. Nevertheless, major ambiguities and problems persisted, while new ones emerged, mainly because the Greek state apparatuses' intervention in Minority education started to restrict the Minority's educational autonomy, which caused major friction between Western Thrace, Ankara and Athens. Although Law No. 3065/1954 regulated various issues of Minority education, some of the basic problems caused misunderstanding between the Minority and the Greek state not only in 1950s but also in the following decades of the Cold War.

The next section selects some of the main ambiguities and elaborates upon them in the context of this trilateral relationship at the Greek borderland.

5.3.1 Turkish or Muslim schools: Problems with denomination

From the 1920s until the 1950s, calling Minority schools ‘Turkish’ was not a problem; Greece took a step forward in 1954 and promoted the official use of this term. According to the official document signed by the GATH, all signs using the term “Muslim-of Muslim” had to be changed to “Turk-Turkish”: (cited in Andreadis 1956:9).

KINGDOM OF GREECE

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF THRACE

INTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY

Komotini, 28/1/1954

Protocol No. A 1043

URGENT

TO: The Mayors and Presidents of the Communes of the Prefecture of Rodopi

Following the order of the President of the Government we ask you that from now on and on all occasions the terms “Turk-Turkish” are used instead of the terms “Muslim-of Muslim”

The General Administrator of Thrace

G. Fessopoulos

In spite of this regulation, and Law. No. 3065/1954, where Minority schools were termed ‘Turkish’, especially the Coordinator and some other Greek officials insisted on using the term ‘Muslim’ for Minority schools in Western Thrace. However, the official documents prepared by those Modernist-affiliated school boards insisted on using the title ‘Turkish’ for their institutions while some Traditionalist-affiliated schools preferred the religious denomination (Haliloglu 1957). In the following decade, Greece discouraged any reference to ‘Turkish’ schools across Western Thrace, and the ethnic denomination of Minority schools was officially banned in the early 1970s.

5.3.2 Administrative problems concerning religious schools

Contrary to a variety of measures addressing educational issues at Minority primary and secondary schools, Athens took no major step to solve problems raised by Minority members in the Traditionalist camp. Taking *medreses* as an example, there were only two *medreses* functioning in Western Thrace in the early 1950s. Conservative elites of the Minority asked the Greek Ministry of Education to make the status of *medreses* equivalent to that of Greek ecclesiastical secondary and high schools (Akin, 6.11.1959).⁷⁴ Thus, those Minority students finishing these schools would be accepted

⁷⁴ It was reported that the Medrese in Komotini was unique since some courses were taught using books of primary schools! (Selami 1977:5)

as graduates of high schools so that they could go on to higher education either inside or outside Greece.

Along with problems about the status of *medreses*, Traditionalist elites also raised the problem of the lack of official regulations on the duration of education. For instance, the *medrese* in Komotini, *Medrese-i Hayriyye*, continued to provide a three-year education. In 1957, this increased to four years and, in the 1960s, to five years; the one in Echinós (*Şahin*) started providing a five-year education from 1968 onwards (Tsitselikis 2003: 54).

These Traditionalist demands fell on deaf ears for decades, until 1998, when Greece's first major legislative regulation of *medreses* was introduced⁷⁵. Thus, various issues of education at these religious schools were finally regulated under Greek law almost sixty years after Greece signed the 1923 Lausanne Treaty.

Apart from the common concerns of Traditionalists, some members of this faction, the Union of Muslims in Greece, sent a letter to the Ministry of Northern Greece in 1955, where they communicated the Traditionalists' sensitivity about two main issues in the education of Minority children: firstly, Greece should stop promoting the instruction of Turkish courses in the Turkish alphabet, and limit the influx of teachers with Turkish citizenship; secondly, since Athens had enabled the opening of the first Minority secondary school in Komotini, it should also promote the opening of new religious schools. To show the Minority's desire for the establishment of new *medreses*, they attached a petition with 2,000 signatures (cited in Andreadis 1956: 74-75).

Although Greece did not open any new *medrese* under the authority of the Mufti's office, it still promoted the opening of private *medreses* such as the one opened by one of the prominent figures of the Traditionalist camp, Hafız Ali Reşat. His school started to function first in Komotini, then moved to Fillira (*Sirkelli*) (of the synonymous prefecture), where it functioned until the mid-1960s (Tsitselikis 2003: 51). Both this school and some other private *medreses* opened in the 1950s and 1960s were short-lived and taught a handful of Minority students. For example, by 1963, there were only 34 students enrolled in all three private *medreses*. (AYE 1963b). Under such

⁷⁵ Law 2621/1998, FEK A' 136, 23.6.1998; Greek Ministry of Education's Decision Γ2, FEK B' 2162/1998 quoted in Tsitselikis and Baltiotis (2001:290-291).

circumstances, the two religious schools - one in Komotini and the other in Echinós - continued to function as the main destination for religious education in Western Thrace.

5.3.3 The absence of the Minority in secondary and tertiary education

Contrary to the strong Minority presence at the level of primary education, there were very few at the secondary level, because most families stopped their children's education after primary school. Thus, already in the 1950s and 1960s, there was almost no Minority presence at Greek universities. As well as their families, Minority students had other impediments to entering Greek higher education:

First of all, the low level of their Greek knowledge made it almost impossible for Minority students to compete with Greek students in the university entrance exam. Second, there were many applicants for few places at Greek universities, so there were few opportunities for any Greek citizen. Third, most of them needed to take extra courses in Athens and Thessaloniki while preparing for the university entrance exams, which put them at an even greater disadvantage; and fourth, undergraduate studies were quite expensive, unaffordable for most Minority parents, who made a living from agriculture (*Akin*, 1.7.1960).

Taking such difficulties into account, it was proposed that Greek universities should accept the first graduates of Celal Bayar High School without any examination, and that the Komotini waqf board should give them scholarships and support them economically during their studies (*Akin*, 1.7.1960); but this proposal never received any response from Greek side.

In spite of the examples of cooperation between the two countries over the Minority's education in the first half of the 1950s, a 'top secret' report prepared by the Greek MFA in 1952 actually indicated that the Ministerial officials were very cautious about Greek-Turkish rapprochement. In the report, they suggested that Greece should take measures to prevent Turkey from playing an active role in Western Thrace. They suggested that there should be no official expression of Greek concern about the establishment of Minority secondary schools in Western Thrace. In addition, those Minority associations with 'Turkish' in their titles, e.g. XTU, should be called 'Muslim', while the 'Muslim' ones, e.g. Union of Muslims of Greece, should be

allowed to function freely in Western Thrace. As for Minority education, they underlined that those Greek teachers appointed to Minority schools should be chosen from those ‘with an allegiance to the national ideals of Greece’ (AYE 1952:23-24).

These concerns of Greek policymakers would not only result in a gradual increase in Greek control over minority issues, but also a ‘deepening’ of that control through the operation of a secret but official organization, CCT. This chapter finishes by explaining how the CCT was used to give the Greek state absolute power over the Minority’s primary and secondary education of the Minority in Western Thrace.

5.4 Minority education under the control of the Co-ordinating Council of Thrace (CCT)

The existence of the CCT, which functioned between 1959 and 1969, was unknown when a Greek graduate student discovered accidentally records of the CCT and the General Inspection of Minority Schools in 2003. Having access to these archives at the office of the General State Archives in Kavala, C.Iliadis (2011:12) realized that this was probably “the most extensive collection of previously confidential official documents on minority issues in Greece” which had been kept secret for decades and never revealed to the public. Even though researchers had access to the CCT Archives between 2003 and 2005, the existence of the CCT became popular across the country when one of the most-circulated Greek daily newspapers, *Eleftherotipia*, exposed the history of this organisation. A team of journalists, called as *Ios*, accessed the CCT Archives and published the first article about the CCT and some of its activities regarding the Minority (Ios tis Kiriakis 2005).

This had an explosive effect, not only in Athens but also in Western Thrace, because the CCT was a secret organization. It was formed on the initiative of the Greek MFA, and all of its members were Greek state officials. In the ten years of its existence (1959-1969), the CCT had a total of 61 ‘top-secret’ meetings, all of which were recorded. Members of the CCT comprised the three Prefects of the region, the head of the Gendarmerie commander in Thrace, the Representative of the Greek Secret Service, the Minister of Agriculture and the Agricultural Bank of Greece, and the General Inspector of Foreign and Minority Schools. The Coordinator of the Minority Schools of

Thrace was also invited to meetings when matters of Minority education were discussed (AYE 1963c; Iliadis 2004: 22-23; Kostopoulos 2009: 68-69).

That is, Greece had formed its own deep-state structure in Western Thrace to regulate every issue concerning the Minority. As reactions against the CCT grew after 2005, the whole CCT archive was withdrawn from Kavala and transferred to Athens. Today, it is in the Diplomatic and Historical Archive of the Greek MFA, and access to the complete archive is limited⁷⁶.

Reading extracts from the “Governmental Measures for the Muslims of Thrace” meeting, the top-secret archival material available at the Karamanlis Archives in Athens, it became evident that the formation of the CCT was proposed and agreed in 1959. The main aim of this meeting was to discuss measures needed in order to increase state control over Minority issues in Western Thrace. Putting the CCT at the epicentre of this meeting, Greek officials with responsibility for Greek minority policy in Western Thrace also agreed on the following measures that primarily dealt with the Pomak-speakers of the Minority:

Firstly, the Agricultural Bank of Greece would provide a special type of credit only for Greeks of Greek ethnic origin buying Minority lands. Secondly, they agreed on the ‘ethnic proselytization’ [sic.] of the Pomaks, so Greek teachers would put a special emphasis on the education of Pomak-speaking Minority students. For this purpose, Greek authorities would carefully select those Greek teachers appointed to Minority primary schools attended primarily by Pomak students. Also, Greece would improve the well-being of Pomak-inhabited villages in the highlands by building new schools and children’s clubs, and providing bursaries for Pomak students (AKK 1959a).

In 1962, the Greek MFA decided to reorganize the CCT. According to the confidential order of the Minister, the main purpose was to make the CCT more effective on Minority-related matters in Western Thrace, to increase its relations with

⁷⁶ During my research at the Archive, I came across with some recorded meetings of CCT. However, all of the meetings were not available. As of today, only a handful of academics and journalists have the copies of the whole CCT archive that had accessed them when the archive was kept in Kavala before 2005 and open for researchers.

Greek state apparatuses in Athens and Western Thrace, and to promote coordination between them. (AEKSTMS 1962:1)⁷⁷

Before exploring the CCT policies on the education of the Minority, it is useful to note that the worsening of the Greek-Turkish bilateral relations over the Orthodox Greek minority of Istanbul and Cyprus actually encouraged the CCT to use the principle of reciprocity. Thus, it increased its control over the Minority and triggered the counter-measures against the Minority members in Western Thrace. In spite of the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 and the increasing communication at the highest level between the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Bitsios and Kunalalp (who were later succeeded by Sarper and Averoff), inter-communal violence between Turkish and Greek Cypriots intensified in the 1960s.

The Greek Cypriot side under the leadership of Makarios expressed dissatisfaction about the extent of Turkish Cypriot role within the bi-communal political structure of the island and it raised again issues of Enosis, which further worsened relations not only between Greek and Turkish Cypriots but also between Greece and Turkey.

Controversy over issues about Cyprus was coupled with the expulsion of the Greek minority from Istanbul. Turkey denounced the 1930 Convention of Establishment, Commerce and Navigation in 1964. Afterwards, the Turkish Parliament passed a new law stipulating that the residence and working permits of 10.000 to 11.000 Greek citizens possessing Greek citizenship and living in Turkey would not be renewed. This contributed to the gradual elimination of the Greek Minority population in Istanbul as well as the Imbroz and Tenedos islands. As a result, the Greek population numbering 80,000 in 1955 diminished to 48,096 in ten years time (Alexandris 1992: 291). Such developments contributed to the Greek introduction of major discriminatory measures against the Muslim Turkish minority, such as expropriation of their lands or banning them from purchasing immovable properties⁷⁸, which strengthened the negative

⁷⁷ I would like to thank Dr. Iliadis for providing me this archival document.

⁷⁸ See Tsitselikis (2012: 315-322). Minority's prevention from buying and selling of immovable properties would constitute one of the major factors that would directly affect the overall economic development of the region. According to the Law No. 1366/1938 all Greek citizens living in the bordering regions, one of which was Thrace, needed to get the necessary permission from a commission situated in the region. However, especially from mid 1960s until the beginning of the 1990s, permits for building or repairing houses would hardly be given for the Minority. As it is underlined (Christakoudis 1992:210)

application of the inter-state reciprocity principle embedded in the 1923 Lausanne Treaty and promoted the victimization of the Muslim Turks under the CCT regime in Western Thrace. I explore these processes in the following sections of this chapter.

Among other issues such as muftis and waqf properties, Minority education constituted one of the main areas under the influence of the CCT. It revised existing measures and introduced new ones in line with national policy on Western Thrace. The following sections query the role of the CCT in the regulation of the Minority education throughout 1960s.

5.4.1 Playing the ‘Pomak card’ in the Surveillance Zone

Throughout the 1960s, the CCT supported the opening of new children’s clubs in five mountainous villages inhabited mainly by Pomak-speaking Minority members – Echinós, Kentavros (*Ketenlik*) and Paxni (*Paşevik*), Mirtiski (*Musacık*) and Ano Virsini (*Hacıören*). These clubs also provided Greek language education and agriculture courses for Minority adults (Kostopoulos 2009: 77).

The CCT placed special significance upon the improvement of the educational regime within the Zone, especially in Pomak parts of the Thracian highlands. For this purpose, the CCT also prepared a confidential report on Minority education and submitted it to the Greek prime minister. According to this report, Minority schools were classified according to the alphabet used in Turkish language courses, i.e. the Turkish alphabet, Ottoman script or a mixture of the two; and which day of the week was a holiday, Friday or Sunday. The same report grouped Minority teachers not only according to their ethnicity, i.e. Turkish, Pomak and Roma, but also according to their ideological allegiance, Modernist or Traditionalist (AYE 1963).

The vast majority of Minority schools within the Zone were under the close scrutiny of the Greek army. Therefore, it was a safe haven for those Traditionalists promoting religious education and the instruction of Turkish in the Ottoman script. Given that the CCT preferred to cooperate with Traditionalists rather than Modernists, any interference from Turkey-backed Modernists was unwelcome; they were prevented

this law would be used by the PASOK government throughout the 1980s as a retaliation of extradition of the Greek Orthodox minority from Istanbul after the 1964.

from having access to schools inside the Zone, either by Greek state apparatuses or by school boards affiliated with the Traditionalist camp.

However, Turkey's introduction of a new scheme regarding the provision of economic support to Minority teachers in the early 1960s enabled the CCT to increase its economic support to Minority teachers. That is, the status of Minority teachers was not that of a Greek public employer. Therefore, their salaries were either paid by the parents of the Minority school children or the administrative boards of waqfs. Also, they were not entitled to the public retirement scheme, i.e. pension, unlike their Greek colleagues.

In 1960, a new law adopted by the Turkish Parliament introduced a new social aid scheme only for teachers abroad. According to the Law 168/1960 teachers of Turkish origin with foreign nationality (not those possessing Turkish citizenship) who retired at the age of 60 or earlier were given the right to receive social aid in cases where they served the promotion of Turkish culture outside of the national boundaries of the Republic of Turkey. Some of the criteria for eligibility of the candidates were as follows: at least 25 years of teaching, retired at the age of 60 after a minimum 15 years of teaching, or being prohibited to teach by the state authorities on the grounds that they had "served the Turkish culture" (TC Resmi Gazete, 10688, Law 168/16.12.1960).

In fact, this was the light at the end of the tunnel for Minority teachers who had served in Minority primary schools for years in Western Thrace without any public retirement scheme and social security. In the following decades, the number of these teachers benefitting from this Turkish social aid would increase given that a number of TTA teachers would either be prohibited to teach or were fired by the Greek authorities for contributing to the promotion of the values of Turkish culture inside the primary schools.

The new law also strengthened the power of the Turkish Consulate General in Komotini in the eyes of the Minority. Provided that the social aid was provided from the special section under the budget of the Turkish MFA (*ibid.*), then, the Consulate, which was also the only official body of Turkey in Western Thrace, became the primary authority to identify those Minority teachers eligible for this official social aid from Turkey.

The social aid policy of Turkey not only enabled the consolidation of the Minority teachers' bonds with Turkey and the Turkish Consulate General but also pushed the CCT to devote more economic aid especially for those Traditionalist teachers who worked closely with the local Greek authorities. In this respect, seeking to counter the aid coming from Turkey, the CCT introduced a new scheme of monthly allowances for those Minority teachers who had not applied for the social aid from Turkey. Iliadis (2011:245) underscores that the number of those teachers who took the Greek allowance increased from 132 to 200 between 1963 and 1967. Furthermore, the CCT also allocated some money for scholarships of Pomak students at public secondary and high schools. For example, in the CCT's 1963 budget of 2,529,000 drachmas, 50,000 drachmas were allocated to those scholarships and 500,000 drachmas to repair Minority schools within the Surveillance Zone (AYE 1963d).

As is underlined, according to the minutes of CCT, one could easily conclude that the main reason to support the Pomak students in the Surveillance Zone was to form a local elite of Pomaks. The scholarship programme demonstrates that they were expected to have closer relations with the Greek authorities than the Turkey-backed Modernists did. (Kostopoulos 2009: 85).

5.4.2 Teasing out the differences between Modernists and Traditionalists

In a short period of time, the CCT regulations bore fruit. In the 1960s, for the first time after 1923, there were strong ideological clashes between the Modernists and Traditionalists villagers, over their perception of educational issues and their children's needs. For example, in the village of Amfia (*HacıMustafaköy*) in Komotini Prefecture, some of the Minority villagers wanted to hire a TTA teacher, while others wanted to continue with the existing one, who taught Turkish courses in the Ottoman script. As the majority of villagers were affiliated with Traditionalists, it was decided to carry on teaching with the Ottoman script. Therefore, Modernist families protested this decision, took their children out of the Minority school and sent them to the Greek primary school of the village until their demands were accepted by the Coordinator (*Akin*, 19.1.1962).

A similar example occurred in a small village near Komotini, Kalhas (*Kalfa*), where the villagers held votes on the teaching of the Turkish curriculum at the Minority primary school and the choice of the weekly holiday (*Akin*, 26.10.1962). Disagreements

persisted between the two groups until a second Minority primary school was opened (*Gundem*, 5.11.2004). Despite the small population of the village and the limited number of students, they had to choose between two schools, both of which were composed of two classrooms and still had spare resources.

Similar cases of the opening of a second Minority primary school happened elsewhere in Rodopi Prefecture, like Arisvi (*Ircan*), Arriana (*Kozlukebiri*), Likion (*Kurcali*) and Asomatos (*Bulatköy*) (Anonymous 1963:14-15), while all suggestions to merge the pairs of schools into one unit with six classrooms fell on deaf ears of the Greek authorities until 1991.

Analysing the establishment of a second school in small Minority communities from the 1960s onwards, I drew two significant conclusions. Firstly, this was another indication how the CCT was successful in promoting Modernist-Traditionalist conflict over Minority education, by siding more with Traditionalists than Modernists, and gradually deepening the schism between villagers sharing the same space. Secondly, although parents of schoolchildren clashed over ideology, their children paid the price too, by being obliged to study in ideologically-divided and underdeveloped facilities.

5.4.3 The beginning of protests from Minority parents

Minority primary schools' boards and the Coordinator disagreed more and more over the schooling system, for example over hiring a teacher from Turkey, and it led to protests by Minority families. This simple and peaceful way of expressing discontent became popular in Western Thrace: if Minority parents' demands were not met, they withdrew their children from school. For example, the school board of Melivia (*Elmalı*) primary school decided to hire a second Turkish teacher; but the Coordinator in Xanthi refused their demand, despite them having the right to do so. The villagers protested, and 130 Muslim Turkish students were withdrawn from school for months. (*Trakya*, 11.1.1960)

From a different angle, this example from the early 1960s shows how the initial major disagreements between Minority school boards and the Coordinator resulted in Minority students being deprived of basic education. During my fieldwork, I came across a number of similar examples, which happened between the 1960s and the 1990s,

discussed in Minority and local Greek newspapers. I analyse some of these examples in Chapter 6 and 7.

5.4.4 Downgrading the ‘Turkishness’ of the Minority primary schools

Contrary to Greek promotion of ‘Turkish’ schools under the 1954 Fessopoulos Order that I cited above, any reference either by Greek officials or the Minority itself to the existence of ‘Turkish’ schools in Western Thrace was strongly discouraged, and sometimes even punished. For example, the head of the Minority Primary School in Echinós was prevented from teaching at Minority schools for making ‘Turkish propaganda [sic]’, because he permitted the use of the name ‘Turkish School of Echinós’ on a wreath in a 28 October, Greek Independence Day ceremony (*Trakya*, 28.11.1960; Fettahoglu 1962).

From a broader perspective, it seems that most of the local Greek authorities implemented CCT decisions and promoted the use of the religious denomination to identify Minority primary schools. That is, despite the Fessopoulos Order, the Coordinator of Minority Schools in Komotini and Xanthi started to reject the ethnic identification of Minority primary schools. Rather, in lines with the CCT directives both offices started to use the religious denomination and changed their own title to be the ‘Coordinator of the Muslim Schools’ (*Akin*, 19.12.1958; *Trakya*, 11.1.1960). This change also marked the start of Greek state apparatuses referring collectively to ‘Muslim Schools’, a terminology that is still officially promoted today.

In fact, the intolerance of the CCT towards the use of any ethnic ‘Turkish’ identification reached such a level that the then president (cited in Kostopoulos 2009:88) reportedly talked at one of the CCT meetings in 1966 about the renaming of some Minority primary schools as ‘Pomak’ or ‘Roma’ rather than ‘Turkish’. Despite the official rejection of a collective ethnic Turkish identity by the CCT, it was interesting to note that, during their confidential meetings, CCT officials used also term ‘Turkish students’ referring to the Minority students (AYE 1963; AYE 1963e).

Furthermore, Minority teachers who refrained from teaching Turkish courses with the Turkish alphabet and promoted teaching with the Ottoman script were given special subsidies. Similarly, Traditionalists dominated religious schools, including the

private ones, and they provided education in Ottoman script. Therefore, they were economically supported. For example, at the 30th CCT meeting, it was stated that Hafiz Ali Resat, one of the most prominent Traditionalist figures, was given 20,000 drachmas to support the operation of his private *medrese* (AYE 1963d).

By the same token, TTA teachers and their colleagues of Turkish citizenship were restricted to teaching Turkish courses at Minority primary schools within the Surveillance Zone, where the vast majority of schools taught Turkish courses in the Ottoman script. On the other hand, those Pomak-speaking Minority teachers who accepted working at schools within the Zone benefitted from the special subsidies (see Kostopoulos 2009: 83-86; *Trakya*, 14.4.1959).

The main reason behind restrictions against the TTA teachers can be understood from the confidential report about the statements of the then president of the CCT. In his speech, he presented the Minority teachers educated in Turkey as even more dangerous than their Turkish citizen colleagues in Western Thrace, because the former was much more active in promoting not only the overall level of Minority students' education, but also ethnic Turkish identity among the Muslims (AYE 1966).

Nevertheless, although the CCT tried to prevent the development of the Turkish curriculum and to restrict the impact of Turkey on Minority education in Western Thrace, it also consented to the opening of a second Minority secondary school in Xanthi. During the 31st meeting of the CCT, the common belief of the Council members was that the Greek minority in Istanbul had four Minority secondary schools. Thus, it was impossible to refuse those Minority demands for the establishment of a second Turkish secondary and high school in the region (AYE 1963f). At the 32nd meeting of the CCT, the General Inspector had underscored that the Greek need to create a Minority elite closer to Athens than Ankara could not be achieved without the creation of a new Minority secondary school in Xanthi. But he stressed that, unlike the other one in Komotini, issues of education at this school would be under the complete control of Greek state authorities and Minority students attending this school would be educated "within the Greek spirit [sic.]" (AYE 1963e).⁷⁹

⁷⁹ With the Decision 28767/1965 of the Greek Ministry of Education, the second Minority secondary school was opened in Xanthi under the name Muzaffer Salihoglu Minority High school (Vakalios et.al. 1997:41). Since then, it has still been satisfying demands of Minority families who want to provide bilingual secondary education in W.Thrace.

As for the survival of the Ottoman script in Western Thrace, the Greek state spent considerable effort to keep alive a language that had been buried by new Republic of Turkey in the late 1920s. For this purpose, books in the Ottoman language continued to be printed in Athens, as Traditionalist elites continued to raise demands for Ottoman textbooks. Similarly, the Union of Medrese Graduate Muslim Teachers of Western Thrace (BTMMMMC), founded in 1965, repeated such demands for textbooks in the Ottoman script (Interview with Asim Cavusoglu); by 1967, the CCT allocated 600,000 drachmas to meet such demands (Iliadis 2011:243).

Nevertheless, although the influence of Turkey-backed Modernists gradually increased after 1923, such collaborations between Traditionalists and the Greek state still made officials of the Turkish state worry about the future of their kin in Western Thrace. Therefore, Turkish diplomats and politicians kept underlining their discontent at every possible bilateral and international event. Umit Haluk Bayulken, the then Secretary General of the Turkish MFA, was among the first Turkish diplomats to mention Turkish dissatisfaction about Greek efforts to promote an already-buried script. In one the talks at the LSE, London, in 1963, he said that,

“...As a result of efforts to encourage the exploitation of the religious sentiments and the use of the Arabic alphabet, such odd publications are still possible in Western Thrace and, however little they might be, the effects of such efforts can only be negative in the cultural advancement of the Turks living in the region” (Bayulken 1965:154).

According to confidential Greek reports, a series of high-level meetings between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs included Minority education in Western Thrace. Turkey’s primary demands were for Greece to promote the Turkish language than the Ottoman script; to enable Minority teachers educated at Turkish Academies to work, rather than to promote *medrese* graduates for the teaching of the Turkish curriculum; and to deal carefully with problems emerging after the distribution of new textbooks published for the minorities in Western Thrace and Istanbul by Turkey and Greece respectively (AKK 1959b; AKK 1959c).

In short, Turkish officials demanded Greece minimize the impact of Traditionalists inside and outside of Minority schools that would contribute to their disappearance in the long run. This was exactly the opposite of what the CCT tried to achieve throughout the 1960s across Western Thrace – to deepen the omnipresent schism within the Minority, either by playing the ‘Pomak card’ and eventually

preventing the Minority from acting as a unitary body against Greek measures, or by seeking to increase state control over Minority education in Western Thrace.

5.5 Conclusion

The time period that I covered above showed that Greece gradually started to increase its influence on matters of Minority education throughout the 1950s and 1960s. At both primary and secondary levels of education, the Greek state introduced a variety of rules and regulations. Some of these regulations solved problems, others complicated the existing structure of Minority education.

While doing so, Greece occasionally cooperated with Turkey. In spite of up and downs in Turco-Greek relations, Turkey's influence on the development of the Turkish curriculum was noteworthy, particularly between 1950 and 1955.

Relations between the countries started to sour as the '6-7 September Events' and the Cyprus Problem started to occupy more space in the foreign policy agendas of both countries. In light of this deterioration, Greece increased state influence via the CCT. As I demonstrated above, from ethnicity and religion to education, the CCT played a very significant role in strengthening the Greek state's power over Minority issues.

Although the CCT was dissolved in 1969, the Greek state's influence continued to increase in the 1970s and 1980s, thus making it the absolute power on matters of Minority education. In this respect, the next chapter focuses on the development of Minority education throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

CHAPTER 6: From the Beginning of the 1967 Junta Regime until the End of the 1980s

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to show how Greek state apparatuses continued to increase their control over Minority education in Western Thrace. It begins by highlighting the 1967 junta's manipulation of Minority education, then focuses on Minority education during the democratization and Europeanization of the country between 1975 and 1991. It ends with a watershed in Minority-state relations: when Greece's declaration of a policy based on the principle of equal civil rights, protected under law.

Discussing the development of Minority education in the 1970s and 1980s, this chapter stresses how Greece increased its control over not only education, but also other aspects of Minority life. This resulted in a multitude of basic human and minority rights violations, e.g. expropriation of land and impediments to getting driving licenses or building permits. Some of these violations are mentioned in the final section of this chapter.

This study argues that no major changes occurred in the lives of the Minority in this period, either after the junta regime ended in 1974, or after Greece became an EC/EU member in 1981. Although Greece applied a series of measures to promote socio-economic development, a number of problems persisted in Minority education, while new ones emerged due to certain regulations introduced by the Greek state during the 1970s and 1980s. The Greek government's increasing control over primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education further weakened the educational autonomy of the Minority enshrined in the 1923 Lausanne Treaty.

6.2 The Advent of Military Rule in 1967

The political turmoil of the 1960s, combined with the economic depression, paved the way for the Greek army's intervention in 1967. For the subsequent seven years, up until 1974, the Greek army controlled every aspect of life; and life for most members of Greek society became more difficult, regardless of their ethnic origin, mother tongue and religion. Unfortunately, this situation persisted after 1974.

The junta regime did not follow a special policy with regards to the treatment of the Minority. Rather, it continued the mission of the CCT and controlled every aspect of Minority education. However, a number of the Junta's new regulations, some of which I elaborate upon below, remain disputed between the Minority, Greece and Turkey. This was one of the main reasons why I heard my minority participants using the phrase 'Cunta yadigarı [Reminder of the Junta]' when they spoke about some of the unresolved issues in Minority education, such as EPATH teachers.

6.2.1 The 1968 Cultural Protocol between Greece and Turkey

Although Turkish-Greek disputes increased in the 1960s, mainly due to the 6-7 September Events and the Cyprus Problem, the 1967 regime still preferred to cooperate with Turkey on educational matters. During the Vienna talks on 22nd February 1968, officials from both the Greek and Turkish MFA agreed to re-establish the PMC in a bid to increase cooperation on Minority education in both countries (Panagiotidis 1996:232-234). These meetings bore fruit the same year, when the Cultural Protocol was signed between Greece and Turkey. The initial statements of the Turkish and Greek officials were quite positive; the Greek Foreign Minister emphasized that this Protocol was an indication of cooperation and good faith between the two countries (Galip 1968b).

Compared to the 1951 Cultural Agreement, which promoted primarily cultural exchange between Greece and Turkey, the 1968 Protocol was composed of basic regulations for the education of the two minorities. The Protocol mainly dealt with school libraries, the language of instruction, technical materials in minority languages, the exchange of books and teachers. In addition, the Protocol stressed tolerance towards the ethnic, racial and religious consciousness of the two groups; and suggested that visual materials used in Minority schools should strengthen relations between Greece and Turkey (The Cultural Protocol 1968).

In spite of the regulations targeting the improvement of Minority education, as time passed it became apparent that neither Greece nor Turkey was fully implementing the basic premises of the protocol. Thus, this study underscores that the 1968 Protocol fell far short of solving any of the major educational problems in Western Thrace.

6.2.2 Textbooks

The 1967 regime allowed the use of Turkish textbooks, including the supplementary ones sent from Turkey for the improvement of Turkish language skills at Minority primary and secondary schools. For instance, Turkey donated 12 million textbooks for the 1968-1969 academic year alone, which were distributed following approval by the local Greek authorities (Galip 1968a).

In addition to accepting Turkish textbooks from Turkey, the Greek junta also cooperated with the Turkish Teachers Association of Western Thrace in Komotini, and enabled the latter to prepare a Turkish textbook on Life Science (*Hayat Bilgisi*). Once the term ‘Turkish’ had been erased from the association’s name on the publication, the book was prepared and distributed at Minority primary schools (Interview with Sami Toraman). Even though the Greek junta did not tolerate the use of the term ‘Turkish’ in Western Thrace, this cooperation between junta officials and Minority education professionals was one of the few acts of state-minority cooperation under the 1967 military regime. Some Minority newspapers commented that the publication of the Minority association’s Turkish-language book was a signal that Greek authorities would address the Minority’s need for contemporary Turkish textbooks (Haliloglu 1970). Nevertheless, the junta stopped providing textbooks from Turkey, an application that would be followed by the Greek governments after 1974. As a result, the Minority had to wait three more decades for Greece to approve the use of Turkish textbooks that were prepared in Turkey.

6.2.3 Increasing role of Greek vice-heads

As I explained in Chapter 5, according to Law 3065/1954, only Minority teachers had the right to become heads/principals of Minority primary schools. Greek teachers following a Greek curriculum were restricted to the post of vice-head. However, from the mid-1960s onwards, the CCT emphasized Greek education at Minority schools. In this respect, courses in history and geography were added to the Greek curriculum. Also, all of the Greek teachers, including the ones who were previously paid by municipalities, were granted the status of public employees and appointed to Minority schools. Thus, the number of Greek teachers and Greek-language courses started to increase in the 1960s.

The growing number of Greek teachers also resulted in their involvement in the administration of Minority schools. Such involvement was actually promoted by certain laws introduced in the 1960s. For instance, in 1964, for the first time since 1923, Greek vice-heads were given the right to sign graduation diplomas. Some Minority members interpreted this as a signal of a lack of trust in Minority heads. In my opinion, the Greek vice-head appeared to have a supportive role, but actually functioned as a ‘controller’, monitoring the actions of the Minority head teacher. Thus, the ‘eye’ of the Greek state was always on the Minority heads.

In summary, the 1967 regime followed the practices of the CCT, and emphasized the teaching of Greek at Minority primary schools; and Greek teachers increased in number and administrative influence.

6.2.4 Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki (EPATH) and EPATH teachers

Another significant policy of the Greek state, the establishment of EPATH⁸⁰, was introduced in 1968. One of the main reasons for this was to meet the Minority’s need for teachers with pedagogical training, since most of the teaching personnel responsible for the Turkish curriculum were graduates of *medreses* or primary schools.

In fact, there were already TTA teachers waiting to work at Minority schools, but Greece was not eager to give them permission to teach at these schools. In Chapter 5, I showed that Greek officials were concerned about the appointment of TTA teachers. Therefore, rather than allowing the number of TTA teachers to increase at Minority schools, the Greek junta decided to establish a new teacher training academy in Thessaloniki.

Doing research in local Minority press archives as well as the Venizelos Archives, I found that there were two attempts to address this: the first was a significant attempt in the late 1920s by the Greek state; and the second was a proposal made by the Traditionalists in the late 1950s, on the necessity for education of Minority students at teachers academies in Greece. Let me begin by describing the former.

⁸⁰ Royal Decree 31/1968, cited in Baltiotis and Tsitselikis (2001:113). Further regulations about the application and acceptance procedure, structure and functioning of EPATH as well as its analytical curriculum were introduced by Legislative Decree No.143 (FEK A’ 216, 20.9.1973), Ministerial Decision 61319/1978 (FEK A’ 523, 8.6.1978), Ministerial Decisions No.61318 and 61321 (FEK B’ 527, 12th June 1978) and the Ministerial Decision No.Z/1125 (FEK B’ 308, 26.3.1980).

During his visit to Western Thrace in 1929, the Inspector had witnessed the lack of trained Minority teachers: out of 277 Minority teachers at 241 schools, only four had had any pedagogical training (AEB 1928: 36). Therefore, he reminded the authorities of the need for a Greek *Ipodidaskalio*⁸¹ that would enable Minority teachers to get pedagogical training and to start teaching Turkish at Minority schools. However, he added, this institution needed to be different from the Greek ones, because they were run by Greek teachers, in Greek. In his opinion, the Minority could have perceived the Greek-dominated environment as a device of Greek propaganda, and that would have discouraged parents from sending their children to this institution. The Minority elite could also have interpreted it as a Greek attempt to undermine their educational autonomy. As a result, no step was taken towards the establishment of a Greek *Ipodidaskalio* that would have prepared Minority teachers to teach the Turkish curriculum (AEB 1928: 32-33).

As for the demands of the Traditionalist elite, some Traditionalist newspapers showed their discomfort at the increasing number of TTA teachers. Rather than Greece reaching an agreement with Turkey on the education of Minority students at TTAs, they proposed that Greece establish a teaching academy in Greece where Minority students could become teachers of the Turkish curriculum (see *Sebat*, 24.8.1959).

Seemingly, the Greek motivation for the EPATH was not to satisfy the Minority's needs, but to break the flow of Minority students to TTAs, and to counter the TTA group with an EPATH group. The EPATH teachers would have almost no relation with Turkey, as they would be educated at a Greek institution in Greece (Thessaloniki), under the absolute control of the Greek state. In short, by introducing the EPATH, Greece wanted to control the entire process of training Minority students to teach the Turkish curriculum at the primary level in Thrace.

In the early stages of the EPATH, Minority participation was quite limited. Although the Greek state covered the costs of tuition and accommodation, only around 20 students a year completed the three-year course (Aarbakke 2000:150). In addition, there were some problems between the EPATH's students and teachers. The Greek teachers' denial of the students' ethnic Turkish identity was reminiscent of Greek

⁸¹ It was a kind of teacher-training school aiming to cover the increasing need for teachers at Greek primary education. It provided a one-year education for those who finished primary school so that they could teach or help teachers at primary schools all over Greece.

nationalist rhetoric: “There are no Turks at this school. You are Greek Muslims. Those identifying themselves as Turkish do not have a place here. They can go and live in Turkey” (Haksas 1987:24). In the early 1980s, a group of EPATH students tried to voice their criticism against the low standards of the Turkish language and literature courses. To this end, they even sent a memorandum to the Greek Ministry of Education highlighting that,

“In our region, the primary schools we graduated from had nothing to do with education...Most of us came from religious schools where the level of education was close to zero. However, the situation is not so different here in the Academy. Besides the low level of education, books are almost non-existent. Most of our teachers are provocative and political propaganda is one of the daily routines. Also, our private life is always under observation”.⁸²

In spite of such disputes between the EPATH students and the Greek state, new laws and regulations introduced in 1970s and 1980s managed to encourage Minority parents to send their children to the EPATH rather than the TTAs. In particular, Law 1109/1972 enabled EPATH teachers to teach Turkish courses, while Law 695/1977 prioritised EPATH teachers’ appointment to Minority Primary schools.⁸³

Both of these regulations had a major influence not only on those Minority members who had finished their TTA programme and were looking for teaching jobs, but also on those families who were planning to send their children to TTAs. Until that time, being a TTA graduate was a guarantee of a job. A number of these Minority teachers had got official permission and started to teach at Minority schools during the 1960s. However, with Law No.695/1977, Greece completely reversed this practice in favour of those graduating from the EPATH. Thus, the Greek state only permitted half of the around 300 TTA teachers to work as teachers (Haliloglu 1978). The rest of them either remained unemployed or found a new job outside Western Thrace⁸⁴. Due to this situation, Minority families who wanted their children to become teachers of the Turkish curriculum at Minority primary schools stopped sending their children to Turkey. Instead, they sent them to the EPATH in order to secure job opportunities. In

⁸² The letter of the EPATH students sent to the Ministry on 25th November 1981 quoted in Dede (1982).

⁸³ Article 7. “As for the employment and appointment of Muslim teachers for the Minority Schools the graduates of EPATH are prioritized” (FEK A’ 264, 16.9.1977). Also, the Presidential Decree 1024/1978 regulated the appointment of EPATH teachers as well as their duties and responsibilities (FEK A’ 288, 28.12.1978).

⁸⁴ For example, after his education in Turkey, Naim Kazim was unable to get permission to teach at Minority schools. Thus, he went to Athens to find a job in the 1970s. After a couple of years, he returned to his village and became a farmer (Baltali 2012: 60).

short, the opening of the EPATH represented the beginning of the end for Minority students attending the TTAs.

The statistical figures for the EPATH also give us an indication of the flow of Minority students to Thessaloniki. When the 1977 regulations that I mentioned were introduced, the total number of EPATH teachers at Minority schools started gradually to grow, thus reaching 168 in 1987 (Theodoropoulos 1988:307-308). Three years later, the total number of the EPATH graduates was 307 (Panagiotidis 1995:99).

For various reasons that I explain below, the EPATH and its teachers at Minority primary schools put their stamp on educational disputes between the Minority, Greece and Turkey from its foundation in 1968 until its abolition in 2011. Although the Modernist-Traditionalist controversies inside the Minority faded away in the early 1970s, in the next section I will analyse how the establishment of the EPATH resulted in the formation of a new schism within the Turkish curriculum of bilingual Minority education.

6.2.4.1 Formation of a new schism within teachers of the Turkish curriculum: EPATH teachers vs. Others

As the number of EPATH graduates at Minority schools increased, so too did the controversies between the two main groups of Minority teachers of the Turkish curriculum. The TTA teachers started to raise serious criticisms against the education provided at the EPATH. One of these criticisms was that the EPATH curriculum was largely composed of courses taught in Greek rather than Turkish. The second criticism was about the educational background of students applying for the EPATH, because the vast majority of EPATH applicants were actually graduates of *medreses*⁸⁵, where again most of the courses were delivered in Greek. Therefore, EPATH graduates could not prove that their Turkish was good enough to teach the Turkish curriculum at Minority schools.

From the 1970s onwards, Greek promotion of EPATH teachers resulted in frequent protests from the Minority parents who preferred the TTA teachers. The most prominent, and longest, protest took place in the early 1980s, when the villagers of

⁸⁵ Only one exception was noted by an EPATH graduate: a Celal Bayar High School graduate from the Evros Prefecture, enrolled at the EPATH and graduated in 1973 (Haksas 1987:22).

Simandra (*Karaçanlar*), near Xanthi, reacted against the replacement of their TTA teacher with an EPATH teacher. Despite the intervention of both Minority and Greek political and local elites, neither villagers nor the Greek local authorities took a step back towards a compromise. As a result of this, the Minority primary school of Simandra remained closed for five years; all the schoolchildren had to leave their village and continue their primary and secondary education in Turkey (*Akin*, 13.4.1983; Onsunoglu 1997:62). In the 1980s, similar major protests about teachers of the Turkish curriculum also took place in other parts of the region.⁸⁶ However, none of them lasted for as long as the Simandra protest.

The TTA teachers who did manage to secure places at Minority schools during the 1960s often had to face serious problems, which Greek officials generally ignored or underestimated. First, they were not provided with extra courses and facilities to develop their teaching skills and knowledge, which is why they continued to use pedagogical and teaching materials from the 1960s. Second, their freedom of movement was restricted, as (giving various reasons) the local Greek authorities rejected most of their passport applications (Serifoglu 2002). Third, most of these teachers were not given permission to renew their contracts with their school boards, which meant that they could easily be transferred from one school to another. Thus, reportedly, by 1978 most of the TTA teachers were working on contracts dating back to 1964; this meant that they were paid the same wage for almost 14 years (*Azinlik Postasi* 10.3.1978)⁸⁷. Major problems with the transfer of teachers persisted in the 1980s, and this resulted in a climate of discomfort between the teachers and the families of the students (Joint Report 1987:3) Last, TTA teachers too felt insecure about their future, because they were facing tough conditions. For example, local Greek authorities fired a number of TTA teachers without giving any significant reason (*Akin*, 14.10.1979).

Greek authorities showed a similar attitude towards teachers with Turkish citizenship who came from Turkey. These teachers faced various difficulties during

⁸⁶ *Akin*, 7.10.1983, 7.2.1985; Turkoglu 1983:9. Indeed, the conversation between the Coordinator and the villagers of Melivia seems to be highly important in showing to what extent the Greek state was determined to promote only the EPATH teachers to the Minority primary schools: "The EPATH teacher would definitely come to this school for three years whether you send your children or not. If he resigns like the former teacher he will directly be replaced with another EPATH graduate. You need to digest this. We will not send any teacher other than an Academy graduate." The statement of the Coordinator, Mr. Kefalidis, quoted in Anonymous (1985: 6-7).

⁸⁷ Contracts were regulated with Law No.694/1977 and 695/1977, which gave the right to sign three-year contracts with school boards.

their stays in the region. For instance, the local authorities responsible for approving their applications responded quite late, generally towards the end of year, which resulted in their arriving at least three months into the academic year. It was reported that in the two academic years of 1984 and 1985, teachers of Turkish citizenship only started teaching in March, five months into the academic year, due to bureaucratic difficulties that they encountered when applying for permits from the local Greek authorities (Hursit 2006:178).

Apart from these difficulties, Turkish teachers were always treated with suspicion as potential ‘agents’ of Turkey. From the very beginning of their arrival in Western Thrace in the early 1950s, they were under the close scrutiny of Greek officials; the Greek police usually followed them. Some of them were accused and found guilty of promoting Turkey in Western Thrace. In spite of all these difficulties, Turkey continued to send teachers every academic year.

Similar Greek discrimination against teachers from the TTAs and from Turkey led me to question the underlying motivations for the establishment of this institution by the Greek junta in 1968. Was it to satisfy the Minority’s educational need for Turkish courses, or was it to polarize the Minority schools by producing teachers who would toe the Greek government’s line on issues that had to do not only with the school but also with the broader community? After my readings on EPATH and my personal experience in the field, the conclusion that I drew was closer to the latter.

The EPATH was one of the main indicators of the Greek state’s willingness to control teachers of the Turkish curriculum and limit their links with Turkey. This was probably one of the most effective ways to nurture a young generation of Minority members whose affiliation with Turkey, the Turkish language and Turkish culture would be curtailed. As it was clearly stated by one of the first international scholars visiting Western Thrace in the late 1970s, the EPATH was one of the tools used by the Greek state to intervene in and control the educational affairs of the Minority. It was an effort to “create an incompetent Hellenized teachers’ corps isolated from the mainstream of Turkish culture and civilization” (F. de Jong 1980:98).

6.3 The language of instruction for the Turkish curriculum

The 1968 Cultural Protocol specified that education in Minority schools had to be in the ‘Minority language’. It stated that Turkish should be used in Western Thrace and Greek in Istanbul, Imbroz and Tenedos. One year after signing the 1968 Protocol, the Greek junta regime issued a new directive⁸⁸ stating that the Turkish language was accepted as the Minority’s language, so all Turkish courses would be taught in Turkish which leaves no room for instruction in Ottoman script. This was also confirmed by the Greek MFA, which emphasized that the Ministry “confirm[ed] the absolute freedom of usage of the Turkish language in Minority schools”.⁸⁹

Figures indicate that the order on Turkish-language teaching had no immediate effect at the local level. Of the around 300 Minority schools, 110 continued to teach Turkish courses with Ottoman script (Galip 1971). In some villages that had two Minority primary schools, the school that used the Ottoman script would be closed down, because its students moved to the other school.

By the 1980s, the number of schools using Ottoman script, particularly those within the Zone, further decreased, making Turkish the main written alphabet in Turkish courses at Minority primary schools. This also helped to solve Minority disputes about the official day off; most Minority schoolchildren started to enjoy their weekends on Saturdays and Sundays, and not Fridays and Saturdays anymore (Selami 1981:8). Speculation regarding the use of the new Turkish alphabet was rampant. The following statement is from a Minority newspaper dating back to 1931: “Romania made it compulsory for Turkish schools to use the new Turkish Alphabet. This would be applied also to us sooner or later” (*Milliyet*, 3.7.1931). This would only come true almost half a century later.

Analysing the 1968 Protocol and its impact on the development of the Turkish curriculum from a Greek point of view then, some Greek scholars seem to put it correctly: Greek promotion of the Turkish language over the Ottoman one enabled Turkey to consolidate the transformation of the Minority from a religious ‘Muslim’ community to a national ‘Turkish’ one, at least in matters of education (Alexandris and Paresoglou 1991:121, Vakalopoulos 1991:522).

⁸⁸ Directive No.4282-93/18.1.1969 cited at Panagiotidis (1996:30).

⁸⁹ Document No. 4282-93/18.1.1969 quoted in Malkidis (1999:266).

Similarly, this study provides two arguments about the impacts of the 1968 Protocol on the homogenization of the Minority. First, the Junta's promotion of the teaching of the Turkish curriculum in the Turkish alphabet, that has continued to be followed by the Greek governments, contributed not only to the Minority's affiliation with 'motherland' official Turkey but also to the strengthening of ethnic Turkish identity in Western Thrace.

Second, it also consolidated the widespread usage of the Turkish language between the Minority members some of whom had a mother tongue other than Turkish. Especially the Pomak and Romani-speaking members of the Minority were never given the chance to learn their languages at the Minority's educational institutions provided that the language of the Turkish curriculum was officially defined as Turkish. Therefore, looking from a different angle it seems that the bilateral protocol that signed between the two countries contrasted with an international treaty and its supra-legislative status guaranteed under Article 28 (1) of the 1975 Greek Constitution. That is, by signing the 1968 Cultural Protocol with Turkey, Greece actually went against Article 41 of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty that guarantees the right of instruction in their own languages in primary education for both minorities exempted from the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange.

At this point, it is useful to add that until the 1990s it had never been a priority for the Greek state to preserve the linguistic pluralism of the Minority. No major discussion occurred among the Greek decision makers either at the local or national level regarding policies aimed at promoting the survival of the Pomak and Romani languages at those Minority schools attended primarily by Pomak-speaking and Romani-speaking Minority students. Along with the official indifference, Pomak and Romani-speaking members of the Minority also showed almost no collective claim and determination for the teaching of their languages at Minority institutions attended by their children. Thus, learning and practising their mother tongues was possible only inside their houses or in the localities inhabited mainly by Pomak or Romani speakers.

In fact, since the official Greek proclamation about the division of the Muslim minority into three different ethnic groups in 1991, some minor steps have been taken by the different Greek state and non-state actors particularly for promoting the Pomak language in Western Thrace whose speakers are more numerous than the ones speaking

Romani, e.g. the publication of the Greek-Pomak lexicon by the Greek Army. However, it is a fact that the teaching of the Pomak and Romani languages are still absent not only at any level of Minority education but also at Greek public institutions, thus continuing to pose another threat for the linguistic heterogeneity in Greece.

6.4 Law No.1109/1972 and increasing Greek control of Minority education

As I indicated in the last section, the Greek junta satisfied the Minority's key need for the improvement of Turkish-language teaching at Minority primary schools. Nevertheless, it also enabled the Greek state to increase its control over Minority education. Law 1109/1972 (FEK A' 17, 31.1.1972) was one of the main regulations restricting the Minority's control over its schools while granting Greek officials a greater say in Minority education. More specifically, it affected Minority school boards and the denomination of Minority primary schools.

6.4.1 School Boards

With Law 1109/1972, government control over boards of Minority primary schools increased. Parent-elected members of school boards were still required to seek the consent of the Nomarch of the Prefecture. In this respect, Nomarchs of Thrace's three prefectures started to play the role of the 'Greek guard'. As Tsitselikis (2003:53) notes, this also applied to the two *medreses*, where the power of the Nomarch prevailed over that of the Mufti. For this reason, Law 1109/1972 represents the beginning of the increasing power of Nomarchs over the administration of Minority schools.

In 1978, two more crucial ministerial decrees regulated the election of school boards and restricted their duties and responsibilities.⁹⁰ Thus, these boards needed the highest local Greek authority, i.e. the Nomarch, to approve all of their decisions. On 17 October 1979, the school boards' elections were finally completed (Hursit 2006:150). However the new rules introduced in 1972 and 1978 resulted in discussions about the ineffectiveness of the school boards in contrast to Greek state apparatuses. As a result of these discussions, parents of schoolchildren were discouraged from serving as board members. Thus, for example, in 1983, elections for school boards could not be

⁹⁰ Decree No. 52447 (FEK B' 473, 22.5.1978) and Decree No. 70464 (FEK B' 579, 29.6.1978).

conducted in all Minority primary schools due to a lack of Minority candidates (see *Trakyanin Sesi*, 22nd January 1983).

6.4.2 From ethno-national to religious denomination of Minority schools

Contrary to some laws and orders implemented in the 1950s, there was no regulation of Minority schools' names until the 1970s. Therefore, some of the Minority primary schools used signs with the term 'Turkish', such as the Turkish Minority School of Komotini, while some others used the term 'Muslim' (Yildiz 1970:5). The terminology of Law 1109/1972 referred to 'Minority' primary schools in Thrace. With this in mind, in March 1972, the armed forces intervened in Minority schools. In some localities, they removed the nameplates with the name 'Turkish' on them and replaced them with ones with *M/KON*, which can mean two things in Greek - either *Μουσουλμανικόν* [Muslim], or *Μειονοτικόν* [Minority]. The junta regime appeared to be happy with both interpretations and, interestingly, nobody intervened in primary schools that had 'Muslim' on their signage (Galip 1972)⁹¹. Gradually, all the names of the 'Turkish' Primary schools were changed to '*M/KON*'. Since then, no Minority schools have been allowed to use the term 'Turkish' on their name plates, although I noticed during my fieldwork that most of the Minority members refer to these schools as 'Turkish' schools anyway.

6.5 Changing the balance between the Turkish and Greek Curriculum

As I mentioned in Chapter 5, Greece started to emphasize the Greek curriculum. Initially, it only emphasized the Greek language courses; but then in the 1960s history and geography started to be taught in Greek. In 1975, a new course was introduced in Minority primary education, *Αγωγή* [Morality]. Thus, at a Minority primary school with six classrooms, the total number of courses taught in Greek rose from 60 to 79, while those in Turkish decreased from 126 to 107 (Anonymous 1977:2-3). In 1985, one more

⁹¹ For Oran (1991:298), the Greek Junta authorities claimed that the new directive was to counter the policies of Turkey, where Greek schools have the title 'Rum', not 'Greek'. They also added that if Turkey added the term 'Greek' to the nameplates of the Minority schools in Istanbul, then Greece might stop the use of *M/KON*. Oran blames Turkey for not responding to this demand of Greece, thus allowing debates over the naming of schools to continue. As of 2010, problems with the naming of Minority primary schools persist and no school can officially use the term 'Turkish'.

revision was made with the Decision Z2/15 of the Ministry of Education; the course in Life Sciences should be taught in Greek (FEK B' 20/9.1.1985).

A similar development was also observed at *medreses*. As the number of Greek teachers increased, so did the number of Greek courses. In the 1960s, there were only two Greek teachers responsible for the teaching of the Greek language, while all others were members of the Minority. There was even a Turkish-citizen teacher who had graduated from El-Ezher University/Egypt (Interview with Asim Cavusoglu). From the 1970s onwards, the number of courses taught in Turkish, as well as those regarding Islam and its practices, decreased in proportion with the increased number of Greek teachers and courses taught in Greek (Tsitselikis 2003:57). My informants often raised this point about the decline of courses taught in Arabic and Turkish when they spoke about the role of Minority religious schools in Western Thrace.

Up till now, I have emphasized how the Greek state gradually increased its control over different areas of Minority primary education. In the next section, I will show that this increase in the power of the Greek state was not limited to the Minority's primary education; in the 1970s and 1980s, it was extended to secondary education.

6.6 The Greek impact on the Minority's secondary education

After the end of the Greek junta and the formation of the new democratic government, the Greek Parliament adopted Law No.309/1976 (FEK A' 202, 2.8.1976), which stated that, from 1980 onwards, compulsory education for all Greek citizens would increase from six to nine years. Education at all levels would be free, and entrance examinations for secondary education would be abolished (Katsikas and Thermions 2007:228-229).

Within this framework, a number of new public secondary schools opened across the country; but the situation for the Minority did not change. Families persisted in taking their children away from primary schools in the middle of the academic year to work, mainly in agriculture. Therefore, some students were not able to finish primary education, and others were simply not sent to secondary school. In doing so, Minority parents were violating national law; but the local Greek authorities turned a blind eye.

Each year there were around 10,000 students enrolled in Minority primary schools, but there were only two bilingual Minority secondary schools.⁹² This meant that if all students had been retained, only a small percentage would have been able to get a bilingual education. The number of applicants for the two Minority secondary schools gradually increased in the 1970s and the 1980s; these schools' entrance examinations, which had been introduced by the Greek Higher Education Council, *Ανώτατο Εκπαιδευτικό Συμβούλιο*, were applied until the early 1990s. The entrance examination served to excuse the limited availability of secondary schools for the Minority⁹³. For example, in 1985, the number of Turkish Minority students graduating from primary schools was around 1000. Only one-tenth of them would manage to secure a place in one of the two Turkish secondary schools (Galip 1987: 45). In 1987, among the 173 candidates in Komotini and 53 in Xanthi, only 24 students passed the entrance exam for the two Turkish secondary schools (Anonymous 1987:46). This indicates that the entrance exam itself constituted one of the main hindrances for Minority students' access to the bilingual secondary schools in Western Thrace.

The number of Minority students at secondary school fell further due to a Ministry of Education decree that, from the 1983-1984 academic year onwards, all final-year students had to take the graduation examination.⁹⁴ Since it was available nationwide, all of the exam questions were in Greek. For Minority high school students, it was difficult to take an exam on courses that were taught in Turkish, like maths, chemistry, biology and physics. Thus, the results of this new graduation examination were a severe blow to both the Minority and the Greek state, because none of the final-year Minority students were able to pass the exam (Hursit 2006:228). As Dede ironically stated in his newspaper, this was a new 'record' in the history of the two Minority high schools (*Trakyanin Sesi*, 16.7.1984). As a final blow, one year after the introduction of the graduation examination, the Ministry issued another decree⁹⁵ that introduced the same type of exams for first and second-year students at all Greek high schools. In order to enter the next year, students had to pass the end-of-year exams.

⁹² To note, although they are both Minority schools their official status is different. While the one in Komotini was a state school established under Law No. 2203, the one in Xanthi has a status of private school. From 1979 onwards, they were officially known as 'Komotini Minority Secondary and High School' and 'Xanthi Private Minority Secondary and High School'. Ministerial Decision No. Z/3301, FEK B' 412, 27.4.1979.

⁹³ Opinion No. 11/11.4.1975, quoted in Joint Report (1987:7)

⁹⁴ Decision No. Z.2/396/21.7.1983 quoted in Hatipoglu (1984).

⁹⁵ It was an amendment to Law No.1351/1983, adopted the following year (FEK B' 156, 20.3.1984).

The application of these two measures had a completely negative effect on Minority secondary education, as can be seen from Table 3 below: in a period of five years, the number of Turkish high school students fell from 372 to 37 in Komotini, and from 287 to 85 in Xanthi. In addition to the falling numbers, the second column of each year shows that the number of Minority students graduating from these two schools also plummeted. Due to the lack of students, most of the classes of the high school section of Celal Bayar had to remain empty for four years, while the dormitory for girls, which had been open since 1969, had to be closed (Baltali 2012:90).

Table 3: The total number of Muslim Turkish students at Celal Bayar and Muzaffer Salihoglu Minority Secondary and High Schools between 1982 and 1988 (Anonymous 1988a:10)⁹⁶.

	1982-1983		1983-1984		1984-1985		1985-1986		1986-1987		1987-1988	
Komotini	372	30	305	33	174	1	84	1	42	-	37	
Xanthi	287	14	207	22	183	3	120	2	124	1	85	

To address this issue of a decrease in the number of Turkish students, the Greek Ministry of Education helped Turkish students to pass by making their Greek exams simpler. These regulations were put into place at the beginning of the 1990s⁹⁷; throughout the 1980s, most Minority parents had chosen to send their children to Turkey for secondary education.

This study argues that the Greek state's restrictions on Minority education indirectly motivated Minority parents to educate their children in Turkey in the 1970s and 1980s. As I showed above, rather than finding solutions to various problems in Minority primary and secondary education in cooperation with the Minority, the Greek authorities continued introducing unilateral measures that made the education of

⁹⁶ The first column shows the number of Muslim Turkish students at the two Minority high schools, while the second column of each year depicts the number of students graduating from these schools.

⁹⁷ Law No. 1892/1990. According to this law, the exams for first and second-year students were halted, while the exam for third-year students was simplified. (Hursit 2006:229)

Minority students within Western Thrace a difficult and complicated task. Recalling Oran's study (1991:303), before the 1980s, Turkey had only been a destination for Muslim Turks' higher education; but after, it became the main destination for secondary education as well.

6.7 Opening of new Public Secondary Schools (Gymnasiums)

I remember several references of Minority elites from the 1970s and the 1980s that dealt with the Minority's demands for new bilingual secondary and high schools. This, it was argued, would enable their children to complete the nine years of compulsory education in a bilingual context. The Greek state, however, turned a deaf ear to these requests. Instead, it opened five public secondary schools on the Western Thracian mountain range. All these schools were opened in Minority-settled localities within the Surveillance Zone - four in Xanthi and one in Komotini Prefectures. Their expenses were covered by the Greek state. The only difference to other public secondary schools was the course on religion, which was about Islam and taught by a Minority clergyman (Askouni 2006:218).

Initially, Minority families living in the highlands were hesitant to send their children to these schools. For the 1983-1984 academic year, the total number of students at four of these schools was reported to be only 14! (*Akin*, 25.2.1984). Thereafter, the Greek state started to provide free transportation with private taxis for those who wanted to attend these schools from surrounding villages (*ibid.*). The number of Minority students gradually increased to 157 by the 1991-1992 academic year (ELIAMEP 1993:26). Still, Askouni (2006:229) noted that it took more than five years for the first Minority girls to appear at these gymnasiums in 1998.

Even though identified by some Minority journalists as places for cultural assimilation into Greek majority culture (see Mustafa 1988), Minority parents still sent their children to these schools. It seems that one of the primary reasons why families sent their children to these schools was to help them learn proper Greek. Another reason was the lack of an alternative. These were the only secondary institutions close to their localities, and the schools in the region's cities would have made education financially difficult. Finally, these schools also remained open because of the determination of the

Greek officials regulating Minority education. In one of his interviews, the Vice-Minister of the Greek MFA said the following:

“For us, the main reason for opening new gymnasiums in the region is to fight the illiteracy [of Minority students]. But you boycott these schools and do not send your children there. However, I will assure you that we will do our best in order to keep them functioning” (Dede 1984).

This statement of Kapsis confirms the hypothesis that the Greek authorities were acting hypocritically on the issue of secondary education of the Minority. On the one hand, Greece did not open any bilingual Minority schools and used Greek-language graduation exams to discourage those Minority students who wanted to continue their education at bilingual secondary schools. Thus, Greece encouraged those students’ parents to send them to Turkey for secondary and higher education. On the other hand, it opened new public secondary schools and did everything possible to increase Minority attendance at those schools. Hence, this study argues that the opening of new public secondary schools in Minority areas was a clear indication that Greece wanted to limit bilingual Minority education, and increase Minority attendance at the public secondary schools sooner or later.

6.8 Higher Education

In theory, there is nothing preventing Turkish students from entering Greek universities; in practice, however, the quality of education received by the Turkish students in Greece is below the level considered acceptable for university admission (Bahceli 1990:180).

The Minority’s educational autonomy may appear to be limited to the primary and secondary levels of education, because there is no Turkish-language Minority university in Western Thrace. All Minority students who wanted to pursue tertiary education had either to follow the trajectory of Greek students and win a place at Greek universities, or to attend a university in Turkey. By 1968, there were only four Muslim Turks who had obtained a university diploma from Turkey and returned to the region. (Galip 1968). By 1972, this number had increased to seven and by 1975, it had reached 14. These consisted of a dentist, three doctors, six lawyers and four engineers.⁹⁸ These low numbers are even more shocking when one takes into account the population of the Minority, which was then around 150,000.

⁹⁸ Süddeutsche Zeitung’s coverage cited in Anonymous (1975:24-27); see also Cebecioglu (1975:104).

Work in the Greek public sector required a university diploma and fluency in Greek. Taking into consideration the low number of Minority university graduates, it is not surprising that there were almost no Minority members working in the public sector. In my research, I came across one Minority member working in the Greek public sector at the beginning of the 1970s (*Azinlik Postasi* 9.10.1972). Ten years later, Kamoza (1982:11) observed that there were only three Turks working at the Komotini Prefecture, among the cleaning staff.

In the 1970s, more Minority students started to attend Greek universities. Orhonlu (1976:1103) mentioned 18 Turks studying at the University of Thessaloniki in the 1969-1970 academic year. Nevertheless, according to my research, between 1950s and 1970s, the number of Muslim Turkish students passing the entrance exam and winning a place at a Greek university was not more than three!⁹⁹ I subsequently realised that these students had managed to enrol at Greek universities in a rather peculiar way - they transferred from different Turkish universities. These students had been to secondary schools in Turkey, won places at Turkish universities and then transferred to Greek ones. In this way, by finishing their studies at Greek universities, they could then start their careers in Western Thrace more easily than colleagues finished at Turkish universities.

Increasing numbers of university graduates, from both Greek and Turkish universities, started to return to Western Thrace after their studies, while some of the latter group chose to remain in Turkey. Thus, educated Minority elites with higher living standards and better Greek established themselves in an underdeveloped agricultural community. Minority parents saw the value of their children's education, and began to emphasize their children's education.

However, the growth of an educated Minority elite in Western Thrace appeared to disturb the Greek state, which had been trying to control the Minority since the early 1950s. In contrast to the increasing Greek influence in different aspects of Minority primary and secondary education, Greece had almost no control over the tertiary level, because the vast majority of Minority students pursued their higher education in Turkey.

⁹⁹ The first Minority member studying at Greek universities was reported to be Oktay Engin. He was studying law in Thessaloniki in the first half of 1950s (*Trakya*, 10.6.1955). But he gave up his education and left to Turkey during the '6-7 September Events'. Ali Muminoglu, Mehmet Bagdatli and Omer Devecioglu followed him in 1960s who all managed to graduate.

Therefore, as I explain in the next section, the Greek state decided to exploit the DIKATSA for two main purposes: to halt the increase in the number of professional Muslim Turks with university diplomas working in the region; and to discourage Minority parents from sending their children to Turkey for tertiary education.

6.8.1 The DIKATSA issue

Greek citizens who had graduated from universities outside Greece required state recognition to practice their own profession; and DIKATSA, renamed as DOATAP in the mid-2000s¹⁰⁰, was the institution that recognised their titles. As the number of Minority university graduates returning from Turkey increased in the 1980s, the Greek state introduced bureaucratic obstacles that worked against Minority applicants. This meant that they needed to wait around three to five years to get a reply from the DIKATSA. Many of them, subsequently, needed to pass certain exams in Greek and obtain the final confirmation from DIKATSA to finally be able to practice their profession in Greece.

Facing the discriminatory policy of DIKATSA, Minority graduates from Turkey, formed a 'Struggle Committee' to voice their grievances, both to Greek and Turkish mainstream societies and media. They publicly protested in 1986 and in 1987; the protest culminated in a 20-day hunger strike in Komotini that started on 24th May 1988. During this time, some Greek NGOs and left-wing political groups clearly declared their support for the Minority graduates. In addition, some leftist Greek journalists denounced discriminatory DIKATSA regulations as an indivisible part of the general Greek politics that aimed to keep the Minority as second-class citizens in Greece (Aleksatos 1988).

In 1987, the three-year protest of university graduates bore fruit when two of the doctors, having waited years to get a response from the DIKATSA, were finally granted the necessary documentation to practice their profession (*Trakyanin Sesi*, 15.10.1987); the bureaucratic obstacles to Minority university graduates were completely abolished by the early 1990s. Thus, Minority professionals with a university degree from Turkey could practise their profession in Western Thrace.

¹⁰⁰ DIKATSA/DOATAP is the institution responsible for official recognition of Greek citizens' educational titles from universities outside of Greece. It is obligatory that this institution recognize their qualifications before they can practice in Greece.

6.9 The Greek state's increasing penetration of the Minority's autonomy between the 1950s and the 1980s

In Chapter 4, I analysed how the Minority elites controlled various Minority matters between 1923 and the 1950s, when the Greek state was focused on solving problems emanating from the socio-economic and political turmoil. In Chapter 5 and in this chapter, I focused on how Greek hegemony over Minority education gradually increased between the 1950s and the 1980s.

In addition to the Greek measures that paved the way to the Greek state having almost complete control at all levels of Minority education, I will end this Chapter by addressing other measures that impacted on the socio-economic life of the Minority. I demonstrate how hard life was for the Muslim Turkish minority in Western Thrace, and thus argue that the Minority education measures were a significant part of a broader Greek policy on the Western Thracian Minority between the 1950s and the 1980s.

As I will show, the broader Greek policy actually aimed to disempower the Muslim Turks and make the everyday life unbearable for them, so that they would permanently leave their historic home. The history of the Minority indicates that although some of the Minority members migrated to Turkey, Western Europe, Athens and Thessaloniki between the 1950s and the 1980s, the vast majority of the Minority remained *in situ*. In the 1980s, those remaining engaged in collective struggle against the discriminatory measures of the Greek state on local, national and international platforms. Therefore, the following sections of this chapter constitute a prelude for Chapter 7, where I discuss how the 1991 change in Minority policy affected the development of Minority education.

6.9.1 Land Expropriations

Land has always been one of the most vital issues for the Muslim Turkish minority, because this is still a community mainly dependent on agriculture and livestock. Several times in the 1970s, Greece expropriated land in Western Thrace. The most prominent one was the expropriation of 3,200 acres of land in the north-western part of Komotini, in order to build a university. Most of this land belonged to members of the Minority, and they were aware that the financial compensation would not cover

their losses. Although Turkish villagers resisted by organizing various meetings and protests, they were unable to prevent the expropriation of their lands.¹⁰¹ For a decade, nothing was built on the expropriated lands, which were surrounded with barbed-wire fences; Greece finally started to build the university in 1988 (Soltaridis 1990: 22; Iskece Muftulugu 1988:5).

The wave of expropriations continued in the 1980s, when the Greek Supreme Court decided to expropriate around 6,000 acres of land for the construction of an open-air prison; this land, too, predominantly belonged to Turkish villagers. In 1989, almost 3,000 villagers gathered at the mosque of Aratos village, where they discussed how to respond collectively to the expropriation of their land (Anonymous 1989). In the end, the problem was resolved: the Greek authorities agreed not to build the prison (Oran 1991:242).

Earlier in the 1980s, there had been similar disputes in the Evlalon village of Xanthi, when the Greek state rejected the titles of the Muslim Turks, arguing that around 2,000 acres of land belonged to the Greek state. This was a shock for villagers living on land that they had inherited from their ancestors. The Greek state initially rejected their Ottoman titles to the land; but after a few trials and village protests, it relented. The Greek state accepted the villagers' titles and no land was expropriated in Evlalon (Dede 2003; Oran 1984; *İleri*, 23.12.1982).

6.9.2 Getting driving licences and building permits

In the 1970s, Minority farmers faced major difficulties in obtaining driving licences for farm equipment like tractors (Eren 1997:93). The local Greek authorities refused to give them licenses because they were Minority members. The Minority members proceeded to use tractors for agricultural purposes without driving licenses, for which the police fined them. One of my research participants told me that the police were aware of this restriction, and intentionally patrolled near the farms in order to catch them. This informant, tired of the police control and frustrated by having his application turned down nine times for political reasons, went to another region far from Thrace, the Peloponnese, and got a driving licence from the authorities there. This

¹⁰¹ For more information for the meetings of villagers see *Trakyanin Sesi*, 28.1.1984

anecdote was evidence for the Minority's allegations that, in Western Thrace, they were denied driving licenses until the mid-1980s.

Regulation of moveable and immovable properties also significantly affected Minority life and the region's economic development. These issues were regulated under Law No. 1366/1938 according to which all Greek citizens living in the bordering regions, one of which was Thrace, needed to get the official permission from a Commission before buying immovable properties; the Commission was not obliged to respond to any of the state authorities, not even to the courts (Mustafa 1988a:8).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Commission issued very few permits for building or repairing houses to the Minority. Therefore, it was widely criticized for not responding promptly or for rejecting their applications while swiftly giving permits to all Christian Greek locals (Dede 1986). For example, in 1988, from the village of Arisvi alone, there were 2,000 Minority applications for building/repair, awaiting the Commission's decision (Giahni, 1988). Still, things were better in Xanthi: Matzavinou (quoted in Damaskinos 1989:142), the Chairman of the Town Planning Office in Xanthi, noted that the Commission in Xanthi Prefecture granted 4,500 construction permits to Minority members between 1974 and 1990.

While the Minority started to face difficulties when buying immovable properties or getting bank loans, Greek banks continued to selectively support Greeks buying a Minority property in Western Thrace (Ayna 1967:6; ASWTTFDT 1983:25). According to some Greek journalists, these loans, which were given only to Greeks, were in the Greeks' national interest (Anonymous 1988); but for Poulton (1993:184) they were given to Greeks in order to 'dilute' the Muslim Turkish minority. Thus (until the early 1990s), Minority members who had money were prevented from making any kind of investment in the region. This was one of the main reasons why many Muslim Turks transferred their money to Turkey, albeit mostly illegally, and invested there.

6.9.3 The official denial of ethnic Turkish identity

As I discussed in Chapter 5, the deterioration in Greco-Turkish relations after 1955 and 1964 pushed Greece to increase its control over Minority issues in Western Thrace. Bilateral relations worsened further in 1974 when Turkey intervened in Cyprus. Thus, as Dimitras (1985:136) emphasized, Turkey became 'public enemy number one'

in the eyes of Greeks. This also triggered the Greek intolerance of Muslim Turks' presence within the Greek border with Turkey.

In 1973, Turkish music and radio was prohibited in public spaces: junta soldiers would enter Turkish cafes to stop people listening to Turkish radio and music; and they prevented people from hanging Turkish calendars on their walls. (*Akin*, 9.2.1973) In the same year, Turkish films were banned from the region's cinemas, though they were still shown in Athens and Thessaloniki (Galip 1973).

The deterioration of bilateral relations between Turkey and Greece after the crisis over Cyprus in 1974 affected the ethnic Turkish identity in Western Thrace. Some local extremist groups formed by Greeks, i.e. *Antikas*, started different campaigns targeting those Minority members identifying themselves as 'Turks'. They distributed leaflets where they used pejorative expressions against local Turks and Turkey (Anonymous 1977a). Later in the 1980s, it was reported that post offices rejected any kind of written parcel that included reference to a 'Turkish' minority (The FPI Research Staff 1992:100); the Greek state started jamming radio and TV signals from Turkey, so accessing Turkish Radio and State Television, *TRT*, became almost impossible (Mustafa 1989:3). I personally remember from my childhood the effort that our parents made to catch TV signals from Turkey with antennas, since satellite dishes were too expensive. However, for some Greek scholars (Fotiadis 1995:65) the turning of the antennas towards Turkey and watching Turkish television from Western Thrace was equated with 'national betrayal'.

Greek authorities also tried to minimize direct communication between the Minority and Turkey. Although there was a great demand for a private telephone line among the Minority, most of the Minority applicants had to wait for years for one. This was not the case for their Greek neighbours, whose requests were addressed promptly by the Greek authorities (Ataov 1992:96). In conversation, most of my interviewees underlined that until the late 1980s, they had to wait around 3 to 5 years to obtain a line, even though their Greek neighbours had been using one for years.

The Greek denial about the presence of an ethnic Turkish identity in Western Thrace would escalate with the official partitioning of Cyprus after the establishment of the TRNC in 1983. In this negative atmosphere of Greek-Turkish relations fuelled by the formation of the TRNC, the Greek response came reciprocally and promptly: taking

the formation of the TRNC as an example of devastating consequences that could be replicated in Greece, Greek officials started to show strong and collective determination to reject any Greek argument referring to the presence of the Turkish identity in Western Thrace. As it is underlined, this was an important indication that Greece was not only anxious about Turkey's possible exploitation of the Minority discontent but also its usage as a pretext against any attack from the Turkish side (Larrabee and Lesser 2003:95-96).

In addition to the increasing references from the Greek officials to the threat from the East, Turkey, some visual materials that aimed to keep alive the Cyprus dispute started to appear particularly in Northern Greece. For the first time in 1987, huge billboards were introduced by various local Greek-Cypriot associations on the main roads at the entrance of major cities, such as Komotini, Kavala and Alexandroupolis (Poulton 1993:183). These boards were noteworthy and unique in the way they featured a partitioned Cyprus bleeding from the North of the island towards the South with a note in capital letters '*ΔΕΝ ΞΕΧΝΩ!* [I NEVER FORGET!]' (see Appendix V).

I remember one of these boards put at the entrance of Komotini during my childhood, where the majority of the Turkish minority lived. It remained there for more than two decades without any interference from the local Greek officials. In my opinion, these billboards put by local Cypriot organizations and tolerated by the Greek state reminded all people passing by that the Cyprus issue and the Turkish threat was still a matter of concern for Greece. During my fieldwork, I went to the same point to check the final situation of the billboard. As it is obvious from my photo taken in 2009, it was mostly damaged and almost destroyed. Nevertheless, similar billboards in other parts of Northern Greece, including Western Thrace, still persist (see Appendix V).

The most significant official reaction against the ethnic Turkish identity of the Minority occurred after the deterioration of Greek-Turkish relations over the establishment of the TRNC in 1983. It was officially manifested in November 1987, when the Greek Supreme Court decided to abolish the three main Minority associations, which had existed since the late 1920s. According to the court verdict, the word 'Turkish' referred to citizens of Turkey and could not be used to describe citizens of Greece. Also, its use could endanger public order (Baltali 2006:21) Minority elites had

occasionally criticized the decades-long policy and practice of the denial of Turkish identity; but the major reaction came on 29th January 1988. For the first time in the history of the Turkish Minority, more than 10,000 men and women rallied in the streets of Komotini to protest against Greek rejection of their ethnic Turkish identity.

The date of 29th January was chosen to attract the attention of the Turkish and Greek prime ministers, who were meeting the same day in Davos, for the first time in 40 years (Ahmet 2001). It is worth noting that, despite the Minority's expectation that the protest would put the Western Thrace issue on the agenda at the Davos meeting, both leaders interpreted the massive protest as a 'provocation' (Anonymous 1988b). Indeed, such an interpretation from the two leaders shows that neither side wanted to spoil the positive atmosphere they both hoped to create with this meeting, but which could not be achieved in the end.

This was a major opportunity for the Minority to voice their complaints about Greece's ongoing discrimination. In fact, the reading of the Friday prayer, *khutbah*, had been read in almost all of the region's mosques two weeks before 29th January, might help the reader to understand the climate of the protest: "Today, if they tell us that we are not Turks and if we do not resist then it would be more difficult to raise our voice when they were to tell us that we are not Muslims either" (*Hakka Davet* 1988:4-6). Also, Minority parents supported this protest by not sending their children to Minority primary schools on 1-3 February 1988, which resulted in the closure of the schools on those days (Anonymous 1988c).

This protest was organized to protest against a particular instance of Greek denial of the Minority's Turkish identity. Nevertheless, looking at it from a broader perspective, this study argues that the denial was the last straw of human and minority rights violations that had started in the 1960s, increased during and after the military regime, and finally climaxed in the 1980s. In what could be termed 'exhaustion' from the accumulation of suffering brought about by Greek regulations of their social, political and economic life, the 29th January protest became the first and the single most influential opportunity for the Muslim Turkish minority to protest continual hardship.

The 1988 protest ended peacefully. In 1989, the denial of ethnic Turkish identity was further exacerbated when two parliamentary candidates, Sadık Ahmet and İbrahim Şerif, were sentenced to 18 months for their use of the term 'Turk' when referring to the

Minority in their election campaign leaflets (Kourtovik 1997:260). At this point, it is worth underlining that the trials of Ahmet and Şerif were followed not only by some Turkish MPs, and Turkish and Greek media organisations, but also by some MPs and NGO representatives from other European countries. This suggests that the international community was increasingly aware of and concerned about the treatment of the Minority in Western Thrace.

Only two years after the 1988 protest, violence erupted in Komotini, when various Greek groups decided to protest against the religious ceremony organized to celebrate the second anniversary of 29th January. Greek mobs ran through the streets of Komotini, beating Turks and smashing the windows of their shops. More than thirty Minority members were injured and most of the Turkish shops on the main streets were damaged.

Oran (1999: 27) has called it ‘a mini Greek 6-7 September event’, implying that Greeks got at least some revenge for the ‘6-7 September Events’; some Greek journalists have referred to it as an ‘anti-Turkish pogrom’ (Ios tis Kyriakis 2004) or ‘the Greek 1955’ (Psarras and Giannopoulos 1990:18-21). It has also been described as organized crime, because Greek shopkeepers had been warned in advance, and some of them put stickers with Greek flags in the front windows, posted papers with the word ‘Greek’ on them, or even painted their shop windows with the colours of the Greek flag. It was reported that no- non Minority shops were damaged; only two shops belonging to the Armenian community of Komotini were attacked by mistake! (ibid.).

The 1990 violence against the Minority in Komotini, which were largely covered by the Turkish and European press (DAGM/DDB 1992), was the most significant event in attracting the attention of the international community. Various international human rights organizations and foreign press organs started to pay more frequent visits to the region and observe Greek treatment of the Muslim Turks at the local level. However, starting from the late 1970s onwards, issues of rights violations in Western Thrace had already started to appear at various interstate and suprastate organizations. The next section explores the main international actors on Minority issues in Western Thrace in the 1980s, which had a tremendous impact on Greece’s official policy change in 1991.

6.10 The 1980s: Growing international concern over the violation of rights in Western Thrace

In the positive climate after the end of the dictatorship in 1974, Minority members assumed that the restrictive measures, which had begun in 1960s and been reinforced by the 1967 Junta regime, would eventually come to an end; and that the Greek authorities would gradually return their rights. This optimism grew as Greek accession to the European Community (EC) picked up speed after 1974. Greece's becoming a member of the European Community increased the Minority's expectation that it would adapt its domestic law to the principles and values of the EC, which would end human and minority rights violations against the Minority. But the vast majority of the Minority were not actually fully aware that there were no obligations for candidate countries to protect the rights of persons belonging to minorities, until the introduction of the 1993 Copenhagen Criteria.

Thus, even though violations of human rights issues within the EC region were raised at the European Parliament it gradually became clear that neither the restoration of democracy in 1974 nor EC membership in 1981 led to any reduction or weakening of the discriminatory measures against Turks. Indeed, from 1981 onwards, alongside the existing violations, some more repressive regulations were introduced in Western Thrace. Thus, the worsening picture of Western Thrace in the minds of local Minority members enabled them to question the effectiveness of the EC in human rights protection.

In short, the restoration of democracy in 1974 followed by EC membership had not met even the minimum expectations of the Minority that the extant violations of the Minority's rights would end. In this context, the Minority members started to cooperate with each other and fight against those discriminatory measures that violated fundamental human and minority rights. Thus, the Minority's collective struggle, headed by the Minority elite, had begun at the local, national and international level; it was aimed at the safeguarding of rights enshrined in the Greek constitution, and in the bilateral and international agreements that Greece had signed and ratified. This is one of the main reasons this project considers the 1980s a key decade in the Minority's collective struggle against the Greek authorities.

Along with the Minority struggle at the local level, the effects of which have been noted in Chapter 5 and in this chapter, the Minority elite also initiated campaigns to raise awareness at the regional and international level, in close collaboration with the Minority's diaspora organizations in Europe, particularly in Germany and Turkey¹⁰². From the early 1980s onwards, they started to appear at various international platforms, informing Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and technocrats of recent developments in Western Thrace, violations of the Minority's rights and their effects on the survival of Muslim Turkish identity in the region. The next section explores the lobbying of Minority NGOs at the European level.

6.10.1 Resistance from the grassroots takes a European dimension: The Minority's elites lobbying in Strasbourg and Brussels in the 1980s

At the beginning of the 1960s, Greece was struggling with nationwide economic stagnation. The living standards were even worse in the underdeveloped peripheries. Thus, Greeks started to migrate to Germany, where there was a labour shortage. As Senturk (2008:421) underlines, although the number of Greek citizens in Germany reached 342,000 in the year 1970, almost none of them belonged to the Minority. The arrival of Muslim Turks from Western Thrace began at the start of the 1970s, and the first Minority associations, which formed the backbone of the Minority's European lobby from the 1980s onwards, opened in 1978. By 1988, there were seven such NGOs in Germany alone, and they were unified under the Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe, *ABTTF* (Alioglu 2005:216-217).¹⁰³

Until 1988, the Minority's German diaspora NGOs cooperated with each other in order to inform the international community, but particularly the main European organisations, of the human and minority rights violations against the Muslim Turkish minority in Greece. The European Parliament and the Council of Europe (CoE) became

¹⁰² The Western Thrace Turks Solidarity Union, *BTTDD*, was founded in 1946 by those Minority members who had migrated from Western Thrace to Turkey. Other than dealing with problems that their members faced in Turkey, they organized various protests and campaigns, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s, to raise awareness in Turkish society about Greek violations of rights in Western Thrace (See Huseyin 2004)

¹⁰³ Biro (2011:97-100) observes that the *ABTTF* was one of an increasing number of INGOs in northwest Europe in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s that dealt exclusively with minority rights. In the given period, she noted the formation of 28 more INGOs that were actively involved in minority rights issues. As of 2011, *ABTTF* is an umbrella organization of 30 Minority NGOs the vast majority of which are functioning across Germany (*ABTTF Online* 2011).

the two primary targets for lobbying. Both institutions provided an opportunity for the Minority representatives to gain the attention of MEPs, and enabled them to put pressure on Greece to end discriminatory measures against Minority members. In addition to meeting with Turkish MEPs, representatives of Minority NGOs in Germany tried to lobby German and Dutch MEPs, and ones representing the guarantor parties of the Lausanne Treaty, like Great Britain, France and Italy.¹⁰⁴

The initial lobbying activities of the Minority's diaspora NGOs bore fruit when Greece, as an EC member after 1981, was criticized for the first time at the European level. Two MPs of the European Parliament, David Taylor and Ian Paisley, with their resolution of 7 March 1983, highlighted discriminatory measures in Western Thrace, such as the insufficiency of the two Minority secondary schools, the restrictions on Minority applications for credit and house-building permits. (*Akin*, 24.3.1983; *Trakyanin Sesi*, 26.3.1983) However, in his reply to the allegations of the two MEPs, the Greek Rapporteur K. Gontikas (quoted in Oran 1991:313) denied that such measures were being used against the Minority members and argued, to the contrary, that they were gradually becoming wealthier and richer. One year later, similar concerns were raised when the 18 MEPs of the CoE signed a motion mentioning the measures against the Turkish Muslim minority in Western Thrace (*Akin*, 24.5.1984; Gonatas and Kidoniatis 1985:63).

In addition to paying regular visits to the European institutions, throughout the 1980s, Minority NGOs organized local meetings, protests and boycotts in front of Greek foreign missions in Germany. They also sent telegrams and open letters, and prepared leaflets and bilingual or trilingual newsletters about discrimination against the Minority in Greece. (ASWTTFDT 1983; Alioglu 2005:245,262,283) In this way, they also caught the attention of the media; *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (Z.D.F.), *Bild*, and the *Associated Press* started to visit the region and prepare material about the lives of the Turkish Minority and the effects of Greek policy (see *Trakyanin Sesi*, 4.9.1984, 31.3.1988).

From a broader perspective, Europe provided a regional arena where the demands of the Minority clashed with the interests of the Greek state. The Minority demanded their individual and group rights; Greece argued for the equal treatment of all

¹⁰⁴ Alioglu (2005) provides details and notes of various visits of the *ABTTF* to European institutions.

Greek citizens, and blamed the Minority representatives for damaging its international image and prestige. In the end, increasing criticism from European institutions pushed Greece to start work on a new minority policy in the early 1990s.

Having emphasized the impact of the EC, CoE and diaspora organizations pushing Greece to revise its Minority policy, the next section elaborates the role of the Islamic world in the survival of Muslim identity in Western Thrace.

6.10.2 The Islamic World

Along with their appearance at various interstate and supranational platforms in Europe, representatives from Minority NGOs in Western Thrace and Germany also increased their communication with Islamic countries, which helped amplify the Minority's voice at the international level. They started to inform their coreligionists about the fundamental problems that Islam continued to face in a country where the vast majority were Orthodox Christian, for example the prevention of the election of muftis.

From a broader understanding, the Muslim world's lobbying for the Minority reflected some Islamic countries' determination to concentrate more on the plight of their coreligionists in Western Thrace. Throughout the 1980s, Muslim and Arab voices addressed issues in Western Thrace, for example: the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) frequently condemned Greek violations in Western Thrace; a group of El-Ezher University's students visited and prepared a report (Anonymous 1979:15-19); the director of the Islamic Development Bank visited Western Thrace and met with the Minority's political, economic and religious elites (Christakoudis 1992:207); and a group of Saudi Arabian journalists visited the region and prepared programme on the lives of Muslim Turks in Western Thrace (Anonymous 1982; Sonyel 1984).

Still, it seems that for many Islamic countries, Islam in Western Thrace seldom constituted a point of dispute with Greece; one exception was the OIC's sensitivity over the continuity of Islam in Western Thrace¹⁰⁵. Consequently, representatives from the Islamic countries' embassies in Athens seldom visited the region or contributed to the solution of religious problems in the region.

¹⁰⁵ The strong influence of Turkey was one of the main reasons why the OIC was concerned about Islam in Western Thrace.

Having elaborated upon the role of the Islamic world in the survival of Islam in Western Thrace, this section will move on to tackle the involvement of the international human rights organizations in the matters of Western Thrace.

6.10.3 The Role of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs)

The late 1980s saw the involvement of international human rights organizations in Greek domestic affairs; the Muslim Turkish minority and the Macedonian minority constituted two key case studies for these organizations (see Cowan 2001; Cowan and Brown 2000). In particular, the American, Norwegian and Danish Helsinki Watch Committees¹⁰⁶ visited the region and published reports, which raised awareness in the international community of violations of fundamental rights in Greece, the birthplace of democracy.

Of all other international human rights organizations, Helsinki/Human Rights Watch¹⁰⁷ became the first international human rights organization to visit the region after the atrocities in Komotini. Minority representatives took members of the Helsinki Committee, headed by Lois Whitman, to Turkish shops in Komotini that had been looted by Greek mobs on 29 January 1990. They also visited other Turkish villages and settlements, surveyed sites, asked Minority members about living conditions in the region, and produced a report on Western Thrace. Published by Helsinki Watch International (Whitman 1990), it is widely accepted to be the first human rights INGO report that criticized discrimination against the Turks in Western Thrace in such an open and excoriating manner, thus damaging the international prestige of Greece as the birthplace of democracy.¹⁰⁸ As E. Siesby (quoted in Ataov 1992:91) the head of the Danish Helsinki Committee, put it in 1990:

“In Greece the Turkish minority is much too small to present any danger to the society. The treatment of this population as second class citizens has harmed, not only the ethnic Turks, but even more the reputation of Greece as a civilized society.”

¹⁰⁶ They were all members of Helsinki/Human Rights Watch.

¹⁰⁷ Helsinki Watch was formed in 1978 in New York. Its initial mission was mainly to monitor the application of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act of the CSCE. In 1988, it was renamed Human Rights Watch. As a non-profit international NGO, it has worked for the protection of human rights around the world (HRW Online 2011).

¹⁰⁸ Similar to that of the 1990 Helsinki Report, the increase in the intensity of criticism in the 1990 US State Department Report showed American discomfort with the continual rights violations in Western Thrace. Although these reports had begun to be published in the late 1970s, the 1990 report was the first time that America strengthened its criticism.

These observations and reports of the increasing violations of rights in the southernmost region of Europe turned out to be one of the main reasons for Greek authorities' change in Minority policy in the early 1990s. That is one of the main reasons why the Greek state felt uncomfortable when foreign diplomats, researchers or human rights activists approached the Minority elite to get updates from Western Thrace.

Looking through Whitman's report, which has been called the most comprehensive source of information that has ever been published in the Western world (Oran 1991:286), one clearly identifies the fundamental problems of the Minority and the unwillingness of the Greek state to solve them. In short, it emphasized how miserable everyday life turned out to be for a Minority member who tried to maintain his or her ethnic and religious identities in the Western Thrace of the early 1990s. The present study contends that Whitman's report can also be interpreted as the first strong 'cry' for the Minority by a non-Turkish, non-Greek foreigner.

The Norwegian Helsinki committee maintained Helsinki Watch's interest in the promotion of human rights in Greece. Their fact-finding mission visited Western Thrace at the beginning of the 1990s and addressed various Minority issues and problems. (Funnemark 1991) This was reported in a local Greek newspaper in an ironic way: "it is particularly unacceptable for a Viking [*sic*] to travel to Thrace, the cradle of civilization, and take the liberty of talking about human rights" (quoted in Funnemark, 1991:5).

Throughout the 1990s, the Helsinki Committees continued to visit and monitor the situation in the region as a result of which two more reports were prepared, one in 1992 and the other in 1999 (HRW 1992; HRW 1999).

In this section, I explored the growing international interest in human and minority rights violations in Greece in the 1980s. This interest not only contributed to the deconstruction of Greece's popular image in the Western World as the 'cradle of democracy', but also pushed the Greek authorities to change their Minority policy in the early 1990s.

6.11 Conclusion

This Chapter analysed how the Greek state's contravention of the Minority's educational autonomy ran from the beginning of the 1967 Junta regime until 1991, when Greece changed policy. It showed that although the military regime ended in 1975, and Greece started to apply new policies in line with its candidacy for the EC/EU, almost nothing changed in Western Thrace. Quite to the contrary, the quality of the Minority's everyday life worsened throughout the 1980s.

The democratization and Europeanization process brought more restrictive directives on Minority education. It also introduced a variety of discriminatory measures that violated basic human and minority rights in Western Thrace between 1975 and 1991. According to Article 28 (1) of the 1975 Greek Constitution that guarantees the supra-legislative status for international treaties, "the generally recognised rules of international law, as well as international conventions as of the time they are sanctioned by statute and become operative according to their respective conditions, shall be an integral part of domestic Greek law and shall prevail over any contrary provision of the law" (Hellenic Parliament 2008).

Nevertheless, as I have shown above, although Greece was an EC/EU Member State and had ratified a variety of international and bilateral agreements, the basic right of getting a driving license or construction/repair permit was a problem for the members of the Minority in the 1980s. Thus, Greece's violation of the human rights of the Minority in Western Thrace continued even after it joined the EC in 1981 since the latter had no right to control member states' human rights performances.

In this context, local Minority elites cooperated with Minority diaspora organizations and started lobbying various interstate and supranational organizations in the Western and Islamic worlds in order to attract the attention of the international community. In the end, not only the EU and CoE but also prominent INGOs increasingly involved themselves in the treatment of the Muslim Turkish minority, including its educational autonomy.

Having elaborated on the increasing influence of the Greek state on Minority education in the 1970s and 1980s, the next chapter will dwell on the development of Minority education during the 1990s and 2000s. The main purpose is to show the reader how Minority education was affected by the 1991 policy change. The next chapter will also highlight the major actors in the policy change, particularly the international

community's intervention in matters of Minority education in Western Thrace after Greece became a member of the EU in 1981.

CHAPTER 7: Questioning the continuities and changes in Minority education in the post-1991 era

7.1 Introduction

Following on from the last three chapters outlining the emergence and development of Minority education in Western Thrace between 1923 and 1991, this chapter will more deeply analyse various aspects of Minority education. In doing so, it continues to take into account the four primary actors that played a vital role in Minority education in Western Thrace: minority students' parents, Greece, Turkey and the international community.

This chapter aims to explain the extent to which Greece's 1991 change in Minority policy affected Minority education throughout the 1990s and 2000s. It also emphasises two main points: first, how the bilateral cooperation between Greece and Turkey following the 1999 earthquakes, known as 'earthquake diplomacy', had a significant impact on the resolution of several chronic problems in Minority education; and second, the extent to which various interstate and suprastate organisations such as the EU pushed Greece to adopt different affirmative action policies for Minority education after 1991.

Thus, this chapter is composed of two main sections. The first section examines the major changes at every level of Minority education in Western Thrace. The second section elaborates upon the continuation of problems after 1991, with a particular focus on nursery and primary education. While analysing both continuities and changes in Minority education before and after 1991, this chapter makes two main arguments. First, Greek power over Minority education continued to increase after 1991, thus challenging the already-distorted autonomous character of Minority education. Second, in spite of major changes enabling a significant rise in the number of literate Minority members in secondary and tertiary education, fundamental problems remained, mainly in nursery and primary education: the lack of bilingual or Turkish-language nursery schools; EPATH teachers trying to teach with modern Turkish textbooks; and Greece's dismissal of Minority demands for more bilingual secondary and high schools.

7.2 The declaration of the change in Greek minority policy in 1991

7.2.1 29 January 1990 and its immediate aftermath: Political mobility in Athens

As I noted in Chapter 6, the violence against Minority shopkeepers on 29 January 1990 in Komotini were the last straw, following human and minority rights violations throughout the 1980s. The communities' peaceful coexistence was damaged and regional tensions peaked, leading Greek authorities to reassess their minority policy.

The first official reactions came two days after the atrocities in Komotini. With the public memorandum of 31 January 1990, the leaders of the three main political parties condemned atrocities against the Minority and promised that discrimination against the Minority would end soon (Aleksandris and Paresoglou 1991:117). This public memorandum¹⁰⁹ was the first official admission of discrimination against the Muslim Turkish minority between the 1960s and the 1980s.

However, a closer reading of the memorandum makes it clear that the Greek state was determined to continue to limit the autonomy of the Minority after 1991. All three leaders agreed on three main issues: first, economic development programs would be established to improve the Minority's living standards; second, Pontic Greek refugees who had arrived from former Soviet countries after the dissolution of the USSR would be settled in Rodopi and Evros prefectures, specifically to balance the Greek-Turkish population ratio of Western Thrace; and third, credits with very low interest rates would be provided only to Greeks buying immovable properties from the Minority. Meanwhile, special privileges like working in the public sector would be provided only to those Minority members who left Western Thrace and moved to a city (see Psarras 1990).

From February 1990 onwards, various meetings were held in Athens showing major concern about increasing tensions. On 12 March 1990, a panel discussion was organised at the Panteion University in Athens, where the leaders of the three largest parties and the prime minister officially confirmed the existence of the discriminatory practices in Western Thrace and underlined the necessity of changing Minority policy.

¹⁰⁹ The text of the memorandum was published in *Eleftherotipia*, 2.3.1990.

They agreed that discriminatory measures had been the major obstacles preventing the integration of the Minority with Greek society, and allowing them to maintain close relations with ‘motherland’ Turkey (Muhtar 1990). In my opinion, the public memorandum, and such statements from the highest-ranking Greek political figures, signalled the first fundamental changes in minority policy.

The Greek bureaucrats worked carefully on the content of a new minority policy that would both serve the national interest and lessen international criticism of the events of 29 January 1990. For the first time, during his speech to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in April 1991, Prime Minister Mitsotakis affirmed that the Minority had some reasonable demands, which his government was working to meet, in dialogue with the Minority (Dede 1991; *Tunel*, 29.4.1991). Contrary to the statements of Mitsotakis, my research in the field indicates that almost no attempt at dialogue or cooperation had been noticed, or reported by the local press, during the process of policy formation in Athens. So the official announcement of a new minority policy in May 1991 came as a great surprise to the Minority.

7.2.2 Mitsotakis’s visit and the declaration of the ‘New Minority Policy’

On 14-15 May 1991, Mitsotakis visited Western Thrace, making two fundamental points during his official speeches: first, his government was determined to solve the economic underdevelopment of the region through greater investment; and second, the Greek state had discriminated against the Minority in reciprocity for Turkey’s policies on the Greek Orthodox minority and the Cyprus conflict (*Paratiritis Tis Thrakis*, 15.5.1991; Anonymous 1991). According to his official statements, it became clear that the negative climate in Turkish-Greek relations before 1991 had had an adverse effect on the treatment of minorities on both sides, due to the principle of reciprocity embedded in the 1923 Lausanne system.¹¹⁰

He then officially introduced the new minority policy of the Greek state, based on two fundamental principles: *Ισονομία* [equality before the law] and *Ισοπολιτεία* [equality in civil rights]. He also declared that the Minority in Thrace was a ‘Muslim’ minority composed of three different ethnic groups – those of Turkish origin, Pomaks

¹¹⁰ For a recent study about the impact of the principle of reciprocity on the treatment of the two minorities across the Aegean see Akgonul (2008).

and Roma. For him, the main objective of this new minority policy was to integrate all Minority members into Greek society, stating that “Some of the Muslims’ complaints are obviously just and we must find a solution” and showing the strong determination of the Greek state to improve conditions for the Muslim Turkish minority (Mitsotakis quoted in Funnemark 1991:30).

This visit was interpreted in two ways by the Minority press: on the one hand it was ‘the light at the end of the tunnel’ that increased optimism that living standards would rise and discriminatory practices would end; on the other hand, it was a new ‘carrot and stick’ policy, wherein Greece again rejected the Minority’s ethnic Turkish identity, arguing that it was composed of three different ethnic groups (see Mustafa 1991:2-3).

Having briefly explained how the new minority policy was developed and announced in May 1991, I will now focus on its impact on Minority education.

7.3 Zengin’s Books: A Greek ‘failure’ to prepare Turkish textbooks

The Greek state’s first major educational initiative was the introduction of Turkish textbooks printed in Athens. During his 1991 visit, the Greek prime minister displayed the State’s will to end problems concerning Turkish textbooks in Minority primary schools, for the first time since the 1970s. In his speech in Komotini on 14 May 1991, Mitsotakis (quoted in Anonymous 1991b:6) he had clearly stipulated:

“We are supporting the improvement of the standard of minority education. I am quite aware of the problems with Turkish textbooks. I cannot accept students being educated without textbooks. That is why we are going to send Turkish textbooks to all Minority schools”

He also explained that the lack of modern textbooks was due to Turkey’s attitude:

“The content of the Turkish textbooks printed in Turkey has been harmful to both the Greek state and the Minority. Thus, we have been demanding the Turkish authorities make some necessary corrections. We have not got any reply yet. If Turkey will not send them, we will publish new Turkish textbooks for Minority children” (Anonymous 1991).

Mitsotakis’ statements did not clearly stipulate how the problems with Turkish textbooks would be resolved. In time, however, it became clear that Greece would

continue to reject Turkish textbooks published in Turkey, for the same reasons as before: numerous references to Turkish culture and the Turkish lira; and pictures of the founder of Turkey, Atatürk, deemed unacceptable for use in Minority schools. Therefore, Turkish textbooks used in Minority schools had been published in the mid-1960s, some of which included statements like ‘one day humankind will step on the moon’! (BTS Haber Merkezi 1991:13; *Yeni Düşünce* 27.12.1991)

So, Greece published its own Turkish textbooks for Minority schoolchildren in Athens. Two Greek academics, E.Zenginisi and P. Stathi, prepared two Turkish grammar textbooks, which became compulsory texts at Minority primary schools.

Major disputes between the Minority and the Greek state began after the distribution of the ‘Zenginisi books’ to Minority primary schools on 12 February 1992. Instead of focusing on their educational content and quality, the Minority asked, “How can Greece prepare a Turkish textbook without cooperating with Turkey?”.

Citing the 1951 Cultural Treaty and 1968 Cultural Protocol, Minority elites and NGOs raised awareness among Minority parents; they convinced the parents that the ‘Zenginisi books’ were a unilateral action of Greece, and that they were compulsorily taught at Minority primary schools. However, according to the Greek MFA, the 1968 Educational Protocol did not require such cooperation, only allowing the exchange of textbooks between the two countries. (*Thessaloniki*, 3.2.1993) In a short time, most Minority families became aware that instead of accepting contemporary Turkish textbooks prepared by Turkey, Greece chose to prepare its own Turkish textbooks in Athens (*Tunel*, 10.3.1992, *DEB Partisi Gazetesi*, 18.2.1992). This unilateral policy highlighted the historical problems of Turkish textbooks, resulting in one of the most effective boycotts in the history of Minority education since 1923.

7.3.1 1-5 February 1993: Boycotting Turkish textbooks printed in Athens

The campaign against the distribution of the ‘Zenginisi books’ was introduced by the Turkish Muslim minority’s only political party, Dr. Sadık Ahmet’s DEB [Friendship, Equality and Peace Party], in cooperation with other Minority NGOs. They asked Minority parents to gather their children’s ‘Zenginisi books’ and return them to the school authorities. Although most Minority families returned the books, they

continued to be used at Minority schools: the ‘Zenginis books’ were distributed at the beginning of the class and collected at the end. Thus, no student took them home (Anonymous 1992b:5).

As a result, under S.Ahmet’s leadership, Minority elites demanded that Minority parents and school boards get the ‘Zenginis books’ back from the Minority primary schools and bring them to Komotini; then, the collected ‘Zenginis books’ were to be returned to the Greek Ministry of Education. This action had quite impressive results. In a short period of time, approximately 1,500 books were delivered to the main office of the DEB in Komotini. In November 1992, all of these books were returned to Athens (Anonymous 1992:4-5).

In spite of this reaction, the Greek state went a step further and declared that the third Turkish textbook would be prepared soon. This increased the tension in Western Thrace, resulting in one of the most effective boycott campaigns in the history of Minority education. In coordination with Minority NGOs and associations, the Executive Committee of the DEB declared a boycott of the ‘Zenginis books’: all parents would refuse to send their children to Minority schools between 1 and 5 February 1993; they would also prevent anyone else entering Minority school buildings. As for Minority teachers of the Turkish curriculum, they would refuse to teach on those days (*Balkan*, 30.1.1993).

The participation of Muslim Turkish parents and teachers to the boycott was remarkable; in almost all villages and cities, Minority education was halted for five days. Almost all Minority teachers participated in the boycott, including the EPATH teachers, the majority of whom were public employees with salaries paid by the Greek state (Hursit 2006:116).

In the aftermath of the boycott, some of the parents and school board members were put on trial because the ‘Zenginis books’ were perceived as ‘state property’ and their removal from schools damaged the Greek state (Thrakiotis 1993:23; BTS Haber Merkezi 1993). It is important to note that some MPs from Human Rights Research Commission of the Turkish Parliament, TBMM İnsan Hakları İnceleme Komisyonu, attended to some these trials as observers (*Gündem*, 12.1.1999). This could be interpreted as another indication for Turkey’s interest in educational matters of its kin in Western Thrace.

Besides Minority parents, a number of EPATH teachers were also punished, because they supported the boycott against the orders of the Greek authorities. Consequently, they lost their jobs and were banned from teaching at Minority primary schools (*Bati Trakya Ekspres*, 5.7.1993).

According to my interview with Ismet Tuccar, who was the teacher of Melivia village and one of EPATH teachers participated in the boycott, Greek pressure on EPATH teachers greatly increased from the protest onwards; and local Greek media continuously criticized their participation in the protest. In the end, he and some of his colleagues were put on trial and lost their jobs (Interview with Ismet Tuccar). Next section explores how the protest affected the EPATH teachers who had the status of civil servant and why did they brought their cases before the supranational jurisdictional authority in Strasbourg.

7.3.1.1 Minority teachers and litigation in the ECtHR

Greece adopted the right to individual petition to the ECtHR in 1985. Since then, the number of litigations about Greece's violation of the ECHR resulted in an increasing number of cases against Greece at Strasbourg. Most of these applicants came from members belonging to ethnic and religious minorities such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Turkish Muslim and Slavophone minorities (see Psychogiopoulou 2010; Tsitselikis 2008). In this respect, the denial of ethnic Turkish identity in Western Thrace constituted one of the main reasons why Muslim Turkish litigants ended up their legal struggles in Strasbourg. This could also be observed from the applications of the Minority teachers to the ECtHR in the 1990s that I shall explore in the following paragraphs.

As I highlighted in Chapter 6, the ethnic Turkish denomination of the Minority started to problematize relations between the Greek state and the Minority when the two Turkish unions in Komotini were officially dissolved in 1987. In this context, Minority teachers functioning at bilingual Minority primary schools also started to face problems when referring to ethnic Turkish identity in Western Thrace. Adnan Raifoglu, a member of the BTMMMMC who used to teach at the Minority primary school of Xanthi, became the first Minority teacher resorting to the ECtHR jurisprudence in 1996.

On 26 February 1987, the Regional Primary Education Board of the Prefecture of Xanthi concluded a disciplinary penalty against him with one year's suspension for the following reasons: "he printed and distributed a document.... in which he used the term 'Turkish teachers'....and old Turkish names of villages....in breach of international agreements, the laws of the Greek State...." (see *Raif Oglu v. Greece*, no. 33738/96).

The same year, he applied to the Council of State of Greece, Συμβούλιο της Επικρατείας. In 1993, the Council of State found his appeal inadmissible (Giakoumopoulos 1997: 57-58). Two years later, the Minority Schools Office of the Prefecture of Xanthi announced that he could return to the school where he used to serve and resume his duty. Nevertheless, this time the Prefect dismissed his return on the basis that his disciplinary penalty was based on actions that could endanger the interests of the Greek state. As a result, after exhausting all local remedies he brought the case to Strasbourg. On 11 April 1996, Raifoglu's application was accepted by the European Commission of Human Rights (hereinafter the Commission) that functioned as a judicial body assisting the ECtHR until its abolishment in 1998 (see *Raif Oglu v. Greece*, no. 33738/96).

In his application, Raifoglu complained that the judgments of the Greek courts violated Article 6(1) and Article 14 of the ECHR that guaranteed fair trial before an independent tribunal established by law and the enjoyment of rights and freedom enshrined in the ECHR without any kind of discrimination respectively (ECHR 1948).

Meanwhile, the Administrative Court of Appeal of Komotini rejected the decision of the Prefect and resumed the duty of Raifoglu as a Minority teacher in 1997. He was also paid 7,108,572 drachmas corresponding to his salary and social security contributions for the period that he was rejected to function as a teacher (1994-1998). As a result, taking into account the developments between 1997 and 2000, the Chamber of the ECtHR decided to dismiss the case because the applicant's duty was already resolved and he was compensated for his loss of the period of four years between 1994 and 1998 (*Raif Oglu v. Greece*, no. 33738/96).

The second wave of litigations from Minority teachers started on a similar basis in the same year when Raifoglu applied to the Commission. This time, 13 Minority teachers, all of whom were EPATH graduates, applied to the ECtHR complaining about Greece that their rights to teach at Minority primary schools were prevented. Looking

through their Application all teachers were represented by three Minority lawyers from Xanthi and Komotini. According to the facts presented before the Commission, all applicants considered themselves members of the Muslim Turkish minority and civil servants of the Greek state (*Ahmet Imam and Others v Greece*, no. 29764/96).

At the local level, the trials of the EPATH teachers began in 1993 when the Minority Schools' Office of the Prefecture of Rodopi and Xanthi called all the Minority teachers functioning at minority schools to attend an educational meeting on 1 February 1993. At this meeting, the Zenginis books that I mentioned above would be introduced and delivered to Minority directors of the Minority primary schools. However, both Minority families and Minority teachers, including the majority of the EPATH ones boycotted the preparation and distribution of the Zenginis books resulting in one of the biggest collective protests in the history of Minority education; almost all Minority schools did not function between 1st and 5th February, 1993. Although the boycott campaign become successful and Greece stopped the distribution of the Zenginis books, those EPATH graduates participated to this campaign started to face trial for disobedience to their superiors.

Exploring the facts of the trial, it seems that all the 13 EPATH teachers were called to participate to this meeting. They however informed the Minority School Offices in Komotini and Xanthi, in writing, that they would not attend the educational meeting on 1 February 1993 or collect the Zenginis books. Instead, they took part in a boycott campaign and did not perform their duties between 1 and 5 February, 1993 (*Ahmet Imam and Others v Greece*, no. 29764/96).

After this boycott, the Minority Schools' Office in Komotini and Xanthi took immediate action against those EPATH teachers. When asked for their reasons for not carrying out their duties as Greek civil servants, they stated two main reasons. First, their attendance at the educational meeting could cause disturbance in their school areas. Second, preparation and distribution of Zenginis books was a unilateral action of Greece which was incompatible with the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, 1951 Educational Agreement and 1968 Educational Protocol signed between Greece and Turkey (*ibid.*).

After their hearings, the local Greek authorities concluded that they violated Article 206 of the Greek Civil Servants Code. As a result, their duties were suspended for one year between 1993 and 1994. In 1995, the Regional Disciplinary Board

interpreted their participation to the boycott as illegal and contrary to the interests of the Greek state. They were found to lack faith and dedication to Greece, to have aligned with anti-Greek powers that aimed to cause tension and disrupt the coexistence between the Minority and majority Greek citizens in Western Thrace, to have disobeyed the decisions of their superiors and criticized them in public. Thus, it was decided that their actions merited severe disciplinary offences and that they would be punished by their dismissal (*ibid.*, see also *Agko v. Greece*, no. 31117/96).

Upon hearing the disciplinary proceedings, all these teachers appealed to the Council of State in 1994. A year later, their appeal was rejected. However, the Council of State underscored that “the applicants could only be punished for having failed to attend the educational meeting of 1 February 1993” (*Ahmet Imam and Others v Greece*, no. 29764/96).

Following this verdict, 13 EPATH graduates applied to the Commission in 1996. They complained that their rights as Greek citizens were violated based on Article 6, 11 and 9 of the Convention (see ECHR 1948). In their statements to the court, they underlined that the decision about their dismissal was unfair because they had participated to a peaceful boycott that aimed to express their discontent with “the chronic problems of the minority education system” and “safeguard the right of minority parents to educate their children in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions” (*Ahmet Imam and Others v Greece*, no. 29764/96).

Hearing both the Greek state and the Minority applicants, the Commission underlined that the ECHR does not guarantee any rights for the civil servants to strike and concluded as follows: some complaints of the applicants were ill-founded while the rest were rejected on the grounds that all local remedies were not exhausted. Therefore, the Commission declared this case inadmissible in 1997 (*ibid.*).

In the following years, trials of these EPATH teachers continued at the local Greek courts. Although some of these applicants were awarded around 4.000 Euros for pecuniary damage, none of them managed to resume their duties. Thus, some of them filed petition to the ECtHR in early the 2000s. Nevertheless, all of these applications were found inadmissible on similar reasons that the Commission had concluded in 1997 (*Kehagia v. Greece*, no. 67115/01; *Deli Hatzoglou v. Greece*, no. 67754/01; *Karabouyiouklou v. Greece*, no. 63824/00; *Molla Housein v. Greece*, no. 63821/00;

Ouzoun v. Greece, no. 63976/00; *Imam v. Greece*, no. 63719/00; *Toutziar v. Greece*, no. 63949/00). Since then, no Minority teacher, including the EPATH ones who participated to the 1993 Boycott, resorted to Strasbourg.

This section has described a number of cases at the ECtHR lodged by Minority teachers' against Greece between 1996 and 2001. Minority teachers used the supranational jurisprudence at Strasbourg in order to raise their voices at the European level and to demand that their rights of teaching be resumed by the Greek state. Although the Commission in 1997 and the ECtHR in the early 2000s declared their applications inadmissible, this study underlines that their struggle at the supranational level actually pushed Greece to provide a sum of money that would compensate at least the pecuniary damage of these teachers.

From a wider perspective, the boycott of 1-5 February 1993 indicated two significant developments in Minority education. First of all, it highlighted improving relations between two main groups of Minority teachers teaching the Turkish curriculum at Minority schools. As seen in Chapter 6, various problems and disputes occurred between the EPATH teachers and Minority TTAs in the 1970s and 1980s. With the 1993 boycott, it was the first time since the establishment of EPATH in 1968 that two main groups of Minority teachers cooperated and showed solidarity on a significant matter of Minority education, i.e. Turkish textbooks. It was also an act of collective resistance from Minority actors conserving bilingual Minority education in Western Thrace. That is, Minority parents became more responsive to the educational needs of their children; and they became more aware of their legally-protected individual and collective rights. Minority elites, NGOs and media played a noteworthy role in this process of raising awareness.

The deadlock over the 'Zenginis books' ended in the mid-1990s, when Greece considered the Minority's protestations and stopped dealing with Turkish textbooks unilaterally. Instead, it started cooperating with Turkey on new Turkish textbooks. Thus, in the positive atmosphere generated by the two foreign ministers, I.Cem and G. Papandreou, on the basis of 'earthquake diplomacy', Greece agreed to distribute new Turkish textbooks prepared and printed by Turkey for the first time since the 1950s. As a result, 19 new Turkish textbooks were distributed to Minority students in February 2000 (Anonymous 2000:26).

While debates over the ‘Zenginis books’ ended in 2000, the impact of this controversy on both Minority teachers and parents of Minority students remains. As Dragona and Frangoudaki (2007:21) underline, the Greek state’s ‘unfortunate initiative’ indeed left indelible traces in the minds of the Muslim Turkish locals.

Having traced the evolution of the disputes over the ‘Zenginis books’, I want to emphasise that the distribution of new Turkish textbooks satisfied the Minority’s needs for contemporary Turkish textbooks. However, it also sparked debates about the EPATH teachers and their presence within the Minority. That is to say, while the vast majority of Minority teachers who would teach with the new Turkish textbooks had graduated from the EPATH, their level of written and spoken Turkish was quite low, because most EPATH courses were in Greek. The following part of the study therefore discusses the different issues concerning the EPATH, and EPATH teachers at Minority primary schools in the post-Cold War era.

7.4 EPATH and its teachers

“For the Ministry (of Education), the journey of EPATH has come to an end” (Thalia Dragona’s interview with *Paratiritis tis Thrakis*, 01.04.2010)

As noted in Chapter 6, since 1968, the EPATH has trained teachers for the Turkish curriculum of the Minority education programme. All of its applicants were Minority students from Western Thrace, and the vast majority of them were graduates of the two *medreses*. The general profile of students accepted to the EPATH did not change in the post-1991 period: they were still graduates of *medreses* where the great majority of courses were in Greek until the mid-1970s. After a six-year education at *medreses*, most of the students ended their education; some of the others continued to the EPATH in Thessaloniki. EPATH applicants’ limited knowledge of Turkish sparked debates among Minority members from the 1990s onwards, in relation to the status of Minority teachers graduating from the EPATH and the poor quality of Turkish education provided at the EPATH.

Just as before, Minority students graduating from the EPATH could only teach at Minority primary schools, not at other primary or secondary schools in Greece. It was not possible for them to apply to posts requiring a university diploma, because the status

of the EPATH was never equal to a university education department. The most recent case occurred in 2008, when an EPATH graduate was prevented from applying for a job in the Greek public sector, because the EPATH was not accepted as equivalent to an institution of higher education. Despite complaints from the union of EPATH teachers in Komotini, the status of EPATH teachers did not change.

For the first time in May 1991, Mitsotakis highlighted problems with the EPATH with regards to the quality of Turkish education at the Academy, and suggested developing it into a proper department of education with a four-year programme of education (Anonymous 1991a:3). Successive Greek governments continued to stress their desire to convert EPATH into a department of education.

In 2002, the total duration of education at EPATH increased from two to three years¹¹¹, but the hours of Turkish courses remained low compared to those of Greek ones. According to the 2008-2009 academic program of EPATH, there were 100 classroom hours in total. Only 16 hours per week were devoted to Turkish and Islamic theology, and 6 hours to English. All the remaining hours were composed of courses in Greek (EPATH Online 2009). This constitutes one of the main reasons why the fluency of EPATH graduates in both written and spoken Turkish remained limited. They also lacked any kind of pedagogical training, because no such training was provided at the EPATH; that was yet another reason why EPATH graduates were not recognised as equals of Minority or Greek students graduating from Greek faculties of education.

Taking their poor command of Turkish into account, a number of EPATH teachers started to face significant problems using the new Turkish textbooks in the 2000s. Thus, some Minority parents wrote letters to the Ministry of Education complaining about the teachers' inadequate Turkish (*Trakyanin Sesi*, 24.10.2001). Also, EPATH Teachers' Association of Rodopi-Evros, composed of EPATH graduates teaching at Minority primary schools, wrote several times to the Ministry of Education requesting special seminars to help EPATH teachers with the new Turkish textbooks (Interview with Mehmet Derdiman; see also Letter 1, 2008; Letter 2, 2008).

In my interview with the then President of the EPATH Teachers' Association of Rodopi-Evros in Komotini, M. Derdiman, he clearly underlined that the Ministry of Education continued to turn a blind eye to problems faced by EPATH teachers in

¹¹¹ Ministerial Decision 76102/Z2/17.7.2002, FEK B' 963, 26.7.2002.

Minority schools. For him, all teachers were routinely invited to seminars to learn how to use new books, before they started teaching. However, the opposite occurred in the case of the new Turkish textbooks printed in Turkey: Minority teachers were trained to use the books only after their distribution to Minority students, which was a major pedagogical mistake. As of 2010, no such seminar had been organised for this purpose, with the exception of one under the Programme for the Education of Muslim Children (PEM), in which EPATH teachers refused to participate because it did not meet their demands (Interview with Mehmet Derdiman).¹¹²

The difficulties faced by EPATH teachers in using the new Turkish textbooks persist. Rather than solving fundamental problems dating back to 2000, Greece continues to appoint these teachers to teach the Turkish curriculum at bilingual Minority primary schools across Western Thrace. In 2002, there were 247 EPATH graduates teaching in 236 Minority primary schools, and 93 TTA graduates (Anonymous 2002:2). Seven years later, with a few exceptions¹¹³, all Turkish courses at the primary level were taught by EPATH teachers, as the number of their TTA colleagues had diminished, and the last two retired in 2009. This brought to an end any disputes between the two main categories of Minority teachers that had started in the 1970s.

By 2011, the Greek state filled all positions to teach the Turkish curriculum at bilingual schools with EPATH graduates, but the journey of the EPATH that had started in 1968 came to an end in 2010. EPATH was replaced with a programme specialising in Minority education, *Τομέας Μειονότητας*, introduced at the Pedagogical Department of Primary Education in the Faculty of Education of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

From 2011 onwards, Minority students who want to teach at Minority primary schools will therefore have to enrol at the Pedagogical Department. After completing certain compulsory courses, Minority students can choose courses from the 'Minority program'. Thus, after four years of education, Minority graduates of this department can teach in both Minority primary schools and Greek public schools. For the 2011-2012

¹¹² In the end, it was announced that the Ministry of Education had given permission for the authors of the Turkish textbooks to come to Western Thrace and give 80 hours of seminars about their books to EPATH teachers on 15-17 December 2011. However, it was delayed for certain technical and bureaucratic reasons (Azinlikca Online 2011; Birlik Gazetesi Online 2011)

¹¹³ These are Minority teachers with no pedagogical background. They are either graduates of primary or secondary schools. As of 2010, only a few of these teachers still work at Minority schools, and they will retire soon. Thus, in the very near future, all Turkish courses will be taught by EPATH graduates.

academic year, 21 Minority students have already won a place and begun to study to become the first teachers of this new scheme (*Gündem* 30.9.2011).

Having discussed the Greek state's first major policy change concerning Minority primary education, the following section examines the second major policy change of the post-1991 era.

7.5 The introduction of the '0.5% quota': A breakthrough in Minority tertiary education

This section examines the 0.5% quota system (hereinafter as '0.5% quota'), which the Greek state introduced in 1996, and the consequent increase in the number of Minority students completing secondary and high schools. The next section elaborates how the '0.5% quota' affected the outflow of Minority students to Turkish universities.

The quota system was actually introduced to increase the number of Minority graduates from Greek universities, but together with the introduction of the PEM program in 1997, which I will analyse in the following section, it motivated Minority parents to educate their children in Greece from pre-school to university.

As I discussed in Chapter 6, Turkey was Minority students' primary destination for secondary and higher education, because of the difficulties they faced trying to compete with their Greek classmates and win a place at a Greek university. This trend of attending Turkish universities remained unaffected by the 1991 policy change. For instance, in 1995, although the Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH) was based in Komotini, where the majority of Muslim Turks lived, no Minority student was enrolled at the DUTH¹¹⁴.

This lack of Minority presence in Greek tertiary education changed with the introduction of a new entrance system exclusive to Muslim Turkish students of Western Thrace.¹¹⁵ For the first time since 1923, Law No.2341/1995¹¹⁶ established a special Minority quota that was clarified one year later by a Ministerial Decision.¹¹⁷ According

¹¹⁴ The Dean of the DUTH quoted in Someritis (1995a).

¹¹⁵ Like many other measures of the Greek state for the Minority, this measure is also area-specific. Minority members who transfer their local rights, like voting, etc., to a Greek municipality outside of Western Thrace cannot benefit from the 0.5% quota system.

¹¹⁶ FEK A'208, 6.10.1995

¹¹⁷ Decision No.152.11/B3/790, FEK B'129, 5.3.1996

to this law, except in departments of theology and Technological Institutes, 0.5% of places at Greek universities had to be reserved for Minority candidates. They would sit for the same university entrance exam as all other Greek students, but they would compete with each other, not with the Greek students.

The initial criticisms of the '0.5% quota' came from some of the local Greeks. Under the leadership of Damaskinos, the local Metropolitan bishop based in Komotini, it was argued that this quota violated the basic principle of equality between Greek citizens. For the bishop, who interpreted minority-majority relations in W.Thrace as a zero-sum game, it was an indication that issues in Thrace were worsening for the Greek majority (Pini 1999).

In spite of such initial criticisms, 200 places were reserved for Minority students for the 1996-1997 academic year; however, the total number of Minority applicants was far lower. In fact, the small number of Minority applicants to study at Greek universities was yet another indication of the major outflow of Muslim Turkish students to secondary and higher education in Turkey.

In 2005, it was extended to Greek technological institutes, under Law No. 3404/2005, by which Minority students graduating from public technical and vocational high schools could enter these technical institutes (Hunault 2009). Thus, the total number of places for Minority students reached to 756 by 2008. Parallel to this, the number of Minority students entering Greek universities also increased, reaching the annual rate of 499 in 2009, according to the official statistics presented in table below:

Table 4: Turkish Muslim Students of Western Thrace entering Greek universities between 1996 and 2009 (Report of Greece 2008:4).

Year	Number of Muslim Turkish students entering Greek Universities (1996-2008)
1996-1997	67
1997-1998	110
1998-1999	109
1999-2000	112
2000-2001	70
2001-2002	147
2002-2003	176
2003-2004	186
2004-2005	249
2005-2006	315
2006-2007	425
2007-2008	460
2008-2009	499
Total	2925

In spite of the increasing number of the reserved places for Minority students, recent statistical data shown below indicates that that around 1/3 of those places at universities and half of the ones at Greek Technological Institutes remained vacant given that not all Minority students managed to pass the exam:

Table 4a: Muslim Turkish students entering Greek Universities (2006-2008)

Academic Year	Number of Reserved Places	Total Number of Candidates	Passed	Failed	Vacant Places
2006-2007	730	618	470	148	260
2007-2008	756	641	487	154	273

7.5.1 Minority students at Greek universities after 1996

Looking at the increasing number of Minority students at Greek universities, this study raises two main points. Firstly, the ‘0.5% quota’ was a top-down initiative, in the sense that while Minority students were facing a number of fundamental problems in primary and secondary education, which I discuss later, Greece introduced a new initiative in tertiary education. Secondly, the ‘0.5% quota’ had a great impact on changing expectations and preferences among Minority parents regarding the future of their children. As members of an agrarian and predominantly illiterate community¹¹⁸, most of the Minority were ambitious to educate their children and provide a ‘better future’ for them. However, as a result of the discriminatory measures applied by the Greek state before 1991, their options in the region were limited. Therefore, because Muslim Turkish families saw Turkey as their children’s only option for further education, they generally sent their children to Turkey for secondary education.

Looking from a broader perspective, this study argues that Minority families sent their children to Turkey for secondary and higher education primarily to ‘save the future’ of their children. During my fieldwork, I frequently heard such statements from Minority families speaking about their children’s education. Also, being one of these students sent to Turkey, I also remember the last thing my parents said to me before leaving me in front of my secondary school in Istanbul in 1990: “If you want to be an

¹¹⁸ National Statistical Data dating back to the years 1961, 1981 and 1991 indicated that the illiteracy rate in Rodopi and Xanthi prefectures was the highest in the country (cited in Wagstaff 1993:140; Kassotakis and Roussakis 1999:105)

educated person and save your own future, the only way is to finish your education here. If you want to return with us to our village in Greece, you will become a farmer like us and you will never have a ‘meal wearing a suit and tie’”¹¹⁹.

In this respect, as Greece reformed its static and oppressive policy towards the Minority in 1991, and instituted various affirmative action policies such as the ‘0.5% quota’, so Minority families changed their choices and expectations for their children’s education. The above table showing the gradual increase of Minority students at Greek universities suggests that Minority families welcomed and appreciated the ‘0.5% quota’ that ‘opened the gates’ of Greek universities to their children.

7.5.2 Additional promotions for Minority students at Greek universities

In addition to instituting the 0.5% quota, the Greek state also initiated supplementary actions to help Minority students at Greek universities. First, in 2006, the IKY [Foundation of State Scholarship] announced 10 scholarships (500 Euros/month) exclusive to Minority students registered at Greek universities. After three years, five scholarships were dedicated to Minority students enrolled at undergraduate and graduate programs in Greece (IKY Online 2009).

Then, according to a regulation introduced in 2006, all candidates for the Greek universities had to score at least 10 out of 20 in the entrance exam to be accepted, but Minority candidates were exempted (Giannakou 2007).

And last, for the first time in April 2010, Minority students were given the possibility to continue their tertiary education at Greek military academies (Huseyinoglu 2010). Until 2010, one of the main criteria for entry to those academies was racial: only those of Greek ethnic origin could apply; thus, no Minority student was able to win a place at such a military institution, even if they had an excellent score in the nationwide university entrance exams.

¹¹⁹ It was an expression frequently used by older Minority members in Western Thrace in the post-1990s. Wearing a suit and tie implied somebody who did not wear farming clothes or make a living from agriculture. In fact, it symbolized a university graduate who worked in the private or public sector. During the Cold War years, the vast majority of Minority members could not finish secondary and higher education, and most of them became farmers. Therefore, by using this expression, they indicated their intention to see their children graduate from universities and work in public or private sector professions inside or outside Western Thrace.

According to an announcement of the Greek Ministry of National Defence, the clause requiring applicants to be ‘of Greek origin’ was finally abolished in 2010 (ibid.). This meant that all Greek citizens, including members of minorities, were given the chance to win a place at a Greek military academy. Thus, Greece abolished a form of ethnic discrimination and made a significant advance in the promotion of democracy and equality for all of its citizens.

7.5.3 Talking with Minority Students at Greek universities

The presence of Minority students in Greek higher education is quite a new phenomenon, so it seems to be open to further research. The literature emphasises the increasing numbers of these students in Greek higher education but does not include any detailed analysis of this phenomenon. Considering this gap, I decided to talk to some Muslim Turkish students during my fieldwork in 2009, to learn their feelings about studying at a Greek university. I questioned some one-on-one, but I also had several group interviews. I wanted to know the challenges they faced, their experiences with their Greek friends, and their concerns and expectations for their future. I believe their answers can begin to fill the gap in the literature, and to inform discussion of the growing Minority presence in Greek universities since 1997.

There were commonalities in the profiles of my informants: most of them were graduates of public high schools; graduates from Minority high schools generally preferred higher education in Turkey. According to my interview with the head of the Komotini Minority High School, their graduates took both Turkish and Greek university entrance exams, but almost 80% of them chose to continue their higher education in Turkey. (Interview with Tunalp Mehmet) Moreover, most of my informants underlined the disproportionate number of Minority students entering and graduating from Greek universities. Although a great number of them accessed Greek higher education much more easily than the majority Greek students due to the ‘0.5% quota’, the total number of them graduating from these institutions remained comparatively low. This indicates that a number of Minority students could not finish their studies. Moreover, graduating from universities on time was uncommon; and only a few Minority students went on to postgraduate studies at Greek universities.

The initial years were painful for them in terms of adapting to the new environment, especially for those leaving Western Thrace and going to urban centres, like Athens or Thessaloniki, for the first time. Informants stressed that some of their friends from small and Minority-settled localities faced major difficulties communicating in Greek. Nonetheless, some Minority students built friendships with Greek students for the first time in their lives. In addition, although all of my research participants stressed that they had not faced major ethnic, religious or racial discrimination during their studies, they still preferred to share a room or house with other Minority members rather than with Greek classmates.

In addition, they criticised the ‘0.5% quota’ through which they had easier access to Greek universities. They underscored that as it had no lower limit, Minority students with very low scores, e.g. 3 out of 20, could win a place at a Greek university. Therefore, Minority students in general faced major problems in catching up with their Greek classmates. For this reason, a great number of my research participants proposed the introduction of a lower limit, such as 5 out of 20, so that Minority students scoring lower than five would not be able to study at Greek universities.

As for their prospects, return to Western Thrace was common to almost all of my informants, and even those studying in major urban centres showed a strong desire to go back and live in the region. When asked why they wanted to leave the capital city to go back to the second-least developed region in Greece, most of them said that they would feel more comfortable living there, and added that they wanted to be close to their parents and to take advantage of living in a big family.¹²⁰

Thinking back to my own experience in Turkey, such motivations for returning to Western Thrace felt quite familiar to me. During my undergraduate studies in Ankara, a common wish among my circle of friends from Western Thrace, was for us to finish our studies and go back to Western Thrace as soon as possible. Only a few of us were determined to continue our lives in Turkey.

This section focused on the experiences of Minority students at Greek universities. Next, I discuss the impacts of the ‘0.5% quota’ on the outflow of Minority students for tertiary education in Turkey.

¹²⁰ Interviews with a group of Minority students, Komotini, 17.7.2009 and 5.8.2009.

7.6 Minority students at Turkish Universities

Increasing numbers of Minority families choosing Greek secondary and higher education for their children did not mean the end of the outflow of Minority students to Turkey. Some Minority families preferred to educate their children in Turkey, but relatively, their numbers declined after 1997. Over a decade, Western Thracian applications for the University Entrance Examination for Foreign Students, *YÖS*, diminished by almost 50% (see table 5 below), and half of those did not win a place at a Turkish university.

YÖS, which had been held since 1981, was officially abolished in January 2010 (*Hurriyet Avrupa*, 23.1.2010). From then on, foreign students applying for higher education at a Turkish university did not need to sit a university entrance exam; instead, they had to meet requirements set individually by senates of Turkish universities.

Table 5: Students from Greece entering Turkish universities via *YÖS* (1997-2008)¹²¹

Academic Year	Applicants	Those who take the exam	Those who pass the exam and get a place at a Turkish university
1996-1997	591	575	288
1997-1998	463	455	256
1998-1999	465	446	273
1999-2000	368	362	249
2000-2001	345	333	225
2001-2002	320	315	230
2002-2003	254	244	169
2003-2004	289	279	---
2004-2005	260	250	---
2005-2006	295	282	---
2006-2007	294	279	---
2007-2008	289	278	---

Despite the gradual decline in Minority students attending Turkish universities after 1997, my fieldwork notes and participant observations give a slightly different picture. In comparison with the increasing number of Minority students at Greek universities, the total number of those studying at Turkish universities did not change

¹²¹ I would like to thank Mr. Gürsel Yumurtacı from the Turkish Higher Education Council, *YÖK*, for providing me with the official data during my research in Ankara, Turkey, in 2008. I have never seen any study about the Minority use these figures, so they have probably been used for the first time here.

The reason for the lack of some data is that both scores and allocations of foreign students were regulated by the ÖSYM [Student Selection and Placement Centre of the Turkish Higher Education Council] until 2004. However, from 2004 onwards, foreign students winning the *YÖS* exam were no longer allocated places by the Centre. Their scores were published, then they had to apply individually to whichever Turkish university they preferred.

dramatically. The main reason was that the number of Minority students entering Turkish universities via a second scheme was increasing.

The *TCS* [Turkish Republics and Turkish Communities] exam constituted this second method, but only for applicants who were not Turkish citizens, who belonged to the broader Turkish nation, and who finished secondary education in their own countries, for example Minority students finishing bilingual Minority high schools in Western Thrace. *TCS* was easier than *YÖS* and those placed at a Turkish university via *TCS* were provided with a state scholarship.

Applications for *TCS* were thus only accepted from graduates of the two Minority high schools. However, during my fieldwork I noted that, in recent years, Turkish state apparatuses extended the entrance criteria for the *TCS* to those Minority students finishing public high schools in Western Thrace, because the number of Minority students at Greek public secondary and high schools continued to increase in the 2000s. Thus, this research contends that the number of Minority students entering Turkish universities via *TCS* has continued to increase, making it unlikely that Minority students will stop enrolling at Turkish universities in the near future. In fact, the outflow of Minority students to Turkey is likely to continue because the main bureaucratic and technical restrictions applied by Greek authorities against Minority graduates from Turkish universities have also started to disappear. The next section elaborates how the elimination of these measures began and developed.

7.6.1 Abolition of the restrictive measures for Minority graduates arriving from Turkey

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, most Minority students completing their undergraduate studies in Turkey continued to return to Western Thrace, though some preferred to remain in Turkey. In fact, the positive atmosphere in the region after 1991 fostered the hopes of Minority graduates who wanted to pursue their own professions in Western Thrace. However, they faced two chief technical and bureaucratic restrictions.

The first restriction was related to getting local authorities' permission for opening an office, health and safety certification, etc. Although the permits were given promptly to Greek students graduating from Greek universities, some restrictive measures against Minority members continued to be applied after 1991. The existence

of such measures against the Minority became widely known across Greece when the case of a Minority pharmacist, Cahit Çingur, was reported by one of the national Greek newspapers in 1993. Although he had prepared all the necessary documents and submitted them to the local Greek authorities, he had to wait more than two years to get consent to open a pharmacy in Xanthi (*Eleftherotipia*, 18.9.1993).

After increasing concern, and criticism of such discrimination by both Minority and majority Greeks, the ‘scandal of the long-lasting refusal’ (Someritis 1995) ended: Çingur was given permission in 1993; and three other Minority pharmacists from Komotini, who also had to wait years, were given permission in 1994¹²². Over time, similar impediments were gradually abolished, allowing a number of Minority graduates from Turkish universities to pursue their professions in Western Thrace.

The second restriction, which was related to major difficulties with DIKATSA, gradually diminished. By the mid-2000s, the period between the application and official response from DIKATSA was shortened. Thus, most Minority graduates stopped waiting for a couple of years to hear about their applications to DIKATSA. In this respect, this thesis underlines that the abolition of these two major impediments not only enabled Minority graduates of Turkish universities to practise their profession in Western Thrace, but also encouraged families to send their children to Turkish universities. Having discussed the ‘0.5% quota’, I will now elaborate on the fourth major initiative instituted in 1997, which was introduced with the economic support of the EU.

7.7 Programme for the Education of Muslim Children (PEM)

Before analyzing the Program for Education of Muslim Children, let me briefly elaborate the concept of intercultural education and its application in Greece, which would be helpful to understand the broader policy of Greece in the post-1990s while dealing with problems about education of students belonging to socially-excluded, marginalized or disadvantaged communities across the country.

¹²² *Trakyanin Sesi* 15.12.1994, 22.12.1994. For the specific case of Yuksel Nurioglu, whose efforts to get permission for a pharmacy started in 1982 and lasted for more than a decade, see Giakoumopoulos (1997:58-59).

The introduction of intercultural education in Greece was achieved in 1996 and was followed by the opening of intercultural schools across the country. The articles 34-37 of the Law 2413/1996 (FEK A' 124,17.6.1996) regulate different issues about establishment and functioning of these schools. According to the law, the aim of intercultural education is to serve the needs of those students having different educational, cultural and social characteristics than the Greek students.

Intercultural schools exist at the primary and secondary level and are primarily located at those localities with great number of Pontic Greek and immigrant concentration. According to the Greek Ministry of Education, a total number of 26 intercultural schools across the country; 13 primary schools, 9 secondary schools and 4 high schools. More than half of these schools function in Athens and Thessaloniki where population of the two-aforementioned communities is quite high. Only three of these schools are located in Western Thrace; a primary school in Iasmos (*Yassıköy*) and a primary and secondary secondary school in Sappes (Ministry of Education 2011).

Compared to Minority schools, the curriculum followed at these schools is almost the same with that at public schools. Still some courses are modified according to needs of those students. However, as Tsitselikis (2002:452) underlined, almost all courses are taught in Greek and no consideration was shown to the linguistic specificity of students attending to these schools.

Among four large-scale EU-funded projects for fighting social exclusion of communities in Greece in the post-1990 years,¹²³ the Program for the Education of Muslim Children (PEM)¹²⁴ was the only long-term educational project. Composed of three phases – 1997-2000, 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 – the overall cost of PEM was 16,990,000 euros, 80% of which was funded by the EU (Report of Greece 2008:2). Two Greek professors in Athens, A. Frangoudaki and T. Dragona directed the project; it is known as the 'Frangoudaki Program' in Western Thrace. The majority of the project group was composed of Greek academics and scholars from linguistics, educational sciences, anthropology, psychology and so on, with some Minority members working on various phases of the project.

¹²³ The other two projects were targeting the inclusion of migrant children and the other one the Roma community in Greece. see (Dragonas and Frangoudaki 2006:38).

¹²⁴ For more information about this project, visit its official website at www.museduc.gr/index.php [accessed on 1.12.2011].

PEM coordinators began by outlining significant problems causing underdevelopment in Minority primary education that needed further research. First of all, dropout rates from primary and secondary education were high among Minority students. While the average dropout rate from Greece's nine-year compulsory education was 7%, it reached almost 65% among Minority members in Western Thrace. (Dragonas and Frangoudaki 2006:30) In particular, a great number of Minority parents did not want their daughters to receive secondary or higher education.

Second, Greek textbooks were the same as the ones distributed to Greek students in public primary schools, so they were not appropriate for Turkish students learning Greek as a second language. Until that time, no Greek language textbooks were printed in Athens for Minority students. Some Greek officials were glad that the same Greek textbooks were used in both Minority and public primary schools (cited in Baltsiotis 1997).

Third, none of the Greek teachers at Minority schools were trained to teach Greek as a foreign or second language. Therefore, they faced difficulties teaching Greek courses to Minority students. Fourth, local and ministerial officials showed indifference towards the problems faced by Greek teachers at Minority primary schools. As Frangoudaki and Dragona (2007:20) note, according to Greek policy before 1991, Greek teachers had been appointed to Minority schools not to teach Greek to Minority pupils, but rather to protect the nation's 'borders' against the foreign threat in the north-eastern margins of the Greek mainland. Last, the lack of cooperation between Greek and Turkish teachers at Minority schools became one of their priorities; but it was never completely successfully addressed (Frangoudaki and Dragona 2007:40).

After taking into account the fundamental problems of Minority primary education, PEM coordinators and researchers clarified the main goals of the program as the motto "Addition, not Subtraction; Multiplication, not Division". The objective was not only to improve Turkish Muslim children's Greek language skills in order to assist them in integrating into wider Greek society, but also to fight the illiteracy and dropping out of many Minority members in Western Thrace.

During the initial years of the PEM, hesitations and reservations were raised by Minority and majority teachers, schoolchildren's parents, local Greek and Minority NGOs, and local Turkish and Greek media, against the aims and implementation of the

PEM programme (Frangoudaki and Dragona 2007:45). Over time, Minority and majority Greek teachers, and Minority families increasingly supported PEM.

The PEM program resulted in the preparation of Greek textbooks, bilingual and trilingual dictionaries, and some supplementary audiovisual materials for Minority students and their teachers at Minority primary and secondary schools.¹²⁵ Unlike the ones used at public primary schools, all of these materials were designed for the teaching of Greek as a second language, in which Turkish and Greek names, and Western Thracian places were included. After their distribution, they became the standard Greek textbooks for the Greek courses at Minority primary schools.

In addition, extra afternoon classes were organised at some public secondary schools for Minority students who wanted to improve their knowledge of Greek. Moreover, two key community centres were formed in Komotini and Xanthi, with equal numbers of Minority and majority staff members. Named ΚΕΣΠΕΜ, they provide a space where Minority students and their parents could, among other things, socialise, take afternoon classes, use computers, borrow books from the centres' libraries, receive counselling on educational matters, and practice the Greek language; mobile ΚΕΣΠΕΜ regularly visited remote highland villages.

Besides, seminars, talks and training courses, various activities were also prepared for teachers participating in PEM, addressing intercultural education, teaching Greek as a secondary language, new pedagogical methods, etc.; there, both Minority and majority teachers shared ideas, experiences and opinions about developing Minority primary education.¹²⁶

Ten years later, PEM activities had contributed to the improvement of Minority primary school pupils' Greek language skills, to a decrease in dropout rates from compulsory education, and to an increase in Minority students attending secondary and higher education in Greece. The number of those finishing either Greek or Minority

¹²⁵ As it is noted, of all the new books prepared according to the principle of teaching Greek as a secondary or foreign language under the EU-funded PEM project (1997-2013), it was only the history textbook that did not get official approval from the Greek authorities for its distribution to Minority students studying at Greek secondary schools (Avdela et.al. 2007:277). I could not find any information why it was rejected by the Greek authorities.

¹²⁶ For a collection of all PEM activities, see Frangoudaki and Dragona 2007; or visit the website www.museduc.gr/index.php [accessed on 1.12.2011].

secondary schools increased by approximately 60% between 2003 and 2007 (Frangoudaki and Dragona 2007:54).

7.7.1 Minority Criticisms of the PEM

In spite of the PEM's achievements between 1997 and 2008, Minority families and elites made two main criticisms of the program. The first focused on its restriction to the Greek curriculum. That is to say, ignoring the basic pedagogical assumption that 'those educated well in the mother tongue learn the second language better', the PEM aimed to develop only the Greek curriculum of bilingual Minority primary education, and it made almost no contribution to the development of the Turkish one. Given that education at Minority primary schools was bilingual, the PEM (or any other program targeting only the enhancement of the Greek curriculum at Minority primary schools) could not work efficiently (Kabza 2007; Ahmetoglu 2007). Some Minority journalists even interpreted the PEM as another of the Greek state's 'assimilation project[s]' (Omer 2005).

The second criticism emerged as a reaction to one of the PEM coordinators' definitions of Minority primary schools as 'ghetto schools' that segregated Minority students from majority ones for six consecutive years. According to Frangoudaki :

"A Minority school in which half of the education is in Turkish and the other half in Greek is a type of schooling that belongs in the past. What is good for Minority students is not ghetto Minority schools but a common school, composed of both Minority and majority kids regardless of their cultural and linguistic differences" (Azinlikca Editorial Board 2004:70-74).

In spite of PEM's achievements in improving the Greek curriculum, such statements led to Minority suspicions of the possible 'hidden' aims of the Ministry of Education, as well as of the 'actual' intention of scholars collaborating with the PEM. This affected overall Minority support of the PEM.

My fieldwork research indicates that any discussions referring to the Minority schools as 'ghetto' or 'old-fashioned' educational institutions of the Minority frustrated a great number of Minority families, MPs and elites of the region, for whom their schools were of vital importance for their community's survival. In fact, Minority primary schools still had a symbolic meaning for the Muslim Turkish minority. These were one of the few places in the region where their own language, culture, ethnicity and religion were taught and passed on to younger generations for more than half a

century. Thus, any argument for the replacement of Minority primary schools was likely to face great opposition from the Muslim Turkish minority.

Looking at the PEM from a broader perspective, it seems that, despite its achievements, the PEM was not effective in solving a number of long-standing, fundamental problems in minority education. As the two coordinators of the project underlined: “While PEM has certainly disturbed still waters, it has not changed the deep structure”. (Dragonas and Frangoudaki 2006:36) In my opinion, PEM represented a new beginning for cooperation between Athens and Western Thrace on matters of Minority education in the post-1990 years; it was unrealistic to expect a ten-year project to solve the fundamental problems of Minority education so quickly, and by reforming only the Greek curriculum.

The PEM finished in 2008. Two years later, the ‘Education of Muslim Minority Children in Thrace’ (EPMMTH) started under the supervision of Anna Frangoudaki, one of the heads of the former PEM program. Running from 2010 to 2013, EPMMTH has similar targets to the PEM, such as fighting high dropout rates, improving the Greek curriculum at Minority primary schools, and contributing to the improvement of the Minority’s overall educational level. Similar to the PEM, it does not intend to make any improvements to the Turkish curriculum (EPMMTH Online 2011).

Taking into account the aforementioned Minority criticism of the PEM, this research posits that any program prioritising the Greek curriculum while ignoring the Turkish curriculum is likely to face similar reactions from the Minority. Therefore, taking into account the necessity to educate Minority students in both the minority language and the state language, I believe that Greece should reform Minority primary schools’ Turkish curriculum.

7.8 Growing numbers of Minority students in secondary education

7.8.1 Minority *Medreses*

Until 1998, both *medreses* in Komotini and Echinis, which were attended only by Minority students, operated within a complex educational framework. For instance, their status was not equal to other ecclesiastical secondary and high schools in Greece,

and therefore their graduates were not allowed to sit the university entrance exam. However, in 1998, under Article 4 of Law No.2621/1998,¹²⁷ the status of these schools was made equivalent to that of Greek ecclesiastical secondary schools.

Before 1998, *medrese* graduates were only able to continue their education at the EPATH. According to research conducted in the late 1990s, almost 92% of EPATH students were graduates of *medreses* (cited in Askouni 2006:76); but from 1998 onwards, they were also given the chance to enrol at Greek universities. As the figures below indicate, the number of students studying at *medreses* continued to increase throughout the 2000s.

¹²⁷ FEK A' 136, 23.6.1998

Table 6: Number of Muslim Turkish students at the Religious School, Medrese-i Hayriyye, in Komotini (2001-2009).

Secondary School				High School			
Academic Year	Boys	Girls	Total	Academic Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2001-2002	154	4	158	2001-2002	90	0	90
2002-2003	163	15	178	2002-2003	84	0	84
2003-2004	160	30	190	2003-2004	93	3	96
2004-2005	170	54	224	2004-2005	83	9	92
2005-2006	169	68	237	2005-2006	83	19	102
2006-2007	192	101	293	2006-2007	82	23	105
2007-2008	203	101	304	2007-2008	79	30	109
2008-2009	214	105	319	2008-2009	70	39	109
Total number of students at the Komotini Religious School in 2009					428		

Table 7. Number of Muslim Turkish students at the Religious School in Echinos-Xanthi, 2001-2009¹²⁸

Secondary School				High School			
Academic Year	Boys	Girls	Total	Academic Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2001-2002	10	0	10	2001-2002	17	0	17
2002-2003	11	0	11	2002-2003	17	0	17
2003-2004	16	0	16	2003-2004	20	0	20
2004-2005	13	0	13	2004-2005	22	0	22
2005-2006	19	0	19	2005-2006	22	0	22
2006-2007	14	0	14	2006-2007	15	0	15
2007-2008	12	0	12	2007-2008	13	0	13
2008-2009	7	4	11	2008-2009	14	0	14
Total number of students at the Echinos Religious School in 2009					25		

Comparing these figures, it becomes obvious that the number of Minority students at the *medrese* in Komotini gradually increased through the 2000s, but those in Echinos remained the same. Moreover, the number of students registered at the secondary section of the *medrese* in Komotini almost doubled, while the number of those continuing to the high school remained constant, showing us that many students starting *medreses* either give up before finishing their education or transfer to other secondary and high schools.

¹²⁸ ‘Numbers of students at Minority primary and secondary schools, official statistical data provided by the Coordinator of Minority Schools in Komotini, Protocol. No. F.23.5/990, 26.5.2009

The increasing number of girls at the *medrese* in Komotini also seems noteworthy. Minority girls were first accepted at this school in the academic year of 2001-2002 (Askouni 2006:229). Since then, their numbers multiplied more than twenty times in eight years, but this was never the case at the *medrese* in Echinós; no girl was registered between its opening in the 1950s and 2008, when four girls enrolled at the secondary section of the school. For the same period, a similar increase of girls finishing secondary and high schools was also observed at the Minority secondary and high school in Komotini (see Table 8 below). Thus, this study highlights that the overall number of Minority girls completing secondary education increased throughout the 2000s.

Table 8. Number of Muslim Turkish Students at the Celal Bayar Minority Secondary and High School in Komotini (2001-2009)

Secondary School				High School			
Academic Year	Boys	Girls	Total	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2001-2002	211	164	375	2001-2002	48	62	110
2002-2003	210	149	359	2002-2003	64	60	124
2003-2004	167	131	298	2003-2004	94	83	177
2004-2005	197	155	352	2004-2005	102	91	193
2005-2006	201	178	379	2005-2006	101	99	200
2006-2007	221	199	420	2006-2007	82	89	171
2007-2008	215	203	418	2007-2008	84	98	182
2008-2009	183	191	374	2008-2009	82	120	202
Total number of students at the Celal Bayar Minority School in Komotini in 2009					576		

Prior to the religious education provided at secondary level, I want to add that informal teaching about basics of Islam was also offered to Minority students at earlier ages. Especially those at the stage of primary education were sent by their parents to the quranic courses, *kur'an kursu*, organized at the mosques in the Minority localities where the clergyman, who was generally imam of the mosque, taught the children how to read and write quran and practice prayers. Given that imams organized these courses on a voluntary basis it was mostly up to the imam whether to organize or not.

7.8.2 Public Secondary Schools

There have been public secondary schools across Western Thrace since 1923. But until 1991, most Minority families refrained from sending their children to those schools. The education was only in Greek so few Minority students could complete their education. In fact, I concluded that the low probability of them winning a place at a Greek university even after finishing secondary education in Western Thrace was one of the main reasons. As mentioned in Chapter 6, only a few students managed to win a place at a Greek university; however, the introduction of the '0.5% quota' in 1996 and the PEM in 1997 encouraged more Minority parents to send their children to public secondary and high schools in Greece. An example of this increase in students is indicated below, using data from the local Greek office responsible for public secondary schools in Rodopi Prefecture.

Table 9. Number of Minority students in Greek secondary education in Rodopi Prefecture¹²⁹

	2002-2003			2004-2005			2006-2007			2008-2009		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Secondary Schools	505	347	852	498	380	878	541	423	964	504	334	838
High Schools	82	73	155	92	124	216	143	161	304	147	213	360
Technical High Schools	106	47	153	355	205	560	231	98	329	317	148	465
Total	693	467	1160	945	709	1654	915	682	1597	968	695	1663

¹²⁹ M is for male, F is for female and T is for total number of students.

In addition, reading the figures above, a significant shift is observed in the number of Minority students at high schools, where the total number of Minority students more than doubled between 2002 and 2009.¹³⁰ Also, according to the official data of the Greek Ministry of Education, by the 2008-2009 academic year, the total number of Minority students at Greek secondary and high schools throughout Western Thrace had increased ten-fold in two decades, from 400 to 4,650 (Report of Greece 2008:1).

Elaborating on the increasing numbers of Minority students at public secondary and high schools in Western Thrace, it is useful to clarify that a number of families who were not willing to send their children to Turkey had no other option than to send them to public secondary schools in Greece. There were only two Minority secondary and high schools, with limited capacities that could not satisfy all of the Minority families who wanted to provide their children with a bilingual secondary education.

As figures from a prominent Minority NGO show, the imbalance between the population ratio and the school ratio persisted in the late 2000s: approximately 52 % of the total population of the Rodopi region and 45% of the Xanthi region were composed of Muslim Turks; but there were only two Minority secondary schools, whereas there were 24 public secondary, high, and vocational high schools operating in Rodopi Prefecture and 37 in Xanthi Prefecture (WTMUGA Report 2009).

During my fieldwork, several of my informants complained about the lack of bilingual secondary schools. They added that this was one of the main reasons for the increasing numbers of Minority students at public secondary schools. Yet, despite Minority members' growing demands for more bilingual Minority secondary schools across Western Thrace, the Greek authorities took no action (as of 2011). Thus, not all Minority families were given the opportunity to choose the best type of secondary education for their children.

¹³⁰ Unpublished data of the local branches of the Secondary Education-Ministry of Education cited in Askouni 2006: 242

7.8.2.1 Introduction of the Turkish language course at public secondary schools: A complete failure?

Parallel to the increase in Minority students registered at public secondary schools, in 2006, Greece introduced Turkish as an elective course at the four public secondary schools with significant Minority communities in Komotini and Xanthi. It comprised two levels, one for those with no knowledge of Turkish and one for those who were fluent; thus, it targeted at both Minority and majority students.

According to Ministerial Decision 61539/G/2/20.6.2006, the objective of this was twofold: it served to make Greek beginners aware of the language of the neighbouring country, which would contribute not only to their communication with Turks but also to their active participation in the multicultural society of the region; for native or advanced Turkish speakers, the aim was to enrich their knowledge of Turkish literature and to improve their capacity to read and write¹³¹.

Table 10. Numbers of Minority students at pilot Turkish courses in four public secondary schools in Komotini and Xanthi¹³²

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Komotini	22	27	36
Xanthi	9	10	9
Total	31	37	45

Introduced on a pilot basis, the success or failure of this initiative was significant for Greek officials in determining the fate of Turkish language classes as elective courses at public secondary schools. From my fieldwork notes and official data shown at Table 10, I draw several conclusions. Firstly, the participation of both Minority and

¹³¹ The Ministerial Decision No. 61539/G/2/20.6.2006, FEK B'867, 10.7.2006

¹³² I would like to thank both offices of secondary education in Komotini and Xanthi for providing me with this statistical data.

majority students remained very low. Almost no majority Greek student opted to learn Turkish at these schools. Secondly, those students choosing Turkish were primarily Minority students whose mother tongue was Turkish. As one of the Greek officials responsible for education of this course had told me during my fieldwork, almost all of the students choosing this course were much more fluent in Turkish than the Greek teacher responsible to teach the Turkish course. As a result, this study argues that the introduction of Turkish as an elective course failed to meet the aforementioned objectives of the Ministry of Education.

Teaching Turkish at Greek public schools is still a pilot project, meaning that it will result in two possible outcomes: either it will be abolished, or the Ministry will expand its application to other public schools inside and outside of Western Thrace. However, if the low participation of students persists, it is likely that public secondary schools' Turkish language courses will be discontinued.

Considering the official policy change of the Greek state in 1991, I elaborated on the major initiatives introduced by the Greek state, and questioned the extent to which they led to significant changes in Minority education. It became clear that significant changes occurred, primarily at the secondary and tertiary levels of Minority education, although some basic problems persisted, e.g. the lack of bilingual secondary schools, the low number of Minority students finishing high schools, etc. As I will discuss in the next section, persistent, fundamental problems in Minority nursery and primary education continue to cause friction between the Minority, Greece, Turkey and the international community.

7.9 Continuities in problems of Minority education after 1991

7.9.1 Nursery Education

It makes a five-year-old child very nervous to be at a place where he/she cannot speak his/her own native language (T.Dragona's interview in Martidou 2010)

The operation of nursery schools plays a significant role in adapting children to the school environment. Although public nurseries continued to operate across the country for a long time, they were not included in the scheme of nine years' compulsory

education until 2006. According to Law 3518/2006,¹³³ compulsory education in Greece increased from nine to ten years and all four- or five-year-old children with Greek citizenship had to attend nursery schools in their own areas. Thus, all children with Greek citizenship had to start compulsory education at nursery, continue with six years' primary education and finish with completing three years' secondary education.

Nursery schools continued to operate in Western Thrace in the post-1991 period. They were all public, and located in either cities or municipalities where considerable numbers of Greeks lived. Minority families living close to these localities still refrained from sending their children to those nursery schools, considering that such a 'foreign,' 'Christian' and 'Greek' environment could, in the long run, cause either assimilation or 'Hellenization' of their children.

As for the areas populated only by Muslim Turks, there were no nursery schools at all. Therefore, almost all of these areas' children were brought up in families where Greek was rarely spoken; they had no Greek neighbours to practice the Greek language; and they generally preferred to watch Turkish television broadcast from Turkey, and listen to Turkish radio stations rather than Greek ones. As a result, most Minority children had no knowledge of Greek before beginning Minority primary schools.

As conditions for the Minority in Western Thrace improved after 1991, so the Minority's emphasis on nursery education grew. In particular, the 1997 introduction of the '0.5% quota' strengthened parents' motivation to provide better-quality education for their own children from their early childhood onwards. As a result, at the start of the 2000s, villagers in Minority-populated areas appealed to Greek authorities and demanded they open nurseries in Minority areas (see Hursit 2006:78-79). Parallel to such demands, the number of those Minority parents choosing public primary schools also increased.¹³⁴

As new nursery schools opened in different parts of Western Thrace in the 2000s, the number of Muslim Turkish students at nurseries gradually increased; however, this created significant disputes between the Greek state and the Minority. Firstly, in areas with large Minority communities, the great majority of Minority

¹³³ FEK A' 272, 21.12.2006.

¹³⁴ Unpublished statistics of local educational offices of the three Prefectures cited in Askouni (2006:165).

students in nursery education belonged to Muslim Turkish families, but neither their friends nor the Greek teacher could speak Turkish. This discouraged some Minority parents from sending their children to these schools. As Kanakidou (quoted in Habip and Nikolaou 1999) advised, Minority pupils should not feel a gap between their family environments and those of their nursery schools.

Secondly, the Greek state was incapable to apply Law 3518/2006 in Western Thrace. By 2010, there were only 65 nurseries across Western Thrace, whereas there were 195 Minority primary schools (Report of Greece 2008:2). These numbers imply that many Minority children were automatically prevented from accessing basic nursery education by the lack of public provision. In this respect, the state was infringing its own law.

In this context, the number of Minority families demanding inclusion of Turkish at the nursery level increased. In fact, the inclusion of the Turkish language at the pre-school education is partly covered in recent years owing to the two child clubs, *μονάδα φροντίδας και απασχόλησεις νήπιων*, functioning under the CEFOM. Nevertheless, these clubs are quite low in number and have the same status like all other private child clubs across Greece. That is, they accept kids until five years old but their parents had to pay fees for attendance of their children (Interview with Pervin Hayrullah). Provided that nurseries were added to the Greek compulsory education scheme, after attending to these clubs Minority pupils still need to continue to public nursery schools if they want to get enrolled in primary schools.

Moreover, before the inclusion of the Turkish at the pre-school level through CEFOM's private child clubs, WTMUGA started opening 'children's clubs', *παιδικά τμήματα*, in 1998 for Minority students where Turkish was the medium of communication (WTMUGA Annual Report 2009:103). At the website of this NGO, it was also underlined that one of the main aims of these clubs was to help the social development of the children (WTMUGA Online 2012).

To note, according to the Law 3518/2006 all Minority pupils have to attend to public nursery schools before beginning primary education. Thus, those Minority pupils attended any of these child clubs that I previously mentioned still need to continue their education at nursery schools. In other words, the status of these clubs operating under

the WTMUGA and CEFOM is neither equal to those of the public nursery schools. Nor do they satisfy those Minority parents demanding nursery education in Turkish.

This increasing demand of the Minority parents for inclusion of the Turkish language in pre-school education would transform those nurseries attended by Minority children into bilingual schools; thereby, the law for ten years' compulsory education would therefore not be violated, and all Minority students would have access to nursery education before starting primary school. However, as it is underlined Greece introduced no special regulations about matters of the pre-school level of Minority education (Tsitselikis 2012: 481). Nor it did spend major effort for opening of bilingual nurseries or making the existing ones bilingual over time.

During my stay in the field, it was common to see Minority requests for bilingual nursery schools fall on deaf ears. As of 2011, there is no change at all. So the law guaranteeing 10 years of compulsory education is still not fully applied in Western Thrace. However, Greece made almost no effort to open bilingual nurseries or to make the existing ones bilingual over time. During my stay in the field, it was common to see Minority requests for bilingual nursery schools fall on deaf ears. As of 2011, there is no change at all. So the law guaranteeing 10 years of compulsory education is still not fully applied in Western Thrace.

7.9.2 Primary Education

In spite of changes mentioned earlier in this chapter relating to Turkish textbooks and the abolition of EPATH, a number of problems continued to interfere with the proper functioning of Minority primary schools. First, only a few Minority primary schools, numbering 195 by 2009, were composed of six classrooms reflecting a proper primary education of six consecutive years; most were composed of two or four classrooms, where education was provided to combined classes. For example, among the 132 Minority primary schools in the prefectures of Rodopi and Evros, only seven were composed of six or more classrooms, and six of those seven were located in the two main cities.¹³⁵ Although some improvements were made by the Greek authorities through the 1990s and 2000s, including building new school buildings or renovating existing ones, a number of Minority primary schools, especially remote ones, still faced

¹³⁵ 'The number of Minority Schools and Students in Western Thrace 2008-2009_Document No.2', Statistical Information provided from the Association of EPATH Teachers in Rodopi-Evros Prefectures

basic infrastructural inadequacies, which affected the overall quality of primary education at these schools.

Second, the equilibrium between Greek-language courses and Turkish-language ones at Minority primary schools was altered. According to the 1995 directive of the Ministry of Education, the new English language course for Minority primary education could only be taught by Greek teachers. Also, the teaching language of technical courses like music, sport and art was changed from Turkish to Greek.¹³⁶ Thus, the total amount of courses taught in Greek increased in relation to those taught in Turkish. Although Minority parents responded with a boycott campaign on 9-15 October 1995, nothing changed. Consequently, at a Minority primary school composed of six classrooms, the total number of hours taught in Turkish decreased from 126 to 83 in a week, while the hours in Greek increased from 60 to 112 between 1997 and 2006 (Hursit 2006:144-148).

Third, Minority primary school boards' administrative control continued to diminish throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Local Greek authorities kept interfering in these schools' operation, generating friction between them and the school boards' members. For instance, in Krovili and Sappes, the Nomarch of Rodopi was reported to have ordered refurbishment works to start in the middle of the academic year without informing any of the schools' board members (*Balkan*, 24.11.1992; Anonymous 1992a). In the 2000s, the Ministry of Education decided to limit the authority of school boards and transfer them to the local Greek authorities in Western Thrace with the introduction of new regulations.¹³⁷

As school boards started to lose power over Minority primary schools, so Minority parents showed less interest in becoming members of these boards. For example, out of 226 Minority primary schools, it was possible to hold elections at only 130 of them, because so few Minority parents stood for election (Ahmetoglu 2002). Four years later, the picture was almost the same: of 215 Minority primary schools, only 99 held school board elections (Ahmetoglu 2006).

As of 2011, the Coordinator of Minority Schools and some local Greek authorities have a much greater say on administrative issues than the school boards. The

¹³⁶ Directive No. F12/921.61.1058/31.8.1995 quoted in Ahmet (2004).

¹³⁷ See the Ministerial Decision No. 62092/10.6.2002, FEK B' 963, 28.7.2002.

Greek authorities still generally ignore or reject school boards' ideas and suggestions. This is another indication of how the autonomous character of Minority schools, enshrined in the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, has gradually been devastated by the Greek state since 1991.

7.10 Conclusion

This chapter examined continuities and changes in Minority education between 1991 and 2011. To this end, it examined key events at all levels of Minority education. It also explored the significance of the main actors in these issues. Taking into account the primary role of the Minority, Greece, Turkey and the EU over matters of Minority education, it discussed the extent to which Minority parents resisted several Greek initiatives and affirmative action policies, while welcoming and actively supporting others.

While doing so, it frequently emphasised the changing preferences and prospects of Minority families, which affected the overall level of Minority education. It also underlined the growing power of the Greek state over Minority primary, secondary and high schools after 1991, which further damaged the autonomous character of Minority education. This chapter indicates that although Greece introduced major affirmative action policies to improve Minority education in Western Thrace, there are still fundamental problems, particularly in nursery and primary education that constitute the backbone of education of the Muslim Turkish minority. As of 2011, while Minority students have greater access to higher education in Greece, Minority pupils still have no chance to be enrolled at bilingual or monolingual Turkish nursery schools.

CHAPTER 8: Conclusion

This thesis focused on the development of Minority education in the north-eastern borderlands of Greece. It explored how bilingual education in Western Thrace emerged in 1923 and passed through different stages until the 2000s. While doing so, it developed a historical understanding primarily based upon data that I collected from the Greek state archives and the Turcophone newspapers published in Western Thrace. Identifying the key events and explaining their impact at every level of Minority education in Western Thrace, from nursery to universities, this thesis also showed the different roles that the local, national and international actors played in the realm of Minority education in Western Thrace.

The majority of Greek politicians and academics insist that almost all of the Minority's legally-protected rights have been realised since 1991. While I concur that there have been some improvements, the Minority's difficulties in the realm of rights with collective aspects, such as education of Minority students in a bilingual environment, nonetheless persist. As I demonstrated in this study, the Minority's educational rights involved simultaneously collective and individual aspects. That is, according to the Article 16.4 of the Greek Constitution, every Greek citizen "is entitled to free education on all levels at State educational institutions" (Hellenic Parliament 2008). Therefore, the Greek state is obliged to provide basic education to all of its citizens regardless of their ethnic, linguistic or religious differences. In addition, Greece is also under the responsibility to promote and support bilingual education for Minority students in Thrace based on the bilateral and international treaties that it signed and ratified, e.g. the Lausanne Treaty. Therefore, my case study indicated that educational rights of minorities could not be properly implemented without recognising their collective aspects.

Along with matters of Minority education, I also argued in this study that other individual rights of the Minority could not be fully implemented if the collective dimension of it was ignored; the right of freedom of association is an individual right that can be enjoyed only collectively with other people. The case of the XTU that I

briefly mentioned in Chapter 2 was one of the most recent examples pertaining to individual rights with collective aspects; in spite of the two decisions of the ECtHR in 2005 and 2007 Greece still prevents official registration of this union (Psychogiopoulou 2010:134-135). As a result, a member of the Minority has the right to self-identify as a 'Turk' but three of these people are officially disallowed to unite under a 'Turkish' organization.

Having focused on the development of Minority education in Western Thrace, this study has shown that Greece, in general, preferred to act unilaterally while deciding on matters of Minority education. That is to say, especially from the 1950s onwards when Greece increased its hegemony over various aspects of Minority education, the Greek decision makers in Athens and Western Thrace had limited communication with the Minority parents and elites composed of journalists, politicians, professionals, teachers and imams while working on new regulations on Minority education. Even the Minority MPs, the primary representatives of the Minority in Athens, were not included in any phase of the process of making law on matters of Minority education. This constituted one of the primary reasons why the Minority and the Greek state could not establish an effective mechanism for dialogue and cooperation on matters of Minority education. As a result, one frequently came across news in the Minority newspapers complaining about the fact that the Minority was becoming aware of a new law on Minority education only when the Greek Parliament had adopted it. In addition to my conversations with my research participants, my interviews with the Minority MPs of Rodopi and Xanthi also confirmed that this lack of communication between the Minority and the Greek state continued as of the 2000s (Interview with Ahmet Haciosman; Interview with Cetin Mandaci).

Looking from a more theoretical perspective, social constructionist arguments were most useful in several of the discussions here. Neither the Minority under study nor other minorities in Greece were treated as primordial or eternal communities. Rather, I treated minorities as socially-constructed groups with their own distinct ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics. Therefore, I underlined that minorities could appear or disappear depending on various internal and external criteria, as had been the case with the dissolution of empires and formation of nation-states in 19th and 20th-century Europe; new nationalities supplanted the old imperial nationalities.

In chapter 2, I highlighted how the international community had tackled various problems of the minorities in Europe starting from the League of Nations until today. In this context, I noted that the international community's interest in the protection of minority rights at the international level began under the League of Nations. But during the Cold War years, minority rights started to be dealt with under the broader concept of individual human rights. Thus, throughout the Cold War years, the protection of minority rights was underemphasized at the international level.

Nevertheless, the emergence of inter-ethnic tension in the Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) after the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia demonstrated that it was insufficient to protect the rights of minorities under the basic principles of individual human rights. As a result, in addition to the international human rights organizations, various other international, supranational and nongovernmental organizations identified collective rights as an important issue concerning minorities, and they started to work immediately on new policies concerning individual rights with collective dimensions. Doing so, they considered that states still needed to tackle different dilemmas while introducing and applying policies about collective rights of minorities, such as education, given that there was no 'one-size-fits-all' type of models coping with minority issues. The thesis highlights this 're-internationalization' of minority rights across Europe in the 1990s.

Moving from the broader international level to the local one, I showed in Chapter 2 how the concept of a minority and of minority rights developed in Greece after 1923 when the Minority concept that I use in this project took a legal and institutional dimension with the ratification of the Lausanne Peace Treaty. Along with the Minority under study, I also referred to the Slavic-speakers, Jews and Tsam Albanians in the context of post-World War I Greece.

In this chapter, I also introduced the main theoretical framework of this study. The history of Minority education supported the main arguments of Brubaker's Triadic Nexus; the basic ideas behind his theory of state-minority-homeland relations seemed quite useful in explaining the development of Minority education in Western Thrace. Since Greece signed not only international treaties protecting the rights of the Muslim Turkish minority but also bilateral agreements with Turkey, i.e. the 1951 Cultural Agreement and the 1968 Cultural Protocol, both of which affected the matters of

Minority education in Western Thrace, Turkey was included in matters of the Minority from the very beginning of the formation of minorityhood in Western Thrace in 1923.

However, Brubaker's Triadic Nexus was insufficient when I dealt with issues of Minority education in Western Thrace from the 1980s onwards, when the international community increased its presence in the region as well its interest in Minority issues. Members of different supranational and international human rights organizations paid more frequent visits to Western Thrace and observed how miserable were the living standards of the Muslim Turks due to the discriminatory policies of the Greek state. Thus, as I explained in Chapter 6, their involvement turned out to constitute one of the main reasons why Greece felt obliged to change its Minority policy in 1991 and started to give the Minority back their fundamental human rights, which had been violated for decades. Like some other scholars studying state-minority-homeland relations, I added the international community as a fourth actor and contributed to those arguments supporting the necessity to transform Brubaker's triadic nexus theorization of state-minority-homeland relationship into a quadrilateral one.

Regarding the methodological framework of this study, in Chapter 3 I discussed in detail the process of an insider researcher conducting fieldwork in their community. My personal choice to study one of the Minority's most sensitive issues, which was also a highly-politicised problem between Greece and Turkey, caused problems in approaching my research participants, as well as unanticipated challenges during my fieldwork. However, dealing with such problems, talking to my research participants and making observations in the field enabled me to explain issues of Minority education from a broader perspective.

While dealing with the emergence and development of Minority education in Chapters 4 and 5, I showed how influential the schism within the Minority was by discussing its impact on Minority education. Unlike complaints made by Minority elites in the past, the Minority was relatively unable to act as a single body because it was fragmented, mainly by the rivalry between followers of the Modernist and Traditionalist factions. Moreover, both Greece and Turkey promoted this schism through their direct or indirect support of these camps. Greece satisfied the demands of both camps, but it was more inclined to side with the Traditionalist camp; it preferred to see a Minority identifying itself with Islam and the Ottoman past, rather than one affiliating itself with

an ethnic Turkish identity and the secular Islam promoted by its neighbour. Contrary to Greece, Turkey always supported the Modernist group who promulgated the ethnic, religious and cultural values of the modern Turkish Republic amongst the Minority. In particular, the economic support of Minority teachers through the social aid scheme after the 1960s was of particular concern to show how a significant part of the Minority's educational elites increased their affiliation with the fundamental ethno-cultural and religious values promoted by the state institutions of Turkey.

From the 1920s until the 1970s, this rivalry between the two neighbouring as well as other major bilateral conflicts such as the ones regarding Cyprus and the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul affected Minority education in Western Thrace. The end of the schism between Modernists and Traditionalists in the early 1970s coincided with increasing Greek measures infringing upon the Minority's fundamental rights and freedoms. As I considered in detail in Chapter 6, in spite of Greece's democratization and Europeanization processes after the end of the junta regime in 1974, the Minority were disappointed, as they faced some of the harshest conditions ever in Western Thrace during the 1980s. In a country that became an EC member in 1981, their human rights continued to be violated, even in simple matters like getting a driving licence or a building repair permit because the EC had no right to control human rights performances of its members, even though violations of human rights issues were raised at the European Parliament.

This disappointment actually constituted one of the main motivations for the Minority to start acting as a single body inside and outside Greece during the 1980s. Ranging from educational to religious matters, they tried to make the international community aware of their sufferings in a country that was a member of various regional and international organizations. In addition to Turkey, which continued to be the only external actor supporting the Minority's rights at various regional and international platforms, Minority elites lobbied various supranational and interstate organizations in Europe and the Islamic world that could push Greece to stop the violation of the rights of the Muslim Turkish minority.

Such Minority efforts bore fruit when Greece, for the first time since 1923, declared at the beginning of the 1990s that it had adopted a new policy on the Minority based on two main principles: equality before the law and equality in civic rights. Thus,

as explained in the central argument of this study, almost all violations of basic individual human rights gradually came to an end, yet most of the violations of collective rights persist. A variety of fundamental problems continue to affect the Minority's overall level and quality of education in Western Thrace. As I showed in Chapter 7, Greece introduced some affirmative actions, such as the '0.5% quota' and the PEM program. But they fell short of a solution to the fundamental problems, especially in the nursery and primary level that constitute the backbone of Minority education in Western Thrace.

Recalling the two main purposes of this study, i.e. to analyse how Minority education in Western Thrace emerged and developed between 1923 and 2010, and to study the role of internal and external actors in this process, then, I drew four general conclusions for the four main local, national and international actors, all of which continue to decide the fate of Minority education in Western Thrace.

First, Greece's impact on Minority education during the interwar years was highly limited, because Greece had to spend much time and energy dealing with critical national problems – the Italian and German invasions in the 1940s that were followed by the Civil War between 1946 and 1949. Thus, issues of Minority education were regulated mainly by the elites of the Modernist and Traditionalist factions; nevertheless, this started to change in the 1950s, with the gradual intervention of the Greek state. At that point, the Minority lost power over the functioning and administration of their schools.

As a result of the various laws introduced by Greek governments between the 1950s and the 2000s with a very limited communication with the Minority elites, educational matters that had been controlled by the Minority until the 1950s started to be regulated by Greek officials functioning in Western Thrace and Athens. Nevertheless, as I have shown in Chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7, this increasing Greek rule over matters of Minority education resulted in a transformation in the status of bilingual Minority education. In time, the educational autonomy enshrined in the 1923 Lausanne Treaty was abolished and the private character of Minority education was transformed. Today, Minority education in Western Thrace is neither private nor public. Because of continually increasing Greek control, the Minority education system evolved into a *sui generis* one. That is, Greek authorities have absolute control over every aspect of

Minority education in Western Thrace. In this context, the role of Minority actors in Minority education is primarily symbolic; Minority actors' role is weaker than that of Greek officials. Therefore, today, it is impossible to talk about an autonomous Minority education in Western Thrace.

Second, realizing that rights are not only given but also claimed, the Muslim Turkish minority started to react against the Greek authorities' violation of their human and minority rights. As for the rights concerning the education of their children, they chose to follow the most peaceful method of protest – in the event of a dispute with the Greek state, they temporarily stopped sending their children to schools. Such protests lasted from one day to five years depending on the case. In spite of such protests, it was interesting to note that the vast majority of rights violations in the realm of Minority education were not brought before international judiciary mechanisms like the ECtHR, though representatives of Minority NGOs still present violations of educational rights on international platforms so as to criticize Greece's minority policy in Western Thrace. As I elaborated in Chapter 7, it was only some Minority teachers, most of whom were graduates of the EPATH, resorted to the ECtHR. But their cases were found ill-founded and inadmissible and none of them managed to start teaching at Minority primary schools.

Also, this study showed that the Minority in Western Thrace not only reacted against Greece's policies but also responded positively to some of the affirmative actions that aimed to combat the high numbers of dropout rates of Minority students. As I explored in Chapter 7, this was the case with the '0.5% quota' as well as the PEM program, where the Minority gradually accepted and supported both actions.

Third, although Turkey officially agreed the succession of Western Thrace from the Allied Powers to Greece under the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, it never stopped showing an interest in the survival of its kin in Western Thrace. While playing the role of the kin state or the 'motherland' of the Minority, from 1923 onwards Turkey closely followed developments in the realm of Minority education, thanks to a continuous flow of information from the Turkish Consulate General in Komotini. It also contributed to the development of the Turkish curriculum of the bilingual education programme; it donated primers of the new Turkish alphabets, prepared books for the instruction of

Turkish courses and gave scholarships to Minority students who wanted to study at Turkish secondary and higher education institutions.

The involvement of Turkey in Minority education was officially strengthened with the 1951 Cultural Agreement and the 1968 Cultural Protocol. The strengthening of the Minority's ties with its kin-state was reinforced in the 1970s and 1980s, when Greece implemented various discriminatory measures against the Minority. This made the Minority get closer to neighbouring Turkey, and helped Turkey's buttressing of its role as the main external protector of the rights of the Minority at the international level.

Fourth, going back to discussions of the internationalization of minority rights, this study showed that the Minority's rights have been a matter of international concern since the creation of Minority in Western Thrace under the Lausanne Treaty. Nevertheless, until the 1980s it was only Turkey that highlighted at the international level how Greece violated human and minority rights of the Minority. Although the rights of minorities were underemphasized within the UN system during the Cold War years, Turkey continued to show its interest in the life of its kin at both the national and the international level.

The interstate and supranational institutions as well the international human rights organizations – e.g. the EU, the CoE and HRW – started to deal with the Minority's issues only from the 1980s onwards. With the re-internationalization of minority rights across Europe in the 1990s, international concern about the Minority's problems gradually increased. Today, although Minority representatives still attend various meetings and forums of the interstate and supranational institutions at the European and international level, and still complain about Greece's discrimination against the Minority in Western Thrace, the overall impact of international institutions remains highly limited.

That is, Greece continues to consider itself the main authority and rights provider in Western Thrace. In fact, it is possible for Greece to introduce EU-funded projects to fight illiteracy among the Minority. In this respect, it can benefit from guidelines, knowledge and expertise provided by various mechanisms of the CoE and UN as well as those of some non-governmental organizations, e.g. Fryske Academy, both of which aim to protect ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic richness and heterogeneity in Europe.

But it is also possible to delay the ratification of the FCNM (signed in 1997) that gives significant rights to the Muslim Turkish minority. Similarly, the judges of the same Greek state can officially argue that ECtHR decisions are not binding in Greek law, and therefore can refuse to register Minority associations with the term ‘Turkish’ in their titles, even though the ECtHR made two decisions supporting the establishment of the Xanthi Turkish Union, in 2005 and 2007 (US Human Rights Report 2010).

Comparing continuities and changes in Minority education before and after 1991, this study demonstrated that significant changes can be observed in secondary and higher education, but most of the fundamental problems in nursery and primary education persist. Rather than introducing bottom-up initiatives after 1991, Greece preferred top-down ones to solve the major problems of Minority students in secondary and higher education. Thus, it is appropriate to note that the overall number of Minority students completing secondary and high schools has been increasing since the 2000s. However, looking from a broader perspective, it is still the fact that Minority pupils face major problems especially during nursery and primary education. This study contends that top-down affirmative action may continue to contribute to the falling numbers of illiterate Muslim Turks in Western Thrace in the coming years. However, there is no way that it will solve the fundamental problems in Minority education.

In the event that Greece insists on acting without any effective dialogue with the Minority in Thrace, then this study anticipates that most of the problems at all levels of Minority education will likely continue in the second decade of the millennium. This will not only increase the gap between the Greek state and the Minority, and thus contribute to the further ghettoization of the Minority, but also promote Turkey’s role as the kin state and the major external protector of the Minority at regional and international fora.

To conclude, if Greece intends to improve the overall level of Minority education in Western Thrace, first, it should immediately work on the formation of an effective dialogue mechanism between Athens and Western Thrace. This would also help the Greek state realize the actual needs and demands of the Minority about education of their children. Second, it should put more emphasis on the nursery and primary level given that they constitute the foundation of the bilingual Minority education in Western Thrace. In this context, Greece should allow opening of bilingual

or monolingual-Turkish nurseries. Also, it should increase the overall quality of education provided at bilingual primary schools by emphasizing both Turkish and Greek curriculum, and by giving more power to the Minority to have a greater say on administration of their schools.

Third, along with the primary education Greece should work on the improvement of education at the two Minority secondary and high schools as well as opening new ones in case of demand from the Minority families; it is possible that these families may favour their children continuing to receive bilingual education at the secondary level after finishing Minority primary schools. Last, along with the Minority, Greece should increase its cooperation with Turkey since the latter is still directly included in some educational issues of the Minority, e.g. the preparation of the Turkish textbooks. If Greece increases its cooperation not only with the Minority but also with Turkey and other European interstate and non-governmental instruments, then, this study foresees that a number of the fundamental problems in the realm of Minority education prevailing today could be resolved in the near future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I. Treaty of Lausanne (1923)

Section III. Protection of Minorities - Articles 37-45

Article 37.

Turkey undertakes that the stipulations contained in Articles 38 to 44 shall be recognized as fundamental laws, and that no law, no regulation, no official action shall conflict or interfere with these stipulations, nor shall any law, regulation, no official action prevail over them.

Article 38.

The Turkish Government undertakes to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Turkey without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion.

All inhabitants of Turkey shall be entitled to free exercise, whether in public or private, of any creed, religion or belief, the observance of which shall not be incompatible with public order and good morals.

Non-Muslim minorities will enjoy full freedom of movement and emigration, subject to the measures applied, on the whole or part of the territory, to all Turkish nationals, and which may be taken by the Turkish Government for national defense, or for maintenance of public order.

Article 39.

Turkish nationals belonging to non-Muslim minorities will enjoy the same civil and political rights as Muslims.

All the inhabitants of Turkey, without distinction of religion, shall be equal before the law.

Differences of religion, creed of confession shall not prejudice any Turkish national in matters relating to enjoyment of civil and political rights, as, for instance,

admission to public employments, functions and honors, or the exercise of professions and industries.

No restrictions shall be imposed on the free use by any Turkish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, religion, in the press or in publications of any kind or at public meetings. Notwithstanding the existence of the official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Turkish nationals of non-Turkish speech for the oral use of their own language before the Courts.

Article 40.

Turkish nationals belonging to non-Muslim minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as other Turkish nationals. In particular, they shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any school and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion therein.

Article 41.

As regards to public instruction, the Turkish Government will grant in those towns and districts, where a considerable proportion of non-Muslim nationals are resident, adequate facilities for ensuring that in the primary schools the instruction shall be given to the children of such Turkish nationals through the medium of their language. This provision will not prevent the Turkish Government from making the teaching of the Turkish language obligatory in the said schools.

In those towns and districts where a considerable proportion of Turkish nationals belonging to non-Muslim minorities, these minorities shall be assured an equitable share in employment and application of the sums which may be provided out of public funds under the State, municipal, or other budgets for educational, religious, or charitable purposes.

The sums in question shall be paid to the qualified representatives of the establishments and institutions concerned.

Article 42.

The Turkish Government undertakes to take, as regards non-Muslim minorities, in so far as concerns their family law or personal status, measures permitting the settlement of these questions in accordance with the customs of those minorities.

These measures will be elaborated by special Commissions composed representatives of the Turkish Government and of representatives of each of the minorities concerned in equal number. In case of divergence, the Turkish Government and the Council of the League of Nations will appoint in agreement an umpire chosen from amongst European lawyers.

The Turkish Government undertakes to grant full protection to the churches, synagogues, cemeteries, and other religious establishments of the above mentioned minorities. All facilities and authorization will be granted to the pious foundations, and to the religious and charitable institutions of the said minorities at the present existing in Turkey, and the Turkish Government will not refuse, for the formation of new religious and charitable institutions, any of the necessary facilities which are guaranteed to other private institutions of that nature.

Article 43.

Turkish nationals belonging to non-Muslim minorities shall not be compelled to perform any act which constitutes a violation of their faith or religious observances, and shall not be placed under any disability by reason of their refusal to attend Courts of Law or to perform any legal business on their weekly day of rest.

This provision, however, shall not exempt such Turkish nationals from such obligations as shall be imposed upon all other Turkish nationals for the preservation of public order.

Article 44.

Turkey agrees that, in so far as the proceeding Articles of this section affect non-Muslim nationals of Turkey, these provisions constitute obligations of international concern and 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. The British Empire, France, Italy and Japan hereby agree not to withhold their

assent to any modification in these Articles which is in due form assented to by a majority of the Council of the League of Nations.

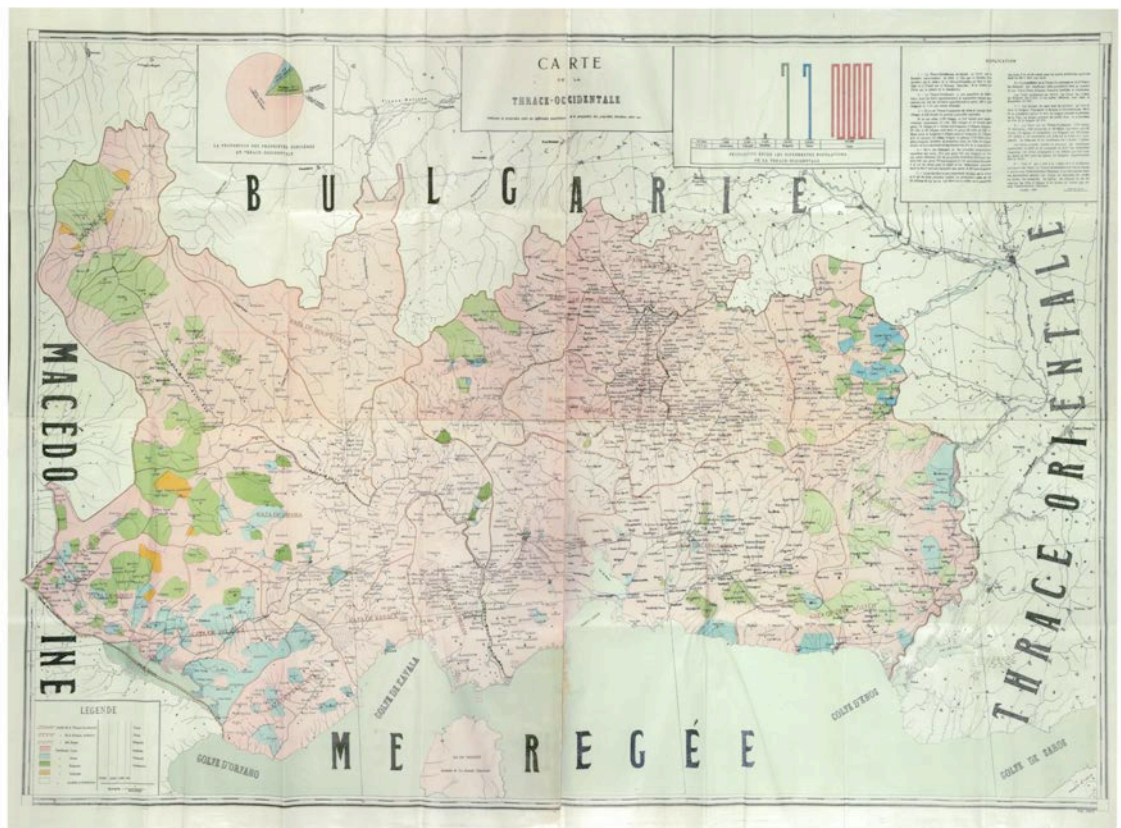
Turkey agrees that any Member of the Council of the League of Nations shall have the right to bring to the attention of the Council any infraction or danger of infraction of any of these obligations, and that the Council may there upon take such action and give such directions as it may deem proper and effective in the circumstances.

Turkey further agrees that any difference of opinion as to questions of law or of fact arising out of these Articles between the Turkish Government and any of the other Signatory Powers or any other Power, a Member of the Council of the League of Nations, shall be held to be a dispute of an international character under Article 14 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The Turkish Government hereby consents that any such dispute shall, if the other party thereto demands, 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 of the Covenant.

Article 45.

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 (Martin 1924: 970-973).

Appendix II. Map of the greater Western Thrace in 1922



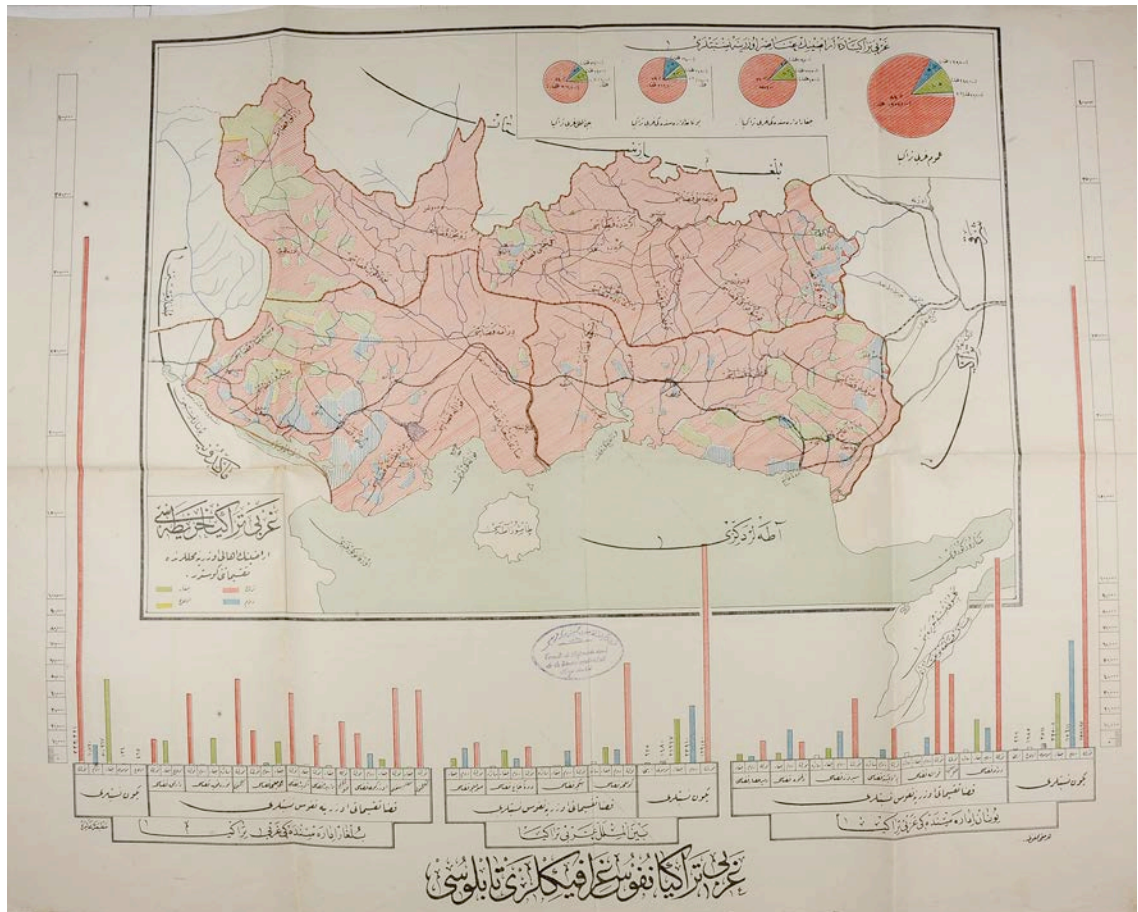
Source: TNA (1922).

Note: Although various Turkish scholars underlined that almost 84% of the land belonged to the Turks just before the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, they had no audiovisual evidence for this argument. This map of 1922 prepared by the Committee of Western Thrace Turks, *Comite de la Thrace-Occidentale*, who visited the Lausanne Talks, is the actual proof of this argument. I came across with it accidentally inside a file on Western Thrace while I was doing research at the National Archives of the UK government.

It is a unique and original map because it gives a very detailed analysis of all cities, towns and villages – even the remotest ones in the highlands – as well as showing the concentrations of different populations living in the region.

I have never come across this map in neither Turkish nor Greek sources. It is therefore highly possible that it is being reproduced for the first time in this academic work.

Additional note: Meaning of colors is also stated at the above-right corner of the map; red, green and blue represents those areas inhabited by the Muslim Turks, Bulgarians and Greeks respectively).



Source: DAGM/BOA 1921.

This map is exactly the same as the one in French but there are fewer details about the toponyms of the localities and information about the Ottoman population. It is prepared in the Ottoman script.

Appendix III. Map of Greece and Western Thrace

Source: <http://www.maps-of-greece.com/thrace-map.htm> [accessed on 2.1.2012]

Appendix IV. Graduation Diplomas of Minority students before and during the Bulgarian Occupation of Western Thrace in the early 1940s.



Note: One part of the diploma used to be in Greek and the other part in Ottoman script. This would change with the Bulgarian occupation of Western Thrace. Thus, as it is obvious from the next picture on page 316, Bulgarian would replace Greek while the Turkish alphabet would replace the Ottoman script. I would like to thank Mr. Şerafettin Hurşit for giving me these two archival documents.

<p>Частно ТУРСКО ПЪРВОНАЧАЛНО УЧИЛИЩЕ</p> <p>№ 144</p>	<p>Yeniye Husei TUREK İLK OKULU</p> <p>Yeniye Husei Husei</p>
<p>УДОСТОВЕРЕНИЕ № 144</p> <p>Mustafa Hasanov Mustafin, роден в на 10 март 1935 год в Чошмафен околия Бургас, област Плевен по народност от турци от мислен възпроизводство, Радослав Попови М. е следвал П. през учебната 1941/1942 г. в 7-и отделение при поведение Мустафа (6) е показал общ успех <u>успехи</u> (3) и е от сжествувал в полудни, от които, извинени и, неизвинени.</p> <p>Въз основа на този успех учени <u>Коста</u> <u>Мустафа Хасанов</u> (минава или-остава в 7-и отделение на Частното Турско първоначално училище.</p> <p>Въз основа на 19.11.1942</p> <p>ГЛАВЕН УЧИТЕЛ <u>Генерал</u> Мисирис <u>С.</u></p>	<p>TASTIKNAME</p> <p>№ 144</p> <p>Yeniye Husei halkından 10 Mart 1935 yılında doğan Mustafa Hasan 1941/1942 ders yılı sırasında 7. Sınıf Husei Türk İlk Okulunun 7. Sınıfına devam ile adı geçen sınıfta okunan dersleri güderék ve yıl arasında kamu derslerden orta olarak (3) derecede başarılı göstermiştir.</p> <p>Okula gelmediği saatlar / izimli / izinsiz. Ablağ <u>Layman Tentiridis (6)</u> Yukarıda gösterdiği başarılı derecesinden ötürü Mustafa Hasan 7. Sınıf geçtiğini ve dolaylı işbu tasdikname verildi.</p> <p>Yeniye Husei 19.11.1942</p> <p>Baş Öğretmeni <u>Genel</u> Sınıf Öğretmeni <u>S.</u></p>

Appendix V. Photos of billboards about Cyprus in Northern Greece

Kavala 2009¹⁴⁰



Komotini 2009



¹⁴⁰ I would like to thank İlhan Tahsin, a Minority journalist, for providing me this picture at Kavala.