



UNIVERSITÀ' DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE



INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES

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XXIV CICLO DEL
DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN

POLITICHE TRANSFRONTALIERE PER LA VITA QUOTIDIANA

TRANSBORDER POLICIES FOR DAILY LIFE

**MINORITY RIGHTS IN BULGARIA AND GREECE, AND THE
IMPACT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS**

Settore scientifico-disciplinare: SPS/04

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ANNO ACCADEMICO 2011 / 2012



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Austrian agency for international mobility and cooperation in education, science and research.

Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation

Centre for Research on Peace and Development, **Katholieke Universiteit Leuven**.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMVR	Arhiv na Ministerstvoto na Vatreshnite Raboti (Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Bulgaria)
BCP	Bulgarian Communist Party
BEM	Bulgarian Ethnic Model
BSP	Bulgarian Socialist Party
CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation
CoE	Council of Europe
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECRML	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EPATH	Thessaloniki Pedagogical Academy
EU	European Union
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
GCC	Greek Citizenship Code
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IMIR	International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations
PCIJ	Permanent Court of International Justice
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
MRF	Movement for Rights and Freedom
MSZ	Military Surveillance Zone
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
TsDA	Tsentralen Darjaven Arhiv (Central State Archive, Bulgaria)
UDF	Union of Democratic Forces
UN	United Nations

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation deals with the rights of minorities in Bulgaria and Greece while providing an overview about their changing perception. Both countries are evaluated based on their progress on minority rights, the role of nationalism and the impact of the European integration process.

Speaking about minorities is still one of the most sensitive issues in Southeast Europe. Because of its historical background, in terms of minority population, the region has one of the most diverse structures in Europe. Often this diversity caused some small scale conflicts and even led to the wars. But Bulgaria and Greece are two unique examples where minority issues did not go toward violent conflicts in the beginning of 1990s. Was it because of the state policies or other reasons stemming from the structure of the minorities? Both countries have a compact Turkish/Muslim population settled in border regions, but relatively peaceful minority.

Following the creation of Greece and Bulgaria as independent states, protection of minority rights became a crucial issue in order to prevent forced migration or assimilation of the population belonging to minorities. However, the way how nationalism was shaped in both countries, affected not only the treatment of minorities, but also their integration into the society. By adding the impact of the adoption of different political systems in the post-Second World War period, the issue of minority rights developed differently in Greece and Bulgaria.

In the case of Greece, minorities did not find the chance to get fully integrated due to strongly exclusionist structure of the Greek national identity which constantly worked on the idea of 'otherness' of the Muslim/Turkish

minority in Thrace.¹ This period became widely shaped with the revisionist ideas of treaties signed with Turkey for the protection of minority rights. The content of nationalism and its stance towards the minority in Thrace, deepened the segregation between Muslim/Turkish and Orthodox Greek populations. Eventually, this environment which was characterized with a highly sensitive inter-ethnic rhetoric, legitimized the unequal treatment of Muslim/Turkish minority in Greece. The rights that were guaranteed by the Greek Constitution, were curtailed through additional internal regulations. Education, economic and social policies were widely shaped in line with these legal changes.

The situation in Bulgaria was relatively different. Bulgaria formed its national identity on the same features as Greek one, and Bulgarian language, culture and Bulgarian Orthodox Church became its core. Meanwhile, when the country decided to adopt communism, this automatically affected the concept of Bulgarian nationalism and accommodation of minorities as well. The initial exclusion of the Orthodox Church, constituted a big step towards modernization of Bulgaria, which was supposed to help for the integration of national minorities. In 1950s and 1960s, this policy proved its success during the intensive economic progress in Bulgaria. On the other side, it began to decline when the situation of the Turkish minority deteriorated due to the assimilation policy launched in the form of 'name changing campaign'.

The changes in 1990s affected both countries. The intensity of the Europeanization process became catalyzer for further democratization in Greece and Bulgaria. For Greece, this process followed partially the acceptance of the political and democratic integration with the EU, since before this, Greek authorities perceived European integration as only an

¹ See Mitja Zagar, *The Ethnic Relations, Nationalism and Minority Nationalism in South-Eastern Europe*, in: *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*, (Ed.) Michael Keating & John McGarry, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 331.

economic policy by ignoring its political aspect. The limited modernization in Greece brought some changes to the Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace. Meanwhile, Bulgaria's transition from communism into democracy brought also political changes that resulted with the EU membership in 2007. Although limited, by restoring the rights of the Turkish minority, Bulgaria's European integration process, established new conditions for the integration of Turks into the society.

Bulgaria and Greece are especially chosen case studies of this work in order to give an overview of the different effects of minority integration methods and to examine the level of European integration and the role of the Europeanization process on the rights of minorities. Greece as an old EU member and Bulgaria as a new member state are also good examples in order to see the contribution of the negotiation process for the EU membership.

Minority rights movements in Europe made a peak in 1990's after the fall of communism. All Eastern European countries were interested in further integration with Europe hoping to become members of the European Union. Meanwhile, most of them had problems with their minorities and some unsolved border issues. Having demand for membership from so many states, forced EU to adopt some standards for the democratization which eventually targeted human rights. The emphasis on human rights made necessary further discussion of minority rights as well. Consequently, Copenhagen Criteria were adopted by the EU as new standards to be met by the applicant countries to gain candidate status.

In spite of all modernization efforts in the region, still many issues regarding the rights of minorities are continuing to be a taboo in the social and political lives of both countries. Probably in some aspects today the level of the rights is better than the past years, but the implementation is

below the average. This dissertation aims to give an explanation for the reasons behind this reluctance and its roots in the past.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical structure of the work is designed in a way to compare both countries regarding their policies towards Turkish/Muslim minority and how it has been changed under the effect of major political challenges. Turkish minority in Bulgaria and Muslim/Turkish minority in Greece are taken as the subjects of present work, since they are the only officially recognized minority by both countries. The presence of other minority groups in both countries is fact, however, they are not officially recognized, and therefore, they are excluded from the scope of this work. This approach is designed to provide information on how the protection of recognized minorities evolved throughout the history, and how it became affected with the European developments that took place in the region.

Turkish and Muslim minorities are selected from both countries as independent variables in order to see how their treatment differs from country to country. Turkish minority in Bulgaria and Turkish/Muslim minority in Greece had close relations until 1950's when the border between two states begun to be strictly controlled after Bulgaria became communist. Nevertheless, the fall of communism showed that so many things changed in social, religious and cultural features of both minority groups. Therefore, their situation has been examined along the political developments in Greece and Bulgaria.

Part of the work tackles also Pomaks – Muslim community that speaks a dialect of Bulgarian – since they have been for a long subject of controversy because of their ethnic self-identification as Turkish. Ethnic self-identification became major problem in Greece, while in the past Bulgaria

embarked three different assimilation processes aiming to change the ethnic consciousness of Pomaks. They are partially subject of this study in order to support part of the arguments regarding the effects of nationalism on the integration of minorities.

It seems that Europeanization efforts are partly overwhelmed by the historical facts. So it depends on the political conditionality and historical security perceptions of countries to implement European regulations and new minority rights standards. This argument is evaluated via implementation of the cross-border cooperation projects in the region, involving Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.

From the aspect of minority rights, EU negotiation process might be seen as a missed opportunity for the further liberalization of minority rights in Bulgaria. The European Commission and Bulgaria avoided the discussion of rights and situation of Turkish minority, which has been perceived as the most sensitive political issue.

As a country that did not pass through the same procedure as Bulgaria, Greece continued the treatment of minority in Western Thrace according to the regulations accepted by the Lausanne Treaty. Non-recognition of the ethnic Turkish character of the minority in Thrace followed with the systematic denial of the contemporary European regulations pertaining to the rights of minorities. This attitude automatically excluded the rights offered by the European Framework Convention for the Protection of Minorities.

Nevertheless, cross-border cooperation and its limits in the region have been tackled to give an insight on the impact of the European integration in regional development. Since minorities are concentrated in border regions, cross-border cooperation and its institutionalization have

been accepted as a criteria for the evaluation of the success of Europeanization process.

Apart from comparing minority rights standards in Bulgaria and Greece, this work analyses the hypothesis whether different political systems adopted by both countries resulted with some positive and/or negative changes in the conditions of minorities. It further claims that education and educational policies are the basis of coherent strategy for the integration of minorities.

Methodology

This work has been conducted on the grounds of multidisciplinary and cross disciplinary approach due to the complexity of the problems. Another approach that it develops is perceiving nationalism as a historical phenomenon rather than only contemporary one.

Policy analysis is the main method used in the whole work. However Sociological approach is also used in order to define minority problems. Methods of Social Anthropology are seen as a tool to explain the persistence of cultural traditions in minority groups of both states and the responses to the political and social phenomena. Legal methods are used to define the standards and availability of the protection mechanisms for minorities.

Greece and Bulgaria are two independent variables while the treatment of minorities is dependent variable. Meanwhile, in order to abstain from making abstract generalizations and too many theoretical descriptions, a case oriented strategy has been used where necessary and vice versa. Since case oriented strategy sometimes might have the tendency to focus

on many examples, it would be possible to use variable oriented strategy in order to give theoretical explanation to some cases.

Primary resources from Bulgarian state archives have been used in order to support the arguments. At the moment there are no documents available from the Greek State archives and therefore secondary resources like books, newspapers and some published documents are used. Bibliography consists widely from the secondary resources such as books, newspapers, journal articles, conference and seminar presentations in Bulgarian, English and Turkish languages.

Contribution

This dissertation has been prepared in order to contribute into the field of minority and area studies in Southeast Europe. It is unique work that examines the impact of nationalism on the rights of minorities, while tackling the historical struggle between nationalism and minority rights in Bulgaria and Greece. Moreover, evaluating the progress made during the European integration process, gives an additional opportunity to measure the impact of the Europeanization process per se.

Studying the progress of cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Greece, and in some parts including an analysis about Turkey, it is contributing into the literature by explaining some issues related with minorities living in border regions.

Another contribution of the present work is, following the line of multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approach, it aims to explain the complexities of the problems that are stemming from historical and social issues in both countries. Hence, the problems of minorities have been

evaluated in a way that would give different perspectives based on social, economic and political aspects.

There are many arguments also regarding the accommodation of minorities in communist and liberal democratic systems. This dissertation also evaluates the topic in order to show the weaknesses and strong points of both systems by offering an in-depth analysis on the daily life of minorities in Bulgaria and Greece. It could be a good example also to make comparison with today's migration problems in Europe and the integration of immigrant groups.

The Flow of the Work

First chapter has been designed to give a clear perspective how minorities emerged in Bulgaria and Greece, the way how nation states were created. It also emphasizes on the evolution of the international and European standards for the protection of minorities by discussing the struggle to find a universal definition for the term 'minority'. The wars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that occurred in the area generated the need to provide minority rights for people who were left within the national borders of new states. Therefore, the search of a common definition for minorities originated back then, when the famous advisory opinion of the PCIJ on Greco-Bulgarian Communities case was announced.

The second chapter deals with nationalism, and its evolution under the conditionality of different political systems in both countries. Deteriorating conditions of the Turkish/Muslim minorities, have been explained through the heavy presence of nationalism. Extraordinary conditions in Greece and measures that contradict with the basic principles of the Constitution, have been analyzed through different practices that took place in Western Thrace. The establishment of the communist regime in Bulgaria and the strategies

towards the integration of the Turkish minority are another topic of the chapter, where systematic assimilation and forced migration of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria is examined.

The third chapter aims to explain the reasons behind the change that brought some freedom to minorities. It provides an in-depth analysis on how social and political conditions in Bulgaria forced politicians to adopt more liberal minority rights policies. An additional focus has been made on the resilient character of nationalism that has been conceived as a factor limiting proper liberalization of minority rights in Bulgaria and Greece.

The content of the fourth chapter is about the progress of cross-border cooperation and its evolution in the Bulgarian-Greek border region. Due to minority groups living in the region, Turkey is partially included in this chapter as a kin-state, to give an overview how bilateral relations and history are defining the flow of cross-border cooperation between the neighboring countries.

Finally, the fifth chapter is comparing the progress of the integration of Turkish and Muslim minorities in both countries, by making certain references to the events that took place and affected the role of minority members. Bulgaria and Greece are compared with regards to their educational policies, measures of social inclusion, and political participation of minorities. Furthermore, the chapter addresses, in how far variations in these categories are stemming from the differences in communist and liberal democratic systems.

CHAPTER ONE

DEFINING MINORITIES IN BULGARIA AND GREECE AND THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF MINORITY RIGHTS

1.1. THE ERA OF MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL TREATIES: CREATING MINORITIES OUT OF NEW NATION STATES BULGARIA AND GREECE

It was not before the second half of nineteenth century, the issue of minority rights, which has been long time discussed, to take a legal form. At the time of conflicts and wars, Balkan states started to draw borders beyond their ethnic lines which did not make them exempt from the formation of minority rights systems. However, this system was imposed by the big powers as it was on the Ottoman Empire. Russia's Pan-Slavism policy started to give its results thanks to the support of the Orthodox Church- which was the protector of all Eastern Orthodox citizens of the Ottoman Empire. With the inclusion of the wars, in late nineteenth century, the "Eastern question" became one of the major issues of the European History. The independence of the Balkan states, and the expansion of their borders at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, raised concerns among the European powers, since the Russian influence in the Balkans was increasing rapidly. In short time, violent conflicts turned to a complicated diplomatic game of the "Eastern question"¹, where the balance between new powers was to be created through territorial regulations.

Deepening of segregation among the communities in the Balkans was taking place through a large scale armed conflicts, which were

¹ Mary Neuburger, *The Orient Within Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2004, p.34.

controlled by the elite circle of people in Bulgaria² and Greece. Mainly European powers were in charge of designing the nation building of new states in the Balkans. According to them the dominant position of the Orthodox church and its central role, was the key of success in this process.³ Balkan nations such as Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians had different languages but they were all unified under the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople. Situation of the villages in the Balkans was really mixed as any ethnic group was not able to form a majority in the area where it existed. Moreover, there was religious division even among the nations who spoke the same language like Bosnian Muslims speaking Serbian and Pomaks who speak a dialect of Bulgarian.

Bulgarians were praying together with Greeks and the prayer was conducted in Greek language. Among these ethnic tensions in the region, in the second half of the nineteenth century, Bulgarian Exarchate was created as a result of the *ferman** signed by the Sultan. This action gave the pave to more aggressive actions of nation building in the area. Greece became independent in 1830 occupying the Peloponnesus Peninsula and was in deep need to enlarge her territory towards north in order to protect herself from the Slavs and regain historical Greek lands. 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish war marked the change of the situation in the Balkans. For the first time in the history Turks were becoming a minority in the areas where they live as a result of the Ottoman withdrawal.

Newly established states in the Balkans were reluctant to offer certain rights for the religious or national minorities, since the acceptance of their presence would harm the nation building process.⁴ Creating such

² Ibid., p.34.

³ Paschalis M.Kitromilides (a), "Imagined Communities and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans", *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1989), p. 150.

* the name given to the order of the Sultan in Ottoman Empire.

⁴ Renee Hirschon, History's Long Shadow: Lausanne Treaty and Contemporary Greco-Turkish Relations, in: *In the Long Shadow of Europe: Greeks and Turks in the Era of Postnationalism*, (Eds.)

communities free of external intervention would lead to certain disorders by accepting their presence in the newly created states. Moreover, this would be contradictory with the idea of national homogeneity, which was the main motive of autonomy at first, and independence in a later stage. Both Greece and Bulgaria first started the formation of their national identity inside the Ottoman “millet system” and later on claimed certain territory with some autonomous features. However, after deepening their societal integration, these processes ended up with the formation of independent nation states-with some minority groups. Recognition of a certain minority group would *ipso facto* state that these countries are not homogenous. The main fear behind was the potential claims of these minorities which would lead to a secession, similar to the one from the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, minority rights were ignored and massive migration of Turks from the Balkans took place in nineteenth century. When the size of the population was large and difficult to manage, recognition of certain rights for minorities was imposed on the new nation states in the Balkans. The Treaty of Berlin from 1878 is important, being the first multilateral Treaty signed on the rights of minorities.

1.1.1. 1878 Berlin Treaty: Imposing Minority Protection on Bulgaria

After the Russo-Turkish war, the greatest concern was the new balance in the Balkan Peninsula. Russia forced Ottomans to sign the San Stefano Treaty which had very harsh conditions for the Ottoman State. San Stefano Treaty was dealing with the new situation of the borders, but there was no single provision for the rights of minorities/communities to be found. Since Russian claims for starting the war were based on the rights of the Bulgarian Orthodox minority, it was considered weird not including regulations for the rights of the Turkish/Muslim minority remained within Bulgarian borders as a result of this war. Creation of “Great Bulgaria”

Othon Anastasakis, Kalypso Nikolaidis, Kerem Oktem, Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009, p. 80.

according to the San Stefano Treaty, resulted with the opposition of the European Powers, with Great Britain ahead. Although, in the first instance, British interference was justified with the lack of the minority regulations in San Stefano Treaty⁵, the main motive was the creation of Great Bulgaria reaching three seas. There was no country in Europe willing to see a strong Slavic state, satellite of Russia in the region. Therefore they urged for a new treaty to be signed, and gathered together at the Berlin Conference. The Treaty of Berlin signed in 1878, was much different than the Treaty of San Stefano. First, it reduced the size of the Great Bulgaria, and created an autonomous Bulgarian principality under the control of the Sultan. The Treaty of Berlin signed between Germany, Austria, Hungary, France, Great Britain, Italy, Russia and Turkey, prohibited discrimination on religious grounds in Bulgaria. Moreover, recognition of the newly established Balkan states was conditional on their adherence to the non-discrimination principle on the grounds of religion. Article 5 of the Treaty, dealing with the recognition of Bulgaria, states the following requirements:

*The difference of religious, creeds and confessions shall not be alleged against any person as a ground for exclusion or incapacity in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil and political rights, admission to public employment, functions and honours, or the exercise of the various professions and industries in any locality whatsoever. The freedom and outward exercise of all forms of worship shall be assured to all persons belonging to the State, as well as to foreigners, and no hindrance shall be offered either to the hierarchical organization of the different communities, or to their relations with their spiritual chiefs.*⁶

⁵ The Treaty of Berlin and the Convention of Constantinople , Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, Westminster, 1878.

⁶ Francesco Capotorti, *Study on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*, New York, United Nations, 1991, p. 3; and *The Treaty of Berlin and the Convention of Constantinople*, p. 9.

As it can be understood from the Article above, non-discrimination covers a wide range of social and political issues, mainly focusing on the religious diversity of the citizens of newly established Bulgarian State. After signing the Treaty of Berlin, new task for Bulgaria was to make this regulations part of her internal legislation via Tarnovo Constitution. Tarnovo Constitution, with the article 37, accepted in 1879, was the first Constitution of Bulgaria indicating the Eastern Orthodoxy as the official religion of the country. Meanwhile, Article 38 was regulating the religious orientation of the Bulgarian Prince, stating clearly that the Prince of Bulgaria, as a Head of State must be a follower of the Orthodox faith. The only exception of this rule, was the religious orientation of the first Prince of Bulgaria, who was allowed to be from a different religious background, but his successors were strictly obliged to be followers of the Bulgarian Orthodox faith.⁷ This situation can show the importance of the Orthodox religion in Bulgarian national identity. Respectively Articles 41 and 42 regulate the worship of Bulgarian citizens and foreigners of non-Orthodox Christian faith, stating that they are free to practice their religion in Bulgaria. Another aspect of the Article 42 was defining the autonomous status of other religions in Bulgaria.

Nevertheless, the Treaty of Berlin had also another regulation on the rights of ethnic minorities. Article 4 of the Treaty stated the following:

*In the districts where Bulgarians are intermixed with Turkish, Romanian, Greek and other populations, the rights and interests of these populations shall be taken into consideration as regards the elections and the drawing up of the organic law.*⁸

This issue of ethnic minorities was also regulated in the Tarnovo Constitution, as minorities from non-Bulgarian origin were named as

⁷ Full text of the Tarnovo Constitution in old Bulgarian version see here: http://www.kingsimeon.bg/downloads/Turnovska_Konstitucia.pdf (access: 11.11.2012).

⁸ Francesco Capotorti, p. 3.

“Bulgarian citizens from foreign background”. These two articles, regulated the very first principles of the minority rights protection in Bulgaria and gave a better status to the Tarnovo Constitution. With being aware that the recognition of the independence is conditional on the adoption of minority protection rules, Bulgarian officials started to defend the idea that the newly created state, is not aimed to be the home of only Christian Bulgarians, but they wholeheartedly indicated that, Bulgaria is home to all people living in her territory. This is how Bulgarian minority protection started from the establishment of the new Principality.

Together with the Treaty of Berlin, there was also another document signed between the great powers Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, France, Great Britain, Russia and Turkey. Concluded between aforementioned states, the International Convention of Constantinople from 1881, regulated the rights of the Muslims left within Greek territories. Article 8 of the Convention stated the rights of the Muslim community as follows:

Freedom and the outward exercise of worship shall be assured to Mohammedans(Muslims) living in the territories ceded to Greece. There shall be no interference with the independence and hierarchical organization of the Mohammedan communities at present existing, or which may be formed, nor with the management of the funds and buildings appertaining to them. No hindrance shall be offered to the relations of such communities with their spiritual chiefs on religious matters.⁹

In terms of civil and political rights, Greek side, accepted the equal treatment of minority members with the rest of Greek citizens. As it can be seen from the Article mentioned above, the organization of the minorities was mainly based on religious division and their rights were normally

⁹ Francesco Capotorti, p. 3.

guaranteed through multilateral conventions or treaties. With the Convention of Constantinople in 1881, Mufti was formed as an official institution dealing with the organization of religious and social life of the Muslim minority in Greece. This is how, by enlarging her territory northwards, Greece started to be bound with minority regulations after her independence in 1830. The issue which was becoming more important was the ethnic division of the so-called religious minority. This problem was waiting for its turn in political life of the new nation states in the Balkans.

1.1.2. Balkan Wars in 1912-1913: Towards More Solid Borders and Minority Rights Regime

After having created their national states, Bulgaria and Greece started to plan new actions in order to enlarge their territories at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. However, this time the main reason for the expansion was the strategic importance of the so-called lands which were still under the Ottoman rule. In order to justify their demands for more lands they started to publish statistic data about the composition of Balkan population. Usually they were using the Ottoman statistic data in order to prove their claims, but population records were distorted on papers to serve the propaganda for further extension of borders¹⁰ of newly independent nation states in the Balkan. Division of the Ottoman millet system was based on religious ground and not on ethnicity. But often the statistics issued by Bulgaria and Greece and referred to the Ottoman census records, were showing the ethnic or linguistic origin of the people living in the concerned areas. This was one of the proofs how statistics was used to justify territorial claims. The idea behind this philosophy was simple: after defining the borders of new nation states, Greece and Bulgaria, the next stage was to deal with people living there. They were either be accepted as co-nationals or excluded as

¹⁰ Justin McCarthy, "Muslims in Ottoman Europe: Population From 1800 to 1912", *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 28, No. 1. (2000), p. 29.

foreigners.¹¹ As a result of this, geographical division of the borders, was to be completed with the mental or imagined divisions.

Serbia, Montenegro, Greece and Bulgaria agreed to launch a war against the Ottomans in order to enlarge their borders. As a result of the First Balkan War, which took place in 1912, Bulgaria managed to get access to the Aegean sea by occupying Western Thrace and Greece managed to conquest Thessaloniki. This change of the borders affected mostly the Turkish communities since these areas were mainly settled by them.¹² Massive migrations started towards Turkey, which caused destruction of the Muslim population in the Balkans as a result of starvation, diseases and massacres conducted by the irregular Bulgarian and Greek groups.

Meanwhile, between the allies of the First Balkan War, there was a disagreement regarding the share obtained from the Ottoman territories. Mainly Greece and Serbia were not satisfied with what they have obtained from the war and therefore declared war against Bulgaria. Ottoman Empire used the same opportunity in order to get back Edirne from Bulgarians. As a result of the Second Balkan War in 1913, peace treaties have been signed with Bulgaria and Greece in order to secure the rights of the Turks and Muslim subjects remaining out of the Ottoman borders.

Treaty of Peace between Bulgaria and Turkey signed at Istanbul, September 30, 1913, offered certain rights to the Muslim population who stayed in Bulgaria. Article 8 of the Treaty, states that "Muslim subjects of Bulgaria" shall enjoy the same social and political rights as citizens from Bulgarian origin. Freedom of religion and its distinct character has been preserved. Moreover, for the first time, it is indicated that "The name of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan as Caliph, shall continue to be pronounced in

¹¹ Mary Neuburger, p. 13.

¹² W. L. G. Joerg, "The New Borders of the Balkan States and Their Significance", *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, Vol. 45, No. 11. (1913), p. 827-829.

the public prayers of Muslims”.¹³ This article is very important to see the role of the Caliph and its influence on the Turkish/Muslim population in Bulgaria. The election of Mufti, who is the religious leader of the Muslim community in Bulgaria, is agreed to be done by the direct election of the Bulgarian Muslims. After the Balkan Wars, the rights of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria were regulated more detailed, indicating clearly, social, political and religious aspects of their daily life.

Second Balkan War had also different effect on the Muslims left within Greek borders. The Treaty of Peace Between Turkey and Greece was signed at Athens, November 11, 1913. According to the Peace Treaty of Athens, Muslims who reside in the territories which became Greek with the recent wars, were given the right to choose their citizenship, to stay in Greece or to emigrate to Turkey. The immunity of property rights of the Muslims who became Greek subjects was confirmed. Regarding the religious life, similar to the Treaty signed with Bulgaria, the Treaty of Athens indicates that, civil and political rights of the Muslims are assured as well as their equal treatment with citizens from Greek origin. Pronouncing the name of the Sultan as Caliph, during the public prayers of the Muslims has been accepted by the Greek side. Muslims are given the right and autonomy in terms of their religious regulations. But the most important article is the one that deals with the election of Mufti as religious leader of Muslim community. According to Article 11 of the Peace Treaty of Athens, it is explicitly stated that, “*the Muftis, each within his own community, shall be elected by Muslim electors*”.¹⁴ This last phrase is significant to the organization of the religious life in Greece, since Mufti’s are able to exercise also some legal acts which are officially recognized by Greek authorities.

¹³ Treaty of Peace Between Bulgaria and Turkey, Istanbul, 30 September 1913.

¹⁴ The Treaty of Peace Between Turkey and Greece, November 11, 1913, Article 11.

1.1.3. 1919 Neuilly Treaty

After the end of the First World War, Bulgaria had to sign Neuilly Peace Treaty as a defeated country. Bulgaria entered in to the War in order to complete her territorial claims toward south, west and north. However, being a defeated country had very bad consequences for Bulgaria. Bulgaria lost Western Thrace, her exit to the Aegean Sea. But more important were the tough conditions of a Peace Treaty which was punishment of Bulgaria's national and territorial aspirations. Neuilly Treaty, signed in 1919, not only had regulations on the new borders of Bulgaria, but also for the rights of minorities. Fourth part of the Neuilly Treaty, including the Articles from 49 to 57, was dedicated to minority rights in Bulgaria. With the Article 49, superiority of Neuilly Peace Treaty regulations, pertaining to the rights of minorities in Bulgaria is assured. Bulgarian part accepts that no official action or amendment shall be in conflict with the principles indicated on the Treaty. Bulgaria accepts the equal treatment of her citizens, and prohibits discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion and language. The freedom of religion is guaranteed for all Bulgarian nationals.¹⁵

The Peace Treaty of Neuilly had more conditions beyond offering equal treatment to the minorities in Bulgaria. For the first time in Bulgarian history, Muslim/Turkish minority has had distinct rights in terms of schooling, language issue and separate religious organization, which before was regulated with the Treaty of Berlin. Restrictions of using another language than the Bulgarian in public, private, religious worship, schooling or for publication purposes are prohibited. Defense at courts in mother tongue, other than Bulgarian has been secured with the Neuilly Treaty. Moreover, Bulgarian nationals from different religious and language backgrounds are granted the right to open and manage their own educational establishments

¹⁵ Treaty of Peace Between the Allied and Associated Powers and Bulgaria, and Protocol and Declaration signed at Neuilly-sur-Seine, 27 November 1919, Section IV, Minority Protection.

at their own expense, where they can work and study in their mother tongue. It is stated that, the right to have teaching in mother tongue does not prevent authorities from making obligatory learning Bulgarian at schools.¹⁶ It can be said that the Neuilly Treaty was creating very liberal system for the Turkish minority in Bulgaria as Turks were the only minority to benefit from such regulations. Nevertheless, the flow of the political developments in Bulgaria would turn this to a struggle, resulting with the denial of the rights of Turkish minority.

1.1.4. 1923 Lausanne Treaty and the Recognition of Muslim/Turkish Minority in Greece (Western Thrace)

The end of the First World War, changed the situation of Muslim minorities in Greece very deeply. First, the Treaty of Sèvres was signed by the Ottoman Empire in August 1920, which due to its harsh conditions was not accepted by the National Grand Assembly in Ankara and by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Second reason was the Greek campaign to occupy Izmir and western Turkey. However, when the Greek troops were forced to withdraw from Turkish lands, new Treaty with more acceptable conditions was signed as a result of Lausanne Conference held in 1923.

The Treaty of Peace with Turkey signed at Lausanne, July 24, 1923 put an official end to the war between allied powers and Turkey. Apart from recognizing the existence of new Turkish Republic, Lausanne Treaty made some regulations on the rights of non-Muslim minorities in Turkey, which were applicable for the Muslim minorities in Greece. Section 3 of the Lausanne Treaty, including articles from 37 to 45, deals with the protection of minorities in Greece and Turkey. According to Lausanne Treaty, the rights of the Muslim/Turkish Minority in Greece are indicated as follows:

¹⁶ Ibid., Articles 53-55.

- Greece accepts that, her future legal regulations and actions shall not be in conflict or interfere with the stipulations of Lausanne Treaty (Article 37).
- The Greek Government undertakes to assure protection of all inhabitants regardless of their nationality, language, race or religion. All inhabitants of Greece shall enjoy free exercise of their religion either in public or private (Article 38).
- Greek nationals from non-Greek origin are entitled to the same civil and political rights as the citizens from Greek origin. All inhabitants of Greece, regardless of religious orientation, shall be equal before law. There should not be any discrimination as to admission to public employments, functions and honours, or the exercise of professions and industries. Restrictions on use of another language other than Greek, in private, public, in the press are prohibited (Article 39).
- Muslim minorities of Greece shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law. Additionally, they shall have the right to establish and manage at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions and schools with the right to use their own language and to freely practice their religion.
- In places where considerable proportion of minority population lives, Greek Government shall provide initial assistance that primary education is offered to children in their mother tongue. However, this does not prevent the Greek Government from making the teaching of Greek language obligatory. In addition to this, it is stated in the Lausanne Treaty that in towns and districts where there is a significant number of minority members, they shall be provided with public funding from the State in order to conduct their educational, religious and charitable activities (Article 41).
- The Greek Government is under obligation to ensure the protection of mosques, cemeteries, and other religious establishments of the

Muslim minorities in Greece (Article 42).¹⁷

In fact articles which are briefly indicated above are valid in the same way for the non-Muslim minorities in Turkey. Hereby with the Article 45, Greek Government, accepts to be bound with the minority regulations of the Lausanne Treaty regarding the Muslim minority in her territory. Regarding the territorial scope of minority rights in Greece there is no certain limit indicated in the section of minority rights of the Lausanne Treaty. However, Greek Governments limited the use of minority rights and regulations accepted at Lausanne only with Western Thrace. Main reason for this might be signing the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations at Lausanne, January 30, 1923. This case will be examined below in line with the situation of Lausanne Treaty. Although the issue at the time of the conference was not focusing so much on the territorial scope of rights, there were certain doubts about the situation of Muslim properties in Greece. As a result of the discussions made at Lausanne, "Declaration Relating to Moslem Properties in Greece" was signed by the Greek representative Eleftherios Venizelos.¹⁸ According to this declaration, Greek Government declares that, there shall be no infringement of rights to property held by Muslims in Greece who left Greece before 1912 and were not subject of the population exchange agreement signed at Lausanne. But up until now, there is no certain information on how many people were allowed to go back to Greece in order to deal with the property left before 1912.

¹⁷ Treaty of Peace with Turkey Signed at Lausanne, July 24, 1923.

¹⁸ http://www.mfa.gov.tr/ix_-declaration-relating-to-moslem-properties-in-greece.en.mfa (access: 15.11.2012)

1.2. POPULATION EXCHANGE AS A METHOD TO PREVENT MINORITY ISSUES

The very first idea of a population exchange emerged as a result of the Balkan Wars and the First World War, which have concluded not only with territorial changes, but also with the massive migration waves. In fact, years before the First World War, newly independent states in the Balkans, under the effect of their glorified historical accomplishments, tried to recreate their national states on the European part of Ottoman Empire. However, such kind of process made it necessary the confrontation not only against Muslims, but also between Orthodox Christians. Ottoman “millet system” was based on a religious division. Therefore Orthodox Christians were accepted as one group, and the Orthodox Church was responsible for the safeguarding of community. After the French Revolution, the national groups started to be defined by common race, culture and language which was embedded in the national consciousness of the Balkan nations.¹⁹ First effect of the segregation showed itself not with the territorial independence, but with the division of Orthodox Churches. Bulgarians were conducting the worship in Greek together with Greeks at the Greek Orthodox Church. This situation started to change after the Greek independence in 1830. Gradually, the request for creation of an independent Bulgarian Orthodox Church was intensified. This nationalization of the church/religion became official with the “ferman” (irade-imperial order) of the Sultan on 28 February 1870, as a result of which Bulgarian Exarchate was created.

Preservation of the collective Christian identity was the task of the Orthodox Church in the Balkans during the Ottoman rule. However, with the time passed this non-national profile of the Church has changed. Discourse of the religious belonging was politicized by nationalism²⁰, which was the

¹⁹ A. Triandafyllidou & A. Paraskevopoulou, “When is the Greek Nation? The Role of Enemies and Minorities”, *Geopolitics*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2002), p. 79.

²⁰ Paschalis M. Kitromilides (a), p. 178.

reason for deeper segregations and led to national Orthodox Churches, being perceived as pillars of new national identities in the Balkans. Ecumenical character of the Orthodoxy was abandoned and culminated in to perception of a direct link between Orthodoxy and national belonging. Balkan Wars were the first direct confrontation of these newly created national identities, where political side of the construction was reshaped. Balkan Wars were also important to underline the significance of territorial belonging, while kin communities left on the other side of the border were considered as potential areas to expand in the future, embedding irredentist incentives in the idea of national belonging.

Maltreatment of minority groups were perceived as causes of new wars and there was an effort to prevent this by making minority treaties, through which the rights of minority groups would be guaranteed. Minority treaties, as a method to protect the rights of people belonging to racial, ethnic and religious groups²¹ was used until the beginning of First World War. The fact that Greek identity was defined with common kinship based on race, religion and culture, and embedded with the idea to liberate lands where other Greek people live, created an irredentist movement in the Southeast Europe. Bulgaria started to follow the same model, and both countries did not hesitate to fight with each other in order to realize their national goals. Despite this Greek irredentist movement, emblazoned with the ideas of Hellenism looked like directly threatening Turkey, Bulgaria also perceived a threat due to her expansionist aims. This policy itself was the reason of the tendency to see minorities as fifth column and to get rid of them in order to prevent further irredentist movements.

In line with the developments above, after the First World War first population exchange agreements were signed between Bulgaria and

²¹ Richard B. Bilder, Can Minorities Treaties Work?, in: *The Protection of Minorities and Human Rights*, Ed. Yoram Dinstein, and Mala Tabory, Dordrecht, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1992, p. 59-60.

Greece, Turkey and Greece in order to put an end of further territorial expansions. Despite there is a tendency to see the Greek-Turkish population exchange as first of its kind in the modern history of Europe, in reality, Bulgarian-Greek population exchange signed in 1919 as a convention attached to Neuilly Treaty, is the first agreement in Europe regarding the mutual emigration of minorities. Greek-Turkish population exchange is the second one signed as a convention attached to Lausanne Peace Treaty in January 1923. The only difference between the two conventions involving reciprocal emigration and mutual exchange is the type of migration. In the Bulgarian-Greek case, emigration of minorities was of voluntary character, and in the Greek-Turkish case it was compulsory for everyone except the Greeks in Istanbul and Turkish/Muslim minority in Western Thrace.²² However, after Greece's Asia Minor catastrophe, emigration of Bulgarians in Greece took compulsory form due to the immigration of Greeks from Turkey. Attempts to create additional minority treaties for those who opted to remain in Bulgaria and Greece failed, which dramatically changed the population structure and social movement in the Bulgarian-Greek borderland. Consequently, after the wars in order to expand borders, population exchange has been accepted as the last solution to prevent irredentist movements in the area. In fact the idea to transfer populations was a methodology imposed by the nationalist movements of newly established Balkan states, as a result of which, the idea of a nation state to create homogeneous nations was to be realized through the international law.²³ It became a general tendency of nation states Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey to clear up the ethnic composition of populations by migration, in order to prevent wars and future border changes.

²² A. A. Pallis, "Racial Migrations in the Balkans during the Years 1912-1924", *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (Oct., 1925), p. 319.

²³ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (a), Exchange of Population: A Paradigm of Legal Perversion, in: *The Protection of National Minorities by Their Kin-State*, European Commission for Democracy Through Law, Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing, 2002, p. 135.

The Bulgarian-Greek reciprocal migration process was subject to many discussions regarding the scope of migration and its effect on the property rights of people who emigrated. Convention for the reciprocal emigration signed in 1919 between Bulgaria and Greece, was the first population exchange implemented by the League of Nations. Suddenly this process had led to a litigation at the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) which resulted with the famous “community definition”, reflecting formation of minority identities in the area at that time. In the Turkish-Greek migration case the main issue to solve was the meaning of the term “*établis*” (settled) in order to find out who was exempted from the provisions of the Convention for the Exchange of Greek and Turkish populations. Both cases will be analyzed below in detail.

1.2.1. Bulgarian-Greek Convention for Reciprocal Emigration

For strategic reasons Bulgaria aimed to have an exit to the Aegean Sea. Initial unification with Eastern Rumelia gave the opportunity to Bulgaria, to pursue her goals for further expansion of the borders. First and Second Balkan Wars were very important to realize this aim, and as a result of both wars, Bulgaria secured an access to the Aegean Sea with the annexation of Western Thrace, where significant Bulgarian population was living. But the result of the First World War changed everything dramatically. First, Bulgaria lost the war and had to sign Neuilly Peace Treaty, and the control of Western Thrace was ceded to the Principal Allied and Associated Powers. In 1920, with the Treaty concerning Thrace, signed in Sèvres, Principal Allied and Associated Powers ceded the area to Greece, which effectively became Greek territory in 1924 after the ratification of Treaty by Greece.²⁴ Second, attached to the Neuilly Peace Treaty, a Convention for the Reciprocal

²⁴ Stephen P. Ladas, *Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1932, p. 44.

Emigration between Bulgaria and Greece was signed regarding the voluntary emigration of national minorities.

First article of the Convention for Reciprocal Emigration recognized the right for emigration of those people who belong to racial, religious and linguistic minorities of the respective states, Bulgaria and Greece.²⁵ But the issue to divide and define the people who are covered with the provisions of the convention, turned to be a really problematic one. Living for centuries together, Bulgarians and Greeks were mixed, having many things in common. It was difficult to define the real target of the convention, based on the indicators such as race and language. At the time when the Convention was signed, race was used to indicate the cultural and ethnic peculiarities of people. During the Ottoman rule in the area, villages and settlements were all mixed in a way that single ethnicity was not dominant in one place. Despite this fact, people from different ethnic background, who lived together for long time, were talking the more important language in the area. Therefore, there were cases in some rural areas, where people from Bulgarian background were going to the Bulgarian Church for worship but speaking in Greek. Same was valid for Greeks in Macedonia and some other areas where Bulgarian was perceived as important language.²⁶

However, during the second half of nineteenth century, there was a segregation between the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul and the supporters of a separate Bulgarian Orthodox Church. In 1870, after the creation of Bulgarian Exarchate in Istanbul, religious affiliation of the followers of Orthodox religion in both countries changed also on national grounds, which made the distinction more clear.²⁷ Following this process, membership to both national churches-Bulgarian and Greek, turned to be an

²⁵ Convention for the Reciprocal Emigration Between Bulgaria and Greece, signed at November 27th, 1919, Article 1.

²⁶ Stephen P. Ladas, p. 77-79.

²⁷ Stephen P. Ladas, p. 78.

indicator of national affiliation as well. Therefore, religion was the most efficient way to make distinction between Greeks and Bulgarians.

After having clarified the borders of Greek state and eligible people based on race, language and religion, the next stage of the work was to implement the provisions of the Convention for Reciprocal Emigration. Since provisions of emigration stipulated under the Convention were voluntary, applications for emigration were really limited. Meanwhile, Bulgaria was reluctant to apply the provisions of the Convention, and attempted to preserve the existence of Bulgarian population in Greece, mainly in regions like Macedonia and Western Thrace.²⁸ Bulgaria was planning that large number of Bulgarians concentrated in Greek territory, would support her claims for the revision of territorial changes made in Neuilly Treaty, which would help to accomplish her irredentist aims. On the other side, Greece, tried to encourage such migrations in order to strengthen her sovereignty in the newly acquired territories. The influx of Greek people into Macedonia and Western Thrace would help the country to change the demography in the areas which were newly annexed to Greece.

Mixed Commission was created in 1920 which was in charge to manage the migration process between both countries and to collect the declarations of migration. But first declarations were collected in 1922, two years after its creation. By June 1923, 197 declarations of Greek families in Bulgaria, and 166 of Bulgarian families in Greece were registered.²⁹ Still Bulgarian part was more in favor to offer minority protection to Greeks who are staying in Bulgaria, and to ensure reciprocally the same rights for the Bulgarian minority in Greece. But the existence of minorities was perceived as a threat by the Greek part. This threat apprehension had its external and internal justifications for the Greek Government at the time. First, tolerant

²⁸ Theodora Dragostinova (a), "Navigating Nationality in the Emigration of Minorities between Bulgaria and Greece, 1919-1941", *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 23(2009), p. 186.

²⁹ Stephen P. Ladas, p. 104-105.

policies of the Agrarian Union and the Government of Stamboliyski towards the Greek minority in Bulgaria³⁰ were not welcomed by the Greek Government, as this was simply interpreted as potential for a voluntary assimilation of the Greek population in the future. Privileged economic and intellectual status of the Greek minority in some cities like Plovdiv and Burgas, and the existence of mixed marriages between Greeks and Bulgarians³¹, were considered among the other motives to ease the voluntary assimilation process of the Greek minority in Bulgaria.

Second aspect of the Greek approach was shaped along the lines of national security and strengthening the Greek component in recently acquired lands Macedonia and Western Thrace. Strong presence of Bulgarians in these areas was accepted as a threat to the future of Greek sovereignty in the region. Creation of a nation state took a form which could not tolerate anymore presence of a minority. Initially, the attempts to create minority rights mechanism in both countries failed. Representatives of Greece and Bulgaria, Politis and Kalfoff signed two protocols to set up a legal minority protection. However, they never came into force, as the Greek National Assembly rejected both documents.³² Despite some arguments that Greece was the only country in favor to set up minority protection³³, it is obvious that, on the other side, support for reciprocal emigration was bigger.

Bulgarian minority living on the border with Bulgaria became the first target of the migration wave. As a result of small scale conflicts created through the organized cooperation between the Greek Government and Greek Orthodox Church, Bulgarians living in border areas started to emigrate.³⁴ Suddenly their move forced also Greeks living in Bulgarian lands to emigrate to Greece. There were disorders and violation of the voluntary

³⁰ Theodora Dragostinova (b), *Between Two Motherlands: Nationality and Emigration Among the Greeks of Bulgaria, 1900-1949*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2011, p. 131.

³¹ Theodora Dragostinova (b), p. 124.

³² Konstantinos Tsitselikis (a), p. 137.

³³ Stephen P. Ladas, p. 28.

³⁴ Theodora Dragostinova (b), p. 113.

principle of the migration process itself. Meanwhile, formation of nation state created deeper segregations among the members of community, which imposed on them the choice of certain ethnic identity and their country of citizenship. This conflict started to escalate after the Greece's Asia Minor disaster*, when Greeks started to emigrate from Turkey. They were seen as "potential colonizers" for the new Greek territories like Macedonia and Western Thrace where Hellenic component was weak.

Emigration of people in both countries created the problem with property ownership which was really challenging for the Mixed Commission. Cases with Bulgarian refugees who had to leave Greek lands after 1906 became really problematic with the inflow of the Greeks coming from Turkey. Because Bulgarian refugees who left Greece earlier without being able to liquidate their properties. According to the Convention for Reciprocal Emigration, those who left Greece earlier, were given the opportunity to return, or to retain property rights in Greece. However, migration of Greeks from Asia Minor made the issue really complex one. Most of them settled in the abandoned Bulgarian houses or started to use their properties which made impossible the return of Bulgarian refugees. Moreover it was perceived as threat to keep the property ownership rights in Greece with the Bulgarian citizenship.³⁵ Extending migration was perceived as the only way to solve the issue regarding property and minority rights. Removing mixed ethnic groups was accepted as the main solution to prevent the irredentist claims, since the existence of minorities *per se* and granting them special rights was unacceptable for the new nation states, which were still in the process of nation building.

Failure to ensure minority rights to the Bulgarians in Greece and Greeks in Bulgaria, resulted with the escalation of the reciprocal emigration.

* *Asia Minor Disaster* is the name Greeks use for the defeat of the Greek Army in 1922 in the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922) and the subsequent expulsion of Greek presence from Asia Minor

³⁵ Stephen P. Ladas, p. 92.

As a result of this process, Convention for the Reciprocal Emigration, which was regulating only voluntary emigration, but when all the process became deliberately forced, there was nothing left to do except property liquidation for the emigrants in both parts. In the end of this period, it is estimated* that, 46.000 Greeks left Bulgaria for Greece and 92.000 Bulgarians moved from Greece to Bulgaria.³⁶

1.2.2. The Importance of the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange

The end of the First World War did not bring the peace itself to Turkey. Soon after the ceasefire Turkey was occupied by the allied powers. However, then most important aspect of this occupation was done by Greece. Greek troops came to Izmir in May 1919 and started to expand their control over central Anatolia. In fact this move was backed by the British Empire both logistically and politically. When Brits had to withdraw from Anatolia and occupied parts of Istanbul, their hopes were to be realized by Greeks. After the end of the First World War, British policy towards Near East was directed by group of people who were under the effect of "Philhellenism".³⁷ This idea to recreate ancient Greece along Byzantine traditions, incorporating romanticism, gave the last shape to the idea of Neo-Hellenism, which had many supporters among the British politicians. Existence of "Greater Greece" as close British ally in the region, was perceived as the only solution to secure the British influence in this area for long term.

* Unfortunately not all people were able to follow the process through Mixed Commission created. Escalation of the migration wave was not a peaceful process, contrary, it was a process involving violent actions to force people leave their homeland. This was the case for Bulgarians living in the border areas of Greece, and Greek communities living in central and Black Sea regions of Bulgaria.

³⁶ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (a), p. 137.

³⁷ Erik Goldstein, "Great Britain and Greater Greece 1917-1920", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 2. (1989), p. 339.

Turkish denial of harsh conditions of the Sèvres Treaty, and opposition towards Greek occupation, changed political situation in the region dramatically. First, with the Greek occupation of Western Anatolia, it became obvious that Greeks are continuing their irredentist aims and will do so in the future until they form Greater Greece. Second, collaboration between local Greek population and Greek occupation forces, created distrust between Turks and Greeks.

After the defeat of Greece in 1922 in Western Anatolia, Greek troops left Izmir. With the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey started to negotiate new conditions for the peace treaty to be signed at Lausanne. However, before the conditions of permanent peace were decided, separate Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations was signed at Lausanne, January 30, 1923.

According to the VI. Convention signed at Lausanne, compulsory exchange of Muslim population in Greece and Greek population in Turkey was agreed by Turkey and Greece.³⁸ Meanwhile, there were some exceptions regarding the compulsory exchange of minorities: according to Article 2 of the Convention, Greek inhabitants of Istanbul and Muslim inhabitants of Western Thrace were exempt from the provisions of the Convention. Greco-Turkish Convention for population exchange was different from the Greco-Bulgarian one, as migration of minorities was compulsory in the first case and voluntary in the second one.³⁹ However, due to internal conditions of the Greek social and political life, voluntary character of the migration in Greco-Bulgarian Convention, changed to the compulsory one as a result of some violent events, which took place mainly in regions like Macedonia and Thrace. With the massive influx of Greek refugees from Turkey, Bulgarian minority in Greece was forced to emigrate.

³⁸ Lausanne Peace Treaty VI. Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations Signed at Lausanne, January 30, 1923, Article 1.

³⁹ A. A. Pallis, p. 319.

The exchange of the populations in both sides was based on religious orientation according to the Article 1 of the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations. However, there were significant problems that arose, when the eligible ones were to be designated. Terms like “Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion” and “Greek nationals of Muslim religion” turned to be very vague to detect the target group along the Ottoman ethnic mixture. Existence of Muslim Albanians in Greece and Armenians, Syrians, Russians, Romanians of the Greek Orthodox faith became a real question while managing the migration process.⁴⁰ Turkish and Greek delegations agreed to exempt Albanian Muslims from the exchange, after a discussion of the case with the Mixed Commission. Nevertheless, when it came to define the eligibility of the different ethnic subjects whose religious orientation was perceived to be the Greek Orthodox Church, Mixed Commission decided to follow a different pattern. In its decision on 31 May 1927, Mixed Commission stated clearly that, Article 1 of the Convention pertaining to the criteria of “Greek Orthodox religion” is not applicable to all Eastern Orthodox Religions.⁴¹ In order to justify this decision, Commission referred to the national divisions which occurred during the nineteenth century from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Istanbul like Greek Orthodox Church, Bulgarian Orthodox Church etc.

In fact this was quite correct when referring to the very nature of the exchange of populations, since Turkey wanted to discard mainly the Greek population and prevent Greek irredentism. Therefore, target group was not the followers of certain belief, but mainly ethnic Greeks. In the Greek side, Asia Minor Disaster had really big impact on the social and political life. It marked the end of the ideal to reestablish the Hellenic State which might

⁴⁰ Stephen P. Ladas, p. 378.

⁴¹ Stephen P. Ladas, p. 382.

incorporate Istanbul and Western Anatolia, where traditional Greek population was living.⁴²

When migration started, soon first written complaints were forwarded to the Mixed Commission. Turkish delegation was complaining from the fact that properties of the Turkish/Muslim minority in Western Thrace were seized by the Greek Government for the purposes to accommodate Greek refugees coming from Asia Minor. By the year of 1924, 8245 rooms in rural houses and 5590 rooms in urban houses were occupied by Greek refugees coming from Turkey. In addition to this 127 mosques and Muslim schools, 667 stables and granaries belonging to Muslims were seized to accommodate Greek refugees.⁴³ Simply, Greek Government had a great difficulty to accommodate all refugees and therefore decided to use Western Thrace as first step before they were sent to their final destination Macedonia in order to increase Greek presence there. To achieve this aim they had to wait the area to be cleaned from Muslims who were to leave for Turkey, and force the Bulgarian minority to leave the country as part of Greco-Bulgarian Convention for Reciprocal Emigration.

Lausanne Peace Treaty ended the conflict between Greece and Turkey. As part of the compulsory population exchange, 1,300,000 Orthodox Greeks left Anatolia for Greece and 500,000 Greek Muslims migrated from Greece to Turkey.⁴⁴ Migration of kin minority groups, was certainly perceived as a tool to strengthen “national character” of these newly established nation states by creating more homogenous populations. For Turkey, this was realized by getting rid of Greek irredentist presence, while for Greece it was in the form of settlement of newly acquired territories by ethnic Greeks coming mainly from Anatolia and Bulgaria.

⁴² Onur Yildirim, “The 1923 Populations Exchange, Refugees and National Historiographies in Greece and Turkey”, *East European Quarterly*, XL, No. 1(2006), p.45.

⁴³ Stephen P. Ladas, p. 478.

⁴⁴ Nora Fisher Onar & Meriç Özgüneş, “How Deep a Transformation? Europeanization of Greek and Turkish Minority Policies”, *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, Vol. 17(2010), p. 113.

1.2.3. League of Nations as an International Actor to Manage Minority Rights and Exchange of Minorities between Bulgaria-Greece and Greece-Turkey

League of Nations was created as a result of the Paris Peace Conference after the First World War. The main goal of its creation was to solve disputes between states without violence. Apart from this it was considered to be an organization where states, were discussing problems created with the harsh conditions of Peace Treaties that ended the War. Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) was created as an organization attached to the League of Nations, where binding decisions or advisory opinions on international issues were given to countries which submitted requests.

Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey often applied to the PCIJ in order to solve misunderstandings and disputes over the treaties signed after the war and mainly on the issues of minority exchange and interpretations of the respective treaties. Minority treaties were signed with defeated states, and League of Nations had a supervisory role in monitoring the treaties and implementation. It was during this period that minority rights enjoyed popularity in the international arena and the legitimation of international protection via League of Nations was achieved.⁴⁵

During the implementation process of the provisions pertaining to the exchange of minorities in Lausanne Treaty, Greece and Turkey submitted a request for advisory opinion to define the status of “établis” (settled or established) people who had to be exempted from the compulsory

⁴⁵ Hurst Hannum, The Concept and Definition of Minorities, in: *Universal Minority Rights: A Commentary on the Jurisprudence of International Courts and Treaty Bodies*, (Ed.) Marc Weller, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 54.

exchange.⁴⁶ This was perceived as the last solution to end disputes on the status of people who were part of the compulsory exchange or not.

However, the most important advisory opinion given by the PCIJ was on the question of the Greco-Bulgarian “Communities” submitted by the Greek and Bulgarian governments. Neuilly Treaty resulted with significant territorial changes for Bulgaria as Western Thrace was given to Greece. Convention for the Reciprocal Emigration was based on voluntary migration, and with the process following it changed to compulsory one, eradicating the presence of Bulgarian minority in Greece. Meanwhile both states had a dispute on the term “Community” used since it was perceived only as legal body by the Greek side while Bulgarian part was insisting that it possesses ethnic character as minority group.⁴⁷

In its decision on the “Greco-Bulgarian Communities” case, PCIJ unanimously decides that; *“Community” is a group of persons living in a given country or locality, having a race, religion, language, and traditions in a sentiment of solidarity, with a view of preserving their traditions, maintaining their form of worship, securing the instruction and upbringing of their children in accordance with the spirit and traditions of their race and mutually assisting one another.*⁴⁸ Despite the fact that this definition was made solely as an interpretation of the term community in Greco-Bulgarian case, it is still important to have a definition how minorities were defined in the Balkans in early twentieth century.

Another important issue raised by PCIJ, was about the main reason of minority exchange between Bulgaria and Greece. Convention for Reciprocal Emigration was interpreted as a way to eliminate or reduce

⁴⁶ PCIJ, Series B-No.10, February 21, 1925. This advisory opinion gave clear indication to Greece and Turkey how the status of established people was to be defined.

⁴⁷ List of questions drawn up by the Greek Government, PCIJ, Series B-No.17, July 31, 1930.

⁴⁸ PCIJ, Series B-No.17, July 31, 1930; Malcolm N. Shaw, *The Definition of Minorities in International Law*, in: *The Protection of Minorities and Human Rights*, Ed. Yoram Dinstein, Mala Tabory, Dordrecht, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1992, p. 8-9.

irredentist movements in the Balkans, which were sources of conflict between new states.⁴⁹ However, there was different remark made regarding the presence of minorities which were not subject of exchange. While discussions between Bulgaria and Greece were continuing amid flow of refugees from both sides, PCIJ decided that, the existence of minorities is a question of fact; it's not a question of law.⁵⁰ As a result of this comment, both states focused to clear up their territories from minorities rather than to discuss the issue of their presence.

The League of Nations Minority Treaty system worked well for some period, for some minorities in special cases. However, it failed to show certain sustainability in the whole process⁵¹. As part of Neuilly Treaty, Bulgaria had already embarked to set up minority protection system. Sèvres Treaty had similar provisions for minorities in Greece. Nevertheless, after signing the Convention for Reciprocal Emigration, the atmosphere of mutual distrust, made it impossible for both parties to implement minority rights. Moreover, as a winner of the First World War, Greek Government, perceived minority clauses to be imposed only on losers⁵² like Bulgaria, and therefore they were free either to accept them or not.

This unilateral perception of Greek Government changed only after the war with Turkey, as a result of which Lausanne Peace Treaty was signed in 1923. In terms of minority rights, Lausanne Treaty imposed certain obligations both on Turkey and Greece regarding their minorities, although certain minority groups were not included in this framework of protection. Lausanne Treaty is still important with being main basis of minority protection system in Greece and legally recognizing Muslims as the only minority group in the country. This process made significant change in lives

⁴⁹ PCIJ, Series B-No.17, July 31, 1930.

⁵⁰ Ibid., (35).

⁵¹ Javaid Rehman, *The Weaknesses in the International Protection of Minority Rights*, The Hague, Kluwer Law International, 2000, p. 41.

⁵² Theodora Dragostinova (b), p. 155.

of Turks/Muslims living both in Bulgaria and Greece, who used to be a single unified community under the Ottoman rule, now was divided by borders. Turks in Bulgaria were enjoying minority rights provided with Neuilly and previously signed treaties, and Turks/Muslims in Greece were protected with Lausanne Treaty.

Until the Second World War, Bulgaria and Greece tried to implement some minority rights regulations while being fully engaged with their nation building processes. Disputes created by the different interpretation of signed treaties were solved via League of Nations or Permanent Court of International Justice. However, unequal character of these obligations on different countries created mistrust towards the League of Nations Minority System in general, which was perceived as an intervention in the internal affairs of some countries.⁵³ With the outbreak of Second World War, progress in minority rights stopped, since stability and security were even more fragile. The next stage of the international involvement on the rights of minorities was to be started after the end of the Second World War.

1.3. THE RISE OF INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS DEALING WITH THE RIGHTS OF MINORITIES AND THE NEED TO DEFINE MINORITY

The end of the Second World War marked the beginning of very important period regarding human rights in general and minority rights in particular. It was necessary first to define and accept universal human rights in order to make progress on the rights of minorities. Minority rights emerged in late nineteenth century were more of collective character enabling all members of the minority to enjoy these rights simply because they are belonging to specific minority group. However, with the adoption of liberal democracy this tendency has changed parallel with the political philosophy

⁵³ Javaid Rehman, p. 41.

at that time. Individual and his perception as a member of a group became more important motive to claim such rights.

Adoption of Universal Human Rights created discussion also on the rights of minorities which has changed their perception in a different way. Initial change in the focus of international community from group rights to individual human rights, made it necessary to update the system of minority rights protection. Therefore first problem to discuss was the target of such rights, which made it crucial to invent unique minority definition that would be valid globally. In this case it would be more efficient to adopt such clear definition in order to ease the process of its application on the group concerned.

However, due to different opinions of countries with significant minority populations, process of minority definition was not successful as much as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This process of transition from group/collective to individual minority rights will be evaluated below in detail with the special focus on the study of rights of persons belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities conducted by UN representative Francesco Capotorti

1.3.1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Adopted on 10 December 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly, Universal Declaration of Human Rights constitutes the basis of the rights of all people in the world. Nevertheless, similar to the Charter of the United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not contain any specific reference to the rights of minorities.⁵⁴ There was a certain hesitation to include such term, as this had been perceived as an obstacle to

⁵⁴ Francesco Capotorti, p. 27.

the international scope of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore there was no reference made on the rights of minorities. Instead of this, the General Assembly, confirmed that United Nations will be engaged with the issue in the future.⁵⁵

When general human rights were accepted, situation of minorities started to be discussed more. Minority's different background from the majority of the population, created doubts whether it enjoys the same human rights as the majority of people in terms of belonging to different community and its survival. First, the initial differentiation of minority groups was defined based on three different criteria: language, religion and culture.⁵⁶ On top of this division was the anticipation that minorities are connected to the state with citizenship and they are in a non-dominant position. Hence they would need additional regulations in order to be able to participate in the social and political life and to protect their identity.

Some authors argue that minority rights are an integral part of the international protection of human rights.⁵⁷ However, in terms of human rights, this can be only very modest offer, as minorities might need additional norms to protect their identity and to be able to participate equally in the social and political structures. Therefore this may create some arguments; whether minority rights are privileged rights or not, or if accepting such rights is not in conflict with the equality principle of the constitution. In fact adopting such rights does not constitute directly a privilege, but rather they are complementary to the general human rights.⁵⁸

Criteria of non-discrimination became to be supported as the main idea in the post Second World War period in order to be widely supported by

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Johannes Morsink, "Cultural Genocide, the Universal Declaration, and Minority Rights", *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 4(1999), p. 1013.

⁵⁷ Gaetano Pentassuglia, *Minorities in International Law: An Introductory Study*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing, 2007, p. 48.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

the international community. Distinction between group rights and individual rights, created segregation among the states. There was an argument that group rights might pose a threat to the territorial integrity of the state⁵⁹, especially if the minority is living in a compact area. The most contested aspect was the right to self-determination which was acknowledged mainly to the groups. In case of claim for secession, states would have legitimate reasons to put limitations with the motive to sustain national security and territorial integrity.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, there was also terminological change adopted in 1950s. Previously in all treaties made during the League of Nations time and also in the first years of United Nations, the term “racial minorities” was widely used. This term was replaced with the new one “ethnic minorities” in order to refer to all minorities globally; religious, cultural, biological etc. The reason behind this change was the belief that, the term racial minorities had only physical connotation while referring to minorities.⁶¹ Thus this update in terminology has been perceived to embrace the complexity of the new international system.

1.3.2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Struggle to Define Minorities

Adopted on December 16, 1966, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is the first important document which refers directly to minorities. Article 27 of the ICCPR granted religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities the right to enjoy their culture, religion and language. The full version of the article is as follows:

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 47.

⁶⁰ Lauri Hannikainen, Legal Nature of Minority Rights as Part of Human Rights: Limitations, Derogations, Reservations and Interpretative Statements, in: *Universal Minority Rights: A Commentary on the Jurisprudence of International Courts and Treaty Bodies*, Ed. Marc Weller, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 34.

⁶¹ Malcolm N. Shaw, p. 17.

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.

As it can be understood from the way how the article was structured, rights granted here were on individual basis. Nevertheless, it does not change the nature of the benefit; the only strength that had been made was on the issue of a membership to certain minority group. The term national minority was deliberately avoided,⁶² and instead of it minorities were divided in three main groups as religious, linguistic and ethnic.

Another important aspect of ICCPR is the article 26 which focuses on the issue of non-discrimination. It is explicitly indicated that *the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status*. Despite the presence of non-discrimination principle in article 26, it is important to have special focus and direct reference on minorities⁶³ which is indicative that non-discrimination principle in international human rights system is not enough to ensure full protection to minorities.⁶⁴

The fact that article 27 of the ICCPR makes a reference to minorities, but does not indicate their rights in detail, creates new discussions.

⁶² Tove H. Malloy, *National Minority Rights in Europe*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 32.

⁶³ Kirsten Shoraka, *Human Rights and Minority Rights in the European Union*, London, Routledge, 2010, p. 102.

⁶⁴ In terms of non-discrimination the most comprehensive document is the “International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination”. First article of the Convention clearly defines the term “racial discrimination”. Convention puts state parties under the obligation of equal treatment of citizens.

Definition of minorities becomes the most problematic issue as it will make the target of these specific rights more clear. In order to solve this problem, UN Sub Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, appointed Francesco Capotorti to conduct a special study on the question of minorities, with the aim to find world wide valid definition of the term “minority”. The results of the study were published in 1977. So far this work is the most comprehensive UN report on this topic.

The scope of the study is limited with the interpretation of article 27, which makes the issue of definition most problematic one. The phrase “in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exists” gives an idea about the need of special regulations to persons belonging to minority groups.⁶⁵ But the argument that, such additional regulations might be in conflict with principles such as equality and non-discrimination is denied with the fact that these regulations are complementary to the general human rights and not replacing them. The nature of minority rights could be described best, as rights granted to minorities, helping them to preserve their own identity while living in peace together with the rest of the population.

Furthermore, an explicit expression such as “in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist” is perceived as a direct obligation on the contracted parties to recognize the existence of such groups in order for article 27 to be applied. Such recognition of a group does not influence the existence of this minority in international law (“since existence of minorities is not a question of law, it is a fact”), but it may help to improve the situation of the group significantly. This type of direct recognition provides concrete basis for the protection of minority rights.⁶⁶ However Capotorti does not agree with the fact the application of article 27

⁶⁵ Francesco Capotorti, p. 34.

⁶⁶ Kristin Henrard (a), *Devising an Adequate System of Minority Protection: Individual Human Rights, Minority Rights and the Right to Self-Determination*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2000, p. 46.

of the Covenant to be limited only with the states which officially recognize minorities. According to his opinion this situation may lead to arbitrary deprivation of minorities in those countries from the benefits granted by article 27 of the ICCPR.⁶⁷

With the aim to conduct the study, Special Rapporteur Capotorti adopted the following minority definition:

*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 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.*⁶⁸

Some Governments submitted their opinions regarding the definition which Capotorti created for the purposes of this study. Observations submitted by the Bulgarian and Greek Governments were almost reflecting their policies towards minorities. In its opinion, Greek Government states that Capotorti's definition of minorities is vague, and *the characteristic features should be distinctive for the group concerned to be clearly distinguishable as separate from the majority.*⁶⁹ It is indicated that definition provided, does not consider the groups recognized as minorities with an international treaty or agreement. In other words the Government needs to hold the monopoly to recognize a group as such as minority via international agreement, where political will of the state is more independent to grant such recognition. Signing process of Lausanne Peace Treaty (in which Greek Government recognized Muslims in Western Thrace as the only minority in Greece) and tough negotiations before signing it could be a good

⁶⁷ Francesco Capotorti, p. 35.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 96.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

example for this case. Greek Government argues that, the term “a group numerically smaller than the rest of the population” is not clear enough to describe a minority *per se* without considering the geographical area where the group lives.⁷⁰ The last statement of the Greek Government may have different implications in case when minority constitutes the majority in the geographical area where it lives. However, the Government ignores the fact that the subject groups or minorities are compared with the general population of the country-citizens, not the regional one or based on its regional concentration.

The opinion of the Bulgarian Government regarding Capotorti’s definition was rather short. According to Bulgarian Government, *no generally accepted definition of “minority” exists*. This view is based on the assumption that, due to the complex situation of minority problems in the world, a global definition of the term “minority” may lead to misinterpretations, considering some specific conditions in different states.⁷¹

In the end of the study, Capotorti states that, despite the definition he presented was criticized from different aspects, criteria, such as presence of a group which has distinct ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics different than the rest of the population of the state, is the most objective one, and can not be neglected. Therefore according to him, this criteria could be the basis for a world-wide definition of the term “minority”.⁷² The reason behind the reluctant attitude to be bound by an international legal order is mostly related with the intervention into internal affairs due to minority problems. According to Capotorti, most states prefer to be free in terms of minorities, since the issue is often connected with the national security. Existence of international regulations, opens the door to interference in internal affairs - which was the perception inherited from the

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷² Ibid., p. 96.

League of Nations minority protection system. Capotorti recommends that, in order to increase the standards of minority protection, more regional or bilateral arrangements should be made.⁷³

1.3.3. Other Important International Conventions and Regulations Dealing with Minorities

During the Cold War, despite relations between leading powers were strained, there was significant progress made in the area of human rights with the leading role of international organizations. Apart from ICCPR, second important document dealing with minorities was the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination adopted on December 21, 1965. Article 1 of the convention clearly states the scope of racial discrimination which is described as follows:

In this Convention, the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

After article 1, following stage of the convention describes the obligations of state parties to ensure the equal treatment of all citizens. These obligations are making the convention as a good example to improve the rights of people who were disadvantaged in the past.⁷⁴ However, the most important feature of the convention is to embrace ethnic, national or racial minorities with the term “racial discrimination”.

⁷³ Ibid., preface.; Asbjorn Eide, The Framework Convention in Historical and Global Perspective, in: *The Rights of Minorities in Europe: A Commentary on the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, (Ed.) Marc Weller, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005.

⁷⁴ Kristin Henrard (a), p. 149.

Once again, here the argument focused on the issue of non-discrimination and positive regulations dealing with minorities and to which extent these regulations are compatible with the equality principle accepted in constitutional documents. The answer concentrated on the different character of minority rights as a common ground to ensure the equality to disadvantaged groups that suffer due to the lack of such regulations.⁷⁵ To preserve their distinct identity, to be able to participate equally in the social and political life, and at the same time to continue its peaceful coexistence with rest of population, such positive regulations are of immense importance for minorities.

Another important document was adopted in 1992, soon after the fall of Communism. Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities could be accepted as a good progress in the area. It is important that, for the first time, apart from ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, the term national minorities is used in a United Nations (UN) based document. With an emphasis on the protection and promotion of minority identities, this declaration, highlights the key factor of minority rights. Moreover, this document is making a reference on the protection of “cultural identity” in order to adapt the international regulations into changing global situation.⁷⁶

Establishment of a mandate as UN Independent Expert on minority issues, which is directly in charge of minorities, has been accepted as another progress made in the area of minority rights. Briefly, the mandate of the Independent Expert was established by the UN Commission on Human Rights in 2005. Promoting implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities was the main motive for the creation of the mandate. Protecting minorities, protection and promotion of minority cultures, applying the gender

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 146.

⁷⁶ Hurst Hannum, p. 59.

perspective in his/her work are among the other duties of the Independent Expert.⁷⁷

While conducting his/her work, Independent Expert is requested to consider the work and opinion of non-governmental organizations (NGO) which are working on the same issue. Moreover, Independent Expert is requested to make consultations with the Governments. However, the fact that the visit of the Independent Expert is conditional to the invitation of the Government concerned, brings some limitations to the scope of the mandate.⁷⁸ For instance, in a country where the rights of minorities are violated, such work would not take place, since the visit of the Independent Expert is conditional to the invitation of the Government.

The issue of minorities is still among the most sensitive topics in the world. Several conventions at international level clearly provide a framework for the rights of minorities and minority protection. Despite the fact that international community could not reach a consensus on a binding definition of minority, there are already neutral criteria how to detect their presence in a given country. Obviously, unique conditions in every country make it essential to have a special approach in order to find the best solution.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, to reach consensus internationally might be difficult most of the time. Therefore regional organizations could also contribute in the progress of minority issues.

⁷⁷ <http://www.ohchr.org/en/Issues/Minorities/IEExpert/Pages/IEminorityissuesIndex.aspx> (access: 21.11.2012).

⁷⁸ Anna Meijknecht, Reducing the Risk of Differential Standards in Minority Protection: The Holistic Approach of the UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, in: *Double Standards Pertaining to Minority Protection*, Ed. Kristin Henrard, Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2010, p. 145.

⁷⁹ Hurst Hannum, p. 69.

1.4. MINORITY RIGHTS REGULATIONS IN EUROPE

For long time Europe has been the place where wars erupted due to ethnic tensions. Delicate balance of powers in Europe had been perceived as a way to secure peace in the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, ethnic tensions in the Balkans became the first spark of the big catastrophe. Minority protection system created as part of the League of Nations regulations targeted mainly Eastern European countries, which regarded it as a tool of international community to interfere in their internal affairs. This situation was another reason for the failure of the League of Nations minority protection system, which was working only for certain minority groups in specific countries. Therefore, post Second World War period was unique in terms of adopting instruments that would be valid for all countries. However, apart from international regulations, significant amount of initiation came up from regional organizations as well. Europe became more engaged with regional human rights regulations to achieve the peace and security in the continent.⁸⁰

Compared to the international regulations, European aspect of minority rights has more advanced system. Starting with the formation of Council of Europe in 1949, a new impetus was given to the formation of more solid human rights regulations in Europe. End of the Second World War and adoption of several international documents outlined above, created new incentives in Europe to deepen liberal values regarding human rights. Being the first European intergovernmental organization, Council of Europe became the center of new human rights regulations. It should not be confused with the Council of European Union which is an institution connected with the EU.

⁸⁰ Andrew Moravcsik, "The Origins of Human Rights Regimes: Democratic Delegation in Postwar Europe", *International Organization*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (2000), p. 230.

1.4.1. European Convention on Human Rights

Adopted on November 4, 1949, European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is the most important document in Europe dealing with human rights. It constitutes the basis of the European human rights system. Council of Europe (CoE) took the initiative to prepare a human rights system similar to the one created by the UN with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

ECHR was created as a result of efforts described above. However, as a system it was more different. With the article 19 of the convention, establishment of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) was accepted in order to observe the application by contracted parties of the rights granted. Indeed this enforcement made it different than the UN system, which also brought a significant success to the European human rights system.⁸¹

After the fall of communism, European human rights system undergone some changes as well. Aspirations of Eastern European countries towards an integration with western organizations such as NATO and EU, became the new motivation of this change. Initial update in the standards of the European human rights system has been adopted, to make it more systematic the inclusion of Eastern European countries into western organizations. Member states of the European community, accepted protection of human rights as the basis of European co-operation which were to be spread in other countries in Europe and neighboring states.⁸²

ECHR does not have positive minority rights provisions. Article 14 which deals with the prohibition of discrimination - similar to other

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 238, 243.

⁸² Peter Van Elsuwege, Minority Protection in the EU: Challenges Ahead, in: *The Constitution for Europe and an Enlarging Union: Unity in Diversity?*, (Ed.) Kristyn Inglis & Andrea Ott, Groningen, European Law Publishing, 2005, p. 259.

international regulations - mentions “association with national minority”, which is the only direct reference to minorities.⁸³ Here the main assumption is that, minorities are granted the same rights as the majority which are stipulated in ECHR, and through the principle of non-discrimination, they are entitled to claim these rights. States’ arguments whether minorities are officially recognized or not, does not affect their eligibility. International Law has a clear stance towards the existence of minorities with the following principle: decision whether minorities exist in an country or not is not a question of law, it is a fact.⁸⁴ Aforementioned principles constitute the basis of the judgments of ECtHR.

The lack of positive minority regulations became leading discussion within the European human rights system. CoE summits were often dealing with the issue to provide positive minority regulations. However, due to ideological differences between countries, regulations dealing with minorities were simply blocked.⁸⁵ In 1993, Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE, proposed a definition of national minority to be added to the protocol of the ECHR,⁸⁶ which was not approved for further consideration. This situation showed that, it is still difficult to make progress on common definition of minorities, even at regional level. States prefer to be the last ones to decide whether certain minority in their territory exists or not.

1.4.2. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Perhaps it would be an exaggeration to see the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) as an instrument which grants specific rights to minorities. However, it is necessary to consider this

⁸³ Patrick Thornberry & Maria Amor Martin Estebanez, *Minority Rights in Europe*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing, 2006, p. 39.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁸⁶ Hurst Hannum, p. 59.

document as a different aspect of minority rights. ECRML was adopted on November 5, 1992. As it can be understood from its name, it focuses on the linguistic rights of minorities. Article 1 of the ECRML gives clear definition about the term “regional or minority languages”. Two main principles are underlined to define a given language as regional or minority language:

1. *A language that is traditionally used “within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population”.*
2. *It must be different from the official languages of the State (dialects of the official languages of the State and languages of the migrants are not included in this category).⁸⁷*

Nevertheless, it is crucial to state that ECRML does not provide direct rights to minorities, but it rather focuses on the aspect of their protection and promotion.⁸⁸ Despite its limited scope, so far both Greece and Bulgaria did not sign the Charter. There might be several reasons for this action. One of them is the association between language and ethnic identity. Linguistic diversity issues are often linked with ethnic and cultural diversity.⁸⁹ This relationship leads to the fact that protection and promotion of minority languages is actually an act to improve the conditions of minorities and their linguistic rights which is also affecting their cultural situation.

In places where minority issues are really sensitive, improving the conditions of a certain minority group is mostly confronted with the fear of increasing separatism and secession.⁹⁰ In this type of environment where

⁸⁷ European Treaty Series, 148, Strasbourg, 1992.

⁸⁸ Tove H. Malloy, p. 54.

⁸⁹ Fernand de Varennes, Enhancing Linguistic and Cultural Diversity, in: *Minority Policy in Action: The Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations in a European Context 1955-2005*, Ed. Jorgen Kuehl & Marc Weller, Aabenraa, Institut for Graenseregionsforskning, Syddansk Universitet, 2005, p. 221.

⁹⁰ Camille C. O'Reilly, When a Language is ‘Just Symbolic’: Reconsidering the Significance of Language to the Politics of Identity, in: *Minority Languages in Europe: Frameworks, Status, Prospects*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 28.

minority issues are extremely connected with the national security of the state, political volition is also limited. The objective fact that language is a constructed border between minority and majority,⁹¹ is used in a negative way to protect the status-quo which is most of the time formed against minorities and constitute certain limitations on the use of their languages in education, social or political life.

In spite of its positive content which is directed to regulate the use of minority languages, its less binding character and the lack of provisions to submit a petition reduced the effect of the ECRML in Europe. Signatory States were usually countries without serious minority problems. Therefore, it should not be wrong to state that, ECRML could not realize the hopes invested in it.

1.4.3. Copenhagen Criteria

One of the most discussed topics in Central and Eastern European countries in 1990s were the so called Copenhagen Criteria. Creation of such criteria was the result of an increasing demand for EU membership from Eastern European states with different human rights standards. Copenhagen Criteria were adopted in 1993 as a result of Copenhagen European Council. There are three different aspects of these criteria; political, economic and legal. Meeting the political criteria, that refer to stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities is accepted as prerequisite to start negotiations for EU membership.

Copenhagen Criteria were perceived somehow as common ground of standards for Eastern European countries with different democratic

⁹¹ Stephen May, *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language*, Essex, Pearson Education, 2001, p. 163.

standards and complex minority issues. Council of Europe became main promoter of the connection between democracy and human rights which was also including minority rights.⁹² This initiative made it once again obvious that, human rights are not enough to protect minorities. This 'differentiation' between human rights and minority rights, made it necessary to establish more solid standards to protect minorities. It was clear that, minorities need different regulations to be protected, at least something additional to human rights in order to sustain peaceful co-existence with the rest of the population.⁹³

The role of the European Community was really significant regarding the problem of democratization, improving the standards of human rights and minority rights in Eastern Europe. Different methodology has been adopted to foster the democratization or the so-called "Europeanization" of ex-communist countries. Clear set of systems was established to avoid direct intervention in their national policies pertaining to minorities. While countries which undertake certain reforms regarding minorities were supported with assistance by the EU, states which neglected such reforms and followed policy of systematic violation, were denied to deepen the co-operation with the EU.⁹⁴

Copenhagen criteria were successful to evaluate the progress in different countries and their bid for EU membership. Nevertheless, there are still discussions going on regarding the different treatment of certain countries and their problems with minorities even after the EU membership which makes it necessary to revise Copenhagen Criteria or to reduce the political influence upon their interpretation.

⁹² Gwendolyn Sasse, National Minorities and EU Enlargement: External or Domestic Incentives for Accommodation?, in: *European Integration and the Nationalities Question*, Ed. John McGarry & Michael Keating, London, Routledge, 2006, p. 65.

⁹³ Kristin Henrard (b), The EU, Double Standards and Minority Protection: A Double Redefinition and Future Prospects, in: *Double Standards Pertaining to Minority Protection*, (Ed.) Kristin Henrard, Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2010, p. 33.

⁹⁴ Peter Van Elsuwege, p. 263.

1.4.4. Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Adopted on February 1, 1995, Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), is the most important document accepted by CoE regarding the rights of minorities. This document is legally binding for the states which signed and ratified it. In fact, it is quite meaningful to see the scope of minority rights in the first article of the FCNM which states that '*minority rights form an integral part of the international protection of human rights*'.⁹⁵ This can be accepted as officially declaring the difference between human rights and minority rights.

Monitoring system through regular state reports has been established for signatory states, which is regulated by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. There is certain criticism directed towards the method of evaluation with reports prepared by states. According to the Convention, within one year of its entry into force, states are required to submit report giving information on the first legal measures taken to implement the principles of the Convention.⁹⁶ Since these reports are prepared by the states, their objectivity and function was already questioned. To alleviate these critics, Advisory Committee to the FCNM, invited NGOs to participate in the preparation process of these reports. Moreover, additional meetings and consultations with national institutions were stipulated for the Advisory Committee in order to reflect more efficiently the preparation process of the initial reports.⁹⁷

FCNM, guarantees only individual rights and not collective rights to national minorities. This could be seen as a result of the growing tendency to

⁹⁵ *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (5th edition), Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing, 2008, p. 8.

⁹⁶ Rainer Hoffmann, *Preferential Treatment of Kin Minorities and Monitoring of the Implementation of the Framework Convention for National Minorities*, in: *Collection Science and Technique of Democracy*, No. 32; *The Protection of National Minorities by their Kin-State*, European Commission for Democracy Through Law, Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing, 2002, p. 241.

⁹⁷ Tove H. Malloy, 55-56.

accept minority rights as individual rather than collective rights.⁹⁸ Another lack of the Framework Convention, is the definition of the term ‘national minority’, which leaves large room for the interpretations of the states.

Most of the signatory states submitted their reservations on how the principles of the FCNM will be applied. Within the framework of this work, attitudes of Bulgaria and Greece are important to analyze. Greece signed the Convention in 1997 but not ratified, which made it not applicable in Greece. FCNM was signed by Bulgaria in 1997 and entered into force in 1999. It was for the sake of the Europeanization process in Bulgaria, since EU membership was the main target for the political elite, who knew that negotiations for EU membership would not start without initial ratification of the FCNM. In a special declaration containing the ratification instrument, Bulgarian Government described its reservation as follows: *Confirming its.....desire for the integration of Bulgaria into the European structures.....National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria declares that the ratification and implementation of the FCNM do not imply any right to engage in any activity violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bulgaria.....*⁹⁹ This statement has the potential to be accepted as very indicative for the general situation of minority rights in Bulgaria which will be evaluated in the next stages of this work.

Nevertheless, ambiguities in the FCNM and reservations made by countries are accepted as normal, considering the political sensitivity of minority issues in Europe. Somehow ambiguous character of the Convention and interpretations made by the states, are accepted as a bridge connecting states with FCNM and its general principles regarding minority rights.¹⁰⁰ The idea behind is very simple; once states become part of the Convention,

⁹⁸ Geoff Gilbert, “The Council of Europe and Minority Rights”, *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 1(1996), p. 178.

⁹⁹ See (for the full version of reservation) *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (5th edition), Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing, 2008.

¹⁰⁰ Perry Keller, “Re-Thinking Ethnic and Cultural Rights in Europe”, *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1998), p. 33.

possibility to improve the situation of minorities will be larger compared to countries which did not sign the Convention.

1.4.5. OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

It was during the crisis in Yugoslavia when the idea to create mandate of a High Commissioner on National Minorities came. Perception that wars erupt as a result of interstate conflicts was replaced by the tragic events in Yugoslavia, which showed that internal problems may create large scale violent conflicts. Hence in 1992, OSCE decided to establish the post of High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), in order to act as an instrument for conflict prevention in an early stage of conflict which involves national minorities.

Creation of the post of HCNM, was accepted as success, since a coherent institution was established to deal with serious issues involving minorities in the OSCE area. However, his/her role was more acting as a mandate to protect peace and stability by cooperating with the governments, and not to secure rights and protection for minorities.¹⁰¹ Even with this focus to prevent violent actions involving minorities, Governments, had certain reservations regarding the post of HCNM fearing that it may affect the recognition of some minorities or support secessionist movements. But later, States which had some reservations regarding the HCNM, changed this opinion since his/her role was more acting as 'early warning' or as 'conflict prevention' tool in cases which involve national minorities.

In his/her work, HCNM was not immune from critics. Some blamed HCNM with double standards and different treatment of minority problems in Europe. Supporting national autonomy in some cases and discouraging it in

¹⁰¹ Tove H. Malloy, p. 65.

others, created discussions around the objectivity of the position of HCNM.¹⁰² In fact this position was created with the aim to prevent violence and to improve the conditions of minorities in OSCE area. Existence of problems which possess complex character in each state made it necessary to have different approaches, which resulted with such accusations.

While carrying his/her work HCNM is meeting not only with the Governments but also with other parties involved in the conflict. In addition to this, Commissioner meets with NGOs, press and local activists in order to get the best insight of an ongoing problem. This, can give an idea regarding the goal of the Commissioner to balance the interests of the States with the demands of national minorities.¹⁰³ Perhaps both parts would never be satisfied, but at least a point of compromise could be reached only with peaceful negotiation.

HCNM does not need invitation from States in order to visit and observe the situation. However, a previous contact with the state is required. At this point he/she is free to conduct his/her duty and to collect information from individuals or NGOs. Somehow this situation would allow HCNM to work in an environment where different dynamics of the problem will be examined in order to prevent culmination into a violent conflict.¹⁰⁴

The mandate of HCNM which was created to prevent violent conflicts involving national minorities, was a response to the violent dissolution in Yugoslavia. Changes which occurred in the last years made it necessary to

¹⁰² Natalie Sabanadze & Vincent de Graaf, Are Some Minorities More Equal Than Others? Double Standards and the Work of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, in: *Double Standards Pertaining to Minority Protection*, (Ed.) Kristin Henrard, Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2010, p. 118.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹⁰⁴ Safia Swimelar, "Approaches to Ethnic Conflict and the Protection of Human Rights in Post-Communist Europe: The Need for Preventive Diplomacy", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 7. No. 3 (2001), p. 108.

reconsider the needs of minorities and perhaps to revise the functions of existing institutions with the aim to increase their role.

The Fate of Minority Rights in Europe as Conclusion

It can be anticipated from this work that minority rights issue and its historical evolution in Europe are quite complex. Formation of unique standards is often obstructed with the arguments referring to the complexity of national minority cases in Europe. However, one thing is clear: even the most neutral human rights might be denied to minorities if States interpret them as dangerous to the territorial integrity etc.

Pertaining to minority rights in Bulgaria and Greece the issue of high threat perception prevents every attempt to offer more freedom to minorities. Treaties signed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century granted certain rights to the Turkish/Muslim minorities in Bulgaria and Greece. They were respected for some period, and afterwards adjusted to the national policies of both states. It is not understandable how a simple issue of minority definition is perceived as a threat to state sovereignty (considering the comments sent by Greece and Bulgaria regarding the study of Francesco Capotorti in 1970s), since treaties which both states signed with the Ottoman Empire and later on with Turkey, made a clear definition of minorities as target of the rights granted. In other words, today the influence of the history is more powerful, which is continuously re-interpreted referring to current conditions.¹⁰⁵ This attitude is creating tensions between minorities and majorities in countries with significant minority population.

Minority regulations were not new for some States. However, with the initiation of the United Nations to bring more specific rights to minority

¹⁰⁵ Renee Hirschon, p. 74.

groups, some countries started their actions as it was their first attempt to offer such rights or to recognize specific group in their territory as minority. As a result vague international regulations were interpreted in different way which blocked progress of minority rights in some countries. Existence of basic human rights was accepted enough for minorities, without considering the need to preserve their distinct identity.

ICCPR could be accepted as the most innovative document of its time referring directly to minorities. Although Capotorti's work to reach a common definition on minorities was contested, it is important to show the situation of international legal instruments of the time.

Despite the existence of problems in some countries, Europe still remains as the most successful area for minority rights regulations. It can be a good example for the success of regional engagements in this area. Partially fall of communism and partially EU membership incentive, became catalyzers for the progress in minority rights. However, one must bear in mind the difference between European regulations and internal differences of the European Union. These peculiarities influenced also the difference of the standards of minority protection in EU member states. Only Eastern European countries passed through such evaluation in 1990s. Old member states like Greece and France did not follow this process, and still do not answer to most of the criteria pertaining protection of national minorities.

In terms of minority rights, most EU documents refer to OSCE or CoE documents. This reflects the lack of adequate EU regulations or policy regarding minority rights. Accepting EU wide provision on minorities seems to be a real tough job, since most countries prefer to have the last decision regarding minorities in their territory. In the meantime it is very common to see EU pushing candidate countries for further democratization and respect to human rights and protection of minorities. This issue is being criticized by some people with the argument that, minority rights is used as a tool to

intervene in the internal affairs of states or following double standards. Existence of such criticism may limit the impact of the EU on the rights of minorities in general.

CHAPTER TWO

DISCOURSE OF GREEK AND BULGARIAN NATIONALISM TOWARDS THE RIGHTS OF MINORITIES

2.1. INTRODUCTION TO GREEK AND BULGARIAN NATIONALISM AND THE ISSUE OF MINORITY ACCOMMODATION

Nationalities became existent only when a given group became limited with certain borders such as language, culture and religion. In cases where such kind of demarcations were not present, their invention was included in the agenda as a tool to divide multi-ethnic empires. Nationalist revolution in France, had been accepted with hopes, and welcomed as a new universal ideology to bring peace to Europe. However, nineteenth century witnessed a shift of nationalism, *from liberal humanitarianism to aggressive exclusivism*¹, in some cases to irredentist claims, like in the case with the Balkans. As Liah Greenfeld says, after being spread across Europe, newly emerging national identities were no longer part of the original context, but rather trying to imitate the already existing idea within their own case.² Hence for Greece and Bulgaria it would take the form of different movement in order to ensure the independence and segregation they wanted, and to sustain the distinctive character of the national identities that were emerging. This led to initial transformation of nationalism, which at the beginning was perceived as internal freedom and turned into independence from other groups and marked with strong invisible borders.³ Consequently, nationalism became more exclusive through the invention of specific language, certain sensitivity

¹ Hans Kohn (a), *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History*, Malabar, Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1982, p. 50.

² Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 14.

³ Hans Kohn (a), p. 50.

on the perceived culture, customs and territorial affiliation that were claiming the unique character of such group.

In multi-ethnic states, this movement could be identified as ethnic nationalism like in the case of Ottoman Empire. Nationalism, which was originally a political idea based on liberal theories, started to be perceived as loyalty within a group that was connected with blood and common goals for the future.⁴ The next stage of the process culminated into a claim of territory which was also directed by romantic feelings. However, due to the simultaneous resurgence of different national groups, at this stage, the most striking issue was to face overlap in the territorial claims of different nation states. In the Balkans, the First Balkan war was done to get some land from the Ottoman Empire, but the Second Balkan war erupted as a result of an overlap of claims over newly occupied areas.

Violent conflicts in nineteenth and twentieth century showed the other peculiarity of the nationalism in the Balkans, irredentism. Based on Western European Christian traditions, nationalism in the Balkans, took the form of ethnic nationalism in pursuit of irredentist goals, aiming to unify other kin groups within its borders.⁵ This situation might be due to the big influence of the Russian Pan-Slavism and German Romanticism in the Balkans and their nation building processes.⁶ Nationalism and ethnicity were perceived as having the same meaning, while possessing some ethnic characteristics such as language, culture and religion became indicators for affiliation with a certain group.

Greeks were the first nation to declare independence from the Ottoman Empire. Politically they were ruled by the Sultan in Istanbul and for

⁴ Ibid., p. 74.

⁵ Mitja Zagar, Ethnic Relations, Nationalism, and Minority Nationalism in South-Eastern Europe, in: *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*, (Ed.) Michael Keating, John McGarry, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 330.

⁶ Liah Greenfeld, p. 14.

all other aspects of social life they were connected to the Patriarchate. The Patriarchate in Istanbul was the head of all Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. However, for Greeks, due to its historical profile and language, Orthodox Church and Patriarchate were considered as national heritage.⁷ But this did not change the fact that Greek Orthodox Church was the first one to separate from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, with the aim to realize its national goals and to become a national church. The dilemma in this process of separation came to the fore when Bulgarian Orthodox Church was accused with being “schismatic” during the Bulgarian national awakening. Eventually, this schismatic character of Bulgarian Orthodox Church turned into conflict and competition between Greece and Bulgaria to establish their hegemony in the Balkan peninsula.

Main reason behind the Greek awakening and their leading position in the Ottoman Empire for nation building, was not due to the intensity of the Turkish oppression, but it was rather a result of the good communication with Western Europe and the existence of national intellectuals who initiated the process and supported it morally.⁸ They tried to adopt European nationalist idea into the Greek case by making some changes in it. After the invention of contemporary Greek language, works of classical authors were translated with patriotic reflections in order to create a link between ancient Greece and Greece to be reborn.⁹ Furthermore, this was an initiative to create a culture associated with the new language, aiming to imbue the newly created identity.

Bulgarian nation building process followed the same methodology like Greek one. Bulgarian elite was the leading factor in the process, encouraging the use of Bulgarian language among Bulgarians and strongly focusing on

⁷ Hans Kohn (b), *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1946, p. 535.

⁸ Ibid., p. 537. See also: Paschalis Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy*, Vermont, Variorum, 1994, p. 193.

⁹ Hans Kohn (b), p. 541.

the distinct character of Bulgarian culture.¹⁰ All these efforts were made to prove the historical continuity of the Bulgarian nation.¹¹ Paisii Hilendarski's book 'Istoria Slavianobalgarska' (Slavic-Bulgarian History) was one of the most important works on the Bulgarian history, where Bulgarian history was glorified through different examples. Paisii, strongly criticized those Bulgarians who use Greek in their daily life and worship, he underlined the rich history of Bulgarian culture and language.¹² On the other side, Turkish rule in the Balkans was depicted as slavery in Paisii's work, and Turks were accused of committing massive assimilation against Bulgarian population during the four hundred years long Ottoman rule.¹³ It is necessary to stress the point that not only Turks, but also Greeks were described as foreign to Bulgarian culture. Due to importance of Greek in the Balkan peninsula among people who were doing trade, Paisii stressed the point that Greek was widely spoken among Bulgarians as well, even with the motive that some Bulgarians deliberately were using Greek because they were ashamed of Bulgarian language and culture. To encourage the use of Bulgarian language, Paisii makes references to Bulgarian history dating back to the seventh century, as an example to express the superiority of Bulgarian culture. Past conflicts and struggles of dominance in the Balkans between Greeks and Bulgarians is tackled in detail by Paisii, in order to indoctrinate the distinction between both nations.¹⁴

The second half of the nineteenth century was the period which saw tough competition between Greek and Bulgarian nationalists to expand their area of influence, or in other words to spread nationalism beyond their borders reaching other Christian citizens of the Ottoman Empire. This was important for both Greeks and Bulgarians as a spiritual preparation stage for future irredentist steps, which were foreseen to realize their national ideals.

¹⁰ Gabriela Petkova-Campbell, "Nineteenth-century Bulgarian private collections", *Journal of the History of Collections*, Vol. 22, No. 2, p. 246.

¹¹ Alex Toshkov, p. 281.

¹² Paisii Hilendarski, *Slaviano-Balgarska Istoria*, Sofia, Balgarski Pisatel, 1972, p. 42.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 46, 142, 146.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

Macedonia and Thrace became centers of Greek and Bulgarian nationalist competition.¹⁵ Religion and educational attainment were main tools for the desired expansion, aiming at the assimilation of people in geopolitically important areas.

In her book, *Imagining the Balkans*, Maria Todorova denies such accusations for assimilation in the Ottoman Empire. According to Todorova, there was no high degree of social integration in the Ottoman Empire, which was due to lack of feeling for belonging to a common society. Religious and social affairs of the Christians were regulated by the Patriarchate in Istanbul while they were only politically governed by the Sultan, where bureaucracy was the only connection between State and peoples. Therefore she thinks that, the existence of such disintegrated system itself is enough to understand that assimilation of populations was not the ultimate goal of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶ However, such exaggerations were used just to intensify the feelings of people who were target of these stories. Applying Said's Orientalism in the Balkans, Todorova argues that Western influence in the Balkans created the critic of Ottoman backwardness and 'otherness' while installing the idea of national consciousness over the pillars of glorified ancient past like in the case of Greece. These actions were perceived as another reflection of the Western style for dominating, restructuring, and creating its influence on the East.¹⁷

National revivals of Greece and Bulgaria had almost parallel methodology which was tackled by Ernest Gellner. Nationalism started to be spread by the elite who was working hard to review the language¹⁸ and create connections between the history and culture of both nations. As a result, nationalism became the new guard of the culture and language it

¹⁵ Victor Roudometof (a), *Nationalism, Globalization, and Orthodoxy: The Social Origins of Ethnic Conflict in the Balkans*, Westport, Greenwood Press, 2001, p. 112.

¹⁶ Maria Todorova (a), *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 163.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 3-12; See also Neophytos G. Loizides, "Religious Nationalism and Adaptation in Southeast Europe", *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 37, No. 2(2009), 203-227.

¹⁸ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1988, p. 55-56.

invented out of nations. Again it just shows the vicious circle of nationalism, since *cultures and traditions it claims to defend and revive are often its own inventions*.¹⁹ Nevertheless this can help to understand better the different stages of Greek and Bulgarian revivals. Reinvention of culture and publishing material dealing with the national past can be considered as the first stage of national revival of Greece and Bulgaria. Once this story was spread around and became accessible for masses, the attachment to a territory became key factor for the creation of independent states. In the case of Balkans, where violent conflicts took place in nineteenth and twentieth century, the motive of expansion was often justified with the aim to unify the rest of the nation which was left behind national borders at the time of independence. But during the process of national revivals, both Greece and Bulgaria, claimed frontiers as with their greatest national expansion before the Ottoman presence and often disregarded the ethnic component of these areas.²⁰ The territorially non-homogenous structure of the Ottoman Empire, made it difficult to create nation states out of it. Therefore wars for independence were seen as the only way to create this homogeneity and conduct ethnic cleansing or to get rid of people who were excluded from the newly constructed national identities.

In the Greek and Bulgarian national revival process continuity of the culture was defended with the thesis that cultural traditions and language were preserved in spite of Ottoman oppression, which automatically made Muslims and Turks 'other'. After the wars for independence big part of the Turkish population in both countries was forced to migrate to Turkey. At the time when their number was very large and difficult to maintain forced migration, then additional solutions were searched to arrange migration or exchange of populations as it was described in chapter 1 of this work.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 56.

²⁰ Hans Kohn (a), p. 46.

With the creation of Greece and Bulgaria, the only sizeable minority left in both countries was Muslim/Turkish minority. Meanwhile, unfolding character of nationalism was spread towards post-Ottoman space, and consequently as a result of Ataturk's revolutionary steps, Turkey emerged as the latest nation state in the region. Turkish nationalism had its inevitable effects on kin communities left beyond the borders of the new nation state. Although Turkey acted always as protector of minority rights for the Muslim/Turkish minorities in Greece and Bulgaria, the main problem occurred with the interpretations of the process, while those minority groups started to acquire an ethnic consciousness in addition to their religious belonging. This was not welcomed both by Greece and Bulgaria, which were willing to keep their minorities' ties with Turkey at religious level. Cultural and ethnic differences were seen as a threat to the nation state which was still upgrading. Several agreements were already made between Greece and Ottoman Empire, and later on Turkey as well as between Bulgaria and Turkey in order to secure decent protection for the rights of Muslim/Turkish minorities in Greece and Bulgaria. However, from time to time they had to be updated according to the changing status or due to breaches occurred in previously made ones. Often nationalism or ignorance was blamed for the bad condition of the Muslim/Turkish minorities in Greece and Bulgaria. This brought the criticism that, nations which declared their independence and were "released from oppression", became oppressors of minorities living in the new nation states.²¹ The most striking aspect of this oppression was not its strength but its systematic structure, which became part of the system of new nation states and continuously enhanced with the time passing despite the increase of democratic and liberal values in the world. Detailed perspective of this mechanism, with its unique features and examples, will be tackled below in detail.

²¹ Ibid., p. 82.

2.2. GREEK NATIONALISM AND ITS HISTORICAL EVOLUTION: CONSTRUCTING TURKISH/MUSLIM MINORITY AS THE “OTHER”

Examining the process of Greek nationalism and its ultimate goal, is crucial to understand the basis of segregation in contemporary Greek society and persistence of some problems pertaining to minorities and Greek national identity. It is clear that the concept of ‘Hellas’ was not produced by Greek community in Ottoman Empire, but rather invented by European intellectuals with the idea of magnificent past of ancient Greece and spread by Greek elite educated in western world.²² Therefore this philosophy played a crucial role in Greek revival, by giving rise to Philhellenism and the Neohellenic Enlightenment, which created modern Greece by reinterpreting its past. Accomplishments of ancient Greeks were seen as the basis of European civilization, which was also ensuring intellectual and economic superiority for Greeks under the Ottoman rule. They were now assigned with the duty to revitalize this success by reinstating Greece through the revival of Greek national identity.²³ Even at the time when religious affiliation was abandoned – accused of being backward - with an aim to proceed towards European style of modernization, Philhellenism became a movement which embraced nationalism, religion, culture and romantic sentiment with a vision to increase its area of influence in the Balkans.²⁴

Reinterpretation of Byzantine and Ottoman tradition became one of the biggest dilemmas of Neohellenism. Due to the heavy influence of religion in both, they were regarded as backward and inappropriate for the ideal of

²² Spyros A. Sofos and Umut Ozkirimli (a), Contested Geographies: Greece, Turkey and the Territorial Imagination, in: *In the Long Shadow of Europe: Greeks and Turks in the Era of Post Nationalism*, (Eds.) Othon Anastasakis, Kalypso Nicolaidis & Kerem Oktem, Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009, p. 20.

²³ Ioannis D. Stefanidis, *Stirring the Greek Nation: Political Culture, Irredentism and Anti-Americanism in Post War Greece, 1945-1967*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007, p. 37.

²⁴ Maria Todorova (a), p. 70.

Neohellenism.²⁵ Avoiding Byzantine and Ottoman traditions, would allow new Hellas to reach its ancient glory. Orthodoxy was to blame for the backwardness of Greek people, and therefore modernization would be achieved only with secular state structure.²⁶ Nevertheless, Greek citizenship was still subject to religious discrimination, allowing only Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire to acquire it and excluding Muslim population.

The idea to abandon Orthodoxy was also strongly supported by those who wanted to bring European liberalism in Greece. In rural areas where literacy was not really high, religion was the main marker of identity. Therefore the National Church of Greece was established with the aim to create state controlled religion, and not to be controlled by the Patriarchate in Istanbul who was a civil servant of the Ottoman Empire. However, the second part of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of a conservative movement, which was in favor of Orthodoxy and restoration of the ties between independent Church of Greece and Patriarchate of Constantinople.²⁷

Historical, political and religious aspects of Greek identity were still lacking some connections to justify the continuity between ancient and contemporary Greece. Apart from the religious dimension of contemporary Greek identity, the real problem was to give an explanation for centuries long uninterrupted continuation of Greek nation. Thus, Greek elite, with Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos ahead, was engaged to rehabilitate Greece's Byzantine past. According to Paparrigopoulos, Hellenic identity was comprised from classical and Christian elements, which were complementing each other.²⁸ As a result of this, Orthodoxy became the key

²⁵ Victor Roudometof (a), p. 102.

²⁶ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis (a), "Redefining the Nation: Shifting Boundaries of the 'Other' in Greece and Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (2011), p. 169.

²⁷ Paschalis Kitromilides (a), *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-Eastern Europe*, Vermont, Variorum, 1994, p. 10 (XII).

²⁸ Neophytos G. Loizides, p. 208.

factor of Greek national identity, while the National Church of Greece had the mission to deal with its accommodation and cultural adoption.

Unique product of this process in Greece was the invention of the 'Great Idea' (*Megali Idea*)* as a philosophy of Greek irredentism. First time in the second half of nineteenth century, prospective targets of Greek irredentism were defined as Ioannina, Thessaly, Serres, Adrianople(Edirne), Constantinople(Istanbul), Trebizond(Trabzon) and Crete.²⁹ These cities were proclaimed as the most important centers of Hellenism and Hellenic historiography. Byzantine traditions were integrated into Neohellenic culture with the thesis that Byzantium was a manifestation of Middle Age Hellenism.³⁰ The University of Athens became the scientific center of the new propaganda and was fully engaged to justify the Greek expansion and its necessity. Through cooperation with educational institutions, Greek National Church was the most important exponent of the Great Idea. Greek irredentism was justified with the project to create Greek Empire in the east embracing Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire and bringing the necessary modernization in the region. Great powers and especially Great Britain supported the idea of Hellenic Empire in the East, despite the fear that it would fall under Russian influence. When the separation of the Bulgarian Exarchate took place and Bulgarian nationalism developed under Russian influence, support for the Greek bid was increased dramatically, as controversy between Bulgaria and Greece arose. It was clear that Greece would be isolated from the Russian influence through Bulgaria.³¹

* *Megali Idea* or the *Great Idea* is a project of Greek irredentism to gather all Greeks with Orthodox belief under the umbrella of Neohellenic state whose borders would expand into the Ottoman Empire and restore Constantinople (Istanbul) as its capital.

²⁹ Victor Roudometof, p. 105-106.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 109.

³¹ Sofia Matthaïou, "Stephanos Koumanoudis' Preception of the Bulgarians: Convergences with and Divergences from his Contemporaries", in: *Greek-Bulgarian Relations in the Age of National Identity Formation*, ed. P.M. Kitromilides & Anna Tabaki, Athens, Institute for Neohellenic Research, 2010, p. 155.

The center of all these ideas and conflicts was still Ottoman Empire. After embracing Byzantine past, Greek scholarship was in search of other connections related to territorial claims. According to Greek elite, Constantinople was the pearl of Hellenic world. Its conquest by the Ottoman Turks and the rise of the Ottoman Empire at the expense of Byzantium, were consolidated with the decline of medieval Hellenism.³² Turks were identified as barbarians and blamed for the destruction of Greek culture and heritage through their backward Empire. Through education and different publications these ideas were spread among Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman State in order to increase the ethnic and religious segregation.

As it was previously indicated, no ethnic group was able to form a majority in certain area due to the Ottoman social system. Creation of Greek nation state made dramatic change in the lives of Muslims living in the newly proclaimed Greek territory. They were the first victims of the new structure called 'nation state'. After a centuries long common existence, they were forced to leave new Greek territories because they were perceived as aliens representing Ottoman yoke and therefore were not qualified to be called as Greeks.³³ This situation could explain how language was not used as an indicator of national identity during the time of Greek revival. Muslims living in the Greek territory were speaking Greek in their daily life, however, this was not enough to grant them Greek citizenship. Despite Greek revival relied on language and the invention of new vernacular, it was obvious that what Greek meant at that time was the composition of different elements defined by the elite, which in fact made Muslims/Turks ineligible for it. With feelings of revenge for the Ottoman rule, Greeks forced Muslims to follow Ottoman troops in their withdrawal.³⁴ Eventually Muslims/Turks were excluded from the nation building process in Contemporary Greece. The number of Muslims who were allowed to stay was really very limited. Those

³² Paschalis Kitromilides (b), p. 15(XII).

³³ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), *Old and New Islam in Greece: From Historical Minorities to Immigrant Newcomers*, Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2012, p. 27.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

who left Greece were forced to liquidate their property. Muslims who stayed were obliged to share their property with Greek refugees regardless of their will. This was the beginning of the creation of a new system in Greece where in terms of rights, inequality between ethnically Greek and non-Greek subjects was structured on the equal distribution of obligations stemming from the Greek citizenship, while non-Greeks were denied the right to benefit equally from it.

During the time of Greek territorial expansion towards North, reassessment of Greek national identity and its unique distinction from the Ottoman Empire was questioned. Things which were reminding the Ottoman presence were ignored while Byzantine past was glorified together with the ancient Greek heritage.³⁵ During the Balkan Wars, different components of Greek national identity were reinterpreted in order to embrace other Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire under the umbrella of modern Greece. This process witnessed strategic shifts in the definition of Greek. Macedonia and Thrace were really important for Greece, as they were on the way to Istanbul which was the main target of Greek irredentism. People living in these areas were not speaking Greek, but this did not stop Greek claims. People living in Macedonia and Thrace were considered ethnically Greek because of the traces of ancient Greece and the initial adoption of Macedonian traditions by Neohellenism.³⁶

Greek irredentism and efforts to realize the Great Idea reached their peak with Greece's occupation of Izmir after the First World War. However, with the formation of Atatürk leadership, Greek forces had to withdraw and Greek population in Anatolia became subject of population exchange, as it was indicated in the previous chapter. This failure became known in Greece as Asia Minor catastrophe. Inevitable result of the Asia Minor catastrophe

³⁵ Spyros A. Sofos & Umut Ozkirimli (b), 'Colonising' The Past: History and Memory in Greece and Turkey, in: *Nations and Their Histories: Constructions and Representations*, (Eds.) Susanna Carvalho and Francois Gemenne, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 52.

³⁶ Sofia Matthaïou, p. 157.

was a deepening of the segregation between Greek and Turkish nations. Destruction of the Greek project called *Megali Idea* confirmed the hostility of the Turks towards the Greek nation.³⁷ Establishment of modern Turkey in 1923 and reforms Mustafa Kemal Atatürk did, shaped modern Turkish nationalism. As a kin state of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace, Turkey's relations with the Muslims in Greece were interpreted differently in certain periods of history. Mostly these interpretations were conditional to the nature of bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey. However, the shadow of Greek nationalism prevailed every aspect of the treatment of Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace. Turkish nationalism was made up as a natural enemy of the Greek one. Most common implications of this hostility found itself while minority in Western Thrace was often depicted as 'fifth column' of Turkey.³⁸ The fact that Turkey did not follow any irredentist actions against Greece, like the Greek occupation of Western Anatolia after the First World War, was distorted by interpreting this occupation as a tragedy of the Greek nation in Turkish lands. It is necessary to indicate that Greek scholarship regarding the Asia Minor catastrophe is very limited, compared to research done about ancient Greece and Byzantine past.³⁹ The lack of self-criticism formed in a scientific way, leaves room for speculations. This situation became a tool of Greek nationalism to foster separation between Greeks and Turks. On the other side, showing an old map with Turkish names of places in Western Thrace, was accepted as an evidence of the resilience of Turkish irredentism toward Greece.⁴⁰

It must be noted here that after spreading the ideas about one's national belonging, violent conflicts became the next stage of drawing the

³⁷ A. Triandafyllidou & A. Paraskevopoulou, p. 88.

³⁸ Dia Anagnostou (a), "Breaking the Cycle of Nationalism: The EU, Regional Policy and the Minority of Western thrace, Greece", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 6, No. 1(2001), p. 105.

³⁹ Alexander Kitroeff, "Continuity and Change in Contemporary Greek Historiography", *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1989), p. 279-280.

⁴⁰ Paul Hidiroglu, "*Thrace in the Light of the National Ideal of the Turks*" 1985-1991, Athens, Hellenic University Press, 1991, p. 30.

borders in the Balkans. Same was the background of the Greek-Turkish relations. This aspect was once again challenged with the war in Cyprus. During the Greek revival, considerable amount of effort was made by Greece to stir independence of the island. Population of Cyprus was composed by Orthodox Greeks and Muslim Turks. Construction of *Enosis*-the idea to incorporate Cyprus into Greece dates back to the nineteenth century. However, the fact that the island was under British control from 1878 until 1960 made it impossible for Greece to realize *Enosis*. Archbishop of the Cypriot Orthodox Church Makarios was set to achieve *Enosis* and when his actions escalated into internal conflict in Cyprus, Turkey intervened in the island according to the regulations of the Treaty of Guarantee signed by Great Britain, Greece and Turkey. As a result of Turkish actions, Cyprus was divided in two, with Turks living in the North and Greeks living in the Southern part of the island.

Cyprus issue refreshed the bitter moments of the history between Greeks and Turks pertaining to nationalist divisions. Greeks accused Turks with irredentism while Turks kept Greek Cypriots responsible for the massacres conducted in the island to accomplish *Enosis*. Today, Cyprus is still dominating Greek-Turkish discourse. Often demands for further liberalization of minority rights in Western Thrace are denied by making an exclusive reference of the division in Cyprus. Still, Greek Cypriots are not willing to accept that the reason for the eruption of conflict was the extreme form of Greek nationalism which has been named as *Enosis*.⁴¹ Apart from this, ongoing division in the island has negative impacts on the perception of both nations and creates negative images about the 'other' across the border, which inevitably affects the situation of Greek-Turkish relations in general.

⁴¹ Vassos Argyrou, "How Greeks Think: About Turks, for Example", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2006), p. 43-44.

Considering the examples given above, it is possible to conclude that nationalism changed Greek and Turkish communities in a very significant way. One has to imagine that neither Greeks nor Turks were existent as a nation before nineteenth century. The emergence of nationalism created new challenges which deteriorated the ties between both nations. Therefore, historical Greek-Turkish enmity could be interpreted as a new product of nationalism.⁴² After centuries-long common existence, violent conflicts created a distance between both nations. Complexity of 'nationalist social engineering' in Greek and Turkish case can be explained better with the loss of contact and shared experience. Through the time passing, lack of experience evolves into further stages, such as suspicion and hostility that are reducing the possibility to cooperate. Creation of negative stereotypes at social level is exacerbating this division between groups. Thus, physical borders are supported with psychological and social narratives about the 'other', in order to make projected alienation more sound. As a result of this process, it is possible to observe that, an inter-communal conflict turns to inter-state hostility.⁴³

2.2.1. The Role of the Greek Orthodox Church in Politics and Daily Life of Greece: Struggle for Power Through Competition

It is impossible to disregard religion while evaluating Greek national identity and its stance towards religious minorities in Greece. Religion was the center of every aspect in the development process of Neohellenism. From the very beginning of Greek national revival, the clergy became leading actor of it, since Orthodoxy was accepted as an integral part of the Greek national identity. Thus, by embracing Byzantine traditions, Eastern Orthodoxy was declared *ipso facto* as Greek through the synthesis of

⁴² Hercules Millas, Perceptions of Conflict: Greeks and Turks in Each Other's Mirrors, in: *In the Long Shadow of Europe: Greeks and Turks in the Era of Post Nationalism*, (Eds). Othon Anastasakis, Kalypso Nicolaidis & Kerem Oktem, Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009, p. 96.

⁴³ Renee Hirschon, p. 83.

'Helleno-Christianity'.⁴⁴ According to this analysis, the promotion of the Greek national identity among the Orthodox population in the Balkans was a steady process. With the adoption of Eastern Orthodoxy as *de facto* national religion⁴⁵, Greek nationalism changed its way from liberalism into intolerant extremism in order to accomplish irredentist aims. The split of Greek National Church from the Patriarchate in Istanbul, was the first national challenge that Eastern Orthodoxy faced during the Ottoman times. There was significant division among the Greek elite, regarding the religious character of the Greek state. Adamantios Korais, defended the idea of an independent Greek Church and split from the Patriarchate in Istanbul.⁴⁶ His view about modern Greece was dominated by the idea of secular Hellenism which had anti-Byzantine and anti-Patriarchal sentiments. Korais thought that the ideas of Western modernism, which could bring back the glory of ancient Greece, would not be reached under the leadership of Patriarchate controlled by the Ottoman Sultan.⁴⁷ Therefore, the creation of a state controlled national Church was the best solution. However, with the second half of nineteenth century, when Byzantine past was adopted by Neohellenic Enlightenment, the vision for secular Greek state was abandoned, and an extreme form of nationalism was promoted by the Greek Church in areas such as Macedonia, Thrace, Cyprus and Western Anatolia. With an aim to lead Greek irredentism, Greek Orthodox Church took the control of political life in early stages of Greek national revival and continuously expanded its role in the formation of Greek national identity. Since then, whenever a sensitive discussion like the situation of minorities in Greece, implementation of democratic reforms or modernization/secularization of Greece is discussed, intervention of Greek Orthodox Church is taking place. This attitude of the Church is justified with its self-identification of being the only

⁴⁴ Constantine Tsoukalas, "European Modernity and Greek National Identity", *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans Online*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 12.

⁴⁵ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis (b), Reciprocity as Race to the bottom in Religious Freedom, in: *In the Long Shadow of Europe: Greeks and Turks in the Era of Post Nationalism*, Eds. Othon Anastasakis, Kalypso Nicolaidis & Kerem Oktem, Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009, p. 168.

⁴⁶ Neophytos G. Loizides, p. 212.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

loyal entity to the idea of Hellenism throughout the centuries-long struggle for nationhood.⁴⁸

Another challenge for the Patriarchate in Istanbul was the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870. This situation proved the ethnic division of religiously homogenous Christian population of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, it made easier the rapprochement between Greek Orthodox Church in Athens and the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul. With the creation of Contemporary Turkey, situation of the Patriarchate in Istanbul was one of the main issues dominating Greek-Turkish discourse. As a result of all events that took place before the First World War, Hellenic character of the Eastern Orthodoxy was approved through close co-operation between the Greek Church and the Patriarchate in Istanbul. Considering facts like the role Orthodox Church played during the Greek revival, and managed to consolidate its position as a national religion in Greece along its leading role in politics, it is possible to declare Orthodoxy as the champion of nationalism.⁵⁰ This situation has been used up until now by clergy to justify their intervention into political issues.

Religious monopoly of the Greek Orthodox Church and its privileges are legalized in different forms. First in hierarchy is Greek Constitution. According to article 3 of the constitution of 1975, Greek Orthodox Church was declared as predominant with the following phrase: the prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Christian Eastern Orthodox Church.⁵¹ Nevertheless, article 13 of the Greek Constitution protects freedom of worship under the condition that following requirements are met: religion must be known, in this case doctrines and rituals must be accessible to

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 210-211.

⁴⁹ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis (a), p. 170.

⁵⁰ Paschalis M. Kitromilides (b), p. 150(XI).

⁵¹ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 90. *See also:* Dia Anagnostou and Ruby Gropas, Domesticating Islam and Muslim Immigrants: Political and Church Responses to Constructing a Central Mosque in Athens, in: *Orthodox Christianity in 21st Century Greece: The Role of Religion in Culture, Ethnicity and Politics*, (Eds.) Victor Roudometof & Vasilios N. Makrides, Surrey, Ashgate, 2010.

anybody. Therefore, Islam and Judaism are the other two religions officially recognized in Greece along with the Greek Orthodox Church. According to the Greek Law, officially recognized religious institutions possess the power of public entity in the country, which allows them to conduct marriages, granting tax exemptions and issuing public administration acts.⁵²

During the years of Cold War, the idea of Ellinochristianismos (Helleno-Christianity) was upgraded in order to set defense against the ideas of atheist Communism. This move was justified with the thesis that, problems of the Greek society are to be solved only with the help of Christian faith. As a result of this movement, Ellinochristianismos has been accepted as a guiding principle that the Greek education system ought to promote in order to influence on the transformation process of Greek society.⁵³

However, this dominant or 'prevailing' status of the Greek Orthodox Church, became an indicator of the fact that there is no official separation between state and the Church. This intertwined structure did not become a problem until 1990's, when claims for the modernization of Greece were made. Every attempt to modernize the country was harshly criticized by the clergy. Archbishop Christodoulos was one of the enthusiastic supporters for the leading role of the Church in Greece. When separation of state and Church was first discussed in late 1990's, he opposed the idea vehemently, blaming its supporters with the aim to destroy Greek national identity. According to him, survival of the Greek nation is possible only through the Greek Orthodox Church.⁵⁴

⁵² Prodromos Yannas, Non-Orthodox Minorities in Contemporary Greece: Legal Status and Concomitant Debates between Church, State and the International Community, in: *Orthodox Christianity in 21st Century Greece: The Role of Religion in Culture, Ethnicity and Politics*, (Eds.) Victor Roudometof & Vasilios N. Makrides, Surrey, Ashgate, 2010, p. 114.

⁵³ Ioannis D. Stefanidis, p. 32.

⁵⁴ Nicos C. Alivizatos, "A New Role for the Greek Church?", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, p. 23.

The Orthodox Church of Greece is also well known with its engagements in Western Thrace. Political engagement of clergy puts Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace in a disadvantaged position. Church officials are showing the biggest opposition to every initiative that aims to improve the conditions of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace.⁵⁵ After his election, Christodoulos initiated a project to change the population balance in Western Thrace in favor of Greeks. As part of 'family planning policy', Greek Orthodox Church decided allocation of additional allowance for the third child born in every Orthodox family in Thrace.⁵⁶ This project has been implemented with the decision of Holy Synod, which shows the importance of the topic. Population of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace is estimated between 100.000 and 120.000 people, which makes only 1,2% of the total population in Greece. However, the issue is perceived as politically sensitive exceeding the percentage of the population compared to the Greek one. Greek National Statistical Service does not offer certain numbers about minority's population in Western Thrace. Estimation is used since 1951 when question about religion affiliation was removed from the national census data.⁵⁷

2.2.1.1. Controversies on ID Cards and Planned Mosque in Athens

Modernization of Greece and secularism became one of the most discussed issues in 1990's. Secularization of the country has been discussed since decades without no progress. Growing number of the immigrants from different religious backgrounds, changed the structure of

⁵⁵ Hakan Baş, *Unutulan Batt Trakya Türkleri*, İzmir, Umay Yayınları, 2005, p. 120.

⁵⁶ Anastassios Anastasiadis, An Intriguing True-False Paradox: The Entanglement of Modernization and Intolerance in the Orthodox Church of Greece, in: *Orthodox Christianity in 21st Century Greece: The Role of Religion in Culture, Ethnicity and Politics*, (Eds.) Victor Roudometof & Vasilios N. Makrides, Surrey, Ashgate, 2010, p. 54.

⁵⁷ Lina Molokotos-Liederman, "Looking at Religion and Greek Identity from the Outside: The Identity Cards Conflict Through the Eyes of Greek Minorities", *Religion, State and Society*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (2007), p. 142.

Greek society, which until 1990's had been mostly homogenous. Growing number of Muslim immigrants, along with Greece's autochthonous Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace, boosted steps for modernization. Political decisions taken by the Greek Parliament were often contested by the Greek Orthodox with the fear of losing its dominant position in Greek society.

The issue of religion and society fueled discussion between Greek Government and the Greek Orthodox Church in 2000, when government issued a plan for the removal of religious affiliation on the ID cards. This step has been taken to ease the integration of people from different religious backgrounds into Greek society and to prevent religious discrimination. However, Archbishop Christodoulos opposed it, by stating that 'an ID card is not just administrative document, but also proof of one's personality'.⁵⁸ Situation escalated in short time and led to different discussions and focusing on the vital role of the Greek Orthodox Church to protect Greek nation.

In fact it has been long time since Church became worried of globalization and its possible effects on the Greek society, and the issue with ID cards presented the necessary opportunity to increase its conservative role in Greek politics, where political life is dominated by the European Integration. Ongoing diversity in Greek society, and its possible implications on the Greek national identity are interpreted as a threat to the Greek nationhood. According to Christodoulos, church is the only institution that is capable to protect Greek nation from harmful effects of the globalization process.⁵⁹ To demonstrate the support of people for the declaration of religion on ID cards, Church collected signatures from three

⁵⁸ Yannis Stavrakakis, "Politics and Religion: On the "Politicization" of Greek Church Discourse", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 21 (2003), p. 154.

⁵⁹ Victor Roudometof, The Evolution of Greek Orthodoxy in the Context of World Historical Globalization, in: *Orthodox Christianity in 21st Century Greece: The Role of Religion in Culture, Ethnicity and Politics*, (Eds.) Victor Roudometof & Vasilios N. Makrides, Surrey, Ashgate, 2010, p. 33.

million people.⁶⁰ This action had a symbolic meaning beyond mere declaration of supporters, in which Church openly confronted the government with the support of citizens. Moreover, through the use of past, and connecting current challenges with it, Christodoulos tried to increase the presence of religious institutions, by declaring the Greek Government as incapable of protecting Hellenism and its ideals.⁶¹

Another controversy arose when a project for building central Mosque in Athens has been revealed. In order to meet the need of growing number of Muslim immigrants in Greece, Greek Government decided to build a Mosque outside of the city center of Athens. Situation of religious freedom in Greece has been often criticized by various non-governmental organizations and the European Union, as Athens is the only capital without an official mosque, despite the presence of a large Muslim immigrant community, whose numbers are estimated around one million.⁶² Again, with the intervention of the Greek Orthodox Church, the whole discourse of building a mosque in Athens has been made through a direct reference to the Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace, Turkey and the Ottoman past.

Establishment of a place of worship requires special permit in Greece which is asked from any religion except the Greek Orthodox Church. Non-separation of church and the state showed itself in a different way during the discourse of building a mosque in Athens. According to the Greek legislation from 1930s, opinion of the local Orthodox bishop is required in order to give permission for the establishment of venue of worship for another religion. Mandatory Act 1363/1938 and its amendment with Act 1672/1939, are the legal regulation in the background of this application.⁶³ In other words, these legal acts are regulating superiority of the Orthodox Church on all other religions in Greece in terms of worship.

⁶⁰ Lina Molokotos-Liederman, p. 146.

⁶¹ Yannis Stavrakakis, p. 157-158.

⁶² Lina Molokotos-Liederman, p. 142.

⁶³ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 93; Dia Anagnostou and Ruby Gropas, p. 95.

Intervention of the Archbishop Christodoulos took very extreme form. He connected building of a mosque in Athens with the return of the Turkish rule in Greece. Symbolic meaning of a mosque, became motive for objection of the Greek Orthodox Church, which symbolized to them 'Turkish yoke'.⁶⁴ Consequently, Christodoulos reiterated his demands towards Turkey regarding reopening of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul for Orthodox Christian worship. Hence, the issue of building mosque in Athens, escalated from internal religious freedom in Greece into reciprocity of minority rights between Greece and Turkey.⁶⁵ Despite the project has been approved by the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church, it is not implemented up until now.

Connecting building of a mosque with the minority rights reciprocity between Greece and Turkey, could be interpreted as a provocative discourse of the Greek Orthodox Church. Apart from being an alleged act to protect its privileged position in Greek society, Greek Orthodox Church tried to sustain its influence on the design and implementation of political issues, which were challenged by the Europeanization of the Greek political life.⁶⁶ Religious hierarchy in Greece, where Orthodox Church is at the top level, causes lack of interreligious dialogue in Greece and church is using this tension in order to strengthen its position in Greek social and political life.⁶⁷ This is why impossible conditions are put by the Greek Church in order to make ongoing tensions permanent.

⁶⁴ Dimitris Antoniou, The Mosque that was not There: Ethnographic Elaborations on Orthodox Conceptions of Sacrifice, in: *Orthodox Christianity in 21st Century Greece: The Role of Religion in Culture, Ethnicity and Politics*, (Eds.) Victor Roudometof & Vasilios N. Makrides, Surrey, Ashgate, 2010, p. 157-158.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 161; Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, p. 184.

⁶⁶ Evangelia Psychogiopoulou, The European Court of Human Rights in Greece: Litigation, Rights Protection and Vulnerable Groups, in: *The European Court of Human Rights and the Rights of Marginalized Individuals and Minorities in National Context*, (Eds.) Dia Anagnostou & Evangelia Psychogiopoulou, Leiden, Nijhoff Publishers, 2010, p. 122.

⁶⁷ Lina Molokotos-Liederman, p. 156.

When Christodoulos in the name of the Greek Orthodox Church demanded these impossible changes from Turkey, reactions of the Turkish side usually focused on the requested opinion of the Orthodox Church to establish non-orthodox places of worship. Very interesting drawing was published on Zaman daily newspaper in Turkish, illustrating the situation in Greece, which is shown in figure 1.



Figure1: Drawing from Zaman daily newspaper (source) in Turkish from March 11, 2003, where cross and crescent are put together on the building to illustrate complexity of building the mosque in Athens. Inside the structure its written in Turkish “Atina Camii’nin Yolu Kiliseden Geçiyor” which means “the path to the mosque in Athens passes through the church”.

This process once again, revealed that the debate about religious freedom in Greece is strictly connected with nationalism and mainly driven by the Orthodox Church, which aims to keep its privileged position and tries to develop resistance against the challenges of globalization which are likely to change the structure of Greek society. Aforementioned both cases, are the major events in the last decade, which showed the changing nature of state church relations in Greece.

2.2.2. “Religious Minority” Recognition Versus “Ethnic Identity” Claims

The issue of ‘ethnic self-identification’ in Western Thrace, became to be the most problematic and resistant one following the signing of Lausanne Peace Treaty in 1923. Lausanne Peace Treaty, Protection of Minorities section deals with the rights granted to the non-Muslims in Turkey and Muslim community in Greece. The lack of direct reference to the ethnic Turkish identity turned to be problematic in 1930s. Formation of contemporary Turkey as a modern nation state and her will to keep close contact with kin minorities left beyond the border of new country, changed the discourse of minority protection into ethnic competition. Soon after having its political borders confirmed with Lausanne Treaty, Greece started the process of Hellenization of new lands namely Western Thrace which was acquired after the First World War. First step was to change the names of places from Turkish into Greek and to destroy last remnants of the Ottoman rule.⁶⁸

During these first years under the Greek rule, mobilization of minority did not take place only through religion but also through Turkish language. The effect of modernization in Turkey showed itself also in Western Thrace where ethnic identification became an important element to face the ‘other’, in this case Greeks. It can be discussed though how vital the language is in this process, since some scholars base their ideas mainly on the Turkish language as a catalyzer for the Turkish self-identification.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, it is obvious that education played an important role in the process of Greek nation building in nineteenth century and further after the population exchange that took place. Mostly those Greeks who came from Anatolia were settled in Western Thrace at the beginning, and they were speaking Turkish. In order to foster their integration into contemporary Greek society education was sought as the only vehicle to promote the use of Greek, which may help

⁶⁸ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis (a), p. 171.

⁶⁹ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 42.

for the formation of homogenous nation.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, application of this methodology in the 'homogenization process' of Greek nation created certain sensitivity regarding the issue of ethnic belonging, which has been perceived as the corner stone of nationhood. Distinction between Greeks and non-Greeks, including religious minorities has been interpreted as a threat to the unity of Greece.⁷¹ Therefore religious affiliation became dominant in a way being less demanding, while ethnic identification of non-Greek groups has always been perceived as a potential for irredentist movement.

Meanwhile, given the nature of Greek-Turkish relations in 1950s, revision of minority policy in Greece took place. Educated elite of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Greece, started to demand the ethnic recognition of the minority in Western Thrace.⁷² In line with these demands, Greek Government started to use terms 'Turk-Turkish' instead of 'Muslim'. Following the process of demand made by the government, local public administration offices were ordered to use the term 'Turkish' when addressing minority in Western Thrace.⁷³ Although there is no official document revealed from the archives of the Greek Government, by looking at the documents issued at local level, it is possible to understand that the order came from the central government in Athens.

With the eruption of conflict in Cyprus in 1970s, ethnic recognition of Turks became again a problematic issue. Turkey's intervention in Cyprus augmented fears among the Greeks, who thought that Western Thrace might face the same problem. Sharp shift of Greek policy took place towards minority in Western Thrace. Since then, more restrictive policies started to be implemented not only in terms of ethnic self-identification but also regarding the use of word 'Turkish' by any association in Western Thrace. Existing

⁷⁰ Dimitrios Zachos, Citizenship, Ethnicity, and Education in Modern Greece, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 27 (2009), p. 134.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁷² A. Triandafyllidou & A. Paraskevopoulou, p. 91.

⁷³ *Distroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Greece*, Helsinki Watch Report, New York, 1990, p. 51-52; Dia Anagnostou (a), p. 101.

associations which used designation 'Turkish' in their names, were classified as dangerous for territorial integrity of Greece.⁷⁴ Following this process, the use of terms such as Greek Muslims, Hellenic Muslims or Muslim Minority⁷⁵ is encouraged, in order to underestimate the ethnic character of minority in Western Thrace. Moreover, Greek Supreme Court prohibited the use of word Turkish in the names of organizations and associations created by the Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace.⁷⁶

After framing political and legal aspects of anti-Turkish regulations, Greek Orthodox Church got engaged with the issue again. Church members started to make special warnings through media regarding the demographic balance between Greek and Turks in Western Thrace. Exactly at this time, Greek Church started to offer financial incentives to Greek families in Western Thrace for the third child.⁷⁷ It can be interpreted as a real dilemma to deny ethnic character of minority while following campaign against it by using ethnic Turkish designation. Greek institutions, tried to control population of minority in Western Thrace and change the demographic balance in favor of Greeks by using the issue of ethnic self-identification.⁷⁸

The case of Ahmet Sadik is important to evaluate legal and political consequences of the ethnic self-identification issue in Greece. Dr. Ahmet Sadik put his independent candidacy for the Greek Parliamentary elections in 1989. Sadik was elected for the Parliament at the election that took place in June 1989. Since no government was formed, second election took place in November 1989. Despite Sadik put his candidacy again, he was not elected. His candidacy was declared to be invalid 'due to some technical problems'.⁷⁹ Moreover being charged with the use of term Turkish, he was arrested. He

⁷⁴ Paul Hidirlioglu, p. 10.

⁷⁵ Hakan Baş, p. 69.

⁷⁶ A. Triandafyllidou & A. Paraskevopoulou, p. 91.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 89.

⁷⁸ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis (b), p. 179.

⁷⁹ Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Greece, Helsinki Watch Report, New York, 1990, p. 17-18.

was accused of distributing printed materials, where he described the ethnic identity of minority in Western Thrace as Turkish. Dr. Sadik spent 64 days in prison. Meanwhile this issue created conflict between Greek and Turkish communities in Western Thrace, where shops belonging to Turkish people were either destroyed or burned by extremists who were protesting against the ethnic self-identification of minority in Thrace.⁸⁰ In such an environment Sadik was kept as the only responsible for disturbing public order, since Greek police did not arrest anyone from the Greek demonstrators who damaged properties and shops belonging to the Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace. When Sadik applied to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) his application was rejected based on the criteria that domestic remedies are not exhausted. Nevertheless, based on the findings of the Court, it becomes clear that legal provisions of Greek Government denying the existence of ethnic minority are found groundless.⁸¹ Hence, it may be accepted as wider interpretation of the criteria “existence of minorities is not a matter of law, it is a fact”.

Ethnic identity of the minority in Western Thrace still continues to be a problem for the Turkish/Muslim minority as well as for Greek-Turkish bilateral relations. In her speech at the meeting of European Christian Democrats-European Democrats Group held in Istanbul, in 2005, Greek Minister of Education and Religious Affairs Marietta Yanakku, explicitly said that “there is no Turkish minority in Western Thrace, according to Lausanne Peace Treaty Greece has only Muslim minority”.⁸² This phrase is the official policy of the Greek Government towards Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace for more than three decades now. Most of the time ethnic issues are being used by political parties and Greek Orthodox Church in order to boost Greek nationalism and to put real borders between minority and majority in Thrace.

⁸⁰ Dia Anagnostou (a), p. 101.

⁸¹ Patrick Thornberry & Maria Amor Martin Estebanez, p. 43.

⁸² Fehim Kelahmet, *Bati Trakya Turk Azinligi, Yuksek Kurulu Yurutme Komitesi Danisma Kurulu Belgeleri (1984-2005)*, Gumulcine (Komotini), BTTADK Yayinlari, 2006, p. 309.

2.3. BULGARIA: NATIONALISM AND GRADUAL DECREASE OF MINORITY PROTECTION UNTIL 1944

Independence of Greece and its implications in the Balkan peninsula were really important. Greek national revival process had also effects on the Bulgarian one. Paisii's book *Istoria Slaviano-Balgarska* described in detail features of Bulgarian culture along the necessity to use Bulgarian language in everyday life and to put a distance between Greeks and Bulgarians since they are two different nations.⁸³ Apart from language and culture, Paisii gave also additional information on the history of Bulgarians by emphasizing on the achievements made in the past. In his words, Bulgaria's status under Ottoman Empire was identical with slavery. In different parts of his book, he mentions that Bulgarians were enslaved by Turks after the conquest of the country and were put under Greek dominance, which is explained as the reason of erosion of Bulgarian language and culture.⁸⁴ Following massive printing and distribution of his book, several other printed materials occurred in order to strengthen Bulgarian identity and struggle for nationhood. However, as a result of this process, Bulgarian nationalism turned to be a product of exclusive ideas which were built to put distance between Greeks and Bulgarians and to justify Bulgarian bid for nation state against the Ottomans. Once again, education had been accepted as a tool to spread the idea of ethnic difference. Creation of secular Bulgarian schools was encouraged instead of existing Greco-Bulgarian schools⁸⁵, which were perceived as a reason of Greek dominance among the Bulgarians.

Since language and authentic culture were perceived as the most important elements of ethnic belonging, Bulgarian elite showed great effort to produce and integrate everyday life stories into this conjuncture.

⁸³ Paisii Hilendarski, p. 177-178.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 140-143, 177.

⁸⁵ Maria Todorova (c), The Course and Discourses of Bulgarian Nationalism, in: *Eastern European Nationalism in Twentieth Century*, (Ed.) Peter F. Sugar, Washington, The American University Press, 1995, p. 73.

Chronicles were written to show the sufferings of Bulgarians under the Ottoman rule and how forced conversion to Islam took place in Seventeenth century Bulgarian lands. In order to make it more effective, stories were revised where Greek monks were depicted as supporters of the Ottoman oppressions towards Bulgarians.⁸⁶ In fact this type of material had been prepared just to intensify the division between Greeks and Bulgarians and to boost separation process of Bulgarian Exarchate from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, which for long had been perceived as a Greek religious institution. After the creation of Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870, Bulgarian elite started to make progress towards independence of the Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire. Three different elements language, culture and religion were defined as crucial for the bid of independence.

Following the Russo-Turkish war in 1877-1878, defining the borders of new Bulgarian state became the most important issue in the Balkans. Bulgarian nationalists were in favor of Great Bulgaria, considering the largest territorial expansion of medieval Bulgarian Kingdom. San Stefano Treaty imposed by Russia, was designed to realize Bulgarian aims without taking into account ethnic composition of the areas that were supposed to become part of Great Bulgaria.⁸⁷ But imposition of the Berlin Peace Treaty, was interpreted as injustice by the Bulgarian nationalists. Intervention of Western Powers and requests for minority rights in newly established Bulgarian Principality, reduced the chances to create homogenous state free of national minorities, since recognition of Bulgarian Principality was conditional upon respect towards minority rights. In line with these demands from the west, Bulgarian elite, strongly defended the idea that Bulgaria will be the 'new home' not only for the Bulgarian nation, but also for other people from different ethnic/religious backgrounds.

⁸⁶ Maria Todorova (b), Conversion to Islam as Trope in Bulgarian Historiography: Fiction and Film, in: *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory*, (Ed.) Maria Todorova, New York, New York University Press, 2004, p. 133.

⁸⁷ Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria*, London, Hurst & Co, 1997, p. 5.

Under the effect of pressures from the European powers, Bulgaria could not sign comprehensive population exchange with the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, emigration of Turks from Bulgaria to Turkey was rather unorganized process which took individual character as a result of local disputes connected with the attacks of Bulgarian irregular troops. This made unique difference compared to Greece and Greek-Turkish population exchange. In spite of large number of Turks who left Bulgaria for Turkey, still Bulgaria had sizeable Turkish minority. Post World War I period became important not only for minorities in Bulgaria, but also for Bulgarian nationalism. Territorial expansion of Bulgaria stopped and nationalist sentiments had been directed towards citizens with non-Bulgarian consciousness.

Sensitive balance between the ethnic and religious groups was sought through liberal Tarnovo Constitution adopted in 1879. In fact, this document was designed in a way to comply with the obligations Bulgaria was bound to because of international treaties signed in the past. However, with being one of the most progressive constitutions in Europe⁸⁸, Tarnovo Constitution started to be accepted as an obstacle for those who wanted to stop the cultural and educational progress of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. These efforts which lead to the suspension of the Tarnovo Constitution in 1934 will be explained below.

On the other side, after the creation of contemporary Turkey, bilateral relations between Bulgaria and Turkey continued to improve which resulted with signing the Treaty of Friendship Between Bulgaria and Turkey in 1925. This document, being the first one signed between Turkey and Bulgaria referred to Muslims in Bulgaria as minority, an aspect which was criticized by some Bulgarian scholars, who denied the existence of the Turkish

⁸⁸ James W. Warhola & Orlina Boteva, "The Turkish Minority in Contemporary Bulgaria", *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (2003), p. 258.

minority in Bulgaria.⁸⁹ With a special protocol signed at the same date in Ankara, both countries agreed not to put any hindrance to the voluntary migration of the Turkish (Muslim) minority from Bulgaria to Turkey, and the migration of Bulgarians (Christians whose mother tongue is Bulgarian) from Turkey to Bulgaria. The lack of direct reference to the Turkish minority in Bulgaria was interpreted in a way that contemporary Turkish Republic had nothing to do with the Muslims in Bulgaria since they were all Bulgarian citizens (an opinion which continued to dominate Bulgarian political discourse over a century).

With the evolution of Turkish nationalism, Turks in Bulgaria started to develop ethnic consciousness. Turkish minority had close contacts with Turkey, which showed itself in the daily life of Bulgaria after the World War I. Education became again the most important tool for constructing ethnic belongingness and for sustaining this identity, as it was the case with Greek and Bulgarian nationalism. The Turkish Alphabet reform⁹⁰ created different reactions not only in Turkey but also in Bulgaria. At the time of its adoption by Turkey, Turks in Bulgaria were following education still with Arabic script. Since the independence of Bulgaria, Turks formed organizations to increase their role in the society and Bulgarian political life. Discussions on the adoption of new Turkish letters by the Turks in Bulgaria, caused division between two different organizations. The Chief Mufti (responsible for the organization of religious issues for Muslims in Bulgaria) in Sofia, was strictly against the idea of Alphabet reform for the Turks in Bulgaria. He was supported by the Bulgarian Government, as they wanted to distance Turks in Bulgaria from Turkey. Change of the script was perceived as an opportunity to divide culturally Turks in Bulgaria from the Turks in Turkey.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Ivan Radev, *Hronologia na Edna Istina*, *Zora* Newspaper, 4 August 1992.

⁹⁰ In 1928 the Law on the adoption of Turkish Alphabet has passed with the initiative of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as a result of which Turkey abandoned Arabic script and adopted Latin letters.

⁹¹ Bilal N. Şimşir, *The Turks of Bulgaria (1878-1985)*, London, K. Rustem & Brother, 1988, p. 96.

However, Turkish Teachers' Association, established in 1906, with its modernist views was in favor of the adoption of new Turkish letters by the Turks in Bulgaria. Considering the fact that conservative Chief Mufti in Sofia was backed by the Bulgarian Government and reformist Turkish Teachers' Association was supported by the Turkish Embassy in Sofia, the issue with new Turkish letters turned to be a rough competition for influence on the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. At the end of the process, modernists with the Turkish Teachers' Association won the battle, and new Turkish letters were introduced simultaneously with Turkey.⁹² Conservative front, with the leadership of the Bulgarian Ministry of National Education, answered by prohibiting the use of the new Alphabet. Escalation of the debate resulted with the intervention of the Turkish Government. In the meantime, 'Turkish Teachers' Association formed a special commission which was sent to Sofia to discuss the problem with Bulgarian officials.⁹³ Finally the issue was solved with the acceptance of the new Turkish letters by the Turks in Bulgaria.

Following this reform, Turkish press in Bulgaria with newspapers called *İntibah* and *Turan* ahead started to use the new script. However, it took some time till the reform was spread all around the country, since newspapers controlled by the conservatives, still used the old Turkish alphabet. With the initial support of the Bulgarian Ministry of National Education, new Turkish scripts started to be used widely in Bulgaria from September 1930.⁹⁴ This situation made it easier to follow intellectual developments and modernization steps in Turkey. Therefore, Turkish minority in Bulgaria experienced the changes of the reforms which Atatürk did in Turkey.

Meanwhile, all these positive steps continued only until 1934, the year when military *junta* started to rule Bulgaria. Military and political organization

⁹² Ibid., p. 96-97.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 100-101.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 103; Lilia Petkova, "The Ethnic Turks in Bulgaria: Social Integration and Impact on Bulgarian-Turkish Relations, 1947-2000, *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (2002), p. 43.

formed in 1927 by army officers called as 'Zveno' created an authoritarian fascist regime in Bulgaria. Consequences of this regime change were more severe for the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Schools belonging to Turkish minority were closed, *Vakıf** properties were confiscated, publication of newspapers in Turkish was prohibited along with the total ban of the use of new Turkish letters.⁹⁵ Within six months after coming to the rule, authoritarian regime changed the names of 1900 villages from Turkish into Bulgarian. This process aimed to stop the modernization efforts of Turkish minority in Bulgaria and to make them more conservative since newspapers published in old script were not closed. Another aspect of these actions was to force the Turks to remain only as Muslims and not to develop an ethnic identity.

With the time passing, educational and cultural life of the Turkish minority became really limited. Following the negotiations between Turkish and Bulgarian Governments, in 1938, Bulgarian King Boris III, agreed to resume education with the new Turkish letters for the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.⁹⁶ This event marked the end of the conflict about the new and old letters. However, by looking at the period between 1920s and 1940s, it is possible to come to the conclusion that, educational infrastructure of the Turkish minority had suffered severe damages. The number of schools belonging to the Turkish minority in Bulgaria were approximately 1700 in 1920s, and were reduced to almost 400 in 1940s as a result of the measures taken by the Bulgarian Government.⁹⁷ This situation resulted in the increasing difference of intellectual abilities between Bulgarians and Turks, in which the latter were simply disadvantaged due to different circumstances of Bulgarian social and political life. Nevertheless, these changes were important to notice that, obligations undertaken with the

* *Vakıf*: is a type of charitable institution and religious endowment in Islamic Law.

⁹⁵ Thomas F. Michel, "The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1990), p. 271.

⁹⁶ Bilal Şimşir, p. 121.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 120.

treaties signed in the past, might be always conditional to political changes and reinterpretations.

2.4. COMMUNIST RULE AND THE RISE OF BULGARIAN NATIONALISM: INTEGRATION WHICH TURNED TO ASSIMILATION, 1945-1989

In 1944 Bulgaria was liberated by the *Soviet Red Army*. Fatherland Front created with the leadership of Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) was engaged with establishing communist rule in Bulgaria. However, on the other side Bulgarian Agrarian National Union was supporting the creation of western style democracy in Bulgaria. This contest continued with the persuasive policies towards Bulgarian population in order to attract their support and interest. In this process Turkish minority became really key factor in Bulgaria, since its support was of vital importance for both sides. Some liberal policies were accepted in order to have the support of the Turkish minority who was mainly living in rural areas. This included granting land to 45.000 peasants for agricultural production.⁹⁸

Nevertheless, many of these steps were taken just to spur some more positivity towards Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP). Bulgaria's first Communist leader Georgi Dimitrov, had an interesting speech during the meeting of the central committee of Bulgarian Labor Party, which was held in Moscow on February 6, 1945. The words of Dimitrov revealed the future scope of Bulgaria's minority policy towards Turks:

National minorities have to be offered with full rights, but we have to be careful with the Turks. They must be treated equally, they have to have the same political and citizenship rights as Bulgarians,

⁹⁸ Ulrich Buchsenschutz, *Maltsinstvenata Politika v Balgaria. Politikata na BKP kam Evrei, Romi, Pomatsi i Turtsi(1944-1989)*, Sofia, IMIR, 2000, p. 125.

*possibility to study in their own language, and to have their own schools and mosques. However, they should not constitute particular national movement, which might create Turkish sentiments in Bulgaria. We want to separate Turkey from Europe. Therefore, Turks should not be allowed to form any national union and get elected to the national parliament as Turkish national community, but it should be under the common ground as Bulgarian citizens from Turkish origin.*⁹⁹

The statement of Dimitrov, gives an idea about the plans of the new Bulgarian Government regarding the situation of Turkish minority in Bulgaria and its anti-Turkish orientation which in the following two decades culminated into an extreme form of nationalism. Three days after Dimitrov's speech, Central Committee of BCP in Sofia, organized a conference with the aim to discuss the problems of the Turkish minority. Turks who were Fatherland Front members also participated at the event. However there was a huge difference between the demands of both sides. Turks were asking for an equal access regarding the jobs in public administration, while BCP members were looking for the support of the Turkish minority representatives in the elections that were scheduled to take place in October 1946.¹⁰⁰ Organization of these events was important for the BCP in attracting the support of different angles of the society if their bid for ruling Bulgaria.

Following the elections in October 1946, communist regime had been established in Bulgaria and new Bulgarian Constitution was accepted in 1947, which changed Bulgarian system into Peoples Republic. With the article 79 of the new Constitution of Bulgaria, existence of the national

⁹⁹ TsDA, F. 1B, o. 6, a.e. 32, l. 5. (Central State Archive, Bulgaria).

¹⁰⁰ Ibrahim Yalimov, *Istoria and Turskata Obshtnost v Balgaria*, Sofia, Ilinda – Evtimov EOOD, 2002, p. 284.

minorities and their rights were officially recognized.¹⁰¹ But despite these guarantees, different interpretations took place in order to disable independent cultural and educational development. Private Turkish minority schools were nationalized in 1947/1948 to enable Government's intervention on a more systematic way. The issue with providing books for the Turkish minority schools was revised, and Bulgarian authorities decided to print new educational materials in Bulgaria, instead of bringing them from Turkey. Two ideological motives stood behind this decision of Bulgarian Government. First, the use of the books printed in Turkey, would allow the Turkish minority in Bulgaria to follow the same curriculum as Turkish students in Turkey, which was perceived as a threat for the exclusion of the minority from Bulgarian social and cultural life. Second, after the establishment of communism in Bulgaria, ideological division with Turkey became more clear, since Turkey decided to form alliance with the West, designing and printing of new educational materials in Bulgaria, would allow the Government to imbue communist principles among the new generations.¹⁰²

The spread of Bulgarian communist ideology in Turkish language was not restricted only to school, it covered almost every aspect of the social and political life. Several newspapers such as *Eylülcü Çocuk* and *Dostluk* were published with the support of Soviet and Bulgarian officials in order to include the Turks in the process of communist nation building which was planned in Bulgaria. The methodology of the communist rule was to educate Turks in Turkish language, and to encourage their participation in the daily life of the country.

Reactions among the Turkish minority toward these developments was different. Starting with the establishment of communism, developments followed by the nationalization of minority schools, many Turks started to

¹⁰¹ See Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria: <http://www.parliament.bg/bg/18> available only in Bulgarian.

¹⁰² Ibrahim Yalimov, p. 295.

hand in petitions to the Turkish consulates for emigration from Bulgaria.¹⁰³ Still this issue did not take massive character until the collectivization process was launched. When this campaign of forcible collectivization of agricultural lands reached areas where Turks were living, situation deteriorated significantly.¹⁰⁴ BCP wanted to attract more Turkish members into the structures of the organization by forming the so called *Turkish intelligentsia*, which would serve for a larger support of communist and nationalist ideas among the Turkish minority.

The situation of the Turkish minority was discussed several times in different meetings. Religious orientation of the Turkish minority had been perceived as a threat to its modernization along the lines of communism. Therefore, communists decided to fight against religion in order to encourage secular Turkish identity in Bulgaria.¹⁰⁵ Low level of literacy among the Turkish minority, made it necessary to develop an approach to spread the ideas of communism via Turkish language which apparently had different impact on Turks. For the sake to sustain support to the regime, there were critics among the BCP members that Turkish ethnic identity is spread among the Turks very fast through the educational campaigns and additional courses organized. However, this situation was tolerated until some degree to enable the construction of communist regime at reasonable level.¹⁰⁶ The presence of Turkish became more evident in daily life of Bulgaria and several Turkish schools opened to educate Turkish children. Opening of the Department of Turkish Philology at Sofia University had been accepted as a step forward in the integration of minority. But due to lack of educated personnel in Turkish language, experts from Azerbaijan were invited in Bulgaria in order to teach the members of Turkish minority according to communist ideals. Also some members of minority were sent to

¹⁰³ Bilal Şimşir, p. 153.

¹⁰⁴ Antonina Zhelyazkova, "Bulgaria in Transition: The Muslim Minorities", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 12, No. 3, p. 288.

¹⁰⁵ Ulrich Buchsenschutz, p. 73.

¹⁰⁶ TsDA, F. 1B, o. 6, a.e. 1942, l. 204-214, 1953.

the Soviet Union for higher education for the purposes of having *Turkish intelligentsia* with communist feelings¹⁰⁷ who would be later responsible for its promotion among the members of minority.

Again in the mid-1950s, policy towards Turkish minority took different course. For some members of the BCP, cultural autonomy of the Turkish minority was found dangerous for the aims of Bulgarian communism. Ongoing resistance among the members of Turkish minority against the collectivization of agricultural lands was interpreted as hostility towards communist regime. Inasmuch ten years passed after the establishment of communism in Bulgaria, reluctance of the Turkish minority to be part of the regime and resistance to collectivization or land expropriation process, were accepted further as an extreme form of Turkish nationalism and conservatism. The process of collectivization was not welcomed by the Turkish minority since they had interpreted it as land expropriation, that communists conducted in order to make them deprived from their main agricultural activities. Collectivization process had different results in Bulgaria: by 1956, 75% of the agricultural land in Ruse was expropriated, while in regions like Tolbuhin and Targovishte this was 80% and 90% respectively.¹⁰⁸ Considering the fact that collectivization process of the land in Haskovo region was only around 50%, and more than 80% of its population was of Turkish origin, fears raised among the members of BCP regarding the progress of communist regime in Bulgaria and its acceptance by the members of the minority.

Heavy atmosphere of nationalism started to show itself first in the form of communist social construction. Those Turks who actively participated in the establishment of communism in Bulgaria, started to complain first about the presence of Bulgarian nationalism and its rise in every sphere of the society. Majority of the complaints were related with the

¹⁰⁷ TsDA, F. 1B, o. 6, a.e. 1942, l. 204-214, 1953.

¹⁰⁸ Ulrich Buchsensschutz, p. 73.

privileged status of Bulgarians who were working together with Turks in public administration and agricultural production. By giving example of cases such as shorter office hours and less working load for Bulgarians, Turks expressed their criticism for the heavy presence of Bulgarian nationalism and discrimination based on ethnic grounds at work.¹⁰⁹ However, this situation has been interpreted by Bulgarian officials as “perception of ethnic segregation from the side of Turkish minority”. Because of this reason, they decided to speed up the process of ethnic homogenization in order to prevent these complaints based on “nationalist grounds”.

In line with these developments, several measures were taken by the BCP to end up the cultural autonomy of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Once again, education became a tool to intervene in the affairs of Turkish minority. Following the nationalization process of minority schools in 1947, this time in 1959, Turkish schools were merged with Bulgarian schools.¹¹⁰ This process has been followed by the gradual increase of Bulgarian curriculum at the expense of the Turkish one taught in the schools of the Turkish minority.

Merger of Turkish minority schools was a product of a meeting of the Central Committee of BCP (known as *Априлският пленум на ЦК на БКП*) which took place between 2-6 April 1956. For the first time after coming to the rule, communist leader Zhivkov, defines the lines of the policy called ‘further integration of national minorities into Bulgarian society’.¹¹¹ Main target of this policy was to create homogenous Bulgarian society by eliminating divisions along ethnic and religious lines, and to continue the process of building communism in Bulgaria.

¹⁰⁹ TsDA, F. 1B, o. 91, a. e. 1230, l. 2-6, 7-9, 1958.

¹¹⁰ Bilal Şimşir, p. 198.

¹¹¹ Ibrahim Yalimov, p. 325.

Following the consolidation of Turkish schools with Bulgarian schools, curricula taught in Turkish have been reduced dramatically. This started to rise fears of assimilation among the minority. The issue with reducing Turkish curriculum was not welcomed also by the Turkish members of the BCP. Therefore, instead of cutting education in Turkish directly, its gradual decrease was preferred in order to keep limited negative reactions of Turkish minority.¹¹² First, Turkish started to be taught at the schools as a facultative language and then by 1970 it totally disappeared from the curriculum of all schools in Bulgaria.

Meanwhile, BCP started also an intellectual propaganda by publishing books which included arguments that Turks in Bulgaria are from Bulgarian origin. In cooperation with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, BCP wanted to spread the idea that "Turks in Bulgaria are actually of Bulgarian origin". In order to defend this idea the following method was used: publication of various books on the history of Ottoman Empire and its presence in Bulgaria had been encouraged. By referring to the book of Paisii Hilendarski, Ottoman period has been described as slavery for Bulgarians. Nevertheless, the striking arguments were formed exactly based on this idea. BCP members with Zhivkov ahead, started to argue that Turks in Bulgaria were in fact assimilated Bulgarians during the five century long Ottoman rule.¹¹³ Therefore, it was assigned as a task to restore Bulgarian identity of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, and to integrate them fully back into Bulgarian society.

These extreme ideas of communist rule started to find more and more proponents among the leadership of BCP and Bulgarian intelligentsia. Decisions accepted by the Central Committee of BCP started to show their consequences in daily life of Bulgaria. Population registers became the first evidence of the assimilationist policies. Up until 1980s section about the

¹¹² TsDA, F. 1B, o. 91, a. e. 1359, l. 1-5, 1963.

¹¹³ TsDA, F. 1B, o. 34, a. e. 89, l. 83, 1967.

ethnic origin was indicated in population registers. However, after an order from the central Government, this part of the registers has been left empty.

Every single change made by the BCP, made inevitable for the last stage to happen. After serious policies targeting social economic and political life, ethnic diversity in Bulgaria was systematically destroyed. Following steps were more directed to fix the missing link between people and state policies.¹¹⁴ Meetings of the Central Committee were dominated by the debate that “Turkish minority has to be part of Bulgarian nation after this process which might be called either as integration or assimilation”.¹¹⁵ This was important to show the decisive character of Bulgarian approach towards Turkish minority and to show its limits.

2.4.1. Contractual Migration as a tool for Ethnic Cleansing during the Cold War

Since the very first days of Bulgarian independence, existence of non-Bulgarian communities - mainly Muslims - and mixed structure of the population has been perceived as a threat for the project called “nation state”. As the issue of forced migration has already been denied by the Western powers with the Berlin Treaty, Bulgaria started to seek other ways to create a unitary state. Despite that Russo-Turkish war ended in 1878, collective migration from Bulgaria was still continuing in 1880s. According to the numbers given by the French consul in Edirne, in the first three months of 1883, approximately 200.000 people crossed the border from Bulgaria to Turkey.¹¹⁶ These migration flows continued throughout the Balkan wars and First World War. Often, Turkish/Muslim minorities felt threatened by the policies of Bulgarian Government and the attacks of Bulgarian irregular

¹¹⁴ Mary Neuburger, p. 74.

¹¹⁵ TsDA, F. 1B. o. 34, a. E. 89, l. 83, 86-90.

¹¹⁶ Thomas F. Michel, p. 270.

troops, which were intensely focused on the areas where Turks live, in order to force them to emigrate from the new Bulgarian lands.

Singing of the Treaty of Friendship between Bulgaria and Turkey became another opportunity for Bulgaria to settle the issue of migration. Unlike Greece, Bulgarian authorities could not manage to make extensive migration agreement with Turkey and get rid of Turkish minority which was seen as an obstacle for the homogenous Bulgarian population. Considering the fact that the real growth of Turkish population was bigger than the Bulgarian one, Bulgarian authorities started to consider migration as the only solution to sustain demographic balance in favor of Bulgarians. After the *military coup d'état* in 1934, situation of the Turkish minority started to get worse due to restrictions imposed by the authoritarian government. Moreover, the fact that minority members were economically more deprived than the Bulgarian majority, increased the motives for emigration. According to the documents of BCP, in 1940, many Turks illegally crossed the border at night and emigrated from Bulgaria to Turkey.¹¹⁷

However, with the end of the Second World War, emigration from Bulgaria started to become part of the daily life. Part of this emigration was voluntary and part of it forced. Besides, migration in Bulgaria had two different types; internal and external. Its external dimension was mainly directed towards Turkey, composed of Turks who wanted to leave Bulgaria because of extreme poverty and limited resources. Nevertheless, in the south of Bulgaria, near the borders with Turkey and Greece a big part of the population was of Turkish/Muslim background including Pomaks* who were later called as 'Bulgarian Muslims. During the time of communist state building, cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the Turkish minority had been perceived as threat. Including the fact that compact Turkish minority was

¹¹⁷ TsDa, F. 176K, o. 7, a. e. 1137, l. 55-57, 1940.

* Muslim population who speaks a dialect of Bulgarian. After the independence of Bulgaria, Bulgarian State decided to assimilate them claiming that they are truly Bulgarians.

living in border areas where they comprised almost 90% percent of the total local population, was considered as vulnerability for Bulgarian frontiers, and their protection from enemies of the western world such as Turkey and Greece.

Aiming to eliminate this threat stemming from the demographic concentration of the Turkish minority, BCP decided to relocate part of the Turkish minority from Southern Bulgaria into Central and Northern part of the country where mainly Bulgarian population lived.¹¹⁸ This relocation would also serve for the 'voluntary assimilation' of the Turkish population among Bulgarians. Because according to the Communists, compact settlements of the Turks in Bulgaria, where no single Bulgarian among them lived, enabled them to preserve their culture and traditions. Therefore, in order to speed up the process of voluntary assimilation, BCP decided to move '*pure Bulgarians*' from the North and Central parts of the country to the South in order to increase cultural interaction in daily life and to speed up the process of integration of the Turkish minority into Bulgarian population. Since Turks were mostly living in villages and working in agricultural field or as tobacco producers, Bulgarian Government decided to take some measures to prevent the economic losses such kind of massive internal relocation might cause. Hereby migration of skilled Bulgarian farmers was encouraged to the Southern Bulgaria in order to reduce the losses in agricultural production.¹¹⁹ This could solve the economic problem for the government and also ease the process of assimilation in Southern Bulgaria, which was planned to take place in later stage.

After its discussion at the Plenum of Central Committee of BCP, decision regarding the internal relocation started to be implemented. According to Şimşir, in July 1948, five trains full of Turks, were moved from Rhodope mountains in the South of the country to the Northeastern region

¹¹⁸ TsDA, F. 1B, o. 6, a. e. 653, l. 4-5, 1949.

¹¹⁹ TsDA, F. 1B, o. 6, a. e. 653, l. 4-5, 1949.

called Dobruja. In October 1949, twenty eight trains full of Turks were moved from Momchilgrad(Mestanli) and Zlatograd towards Northern part of the country. Also in 1950, many families from the Southern regions were moved to cities like Razgrad and Shumen¹²⁰ in order to change the situation in Southern border areas which were densely populated by Turks. Despite the denial of Bulgarian officials for such kind of internal relocations in Bulgaria, during the fieldwork stage of this project, some interviews were conducted with the displaced people from South who are members of the Turkish minority. They have been settled all the way in the Northeastern part of the country, in regions such as Ruse, Silistra, Razgrad, Varna, Burgas and Shumen. But the interesting aspect of their relocation was the settlement style chosen by Turks in their new lands. Mostly, Turks who were forced to leave Southern regions and settled in the Northern parts of Bulgaria, preferred to create new villages with the same neighbors from South (with whom they travelled all the way), instead of going to the villages where local Turks were already living. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that cultural adherence played an important role while choosing their neighbors.¹²¹

When internal relocation did not assist policies of BCP, then external migration became a solution. Somehow, after the establishment of the communist regime in Bulgaria, Turks started to feel the restrictions of freedom first. Nationalization of Turkish schools, had already had bad impact on the Turks of Bulgaria and poor conditions in rural areas did not make the life easier for them. On the other side, newly established communist regime, continued to restrict the rights of minority with the motive that resurgence of the Turkish nationalism among Turks was taking place due to increasing mobility for migration to Turkey. With the census conducted in 1946, population of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria was officially announced as 675.500 people. This number was equal to 9,61% of the total Bulgarian

¹²⁰ Bilal Şimşir, p. 9.

¹²¹ An interview conducted with the 72 years old man from the village Topolitsa, whose members were mainly composed of Turks from the Kardzhali region and were relocated by the Bulgarian Government in 1950s(Interview date: 25 July 2010).

population¹²², and the real growth of the Turkish population was much higher than the Bulgarian. In line with these developments, on August 10, 1950, Bulgarian Government gave a note to Turkey, through which it expressed its request for the acceptance of 250.000 Turks as immigrants within three months.¹²³ The timing of this note was very meaningful, as the war in Korea broke up and Turkey supported United States by sending its troops to Korea. It is clear that, such extensive request for migration made by Bulgarian authorities was directed by the Soviet Union, in order to punish Turkey for her actions backing American side in Korea.

In its answer, Turkey expressed readiness to accept 250,000 Turks, however, in order to control the immigration process, put the requirement of obtaining an entry visa to Turkey. Despite the fact that 212,150 entry visas were granted to Turks, not all of them were able to immigrate in Turkey. The border was closed by the Turkish authorities in November 1951, as Bulgarian Government placed Gypsies without visas or fake entry visas among Turks, which was against the regulations of the Migration Protocol signed in 1925. Eventually, between 1950-1951, 154,393 Turks emigrated from Bulgaria to Turkey.¹²⁴ This migration wave gave an opportunity to Bulgarian Government to boost the collectivization process of agricultural land and get rid of those Turks, who were not eager to integrate into the communist system.

Meanwhile, soon after this process, in 1956, there was another census conducted in order to see the growth of Bulgarian population. Despite the migration in 1951, the number of the Turkish minority recorded an increase bigger than the percentage of the Bulgarian.¹²⁵ This situation

¹²² Natsionalen Statisticheski Institut: Rezultati ot Prebroiavaneto na Naselenieto (tom 1), Sofia, 1994, p. 106.

¹²³ Bilal Şimşir, p. 167.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 178.

¹²⁵ 1956 Population Census, Bulgaria: Total population – 7,613,709; Population of the Turkish Minority: 656,025. There were critics that actual numbers of Turks in Bulgaria was much higher, but

was regarded carefully by the Bulgarian authorities. Five years after the migration in 1951, Turks started to reorganize themselves for another emigration from Bulgaria. Given the effect of policies such as merging Turkish schools with Bulgarian schools, and gradual decrease of education in Turkish from 1962, tendency for emigration among the members of Turkish minority started to dominate the daily life.

In the meantime Central Committee of BCP was engaged with socio-demographic analysis of Bulgarian population. The growth rate of ethnic Bulgarian population compared to the Turkish one, was accepted with apprehension by BCP. Even comparative analysis about the general health conditions of both ethnic groups was designed in a way to show the real growth of the Turkish population in Bulgaria.¹²⁶

In the beginning of 1960s, after the restrictive measures in the cultural and educational life of the Turkish minority, tendency for emigration started to be spread among the Turks in Bulgaria. By the year 1964, almost 400,000 Turks applied to the Turkish representative offices in Bulgaria to emigrate to Turkey.¹²⁷ Harsh measures were taken by Bulgarian authorities to prevent Turks from reaching Turkish consulates.

Bulgarian Government interpreted this massive movement for emigration among the Turks, as a presence of 'extreme Turkish nationalism', rather than being a reaction to deteriorating standards of minority protection. Todor Zhivkov, started to develop the idea that, those Turks whose family members or relatives have already emigrated to Turkey, are more inclined for ethnic segregation due to the separation from their family members across the border. Consequently, in 1964, Bulgarian Government sent official request to the Turkish Government to reach another emigration

Bulgarian authorities registered some of the Turks as Gypsies or Bulgarians. Source: Bilal Şimşir, *The Turks of Bulgaria*, p. 207.

¹²⁶ Priloženie No. 1, TsDA, F. 1B, o. 55, a. e. 1316, l. 2-34, 1972.

¹²⁷ Bilal Şimşir, p. 211.

agreement. As a result of the diplomatic negotiations held between both countries, conclusion of an agreement was declared to the public on February 28, 1968, which aimed to unify broken families as a result of the emigration in 1950-1951.¹²⁸ People who were eligible to emigrate within the scope of this agreement for family unification, were give the right to do so by 1978. Approximately 130,000 people emigrated from Bulgaria to Turkey between 1969-1978 as a part of the Family Unification agreement.

With the last emigration of Turks, Todor Zhivkov managed to find more appropriate environment for the application of the so called policy of 'integration of the Turkish minority into Bulgarian nation', and to realize his goal of bringing the real communism in Bulgaria. Besides, emigration of Turks, was deliberately restricted with close family members and spread to ten years in order to limit the economic and demographic effects of the migration for both countries.

2.4.2. Revival Process and the Name Changing Campaign: The Last Exodus from Bulgaria

Bulgarian nationalism continued its rise during 1970s in the name of building the real communism in the country. Todor Zhivkov as the leader of BCP and Bulgaria, has planned every single detail of the process. According to him, inclusion of the Turkish minority in the process of communist state building in Bulgaria, would only be possible through its fully integration into Bulgarian nation, which in other words means assimilation. Apart from heavy nationalist propaganda directed to Turks, Bulgarian Government conducted also massive campaigns for the ideological aspects of Bulgarian

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 252.

communism.¹²⁹ Therefore, assimilation of the Turkish minority was spreading under the excuses of building real communism in Bulgaria.

BCP as the ruling power of Bulgaria for almost half a century, started to prepare the basis of the assimilation policy by claiming that Bulgaria is a unitary country. After the change of Bulgarian Constitution in 1971, the term 'national minorities' had been replaced with the term 'citizens of non-Bulgarian origin'. In line with this shift, in most of Politburo meetings conducted by the BCP in 1980s, the term 'citizens of non-Bulgarian origin' has been used instead of the Turkish minority. Again the use of Bulgarian language has been accepted as an indicator of the integration of Turkish minority into Bulgaria nation.¹³⁰ Therefore, speaking Bulgarian and conducting all the correspondence in Bulgarian became obligatory in order to show the level of integrity and homogenous character of Bulgarian population.

In 1982, after their Turkish names have been changed with Bulgarian ones, children born in Turkish-Pomak mixed marriages, started to face 'Bulgarization' campaign first. Document sealed as *top-secret*, contained information about the achievements of name changing campaigns among the people who formed mixed marriages, and the Committee for State Security considered further extension of the name changing process towards Turks.¹³¹ Changing the names of people with mixed marriages, started to rise concerns among the Turkish minority as well. Turks handed in petitions to the regional police offices to express their will for leaving the country. Nevertheless, Bulgarian Government, took some measures to cover up these cases. In return those people who wanted to leave the country, were accused with Turkish espionage by Bulgarian authorities.

¹²⁹ TsDA, F. 378B, o. 1, a. e. 1156, l. 1-34, 1975.

¹³⁰ TsDA, F. 1B, o. 63, a. e. 71, l. 1-39, 1982.

¹³¹ AMVR, F. 22, o. 1, a. E. 171, l. 46-59, 1982 (Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Bulgaria).

On the other side, Bulgarian academic institutions such as Bulgarian Academy of Sciences were busy to prove Bulgarian origins of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Leading theory for the Bulgarian origin of the Turks has been connected with the Ottoman past. According to the Bulgarian theses, during the five hundred years long Ottoman rule, while Pomaks (so called Bulgarian Muslims) were only converted to Islam and assimilated through the religion, those who were called as Turks in Bulgaria, were assimilated both through religious and ethnic means. Regarding the discourse about ethnic origin of the Turks in Bulgaria, soon, academic research material started to appear supporting the opinion of the Government. Kardzhali region was chosen for anthropological fieldwork, where some arranged excavations were conducted in order to prove Bulgarian origin of the Turks in the area. For example in 1982, a book called 'Ahrida' has been published under the authorship of Boris Deribeev, where comprehensive analysis about the Bulgarian origins of Turks exists.¹³² In 1986, when second edition of the book was published, the author indicated that, first edition of Ahrida has been accepted with very high interests mainly in the region of Kardzhali where Turks were living. He interpreted this issue as a demand of the Turkish minority to learn the truth about its real origins.

With the support of the press and academia, BCP slowly started to launch the massive name changing campaign among the Turks in Bulgaria. However, even at Politburo meetings, where only key members of Bulgarian Communist Party were accepted, conversations were distorted mainly due to the potential for use of the recorded archival documents against them in the future. Therefore, instead of the term 'assimilation of the Turkish minority', terms such as 'its inclusion into Bulgarian society' and 'to the struggle of building real communism in Bulgaria' were preferred.¹³³ Eventually this process of *Bulgarization* of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria

¹³² Boris Deribeev, *Ahrida: Nepoznata Zemja*, Sofia, Otechestven Front, 1982, p. 235-237.

¹³³ TsDA, F. 1B, o. 67, a. e. 3090, l. 58-139, 1984.

has been officially called as '*Revival Process*' (*Vazroditelniyat Protses*) of Bulgarian nation.

In a secret meeting conducted on July 4, 1984, at Boyana facilities, key members of BCP came together to discuss about the timing of the name changing campaign, and whether it will include all Turks in Bulgaria or only part of them. The meeting finishes without an agreement.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, it was helpful to prepare the background of Politburo meetings in October 1984, when the decision for launching massive name changing campaign has been taken. Moreover, during the meeting of the Central Committee of BCP on October 24, 1984, creation of 'Bulgarian Names Catalogue' has been arranged in order to make the whole name changing process more systematic and smooth.

With an order by Dimitar Stoianov, Minister of Internal Affairs of Bulgaria, the name changing campaign started on December 10, 1984. He further urged for the increase of security officers in the regions where Turks lived, to prevent any events from happening. The so called *Revival Process* and name changing campaign, took its start from Kardzhali region, where Turks comprised almost 90% of the population. Generals of Bulgarian army forwarded their recommendations to the 6th unit of State Security Agency which was also in charge of the process. For example, general Musakov recommended to cut all phone lines in villages where name changing is planned to take place.¹³⁵ Cutting all means of connection were important not to allow information to be spread around and reach to Turkish authorities.

During the name changing process, villages were occupied early in the morning and starting with 6am in the morning police forces were knocking the doors of every family to change their names. People were

¹³⁴ Orlin Zagorov, *Vazroditelniyat Protses: Teza i Antiteza, Otritsanie na Otritsaniето*, Sofia, Pandora Ltd., 1993, p. 25.

¹³⁵ AMVR, F. 22, o. 1, a. e. 257, l. 1-8, 1985.

forced to sign formal petitions which had fixed format, where they declared that name changing action was conducted by their own will. Police authorities collected old documents with Turkish names and issued new documents with Bulgarian names.¹³⁶

In an interview with people from the villages near Kardzhali they said the following:

During the name changing campaign every village was first surrounded by the army early in the morning, in order to block all exits. However, we tried to avoid the name changing for as long as we could. Therefore, among our neighbors in the village, we have organized shifts in key areas of the village to see whether military officers are coming or not. When someone had seen an army or police patrol approaching the village, all adults in the village, we were running in to the forest or to the mountains to hide from the military officers who were there to change our names. In this way we managed to postpone our name changing for couple of weeks, unfortunately in the end we were also forced to change our names.¹³⁷

In this case the attitude of government officials was decisive as they needed permission of parents to change the names of children who were aged under eighteen. When they came to the villages, they have found houses empty with children accompanied by their grandparents, who were not entitled to sign the necessary documents for name changing. Thus finding family members was crucial for the progress of name changing campaign.

¹³⁶ Mila Mileva Maeva, *Balgarskite Turtsi: Preselnitsi v Republika Turtsia, Kultura i Identichnost*, Sofia, IMIR, 2006, p. 30-31.

¹³⁷ Interview conducted on July 20, 2010, with a group of people from Benkovski, village in the Kardzhali district, near the Greek border.

In those areas of Southern Bulgaria, where name changing campaign was launched first, people started to organize protests. Various protests took place in Kardzhali, Cebel, Krumovgrad and Benkovski. During the protest in Benkovski, a seventeen months old baby was killed as a result of a gunfire launched by the Bulgarian army towards protesters. Many people were killed or imprisoned in protests which were spread all around Bulgaria. Those Turks who were kept responsible for organizing such uprisings against the government, were sent to the prison in Belene island situated on Danube river.

From December 1984 until March 1985, the names of 850.000 Turks were changed with Bulgarian ones. Central Committee of BCP, planned new policies in order to deepen the *Bulgarization* process of Turks. The use of Turkish language was prohibited in all public areas and those people who spoke Turkish were fined with five Bulgarian Leva.¹³⁸ Doctors were ordered not to treat patients who did not speak Bulgarian. Mosques were either closed or destroyed, since they were seen as a symbol of conservatism among the Turks.¹³⁹ Even crescents on top of the minarets were removed by officials who considered it as a symbol of the Turkish flag.

External reactions to the revival process in Bulgaria were different. Of course Eastern Block and Soviet Union supported Bulgaria. However, Turkey started a diplomatic campaign against Bulgaria, which led to the isolation of Bulgaria in the international organizations such as United Nations and Council of Europe. Turkish proposals for arranging another migration were refused by Bulgaria. Nevertheless, the Central Committee of BCP, was secretly considering the emigration of few hundred thousand Turks. Because according to them total number of the Muslims in Bulgaria

¹³⁸ Milena Mahon, "The Turkish Minority Under Communist Bulgaria – Politics of Ethnicity and Power", *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 157.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

was approximately 1,600,000¹⁴⁰ people by the year of 1988 including Turks, Roma and Pomaks. BCP members who were responsible for the revival process, considered these people in one way or another as natural allies of Turkey in Bulgaria.

With the time passing, protests and hunger strikes started to be spread in all Bulgarian cities. Zhivkov and BCP had difficulties explaining to the world the reasons of these protests. There were many critics that Bulgarian citizens did not have freedom to travel internationally. Thus BCP decided to issue passports for international travel of Bulgarian citizens who wanted to do so. However, people who have been kept responsible for provocations or organizing protests against the government, were expelled first from Bulgaria.

In May 1989, the border with Turkey was opened for migration and Turks started to emigrate from Bulgaria again. Bulgarian authorities had difficulty in issuing documents for all the Turks, since the number of applicants was growing every day. From May 25, 1989 opening of the border until its closure on August 21, 1989, 362,000 Turks emigrated from Bulgaria to Turkey.¹⁴¹

The effects of the last emigration of Turks in 1989 was really catastrophic for the Bulgarian economy. Most of the people who left the country were working population, either as teachers, doctors, or agricultural workers. This type of comprehensive economic and social change in Bulgaria, prepared the end of the communist rule, since people who were unsatisfied with their situation started to organize uprisings against the government.

¹⁴⁰ Meeting of the Group Responsible for the Revival Process, TsDA, F. 1B, o. 99, a. e. 2, l. 1-82.

¹⁴¹ Ibrahim Yalimov, p. 473.

On December 29, 1989, the Central Committee of BCP denounces the name changing campaign and revival process whose engineer was Todor Zhivkov. Following this decision, normalization of the atmosphere in the country becomes the most important issue for all structures of the BCP.

2.5. UNCERTAINTY OF POMAKS* IN GREECE AND BULGARIA: AN EXAMPLE OF CROSS-BORDER MINORITY GROUP

Pomaks, also called Bulgarian Muslims in Bulgaria or Bulgarian speaking Muslims in Greece, are another autochthonous minority group, mainly settled in the Rhodope mountains area on the border between Greece and Bulgaria. Complex historical events shaped their lives along with their legal status. Their historical origin is one of the most contested issues in the region up until now. However, today they are called as Pomaks or Bulgarian Muslims.

It is supposed that Pomaks were converted during the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans in fourteenth century, as a result of which they became part of the Muslim *millet*.¹⁴² Since the millet system was based on religious grounds, Pomaks were also forming the same millet as Turks and the rest of Muslim population in the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, border changes in nineteenth century affected them as well. After the Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913, territories where Pomaks had been living for centuries became part of the Bulgarian and Greek nation states.

Both Bulgaria and Greece concluded agreements with Turkey regarding the protection of minorities, as it was indicated previously in detail.

* Different terms such as Bulgarian Muslims, Bulgarian Mohammedans and Pomaks are in use to address this group. For the purposes of this work I will use Pomaks, since it has more reliable origins compared to two other terms.

¹⁴² Madeleine Danova, Transformation of Ethnic Identity: the Case of the Bulgarian Pomaks, in: *Parallel Cultures, Majority/Minority Relations in the Countries of the Former Eastern Bloc*, (Eds.) Christopher Lord & Olga Strietska-Ilina, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2001, p. 151.

Pomaks were part of this legal system as a Muslim minority. But during the expansion of the new nation states in the Balkans, they became the first victims of assimilation policies. The fact that the language spoken among Pomaks is a dialect of Bulgarian, created some ideas among Bulgarian officials and especially Bulgarian Orthodox Church, to make this population part of Bulgarian nation in the early days of Bulgarian independence.

After the creation of the Bulgarian Principality, three censuses were conducted until the end of the nineteenth century - in 1880, 1885 and 1888- where Pomaks were counted and registered as Turks. However, starting with 1905, separate group as 'Pomaks' started to appear in Bulgarian census data.¹⁴³ In line with the philosophy of Bulgarian revival, there was a massive campaign for their separation from the Turkish ethnic group.

Meanwhile in the Greek case, since religion was the main criteria to identify non-Greek minorities, Pomaks were mainly considered in the same group as Turks and therefore not treated separately. This tendency continued after Lausanne Treaty was signed in 1923. Greek Orthodox Church was engaged with the assimilation of Christian Macedonians, Bulgarians, Vlachs and Albanians living in Greek territories and Pomaks have been considered automatically as non-Greek due to their religious affiliation.

The Tarnovo Constitution, declared Bulgarian Orthodox Church as the official religion of Bulgaria. Similar to the Greek case, Bulgarian Orthodox Church started to compete with the State and extend its power.¹⁴⁴ This usually happened through the involvement of church members in political and social issues. The first signs of this involvement came after the

¹⁴³ Maria Todorova (b), p. 138-139.

¹⁴⁴ Spas T. Raikin, The Bulgarian Orthodox Church, in: *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, (Ed.) Pedro Ramet, Durham, Duke University Press, 1988, p. 161.

Balkan Wars, when members of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church started to convert to Christianity Pomaks who lived in Rhodope Mountains.

Already in 1912, Bulgarian authorities had begun to speak about Bulgarian Muslims, a term which had been developed to strip off Pomaks from the protection of Turkey and to stress their Bulgarian origin. When the campaign of conversion initiated in Southern Bulgaria, group of Pomaks went to complain to the Mufti in Plovdiv, declaring that they had been forced to accept Bulgarian Orthodoxy.¹⁴⁵ Pomaks from many other villages and cities started to complain about the ongoing imposition of Bulgarian Orthodoxy, and reiterated their complaints to the Turkish representatives in Bulgaria. However, Bulgarian authorities described the events as individual actions conducted by the Church members. In these place where conversion has already finished, new priests were appointed with the orders of Bulgarian Holy Synod.



¹⁴⁵ Velichko Georgiev & Staiko Trifonov, *Pokrastvaneto na Balgarite Mohamedani, 1912-1913 Dokumenti*, Sofia, Akademichno Izdatelstvo Prof. Marin Drinov, 1995, p. 21.

Picture about the conversion of Pomaks in Banite village in 1912. Source: State Archives Plovdiv, F. 959K, o. 1, a. e. 902, l. 2.

Conversion of Pomaks continued until late 1913. During this time people started to express their will to become Muslims again.¹⁴⁶ People who were converted before were not using their Bulgarian names and did not attend worship ceremonies in churches. Moreover, this situation created tensions between the Bulgarian Church and State officials and therefore the conversion campaign stopped in late 1913.

The conversion of Pomaks in 1912-1913 showed how important for Bulgarian authorities was to ensure the homogeneity of the Bulgarian population in order to secure the borders of the newly created state. Support of State officials in the actions of the Church was based only on limited cooperation or unilateral ignorance about things being done by the members of Holy Synod. Although Pomaks were allowed to become Muslims again, the attitude of Bulgarian officials and Church members did not change this much. The only effective result of this ineffective conversion campaign was the fact that, after 1913 Pomaks started to be called “Bulgarian Muslims” officially.

After a turbulent transition process during the First World War, changes in Bulgarian political life affected Pomaks as well. The military coup which took place in 1934, affected not only the Turks, but Pomaks as well. A second conversion of Pomaks took place, this time carried out by state officials. In 1937, an organization called Rodina (motherland) was formed in Bulgaria. Rodina’s aim was to boost Bulgarian identity among all ethnic minorities in Bulgaria and Pomaks were the special target of this radical policy.¹⁴⁷ Worship in Bulgarian language was introduced in the mosques and Qur’an was translated into Bulgarian. It was important to state that “Bulgarians might have different religious affiliation but this does not change

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 456.

¹⁴⁷ Maria Todorova (b), p. 139.

their ethnic belonging". Soon in 1942, these policies of Rodina culminated into a name changing campaign mainly initiated in Western Rhodopes. However, with the end of Second World War, Rodina was dissolved and the names of converted Pomaks were restored.¹⁴⁸

The first process of Pomak conversions was initiated by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the second one by the nationalist movement called Rodina. The role of religion in both processes was really important to support the shift of identity although it had different methodologies. However, the establishment of the communist rule in Bulgaria changed everything in a very radical way. Communists were engaged with the national question and had different proposals regarding its solution. Their efforts focused on the idea to separate Pomaks from Turks, in order to make it clear that they did not belong to the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.¹⁴⁹ Mixed marriages between Pomaks and Turks were discouraged with the idea that they created incentives for the assimilation of Pomaks into Turkish ethnic identity. Special measures were taken by BCP to prevent registration of Pomaks as Turks in areas where they live mixed.¹⁵⁰ BCP members agreed in Politburo meetings to prevent children of Pomak minority from studying Turkish at schools, which was considered as a tool for their assimilation. Finally as a result of all these restrictive measures, some municipalities in Southern Bulgaria in 1960s embarked on an assimilation campaign by changing the names of Pomaks. By the beginning of 1970s the names of all Pomaks were changed with the exception of those who formed mixed marriages with Turks. In order to eliminate this obstacle, in 1982, BCP decided to conduct another name changing campaign among the people who formed mixed marriages, in most cases Turks and Pomaks.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ TsDA, F. 1B, o. 6, a.e. 653, l. 4-5, 1949.

¹⁵⁰ TsDA, F. 1B, o. 15, a. e. 765, l. 1-13, 1961.

After changing the names of the Turkish minority, the so called *revival process* in Bulgaria finished. The successful assimilation of Pomaks, gave an idea that the same methodology might work with Turks as well. However, all these events prepared the end of the communist rule in Bulgaria. Soon after the collapse of communism in Bulgaria, all members of minorities started to submit petitions for the restoration of their names.

Pomak identity is still being perceived very different and subject to many discussions as a result of contradictory government policies in Bulgaria and Greece. Greece did not embark into an assimilation process toward Pomaks, as they constituted for the whole period an integral part of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace. Today, in some parts of Western Thrace as it is in Bulgaria, the use of the word 'Pomak' is perceived as a derogatory expression. Pomaks in Western Thrace consider themselves as Turks and they want to be identified as Turks. For example in villages near Xanthi, in Greece most people identify themselves as ethnically Turk despite the fact that their knowledge of Turkish is very limited.

When it comes to Bulgaria, the structure of Pomaks is even more complex. As a result of all assimilation and conversion campaigns launched against Pomaks, today part of them prefer to identify themselves as Bulgarian, while a second group prefers self-identification as Turkish or Pomak. Regarding the issue of their religious affiliation, Pomaks in Bulgaria are mostly Muslims. However, those who did not restore their names and identify themselves as Bulgarians are mostly not practicing any religion or declare themselves as agnostic. In the case of Greece, with the exception of few villages on the Rhodope mountains, all Pomaks are Muslim.

CHAPTER THREE

EUROPEANIZATION/EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS AND THE PERSISTENCE OF MINORITY RIGHTS ISSUES IN GREECE AND BULGARIA

3.1. EUROPEANIZATION OF MINORITY RIGHTS IN GREECE AND BULGARIA

Compared to Bulgaria, Greece has started her European journey relatively earlier. However, membership to the European Economic Community did not have significant effect on the rights of minorities in Greece, since oppressive policies of the Greek Governments took different form. Revision of the Greek policy towards minorities starts from the beginning of 1990s, under the effect of the new regulations for minority rights that were shaping in Europe, and as a result of the exacerbating ethnic tensions in Western Thrace between Greeks and Turks.

With the end of the communist rule, integration into Western world became a major goal for Bulgaria. The path towards European integration has been already linked to many reforms. Especially after the revival process and brutal assimilation campaign directed to minorities, European integration has been perceived as a major opportunity to provide necessary atmosphere for the peaceful co-existence of different ethnic groups. Already in the first part of 1990s some reforms were made by the Bulgarian politicians, just to enable members of the Turkish minority to restore their names. However, first real steps came after 1997, when Bulgaria's EU candidacy has been approved.

This chapter aims to evaluate minority rights issues in Greece and Bulgaria, and the persistence of oppressive measures despite the Europeanization process. Within the framework of this work, Europeanization of minority rights implies legal and political reforms to adjust national minority policies in line with the European regulations occurred in 1990s. It will be further argued that, despite her longer experience as EU member, liberalization of minority rights in Greece does not take place until late 1990s due to the presence of strong nationalist discourse. Meanwhile, both Greece and Bulgaria, will be evaluated based on their achievements during the so called European integration process. Problems which have ongoing effects will be tackled to show the incompatibility of the current Greek and Bulgarian minority rights regulations with European legal framework.

Turbulent years in Greece with the interruption of democracy by *military junta* did not become an exception for the unequal treatment of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace. Stripping of Greek citizenship of 60.000 people who were mainly members of the minority in Western Thrace, has been regarded as a consequence of this unequal treatment.¹ Such kind of discriminatory measures were taken in spite of equality principles indicated in the Greek Constitution and Lausanne Peace Treaty. However, these problems were not discussed until late 1990s and European integration in Greece was mainly perceived as an economic process rather than a political one. Up until 1990s, minority rights in Greece have been considered as an issue of reciprocity with Turkey. Therefore, Greek authorities failed to improve the minority protection system in Greece and insisted on modest principles indicated in Lausanne Treaty, which had already been curtailed in favor of Greek nationalists who sought the Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace as fifth column of Turkey.

¹ Dia Anagnostou (b), Deepening Democracy or Defending the Nation? The Europeanisation of Minority Rights and Greek Citizenship, *West European Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 2, p. 339.

When it comes to Bulgaria, similarity of the Greek political discourse towards minority rights shows itself again. The first part of 1990s was usually spent with restoring the names of the Turkish minority and accepting some legal regulations to ensure their equality as Bulgarian citizens. Nevertheless, this process did not lead to positive minority rights regulations until the second part of 1990s due to the ethnic tensions in Bulgaria. After the fall of communism, the unitary structure of Bulgarian society was underlined continuously denying special regulations for minorities,² in this case mostly for the Turkish minority, with the accusations that minority rights regulations might be followed with the demand for territorial autonomy. In this environment, adopting more liberal minority rights regime was kept equal as treason. Moreover international pressure on Bulgaria was mainly demanding the stop the assimilation campaign itself, and there were no interventions during the post-communist law making process.

Meanwhile, during the transition process in 1990s, both Greece and Bulgaria continued to emphasize the potential of Turkish irredentism rather than adopting new minority rights standards. Ethnic self-identification as Turkish, is perceived as an influence of *Turkification* and an effect of Atatürk's reforms in Turkey.³ Scholars fail to explain the issue of ethnic self-identification as a social process which is shaping throughout the history. Considering the issue in a wider spectrum, Turkish minorities in Bulgaria and Greece have managed to protect their identity and created identical cultural traditions. Although their official recognition as minority in both countries is different, it seems that European minority regulations are neglected intentionally due to highly contested nationalist discourses. It is possible to defend the idea that European integration of Bulgaria and Greece, helps Turkish/Muslim minorities in both sides of the border to restore their kinship ties which were disrupted with the half century long Cold War.

² Декларация на Бюрото на Централния Съвет на Българското Историческо Дружество (Declaration of the Bureau of Central Board of Bulgarian Historical Association), 10/01/1990.

³ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 51.

Europeanization continues to affect both countries with its restricted influence on minority rights. Reasons of this limitation will be analyzed further below tackling the problems in both countries separately.

3.2. GREEK EU MEMBERSHIP PROCESS AND SYSTEMATIC VIOLATIONS OF MINORITY RIGHTS

Greece entered 1990s amid protests for ethnic self-identification of Turks in Western Thrace. In one side members of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace were claiming their 'Turkish origin' while nationalist Greeks were organizing contra protests which led to violations and vandalism in Western Thrace. Events started with the decision of the Minority High Council in Western Thrace to organize a 'Turkishness walk' in the center of Komotini on January 29, 1988. However, the gendarmerie of the Rhodopi region issued a statement indicating 'Turkishness walk' is prohibited due to the rumors about an opponent Greek group plans to organize protest against the walk, which may lead to inter-ethnic clashes.⁴ Entrances to Komotini were blocked by the police in order to prevent influx of people from neighboring cities and villages. Extensive security measures taken by the police prevented escalation of the issue. Nevertheless, in the end of the day many people from the minority were either arrested or injured.

In 1990, during the second anniversary of the events in Komotini, representatives of the Turkish minority decided to organize mevlid*. Even this was not accepted by Greek authorities and local radio stations announced the same day an event; a Greek man died after he was attacked by a Muslim who was staying at the same hospital with him. This situation caused massive reaction among the Greek nationalists, who organized their own

⁴ Yankı, 29 January 1988, Yıl 1, Sayı 11.

* Mevlid/Mawlid is a religious celebration in Islamic tradition which has two different stages, first stage is composed of ritual and followed by different meals served to people.

protest in Komotini, which led to damage of minority properties and vandalism. While Muslim/Turkish minority was becoming allegedly target of aggression, Greek police was heavily criticized for not reacting towards demonstrators.⁵ However, it became clear that the news were not reflecting the truth since the Greek man died in February, a month later. Eventually this was used by the Greek media to extend ethnic confrontation in Western Thrace. News of provoking character became part of the daily life in Greece in 1990s. Watching Turkish television was interpreted by the Greek media as a demonstration of extreme Turkish nationalism.⁶

Strained relations between minority and majority in Western Thrace and the pressure of the Turkish Government resulted in the international isolation of Greece. Unfair trials in national courts directed to minority members were criticized due to the pressure on freedom of expression. Cases which have been forwarded by minority members to the ECtHR, were mostly rejected with the reason of not having exhausted domestic remedies. Nevertheless, situation was totally different in the Greek case. Greece had been condemned for not providing certain people - in this case minorities - direct access to judicial institutions.⁷ Simply for most of the cases related to the maltreatment of the minority in Western Thrace, either they were not documented or state institutions refused to process complaints made by the members of minority, which eventually made it impossible to exhaust domestic remedies and proceed with the application to the ECtHR. Issues involving ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities have long been interpreted as sensitive to the state security and ethnic peace, and therefore, avoided with deliberate ignorance. Long judicial proceedings involving excessive formal requirements, and intertwined relationship between the state and the Greek Orthodox Church⁸, made it almost impossible to break the chain of

⁵ Ortam Gazetesi, January 19, 1993, Yıl 1, Sayı 11.

⁶ Ortam Gazetesi, February 23, 1993, Yıl 1, Sayı 16.

⁷ Stephanos Stavros (a), "Human Rights in Greece: Twelve Years of Supervision from Strasbourg", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol, 17, No. 1 (1999), p. 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

institutional formality, which turned to systematic violation of minority rights in Greece. In fact, complexity of the legal structure served to the political goals of the politicians and Church members who openly rejected equality of the Greek citizens and accepted alleged discriminatory regulations which were not congruent with the 'equality' principle adopted in the Greek Constitution. With restrictions to exercise freedoms granted by the constitution and strong pressure on ethnic self-identification⁹, Greek democracy shows the characteristics of an 'ethnic democracy' when the treatment of Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace is questioned.

The case of Sadik Ahmet in Western Thrace, could be an example for the problematic relationship between minority members and judicial organs. As it was previously indicated he had been sentenced by the Greek court for using Turk as ethnic identification for the minority in Western Thrace. He applied to the European Commission of Human Rights, where the Commission decided that Greece violated freedom of expression under the article 10 of the ECHR, and forwarded the case to the ECtHR. In 1996, however, the court decided that Dr. Ahmet's case was inadmissible, because domestic legal remedies were not exhausted.¹⁰ Meanwhile, in their dissenting opinion, judges Martens and Foighel, criticized Greek policies as non-appropriate in a democratic society, since ethnic self-identification of ethnic minorities was prevented with extreme measures that led to imprisonment.¹¹ Their criticism focused on the issue of ethnic denial, which was imposed by the Greek political discourse and reference to minority clauses in Lausanne Treaty, which had been accepted as the only legal document regarding minority groups in Greece. With their dissenting opinion they have stressed the point that "existence of minorities is not a matter of law, it is a fact".

⁹ Sammy Smooha & Theodor Hanf, Conflict Regulation in Deeply Divided Societies, in: *Ethnicity*, (Eds.) John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 331.

¹⁰ The Turks of Western Thrace, Human Rights Watch, January 1999, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 13.

¹¹ Patrick Thornberry and Maria Amor Matrin Estebanez, p. 42.

The situation of the Turkish/Muslim minority in Western Thrace started to attract also the attention of Western scholars. However, Greek police took different measures to prevent direct contact between minority members and Western observers. Those people who assisted in activities of Western observers were labeled as potential traitors. For example, advocate Adem Bekiroglu, had been requested to come to the police office in order to explain his assistance to Professor Eric Siesby, who was president of the Danish Helsinki Committee and visited Western Thrace between 11-15 February 1990, and published a report about 'Turkish minority in Northern Greece upon his return. Police authorities were interested in the nature of cooperation between Eric Siesby and Adem Bekiroglu by asking to the latter the motives and scope of his assistance during the visit.¹²

Considering the events in 1988 and 1990, strained ethnic segregation and its gradual exacerbation, prompted Greek officials to adopt some liberal policies in line with European regulations to end the ethnic tension in Thrace. For the first time in 1991, during his visit to Western Thrace, Greek prime minister Mitsotakis identified policies of past governments towards minority in Western Thrace as 'mistakes' and 'injustices'. Moreover he declared that the new principles of the Greek minority policy will be based on 'legal equality' and 'equal citizenship'.¹³ This step of recognition of unequal treatment of the Muslim/Turkish minority and considering it as a problem to be eliminated, could be seen as an important progress for the Greek minority rights regime.

It is necessary, however, to indicate that problems pertaining to the ethnic self-identification still exist. In late 1980s, Greek courts outlawed the word 'Turkish' and its use in Western Thrace with motive that it refers to the citizens of Turkey.¹⁴ In spite of some positive steps throughout the Europeanization process, there are certain breaches of basic human rights.

¹² Baskın Oran, *Türk-Yunan İlişkilerinde Batı Trakya Sorunu*, Ankara, Bilgi Yayınevi, 1991, p. 187; See "Destroying Ethnic Identity: the Turks of Greece", New York, Helsinki Watch Report, 1990.

¹³ Dia Anagnostou (b), p. 344.

¹⁴ Destroying Ethnic Identity, Helsinki Watch Report, p. 16.

For instance in 2005, Greek Court of Cassation decided that using the word 'Turkish' is harming public order in Western Thrace.¹⁵ The 'Turkish Union of Xanthi' established in 1927, continued its cultural activities, however, Greek officials decided to close it down, since the use of word Turkish was found as illegal and disturbing peaceful co-existence of ethnic and religious groups. Apart from political impositions directed by the court, this case showed the level of tolerance towards ethnic minorities in Greece, since extreme right wing organizations showed also their discontent for the use of word Turkish, by organizing some protests which led to violence in Xanthi as well.

The prohibition of Xanthi Turkish Union followed similar pattern with the case of Sadik Ahmet. The creation of Xanthi Turkish Union dates back to 1927. However, in 1986, it was closed down by the Greek court due to the use of the word Turkish in its name. After exhausting all domestic remedies, the case has been forwarded to the ECtHR. In its decision regarding the case of *'Tourkiki Enosi Xanthis and Others v. Greece'*, ECtHR, condemned Greece for violating the articles 11 and 6 of the ECHR, which are respectively tackling freedom of association and the right to fair trial. However, the most striking developments occurred at this stage. As a result of the decision from Strasbourg, Xanthi Turkish Union applied to the Regional Court in Xanthi for the reestablishment of the Union according to the decision given by the ECtHR. Regional Court of Xanthi concluded that they were not obliged to apply the decisions taken by the ECtHR. The case has been forwarded to the Greek Court of Cassation, which on February 24, 2012 decided that "the decisions of ECtHR are not binding and therefore Xanthi Turkish Union is not allowed to continue its activities as a Turkish organization".¹⁶ With the decision of Greek Court of Cassation on the issue of Xanthi Turkish Union, domestic legal remedies were exhausted for the second time with no positive impact on the lives of Turkish minority in Western Thrace. Article 46 of ECHR

¹⁵ Ioannis Grigoriadis (c), "On the Europeanization of Minority Rights Protection: Comparing the Cases of Greece and Turkey", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 1(2008), p. 27.

¹⁶ Hürriyet Gazetesi, March 4, 2012. See http://www.iskeceturkbirligi.org/page.php?ref=hukuki_surec

states that judgments made by the Court are binding, however, even today, Greek authorities refuse to apply the decision of ECtHR. This confirms the complaints, Greek judges remain unaware or ignorant to the judgments of ECtHR and contemporary standards of minority protection.¹⁷ Not respecting EU decisions to a large extent by Greek authorities, reduced popularity of European justice system among the Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace. Decisions involving minority members, have had the heavy influence of politicians and Church officials.

The shift to more fair treatment of minority in Western Thrace did not take place quickly. However, adoption of some European standards in 1990s, deteriorating inter-ethnic relations in conjunction with the pressure from Turkey, revision of the Greek minority rights regime became inevitable. The most important aspect of these changes was the fact that this movement of liberalization was marked with strong nationalist resistance, which prevented retrospective restoration of the rights of minority in Western Thrace. Eventually those people who were affected by previous restrictive measures, were not given the chance to seek justice.

Eventually, these controversial applications, showed that all efforts have been made to change oppressive regulations targeting minorities in Greece. Greek authorities initiated liberalization process just to get rid of international isolation and criticism towards minority rights in Western Thrace. Efforts were not directed to the elimination of unequal treatment of minority in Western Thrace, but they were rather adapted to the contemporary European legislation, in order to make them less detectable. The following stage of this work, analyzes other measures directed against minority members in Western Thrace along with problems pertaining to their daily life.

¹⁷ Evangelia Psychogiopoulou, p. 121.

3.2.1. Restricted Area and Military Surveillance Zone in Western Thrace

Designation of *military surveillance zone (MSZ)* in Northern Greece took place in 1953 with the motive to prevent the communist threat from the North. It encompassed a 15-45 km wide strip parallel to Greece's northern borderlands along the borders with Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia (Figure: 1).

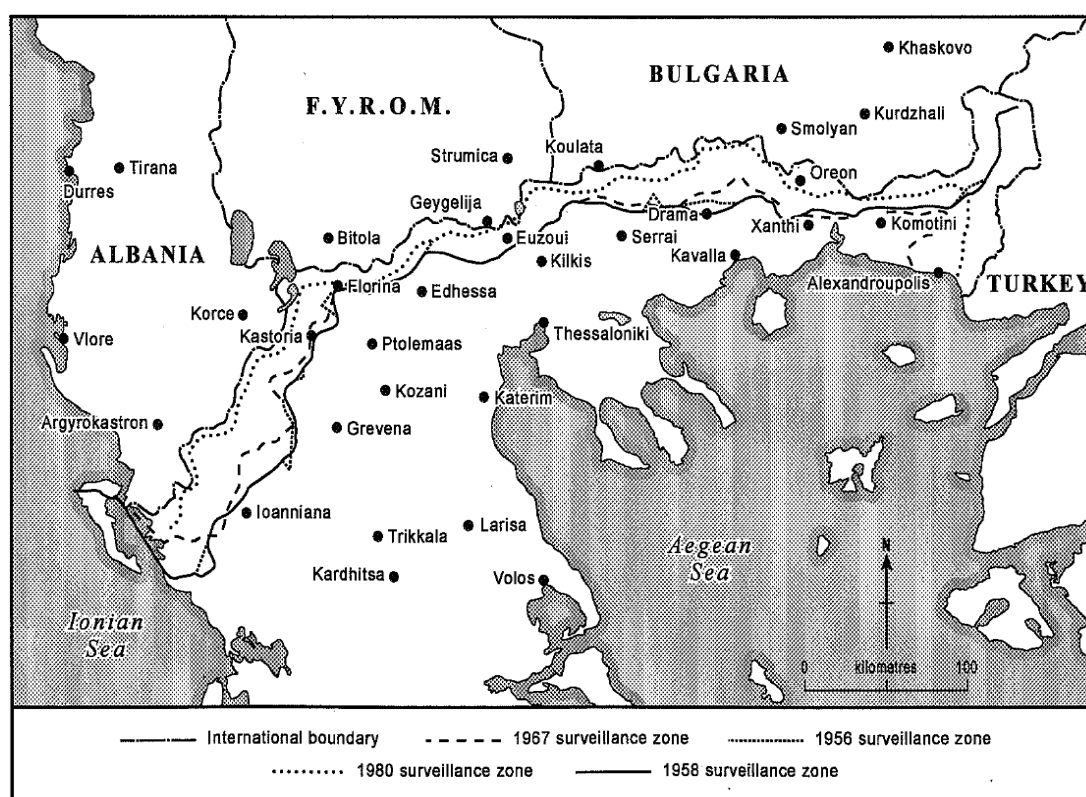


Figure 1: Military surveillance zone/restricted area and its historical evolution.

Source: Lois Labrianidis, IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin, Summer 1999.

Formation of the MSZ was primarily related with the issue of communist threat. However, it took different shape throughout the history and an additional term *restricted area* was invented to point it. During the Cold War period, the so-called threat from the northern neighbors who were looking for an outlet to the Aegean Sea, remained as a main concern of

Greek national security policies.¹⁸ Greece's Slavic neighbors Bulgaria and Macedonia were the targets of this policy, because of different reasons which were unified with the single aim to occupy northern Greek territories. Bulgaria's strategy and demands towards Thrace confirmed this situation, while Macedonia was blamed because of her name, which would invoke some territorial pretensions related to the region called Macedonia in northern Greece.

Apart from its external aspects, inside Greece, however, MSZ took different forms of measures directed mainly against minority members. Some of these measures were as follows:

- Entry to the surveillance zone was based on a pass issued by the police. Those who were found dangerous - either Greek nationals or foreigners - were denied the entry into restricted area.
- The inhabitants of the restricted area had to carry special identity cards with themselves. Special working permits were required to exercise all professions.
- Between 24:00 and 08:00 nobody was allowed to move from one village to the other, enter or leave the restricted area.
- Buying and selling property was prohibited. Moreover, those who were found dangerous for the security, could be expelled by the Committee for Military Security in each prefecture.¹⁹

Although at the first instance, the idea of restricted area might look as conceivable, the scope of its application and existence of measures heavily targeting life conditions of minorities living in border regions is creating different impressions. Up until 1970's restricted area had features of a military surveillance zone. However, after 1970's it was abolished in most

¹⁸ Ioannis Stefanidis, p. 28.

¹⁹ Lois Labrianidis, "The Impact of the Greek Military Surveillance Zone on the Greek Side of the Bulgarian-Greek Borderlands", *Boundary and Security Bulletin*, Vol. 7 No. 2 (1999), p. 83-84.

areas except regions where minority population was living.²⁰ But this did not change the status of relevant legislation of military surveillance zone, which later became a tool for restrictive measures against minorities. In 1990s, restricted area in Western Thrace covered 120 villages and 40.000 people mainly members of Muslim/Turkish minority.²¹ Considering the applications of restrictive measures, restricted area has been defined as an *open air jail* for the minority in Western Thrace.

As it was previously indicated above, expulsion of people who were classified as suspicious for the security was possible under the legislation of restricted area. This rule has been largely adopted to change the composition of population in border areas. In fact some members of Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace were forced to emigrate not only from the restricted area but also from Greece, as a result of threats made by secret service members who were responsible for the management of the security in this territory. In 1980s, many families, especially those people who owned land in Western Thrace, were forced to leave Greece in a very short time like 24 hours after signing the documents of land and property expropriation brought to them by the members of secret police.²²

With its restrictive measures in force, MSZ created limitations on the freedom of movement of minority in northern Greece. MSZ served also for the goal of transforming minority into “the other who threatens Greek statehood”. Presence of a sizeable Muslim/Turkish minority along the border with Bulgaria and Turkey, was conceived as threat for irredentist activities which might be directed from northern and eastern neighbors. Therefore, there was an immense effort to justify the reasons of applications which were

²⁰ Ibid., p. 85.

²¹ Ortam Gazetesi, December 22, 1992, Yıl 1, Sayı 7.

²² Interview made in Bursa, Turkey on 30 April 2012, with a family who had to leave Greece in 1980s as a result of these measures. All members of the family were deemed to have lost their Greek citizenship and had no more right to return to Greece.

not in line with the legal obligations of Greek Government and with norms related to human rights in general.

After the fall of communism and elimination of communist threat from the north, it became clear that the existence of the military surveillance zone had been directed against minority groups living in this area. However, in the second half of 1990s, with the Europeanization process of Greece, MSZ stopped to exist in Western Thrace. Today there is no official policy of MSZ anymore, however, sometimes researchers or foreigners who attempt to travel in some mountainous villages along the border with Bulgaria are often followed by the secret police or even stopped to give information about the purpose of their visit in the region. Despite the time passed, there is very little known about activities carried out in the restricted area. Perhaps opening of Greek archives will help to know more about the developments in MSZ.

3.2.2. Article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Code and Its Effect on the Muslim/Turkish Minority

Article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Code (GCC), so far constituted one of the most excessive tools for ethnic cleansing of Turkish minority in Western Thrace. According to article 19:

*A person of non-Greek ethnic origin leaving Greece without the intention of returning may be declared as having lost Greek citizenship.*²³

Article 19 was in force between 1955 and 1998, and during this time 60.000 people of non-Greek origin were deprived of Greek citizenship.²⁴ Application of article 19 created many discussions regarding the legal status

²³ The Turks of Western Thrace, Human Rights Watch, January 1999, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 15.

²⁴ Ibid.

of minorities in Greece and constitutional equality of Greek citizens. Turkish minority in Western Thrace became the main target of article 19. Members of Albanian and Macedonian minorities who refused to assimilate in Greek ethnicity were found as dangerous and simply lost their citizenship. Meanwhile, in the case of Western Thrace it had different objectives. Article 19 was used as a tool to control the demography of the minority population in Western Thrace. The process of deprivation of citizenship was quite unofficial, it began when police authorities informed the Directorate of Citizenship about an individual and/or his family having left Greece for a long time without the intent to return.²⁵ However, the process took an arbitrary procedure, since people who left Greece for a very short time or even those who never left the country, were stripped of from Greek citizenship. There were cases when an individual or family members travelled outside of Greece for a short holiday and learned that they had lost Greek citizenship on the border when they were trying to enter Greece and were denied the entry.

Another complexity occurred when Greece joined European Economic Community. As part of free movement, many Greek citizens from Turkish origin went to Germany for work. Majority of those people learned that their citizenship was revoked, during their visit to Greek consulates or embassies.²⁶ Those who resided in Greece and were stripped of from Greek citizenship learned about it when they had to visit state offices for administrative issues. Since there was no official correspondence sent to the individuals whose citizenship was revoked, they were only informed about it when they had to go to local public institutions. Some students who went abroad for education were also stripped of Greek citizenship.

Application of article 19 of GCC continued uninterrupted from 1955 until 1998 despite the fact that it was an alleged violation of national and

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ortam Gazetesi, April 13, 1993, Yıl 1 Sayı 23.

international regulations. According to article 4.1 of the Greek Constitution, “all Greeks are equal before the law”.²⁷ However, article 19 is making distinction between Greek citizens from Greek and non-Greek origin. In addition to this article 4.3 is indicating that “withdrawal of Greek citizenship shall be permitted only in case of voluntary acquisition of another citizenship or of undertaking service contrary to national interests in a foreign country”. Revoking the citizenship of Turkish minority in Western Thrace became an arbitrary process, since Greek authorities revoked the citizenship without having sufficient data about the acquisition of another nationality. Eventually, people were facing consequences of a process about which they were not informed at all. Although officially there was a process allowing the appeal within two months after the decision had been issued, in many cases people failed to meet the two months deadline since no official correspondence was sent.²⁸

Application of article 19 had far more different motives than only targeting the existence of minority in Western Thrace. Normally, Greek constitution does not create distinction between citizens of Greek and non-Greek ethnic origin.²⁹ However, these discriminatory concepts were existent in contemporary Greek national identity, which served as a basis for the creation of Greek nation state. From the very first days of Greek independence there has been a distinction between Greek citizens of non-Greek origin (*allogeneis*) and those of Greek origin who are not Greek citizens (*omogeneis*).³⁰ This classification created a hierarchy between two groups on the basis of their Greekness as such that first group *allogeneis* are not considered as Greeks even if they are Greek citizens, while second group *omogeneis* are considered as Greeks even if they do not possess

²⁷ Greek Constitution: <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/001-156%20agliko.pdf>

²⁸ The Turks of Western Thrace, Human Rights Watch, 1999.

²⁹ Stephanos Stavros (b), Citizenship and the Protection of Minorities, in: *Greece in a Changing Europe: Between European Integration and Balkan Disintegration*, (Eds.) Kevin Featherstone & Kostas Ifantis, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996, p. 118.

³⁰ Ibid.

Greek citizenship.³¹ Therefore this situation automatically excluded from Greekness those citizens who lacked main features of Greek identity such as religion, language and culture.

Application of article 19 left many people in stateless position due to the fact that their citizenship was revoked in a very short time. Those who were deprived of citizenship abroad were denied entry to Greece and could not appeal against the process. Those who were deprived of Greek citizenship while living in Greece, were given the chance to reapply for it through naturalization process. However, most of them had to follow a really long process of naturalization which was embedded in bureaucracy that formed only an official made up process to confirm their exclusion not only from ethnic Greekness but also from Greek citizenship. The majority of applications made by the members of Turkish/Muslim minority for the restitution of Greek citizenship through naturalization, were denied with the motive that they failed to acquire 'Greek consciousness'.³²

Between 1955 and 1998, article 19 and other measures such as restricted area helped to control the demographic growth of Turkish minority in Western Thrace. According to the Greek census from 1928, the number of people who speak Turkish is recorded as 191,254.³³ However, there is some reservation next to this figure that, the number of Turkish speakers contains also Greeks who arrived from Turkey as part of population exchange and indicated Turkish as their mother tongue.³⁴ It looks quite suspicious that authorities agreed to register those Greeks who claimed Turkish as their mother tongue, since nationalist sentiments at the time of migration were really extreme and language was perceived as one of the main features of Greekness. Population census from 1951 shows that there were 179,895

³¹ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 198.

³² *Gündem Gazetesi*, February 12, 2010, Yıl 13 Sayı 672. See: Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), *Ibid.*, p. 203.

³³ Angelopoulos, Ath., "Population Distribution of Greece Today According to Language National Consciousness and Religion", *Balkan Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1979), p. 126.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

people whose mother tongue was Turkish.³⁵ Again inside parenthesis it is indicated that part of them are migrants from Anatolia. However, according to religious affiliation there were 112,665 Muslims in Greece which might confirm the argument that partially people from Greek origin indicated Turkish as their mother tongue. Population census from 1951 was the last census conducted in Greece which asked questions about religious affiliation and mother language. Eventually, today the number of minority in Western Thrace is estimated to be between 120,000-140,000 people as there is no official data provided by Greek authorities. The strategy of Greek Governments was based on balancing population demography of Turks in Western Thrace with the Greeks in Istanbul. However, the growth rate of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace was much higher than the one of the Greek minority in Istanbul. Due to continuous migration of Greeks from Istanbul, population of Greek minority has been reduced dramatically. Therefore, Greek authorities came to the conclusion that: "if it is not possible for the minority in Istanbul to increase, then the minority in Thrace has to decrease".³⁶

For almost half century, article 19 was in use to punish minority members through the citizenship. Democratization of minority rights in the beginning of 1990s and the so-called equal citizenship principle promoted by the Greek government did not include abolition of article 19 of GCC. Meanwhile, there was a continuous pressure on Greece via international organizations regarding the cases of stateless people. These people either in Greece or abroad, continued to have difficulties as they were not registered anywhere and did not have any documentation to prove their existence in general. With the initiative of PASOK and leadership of Costas Simitis, in the second half of 1990s, the abolition of article 19 started to be discussed widely. When the issue came to the Greek Parliament, several members of

³⁵ Ibid., p. 127.

³⁶ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (c), Reciprocity as a Regulatory Pattern for the Treatment of the Turkish/Muslim Minority of Greece, in: *Reciprocity: Greek and Turkish Minorities, Law Religion, Politics*, (Ed.) Samim Akgönül, Istanbul, Bilgi University Press, 2008, p. 80.

parliament expressed their opposition to abolish article 19.³⁷ Reasons for opposing the article focused on the issue of reciprocity with Turkey and depriving the Government from a very powerful tool to control demographic balance in Western Thrace. In the meantime local community in Thrace along with the Greek Orthodox Church also vehemently opposed abrogation of article 19.³⁸ Their concern was based on the potential return of people who reinstate their citizenship and decide to reestablish themselves in Greece. This could change population demography in the region totally. Therefore, Government officials decided to find a different solution to the problem. Article 19 was abolished in June 1998 with the Law 2623/1998, but not retrospectively. More than 60,000 people whose citizenship was revoked with the article 19, were not given the chance to reinstate their Greek nationality.

Once again, this case showed that Government policies were changing with certain reservations and references to history and national elements. Greek nationalists from Western Thrace opposed to the abrogation of article 19 because of the possibility for restoring property rights. Those people who had lost their citizenship while visiting or working in another country never had the chance to come back to Greece and deal with their properties. After some time, their property was seized by Greek Government and transferred to other people, possibly citizens who were ethnically Greek. According to the report of Helsinki Watch, Minister of the Interior George Doganis signed an order on February 1, 1988, where it is indicated that if one person in a family loses Greek nationality, no one else in the family can obtain legal papers or documents concerning their citizenship. Thus no one can apply to inherit property.³⁹ In conjunction with other restrictive measures, article 19 was used to deprive people from their citizenship and other rights such as property which have been considered as main indicators for the existence of minority in Western Thrace.

³⁷ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis (b), p. 183.

³⁸ Dia Anagnostou (b), p. 349.

³⁹ Greece: Improvements for Turkish Minority; Problems Remain, Helsinki Watch, Vol. 4, No. 6(1992), p. 10.

Application of article 19 is contradictory with the official Greek policy of not recognizing the ethnic character of the minority in Western Thrace. Deprivation of citizenship for those people who are not ethnically Greek is in contrast with official Greek policy of not recognizing existence of ethnic minorities in Greece. Claiming that the minority in Western Thrace is only Muslim and not Turkish, and then revoking their Greek citizenship based on the difference of their ethnic identity, creates a dilemma about the Greek policy towards Turkish/Muslim minority in Western Thrace. It is difficult to understand not recognizing ethnic character of minority and at the same time discriminating its members based on the difference of their ethnic origin.

3.2.3. Land Confiscation and Restrictions on Property Transfers

Since the beginning of Greek Revolution, land confiscation became one of the most powerful tools of Greek State to change the ethnic structure of areas inhabited by Muslims/Turks. Greek authorities expropriated lands owned by the Sultan, vakıf and individuals with the aim to redistribute them among ethnic Greeks. During the exchange of populations after 1923, houses, schools and mosques were seized in order to host incoming Greek migrants from Anatolia.

Vakıf properties had a very special place in Ottoman Empire. They were mainly established to serve for the common needs of community.⁴⁰ Therefore, major part of vakıf properties were composed of schools, dormitories and mosques. Eventually, these places were mainly areas where community members came together and organized some events. A committee composed by several people was responsible for the management of vakıf properties. Aside from competition between members of minority to be part of the management committee of vakıf properties,

⁴⁰ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 342.

Greek authorities wanted to influence the selection process of committee members in order to have indirect influence on the minority group.⁴¹

However, with the time passed, Greek State started massive expropriation of vakif properties in 1930s. For example, Muslim cemeteries in Komotini were turned into gardens as a result of expropriation.⁴² A big part of vakif properties in Xanthi and Komotini disappeared because of excessive expropriation policy followed by the Greek State with the aim to diminish minority existence in Western Thrace. Moreover, all these properties were expropriated for a very low price and in some cases, compensations were not given to the owners.

Meanwhile, expropriation of individually owned properties took a more aggressive and systematic character. Legal regulations which had been adopted in the past, were updated according to present political conditions to serve the goal of reducing minority population through different means. Ownership rights of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace were guaranteed with the Lausanne Treaty. However, additional legal regulations in Greece, took different shape to change this situation. After the settlement of 120,000 Greek refugees in the region, local authorities in Western Thrace confiscated houses and plots of the Muslim minority in order to offer incoming Greeks a place to live and land to work.⁴³ This situation raised the tension between two communities. Nevertheless, confiscation of Muslim properties in 1920s, marked only the beginning of a very comprehensive policy of land expropriation to the detriment of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace.

Special regulation in 1950s was prepared to ease expropriation of property of those people who left Greece illegally with the aim to settle in

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 345.

⁴² Ibid., p. 342.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 315.

another country-mainly Turkey.⁴⁴ At the same time, in 1964, when crisis in Cyprus started to deteriorate, Greek authorities made a secret regulation to prevent the acquisition of real estate by the members of Turkish/Muslim minority in Western Thrace.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Greeks were encouraged to buy property from Muslims. The Agrarian Bank became the provider of loans to Greek Christians who intended to buy Turkish/Muslim properties in Western Thrace.⁴⁶ This policy was in force up until 1990s. Christian Greeks were declared as loyal citizens and encouraged to buy properties from Muslim Turks in order to create the balance in Western Thrace, which has always been perceived as a strategically important area. In this part of Greece, property acquisition had to be approved by a committee of five people including a member of the Greek Orthodox Church. When there was a transfer of property from Muslim to Christian Greek, this was approved in a very short time. However, transfers of property from Greeks to Muslims has never been approved by the committee. Simply an issue of public act was turned into a matter of national security through demographic and territorial balance.

Land expropriation in Western Thrace took a massive way after the conflict in Cyprus began. Large areas were confiscated through the introduction of different projects such as university, industrial zone etc. For instance, excessive land expropriation took place during the creation of Democritus University of Thrace and Industrial Zone in Komotini. In 1978, Greek Government confiscated 4,000 acres of land in order to build a campus for the Democritus University of Thrace.⁴⁷ 85% of the seized land belonged to the Turks in Thrace. Members of minority complained about the issue claiming that confiscated areas were mostly composed of fertile fields. This policy of land expropriation followed a pattern consistent with the policy of revoking citizenship of ethnic Turks in order to reduce their share in the

⁴⁴ Article 13 of LD 3958/1959.

⁴⁵ Nora Fisher Onar & Meriç Özgüneş, p. 118.

⁴⁶ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 319.

⁴⁷ Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Greece, Helsinki watch Report, p. 35.

population of Western Thrace. The slogan adopted regarding the government policies towards Muslim/Turkish minority was “the Turks will leave we will buy their land by any means”.⁴⁸ This makes clear how in harmony are article 19 and other restrictive measures of Greek authorities.

Since Turks were not allowed to work in public administration or other state agencies, agricultural production constituted their main income. Therefore, the majority of restrictive measures has focused on land expropriation, with the motive to deprive them economically and encourage for emigration. In addition to this, another policy targeting agricultural areas was in force. A different type of land expropriation has been conducted through the unification of land (*Anadazmos*). According to this method, lands separated into small parts and that had lost their economic function were redistributed as a result of petitions sent by those people who owned land in the same area. Nevertheless, after 1974, redistribution of land became an obligatory act with the order of regional governor. Members of Muslim/Turkish minority were discriminated in this case as well; their lands were included in the land unification process, however they were not offered new land during the redistribution stage.⁴⁹ There were cases, where fertile lands belong to members of the minority were expropriated and during the redistribution process they were given back an infertile land.

Restrictions in the area of properties were not only limited to transfer and sales. Members of minority had to obtain special permission to repair their own houses. In most cases, their applications were denied by Greek authorities, and repairing a house without permission was subject to a huge fine.⁵⁰ Normally, Christian Greeks never had a trouble to obtain such permission, however, for Turks it was a lengthy process which resulted in most cases in a negative answer. This policy created huge disparity between

⁴⁸ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 320.

⁴⁹ Baskin Oran, p. 244-245.

⁵⁰ Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Greece, Helsinki watch Report, p. 32.

Christian Greeks and members of Muslim minority in Western Thrace, as areas settled by Turks and Greeks became really detectable from their appearance, an issue that is even valid for today. Usually Greeks own big apartments or modern houses, while areas settled by the Turkish minority are characterized by small old houses and some areas are lacking even the basic infrastructure.

Inequality between the members of minority and majority became also evident with the issue of new immigrants in 1990s. After the fall of communism, immigration of Pontic Greeks in Western Thrace had negative consequences for the minority. Government expropriated 1,500 acres in order to accommodate Pontic Greeks⁵¹ who were settled in Western Thrace in order to change the population balance in the region. They were offered some subsidies to establish themselves. However, few years later, due to hard economic problems and in search of a better life, part of them left Western Thrace and settled in other big cities such as Athens and Thessaloniki. For instance those who settled in villages near Soufli which is across the border with Turkey, abandoned their newly built houses and settled in Athens.

Currently land expropriation does not continue with the same speed as it was in the past. Minority members say that they do not have much left to give the government. One thing becomes clear that, land expropriation had a very strong effect on the land ownership of Muslims who live in restricted area.⁵² Most of them have lost their land ownership rights and given only the opportunity to work temporary on the lands where they reside. Land confiscation together with the implementation of MSZ, helped for the policy of *Hellenization* of border areas, which are perceived as important for the national security of Greece.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 35.

⁵² Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 322.

3.2.4. Restrictions on the Political and Social Participation of the Minority in Western Thrace

Similar to the previously mentioned policies, minority in Western Thrace faced also restrictions on political and social participation. Muslims were represented in the Greek parliament since the creation of Greece as independent state. However, this situation started to change with the enlargement of Greek territory towards north and gradually deteriorated after 1920s. Muslims/Turks were perceived not just as a different ethnic religious group, but also as a political opponent. Muslims were elected also to local governments which showed certain integration into Greek political life.⁵³

The political life of the minority in Thrace was dominated by the rivalry between Kemalists (modernists) and Islamists (conservative group). After the Second World War period, parallel to Greek-Turkish friendship, the role of modernists in Greek political life started to increase. The period between 1967 and 1974, marked inactivity for the Muslim/Turkish candidates because of the military junta in Greece. Developments in Cyprus, affected also the political life of the minority in Thrace. They had to rise their candidacy through main Greek political parties rather than forming their own party. Two leading political parties, *PASOK* (socialist party) and *Nea Demokratia* (right wing) put the members of Muslim/Turkish minority in their lists. Obviously, this representation was more in the form of symbolic action than initiating constructive policy towards the rights of minorities. Considering discriminatory measures directed toward minority members in Western Thrace, it is possible to conclude that, Turkish/Muslim MPs were not given the opportunity to bring solution for long standing problems of the minority in Thrace.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 217.

Starting with the elections in 1985, minority members participated in elections as independent candidates. The first attempt to get elected as independent candidates was unsuccessful. This shift of strategy started to raise some doubts among the Greek political parties, due to discourse of political separation from the side of minority members. Eventually, the issue of independent candidacy culminated into expression of ethnic identity, which was not welcomed by Greek authorities. During the elections in 1989 two members of minority were elected as independent candidates to the Greek parliament. However, when the issue of ethnic self-identification erupted with the case of Sadik Ahmet, the Greek State decided to take some preventive measures to block such expressions by the members of parliament in the future. The case of Sadik Ahmet (independent candidate elected for the parliament in 1989) created big tensions in the region, since it was the only situation of non-Greek nationalistic discourse throughout the modern Greek history.⁵⁴ Escalation of the issue into an inter-ethnic conflict in Western Thrace was a direct consequence of intolerance from the side of majority, who already labeled the people as Turks, but did not want to recognize it officially.

During the elections in 1989, massive complaints were forwarded by the members of minority regarding the attitude of Greek authorities. Greek citizens from Turkish origin who were in Turkey and wanted to cross the border for voting, were denied entry to Greece, as border was closed due to strike.⁵⁵ There were massive attempts also internally to prevent Turks from voting. Bus services to Western Thrace from other Greek cities were cancelled the day before elections. Following this, with the aim to outweigh the votes of Turkish minority, Greek authorities brought thousands of soldiers to vote in Western Thrace.⁵⁶ Additionally some people complained

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 220.

⁵⁵ Hakan Baş, p. 72.

⁵⁶ Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Greece, p. 30.

that there were attempts to prevent Turks from voting by closing polling places in Turkish districts earlier.

The application of such methods was heavily criticized by the members of minority and would not be sustainable for long time due to the potential for attracting critics from international organizations. Therefore, in an attempt to find a permanent solution to the problem, Greek Government decided to change the electoral law in order to prevent the entry of Turks in the parliament, either as independent or as members of their own party. New electoral law accepted on October 24, 1990 put a threshold of three percent for an independent candidate or political party in order to enter Greek Parliament.⁵⁷ This change in the electoral law was solely targeting independent candidacy of Turkish/Muslim people from Western Thrace, and designed in a way to control their activities via Greek oriented political parties.

Following revisions in the electoral law, the Greek State started to focus on restricting the political role of Turks at local level as well. The democratization process in the beginning of 1990s prevented the application of extreme measures, which forced the government to seek different methodology in imposing restrictions for the political participation of Turks at local level. Demographic situation became an incentive to force the change since nationalists warned for the possibility of election of a Muslim/Turkish prefect in areas such as Xanthi and Komotini.⁵⁸ In order to prevent election of a Muslim/Turkish prefect, Kapodistrias project has been accepted in 1994, which provided enlargement of two prefectures Xanthi and Komotini, dominantly settled by Muslims/Turks with the other three predominantly Christian Greek prefectures Drama, Evros and Kavala.⁵⁹ Eventually, election

⁵⁷ Hikmet Öksüz, *Batı Trakya Türkleri*, Çorum, ODES Ltd. Şti., 2006, p. 236.

⁵⁸ Dia Anagnostou (a), p. 110.

⁵⁹ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 222.

of Muslim/Turkish prefect in Xanthi and Komotini became almost impossible after consolidation of predominantly Christian areas.

Political restrictions imposed on minority in Western Thrace were enforced with different measures which affect their social participation as well. Access to public employment is the biggest problem for the professional life of minority members in Western Thrace. Moreover, they were not allowed to practice every profession and especially the ones which include property ownership such as pharmacy etc. During 1990s, they were able to work in stores or rent a property, but they were not allowed to buy a property and open their own business.⁶⁰ Usually they were not able to get permission from Greek authorities to launch new business. Even hospitals were reluctant to employ Muslims/Turks. This type of discrimination was valid only for Western Thrace. Minority members who wanted to work in other Greek cities outside of Thrace faced relatively less discrimination.

Today, restrictions on private business are relatively lifted, however disparity in public employment still prevails. Despite the fact that the Muslim/Turkish minority forms a significant part of the population in Western Thrace, they are discriminated for accession to work in public administration. They do apply for vacant positions announced by the municipalities, but they never get hired. This practice which is totally against the equality principle of Greek constitution, has been repeated for decades. Some Greek officials explained this situation due to the lack of knowledge of Greek language, by the members of minority.⁶¹ However, the situation in Western Thrace shows totally different things. Officials might be partially right for the command of Greek, but it becomes relatively less convincing when a member of minority graduated from a Greek university has his application denied on the ground of poor Greek language knowledge.

⁶⁰ Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Greece, p. 36.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 38.

There are obviously other reasons for this policy of systematic discrimination. Aside from obliging Turks of Western Thrace to leave for other EU countries, Turkey or big cities such as Athens and Thessaloniki in search of a job, the Greek State encouraged migration of Christian Greeks from other areas into Western Thrace by giving them priority in public employment and constantly creating new positions reserved only for ethnically Greek citizens. A chain of policies, granted privileged status for people of ethnically Greek origin in the name of a common 'Turkish threat',⁶² and this has created a system that took its sources from ethnic hatred.

Encouraging minority members to leave Thrace with economic reasons, aimed their assimilation among the Greeks in other cities such as Athens and Thessaloniki. This is because of the fact that minority rights are not available outside the territory of Western Thrace. Provisions of Lausanne Treaty are not applied by the Greek State in other areas except Thrace. This situation is not also compatible with current legal standards since it restricts the movement of minority members in Greece.⁶³ Today geographical restriction of minority rights provisions shows itself in a very different way in Athens and Thessaloniki. The main issue is to find a place of worship for Muslims. As it was previously indicated, Athens does not have a mosque, and same is true also for Thessaloniki. Old mosques from Ottoman era are either destroyed or turned into museums or churches. Discussions to build new places of worship for Muslims are dominated by the nationalist comments related to the Turkish rule. However, Turks from Western Thrace who live in Athens and Thessaloniki, gather to pray in prayer rooms which are created in small apartments.

⁶² Dia Anagnostou (a), p. 111.

⁶³ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 100.

3.2.5. Educational Policies Towards Minority Members in Western Thrace

Education plays an important role for everyone in order to facilitate the process of social inclusion while developing a certain identity. As it was previously mentioned, during the process of Greek nation building, every single detail of national education was planned to impose linguistic and ethnic differentiation of Greek nation from other ethnic groups in the Ottoman State. Congruent to this comprehension, after the formation of contemporary Greece, Greek authorities put every effort to limit the establishment of an autonomous minority education system. Therefore, Turks of Western Thrace, were affected by the shifts of Greek educational policy, despite the guarantees provided by the Lausanne Peace Treaty.

Problems experienced by minority members in 1920s were mostly related with the material deprivation, as most of the schools belonging to minority were seized to host incoming Greek refugees from Anatolia. Soon after signing the Lausanne Treaty, a bilingual education system was adopted by minority schools. Aside from teaching Greek, Turkish became the main language of instruction in minority schools of Western Thrace. Although some authors argue that adoption of Turkish was due to its dominance among the minority in Thrace⁶⁴, there was no claim for another language to be taught at that moment.

The first years of bilingual education faced some problems related with the lack of knowledge in Greek and on discussions whether education in Turkish should be done with old Turkish letters or the Latin script. Atatürk's alphabet reform in Turkey was perceived as an opportunity to reduce the cooperation between Turkey and minority in Thrace. Thus, Greek officials denied to allow education with new Turkish letters. However, soon

⁶⁴ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 446.

the issue was solved and books with new Turkish letters were in use at minority schools in Thrace.

It is necessary to indicate that this did not put an end to the problems of the minority, and marked only the beginning of a more complex chain of events. There was a problem with providing adequate teaching in Greek, and due to the lack of proficient teachers, members of the minority with non-adequate education level were hired to teach Greek at minority schools. Eventually, this situation did not make a positive impact on the education of minority in Thrace.

Bilingual education in Greek and Turkish with a mixed curriculum taught in both languages, was offered only at primary schools until 1950s. Greek authorities stressed the point that Lausanne Peace Treaty did not oblige to the creation of bilingual educational facilities in other levels.⁶⁵ Therefore, the organization of subsequent high school education took long time like 30 years. Articles 40 and 41 of Lausanne Treaty deal with the regulation of educational life of the minority in Thrace. Although the provision of primary schools is explicitly indicated in article 41, the right to create other social and educational institutions at the expense of minority is provided with article 40. This creates doubts that Greek authorities might have ignored the article 40 for a long period.

Besides the lack of certain educational facilities for the minority, another issue of major importance is the control imposed by the Greek State. Usually Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs imposes its control in every stage of educational activities, and this constituted violation of the independent status of minority schools in Greece.⁶⁶ Textbooks for minority

⁶⁵ Luciana Benincasa (with Olga Karavia and Despina Skoulariki), The Greek State, the Muslim Minority of Western Thrace and Education: Shifts Under Way?, in: *Educational Strategies Among Muslims in the Context of Globalization: Some National Case Studies*, (Eds.) Holger Daun and Geoffrey Walford, Leiden, Brill, 2004, p. 268.

⁶⁶ The Turks of Western Thrace, Human Rights Watch, p. 24.

schools and appointment of teachers became major problems that dominated educational life of minority in Thrace.

Bilingual education in Greek and Turkish was only guaranteed for the primary schools which were offering education over six years. Until 1952, there was no high school education offered for minority members. *Medrese* (which can be translated as Muslim Seminaries) were mostly offering religious education, and were selected by those who would become imams or continue their education later in the area of religious studies, at Universities abroad, mainly in Turkey or other Muslim countries.⁶⁷ Teaching of the Qur'an was part of educational curriculum also in primary schools. Courses such as History, Geography and Greek Language were taught by Greek teachers, while courses like Turkish Language, Mathematics, Physics and Religion were taught by Turkish teachers. Providing education in Greek was hampered by several reasons such as geographical location of areas settled by minority and financial problems, since until 1960s, minority members had to pay for the salaries of Greek teachers as well.⁶⁸ But on the other side, Greek State aimed for the massive introduction of Greek Language, especially in Thrace in order to promote Greek consciousness among the members of minority. Beginning with late 1960s salaries of Christian teachers who teach at minority schools, started to be paid by the Greek Government. Nevertheless, when state funding was extended in a way to cover minority schools, it automatically affected their private status as well. Minority schools became private by creation and public as institution. Moreover, minority education became available only in Thrace and those who move into another city outside of Thrace, did not have the right to ask for minority education. This situation is valid even for today.

Among all these complexities, a low level of the educational profile among minority children became really a chronic issue. This problem,

⁶⁷ Luciana Benincasa, p. 268.

⁶⁸ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 474.

however, constituted only the result of various mistakes done in the past, and which were repeating themselves. Minority education in Turkish was offered by Turkish teachers, but their educational level was always questioned. There was exchange of teachers between Greece and Turkey, a program which allowed Turkish teachers from Turkey to teach at minority schools in Thrace. Their salaries were paid by the Turkish Government. Meanwhile, Greek authorities embarked on a project to open their own academy for educating teachers for minority schools in Western Thrace. Thessaloniki Pedagogical Academy (EPATH) established in 1968 became a direct product of this thought.⁶⁹ Minority students were allowed to become teachers after attending two years long training at EPATH.

Creation of EPATH did not bring an end to the problems but rather became a new topic of contention between minority and Greek State which will be tackled below in detail. Due to the lack of secondary schools, after finishing bilingual minority schools, children of Muslim/Turkish minority were either forced to follow Greek secondary schools or attending Turkish high schools in Turkey. Problems pertaining to secondary education were solved with the creation of two high schools in Komotini and Xanthi. But still their capacity was not enough to answer the needs of the minority. Both high schools provided places for approximately 400 students all together, while there were 8,500 pupils attending minority primary schools.⁷⁰ Obviously, this limited availability of places became an additional incentive for minority students to follow their education in Turkey.

Outdated textbooks also turned into diplomatic problem between Turkey and Greece in the past. Usually, books which will be used for the Turkish curriculum at minority schools were printed in Turkey. After the control and approval of Greek authorities they were forwarded to minority schools. This process was regulated through the Cultural Agreement signed

⁶⁹ Hakan Baş, p. 87.

⁷⁰ The Turks of Western Thrace, Human Rights Watch, p. 28.

between Turkey and Greece in 1968. Question of old books started to raise in the beginning of 1990s when minority students were forced to use books printed in 1960s.⁷¹ For decades Greek authorities did not approve the books sent from Turkey and therefore education had been conducted with old books. Eventually, the Greek Government decided to take the initiative to print Turkish books in Greece contrary to the cultural agreement signed in 1968. Turkish books printed in Greece were forwarded to minority in Western Thrace for the 1992-1993 school year. Amid protests, minority organizations, teachers and parents denied to use the books sent by Athens and even burned them publicly, blaming the Ministry of Education for spreading the nationalist propaganda.⁷² Problem with the textbooks continued until 1997, when Turkey sent books that were accepted as adequate by Greek authorities.⁷³

EPATH became the symbol for bad quality of minority education. After two years of education, EPATH graduates were allowed to become teachers at minority schools. This issue was first criticized by the members of minority, as Greek teachers who teach at minority schools are graduated from four years long programs.⁷⁴ EPATH graduates faced the problem of bad reputation, since they were labeled as incompetent. Members of minority made series of requests to Greek authorities urging for change. Those students graduated from EPATH were employed as regular teachers or under renewable contracts as other Greek teachers. However, a person who has finished his education in Turkey was not appointed as teacher due to non-recognition of Turkish diplomas.

Changes occurred in Greece resulted with an impact on minority education as well. Finally decision was taken to abolish EPATH by 31st August 2013 by putting an end to a very controversial issue. According to

⁷¹ Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Greece, p. 41.

⁷² Ortam Gazetesi, November 17, 1992, Yıl 1, Sayı 2.

⁷³ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 490.

⁷⁴ Gündem Gazetesi, June 18, Yıl 13, Sayı 690.

the new regulations, Pedagogical School of Elementary Education of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki will be responsible for educating future teachers who are supposed to teach Turkish curriculum at minority schools.⁷⁵

Positive changes in the area of higher education took place in the second half of 1990s. Turkish students who finished minority high schools in Thrace were mostly going to Turkey to study at Turkish universities. In fact, this situation became normal for many students, since their families opted for minority schools as well. Greek Ministry of Education decided to increase the number of minority students who study at Greek universities. Quota system provided 0,5% of the available seats at Greek Universities for the members of Muslim/Turkish minority who graduated from Muslim high schools in Thrace.

It might be relatively early to comment about the impact of recent changes in Greek educational policy. In spite of some positive developments occurred in the beginning of 2000, still there are additional steps to be taken in order to reduce the cases of discrimination. Perhaps considering education as a preparatory step for professional life is not enough, as it is obvious that it constitutes the basis of segregation and discrimination in Thrace.

3.2.6. Problems with the Election of Muslim Religious Representatives

The 'Mufti' is the most important religious personality under Islamic law who has the authority to interpret and explain *sharia* rules. Through bilateral agreements between Greece and Turkey, Mufti position has been created as the highest representative of Muslim minority in Western Thrace. Moreover,

⁷⁵ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 508.

Muftis are authorized to act as judges in cases among the Muslims in Western Thrace. Marriage between Muslims of Thrace must be authorized by the local Mufti. There are three regional Muftis in Thrace: in Komotini, Xanthi and Evros. Apart from duties indicated above, they are acting also as religious heads of local community in the areas where they are responsible.

According to article 11 of Treaty of Athens from 1913, Muslims have the right to elect their own Mufti.⁷⁶ Later, this regulation became part of Greek internal legislation through the Law 2345/1920.⁷⁷ However, contrary to this situation Greek authorities preferred to appoint Muftis instead of allowing Muslims to elect their own religious head. Duties attributed to the Muftis cover a wide range of issues pertaining to every aspect of life. Muftis are entitled to act as judges in many issues related to family law, marriage, divorce, adoption and inheritance.⁷⁸ Greek authorities have the right to control legal conformity of the decisions given by Muftis, however they do not have the right to check their content. Due to this power of influence in the daily life of the minority, Greek authorities tried to exercise their own control on the Muslim minority by interfering in the selection process of Muftis in Thrace.

In late 1980s after the death of the Mufti of Komotini, Greek authorities decided to appoint a new Mufti. But newly appointed Mufti resigned as a result of massive discontent among the members of Muslim minority. This process followed with the appointment of the second Mufti by the Greek State, and he did not resign despite the pressure imposed by the Muslim minority in Komotini. Amid discussions on the newly appointed Mufti of Komotini, members of Muslim/Turkish minority decided to elect their own religious head according to the provisions of Law 2345/1920. Eventually,

⁷⁶ See: Treaty of Peace Between Turkey and Greece, Athens, 1913.

⁷⁷ For more detailed information see: Turgay Cin, Yunanistan'daki Türk Azınlığın Hukuki Özerkliği: Müftülük Meseleleriyle İlgili Yunan Yargıtay ve Danıştay Kararları ve Diğer Belgeler, Ankara, Orion Kitabevi, 2009, p. 31; Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b).

⁷⁸ Turgay Cin, p. 19.

Muslims elected Mehmet Emin Aga as Mufti of Xanthi, while İbrahim Şerif was elected as Mufti of Komotini.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, Greek authorities made a counter attack by passing new legislation from the Greek Parliament, which was intended to abrogate Law 2345/1920 on the election of Muftis. According to the new legislation approved by the Greek Parliament in 1991, there was no change in the functions and qualifications of Mufti. However, with the new regulation, a Mufti was to be appointed by presidential decree following a proposal by the Minister of Education.⁸⁰ Before forwarding his proposal to the President, Minister of Education was obliged to consult a committee composed by the local Prefect and some other Muslim members chosen by Greek authorities.

The new regulation about the election of Muftis was welcomed by some Muslims, since Muftis were entitled to get the status of public servants and social benefits. Nevertheless, it was been rejected by others, due to allegations that it consisted in a direct intervention in the affairs of Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace. With the goal to control religious and social life of the minority in Thrace, the Greek State started to create legal regulations which were in conflict with its international obligations and Treaties signed with Turkey.

In the meantime Muftis elected directly by Muslims started to perform their duties normally. However, both İbrahim Şerif and Mehmet Emin Aga were arrested and taken to trial by Greek authorities. İbrahim Şerif was accused of having worn the uniform of public officer and usurped Mufti post. Greek criminal court of Thessaloniki sentenced İbrahim Şerif for six months imprisonment, which was converted to a fine. Following a negative result of the appeal to the Court of Cassation, Şerif forwarded the case to the ECtHR. In its decision, the Court found Greece guilty as a result of violation of article

⁷⁹ Ortam Gazetesi, April 13, 1993, Yıl 1 Sayı 23.

⁸⁰ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 420.

9 of the convention which stands for religious freedom.⁸¹ The case of Mehmet Emin Aga followed the same pattern. After exhausting domestic remedies his case was forwarded to the ECtHR. In its decision on July 13, 2006 the Court found Greece in violation of article 9 of the convention.

Decisions of the ECtHR in the case of Muftis, gave certain confidence to the Muslims in Thrace to continue the election of their own religious heads. However, Greek Government still continues to appoint its own Muftis as well. This situation certainly creates division in Muslim minority of Thrace. One might consider that the Greek State benefits from this disorganization and keeps blaming Turkish Consulate in Komotini with the spread of nationalist sentiments.

An additional change on imams approved by the Greek Parliament on January 16, 2013 seems to escalate discussions about the religious freedom of Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace. According to the Law 4115/2013 which is also known as '240 imams act', 240 religious officials of Turks in Western Thrace will be elected by a commission formed of five officials composed of an appointed Mufti, Muslim theologian assigned by the Greek Ministry of Education, another theologian assigned by the appointed Mufti, a member of the Ministry of Education and an academician whose area of expertise is Islam.

This new regulation is harshly criticized by the members of minority who accuse Greek Government with alleged intervention into their religious issues contrary to the provisions of Lausanne Peace Treaty. There are no certain provisions about the post of Mufti in Lausanne Peace Treaty since it has already been solved with the Treaty of Athens. However, article 40 of Lausanne Peace Treaty provides full freedom to the Muslim minority in the creation and management of their own religious institutions.

⁸¹ See: Case of Serif v. Greece, December 14, 1999.

3.3. THE END OF COMMUNISM IN BULGARIA AND AN ENDLESS TRANSITION PROCESS

Transition process has begun with very big ambiguities for Bulgaria. International isolation showed itself heavily amid protests in almost every city for the restoration of Turkish names. Although communists were responsible for the revival process, they were also among the first to underline territorial integrity of Bulgaria. The last plenums conducted by the BCP, turned into an open expression of the unitary character of Bulgarian nation and assimilation campaign was accepted as a national question. Despite the fact that revival process failed totally, the issue of national unity and 'single ethnic' character of Bulgarian nation, became to be the only basis for the discussion of any possible solution. Revival process was denounced and restoration of constitutional rights of the Turkish minority and their Turkish names was accepted by the members of BCP.

However, the decision to restitute Turkish names was not welcomed by the extreme nationalists who were mainly supporters of Bulgarian Communist Party. While Turks were organizing protests in Sofia to have their rights back, demonstrations of Bulgarian nationalists were against of such restitution.⁸² Intensified demonstrations in mixed areas brought the danger of interethnic conflict, which forced politicians to abstain from extreme nationalist expressions. First democratic elections after the post-communist era were held in 1990, and Turks managed to participate with a separate party called Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). Turkish party managed to become the 3rd power in the parliament and obtained 24 seats out of 400. Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) was transformed into center-left party and took the name Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP). BSP came out as the first party from the elections in 1990. BSP's electorate was at large extent from a nationalist background. However, due to the danger of

⁸² Nadege Ragaru, "Islam in Post-Communist Bulgaria: An Aborted "Clash of Civilizations"?", *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2001), p. 293.

escalation of ethnic clashes, BSP tried to distance itself from nationalist rhetoric and focused on the issue of gradual restoration of the rights of Turkish minority in Bulgaria. In March 1990, Bulgarian Parliament passed a law for the restitution of Turkish names.⁸³ Demonstrations made by masses against the law allowing restitution of Turkish names did not receive much support from the political parties in the parliament, which prevented escalation of conflict in Bulgaria. However, distinctive ethnic identity of Turkish minority was not accepted by academic circles who supervised communists for decades throughout the revival process by emphasizing on the Bulgarian origins of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Therefore, declaration made in the beginning of 1990 by the Bureau of Central Board of Bulgarian Historical Association, became an indicator of the new policy towards Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Group of leading academics from Bulgaria signed the declaration where revival process was not even officially condemned and all the critics were directed to the totalitarian character of Bulgarian political life. They refrained themselves from calling Turks in Bulgaria as ethnic minority and underlined the expressions such as 'Turkish speaking' and 'Muslim Bulgarians' in order to stress the ethnic unity of Bulgarian nation.⁸⁴

The second political power in Bulgarian Parliament, the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) emerged as centre-right organization. From time to time UDF supported some nationalist revisions on the rights of minorities, however, this was not at the level as it had been performed by BSP. UDF turned into political power which strengthened Bulgaria's European integration process by applying reforms of vital importance for the improvement of democracy in Bulgaria.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 299.

⁸⁴ Декларация на Бюрото на Централния Съвет на Българското Историческо Дружество (Declaration of the Bureau of Central Board of Bulgarian Historical Association), 10/01/1990.

During the census in 1992, there was a huge debate about whether to add the question of ethnic belonging. Nationalists vehemently opposed inclusion of questions regarding the ethnic belonging in census with the motive that there are no ethnic minorities recognized in Bulgaria.⁸⁵ However, when the debate was transferred to the Bulgarian Parliament, there was certain consensus to include questions such as ethnic belonging, language and religious affiliation. According to the results of the census conducted in 1992, the number of Turkish minority was slightly over 800,000 out of 8,487,317 people, which constituted 9,7% of the total population.⁸⁶ Southeastern provinces Kardzhali and Haskovo, and Northeastern provinces Razgrad and Shumen were the major areas where Turkish minority mainly lived and even constituted majority of the population in some areas like Kardzhali (approximately 69%). Considering the fact that more than 300,000 Turks emigrated from Bulgaria in 1989, it is obvious that the number of Turks in Bulgaria was more than one million before the end of communism. 1992 census created many arguments as people from different regions complained that they were not registered in the ethnic groups as they declared themselves to belong. This mostly happened in the regions like Smolyan and Gotse Delchev, where Pomaks mostly identified themselves as Turks.

There has been a certain need to prevent escalation of discussions regarding the ethnic belonging of Bulgarian citizens and political parties in the parliament took the leading role to avert ethnic conflict especially in mixed areas. In the political scene, neither BCP nor BSP officially apologized for the revival process.⁸⁷ Nationalists defended the idea that the revival process was necessary for the unification of the Bulgarian nation,

⁸⁵ Ali Eminov (b), "The Turks in Bulgaria: Post-1989 Developments", *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 27 No. 1 (1999), p. 34.

⁸⁶ Rezultati ot Prebroyavaneto na Naselenieto (Results of Census), Vol. 1, Sofia, National Statistical Institute, 1994, p. 194.

⁸⁷ Vera Moutafchieva, The Turk, the Jew and the Gypsy, in: *Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility Between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria*, (Ed.) Antonina Zhelyazkova, Sofia, IMIR, 1996, p. 39.

and Turks had had to change their names if they wanted to stay in Bulgaria. The only alternative to the name changing was the emigration to Turkey. Therefore, with the background of decades-long emigration followed by expulsion in 1989, post-communist era invented a new nationalist rhetoric: “either stay and accept the assimilation or leave for Turkey if you feel Turkish”. This phrase is still used by nationalist in Bulgaria who are mostly against any positive regulations pertaining to minority rights.

Negative comments regarding the revival process were balanced with critics directed to Turkey, as Turkey was accused with being the main responsible for the failure of the assimilation process of Turks in Bulgaria. Expulsion of more than 300,000 Turks who were mainly qualified workers caused a sharp decrease in Bulgarian GDP, and suddenly the so-called national problem revealed its economic aspect as well.⁸⁸ Again Turkey was blamed for causing damages to the Bulgarian economy by opening borders to the incoming Turkish population.

After years of political struggle between nationalists and Turks, in 1995 Bulgaria successfully lodged application for EU membership. If we consider the end of communism as the beginning of the transition process, then application for the full membership to the EU meant intensification of the transition process and liberalization of minority rights in Bulgaria. Like all other Eastern European countries, Bulgaria was also subject to evaluation according to the Copenhagen criteria regarding the treatment of minorities. While the first part of 1990s was usually spent with the prevention of ethnic conflict and taking foremost legal measures for the democratization of Bulgarian political system, the second half of 1990s was the beginning of Bulgaria’s Europeanization process.

⁸⁸ Nadege Ragaru, p. 298.

Beginning of European integration process created new hope for the further liberalization of minority rights. However, due to peculiarities of the Bulgarian political system, these steps did not provide for radical change in the conditions on Turkish minority in Bulgaria as it will be indicated in detail below. Eventually, the transition process from communism to democracy had its own character stemming from the complexities of Bulgaria's minority policy which limited the impact of European integration on the rights of minorities. Ethnic issues were widely used to redefine Bulgarian nationalism, rather than being perceived as problems to solve. Modest minority rights were offered with the motive to protect the majority by demonizing minorities and linking every ethnic issue to the national security.

3.3.1. Bulgarian Constitution from 1991 and Restoring the Rights of Minorities

In July 1991, Bulgarian Parliament adopted a new constitution that provided basic minority rights suitable to the strained atmosphere in the country. Majority of Bulgarian nationalists were not ready to face the reality to accept officially the existence of a Turkish minority in Bulgaria and to have constitutional guarantees for their rights.

One could say that the Constitution from 1991 turned to be a really disappointing document due to its vague phrasing of the rights of minorities. Bulgarian constitutions from 1947 and 1971 had more explicit expressions regarding other ethnic groups in Bulgaria and their rights. The first Constitution adopted by communists in 1947 recognized national minorities in Bulgaria by indicating that "national minorities have the right to study in their mother tongue and to develop their own culture while learning

Bulgarian is obligatory”.⁸⁹ The Constitution from 1971, which is also known as “Zhivkov Constitution”, made some changes coherent with the deteriorating treatment of minorities, and concluded that “citizens of non-Bulgarian origin, apart from the compulsory learning of Bulgarian, have the right to learn their own language”.⁹⁰ When it comes to the post-communist Constitution adopted in 1991, minorities were only mentioned in an implicit way by the article 36(2) which states “Citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian shall have the right to study and use their own language alongside the compulsory study of the Bulgarian language”.⁹¹ This was the first result of the nationwide nationalist protests which were directed against every attempt to improve the rights and conditions of Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Eventually, Bulgarian constitution adopted in the post-communist era failed to offer solid minority recognition even compared to the totalitarian one.

Another negative aspect of the Bulgarian constitution which created many critics was the article 11(4) regulating political parties. Article 11(4) provided that “there shall be no political parties on ethnic, racial or religious lines”. This article has been adopted mainly to prevent formation of an ethnic Turkish political party, thus to prevent political participation of Turks through their own organization and rather control them via mainstream Bulgarian parties. Although nationalist circles in Bulgarian Parliament, failed to provoke inter-ethnic conflict, their activities had an important influence on the legislation process.⁹² Prohibition of all organizations based on ethnic or religious motives was justified with the protection of ethnic unity of Bulgarian nation, an aspect which contradicted with the notion of plurality. However,

⁸⁹ Constitution of People’s Republic of Bulgaria, Article 79, adopted on December 6, 1947. *See:* <http://www.parliament.bg/bg/18> only in Bulgarian, (access: January 12, 2013).

⁹⁰ Constitution of People’s Republic of Bulgaria, Article 45/7, adopted on May 18, 1971. *See:* <http://www.parliament.bg/bg/19> only in Bulgarian, (access: January 12, 2013).

⁹¹ *Konstitutsiya na Republika Balgaria* (Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria) from July 12, 1991, *Darjaven Vestnik* (State Gazette), No. 56, 13 July 1991. *See:* online in English: <http://www.parliament.bg/en/const> (access: January 12, 2013).

⁹² Janusz Bugajsky, *Nationalist Majority Parties: The Anatomy of Ethnic Domination in Central and Eastern Europe*, in: *The Politics of National Minority Participation in Post-Communist Europe*, (Ed.) Jonathan P. Stein, New York, East West Institute, 2000, p. 81.

the situation of the Turkish minority was used to politicize minority rights issue in Bulgaria, and every liberal step has been connected with the national betrayal. It was mainly the attitude of nationalists which limited the adoption of more liberal minority rights standards in Bulgaria in the beginning of 1990s.

Article 37 of the new Constitution provided freedom of conscience, which allowed religious minorities-mainly Muslims to practice their religion freely in Bulgaria. In the meantime, equality of all Bulgarian citizens was guaranteed with the article 6 of Constitution from 1991. During the European integration process, events that occurred in Bulgaria created some discussions regarding the implementation of the Bulgarian Constitution. For instance, freedom of conscience was guaranteed for all Bulgarian citizens while it could be restricted under certain conditions when used to the detriment of national security, public order, public health and morals, or of the rights and freedoms of others. When it came to the stage of implementation, the rights of religious minorities were often restricted due to the problems stemming from the derogative interpretations of this article. More detailed evaluation of the issue will be made below under the heading 'religious issues'.

Including the fact that there was no official tool created for the protection of minority rights in Bulgaria, democratic deficit shows itself even when it is tackled as a general human rights issue. The Supreme Court of Cassation and the Supreme Administrative Court, were defined as the highest judicial bodies responsible for the protection of human rights under the 1991 Constitution.⁹³ Their authority was limited to the issues dealing with criminal law, civil law and administrative law. During the Europeanization

⁹³ Yonko Grozev, Protecting Individuals from Minorities and Other Vulnerable Groups in the European Court of Human Rights, Litigation and Jurisprudence: The Case of Bulgaria, in: *The European Court of Human Rights and the Rights of Marginalized Individuals and Minorities in National Context*, (Eds.) Dia Anagnostou & Evangelia Psychogiopoulou, Leiden, Nijhoff Publishers, 2010, p. 53.

process in Bulgaria, both courts have referred to a certain degree to the decisions given by the ECtHR. But this did not make any significant effect in the area of human rights, as majority of cases were related with the fair trial issue.

The lack of clearly articulated standards for the application of basic human rights, leaves quite large room for the interpretation of by judges.⁹⁴ The Constitutional Court in Bulgaria has been designed as an institution responsible for the interpretation of rules in line with European standards. However, it failed to accomplish its duty as a result of heavy political influence. Eventually, ordinary judges, preferred to give decisions according to domestic legal standards, without considering the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court or ECtHR. These practices in 1990s, reduced the impact of European standards on the Bulgarian jurisprudence. There has been a common mistrust towards Bulgarian courts, which initiated the litigation process to the Court in Strasbourg. With the support of Western governments, several human rights groups took the initiative to forward their cases to the ECtHR claiming that Bulgarian courts were not a reliable forum for human rights complaints.⁹⁵

Meanwhile, the issue to deliver justice in minority rights issues became even more complicated both for Bulgaria and the ECtHR. After the fall of communism, Bulgarian authorities condemned the revival process, but there was no legal pursuit against those who were responsible for the process. Bulgarian courts denied to proceed with the request to deepen the investigation against the perpetrators (Todor Zhivkov, Pencho Kubadinski etc) 'due to lack of evidences' for their participation in the assimilation campaign and for torturing thousands of imprisoned people.⁹⁶ 100 Turks, forwarded the case to the ECtHR, however, in 2005 the Court did not find

⁹⁴ Yonko Grozev, p. 55.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 52.

⁹⁶ Momchil Metodiev, *Bulgaria*, in: *Transitional Justice in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union: Reckoning with the communist past*, (ed.) Lavinia Stan, London, Routledge, 2009, p. 165.

the request admissible because of the fact that Bulgaria was not part of the European Convention of Human Rights at the time of the revival process. The negative answer from the ECtHR, reduced the confidence toward the European human rights mechanisms among the members of the Turkish minority.

3.3.2. Educational Rights of the Turkish Minority in Bulgaria

The right to have education in mother tongue had been revoked by the communist rule and for more than two decades Turkish minority in Bulgaria did not have the possibility to conduct education in Turkish or to learn the language. The lack of education in mother tongue showed its impact mainly on the new generations who were born during 1980s and became pupils in the last years of communist rule. Children of Turkish families attended kindergartens in Bulgarian and followed primary school education in Bulgarian, however, they used Turkish at home. But since circulation of books in Turkish was strictly forbidden during the last two decades of communism, there were no facilities for teaching Turkish to the new generations. In some cases letters sent to the relatives in Turkey were written in Turkish with Cyrillic script. Therefore, the main target of the post-communist era was to reintroduce learning of Turkish in schools.

The Bulgarian Constitution from 1991 provided the right to learn Turkish along with the obligation to study Bulgarian. Therefore, MRF launched the initiative to introduce education in Turkish at schools. However, there was strong opposition from nationalist circles regarding this effort, and it became clear that other political parties in the Parliament did not have the intention to launch education in Turkish at all.⁹⁷ Members of the Turkish minority started to protest when the 1990-1991 school year began without

⁹⁷ Ali Eminov (b), p. 48.

Turkish language classes. Once again, potential for inter-ethnic clashes arose when nationalists organized protests against the introduction of language courses in Turkish. The shift from oppressive to more liberal policy was not a fast process, BSP continued its discriminatory policies towards Turkish minority by blocking the process of introduction of Turkish language courses in public schools. Moreover, BSP and other nationalist members at the parliament, enacted a new law “granting minorities the right to study their mother tongue outside the state school in Bulgaria, under the protection and control of the state”.⁹⁸ The timing of this law was very important as it was accepted just before the National Assembly dissolved itself for the elections on October 13, 1991. With this regulation, which was mainly prepared to attract the votes of nationalists, organizing Turkish language courses in public schools was outlawed automatically. Reinterpretation of constitutional norms with the nationalist arguments became an obstacle to the principle of equality of Bulgarian citizens adopted with article 6 of Bulgarian constitution.

Following the shift of BSP’s policy regarding the educational rights of the Turkish minority, there were massive protests in mixed areas against the law enacted. It led to a school boycott in places where Turkish minority constituted majority of the population, and Turkish children did not attend Bulgarian schools for approximately two months between September and November 1991.⁹⁹ When the elections held on 13 October 1991 resulted with the victory of UDF, the new government lifted the ban on Turkish language courses at Bulgarian public schools, and prepared a plan for the introduction of Turkish language classes in Bulgarian schools in areas where Turkish minority lived. The boycott of Turkish students ended in November 1991, and Turkish language courses were introduced as of February 1992 in Bulgarian municipal schools. Ministry of Education offered Turkish language classes as required subject at schools in areas where Turkish minority

⁹⁸ Bernd Rechel (a), *The Long Way Back to Europe: Minority Protection in Bulgaria*, Stuttgart, ibidem-Verlag, 2008, p. 202.

⁹⁹ Bernd Rechel (a), p. 202; Ali Eminov (b), p. 48.

constituted majority of the population, and as elective subject in areas where Turks were a minority, covering the grades 3-8.¹⁰⁰ Turkish language classes were offered for four hours per week to students of Turkish origin.

Meanwhile, apart from the legal troubles, organization of Turkish language classes became a problematic issue due to the lack of books and educated teachers. Ministry of Education took the initiative to organize a committee responsible for the preparation of new books in Turkish and to offer intensive training for candidate teachers for Turkish language. It can be predicted that, due to the lack of experienced personnel and shortage of resources, the first years of Turkish classes did not provide fruitful results, however, allowing Turkish language at schools after two decades was welcomed as a positive change both by the members of the Turkish minority and by the European countries.

In 1994 teaching of Turkish was extended in a way to cover grades 1-8 and offered as elective subject in municipal schools. Meanwhile, it was not part of the school curriculum and grades in Turkish language were not counted towards completion of general education which left Turkish courses outside of general curriculum. For example, schools in Kardzhali region, offered language courses in Turkish and Russian. While Russian has been accepted 'traditionally' as part of the curriculum, the same status has been denied for the Turkish language. This became part of the policy to undermine the importance of Turkish language and indirectly to reduce the interest of learning Turkish at schools.

After the elections in December 1994 BSP came to the rule again. Newly appointed Minister of Education Ilcho Dimitrov, who had been supported Zhivkov's assimilation policies, decided to change the style of Turkish language courses. It was in this period that staffing became very

¹⁰⁰ Ali Eminov (b), p. 48.

important in post-communist transformation of Bulgaria. Every political party tried to fill public employment posts with its supporters. Ilcho Dimitrov as Minister of Education appointed loyal supporters of BSP as inspectors especially in the areas where Turkish minority was living.¹⁰¹ These inspectors had the mission to push for the organization of Turkish language classes outside of normal school hours. The aim of this action was to reduce the number of Turkish students who were participating in Turkish language courses. BSP, once again, confirmed its anti-minority rhetoric.

Meanwhile, these measures were revoked when UDF came to power again in 1997. In line with the Europeanization bid of Bulgaria, Turkish has been added as compulsory elective course to the educational curriculum, and this time it has been extended to high school level.¹⁰²

Currently, learning of Turkish language in municipal schools is conducted according to the regulations accepted in 1990s. Many experts criticize the methods and quality of minority languages in Bulgaria. Many of the criticisms are based on the figures of students who continue to attend minority language classes in Bulgaria, so that in 1992-1993 school year approximately 100,000 students attended courses for mother tongue while this number reduced to the level of 7,000 in the 2010-2011 school year.¹⁰³ MRF urged for an educational reform that would allow improvement of textbooks and adding to the school curriculum teaching of some subjects in Turkish, however, all proposals have been rejected by the political parties in the parliament, and MRF has been accused with a policy of Turkification.

¹⁰¹ Ali Eminov (b), p. 49.

¹⁰² Bernd Rechel (a), p. 203.

¹⁰³ <http://hermesbg.org/bg/nova-biblioteka/book-41/1978-obratno-na-predstavata-ni-evropa-pooshtryava-izuchavaneto-na-maychin-ezik.html>

3.3.3. Religious Issues

The democratization process in Bulgaria tackled also religious freedom. 1992 census showed that there were 1,110,295 Muslims in Bulgaria constituting 13.1% of the whole population in the country. Sunni Islam was the dominant religion for the majority of Muslims (92,3%) while 7,7% of the Muslims were Shi'ites. Part of the Pomaks and Roma minority members also declared themselves as Muslims.¹⁰⁴ Mixed ethnic background of Muslim followers made it necessary to create a new environment for the peaceful co-existence of religious and ethnic diversity in Bulgaria.

Article 37 of the constitution from 1991, provided freedom of conscience for all Bulgarian citizens. This brought certain freedom to all religious groups in Bulgaria. Muslims were granted the freedom to practice their religion and to establish new mosques or rebuild old ones.

Meanwhile, the status of Bulgarian Orthodox Church was regulated in the post-communist constitution, with an aim to restore its position which was heavily damaged during the half century long atheist regime. The new Bulgarian constitution redefined secularism in Bulgaria in a 'religious way'. Article 13(2) explicitly indicated separation of church and the state. However, article 13(3) defined Bulgarian Orthodox Church as traditional religion in Bulgaria. Even this expression was not enough to reestablish the dominant position of Bulgarian Orthodox Church created by the Tarnovo Constitution in 1879.¹⁰⁵ It provided certain freedom to church members which had been previously denied for Muslims and created a religious hierarchy in Bulgaria.

¹⁰⁴ Natsionalen Statisticheski Institut, p. 213, 222.

¹⁰⁵ Daniela Kalkandjieva, *The Study of Religion in Contemporary Bulgaria: A Challenged Legacy*, in: *From Post-Communism Toward the Third Millennium: Aspects of Political and Economic Development in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe from 2000-2005*, (Ed.) Josette Baer, Bern, Peter Lang, 2011, p. 125.

With the spirit of reforms, after facing problems for decades, Muslims finally were granted the freedom to practice their religion freely. Apart from worship, religious education and training became the most important problem, since all educational institutions which used to provide religious training for Muslims were closed down by the communist rule. Following the adoption of the new constitution in 1991, the Islamic Institute of Sofia was re-opened as an independent institution, along with Islamic high schools in Shumen, Kardzhali and Momchilgrad.¹⁰⁶ Together with the newly established religious institutions, religious literature became easily available for Bulgarian citizens. For the first time Qur'an was translated into Bulgarian in 1993. Guides for prayers were translated or in most cases they were brought from Turkey, for those who read Turkish. Briefly, 1990s became the decade for the revival of Islamic education in Bulgaria. This process resulted with the growing interest of other countries in the Islamic revival of Bulgaria. International mobility of Bulgarian students-mostly from Turkish origin- was encouraged through the scholarships offered by countries such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

However, despite all these liberal steps, there was still a problem to bring religious education into public schools. Initiated as a pilot project in 2000 and later extended to all primary schools, Islamic education became an elective course in Bulgaria in 2004.¹⁰⁷ Discussions whether Islamic education should be funded by the Ministry of Education or by the office of Chief Mufti in Sofia ended, when Ministry of Education agreed to take the responsibility for funding.

Restitution of vakif properties confiscated in 1940s and 1950s by the communist rule turned into a chronic issue, since most of them are not returned to the Muslims even today. The office of Chief Mufti in Sofia is

¹⁰⁶ Nadege Ragaru, p. 308; Bernd Rechel (a), p. 210.

¹⁰⁷ Janice Broun, "Rehabilitation and Recovery: Bulgaria's Muslim Communities", *Religion, State and Society*, Vol. 35, No. 2, p. 119.

responsible for the management of vakif properties in Bulgaria and their restitution is very important for the economic self-sufficiency of Muslim community.¹⁰⁸ State authorities still did not approve the project of building Islamic Education Centre in Sofia on a land that is officially part of vakif property.

Election of Muftis became also another problem after the fall of communism. During the totalitarian rule, Chief Mufti and other regional Muftis were usually appointed by the state among the people who were loyal to the communist rule.¹⁰⁹ During the revival process Muftis were used by the state to support the religious dimension of the assimilation campaign. The last Chief Mufti appointed by the communists was Nedim Gendzhev. When a new Muslim Theological Council was elected in 1992, it has been decided that the Chief Mufti and the regional muftis will be elected by Muslims in Bulgaria. Therefore, previously appointed Chief Mufti and regional muftis were relieved from their posts.

However, when in 1995 BSP came to power, Gendzhev saw the possibility to become Chief Mufti through the support of the new government. On the other side Hasan was elected as the new Chief Mufti at the conference representing all Muslims in Bulgaria. When Bulgarian Government decided to recognize Gendzhev as Chief Mufti, Hasan appealed to the Supreme Court, but the Court dismissed his case. After exhausting domestic remedies Hasan forwarded the case to the ECtHR. In its decision, the Court ruled that Bulgaria violated article 9 of the Convention, which guarantees religious freedom.¹¹⁰ The case Hasan and Chaush v. Bulgaria, managed to bring significant autonomy to the religious affairs of Muslims in Bulgaria.

¹⁰⁸ Anna K. Meijknecht, *Minority Protection: Standards and Reality: Implementation of Council of Europe Standards in Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria*, The Hague, T.M.C. Asser Press, 2004, p. 95.

¹⁰⁹ Ali Eminov (b), p. 42.

¹¹⁰ Yonko Grozev, p. 62-63.

3.3.4. Social and Political Participation of the Turkish Minority

Social and political participation of the Turkish minority, became one of the most important issues during the transition process in Bulgaria. Being subject to excessive assimilationist campaign and oppressions caused a certain shock for a while. However, in the aftermath of name changing actions, massive protests were organized by Turks aiming to restore their names and rights. In the years following the fall of communism, Turks tried to improve their situation by taking an active role in the social and political life in Bulgaria.

The beginning of 1990s marked also the period when political life in Bulgaria was reshaped according to the standards of the transition period, which changed the country's political system from communism into liberal democracy. Elites of the Turkish minority sought engagement in political activities in order to solve the ethnic problem in Bulgaria. However, creation of political organization which would promote minority rights in Bulgaria required some specific preparation. At that time Ahmed Dogan appeared in the Bulgarian political scene. Dogan was imprisoned in 1986 for his activities against the revival process in Bulgaria and the formation of *Turkish National Liberation Movement in Bulgaria*. After the reversal of the revival process, Dogan decided to take the initiative for the formation of a new organization: the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) was founded as political party on January 4, 1990 and Dogan became his leader.¹¹¹ According to Dogan, the rights of the Turkish minority could be only guaranteed through active political participation, and he considered that Turks had the potential to form a strong political unity.

¹¹¹ Iskra Baeva and Evgenia Kalinova, Bulgarian Turks During the Transition Period, in: *Bulgaria and Europe: Shifting Identities*, (Ed.) Stefanos Katsikas, London, Anthem Press, 2010, p. 67. *See also:* Nadege Ragaru, p. 315.

Nevertheless, in order to prove that creation of MRF does not target territorial integrity and ethnic peace in Bulgaria, Dogan preferred to see the revival process merely as an assimilation campaign directed by the Bulgarian Communist Party and not supported by all Bulgarians. Moreover, MRF's demanded modest minority rights and never requested Turkish to be the second official language in Bulgaria. Following clarifications regarding their positions, MRF was registered at the Sofia City Court on April 26, 1990. This allowed the MRF to participate in the upcoming elections in June 1990. MRF won 24 seats in the elections which was evaluated as a great success.

The formation of MRF as the Turkish political party was not welcomed by the BSP and UDF, who wanted to prevent Turks from forming their own political party which might be the symbol of the distinctive Turkish identity in Bulgaria. This attitude became more evident when the new post-communist Constitution of Bulgaria was enacted in July 1991. Article 11(4) of the new constitution prevented the creation of political parties based on 'ethnic, racial and religious lines'. Since Turks were the only minority which could form a separate political organization, there was not much left for the interpretation of its consequences.

Following the enactment of the new constitution in July 1991, Sofia City Court decided to reject the application of MRF to be registered as political party on the grounds that this would violate article 11(4) of the constitution.¹¹² The Supreme Court approved the decision of the regional court as well. These decisions attracted negative comments from Western countries and international organizations. Finding solution to the problem was really important in order to define whether MRF could participate in the elections on 13 October 1991. Under the heavy pressure of Western countries, Central Electoral Committee decided that MRF could participate in

¹¹² Bernd Rechel (a), p. 227.

the next elections since it was already represented in the parliament.¹¹³ In fact, this decision was generated only as a temporary solution to the problem, since all legal remedies to exclude MRF from the political scene were not exhausted.

On October 1991, 93 deputies, mainly from BSP, submitted a petition to the Constitutional Court - which was newly created after the adoption of the new constitution in 1991 - to declare MRF as illegal due to the contradictions with the article 11(4). MRF was defined as a political party known for its mission to represent Bulgarian citizens who identified themselves as ethnic Turks.¹¹⁴ This petition showed the division in Bulgarian political life and to which extent political parties are open for the participation of Turks in Bulgaria. Finally on 21 April 1992, the Court decided to reject the petition and reaffirmed the constitutionality of the MRF.¹¹⁵ The decision of the court was focused on second part of the article 11(4) 'involvement in violence'. MRF did not target 'violent seizure of state power' nor it was involved in the activities of such groups. According to the Court, MRF strived for the same goals like improving educational quality and life standards, social and political participation of Bulgarian citizens. Therefore, carrying these activities through political channels was not assessed as illegal.

After solving its legal status, the MRF focused on the formation of local representatives and on coordinating political demands of the minorities in Bulgaria. Turks formed the largest number of the MRF electorate followed by Pomaks (who are known as Bulgarian Muslims) and Roma minority. MRF managed successfully to improve its position as key party in Bulgarian Parliament by supporting directly or indirectly formation of coalitions. Creation of MRF as (non-official) Turkish political party has been accepted as a great success for the Bulgarian democratization process, since for the

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Venelin I. Ganev, "History Politics and the Constitution: Ethnic Conflict and Constitutional Adjudication in Post-communist Bulgaria", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 63, No. 1(2004), p. 66.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

first time after the creation of Bulgaria in 1878, Turks had a separate political party.¹¹⁶

During Bulgaria's transition process, MRF continued to increase votes in parliamentary and local elections. Political mobilization of ethnic Turks at local level was coordinated by the MRF. Local elections in 2003 became the turning point for the political participation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Hasan Azis who put his candidacy through the MRF was elected as new mayor of the Kardzhali district, where Turks comprised 67% of the total population. Previously, municipalities had a Turkish mayor, but this was not case for the provinces and especially as a candidate of MRF, which has always been perceived as Turkish party in Bulgaria. This situation has been protested by some nationalist groups who organized protests in Sofia and Kardzhali with posters 'Kardzhali is Bulgarian fortress'.

Population census in 2001 revealed that 746,664 people declared themselves as ethnically Turkish, while Bulgaria's total population was 7,928,901 people. This obviously affected the role of MRF in Bulgarian politics since most of its electorate was of Turkish origin. After the parliamentary elections in 2001 MRF managed to win 21 out of 240 seats in the Bulgarian Parliament, which turned MRF into a key political actor. For the first time Turkish was part of a government through the coalition made between BSP and National Movement of Simeon II.¹¹⁷ Turks were offered Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and one ministry without portfolio.

After its first experience in government, MRF continued to increase its votes at the parliamentary elections held in 2005. MRF achieved great success by increasing its seats in the parliament from 21 to 34, compared to the elections in 2001. These results made MRF the third political power in the parliament. New coalition formed in 2005 included also MRF, in which MRF

¹¹⁶ Nadege Ragaru, p. 317.

¹¹⁷ Iskra Baeva and Evgenia Kalinova, p. 74.

had three ministers.¹¹⁸ Being part of this government had also symbolic meaning for MRF, since Bulgaria's EU accession took place during the same mandate.

In a short period of time, MRF managed to transform itself into key political actor in Bulgaria. Its electorate was diverse and focused in different regions, while Southeast and Northeast regions settled by Turks became the most important supporter of MRF.

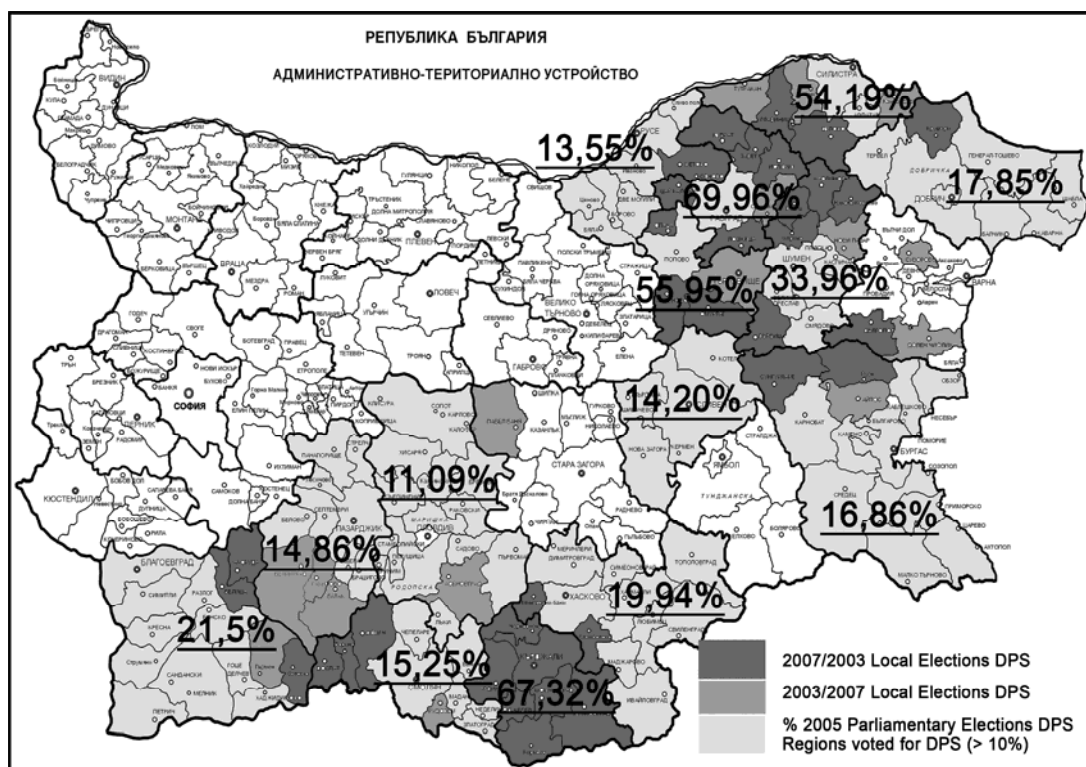


Figure 2: Geographical proportion of the MRF's votes. (DPS stands for Dvijenie Za Prava i Svobodi which is the Bulgarian version of Movement for Rights and Freedoms).

Bulgarian nationalists, interpreted MRF's continuous success as results of the Turkification campaign of Bulgarian Muslims. With the time passing, criticism directed towards the political participation of Turkish minority in Bulgaria resulted with the creation of a far right political party

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

called ATAKA. With its anti-Turkish rhetoric, ATAKA managed to attract the votes of many nationalists and this became evident when it won 21 seats in 2005 elections, after having conducted an election campaign directed against minorities in Bulgaria.

On the other side, MRF managed to strengthen its representation in the European Parliament. It managed to obtain 3 out of 18 seats allocated to Bulgaria. This was not a surprise considering MRF's activities during the European integration process. Dogan and MRF leadership concentrated on the education of youth and MRF organizations working in municipalities in order to increase the contribution of European funds in the regional development.¹¹⁹ This policy aimed to increase economic development of the regions and at the same time helped MRF to sustain its existence on power.

3.3.5. Europeanization of Minority Rights in Bulgaria: Resilience of National Problems or Incompetence of European Institutions?

The transition process in Bulgaria ended officially when Bulgaria joined EU on 1 January 2007. However, problems of the Turkish minority remained unsolved during the negotiation process of EU membership. Both EU and Bulgaria did not raised officially the situation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria due to high political sensitivity of the problem. Both Bulgaria and the European Commission have been criticized for their attitude during the negotiation process. While Bulgaria was accused with following nationalist approach towards minorities, European Commission was labeled as incompetent regarding its attitude toward minority rights.

Copenhagen criteria emerged as first conditionality for countries aspiring to the EU membership. Nevertheless, minority rights are tackled in

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

a very vague way, which allows large room for political interpretations. Situation is quite different with economic achievements as they can be easily linked with the *acquis*, which would make necessary their implementation. Same mechanism was not available for the rights of minorities. In most cases expertise of the European Commission was limited, and they often referred to local NGO's and international organizations such as OSCE and CoE, and had to rely on their evaluation.¹²⁰

The lack of expertise became more evident when the European Commission started to issue yearly progress reports regarding the achievements of Bulgaria. For consecutive three years from 2001 until 2004, there was the same sentence included regarding the situation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.¹²¹ This situation created different opinions regarding the EU's commitment in the area of minority rights since one of the most important conditions of EU membership was tackled only in two-three paragraphs with very vague expressions.

Bulgaria signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1997, and ratified it in 1999. However, in spite of time passed, there was no implementation taking place. Bulgarian authorities ratified the convention in order to speed up the negotiation process for EU membership. The fact that neither Bulgarian Constitution nor Bulgarian legislation did not recognize the existence of national minorities in Bulgaria, remained as an issue ignored throughout the negotiation process with Bulgaria. Moreover, many politicians declared that there are no national or ethnic minorities in Bulgaria.¹²²

¹²⁰ Kirsten Shoraka, p. 121.

¹²¹ Following is the sentence included in progress reports without any change for three years: "The Turkish minority continues to be integrated into political life through elected representation at national and local levels. Further attention needs to be paid for the socio-economic integration of those ethnic Turks and other minority groups who live in economically less developed regions." (Source: 2004 Regular Report on Bulgaria's Progress Towards Accession, European Commission, Brussels, 6 October 2004.)

¹²² Bernd Rechel (a), p. 246.

FCNM provided minorities with the right to use their language in dealing with authorities and for topographic indicators. When the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention recommended Bulgaria to apply these provisions¹²³, Bulgarian authorities vehemently opposed the idea. Main reason for the opposition were again historical and social problems. Historically most of the places in Bulgaria had Turkish names. These names were changed with Bulgarian ones in 1930s in order to get rid of Turkish legacy. Allowing the use of old Turkish topographic names was not acceptable because of their symbolic potential. The same motives were used for the justification of language, and these problems are still persistent in Bulgaria. Therefore, the effects of FCNM were limited on the rights of minorities in Bulgaria, as it was in the case of the EU negotiation process.

Following the EU directive on anti-discrimination, Bulgaria agreed to take necessary measures to prevent discrimination. Creation of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination in 2005, was really praised by the European Union. Similar to other cases involving minorities, newly established Commission for Anti-Discrimination failed to answer the needs of national minorities.¹²⁴ Because parallel to the adoption of non-discrimination principles, hate speech targeting minorities, started to become the new problem in Bulgaria. Extreme nationalist party ATAKA and its supporters, organized protests against minorities in front of the Parliament and mosque in Sofia. In May 2011, supporters of ATAKA including its members from Parliament organized protests in front of the Bania Bashi Mosque in Sofia. The protest culminated into violence as extreme nationalists started to seize Muslims in the garden of the Mosque who gathered for the Friday prayer. As a result of the clashes in Sofia's city center, several people were injured. The attitude of the police was highly

¹²³ Bernd Rechel (b), Bulgaria: Minority Rights 'light', in: *Minority Rights in Central and Eastern Europe*, (Ed.) Bernd Rechel, London, Routledge, 2009, p. 81.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

criticized for not taking necessary measures before the clashes and allowing aggressors to disappear.

The European integration process had a really important impact on the general development of minority rights and especially in adopting international and European legal standards concerning minorities. However, adoption of these legal documents, passed through the evaluation of politicians who tried to adapt them into Bulgarian realities, which inevitably limited their impact on the rights of Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

After the realization of EU membership, suddenly the speed of reforms slowed down. Economic problems dominated political discourse which caused distraction in legal reforms. Persistent inter-ethnic tensions became part of political life and reinvented to serve the needs of political parties during the election process. Bulgarian nationalist described themselves as tolerant and at the same time continued to oppose every initiative to bring more freedom for minorities. Eventually, the lack of active violent conflict has been interpreted as tolerance in the case of minority issues in Bulgaria.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAPPING BULGARIAN-GREEK CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION: THE ROLE OF EU AND OTHER ACTORS

4.1. BORDERS AND THEIR CHANGING MEANING

Briefly, borders would be defined as physical geographic boundaries that separate states, regions and limit their legal jurisdiction. However, borders exist also in our lives, which characterize our own identity and help us to define our difference from other people. In this case it has more to do with imagined peculiarities such language, culture and race. Due to complexity of problems surrounding the daily life of people, perception of borders changed gradually parallel to the needs of society. Borders which in the past were seen as guarantees of nation state, now are considered as obstacles for economic development and intercultural interactions. This phenomena continues its evolution in different regions of Europe and is spreading itself towards the Balkans.

Up until the twentieth century borders were perceived as systems to separate nation states, national economies and even political regimes.¹ This led to centralization of all state policies such as health, education and economy which were totally directed by the central government, and in return changed the relationship between state and society by creating mutual dependence. While people inside the borders were considered as belonging to the same nation and thus closer to the central government, the bordering (geographically closer but living in the other side of the border) populations were ignored and turned into total strangers regardless of

¹ James Anderson, Liam O'Dowd and Thomas M. Wilson, "Why Study Borders Now?", *Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2002), p. 2.

connections in the past. In cases where borders were created as a result of violence, its presence facilitated the creation of more solid boundaries between societies bordering each other. Consequently, parallel to these tendencies, border regions were considered as periphery and therefore, became less developed areas compared to central regions or places close to the center with relatively easy access. These features created the connotation that border regions are relatively backward and less populated. In highly centralized systems, development of border regions was usually regulated through regional policies that tackle certain policy area such as education, health or economy.

The Second World War became the last massive event which strengthened the meaning of borders. Violence and ongoing conflicts are catalyzers of deep divisions between societies, and borders have been perceived as the only way to protect state from the enemies. However, with the beginning of the European project, perceptions of borders have changed rapidly. Economic, environmental and migration problems began to force the necessary process of dialogue², which eventually, culminated into cross-border cooperation. The successful example of cross-border cooperation in Rhine valley, became an incentive for other countries to initiate such cooperation. The initiation of cross-border cooperation, gave better economic perspective to border regions, while helping to solve the problems stemming from historical hostilities. The process dominated with the lack of contact, and turned into hostility though the time, was the first thing to change for the creation of the idea of a united Europe.

In the last half century, European integration process has changed the position of border regions significantly. Borders began to be considered in a different way due to opportunities they offered for cross-border cooperation, cross-border movement of capital and free movement of

² Ibid., p. 8.

people.³ With the increasing popularity of the liberal democratic system in Europe, and the effect of the globalization process, borders were sought as key areas and networks for the development of further economic relations and co-operation. Moreover, starting with 1980s, economic integration of European Community brought the understanding that state borders are barriers preventing the realization of the European market.⁴ This indeed was the motive of the shift from considering borders as political barriers to considering borders as limiting the economic development. Thus states were offered with economic incentives to encourage cross-border cooperation and to reduce the risk of conflicts via closer dialogue between communities living in border regions.

However, this does not mean that the change in the process was a fast and sharp one. Still borders are being conceived as symbols of identity⁵, although this division is not that strong as it was in the past. But it is beyond discussion that this perception has the tendency to change from one area to the other. European countries that started the process of cross-border cooperation in 1950s and 1960s had already defeated this phenomena where borders are being perceived as means to strengthen bilateral ties. There are different challenges for countries which are latecomers in the process of cross-border cooperation.

Apart from the issue how did the borders have changed, one needs to know different aspects which facilitate and complicate innovation and cross-border cooperation processes.⁶ The initial resurgence of cross-border cooperation became detriment to the rigid system of state centralization. The classical way of central planned governance proved to be incapable of managing the new border challenge. Cross-border cooperation and its

³ Ibid.

⁴ Liam O'Dowd, "The Changing Significance of European Borders", *Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2002), p. 20.

⁵ Ibid., p. 27.

⁶ Ibid., p. 14.

increasing importance, forced for new reforms mainly in the area of regional policy planning, which eventually brought the issue of decentralization of public administration. The need to decentralize state power, gradually facilitated the creation of cross-border cooperation, and later its management. However, 'decentralization of power' was accepted by central governments only after sustainable peace process was guaranteed. In the case of the European continent, the process of peaceful coexistence initiated with the European Coal and Steel Community, and later on was followed by the European Union.⁷

The tendency to give more power to regional authorities, became crucial for the successful management of cross-border cooperation by reducing initial formalities to launch and manage projects. Furthermore, decentralization of power was supported within the objective to solve the issue of regional underdevelopment that became common for most border regions.⁸ Therefore, political transformation of borders was followed and directed with economic goals and opportunities to flourish less developed regions in the periphery. It can be possible to argue that there is a link between regional policies and cross-border cooperation, since both aim to focus on less developed areas. However, there is still a difference between two concepts since regional policy might be directed to every region, while cross-border cooperation covers only border regions.⁹ The crucial point in the process of cross-border cooperation is to deal with another community or society across the border to foster ties.

It is normal to discuss the evolution of bilateral ties while revising the opportunities for common work. When it concerns borders, usually historical flow of the bilateral relations with neighboring state are often involving a problem related with the settlement of borders or some territorial claims. In

⁷ Anne van der Veen, Dirk-Jan Boot, Cross-border cooperation and European Regional Policy, *NIG working papers*, No. 95-8, Hengelo, Drukkerij Twente, 1995, p. 2-3.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

this case priorities of both nations would give the shape to the cross-border cooperation. The two options are, either solving the ongoing discussion and continue working together for the development of border regions or continue the old strained relations. Here the most important fact is, what characterizes the priority of a given country. As it will be tackled below, complexity of ongoing problems between Greece and Turkey still prevents the development of cross-border cooperation due to some unsettled border issues.

Another challenge for the cross-border cooperation is the presence of ethnic minorities in border regions.¹⁰ If a given minority is settled in a border region where the state across the frontier is kin state, then there might be some reservations from the state to which this minority is connected with citizenship ties. In this case the nation state may see cross-border cooperation as a threat to its territorial integrity and deny to share some administrative competencies with regional authorities. Thus, strong central power could be perceived as the only option to protect the borders. One case that the current literature fail to nalyze is when the border regions of two states are populated by minority group whose kin state is a third country. How does this may affect the cross-border cooperation process? Regarding this aspect Greek-Bulgarian border is unique since this border region is settled by the Turkish minority whose kin state is Turkey. Current developments in the region continue to provide additional perspective about the topic, which will be examined below in detail as part of Greek-Bulgarian cross-border cooperation section.

For years European Union tried to change the vision of borders in order to foster integration. Western European countries managed to reduce the problem with borders to a minimum thanks to the European integration

¹⁰ Francesco Palermo, Trans-Border Cooperation and Ethnic Diversity, in: *Minority Policy in Action: The Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations in a European Context 1955-2005*, (Eds.) Jorgen Kuehl & Marc Weller, Aabenraa, Institut for Graenseregionsforskning og forfatterne, 2005, p. 161.

process. However, when Eastern European countries wanted to join European Union, borders began to be discussed again. With their own political and historical problems, Eastern European countries changed the dynamics of the cross-border cooperation throughout 1990s and somehow tried to copy the models applied in Western Europe in order to improve the situation of border regions.

4.2. PECULIARITY OF BULGARIAN-GREEK BORDER AND THE INITIAL RELEVANCE OF TURKEY

The Bulgarian-Greek frontier was first created in 1913 after the Second Balkan War. However realities of First World War changed the situation, and with the Neuilly Treaty signed in 1919 Bulgaria lost her access to the Aegean Sea.¹¹ As it was explained in detail in chapter one, according to the Convention signed on 27 November 1919 and attached to the Neuilly Treaty, reciprocal emigration between Bulgaria and Greece took place.¹² Both countries wanted to clear the minorities from their territories in order to put an end to the irredentist claims. Despite this intention there were additional steps taken to create minority protection mechanisms for those who desired to stay in their respective countries; however, the Greek side was unwilling to proceed with that. Such an action would have meant *ipso facto* the recognition of the Bulgarian minority in Greece and its existence in northwestern Greece exceeding beyond the area of Western Thrace. Aside from this, newly created independent Balkan states were eager to increase their populations; as a result of which new lines of division had to be set in order to create new borders. Therefore, reciprocal emigration was accepted as the best way to solve the minority issues between Greece and Bulgaria. Continuous efforts in search of homogeneity focused especially in border

¹¹ A.R.H., "The New Boundaries of Bulgaria", *Wiley-Blackwell and The Royal Geographical Society*, Vol.55 No.2 (Feb 1920), p. 133.

¹² For more information see: <http://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/LON/Volume%201/v1.pdf> (access: 17 October 2012)

regions which had the imagination of intangible and concrete fortresses of nation state in twentieth century. Consequently, all Bulgarians were expelled from Thrace, and all Greeks in Bulgaria were forced to emigrate to Greece. This action became the first mutually organized exodus in order to secure the borders of new nation states.

The creation of Bulgarian-Turkish border took place after the Second Balkan War in 1913 had resulted with the emigration of Bulgarian population living in Edirne and surrounding villages, while two border towns Kırklareli and Edirne remained Turkish. Bulgaria and Turkey did not sign a comprehensive exchange agreement involving minorities and therefore a sizeable Turkish minority was left in Bulgaria, settled adjacent to the frontier with Greece, Black Sea Region and Northeast Bulgaria near the border with Romania. Turks who were living next to the Turkish border in the Bulgarian part, were forced either to emigrate to Turkey or other regions in Bulgaria, while settlement of ethnic Bulgarians in the border region with Turkey was fostered for security reasons.

The Lausanne Peace Treaty signed in 1923 between Greece and Turkey, gave the last shape to the Greek-Turkish frontier including the compulsory population exchange. The Greek population in Turkey focused in Istanbul and Turkish/Muslim population in Greece was settled in Western Thrace (See Figure 1, the map of Western Thrace, Greece). There was very small detail in this population exchange in terms of location of minorities. While Turkey's border region with Greece did not have Greek minority, Greece's border areas with Turkey, along the Evros region, had a significant Muslim/Turkish population, mainly based in villages and part of them in Alexandroupolis. By the time passing, Greek policies aiming to change the demography in the region intensified. In 1974 when Turkey intervened in Cyprus, application of Military Surveillance Zone (MSZ) was extended to

Evros region, in a way to cover the areas bordering with Turkey.¹³ The extension of MSZ to Evros, was formation of a buffer zone between Greece and Turkey.



Figure 1: The map of Western Thrace, Greece. Source: <http://www.maps-of-greece.com/thrace-map.htm> (access: 18/01/2013).

Meanwhile, another issue involving minorities, disrupted homogenous nation state project both for Greece and Bulgaria. Although they had faced controlled expulsion, Southern part of Bulgaria and regions bordering Greece, were predominantly settled with the Turkish minority. After the creation of Greece and Bulgaria, families remaining in the opposite sides of the border were split. Many Turks had to leave their relatives on the other part of the border. For instance Turkish people from Xanthi, Komotini and Iasmos who had their relatives in mountainous Bulgarian villages or cities like Smolyan, Zlatograd and Kardzhali suffered the most from the creation of Greek-Bulgarian border. They continued to see each other and kinship ties

¹³ Lois Labrianidis, p. 82.

were somehow kept until the Second World War. The establishment of bipolar system, and having Greece and Bulgaria allied with opposite powers, created a strained situation on the Greek-Bulgarian frontier. Restricting mobility of people, resulted with the disruption of family ties. Thus, people stopped seeing their relatives in the other side of the border and eventually became foreigners. With the adoption of two different political systems - liberal democracy in Greece and communism in Bulgaria - the fate of Turkish minorities in both countries have changed dramatically. The only thing which left almost intact was the status of Turkey as the kin state of the Turkish minorities in Bulgaria and Greece.

These facts, led to significant changes in regional developments and continued their influence throughout the European integration process of both countries. Minority issues and problems not solved in the past continue to dominate cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. Nevertheless, it is necessary to admit that, involvement of European Union in the process, helped the gradual increase of cross-border initiatives and reduced tensions through mutual interactions.

4.3. THE INCITEMENTS AND PROBLEMS OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN BULGARIAN-GREEK-TURKISH TRIANGLE

Compared to Greece and Turkey, realization of cross-border cooperation in Bulgaria was relatively different. Communist style state planning had its effects both in economy and administrative issues because heavily centralized state system managed economic ties and trade in the same way. Moreover, since two of the most important neighbors Greece and Turkey were defined as enemies cooperating with the Western World, closer cooperation in any aspect was not well regarded. Therefore, there was no cross-border cooperation experience with Greece and Turkey.

In the meantime, the way that regional policy was planned by the communist party, served mainly the interests of state centralization rather than the distribution of power. During the communism, less developed border regions were supported in a way to change the demography in favor of Bulgarians with the motive to prevent irredentist activities. However, massive emigration of Turks from Bulgarian border regions created huge disparities between the regions in the center and periphery. For a while this problem was solved by encouraging the migration of Bulgarians from the central regions. Nevertheless, it failed once again after the end of the communism in Bulgaria, when 360,000 Turks were forced to emigrate to Turkey. Eventually, between 1990 and 1994 Bulgarian GDP declined with 30% and 25% respectively.¹⁴ Due to regional differences, this decrease was felt more in the border areas where emigration continued. Agriculture and tobacco production were the main economic activities in the Southern border regions. However, economic crisis hit also agricultural production and many people decided to leave border regions in search of a better life somewhere else in Bulgaria or abroad.

After the confirmation of Bulgaria's EU candidacy, cross-border cooperation became main priority for Bulgarian authorities in order to prevent depopulation in border regions. A new administrative reform took place in 1999, which facilitated the process of cross-border cooperation by sharing certain aspects of central power with regional authorities.¹⁵ Nine large provinces (*oblast*) in Bulgaria were divided into 28, hoping to ease their administration. However, this constituted only an internal reform process in Bulgaria and cross-border cooperation had also its second part which had to deal with the bordering state. It is necessary to mention that most of the reforms in Bulgaria in 1990s were done with economic incentives and the prospect for European integration.

¹⁴ Vassilis Monastiriotes, *The Emergence of Regional Policy in Bulgaria and the Role of the EU*, in: *Bulgaria and Europe: Shifting Identities*, (Ed.) Stefanos Katsikas, London, Anthem Press, 2010, p. 175.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

The issue of cross-border cooperation has totally different aspect in Greece. Despite being the first EU member state in the region, Greek cross-border cooperation policy does not have long traditions. This is due to many facts that are related with the bilateral relations between Greece and neighboring countries. As it was previously explained in detail, all land borders of Greece were part of MSZ, which restricted every activity within the 15-45 km wide strip close to the border.¹⁶ This action was justified as a security measure since all northern neighbors of Greece were communist countries. Moreover, after the conflict in Cyprus in 1974, Northeastern part of the Greek border was also declared as MSZ. These restrictive measures were applied until the second half of 1990s. Immediately after the fall of communism, talks for bilateral cooperation were launched between Greece and her neighbors. However, the process was not smooth since decentralization in Greece did not take place until 2010. *Kallikratis plan* which came into force as of 1 January 2011, created 9 decentralized administrations and 13 regions in Greece. The change brought significant hope for the development of cross-border cooperation between Greece and her neighbors.

When it comes to Turkey, it is clear that Turkey's cross-border cooperation experience is not also a very rich one. Turkey signed European Charter of Local Self-Government in 1988 and accepted decentralization of power. After becoming member of Customs Union in 1996, Turkey was confirmed also as EU candidate in 1999. With this confirmation Turkey became eligible for European funding within the framework of "Pre-Accession Financial Assistance".¹⁷ Meanwhile, Bulgaria's EU membership increased European borders of Turkey. Further discussion of cross-border cooperation and its progress, showed different results while creating new discussions about bilateral relations between Turkey and her neighbors. The

¹⁶ Lois Labrianidis, p. 83.

¹⁷ Füsün Özerdem, Turkey's EU Cross-Border Cooperation Experiences: From Western Borders to Eastern Borders, *European Perspectives*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2011), p. 81.

contrast in objectives and priorities of all three countries created different perspectives for cross-border cooperation which will be analyzed below.

4.3.1. Cross-Border Cooperation Between Bulgaria and Turkey

The border line between Bulgaria and Turkey is 288 km long, and comprises three border crossing points, namely Svilengrad-Kapıkule, Malko-Tarnovo-Dereköy and Lesovo-Hamzabeyli (opened in 2005). During the Cold War period this border area witnessed mostly the expulsion of Turks from Bulgaria, an issue which dominated for a long time bilateral relations between Bulgaria and Turkey. However, after the end of the Cold War, both countries spent massive effort to improve bilateral relations despite some problems with the rights of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

For Turkey, Svilengrad-Kapıkule border crossing point bears the symbolic meaning of being the gate to Europe. Big part of the Turkish exports to Europe are transported through this border crossing point. Therefore, Turkey pays special attention not only to improve its bilateral ties with Bulgaria, but also to enhance the level of regional development by increasing cross-border cooperation with Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian side of the border with Turkey is one of the least populated areas of Bulgaria.¹⁸ Population density is low and agriculture is the main income source for most people. Two cities, Haskovo and Burgas have relatively developed industry and offer more opportunities for employment. In the Turkish side Edirne and Kırklareli are the two cities that border with Bulgaria. Agricultural activities and industry are main sources of income for the residents of both cities.

¹⁸ Petar Stoyanov, "Bulgarian Regions at EU External Border: The Case Study of Bulgaria-Turkey Border Area", *Geographica Timisiensis*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2010), p. 200.

During 1990s, Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border cooperation process continued to develop as bilateral initiative. After 2003 cross-border activities between Bulgaria and Turkey began to attract financial support from the EU. The 2004-2006 cross-border cooperation program between Bulgaria and Turkey constituted a small step to encourage cooperation by supporting the building of new infrastructure. A new IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme has been approved for the period 2007-2013, which aims at the development of border regions (see figure 2, for the eligible geographic area).



Figure 2: Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-Border Programme, map of eligible areas. Source: <http://www.ipacbc-bgtr.eu/en/page.php?c=35>

The objectives of the 2007-2013 Cross-Border Cooperation Programme between Bulgaria and Turkey were set as follows:

- Developing economic, social and environmental activities in border regions through cross-border cooperation.

- To deal with common challenges such as environment, public health and prevention of organized crime.
- Promote legal and administrative cooperation between both countries and to secure borders.
- Encouraging local “people to people” type actions.¹⁹

With these objectives, cross-border cooperation programme covers the districts of Haskovo, Yambol and Burgas in Bulgaria and Turkish provinces Edirne and Kırklareli. Total population of the area is 1,561,984 people, out of which 830,917 reside in Bulgarian side and 731,067 people in the Turkish part. This project has been initiated to enhance cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Turkey, and to increase the intercultural interaction between people in both sides of the border. Total budget of the Programme for the period of 2007-2013 is approximately 32 million Euros. 27 millions are provided by the EU contribution, while both countries agreed to finance the cooperation with 4.8 millions Euros.²⁰ There are three calls issued so far under the framework of Bulgarian-Turkish cross-border cooperation. All the three calls are directed on activities that aim ‘improvement the quality of life’ and ‘sustainable social and economic development’ in border regions.

The current situation of the Bulgaria-Turkish cross-border cooperation is still under the process of development. Considering that Bulgarian border for long remained closed for any kind of cooperation during the communist rule, these achievements are really impressive. The perspective of European integration and economic incentives of both countries, boosted gradually cooperation between Bulgaria and Turkey, which opens the room for more positive expectations for the next period of the cross-border cooperation.

¹⁹ Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-Border Programme (2007-2013). Source: http://www.ipacbc-bgtr.eu/upload/docs/2012-10/IPA_CBC_BG_TR_Programme.pdf (access: 20/02/2013).

²⁰ <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=45456&l=2> (access: 20/02/2013)

4.3.2. Cross-Border Cooperation Between Greece and Turkey

Cross-border cooperation (CBC) between Turkey and Greece shows very complicated progress. In spite of her long experience in EU affairs, Greece historically lacked the opportunity to develop cross-border cooperation with neighboring states. There are several reasons behind this fact. First, during the Cold War period, both countries became close US allies and this resulted with the NATO membership in 1952. Bilateral cooperation between Greece and Turkey continued mostly on *ad hoc* basis and most of the time interrupted with the problems in bilateral relations. Turkish/Muslim minority in Western Thrace and the Greek minority in Istanbul were used as diplomatic tool by both states to enhance their influence on each other.

There were no problems in land borders, however, defining the sea borders in the Aegean Sea, and additional issues such as continental shelf, territorial waters and the militarization of Aegean Islands, created tensions between Greece and Turkey. It would be beyond the limits of this work to underline problems in bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey, therefore, they will be shortly evaluated only in terms of their relevance and impact on the cross-border cooperation.

The main issue which dominates the discussion on the Aegean sea is the Greece's claim to increase her territorial waters up to twelve miles. According to Lausanne Treaty, territorial waters of both states were limited at three miles. In 1936, when Greece extended her territorial waters to six miles, Turkey accepted the status-quo by doing the same in 1964.²¹ Nevertheless, when Greece decided to expand her territorial waters according to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea which entered into force in 1994, Turkey objected the action. Moreover, Ankara warned Athens

²¹ Serdar Ş. Güner, "Aegean Territorial Waters Conflict: An Evolutionary Narrative", *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 21 (2004), p. 298.

that such an action will be accepted as *casus belli*.²² In fact Greece's action was rejected on the grounds that it was significantly impairing the navigation of Turkish ships in the Aegean Sea. So far there is no solution found to the problem. Along with the arguments on the continental shelf and Flight Information Region, there are many issues to be solved in the Aegean sea.

The crisis between the two countries which erupted in December 1995 over the disputed Kardak/Imia Rocks, showed how serious is the issue, since it had a great danger to turn into war.²³ After the escalation of the crisis, both sides drew back their forces from the area, and several rocky islands in the region remained with disputed sovereignty.

In 1999, following the earthquake in Turkey, both states embarked on the process of rapprochement. The same year at the Helsinki Summit, Turkey's status was confirmed as EU candidate, and this gave additional impetus for the development of bilateral relations via CBC.

Nevertheless, this process created its own challenges as well. The first Greek-Turkish CBC programme has been created under the Interreg III/A in 2004, covering the 2004-2006 period. Its main target was to reduce regional disparities and to increase economic and social cooperation in order to facilitate the European integration process.²⁴ In addition to this, increasing the life standards of people and building new infrastructure were other priorities set to the cooperation. However, during this time, several problems occurred and the programme could not be implemented properly.²⁵ The lack of coordination and expertise on both sides led to the failure of the project. Following this negative experience there was no submission of

²² Ibid.

²³ See more about the topic: Jon M. Van Dyke, "An Analysis of the Aegean Disputes Under International Law", *Ocean Development & International Law*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (2005), 63-117.

²⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/fiche_projet/document/TR%200405.05%20CBC%20with%20Greece.pdf (access: 20/02/2013).

²⁵ Füsün Özerdem, p. 86.

another IPA CBC project for the period 2007-2013 with the joint initiative of Greece and Turkey.

Meanwhile, during this period, problems related to the land borders between Greece and Turkey began to be discussed more often due to illegal migrants crossing the Turkish border and asking asylum in Greece. Most of the illegal migrants crossed the border by passing through a thin line on the Meriç/Evros river*. Greek authorities blamed the Turkish side for not controlling the border.



Figure 3: The map of the area covered under the Greek-Turkish Cross-Border Cooperation Programme INTERREG III/A.

Source: <http://archive.interacteu.net/604900/604902/603765/605062> (access: 20/02/2013).

Greece as Schengen exclave became the target of illegal immigrants since it was the easiest way to reach Europe. Aside from the land border,

* This river passes through Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey, and therefore, has three different names. Bulgarians call it Maritsa, Greeks call it Evros, and Turks call it Meriç.

close distance between Greek islands and the Turkish coast, made it easy the use of sea for migration to Greece. Therefore, migration continued both through the land borders and the sea. However, it seems that the Greek allegations towards Turkish authorities regarding the border control are not totally justifiable. According to the reports of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Frontex), in August 2012, the number of migrants who attempted to cross the Greek-Turkish land border dropped from 2000 a week to almost 200 after an increase of the surveillance and patrolling activities of Greek authorities.²⁶

In order to stop illegal migration, Greek authorities expressed their intention to build a wall on the border with Turkey.²⁷ The Turkish side reacted negatively to this decision, due to potential consequences of a fence between Greece and Turkey.²⁸ The criticisms were usually focused on the psychology of the presence of such a wall, which might increase the division between Greek and Turkish people. However, despite these negative stance, in December 2012, Greek authorities declared that the fence on Evros has been completed.²⁹ Four meters high fence was built on the 10,5 km long shore, where due to its geographical features it was more easy to cross the border.

There are very different issues that affect CBC between Greece and Turkey. Priorities of both states are reflecting also the development of cooperation. It is obvious that the progress in the process of CBC is still depending on the initiatives of the politicians. Further rapprochement between both sides would boost cooperation in different fields.

²⁶ <http://www.frontex.europa.eu/news/situational-update-migratory-situation-at-the-greek-turkish-border-HATxN9> (access: 21/02/2013).

²⁷ Greece to Build Border Fence to Deter Illegal Immigrants: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/07/world/europe/greece-to-build-fence-on-turkish-border-to-curb-illegal-immigrants.html?_r=0 (access: 21/02/2013).

²⁸ Erdal Şafak, Meriçe Duvar, Sabah Gazetesi, January 2, 2011.

²⁹ Greece completes anti-migrant fence at Turkish border: http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsitel_1_1_17/12/2012_474782 (access: 21/02/2013)

Nevertheless, the role of the European Union should be relatively increased in order to avoid divisions at national level.

4.3.3. Cross-Border Cooperation Between Bulgaria and Greece

Soon after the end of communism in Bulgaria, the rights and the names of the Turkish minority were restored. The prospect of European integration and NATO membership aspirations in Bulgaria changed many things. Democratic state institutions were recreated in order to boost cooperation with western countries and particularly with neighboring states. Regarding this aspect, Greece was the most important country for Bulgaria to improve bilateral relationships with. Cross-border cooperation along the Bulgarian-Greek border, which remained closed for half a century during the Cold War, was subsequently launched. For Greece, the “threat from the northern Slavic neighbor” was a central issue of her national security policy³⁰ and remained as such until the mid-1990s.

The process of cooperation did not develop very fast due to contradictions which have existed for a long time between both countries. Especially having a minority group dominantly living in the border area which is not kin to either state created additional problems. Opening border crossing points was one the first issues discussed. Nevertheless, a solution was found through the creation of Euroregions in order to foster cross-border cooperation and the development of economic ties. Euroregion Evros-Meric-Maritsa, Euroregion Delta-Rodopi, Euroregion Mesta-Nestos and Euroregion Strymon-Strouma were among the Euroregions created during the second half of 1990s and after 2000.

³⁰ Ioannis D. Stefanidis, p. 28.

With the opening of new border crossing points, people were able to travel easily and meet with members of the other nation across the border. However, due to a potential massive migration of people, a restriction was enacted in the form of a visa requested for Bulgarians to travel to Greece, which reduced cultural interaction. In 2001 when Bulgarian citizens began to travel visa-free to European countries, this showed also its effects in Bulgarian-Greek border crossings. Greeks were, for the most part, coming to Bulgaria for sightseeing and shopping, which was initially the case with Bulgarians traveling to Greece. However, due to the economic crisis in Bulgaria, cross border labor movement from Bulgaria to Greece soon began. The existence of such working communities across the border forced both states to cooperate in several other areas, such as social security and cross-border law enforcement, etc.

In a short period of time, infrastructure was renewed and new border crossing points were opened at the Bulgarian-Greek border region. The figure 4 represents major border crossing points between border cities.

After Bulgaria became full EU member in 2007, a new dimension of cross-border cooperation between both countries came to the fore. The cross-border European Territorial Cooperation Programme "Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013" was approved by the European Commission on 28/03/2008 by Decision C(2008)1129/28-03-2008. The eligible area of the Programme consists of 7 Greek Regional Units (Evros, Kavala, Xanthi, Rodopi, Drama, Serres and Thessaloniki) and 4 Bulgarian Districts (Blagoevgrad, Smolyan, Kardzhali and Haskovo).



Figure 4: Sandanski(BG)³¹-Seres(GR), Gotse Delchev(BG)-Drama(GR), Svilengrad(BG)-Orestiada(GR), Zlatograd(BG)-Xanthi(GR) and Ivaylovgrad(BG)-Kiprino(GR) Bulgarian-Greek Border Region. Source: European Territorial Cooperation Programme Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013(Euroreg, project proposal 2007-2013).

Briefly, the aims of the programme are indicated as: increasing the living standards of people in the region and enhancing the competitiveness of the area through the construction of new infrastructure. In geographical terms, a large part of the region is situated in mountainous territory; as such, the building of new infrastructure and the repair/reconstruction of existing infrastructure was viewed as being highly important, as this would increase the accessibility of the region and help attract foreign and domestic investment. However, such construction projects involving even the issue of infrastructure development seem to have become a victim of ethnic problems

³¹International code of the country; BG for Bulgaria and GR for Greece.

as it will be shown below with the case of CBC between Kardzhali and Komotini. Some parts of the CBC programme could not be realized on time or are lacking in progress. It should be noted here that this may be due to the domination of such issues by main-stream nationalists.

4.3.3.1 Kardzhali-Komotini: Unique Example in the EU of Cross-Border Non-Cooperation

Discussing of cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Greece should not be conducted without mentioning the ties between Kardzhali and Komotini. Kardzhali is a city in the southern part of Bulgaria next to the border with Greece, predominantly settled by ethnic Turks. According to the last census made in 2011, 61% of its population is Turkish,³² though the methods used to conduct the census in question have been criticized by some. For example some people living in rural areas in Kardzhali were not counted as part of this census, despite the fact that they were living permanently in Bulgaria.³³

Another important fact about Kardzhali relates to the ethnic origin of the mayor and the political party of which he is a member. Hasan Azis was initially elected as mayor during the local elections in 2003, his party being the Movement for Rights and Freedom, known as the political party of the Turkish ethnic minority. As of the time of this writing, Mr. Azis remains still as mayor of Kardzhali, having been reelected two consecutive times.

On the Greek side, across the border from Komotini, the Turkish/Muslim minority is not as active in local or national political life. The Turkish/Muslim minority can be argued as being oppressed in some ways by

³² http://www.nsi.bg/ORPDOCS/Census2011_4.pop_by_ethnos.xls (Access: 19 October 2012).

³³ During an interview conducted in April 2011, people from villages near Kirkovo said that nobody came to visit them in during the official period of the census.

local institutions. For example, such institutions have imposed strict rules on such issues as property transfers and buying new property (it is almost impossible for a Turk to buy property from a Greek citizen, as local administration offices would not agree to process the property transfer application). With this being said, it is necessary to indicate that Greece's EU membership has brought some liberalization to Western Thrace, but despite 30 years having passed after Greece received full EU membership, minority living standards are relatively lower than those of the Greek majority. Discriminative measures taken by Athens restrict political participation of the minority, which was confirmed with the latest decentralization reforms accepted to foster regional development in lines with European integration.³⁴

Perhaps it may be found as awkward to compare the situation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria with the Turkish/Muslim minority of Western Thrace due to the differences in percentage of the minority with the majority population. The Turkish minority in Bulgaria forms 11% of the total Bulgarian population, while Turkish/Muslim minority in Western Thrace constitutes only 1.5% of the total Greek population. However, it cannot be denied that the political influence of the minority in Western Thrace is much larger than its number. Because of this political sensitivity, all the steps of its inclusion are blocked. Their interaction with the outside world is also seen suspiciously by the central government in Athens which blocks the creation of cross-border cooperation itself. One example of such governmental interference would be that of the signing of a protocol between the mayors of Kardzhali and Komotini in order to form twin city cooperation in 2010. Hasan Azis, as mayor of Kardzhali and Dimitris Kotsakis, mayor of Komotini, signed the protocol on 23 September 2010.³⁵ It took twenty one years after the fall of communism to initiate such a process for both cities. It would seem that such a delay was

³⁴ Dia. Anagnostou (a), p. 111-112.

³⁵ Gundem Gazetesi, 1 Ekim 2010, No. 703, Year 14.

due to reluctance on the Greek side, as the Greeks are extremely sensitive to the unification of the Turkish minorities from both sides of the border.

Another example of Greek reluctance to improve cross-border cooperation in the area would be the opening of the Makaza-Komotini border crossing point. According to the cross-border European Territorial Cooperation Programme “Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013”, rehabilitation of the road between Kardzhali and Komotini was envisaged together with the opening of a new border crossing point between Makaza and Komotini. The project was supposed to be finished by July 2009. The Bulgarian section of the road was completed by the summer of 2009³⁶, while the Greek section has not been completed, as of the time of this writing. Among the main reasons for this delay is the reluctance on the part of Athens to launch a connection from both sides of the Rhodope Mountains, which would allow ‘Turkish’ minority members to easily interact. Moreover, there have been many discussions on the Greek side on processes of property confiscation and the geographical position of the road. A plan suggested by government officials would have in effect confiscated large swaths of property which belong to ethnic Turks - mainly land used for agricultural purposes.³⁷ As a result of opposition shown by minority members who suffered from previous confiscations, and complaining that they could not get compensation for earlier instances of such confiscation, there were some modifications made on the project covering the Greek area only. However, it would seem as though the Greek government will attempt to postpone the opening of the border to the latest possible date which might be the end of 2013.

³⁶ http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=143434 (Access: 19 October 2012).

³⁷ Haber Gazetesi, 17 Aralik 2010, No. 714, Year 14.

Conclusion

In a changing world borders continue to change their meaning as well. The 'other' across the border began to be perceived as opportunity for economic development and trade through the European integration process. Perhaps this sharp shift would not be realized without the European project. However, despite this evolution, still cross-border cooperation is perceived as a process that should be initiated by politicians. Especially in countries where bilateral relations are problematic, initial support of state institutions might give a better opportunity for the development of cooperation.

Despite its great potential, the Greek-Turkish CBC is not developed due to the presence of other issues. The economic crisis currently Greece faces, might create additional possibilities to improve economic and social relations between both countries. Moreover, it is necessary to have guidance of Europe in such process in order to avoid further failures. The history has been reinterpreted according to the current conditions, and used as a tool by nationalists to create walls between the two nations. Therefore, political rapprochement between the two countries should be supported with social dialogue in order to make such policies long lasting. This perspective needs to focus more on coexistence and sharing rather than differences and hostilities.

Decentralization of state power creates the basis for a solid cooperation process. Nevertheless, sharing certain type of power with regional authorities becomes conditional to mutual trust. In cases where minorities are living in the border areas, decentralization of power is not desired due to potential danger for irredentism. Mainly these problems exist in countries which have problem with the democracy as well. Obviously it can be very difficult to build cross-border cooperation in an environment which is highly sensitive in terms of security and threat perception. Therefore, the rights of minorities are limited and it is very difficult to take

steps to further the process of democratization. The existence of Turkish minorities in both parts of the Bulgarian-Greek border will continue to be a challenge for both countries in the future. Despite some ethnic tensions, cross-border cooperation continues to develop thanks to the Europeanization process, which might bring with it additional possibilities for more liberal minority rights in the region.

Currently, the organization of intercultural activities as part of cross-border cooperation is the most important step to take after the opening of the new border crossing point between Kardzhali and Komotini. This is important not only to connect the Turks/Muslims with one another on both sides of the border, but also to increase their interaction with Bulgarians and Greeks, and eventually to create a situation of co-existence based on tolerance. Nevertheless, in order to achieve such a reality it is of immense importance to avoid such extreme forms of nationalism which poisoned all the Balkan peninsula in the past

CHAPTER FIVE

BULGARIA AND GREECE: COMPARING THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES OF INTEGRATION

5.1. COMMUNISM VERSUS LIBERAL DEMOCRACY REGARDING THE INTEGRATION OF MINORITIES IN BULGARIA AND GREECE

Studying minority rights in Bulgaria and Greece would not be complete without considering different approaches of the states and the influence of political systems. The situation of the Turkish/Muslim minorities in Bulgaria and Greece gives a perfect opportunity to evaluate the impact of policies followed during the Cold War period. The reason to make such an analysis stems from the fact that the integration of minority groups in both countries differs due to the diverse approaches to the issue of minority integration. While Bulgarian integration policy towards Turkish minority was dominated by the communist philosophy, the Greek policy was shaped through the liberal democratic system. The paths to modernity that have been chosen after the Second World War, determined to a great extent the way how minorities will be integrated into the society and continued their existence until today. However, as it has happened with the nationalism in the nineteenth century, communism and liberal democracy had been accepted by Bulgaria and Greece after their initial reinterpretation according to the national realities of both countries.¹ In other words, these ideologies were used at the certain limit that they served for national goals. Perhaps it could go beyond the limits of this study to make a comprehensive comparison between communism and liberal democracy. Therefore, both

¹ Maya Kosseva, Antonina Zhelyazkova and Marko Hajdinjak, *European Dilemmas and Identity Construction on the Bulgarian Path to Modernity*, in: *Europe, Nations and Modernity*, (Ed.) Atsuko Ichijo, Basingstoke, Palgrave and Macmillan, 2011, p. 87.

systems will be examined only based on certain criteria such as education, religion, social and political participation and integration of minorities in Bulgaria and Greece.

Two decades after the collapse of communism and current debates with the European integration and the ongoing problems with minorities make necessary to develop new methods and policies for the integration of minorities. The case with the Turkish/Muslim minorities in Bulgaria and Greece provides us with the unique opportunity to see the results of previous policies and to avoid mistakes made in the past. Before the independence of Greece and Bulgaria, Turks/Muslims constituted a single community, divided according to the Ottoman *millet* system. After initial independence of Greece and Bulgaria, they were separated with the borders, even relatives who remained on the opposite side of the border became foreigners while the time passed.²

Following the fall of communism, democracy in Bulgaria began to be discussed more, and treatment of minorities became a key political issue. Due to the systematic assimilation policies of the communist rule, the integration of Turkish minority did not attract the necessary attention of scholars in Bulgaria, neither there was such an evaluation of previous policies and their impact on the Turkish minority. All in all, previous studies dealing with the Turkish minorities in Bulgaria and Greece, focused mainly on the issue of rights and violations, and there was not much done for the comparative evaluation of minority integration.

² Before the beginning of Cold War, the border between Bulgaria and Greece was not totally closed. According to the Neuilly Treaty, Bulgaria had the right to make trade through Aegean Sea. This situation affected also the Turkish minority in the area and its mobilization. They continued to visit their relatives in the opposite side of the border and Turks from the mountainous villages in the Bulgarian part were often going to buy food from Komotini, the closest Greek city. This situation continued until the end of the World War II. After the war, the control on the borders was strengthened, since it marked also the ideological division between the two countries.

Post-Cold War period revealed different facts regarding the issue of minorities and their integration in Bulgaria and in Greece. The level of integration of Turkish/Muslim minorities in both countries showed significant differences which are having their effect up until now in various aspects of life such as social participation, political representation, education and religious organization and interaction between minority and majority. These aspects are not only relevant to the issue of rights granted to the minority, but also with the approaches of different political systems such as liberalism and communism, which reflected the concept of rights, equality and emancipation.

The establishment of the communist regime in Bulgaria was not unconditional. Communism has been adopted in a way to help the evolution of the Bulgarian national identity and modernization, through its philosophy of creating classless society. This methodology of 'protecting the national' and 'adopting the foreign'³, created a 'Bulgarian style communism', which in the end turned into hard core nationalism. However, this policy made it necessary to recruit additional methods for the installation of a new system which was planned to be the tool of nationalism. Thus historical and national narratives were recreated to foster the unity of the nation and to create classless society to accomplish the ultimate goal of communism. The control of the political culture was accomplished by taking the nation's history under control.⁴ In 1978, BCP decided to celebrate 3rd March as national holiday in Bulgaria and to commemorate the Treaty of San Stefano. The creation of the unity of the nation has been seen as an opportunity to express the desire for a revision in favour of the recreation of Greater Bulgaria, which would have access to warm seas, and embrace Macedonia and Thrace.⁵

³ Maya Kosseva, Antonina Zhelyazkova and Marko Hajdinjak, p. 90.

⁴ Walter A. Kemp, *Nationalism and Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1999, p. 95.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

The policy directed toward the Turkish minority had some inconsistent steps due to the conditions of that time. The period after the Second World War was very sensitive since the political situation in Bulgaria was not very stable, and posed certain risks for the creation of communist rule. More liberal policies toward the Turkish minority were adopted with the motive of having support of all circles of the society. Extreme policies limiting the rights of the Turkish minority were postponed to a later stage until the establishment of communist institutions was achieved. Therefore Turkish minority was allowed to use its own language and to form a culture along the lines of communist ideology. This *ad hoc* tolerance had two different goals; first, to have the support of the Turkish minority in the process of building the communism in Bulgaria, and second, to use the immigration waves for exporting the communist ideology to Turkey.⁶

The communist tolerant attitude continued only until 1958, when the Communist Party decided to embark on a new policy to create a *monoethnic* Bulgarian nation. These nationalist policies were conducted by justifying the construction of a single '*classless*' nation in order to reach the level of true communism in Bulgaria. However, development of education in Turkish and separate Turkish culture has been supported at the extent that its development aims to support the building of communism in Bulgaria. Thus, it turned into a process of spreading communist ideals among the Turkish minority through massive educational campaigns in Turkish language, which were heavily loaded with communist propaganda. Gradual increase of education in Bulgarian to the detriment of the education in Turkish, has been supported with the objective of engaging the Turkish minority into the national process of building communism. The inclusion allowed Turks to participate equally in most aspects of social and political life in Bulgaria and

⁶ Maya Kosseva, Antonina Zhelyazkova and Marko Hajdinjak, p. 93.

to develop their own culture to some extent, albeit without emphasizing their ethnic identity.⁷

The course of minority rights suddenly changed its nature, and the previously signed treaties with Ottoman Empire and Turkey were ignored by turning the issue of Turkish minority solely as an internal problem of Bulgaria. Meanwhile, Bulgarian authorities classified this problem as a lack of modernity among the members of Turkish minority. Marxist theory perforated minority education in Turkish⁸ aiming to increase the cultural level of Turkish minority and to help for its unification with the Bulgarian nation, which eventually, could help for the construction of proper communism in Bulgaria. Consequently, the communist rule created policies which had their effects on the Turkish minority and its organization in Bulgaria that continue to show their effect even today as it will be explained in this work.

Being identified as a Western style democratic state Greece created different pattern of exceptions⁹ with the treatment of the Turkish/Muslim minority in Western Thrace. The period after World War II created unique conditions in Greece. Being part of the Marshall Plan resulted with keeping the distance with Soviets. However, internal struggle between rightists and leftist who were largely supporting communism in Greece continued for decades. The *coup d'état* in 1967 constituted an interval for Greek democracy which was re-established in 1974, after the collapse of military regime, that could not sustain itself as a result of the Turkish intervention in Cyprus.

Nevertheless, regarding the situation of Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace, chain of events that occurred under the auspices of Greek

⁷ Reshenie na Politburo na TsK na BKP (Decision of the Politburo of Central Committee of Bulgarian Communist Party), TsDA, F. 1B, op. 67, a. e. 3090, l. 7-31, 1984.

⁸ Maya Kosseva, Antonina Zhelyazkova and Marko Hajdinjak, p. 93.

⁹ Will Kymlicka, Justice and Security in the Accommodation of Minority Nationalism, in: *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Minority Rights*, (Eds.) Stephen May Tariq Modood and Judith Squires, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 148.

democracy, culminated into systematic violation of minority rights, which could be interpreted as contradicting with the equality principle in liberal democracy. Application of the Article 19 of the GCC to deprive Turks from the Greek citizenship and restrictions in property ownership, constituted clear violation to the Article 4 of the Greek Constitution that regulated equality of Greek citizens. However, these discriminatory regulations found their justification as 'exceptional applications' to protect the state from the common enemy, the Turks. In fact application of restrictive measures intensified in the period following the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. Even readmission of Greece to the Council of Europe did not bring positive development to the rights of minorities which were neglected on regular basis.¹⁰

The political climate did not permit the improvement of minority rights since both political parties created in the post-1974 period followed nationalist rhetoric. Nea Demokratia (New Democracy) was created by Konstantinos Karamanlis as a centre-right party in 1974. On the other side, the same year, Andreas Papandreu established PASOK as centre-left party. However, within the realities of Greece, PASOK has been characterized by its socialist and nationalist tendencies.¹¹ This exceptional co-existence shaped also the general attitude towards the rights of minorities, as this limited nationalist approach gave the opportunity to PASOK to take the necessary steps for the modernization of Greece in the process of European integration.

It is necessary to indicate that, in the first decade of Greek EU membership, this modernization was only limited to the economic aspects of integration.¹² Therefore, it did not generate considerable changes for the rights of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace, neither it produced positive

¹⁰ Dia Anagnostou (b), p. 339.

¹¹ Andreas Maschonas, "European Integration and the Prospects of Modernization in Greece", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1997), p. 330.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 337.

regulations for their integration as equal citizens of Greece. Deepening of segregation in Western Thrace between Muslims and Orthodox Greeks, created tensions in the beginning of 1990s which sent an alert to the politicians in order to take necessary measures for the modernization of Greek political life and the revision of Greek identity.

Non-separation of the church-state affairs in Greece and the dominant position of the Orthodox Church created troubles for the modernization of the country, and excluded the non-orthodox population from the social structure by restricting their participation. Orthodoxy became the center of the Greek identity, and therefore, minority groups were perceived as a population who lacks the basic feature of 'Greekness'.¹³ This situation, not only resulted with the exclusion of minorities, but also delayed significantly the Greek modernization process. In the Bulgarian case, considering the large number of minorities, communists revoked the privileges of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church with the first Constitution in 1947. Separation of church and state was also determined with the constitution, which guaranteed freedom of conscience for all Bulgarian citizens.¹⁴ This change eliminated segregation on religious grounds and prevented the intervention of the church in state affairs. Thus, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church was turned into a normal religious institution with no political functions, which created equality between Muslims and Christian population in Bulgaria. This regulations would work very well, if communist rule would not have launched a systematic oppression to all religious institutions in Bulgaria. This policy of religious restrictions will be examined further under the section 'the importance of religion'.

By looking at these two cases it could be possible to conclude that, Greek Orthodox Church was taking the advantage of liberal democracy to

¹³ Vasiliki Kravva, The Construction of Otherness in Modern Greece, in: *The Ethics of Anthropology: Debates and Dilemmas*, (Ed.) Pat Caplan, London, Routledge, 2003, p. 158.

¹⁴ Spas Raikin, p. 171.

strengthen its position in all aspects of Greek social and political life, while Bulgarian Orthodox Church lost its superiority at the expense of communist political system. The shift in positions did not only affect the religious institutions, but also determined the process of modernity and conservatism in both states. Eventually, secularization and modernization of Bulgarian national identity paved the way for the inclusion of Muslim Turks in the first years of communism. Incentives offered for the inclusion of Turks, helped for the development of Turkish culture in Bulgaria and created new educational opportunities for the Turkish minority.¹⁵ Again, it could become a good example for the inclusion of national minorities if it would not transform into a forcible assimilation process of minorities. Certain exceptions in both countries, resulted with the creation of unique examples of communism and liberal democracy, which were shaped with the use of certain policy tools directed to regulate the lives of minorities in Bulgaria and Greece. Initially, their effects dominated also at certain level the discourse of minority rights and integration during the Europeanization process, as it will be examined below.

5.1.1. Education as a Tool for Integration

As it has been expressed in previous chapters, education has been the main tool for the promotion of Greek and Bulgarian nationalism. Education remained also as a priority in the period following the independence of both states. This time it has been used as a new strategy to create the 'other' or boost the participation of the minority in social and economic life. Teaching of history became a powerful mechanism for the creation of collective 'self' and 'other'.¹⁶ Formation of national culture and its distinctive features were mainly transmitted through the history syllabus in education. Without certain reference to the treatment of minorities, wars had

¹⁵ Bilal Şimşir, p. 192-193.

¹⁶ Renee Hirschon, p. 86.

been mostly described as heroic events that saved the nation from the yoke of dominant powers. Nevertheless, this method of teaching history created hostile feelings among the majority that perceived minority members as remnants of the so-called era of 'Ottoman slavery'. Therefore, oppressive policies towards minorities in both countries were justified as revenge for the five centuries long Ottoman rule.

In this context, state control of minority education became an important tool for the prevention of the development of minority culture. Somehow, developing a distinct culture has been perceived as a threat to the unity of the state, and therefore, these steps were strongly discouraged. In Bulgaria, communists became the first ones to claim the '*monoethnic*' character of the Bulgarian nation and showed their limited support for the development of the Turkish culture by improving the educational level of the Turkish minority. Paradoxically in the aftermath of the creation of communist rule in Bulgaria, education in Turkish language and creation of new minority high schools made a peak. However, this support was not unconditional, as creation of these institutions and distribution of material printed in Turkish were directed to the same goal of spreading communism among the Turks. The nationalization of the Turkish schools in 1946, gave the possibility to the communists to control the syllabus taught in Turkish as well as to shape it according to their plans.¹⁷ The negative side of this policy was to restrict the development of the minority culture and of an independent Turkish intelligentsia. Meanwhile, it is necessary to indicate some positive aspects of the communist education policy, since it managed rapidly to reduce the illiteracy rate among the Turkish minority and affected the formation of communist Turkish intelligentsia in Bulgaria, who became actively involved in every aspect of the social and political life.

¹⁷ Bilal Şimşir, p. 145.

The situation of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Greece was much more different as Greek State focused its efforts mainly on the policy of controlled inclusion of the minority in Thrace. The attempts to prevent Turks from developing Turkish consciousness became evident when education with Arabic letters was encouraged by Greek authorities.¹⁸ Provisions regarding the education in Lausanne Treaty were forced to the maximum limit since this attitude delayed the creation of minority high schools in Western Thrace until 1952. Before this date, many Turkish students graduated from minority high schools with limited knowledge in Greek did not have the opportunity to follow their education in Greece. Even the creation of two minority high schools was not enough for the needs of minority, and therefore, most of them preferred to continue their education in Turkey.

However, problems in Greece were not only limited to the lack of capacity. Due to discrimination and restrictions targeting minority members, obtaining education did not present a significant value for the minority members in Thrace. They were simply not accepted for public employment and opportunities in the private sector of Western Thrace were also not enough, since the area became the least developed region in Greece. Those who graduated from high schools and universities had the chance either to stay in Thrace and work in agricultural production or to leave the region in search of a better future. Nevertheless, Turks who obtained their education in Turkey or abroad had been labeled as suspicious as they did not pass through the Greek educational system. For Greek authorities, education became the center of the national transformation and homogenization process.¹⁹ The use of common language and the development of common symbols constituted pattern for the promotion of nationalist ideology.

¹⁸ Hakan Baş, p. 83.

¹⁹ Dimitrios Zachos, p. 134.

The content of the educational material in minority schools raised also another concern, since it was mainly shaped according to the systems of both countries. Bulgarian authorities supported education and publication of books, newspapers and other material in Turkish as long as they served to the aims of communist rule. After the nationalization of minority schools, this heavily ideological curriculum was strictly controlled through the well-working administrative system of the Communist regime.²⁰ With the time passing, the curriculum in Bulgarian language had been extended to the detriment of the curriculum in Turkish, and in the last stage resulted with the total abolition of the education in Turkish. Meanwhile, periodical update of the educational material in Turkish reduced disparities between Bulgarians and Turks, which created almost equal profiles in both communities. Rising the intellectual level automatically boosted the development in cities, towns and rural areas in Bulgaria. It could provide even brighter aspects for the country if BCP would not take the process towards forcible assimilation.

In the case of Greece educational material have always remained as a main issue for the education of Muslim/Turkish minority. State authorities allowed the creation and management of minority schools at elementary level where education was conducted in Turkish and Greek. However, this formal application was filled with tiny detail that created huge differences between Christians and Muslims. According to the agreements between Turkey and Greece, books were printed in Turkey and circulated to the schools in Western Thrace after the initial approval of Athens. Greek authorities misused this process by delaying the approval of books sent from Turkey, and finally it turned into a big problem in 1990, when Muslim/Turkish students in Western Thrace did not want to use anymore the old Turkish books printed in 1960s²¹ and demanded for new books to be approved. This event proved how education became a tool to control minority and to prevent the development of culture and intellectual level. These thirty years of

²⁰ Maya Kosseva, Antonina Zhelyazkova and Marko Hajdinjak, p. 99.

²¹ The Turks of Western Thrace, Human Rights Watch, p. 28.

difference in educational materials increased the inequality between Muslims and Christians in Greece, which continue to have its effects until today. The establishment of Thessaloniki Pedagogical Academy (EPATH), constituted only an 'institutionalization' of this policy of 'deliberate backwardness' in Greece. Inadequate profiles of its graduates could not meet the needs of minority members, and therefore, both the academy and teachers were criticized for their shortcomings.

The way how education has been perceived as the center of the expansion of nationalist ideal in Bulgaria and Greece, affected also the educational policies towards minorities. In Bulgaria, the communist regime adopted an educational system favoring its claims for '*monoethnicity*', while Greek liberal democracy, tried to sustain an educational system that was based on the continuous discrimination of the minority in Western Thrace.

5.1.1.1. The Sensitive Issue of Education in Mother Tongue

The access to education in mother tongue presents certain problems in Bulgaria and Greece since both minorities claim Turkish as their mother tongue. Therefore, preference of the mother tongue automatically defines the ethnic origin as well. Since the creation of both states aside from their distinctive religious orientation as Muslims, both minority groups followed education in Turkish, which was their mother tongue. Nevertheless, in the post-World War II period, the right to have access to education in mother tongue has been revised periodically in order to distance Turkish minorities in Bulgaria and Greece from the influence of Turkey. The access to education in mother tongue has been provided conditional upon the creation of distinctive culture, appropriate to the nationalist theories and political regimes of both countries.

The communist regime in Bulgaria, used the education in mother tongue as a tool to encourage the development of Communist Turkish culture which would have more similarities with the Bulgarian national identity and culture.²² Therefore, the development of secularist Turkish culture in Bulgaria has been supported widely via providing massive publications in Turkish language in order to adapt it easily into the communist realities in a later stage, when assimilation became inevitable. This process of partial tolerance proved that Turks are capable to form their own culture when they are offered with the opportunity to do so.²³

For the Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace, education in mother tongue became a paradoxical issue when Greece denied the existence of Turkish minority in her territory, while at the same time, state provided education in Turkish at private minority schools. When Western countries criticized Greece for restrictions in minority education, Greek authorities tried to justify this policy as preventing 'Turkification' of the Pomaks and Gypsies in Western Trace.²⁴ However, this did not reduce the demands of Pomaks and Gypsies to attend the private schools of the minority in Thrace. To counterbalance this demand and its effect on the development of distinctive ethnic culture in Western Thrace, the Greek State increased the curriculum taught in Greek and imposed to teach the history subject only in Greek language, while teaching of religion was conducted only in Turkish.²⁵ This policy clearly demonstrated that the development of religious identity was more encouraged without certain ethnic attribution.

Consequently, both in Bulgaria and in Greece the problem with education in mother tongue faced also the restrictions of opportunities after the graduation. Because those students who obtained education in mother tongue were also partially trained in the language of the majority.

²² Nadege Ragaru, p. 295.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Luciana Benincasa, p. 265.

²⁵ Konstantinos Tsitselikis (b), p. 488.

Nevertheless, their knowledge in the language of the country was limited, therefore, the lack of possibility to continue the education in mother tongue in the following stage and limited professional opportunities, decreased the popularity of education among minority members as a tool for integration.

Another detail regarding the education which has also affected the progress of minority children was the possibility to attend kindergartens. For the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, Communist regime provided kindergartens, which helped for the acquisition of the Bulgarian language before attending elementary schools. Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace did not have this opportunity: therefore, students continued to have troubles for understanding the content of subjects or to express themselves thoroughly in Greek. Even today, kindergartens in Thrace are not sufficient to answer the needs of the members of minority, and government officials continue to ignore their requests to improve the situation.²⁶

The policy to restrict the Turkish language created obstacles for the social participation of minorities in both countries. The lack of knowledge in Greek, significantly restricted the social inclusion of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace, which was the result of deliberate policies of the Greek State. In Bulgaria, this culminated into the total prohibition of the use of Turkish in public space, and Turks were allowed to be part of the system only as Bulgarians. After the fall of communism, proficiency in Bulgarian, became an opportunity for Turks to continue the struggle for their rights and peaceful solution of the ethnic problem.

²⁶ <http://milletgazetesi.gr/view.php?nid=1529#.UURoy9ZPiQB> (access: 16/10/2012).

5.1.2. The Importance of Religion in Bulgaria and Greece

As it has been tackled before, religion played an important role in Greek and Bulgarian national identity building process. It was also the influence of the Ottoman *millet* system that regulated social life according to the religious division. Therefore, some features of this system were copied and additional elements such as language and culture were added in order to create more distinctive identities out of the Ottoman Christian millet. National churches and their leading role in the national revival process, showed how intertwined are the relations between the church and politics. However, this heavily spiritual context also arose the issue of Muslims who became minorities in the newly established countries.

In the first years of their independence, religious rights were mostly respected due to different conditions that were not controlled by Bulgaria and Greece. Creation of modern Turkey and the secular character of the Turkish nationalism, became an incentive for Greek and Bulgarian authorities to encourage the development of a more religious Turkish culture, which would lose its contacts with the contemporary Turkish nationalism. In their attempt to deny the existence of a Turkish minority in Western Thrace, Greek authorities gave more importance to the religious education and even conducting education with Arabic alphabet.²⁷ Nevertheless, this conditional freedom had already created a paradox by establishing a hierarchy between Orthodox Church and Islam. In this aspect the Greek constitution created various contradictions: the equality of Greek citizens was guaranteed by the constitution, and the Article 3 of the same document declared the Greek Orthodox Church as the prevailing religion.²⁸ Moreover, the act number 1672/1939, gave an exclusive monopoly to the Greek Orthodox Church, as building new places of worship was subject to

²⁷ Konstantinos Tsitselikis, p. 148.

²⁸ See: <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/001-156%20aggliko.pdf> (access: 18/01/2013).

the approval of the Orthodox Bishop, who has been granted with the right to define the height of mosque minarets.²⁹ This regulation turned into a main obstacle for building new Mosques not only in Western Thrace but over all Greece, an created significant disadvantages for Muslims.

Organization of religious issues in Bulgaria was relatively different than in Greece, except some similar steps that were subject to the issue of the revision of national identity. In 1930s and until the first half of 1940s, the Bulgarian State tried to prevent the development of a secular Turkish culture, which would mean cultural homogenization of Bulgarian Turks with Turkey. Therefore, education was sought as a tool to prevent such thing from happening, and this shift brought the idea to cooperate closely with Chief Mufti in Sofia who was also against the development of secularist Turkish culture in Bulgaria.³⁰ This cooperation continued for a certain period and was altered by the establishment of communist regime in Bulgaria. Communists perceived conservatism and traditional customs as an obstacle for the regime, and they supported the secular Turkish culture formally, only because it was congruent with the atheist communist ideology.

The Law of Faiths adopted in February 1949 not only placed the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and Islam under strict control of the state³¹, but it also created legal equality between Orthodox Church and Islam in Bulgaria. The Church and Chief Mufti in Sofia were forbidden to engage in educational activities among the youth, and their properties were also confiscated by the state. The religious non-alignment of the state, brought the prospect of the modernization in Bulgaria, which has been perceived as a necessary step to embrace all ethnic and religious groups under the flourishing Bulgarian Communist identity. However, this distance did not prevent communists from cooperation with the Chief Mufti and other regional muftis during the revival

²⁹ Dia Anagnostou and Ruby Gropas, p. 95.

³⁰ Bilal Şimşir, p. 114.

³¹ Spas T. Raikin, p.

process, when the names of Turkish minority were forcibly changed with Bulgarian ones.³²

The status of the religion in Bulgaria and Greece, and changes caused by the political culture, affected significantly the reciprocal perception of minority and majority. Non-separation of the church and state in Greece gave the Orthodox Church superior power to define Greek national identity.³³ Following the period of Greece's EU membership, every effort to modernize the state met the resistance of the church, which did not want to step back from its dominant position. Moreover, those politicians who were in favor of a secular political structure were accused of being traitors.³⁴ Discussions for building the mosque in Athens revealed how strong was the equation between 'mosque' and 'Turk' in Greece. Church members also opposed the project by claiming it allegedly as the symbol of the Turkish yoke in Greece.³⁵ In their view, building mosques outside of Thrace was out of consideration, since this area was the only non-homogenous region in Greece. Therefore, from the Greek point of view mosques constituted another symbolic indicator of the 'otherness' of population in Western Thrace.

In Bulgaria religious contestation did not reach such a level like in Greece neither during the communist regime nor after the establishment of the liberal democracy. This was a first result of the communist polices, which reduced significantly the role of religion, and state authorities did not allow the church to intervene in political affairs. Post-communist constitution accepted in 1991 gave a symbolic role to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church with the phrase 'Orthodoxy is the traditional religious denomination of the

³² AMVR, F. 22, o. 1, a. e. 231. l. 94-104, 1984.

³³ Vasiliki Kravva, p. 160.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 164.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 160.

Bulgarian nation'.³⁶ Furthermore, separation between state and church, limited nationalist assimilation policies only with the BCP, and it prevented confrontation at the religious level. After the fall of communism, relations between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria are relatively peaceful as dialogue between Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Chief Mufti in Sofia is usually based on mutual respect, rather than competition for political power. In addition, in the Greek case, religious segregation has been imposed by the political parties that are using the concept of 'Hellenic-Christian civilization' in order to increase their votes.³⁷ In Bulgaria, nationalism had been restricted only to certain features and this prevented the exploitation of the religion for political goals.

5.1.3. Social Participation and Political Representation of Minority Members

The issue of social participation in Bulgaria and in Greece has been widely shaped not only on the basis of the political systems but also depending on the policies directed towards minority members. The centralized economic development plan of the Bulgarian Communist Party, created massive changes in Bulgaria. Collectivization of land, affected to great extent the Turkish minority who was living in rural areas and working in the sector of agricultural production. However, the Communist regime launched an enormous modernization policy that aimed at the integration of urban and rural areas in Bulgaria and to reduce economic and cultural disparities.³⁸ As a result of the comprehensive industrialization and land confiscation, all members of the society had been included in the process and women got the chance to participate equally in every aspect of life. For the first time in Bulgaria, women obtained the right to equal employment,

³⁶ John Anderson, "The Treatment of Religious Minorities in South-Eastern Europe: Greece and Bulgaria Compared", *Religion, State and Society*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2010), p. 16.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³⁸ Maya Koseva, Antonina Zhelyazkova and Marko Hajdinjak, p. 92.

child benefit and access to universal health care regardless of their ethnic origin.³⁹ Women from less developed rural areas were encouraged to participate in vocational courses to gain professional skills and to contribute into family income, which later would give them access to pension. Children were also provided with equal rights to education and this reduced the inequality at certain degree. These policies brought modernization to Bulgaria and it covered every aspect of life and reduced regional differences.

Regional inequality in Greece became the most resistant issue after the treatment of minority in Western Thrace. Greek Thrace was for long identified as the least developed region in Greece where traditional building technology and old agricultural methods were still in use.⁴⁰ Excessive land expropriation limited also agricultural activities of the Muslim/Turkish minority and they were systematically disadvantaged compared to Greeks. The situation changed after the Greece's EU membership and when European funds were also forwarded to Thrace. Nevertheless, their impact was limited due to additional restrictions imposed by the government. The division of jobs defined also the economic status of the minority in Thrace. While the influx of Greeks into the region was generally encouraged by offering public employment, Turks/Muslims were only supposed to work in the sector of agricultural production. Given the presence of periodical land confiscations, it could be possible to understand how minority members were deprived compared to Christian Greeks. Eventually, when modernization began to be discussed in Greece, privileged Greeks opposed changes which could provide equal rights for minority members in Thrace.⁴¹

The issue of political representation also went in line with other minority policies in both countries, and with some major changes in Bulgaria

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Agapi Kandylaki, "Social Work Practice in Multicultural Settings: A Pilot Study in Thrace, Greece", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 3(2005), p. 437.

⁴¹ Dia Anagnostou (a), p. 111.

following the collapse of communism. During the Cold War period, Turks in Bulgaria were allowed to enter the parliament as Bulgarian citizens, however, there was no certain reference to the ethnic identity. In Greece, the issue of political participation was conditional on not using ethnic allegiances - in this case also Turkish. Following the EU membership of Greece, in 1980s Muslim/Turkish minority members from Thrace began to participate in the elections as independent minority candidates, which fueled discussions about ethnic self-identification in Greece.⁴² Following the use of Turkish as ethnic denomination, in 1990, the Greek State decided to impose a threshold which had been designed to prevent independent minority candidates. Eventually, up until now members of Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace, are being elected to the Parliament from the lists of Greek political parties, which constitutes a tool for the control of political activities of the minority in Thrace.

The post-communist period witnessed significant changes for the political representation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. The creation of MRF as the party of Turkish minority marked the biggest change in terms of political representation in Bulgaria. Although Article 11 (4) of the Constitution from 1991 explicitly prohibited the creation of a political party based on ethnic and religious ground, MRF managed to continue its existence as the non-official party of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. There is no doubt that the creation of MRF was also a result of communist policies. Because those people who obtained their education during the communism and managed to get an insight of the Bulgarian political system established MRF as a political party to protect the rights of minorities in Bulgaria. The most remarkable change in the process is the speed in the transformation, as a result of which MRF leadership managed to form a solid organization and took the leading role in the process by preventing violent ethnic conflict.

⁴² Ibid., p. 102.

MRF's success was proven during the Bulgaria's EU negotiation process.⁴³ After the local elections in 2003, MRF became the second political power in terms of municipalities governed in Bulgaria. Education took a major role in the policies of MRF and many young people were encouraged to achieve Bachelor, Masters and Doctorate degrees abroad⁴⁴ in order to contribute into the transformation of Bulgaria during the transition process. Despite some ongoing problems with the rights of minorities MRF strives for further liberalization through its presence in the Bulgarian Parliament.

5.2. THE FLOW OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

The scope of minority policies in Bulgaria and Greece affected also the construction of cross-border cooperation process. Decentralization of power became a necessity for the initiation of proper CBC, and this would involve sharing the power with minorities. Influenced heavily by the discourse of securitization, Greek authorities perceived decentralization as a suspicious step that may trigger claims for autonomy in Western Thrace. Therefore, border security discourse prevailed every aspect of CBC, and set the priority of Greek regional policy. It later became apparent when Greece's CBC on the border with Turkey did not mark any progress for years. Moreover, it had almost the same effect in Bulgarian bordering regions where the Turkish minority predominantly lived.

In the case of Bulgaria several factors affected CBC and this enabled the decentralization process to be spread steadily. The main issue for Bulgaria was the realization of necessary reforms in order to make progress in the Europeanization of the country and to reduce regional disparities.⁴⁵

⁴³ Iskra Baeva & Evgenia Kalinova, p. 76.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Vassilis Monastiriotis, p. 174.

Since democratization of Bulgaria became also widely discussed, there was a strategy to expand the policy of decentralization and democratization together in order to increase the efficiency of the European integration. This process involved active participation of minority members, and they were trained together with Bulgarians in order to cope with the new challenges brought by the initiation of Europeanization.

The presence of Turks in Bulgaria began to be perceived partly as an opportunity to attract more Turkish investments in order to reduce the unemployment. In Greece the situation was different, since Greek nationalists strongly opposed Turkish investments in Western Thrace.⁴⁶ Turkish businessmen who intended to buy land and build factory in Thrace were shown as the expansionist side of Turkey. Therefore, making investments in Greece became relatively less attractive for Turks due to restrictions imposed in Western Thrace. Hence, it became evident that priorities of both states defined also their commitment on the issue of CBC. While Bulgaria saw CBC as an opportunity for economic development, Greece perceived it as a challenge for national security in bordering regions with Turkey and partially with Bulgaria where predominantly Turkish population lived.

Compared to the Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace, political involvement of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, gave them significant power to initiate the cross-border cooperation with Turkey and Greece. Even after the initial plans for decentralization in Greece, it may take additional time to train the members of minority on the procedures of how to begin CBC with the neighbors on the other side of the border. Decentralization naturally involves division of power and sharing it with regional authorities, and therefore, reducing the segregation in mixed areas might bring the opportunity for efficient development in border regions.

⁴⁶ <http://www.batitrakya.org/bati-trakya/bati-trakya-haber/yunanistanda-turk-yatirimci-fobisi.html> (access: 25/02/2013).

5.3. REVISITING THE SO-CALLED “BULGARIAN ETHNIC MODEL”

The notion of Bulgarian Ethnic Model (BEM) has been praised in light of the violent ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. It was developed in 1994 in a forum organized by the International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR).⁴⁷ The peaceful transition from communism to liberal democracy in Bulgaria, raised the popularity of BEM as a project to be promoted in the rest of the Balkans. Despite the notion of the model was already there, its definition became a problematic issue.

Nevertheless, everyone who believes in the existence of BEM, puts MRF in its center as the leading actor of the peaceful transformation process in Bulgaria. MRF's creation and its legitimization as the non-formal political party of the Turkish minority were interpreted as presence of tolerance in Bulgaria.⁴⁸ MRF also noted in its 2001 program the existence of BEM⁴⁹ while describing how in 1990 ethnic conflict in Bulgaria was prevented. Discussion of recent developments became necessary due to ethnic conflicts in the Balkans, and Bulgarian politicians strongly defended BEM as a potential for peaceful solution of problems.

However, Bulgaria's European integration process, and challenges with the liberalization of minority rights, changed the direction of the discussions regarding BEM. First, there was a tendency among the academic circles to accept the process merely as a result of Bulgarian tolerance, rather than stressing the pressure of external powers such as United States and the European Union. There was a certain sensitivity not to recognize any foreign input in the process, which had something to do with the decision of the Bulgarian Constitutional Court that approved the

⁴⁷ Miroslav Popov, *Pravni Aspekti na Balgarskiya Etnicheski Model*, in: *Balgarskiyat Etnicheski Model: Politicheska Mitologema ili Problemnata Realnost*, (ed.) Maksim Mizov, Sofia, 2011, p. 242.

⁴⁸ Krastyo Petkov, “Involyutsia na Etnicheskiya Model v Balgaria”, *Mejdunarodni Otnosheniya*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2004), p. 39.

⁴⁹ Bernd Rechel, p. 236.

constitutionality of MRF. Despite the rumors that the decision of the Constitutional Court was affected with the influence of foreign powers, it was unacceptable to recognize the foreign intervention in the process. Therefore, MEB was widely acknowledged as the unique model developed in Bulgaria which facilitated the interethnic co-existence.

All positive points listed by the politicians had some negative aspects that also restricted the participation of minorities in Bulgaria. The existence of BEM began to be questioned since it has only accommodated the Turkish minority and ignored Gypsies and Pomaks in Bulgaria.⁵⁰ BEM has been presented as a product of the peaceful co-existence in mixed areas, however, local elections in Kardzhali, the city where 70% of the population is of Turkish origin proved something else. In 1999 UDF and BSP voters in Kardzhali unified in order to prevent the election of a Turkish mayor in the city, while in 2003 Turks were mobilized to elect a Turkish mayor in Kardzhali.⁵¹ This event simply revealed how ethnic allegiances are defining the voting behavior of ethnically mixed areas in Bulgaria.

The definition of the BEM is still problematic because of the existence of Article 11 (4) of the Constitution which prevents the creation of political parties on ethnic and religious grounds, and constitutes an obstacle for the political participation of minorities in Bulgaria. Even at MRF, official meetings and election campaigns are entirely conducted in 'Bulgarian', since the use of Turkish is being identified as an explicit reference to the 'ethnic' character of the MRF as a political party. When in June 2012, MRF expressed their opinion that they would like to conduct election campaign in Turkish, centre-right parties in the Bulgarian parliament vehemently opposed the idea⁵², which showed the conditions of tolerance in Bulgaria, a member of the European Union.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 238.

⁵¹ Krastyo Petkov, p. 41.

⁵² <http://www.trud.bg/Article.asp?ArticleId=1431630> (access: 22/02/2013).

Conclusion

The Treatment of the Turkish/Muslim minorities in Bulgaria and Greece were subject to changes not only based at national level but also changes stemming from the ideological differences. Political systems influenced the process of integration of minorities and defined the lines of inclusion and exclusion through the use of education, social and political policies.

The Turkish minority in Bulgaria, took advantage of the strong educational system while in a later stage it became a tool for its assimilation. The economic and social development that Bulgaria underwent in the first years of communism, helped in reducing regional differences and facilitated the application of the central planned economy according to communist requirements. The massive inclusion in the process resulted with the economic development of Bulgaria and reduced inequalities between Bulgarians and Turks. Eventually, by working in common environments, mutual interaction became part of the daily life and helped for the development of friendly relations between the ethnic groups. It should be noted that the ethnic conflict in Bulgaria was also prevented thanks to the existence of such relationship between Turks and Bulgarians.

In the case of Greece, opportunities of the democratic regime were not available for the minority in Western Thrace as equal Greek citizens. The heavy presence of nationalism created long lasting exceptions in Western Thrace that were based on the inequality of the Muslim/Turkish minority. Nationalism was embedded in every structure of the Greek State, and continued to expand its influence to the detriment of the minority in Thrace by taking its strength from the presence of the 'other' in Greece. Consequently, this way of managing social and political affairs, constantly excluded Muslim/Turks and prevented their further integration as equal Greek citizens.

CONCLUSIONS

This work has aimed to explore the minority rights in Bulgaria and Greece and the impact of the European integration. The national conditionality in the two states affected the way how European regulations were implemented. In return they have gradually shaped the policy of integration of minorities. Historical flow of nationalities questions proved to be more resistant issue and restricted the adoption of new standards for minority protection. The demands of Turkish/Muslim minorities in Bulgaria and Greece for more adequate minority protection system, met the resistance of nationalist policies that claimed the action as resurgence of minority nationalism. Social participation and political representation of minority members has been mostly restricted due to their ethnic identity that constituted the core of minorities question in Bulgaria and Greece.

The need to create homogenous populations was the target since the establishment of the two nation states. Nevertheless, the way how they decided to realize their aims determined also their approaches to the rights of minorities. In Greece Greek language and Orthodox Church became the main components of the Greek identity which excluded the religious minorities from the nation building process. By strengthening the ethnic features of the Greek identity, Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace became automatically the 'other' for Greeks. The presence of ethnically mixed population within the Greek borders had been interpreted as a weakness for the newly established state. Therefore, new methods apart from war were sought to create the homogeneity of the population in Greece which was crucial to protect the borders. The Greek-Bulgarian Convention for Reciprocal Emigration became the first example of the events to restrict the presence of foreign subjects that may jeopardize the security of new nation states in the Balkans. Despite the Convention for Reciprocal Emigration was designed to regulate voluntary emigration, the ideas of unitary state dominated by nationalist ideology, turned the voluntary emigration into

compulsory one. After solving the issue with Bulgaria, Greece focused on the situation of Muslim/Turkish minority.

However, developments in the aftermath of the First World War, resulted with revision of the plan for homogenization of Greece. The Treaty of Lausanne marked the end of the Greek expansion. It regulated the compulsory population exchange that took place between Greece and Turkey and assisted for the homogenization of Greece by getting rid of the Turkish presence in its territory - except for the Muslim/Turkish minority in Western Thrace. Apart from including provisions for the compulsory population exchange, the Treaty of Lausanne granted certain rights to the Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace. Nevertheless, the use of the term Muslim instead of Turkish in Lausanne Treaty became the major problem for the definition of the ethnic identity of the Muslim/Turkish minority.

Nationalism in Bulgaria followed similar patterns like the Greek one. The revival process of Bulgarian nationalism became fact after the initial reinterpretation of national history, Bulgarian language and culture were turned as main indicators of its distinctive character. The establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870, marked the last stage of Bulgarian nationalism on its path for independence. After the Russo-Turkish War in 1877-1878, the Treaty of San Stefano realized the aims for the creation of Greater Bulgaria in the Balkans. However, it was not accepted by Western Powers who did not want to see a big Slavic State in the Balkans as a close ally of Russian Empire. Therefore, by showing the lack of minority regulations on the Treaty of San Stefano, Western Powers designed the Treaty of Berlin, that reduced the size of independent Bulgarian State and imposed regulations for the protection of the rights of minorities. Consequently, this imposition established the path to organize comprehensive regulations for the protection of the rights of Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

The ethnic identity of the Turkish minority did not create any problem in the relations between Turkey and Bulgaria, at least regarding the definition of the minority's (ethnic) character. The fact that sizeable Turkish minority left in Bulgaria and continued to live in geographically concentrated areas, made easier the conservation of their ethnic and religious identity.

The flow of the developments between in the Balkans attracted the attention of the Western Powers. Moreover, problems stemming from the interpretation of the treaties signed between Bulgaria and Greece resulted with the famous decision of the PCIJ regarding the Greco-Bulgarian Communities case in 1930. The definition of a 'community' provided by the PCIJ, is so far unique being the only definition offered by an international organization. This period marked the evolution of minority rights and the importance given to them. With the eruption of the Second World War, the development of minority rights stopped significantly, due to the violence that was spread all around Europe.

However, with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, post-Second World War period witnessed significant changes. The creation of Council of Europe resulted with the adoption of the European Convention on Human Rights, which had a great impact for the liberalization of minority rights in Europe. Nevertheless, liberalization brought also some challenges together that restricted the efforts to find an international definition for the term 'minority'. Francesco Capotorti's study published in 1977, revealed how contested was the definition of minorities in the international arena. Basically, every state wanted to retain its authority to define minorities in its territory, and this attitude prevented the adoption of a universal definition.

After avoiding the topics subject to controversy, the UN took the initiative to bring in further positive regulations for minorities through the adoption of Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Meanwhile, in Europe the strength of European integration resulted with positive developments in the area on minority rights. Following the collapse of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, European integration had been perceived as an opportunity to increase the standards of minority protection.

Copenhagen Criteria became an assessment for the Eastern European countries that aspired EU membership. The adoption of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities raised promises of better standards for minority rights in Europe. The fact that there was no common definition included in any aspect of the post-Cold War regulations dealing with minority rights, proved the reserved stance towards the rights of minorities in Europe.

The national realities in Greece and Bulgaria resulted with the differentiation of minority integration policies. Especially the impact of post-Second World War polices dominated the whole issue, since these were the most coherent aspects of minority treatment in both countries. By becoming close ally of the Western countries, Greece adopted liberal democracy and the rights of minority in Western Thrace became subject to the regulations accepted in Lausanne Treaty. Bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey affected the situation of minority in Thrace as well.

The evolution of Greek nationalism and the lack of modernization, created certain methods which deteriorated the conditions of the minority in Thrace. The invention military surveillance zone, land expropriation and restrictions for social and economic participation, aimed to control the size of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace. Eventually, the problems in bilateral relations with Turkey developed the concept of reciprocity for the treatment of minorities in Greece and Bulgaria. Therefore, instead of following the European and international standards, Greece chose to use the limits of

liberal democracy which culminated into systematic violation of minority rights in Western Thrace.

The eruption of conflict in Cyprus has been used by Greek nationalists as a justification for oppressive policies in Western Thrace. There were theories that closer state control on minorities in Thrace is necessary to prevent the creation of a second Cyprus. This policy of seeing the minority in Thrace as the fifth column of Turkey, blocked every attempt to improve the conditions of the Turkish minority in Thrace. Greek authorities used the education as tool to sustain their policies that were based on certain disadvantages of minority members. Despite the fact that education in mother tongue has not been denied, the way it was carried, degraded the educational profile of the minority.

The post-1945 period brought also different challenges for Bulgaria. The adoption of the communism in Bulgaria, made the BCP as leading power. The establishment of communism demanded formation of a strong central system that would help to control every aspect of life in Bulgaria. In the first years of communism, Turks were offered with extensive rights that enabled the development of the educational and cultural profile of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. However, following the consolidation of communism in Bulgaria, the rights granted to the Turkish minority were revoked suddenly. The Turks began to leave Bulgaria massively as a result of deteriorating treatment of minorities.

Subsequently, BCP launched the policy of ethnic integration which aimed to reduce the differences between ethnic groups in Bulgaria. They adopted a policy to unify Bulgarian nation and to create a classless society. Nevertheless, this policy had more to do with the rights of minorities than the communist development of Bulgaria. After the initial reinterpretation of the Bulgarian nationalism in 1960s, BCP began slowly to initiate the revival process which became known as 'name changing campaign'. Revival

process was a brutal action conducted by the BCP that changed forcibly the names of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria with Slavic-Bulgarian names. The name changing campaign in 1984, provided the basis for the claims of BCP that there are no Turks in Bulgaria. The policy of assimilation had been supported with a total ban of the Turkish language in every aspect of life. Eventually, the assimilation campaign was terminated in 1989 and part of the Turks were expelled from Bulgaria. The rights of the Turkish minority were partially restored with the Bulgarian Constitution from 1991.

All these developments undermined the situation of Pomaks who were identified as Bulgarian speaking Muslims. Pomaks used to live in the region of Rhodope Mountains that is divided between Bulgaria and Greece. However, since the early years of Bulgarian independence, Bulgarian authorities tried to assimilate them in every occasion and this changed their perception in the region. As a result of the Bulgarian assimilationist policies part of the Pomaks began to identify themselves as Bulgarians, while others continued to claim that they are Turkish. On the other side, Pomaks in Greece were count as Muslim minority and their rights were regulated according to the provisions of Lausanne Treaty. The aim of Bulgarian authorities by the assimilation of Pomaks was to take them off from the protection of Turkey. Because according to several treaties signed between Turkey and Bulgaria, Turkey was the kin state of the Muslim population in Bulgaria. Therefore, there was partial accomplishment of the Bulgarian goals in this process.

The fall of communism and the popularity of the European integration, affected both Greece and Bulgaria. Greece's EU membership created relatively limited impact on minority rights due to the tendency to perceive European integration only as an economic issue. In the beginning of 1990s amid new changes in Eastern Europe, the situation of Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace became problematic following the ethnic self-identification as Turkish. The inter-ethnic tensions in Greece proved that policies

restricting the rights of minorities did not brought positive effect, and therefore, several changes were made to fix some discriminatory provisions. Despite there were significant revisions of some old unfair regulations, the impact of the European integration was limited due to the nationalist input in the process. The denial of Greek institutions (mainly courts) not to apply some of the decisions given by the ECtHR, clearly demonstrated the limited impact of the European integration in Greece.

In the case of Bulgaria, European integration began only after the fall of communism, when EU membership arose as an option for the country. Peaceful transition from communism to democracy was set as the main goal to preserve the ethnic peace. Restoration of the rights of Turkish minority was a crucial step in this process. Following the creation of MRF, Turkish minority got the chance to be represented in Bulgarian Parliament, and this has made the politics as an area for further demands for the liberalization of minority rights. When Bulgaria was accepted as candidate for EU membership, this raised hopes for further liberalization of minority rights in Bulgaria. However, during the negotiation process, the situation of the Turkish minority was mostly ignored both by the EU and Bulgaria, since it had been perceived as a politically sensitive issue. Therefore, this limited the impact of the European integration in Bulgaria only to the peaceful transformation of the country from communism into liberal democracy.

Meanwhile, EU had also an impact in the development of cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Greece. Bulgaria's transition process was mostly devoted to decentralize the state power which was heavily affected by the communist ideology. Following the fall of communism, migration waves that took place in Bulgaria, caused regional disparities which dramatically changed the economy. The focus towards big cities fostered regional differences and this resulted with isolation of the border regions that were less populated. Therefore, CBC has been perceived as an opportunity in Bulgaria to improve the economy of border

regions and to enhance their potential for investments. In the Greek case it was not that easy to end up restrictions in border regions which were perceived as the walls of defense from enemy. The existence of Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace, made it also difficult to realize the necessary reforms for the decentralization of power. Bilateral relations continued to determine the progress of CBC not only between Greece and Bulgaria but also between Greece and Turkey.

As a result of all these policies and strategies followed by Greece and Bulgaria, the integration of the Turkish and Muslim minorities showed different levels. In the beginning of twentieth century they began their journey from the same point. However, today totally different conditions are created as a result of the policies of both countries. Comparing their overall status, reveals different facts. The Turks in Bulgaria do not have their own private schools, while Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace continue to operate private minority schools (although with relatively lower educational quality compared to the Greek schools). In the area of political representation, despite all limitations, the Turks in Bulgaria are more active through the MRF. The minority in Thrace, has limited access and role in politics, and this reduces their chances to influence key political decisions that affect their situation.

The sensitivity of the minority issues in Bulgaria and Greece always dominated political and social discourse. The hopes that European integration would push for liberalization of minority rights were overwhelmed by the nationalist discourse in both countries. Continuous tensions led to the different interpretations of minority rights that became subject to national reevaluation process. Their eventual revision, reduced the impact of the integration of minorities, which turned the process as ongoing segregation as it is in the case of Greece.

The adoption of more fair minority standards in Bulgaria and Greece needs to be conducted as a transparent process that considers the needs of minority rather than their difference as a potential threat. Perceiving minority rights as necessity for the integration of all citizens, might give better results than classifying them as privileges offered to the 'other' groups. Changing this aspect must be in line with changing the profile of minority majority relations, since in most cases minorities are depicted as the fifth column rather than equal citizens.

The EU played significant role in the democratization processes of Bulgaria and Greece. However, there is this tendency that this impact could be increased if there more coherent policy towards minority rights in the two countries. The economic aspects of the European integration dominated also the institutional structure, and this has limited EU's capacity to insert its influence in the liberalization of minority rights. Giving more priority to the rights of minorities would help also in the process of European integration by preventing further segregation at national level.

APPENDICES

Appendix-1

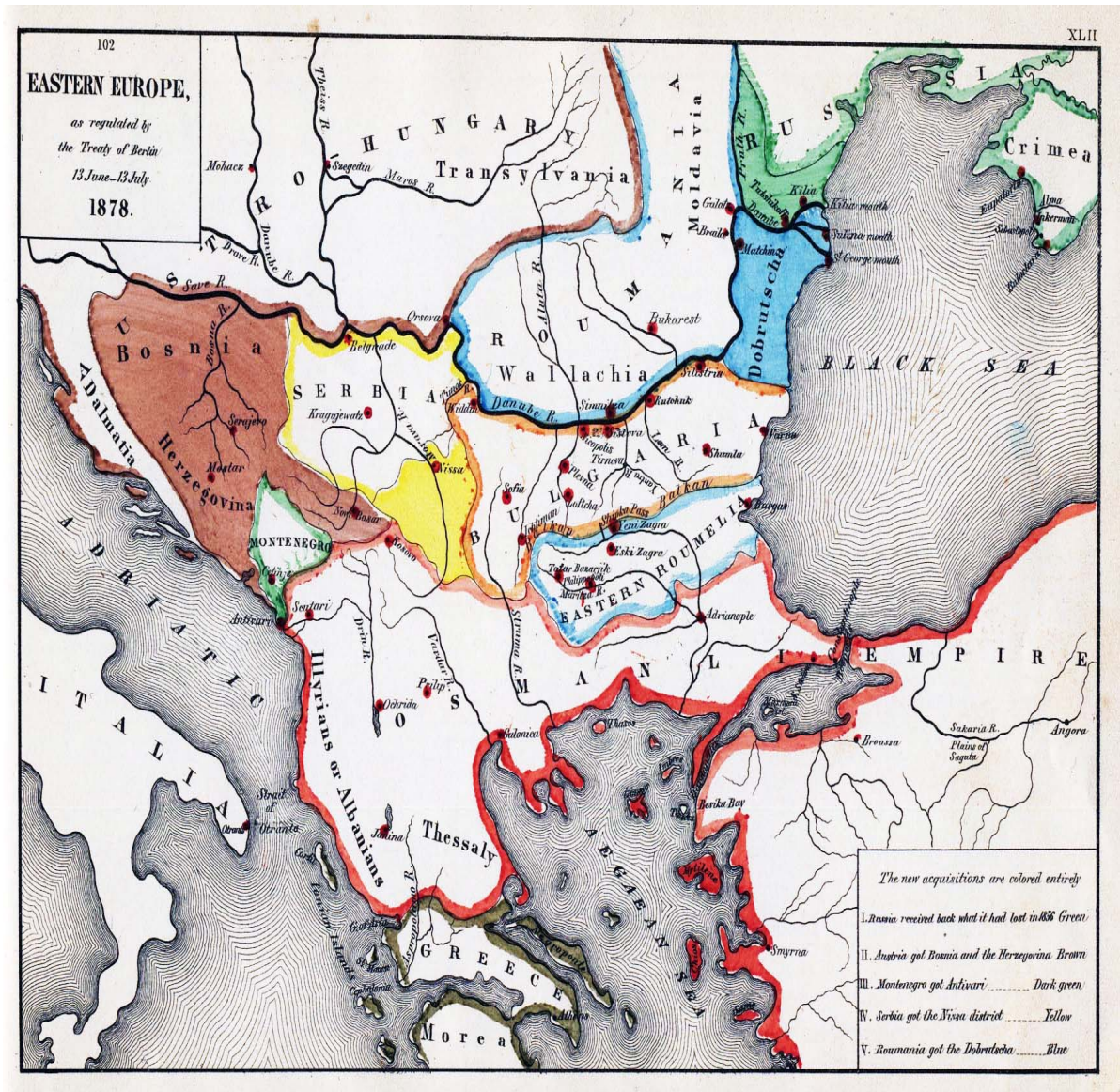
Bulgaria According to the San Stefano Treaty, 1878:



Source: http://world.actualno.com/Makedonskite-bylgari-predlagat-federacija-mejdu-Makedonija-i-Bylgarija-news_406381.html (access: 9/11/2012).

Appendix-2

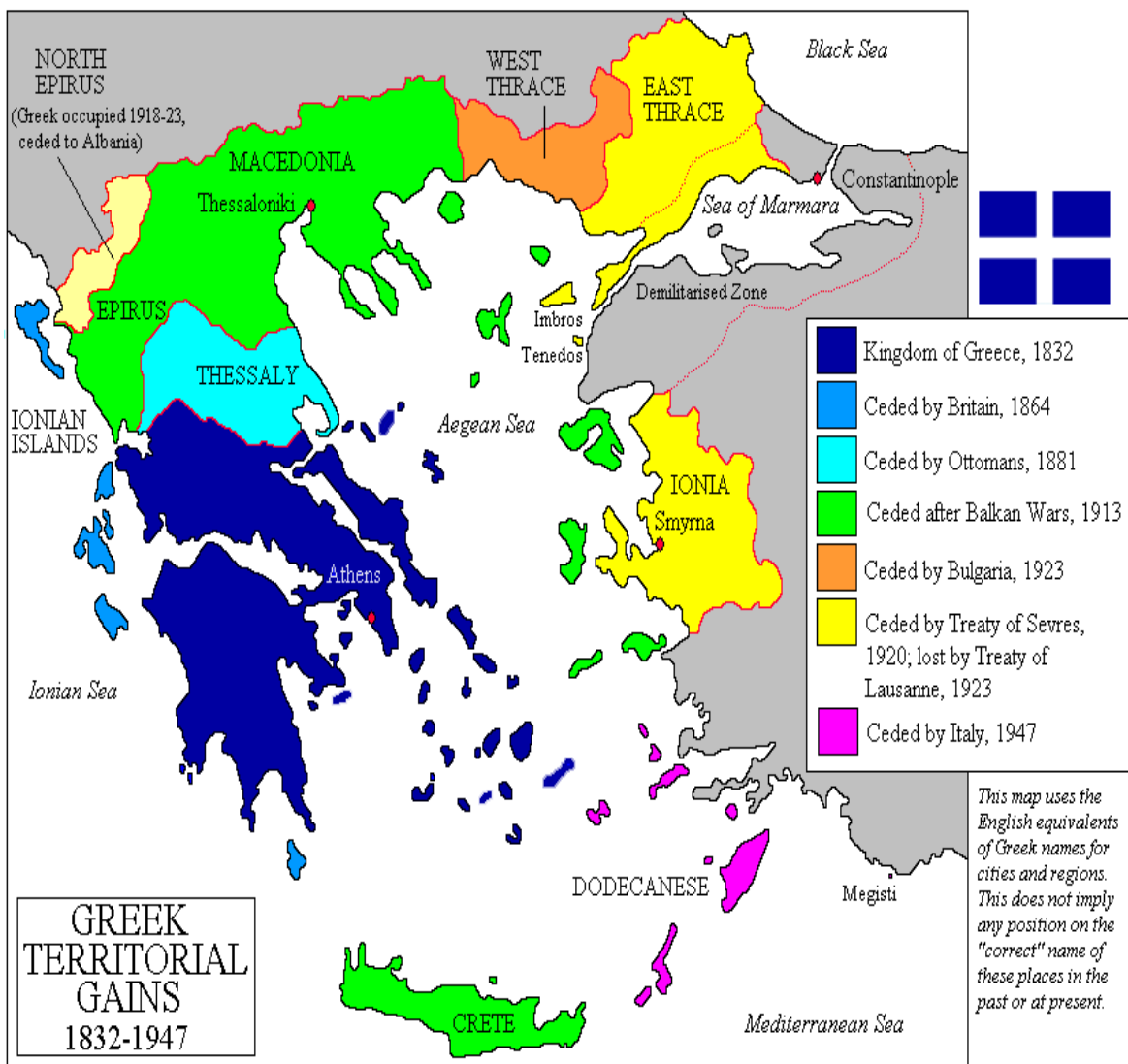
Bulgarian According to the Treaty of Berlin, 1878:



Source: "An Historical Atlas" by Robert H. Labberton, E. Elaxton and Co., 1884.

Appendix-3

Territorial Expansion of Greece:



Source: <http://bigblue1840-1940.blogspot.be/2012/06/greece-hermes-heads.html> (9/11/2012).

Appendix-4

THE TREATY OF LAUSANNE

(Signed on 24 July 1923) Between Turkey and Allied Powers British Empire, French Republic, Kingdom of Italy, Empire of Japan, Kingdom of Greece, Kingdom of Romania, and Serb-Croat-Slovene State:

SECTION III. PROTECTION OF MINORITIES. ARTICLE 37.

Turkey undertakes that the stipulations contained in Articles 38 to 44 shall be recognised as fundamental laws, and that no law, no regulation, nor official action shall conflict or interfere with these stipulations, nor shall any law, regulation, nor official action prevail over them.

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-Moslem minorities will enjoy full freedom of movement and of emigration, subject to the measures applied, on the whole or on part of the territory, to all Turkish nationals, and which may be taken by the Turkish Government for national defence, or for the maintenance of public order.

ARTICLE 39.

Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities will enjoy the same civil and political rights as Moslems.

All the inhabitants of Turkey, without distinction of religion, shall be equal before the law.

Differences of religion, creed or confession shall not prejudice any Turkish national in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, as, for instance, admission to public employments, functions and honours, 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-Moslem 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 schools and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein.

ARTICLE 41.

As regards public instruction, the Turkish Government will grant in those towns and districts, where a considerable proportion of non-Moslem 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 own language. This provision will not prevent the Turkish Government from making the teaching of the Turkish language obligatory in the said schools.

In towns and districts where there is a considerable proportion of Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities, these minorities shall be assured an equitable share in the enjoyment 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-Moslem 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 of 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 authorisation will be granted to the pious foundations, and to the religious and charitable institutions of the said minorities at 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-Moslem 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 preceding Articles of this Section affect non-Moslem 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 thereupon 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 one 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 13 of the Covenant.

ARTICLE 45.

The rights conferred by the provisions of the present Section on the non-Moslem minorities of Turkey will be similarly conferred by Greece on the Moslem minority in her territory.

Appendix-5

ΕΠΙΣΗΜΗ ΤΗΣ ΚΑΤΑΡΧΗΣ
ΓΕΝΙΚΗ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΣΙΣ ΘΡΑΚΗΣ
ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΣΙΣ ΕΣΩΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ

Αριθ: Πρωτ. Α1043

Εν Κομοτηνή τη 27/12/1954

ΕΠΕΙΓΟΥΣΑ

Προς

τους κ.κ. Δημάρχους και Προέδρους Κοινοτήτων Ν. Ροδόπης. Κατόπιν διαταγής του κ. Προέδρου της Κυβερνήσεως παρακαλούμεν όπως εφεξής εις πάσας περιπτώσεις γίνεται χρήσις του όρου «Τούρκος - Τουρκικό» αντί του τοιούτου «Μουσουλμάνος - Μουσουλμανικό».

Ο Γενικό Διοικητής Θράκης
Γ. Φεσσόπουλος

(Türkçesi)

«Sayın Hükümet Başkanının emri üzerine bundan böyle gereken her yerde «Müslüman-Müslümanca» deyimleri yerine «Türk-Türkçe» deyimlerini kullanmanızı rica ederiz.»

Trakya Genel Valisi
G. Fessopoulos

Translation:

Kingdom of Greece
General Administration of Thraka
Interior Office
Number of Protocol Α1043

Komotene, 27/12/1954

URGENT

TO: The Mayors and Presidents of the Communes of the Prefecture of Rodope.

Following the order of the President of the Government (Prime Minister) we ask you that from now on and in all occasions the terms "Turk-Turkish" are used instead of the terms "Muslim- of Muslim".

The General Administrator
of Thraka

G. Fessopoulos

ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΣΙΣ ΕΣΩΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ

Αριθμ/Πρωτ. Α202

Εν Κομοτηνή τη 5/2/1955

Παρά τας αυστηράς διαταγάς της κυβερνήσεως περί της αντικαταστάσεως και χρησιμοποίησεως του λοιπού των όρων «Μουσουλμάνος -Μουσουλμανικός», βία των τσιφούτων «Τούρκος-Τουρκικός» εις το χωρίον Αρατος επί της δημοσίας οδοῦ Κομοτηνῆς- Αλεξανδρουπόλεως, υφίσταται επίγραφή εμφανεστάτη αναγράφουσα «Μουσουλμανικόν Σχολεῖον».

Να αντικατασταθῆ, αμέσως ὅσον αὐτή, ὅσον και πῶσα ἄλλη τυχόν υπάρχουσα εἰς τὴν περιοχὴν του Νομοῦ Ροδόπης.

Ο Γεν. Διοικητῆς Θράκης
Γ. Φεσσόπουλος

«Bühdän böylö «Müslüman-Müslümanca» deyimleri yerine «Türk-Türkçe» deyimlerinin kullanılmasına ilişkin Hükümetin sert emirlerine rağmen, Komotini - Aleksandroupolis millî yolu üzerindeki Aratos köyünde «Müslüman Okulu» başlıklı bir tabelâ çok seçik bir şekilde halâ mevcut bulunmaktadır.

Gerek bu, gerekse Rodop ili bölgesinde muhtemelen mevcut olan tüm benzeri tabelâlar derhal değiştirilmelidir.

Trakya: Genel Valisi
G. Fessopoulos

Translation:

Kingdom of Greece
General Administration of Thraka
Interior Office
Number of Protocol A202

Komotene, 5/2/1955

In spite of the strict orders of the government to replace the terms "Muslim-of Muslim" and use from now on the terms "Turk-Turkish", in the village Aratos on the public road connecting Komotene and Alexandroupole there exists a very prominent sign with the words "Muslim School".

It, as well as any other such signs that might exist in the area of the Prefecture of Rodope, should be replaced immediately.

The General Administrator
of Thraka

G. Fessopoulos

Appendix-6**POPULATION BY DISTRICTS AND ETHNIC GROUP IN
BULGARIA AS OF 1.03.2001**

Districts	Total	Bulgarian	Turkish	Gypsies	Other	Not stated	Unknown
Total	7 928 901	6 655 210	746 664	370 908	69 204	62 108	24 807
Blagoevgrad	341 173	286 491	31 857	12 405	5 519	4 242	659
Burgas	423 547	338 625	58 636	19 439	3 728	1 919	1 200
Varna	462 013	393 884	37 502	15 462	9 866	3 830	1 469
Veliko Tarnovo	293 172	259 099	22 562	6 064	2 495	2 014	938
Vidin	130 074	118 543	139	9 786	528	553	525
Vratsa	243 036	223 692	2 000	14 899	608	984	853
Gabrovo	144 125	131 494	9 109	1 611	939	615	357
Dobrich	215 217	164 204	28 231	18 649	1 588	1 854	691
Kurdzhali	164 019	55 939	101 116	1 264	385	4 565	750
Kyustendil	162 534	152 644	146	8 294	416	508	526
Lovech	169 951	152 194	8 476	6 316	891	1 522	552
Montana	182 258	157 507	235	22 784	649	322	761
Pazardzhik	310 723	261 260	20 448	23 970	1 461	2 978	606
Pernik	149 832	145 642	108	3 035	375	270	402
Pleven	311 985	280 475	16 931	9 777	1 702	2 135	965
Plovdiv	715 816	621 338	52 499	30 196	7 274	2 869	1 640
Razgrad	152 417	67 069	71 963	8 733	1 444	2 739	469
Ruse	266 157	213 408	37 050	9 703	3 076	2 071	849
Silistra	142 000	84 178	48 761	6 478	1 461	656	466
Sliven	218 474	163 188	22 971	26 777	3 193	1 597	748
Smolyan	140 066	122 806	6 212	686	250	9 696	416
Sofia-cap.	1 170 842	1 124 240	6 036	17 885	13 652	4 645	4 384
Sofia	273 240	253 536	654	16 748	821	661	820
Stara Zagora	370 615	319 379	18 529	26 804	2 400	2 308	1 195
Targovishte	137 689	76 294	49 495	9 868	324	1 259	449
Haskovo	277 478	224 757	31 266	17 089	1 143	2 302	921
Shumen	204 378	123 084	59 551	16 457	2 344	2 350	592
Yambol	156 070	140 240	4 181	9 729	672	644	604

Source: http://www.nsi.bg/Census_e/Ethnos.htm (access: 10/11/2012).

Appendix-7

Picture taken from the area near Makaza, Bulgaria showing the signboard of the project co-financed by the EU to construct a road and border crossing point designed between Makaza (BG) – Nimfea (GR).



Source: the author.

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