

Comparing Bulgarian and Greek Policies for the Integration of Turkish/Muslim Minorities: The Cold War Period*

Nuri Korkmaz**

Abstract

Comparing political approaches toward Turkish/Muslim minorities in Bulgaria and Greece became a necessity in order to examine the integration of minority groups under different conditions. This study focuses on the policies of integration of ethnic/religious minorities in Bulgaria and Greece during the Cold War period, studies various methodologies adopted by the communist rule in Bulgaria and the liberal democratic rule in Greece. Since Turkish/Muslim minorities in Bulgaria and Greece claim Turkey as their kin-state, the study partially reflects the perception of minority groups by the majority. Several factors such as educational policies, religion and political approaches to integrate minorities have been evaluated in order to give an overview on the peculiarities and similarities in both cases that are compared. There is detailed analysis also on the issue of national identities and how their conditionality has been defined with the co-existence of minority groups in Bulgaria and in Greece.

Keywords

Turkish minority, Western Thrace, Bulgaria, communism, democracy, comparative policy analysis, Greece.

* Date of Arrival: 18 December 2015 – Date of Acceptance: 05 October 2016

You can refer to this article as follows:

Korkmaz, Nuri (2019). "Comparing Bulgarian and Greek Policies for the Integration of Turkish/Muslim Minorities: The Cold War Period". *bilig – Journal of Social Sciences of the Turkic World* 90: 21-41.

** Assoc. Prof. Dr., Bursa Technical University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of International Relations – Bursa/Turkey

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3829-6057>

nuritahir@yahoo.com

Introduction

Studying minority rights in Bulgaria and Greece requires the use of special methods to evaluate efficiency of state policies in integrating ethnic and religious minorities. The situation of the Turkish/Muslim minorities in Bulgaria and Greece gives 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 path to modernity that has been chosen after the Second World War, determined to a great extent the way how minorities will be integrated into society and continue their existence until today.

However, as it happened with the nationalism in the nineteenth century, communism and liberal democracy were accepted by Bulgaria and Greece after their initial reinterpretation, according to the national realities of both countries (Kosseva, Zhelyazkova and Hajdinjak 2011: 87). In other words, these ideologies were used at 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 systems will be examined only based on certain criteria such as educational policies, the structure of religious institutions and integration of Turkish/Muslim minorities in Bulgaria and Greece.

Two decades after the collapse of communism in line with current debates on 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 provide us with the unique opportunity to see the results of previous policies and to avoid repeating 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 the independence of Greece and Bulgaria, they were separated with the borders; even relatives who remained on the opposite side of the border became foreigners. The rights of the Turkish/Muslim minority in Greece

were secured with the Lausanne Peace Treaty in 1923, while Bulgaria and Turkey signed Friendship and Cooperation Agreement in 1925, where the rights of Turkish minority in Bulgaria were guaranteed. For the purposes of this work the emphasis will be made on the treatment of ethnic/religious minorities based on political perception and the rights provided by the constitutions of two states.

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 until today in various aspects of life such as social participation, political representation, education and religious organization and interaction between minority and majority members. These issues are not only relevant with the rights granted to minorities, but also with the approaches of different political systems such as liberalism and communism, which reflected the concept of rights, equality and emancipation.

The Problematic Issue of Defining Minorities

Up until now, there is not any official definition for minority that is bounding for all states. However, both Greece and Bulgaria have signed treaties with the Ottoman Empire and later on with Turkey for the rights of Muslim/Turkish minorities. In the Bulgarian case, 1878 Berlin Treaty that was signed after the Russo-Turkish war, brought non-discrimination as a principle to protect Muslims in Bulgaria (Capotorti 1991: 3). Furthermore, it imposed newly created Bulgarian state to make some constitutional regulations that will protect the rights of minorities. These rights were mainly including the right to worship, education and participating in community organization. Being the first constitution of Bulgaria, Tarnovo Constitution recognized minorities with the term *Bulgarian citizens from foreign origin*. Being the largest minority group in the country this term was adopted for the Muslim/Turkish minorities in Bulgaria.

Following the Balkan Wars and First World War, there were other agreements concluded between Turkey and Bulgaria in order to guarantee the rights of Turkish minority. In 1925 the Treaty of Friendship between Bulgaria and Turkey was signed which is the first document adopted by Bulgaria and Modern Turkey for the rights of the Turkish/Muslim minorities

in Bulgaria. However, over the time, this treaty was criticized by some Bulgarian scholars with its direct reference to a *Muslim minority* in Bulgaria and not mentioning explicitly the ethnic term *Turkish* (Radev 1992: 2). Hence, they believed that as a new nation state Turkey does not have any ties with the Turkish minority in Bulgaria except the religious one.

Same issue dominated the discourse of Greek-Turkish relations for a century. Signed in 1923, Lausanne Peace Treaty recognized Muslim minority in Greece and granted certain rights. These rights were mainly related to the education, freedom of worship and allowing the Turks/Muslims of Western Thrace to have their issues such as inheritance, marriage and divorce to be settled by *Kadi* (*Muslim judge*). Again, in 1930's when Turkish nationalism influenced also minority groups in Bulgaria and Greece, self-identification as Turkish became more dominant issue than Muslim per se (Grigoriadis 2011: 171). Having concluded previous treaties based on religious recognition and not including an ethnic one, both Greece and Bulgaria resisted to the idea to recognize their Muslim minorities as Turkish. Partly this was to prevent the development of Turkish culture and nationalism, which according to Bulgaria and Greece would compete to increase its sphere of influence. This is why recognition of religious minorities was preferred than recognizing any ethnic elements than the identity of majority population.

In the post Second World War period, the international recognition of minorities was still problematic due to the lack of a common minority definition. United Nations (UN) was the only international organization where most countries were represented. 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 worldwide valid definition of the term "minority". The results of the study were published in 1977 and the following definition was made by him: "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" (Capotorti 1991: 96). Although not being binding definition, this is the most comprehensive study conducted on the

issue of minorities until now. Greek and Bulgarian governments submitted their opinion regarding the definition and they criticized it for being vague and general. Therefore, they mostly relied on bilateral agreements signed with Turkey on the issue of minorities. Here the most important dilemma was with the rights offered to the minority groups in Bulgaria and Greece. Despite the recognition as Muslims, they were offered with a Turkish language education at schools that could be a sign for an indirect recognition of the ethnic identity.

There was also some inconsistency with the constitutional recognition of minorities in Bulgaria. While Greece tried to solve the issue through non-discrimination of its citizens, Bulgaria changed the discourse of minority recognition several times. The first communist constitution in Bulgaria that was adopted in 1947 explicitly used the term *national minorities* and recognized the presence of Turkish minority. Nevertheless, as it will be explained below in details, following the communist agenda to create homogenous nation, 1971 Bulgarian constitution had the term *citizens of non-Bulgarian origin*. This shift in terminology was adopted to compliment communist strategies that later were turned into assimilation.

Communist Approach Towards Turkish Minority in Bulgaria

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* (Kosseva, Zhelyazkova and Hajdinjak 2011: 90), 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 in order to accomplish the ultimate goal of communism. The control of the political culture was maintained by taking the nation's history under control (Kemp 1999: 95). For instance, in 1978, BCP (Bulgarian Communist Party) 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 favor of the recreation of Greater Bulgaria, which would have access to

warm seas, and embrace Macedonia and Thrace (Kemp 1999: 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 in the form of intensive Turkish language curriculum were offered to the Turkish minority in order to obtain their support for the communist cause. Extreme policies limiting the rights of the Turkish minority were postponed to a later stage until the establishment of communist institutions is achieved. Therefore, Turkish minority was allowed to use its own language and to form a Turkish 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 (Kosseva, Zhelyazkova and Hajdinjak 2011: 93).

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 to develop their own culture to some extent, albeit without emphasizing their ethnic identity (Decision of the Politburo of Bulgarian Communist Party).

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 Turkish (Kosseva, Zhelyazkova and Hajdinjak 2011: 93) 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.

Greece's Political Approach to the Rights of Minorities

Being identified as a Western style democratic state, Greece, created different pattern of exceptions (Kymlicka 2004: 148) 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 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 Greek Citizenship Code deprived 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, the implementation of restrictive measures intensified in the period following the Turkish intervention in 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 a regular basis (Anagnostou 2005: 339).

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 (Maschonas 1997: 330). This exceptional co-existence shaped also the general attitude towards the rights of minorities, as its 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 (Maschonas 1997: 337). Therefore, it did not generate considerable changes for the rights of the Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace, neither it produced positive regulations for their integration as equal citizens of Greece. Deepening of segregation in Western Thrace between Muslims/Turks 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.

Comparing the Greek and Bulgarian Cases Regarding the Turkish/Muslim Minorities

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 lack the basic feature of *Greekness* (Kravva 2003: 158). 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 (Raikin 1988: 171). 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. These regulations would work very well, if communist rule would not have launched a systematic oppression to all religious institutions in Bulgaria. The 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 indicate that, Greek Orthodox Church was taking the advantage of liberal democracy to 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 (*Şimşir* 1988: 192-193). 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.

Education as a Tool for Integration

Education remained as the most important component to create and sustain national identities of Bulgaria and Greece following the independence. This time it has been used as a new strategy to create the *other* or boost the participation of minority members in social and economic life. Teaching of history became a powerful mechanism for the creation of collective *self* and *other* (Hirschon 2009: 86). 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 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 a revenge for the five centuries long Ottoman rule.

In this context, state control of minority education became an important tool for the prevention of developing minority culture. 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 Turkish culture by improving the educational level of 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 needs (Şimşir 1988: 148). 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.

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 (Baş 2005: 83). 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 since they did not pass through the Greek educational system. For Greek authorities, education became the center of the national transformation and homogenization process (Zachos 2009: 134). The use of common language and the development of common symbols constituted pattern for the promotion of nationalist ideology.

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 (Kosseva, Zhelyazkova and Hajdinjak 2011: 99). 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. Raising 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 1960s (*Human Rights Watch*, 1999: 28), 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 difference in educational materials increased the *intellectual 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 Sensitive Issue of Education in Mother Tongue

The access to education in mother tongue presented 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 (Ragaru 2001: 295). 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 (Ragaru 2001: 295).

For the Muslim/Turkish minority in Thrace, education in mother tongue became a paradoxical issue when Greece denied the existence of Turkish minority in its 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 (Benincasa 2004: 265). 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 (Tsitselikis 2012: 488). 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. 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 also affected the progress of minority children, was the possibility to attend kindergartens. For the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, Communist regime provided kindergartens that 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 (*Bati Trakya Millet Gazetesi*).

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.

The Importance of Religion in Bulgaria and Greece

Before becoming independent, Bulgarian and Greek communities were part of the Ottoman Christian *millet*. In the first years of their independence, religious rights of Turkish minorities were mostly respected. 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 contact 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 (Tsitselikis 2012: 148). 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 (The Greek Constitution). Moreover, the act number 1672/1939, gave an exclusive monopoly to the Greek Orthodox Church, as building new places of worship was subject to the approval of the Orthodox Bishop, who has been granted with the right to define the height of mosque minarets (Anagnostou and Gropas 2010: 95). This regulation turned into a main obstacle for building new Mosques not only in Western Thrace but also all over Greece, and created significant disadvantages for the Muslims.

Organization of religious issues in Bulgaria was relatively different from

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 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 (Şimşir 1988: 114). 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 state (Raikin 1988: 173), 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 confiscated by the state. The religious non-alignment of the state brought the prospect of 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 cooperating with the Chief Mufti and other regional muftis during the revival process, when the names of Turkish minority were forcibly changed with Bulgarian ones (Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Bulgaria).

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 (Kravva 2003: 160). Following the period of Greece's EU membership, every effort to modernize the state met the resistance of 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. 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 (Kravva 2003: 160-164). 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 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 Bulgarian nation* (Anderson 2010: 16). 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 became relatively peaceful as dialogue between Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Chief Mufti in Sofia was 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 prefer to use the concept of *Hellenic-Christian civilization* in order to increase their votes (Anderson 2010: 25). In Bulgaria, nationalism had been restricted only to certain features and this prevented the exploitation of the religion for political goals.

Conclusion

The Treatment of the Turkish/Muslim minorities in Bulgaria and Greece was 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 and different religious policies.

Eventually, the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, took advantage of the strong educational system both in Turkish and in Bulgarian, 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 which were planned by education people and having a workforce. The massive inclusion in the process resulted with the economic development of Bulgaria and reduced inequalities between Bulgarians and Turks. Therefore, by working in common environments, interaction between ethnic groups became part of the daily life and helped for the development of friendly relations between Bulgarians and Turks.

In the case of Greece, opportunities of a 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.

The structure of religious institutions in Bulgaria and Greece made huge difference on the pattern of integration of ethnic and religious minorities. In the case of Greece, Orthodox Church put itself as the main defender of the Greek state and the Greek national identity where certain religious leaders had influence on government policies toward minority members. This influence restricted the rights of the Turkish/Muslim minority in Greece and created tension between communities on religious grounds by giving certain superiority to the Greek Orthodox Church. Despite treaties signed with the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, Greek state tried to restrict the rights of the minority in Western Thrace and disregarded even some international regulations that were developed during the cold war period.

Bulgarian policies towards Turkish minority were mostly defined along political lines since the role of Bulgarian Orthodox Church was gradually limited after the independence of Bulgaria. Communist rule in the country placed the church as symbolic institution, which diminished the role of religion as identity marker for the Bulgarians. Therefore, the struggle for

the rights of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria was mostly considered as an issue related with Bulgarian nationalism and the Bulgarian Communist Party. Nevertheless, the lack of religious confrontation between Muslim and Christian leaders, contributed for the construction of friendly relations and inter-faith dialogue.

References

- Anagnostou, Dia (2001). "Breaking the Cycle of Nationalism: The EU, Regional Policy and the Minority of Western Thrace, Greece". *South European Society and Politics* 6 (1): 99-124.
- Anagnostou, Dia and Ruby Gropas (2010). "Domesticating Islam and Muslim Immigrants: Political and Church Responses to Constructing a Central Mosque in Athens". *Orthodox Christianity in 21st Century Greece: The Role of Religion in Culture, Ethnicity and Politics*. Eds. Victor Roudometof & Vasilios N. Makrides. Surrey, Ashgate.
- Anderson, John (2010). "The Treatment of Religious Minorities in South-Eastern Europe: Greece and Bulgaria Compared". *Religion, State and Society* 30 (1): 9-31.
- Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs*, Bulgaria: AMVR, F. 22, o. 1, a. e. 231. l. 94-104, 1984.
- Baeva, Iskra and Evgenia Kalinova (2010). "Bulgarian Turks During the Transition Period". *Bulgaria and Europe: Shifting Identities*. Ed. Stefanos Katsikas. London, Anthem Press.
- Baş, Hakan (2005). *Unutulan Batı Trakya Türkleri*. Izmir: Umay Yay.
- Batı Trakya Millet Gazetesi*. <http://milletgazetesi.gr/view.php?nid=1529#.UURoy9ZPiQB> (access: 16/10/2014).
- Benincasa, Luciana (with Olga Karavia and Despina Skoulariki) (2004). "The Greek State, the Muslim Minority of Western Thrace and Education: Shifts Under Way?". *Educational Strategies Among Muslims in the Context of Globalization: Some National Case Studies*. Eds. Holger Daun and Geoffrey Walford. Leiden, Brill.
- Capotorti, Francesco (1991). *Study on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. New York, United Nations.
- Decision of the Politburo of Central Committee of Bulgarian Communist Party*, TsDA, F. 1B, op. 67, a. e. 3090, l. 7-31, 1984.
- Greek Constitution*. <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/001-156%20aggliko.pdf> (access: 18/01/2014).
- Grigoriadis, Ioannis N. (2011). "Redefining the Nation: Shifting Boundaries of

- the ‘Other’ in Greece and Turkey”. *Middle Eastern Studies* 47 (1): 167-182.
- Hirschon, Renee (2009). “History’s Long Shadow: The Lausanne Treaty and Contemporary Greco-Turkish Relations”. In *the Long Shadow of Europe: Greeks and Turks in the Era of Postnationalism*. Ed. Othon Anastasakis, Kalypso Nikolaidis and Kerem Oktem. Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Kandylaki, Agapi (2005). “Social Work Practice in Multicultural Settings: A Pilot Study in Thrace, Greece”. *South European Society and Politics* 10 (3): 433-450.
- Kemp, Walter A. (1999). *Nationalism and Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.
- Kosseva, Maya, Antonina Zhelyazkova and Marko Hajdinjak (2011). “European Dilemmas and Identity Construction on the Bulgarian Path to Modernity”. *Europe, Nations and Modernity*. Ed. Atsuko Ichijo. Basingstoke, Palgrave and Macmillan.
- Kravva, Vasiliki (2003). “The Construction of Otherness in Modern Greece”. *The Ethics of Anthropology: Debates and Dilemmas*. Ed. Pat Caplan. London, Routledge.
- Kymlicka, Will (2004). “Justice and Security in the Accommodation of Minority Nationalism”. *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Minority Rights*. Eds. Stephen May Tariq Modood and Judith Squires. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Maschonas, Andreas (1997). “European Integration and the Prospects of Modernization in Greece”. *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 15 (2): 325-348.
- Radev, Ivan (1992). “Hronologiya na Edna Istina”. *Zora*. 4 August. (Newspaper).
- Raikin, Spas T. (1988). “The Bulgarian Orthodox Church”. *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century*. Ed. Pedro Ramet. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ragaru, Nadege (2001). “Islam in Post-Communist Bulgaria: An Aborted “Clash of Civilizations”?”. *Nationalities Papers* 29 (2): 293-324.
- Şimşir, Bilal N. (1988). *The Turks of Bulgaria (1878-1985)*. London: K. Rustem & Brother.
- “The Turks of Western Thrace” (1999). *Human Rights Watch* 11 (1).
- Tsitselikis, Konstantinos (b) (2012). *Old and New Islam in Greece: From Historical Minorities to Immigrant Newcomers*. Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Zachos, Dimitrios (2009). “Citizenship, Ethnicity, and Education in Modern Greece”. *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 27: 131-155.

Bulgaristan ve Yunanistan'ın Müslüman-Türk Azınlığın Entegrasyonuna Yönelik Politikalarının Karşılaştırmalı İncelemesi: Soğuk Savaş Dönemi*

Nuri Korkmaz**

Öz

Bulgaristan ve Yunanistan'daki Türk azınlıklara yönelik politikaların karşılaştırılması, farklı koşullardaki azınlık gruplarının entegrasyonu ile ilgili durumun incelenmesini gerekli hale getirmiştir. Bu çalışmanın konusu, Soğuk Savaş döneminde Bulgaristan'daki Komünist yönetim ve Yunanistan'daki Liberal Demokrat yönetimin Müslüman-Türk azınlığın entegrasyonuna yönelik benimsediği farklı yöntemlerin değerlendirilmesidir. Bulgaristan ve Yunanistan'daki Müslüman-Türk azınlığın Türkiye'yi anavatanları olarak görmesi nedeniyle, bu çalışma, aynı zamanda o ülkelerdeki çoğunluğun azınlık mensuplarıyla ilişkisini farklı bir açıdan incelemektedir. Türklerin entegrasyonuna yönelik eğitim politikaları, dini ve siyasal yaklaşımlar değerlendirilerek her iki ülkedeki Türklere siyasal sistemlerin etkisinde yapılan muamele karşılaştırılmıştır. Bu çerçevede millî kimlik olgusu kullanılarak, Türk azınlığa tanınan hakların sosyal bağlamda azınlığın kendi kimliğini koruma ve kültürünü geliştirme konusunda nasıl katkı sağladığı veya ne tür sorunlar yarattığı analiz edilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler

Türk azınlık, Batı Trakya, Bulgaristan, komünizm, demokrasi, karşılaştırmalı siyaset analizi, Yunanistan.

* Geliş Tarihi: 18 Aralık 2015 – Kabul Tarihi: 05 Ekim 2016

Bu makaleyi şu şekilde kaynak gösterebilirsiniz:

Korkmaz, Nuri (2019). "Comparing Bulgarian and Greek Policies for the Integration of Turkish/Muslim Minorities: The Cold War Period". *bilig – Türk Dünyası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 90: 21-41.

** Doç. Dr., Bursa Teknik Üniversitesi, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Fakültesi, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü–Bursa/Türkiye

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3829-6057>

nuritahir@yahoo.com

Сравнительный анализ политики интеграции мусульманских и турецких меньшинств в Болгарии и Греции в период холодной войны*

Нури Коркмаз**

Аннотация

Сравнение политики в отношении турецких меньшинств в Болгарии и Греции требует также сравнения ситуаций с интеграцией этих меньшинств. Данная работа изучает разные подходы коммунистического режима Болгарии и либерально-демократического режима Греции в плане интеграции мусульманских и тюркских меньшинств; то, что они считают своей родиной Турцию, добавляет дополнительный аспект в это исследование. Были изучены подходы к интеграции турок в обеих странах с точки зрения образования, религии и политики. Исследовано влияние прав, которыми обладали турецкие меньшинства, на сохранение их культуры, с какими проблемами они сталкивались и какую помощь получали.

Ключевые слова

Турецкие меньшинства, Западная Фракия, Болгария, коммунизм, демократия, сравнительный анализ политики, Греция.

* Поступило в редакцию: 18 декабря 2015 г. – Принято в номер: 5 октября 2016 г.

Ссылка на статью:

Korkmaz, Nuri (2019). "Comparing Bulgarian and Greek Policies for the Integration of Turkish/Muslim Minorities: The Cold War Period". *bilig – Журнал Гуманитарных Наук Тюркского Мира* 90: 21-41.

** Доц., д-р, Технический университет Бурсы, факультет гуманитарных и общественных наук, отделение международных отношений – Бурса / Турция
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3829-6057>
nuritahir@yahoo.com