

Unwelcome Citizens: Muslim Turks of Greece and Orthodox Greeks of Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the experiences of Muslim Turkish minority in Greece and the Greek Orthodox minority in Turkey in the course of nation-state making from 1924 until today. Greece and Turkey are two neighbouring nation-states created upon the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. Yet, harboring two ethnic minorities reminiscent of the past Ottoman period-the Muslim Turks of Greece and the Greek Orthodox of Turkey -stood for both as an impediment in their nation-state making project. For his reason and especially until the final decade, both minorities were regarded as potential threats to the national unity and security of these states. Hence they have become victims of bilateral issues of conflict between Greece and Turkey. Brubaker's theoretical framework of ethnic relations model, the 'triadic nexus'; which links the minority communities themselves, the states in which they live, and their external homelands, is adopted in this paper in order to offer an in-depth analysis of Greek and Turkish minority policies and their implications for both minorities until the final decade. For the period post 1995 until today, though, Sata's 'quadratic nexus', which incorporates the fourth factor of 'international organizations', in this case particularly the European Union, is used to elucidate the positive change in both states' minority policies.

Keywords: *Minorities, Nation-states, Turkish-Greek Relations, the European Union*

I. Introduction and Methodology

The notion of minority was born with the establishment of nation-states in the 19th century and has ever since become a recurring global phenomenon due to altering state borders, creating new minorities. New nation-states and new minorities emerged after three major waves of nation-building; following the dissolution of the Habsburg, Romanov, Wilhelmine and Ottoman empires after WWI, independence of colonies after World War II, and the disintegration of multinational states with the end of the Cold War. The term national minority first attained an international character at the Congress of Vienna (1815). National minority provisions were for the first time included in the Treaty of Berlin(1878) as a precondition for international recognition of new born nation states.¹ Henceforth, particularly during and prior to the WWI, minorities were pawned in the balance of power games played by great powers who became the protector of minorities within the territories of the empires. Concealed in the discourses of equality and non-discrimination remained the intention to provoke them for independence.

Following the dissolution of the empires and the establishment of an international order dominated by the nation-state model, protection of minorities

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¹ Patrick Thornberry, *International Law and the Rights of Minorities*, Oxford:Clarendon Press, 1991, p.10.

shifted from the monopoly of great powers to the international organizations, beginning with the League of Nations. Following the WWII; the United Nations, the European regional organizations such as the OSCE, Council of Europe, and the European Union itself emerged.² Nevertheless, despite the international legislation and protection mechanisms, kin states maintained the key role in the protection of minorities. Otherwise, minorities were regarded by the nation states as a potential threat to the national unity and territorial status quo and were therefore either assimilated, excluded, or forced to emigrate.³ The Muslim Turkish and the Greek Orthodox minorities' experiences would be no exception.

Greek and Turkish nation states were created in the first wave of nation building as a result of the collapse of Ottoman Empire after years of armed struggles. The Muslim Turks in Western Thrace and the Orthodox Greek minority in Istanbul and on the islands of Imroz and Tenedos became minorities after the delineation of Turkish and Greek state borders by the treaty of Lausanne in 1923. Both minorities were granted a wide range of positive and negative rights and liberties by the provisions of Lausanne (articles from 38-45) signed in the League period. However, this panoply of multicultural provisions would challenge the aspirations of homogenization in the course of nation building in both countries, which would, in return, result in even the violation of their basic human rights and liberties.

The treatment of both minorities largely depended on bilateral relations. In times of rapprochement, both minorities would be treated fairly. On the other hand, in cases of conflict, for which the Cyprus conflict marks a turning point, they would each be retaliated against by the host states. In other words, they were pawned in bilateral relations and never truly regarded as citizens. International organizations, particularly post WWII, played little if any role for the minorities in question. The European Union, post 1990s, the European Court of Human Rights, and the Council of Europe stand as exceptions. Yet, the EU's involvement in minority affairs was more effective for candidate states as respect for minority rights was enshrined as a precondition for membership in the Copenhagen Criteria, and indirectly for member states in the form of reforms required for the deepening of the Europeanization process. The Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights served as more significant institutions where grievances of minorities were brought into the agenda, again, by kin-states and conscious minority members. The state of Muslim Turks in Greece and the Greek Orthodox in Turkey started to improve thanks to these institutions.

Given the above peculiarities, analysis of the experiences of the two minorities can be best explained by the theoretical framework of ethnic relations model developed by Brubaker⁴, 'the triadic nexus', and for the post 1996 period the theoretical framework developed by Sata, 'the quadratic nexus', incorporating in the Brubaker's model a fourth element, international organizations, with reference to

² Jennifer Jackson Preece, *National Minorities and the European Nation-States System*, 1st Edition, Oxford University Press, NY, 1998.

³Ibid.

⁴Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

European mechanisms.⁵ The triadic nexus contends that “National minorities, nationalizing states, and external national homelands are bound together in a single, interdependent relational nexus.” Thus, the triadic nexus links the minority communities themselves, the states in which they live, and their external homelands. This relationship can be conflictual and non-conflictual, depending on the circumstances. Brubaker articulated this theoretical framework for the context of the break up and the violent civil wars in ex-Yugoslavia, particularly the Serbo-Croatian conflict. Therefore, incorporating it in the Turkish-Greek context requires some modifications.

Brubaker defines national minority as a ‘dynamic political stance’, as a group who has a public claim to a different ethnocultural nation than the dominant one, demand state recognition of their separate identity, and claim certain collective cultural and political rights. Hence they need not be legal nationals of the state.⁶ However, in our context, since both Muslim Turkish and Greek Orthodox minorities were already defined by the Treaty of Lausanne as such, despite on the basis of religion as ‘Muslim’ and ‘non-Muslim’.

Furthermore, Brubaker prioritizes *perceptions* in his definition of both host states (nationalizing states) and kin states (external homelands). Accordingly, the nationalizing state is an ‘unrealized’ nation-state, ‘a state destined to be a nation-state’, in other words a nation-state in the making, referring to the context of ex-Yugoslavia where the territorial boundaries were not yet drawn and internationally recognized. Therefore, he contends that it is perceived as nationalizing through its ‘...policies, practices, symbols, events, officials, organizations ...by representatives of the national minority and the external national homeland’.⁷ Likewise, the external national homeland is not necessarily a kin state sharing the same ethnic roots with the national minority but rather an imagined ‘dynamic political stance’ based on shared perceptions, assumptions and orientations by the national minority, who monitors and promotes the interests of the minority.⁸

Greece was recognized as an independent state as early as 1821, and also in the process of enlarging to the detriment of the then Ottoman Empire until 1922. Likewise, independence of Turkey was recognized by the treaty of Lausanne, which affirmed for the last time the territorial contours between the two states as well as the minorities. Thus, Greece and Turkey were both legally and historically assigned the role of kin and host states for the minorities in question. Yet, they were both nation-states in the making. Therefore both Muslim Turks and Greek Orthodox were a threat to homogenization and the institution of governmentality.

The triadic nexus is described as ‘an arena of struggle’ where each element; the national minority, the nationalizing state, and the external national homeland are constructed as interdependent, competing stances. Therefore they are ‘*relational fields; and relations between the three are closely intertwined with relations internal to, and constitutive of,*

⁵ Robert Sata, *Multicultural Pluralism: Towards a Normative Theory of Ethnic Relations*, unpublished PhD Dissertaton, Central European University, Budapest, September 2006.

⁶ Brubaker, *Ibid*, p. 60.

⁷ Brubaker, *ibid*, p. 63.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 66-67.

the fields.⁹ The three actors monitor each other through selective attention, interpretation and representation.¹⁰ This monitoring may be shaped according to the aspirations of the actors. In order to mobilize a national minority, the host state may be represented as an oppressive state, or, the nationalizing state may represent the national minority as irredentist. In the process of break up in Yugoslavia, the Serb minority in Croatia was mobilized by representations of Croatia as a dangerously nationalizing state whereas the nationalizing elites in Croatia represented the Serb minority as disloyal and Serbia an irredentist kin state. Indeed the actors did their best to mobilize both minorities and nationalizing states in this process.¹¹

In this context, however, neither the Muslim Turkish minority, nor the Greek Orthodox minority sought mobilization by violent means. They were both passive in their reactions to the host state; the Greek Orthodox preferred to emigrate to kinstate Greece following the 6-7 September events in 1956, upon the expulsion of 12,000 Greek nationals who were official residents in Istanbul in 1964, and after the Turkish military intervention in Cyprus in 1974. The Muslim Turks, on the other hand, migrated to Turkey in large numbers during the Greek Civil War for reasons of security, between 1952 and 1960, owing to the free immigrant visas (serbest göçmen vizesi) given by Turkey, also out of socio economic and political reasons, whereas later migrations were due to the discriminationary and oppressive Greek policies, which culminated after the Cyprus conflict in 1974.

II. Minorities in the initial phase of nation-building in Turkey and Greece

The historical path that shaped the notion of citizenship in the process of nation building and state formation in Turkey and Greece were similar but at the same time, oppositional to each other. The understanding of citizenship and the concurrent citizenship policies in both countries were largely shaped by the underlying premises of nationalisms upon which the nation states were constructed. In rhetoric, both seemed to have adopted civic nationalism, however in practice, ethnic nationalism came to the fore. This is a natural outcome of the relatively late nation state building compared with the West.¹²

Both Turkey and Greece had to create a nation after the creation of the state. Paradoxically, neither was ethnically homogeneous and the only common criterion for the construction of nationhood was religion. Thus, Vlachs, Slavo-Macedonians and even Turkish speaking Orthodox peoples from Karaman had to be Greek, or in other words Hellenized¹³, whereas people from the Caucasus, Balkans, and Greece, some of

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.* For details on the process of breakup, see p. 70-75.

¹² The terms 'ethnic' and 'civic nationalism' were coined by Anthony Smith with reference to the work of Hans Kohn on the analysis of Eastern versus Western nationalism (Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, 1976). Accordingly, civic nationalism was based on the idea that the nation was constructed around common laws and institutions on a shared territory, whereas ethnic nationalism was the idea of nation as a rigid, composed of individuals possessing common traits by blood and soil. Anthony Smith, *Nationalism*, Blackwell Publishing, 2001, 39-41.

¹³ Richard Clogg, "Introduction", (ed) *Minorities in Greece: Aspects of a Plural Society*, Hurst & Company, London, 2002.

whose native tongues were non-Turkish had to be Turkicized in Turkey.¹⁴ The foundation of citizenship on religious criteria stems from the *millet* system of the Imperial legacy which was the predominant understanding of citizenship until the Tanzimat Reforms of 1839.¹⁵ Furthermore, nation state building was equated with homogenization of the population along national lines for which constitution of oppositional ‘others’ to the national identity was necessary. The Turks would be assigned part of this role in the process of Greek nation building and the Greeks in the process of Turkish nation building. It follows that the remaining Muslim Turkish and Greek minorities would be part of this ‘other’ in both nation states and kept outside of the scope of citizen implicitly or explicitly depending on the state of bilateral relations.

The Greek Orthodox and the Muslim Turkish minorities were, as mentioned before, an outcome of the Treaty of Lausanne and the exchange of Greek and Turkish populations between the two countries based on the *Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations* in 1924, which was, contrary to the ethnic definition in the title, based on religious criteria. One million Greek Orthodox had already fled Turkey with the retreating Greek army, so the Convention affirmed expulsion of the remaining 200,000 Greek Orthodox from Anatolia and 354,647 Muslims from Greece.¹⁶ Described as the ‘Asia Minor Disaster’ by the Greek side¹⁷, ‘humanitarian shock’ by Oran¹⁸, the memories and consequences of the population exchange has remained at the very root of Greek national identity and perception of citizenship.

The Greek Orthodox of Istanbul and Gökceada(Imbros) and Bozcaada(Tenedos), and the Muslim Turks(Western Thrace, or northeastern Greece, in the region of Rhodope comprising three provinces, Alexandroupoli(Dedeagac), Komotini(Gümülçine) and Xanthi (Iskece)) were exempted from the compulsory population exchange. The population number of both minorities was restored to be similar in order to preserve proportionality between 100,000-120,000.¹⁹ According to Alexandris, the population of Greek Orthodox was reduced from 300,000 to 100,000

¹⁴ Soner Cagaştay, *Who is a Turk?*, Routledge, 2008, 38.

¹⁵ Berdal Aral, “The Idea of Human Rights as Perceived in the Ottoman Empire”, *Human Rights Quarterly*, 26.2.2004, pp: 454-482.

¹⁶ Venizelos proposed that the population exchange be voluntary but it did not receive sufficient backing/support in the negotiations. The Turkish side demanded complete removal of Greek Orthodox from Turkey in exchange for a complete removal of Turkish Muslims in Greece. However, it was rejected by the representative of great powers Lord Curzon, on the grounds that this would be detrimental for the domestic industry and commerce, largely owned by them, and by the Greek Prime Minister Venizelos, due to incapacity of Greece to receive additional refugees. Seha L.Meray (cev), *Lozan Barış Konferansı Tutanaklar-Belgeler*, Cilt I, Kitap I, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1993, 125-7, 336.

¹⁷For more details about the Population Exchange, see Stephen –P. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*, Mac Millan Company, New York, 1932.

¹⁸Baskin Oran, *Türk-Yunan İlişkilerinde Batı Trakya Sorunu*, Bilgi Yayınevi, 2.Basım, Ankara,1991,21.

¹⁹ It is difficult to know the exact population of both minorities in 1924, because different sources provide different numbers. According to Akgönül and Alexandris, the number of Greek Orthodox was 110,000 (100,000 in Istanbul and 10,000 in Gökceada and Bozcaada). According to Meray, the number of Muslims in Western Thrace was given as 132,666 by the Turkish side, and 114,810 by the Greek side, Meray, *ibid*, p.34.

in order to achieve proportionality.²⁰ Some of those Greek Orthodox who had to leave Turkey would come back in 1930 as a result of the 1930 Convention of Residence, Commerce and Navigation (*İkamet, Ticaret ve Seyrisefain Antlaşması*).²¹

The provisions from 37 to 45 enshrined in the Treaty of Lausanne were guaranteeing a number of civil, political, as well as multicultural rights for both minorities. Two outstanding provisions which would later be exploited especially by Turkey and Greece were the religious definition of both minorities as Muslim and non-Muslim, and the Article 45, interpreted as the principle of reciprocity.²² Otherwise, the rights conferred by Lausanne included the right to non-discrimination²³, free use of any language in commerce, religion, in the press, in publications of any kind or at public meetings as well as before the Courts (Art 39), the right to assembly; to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, schools or other establishments for instruction and education where they can use their language and religion freely (Art40), transfer of equitable share from public funds under the state, municipal or other budgets for educational, religious and charitable purposes(Art41), legal autonomy in matters related to family law such as marriage, divorce similar to that of the millet system (Art 42), the right to enjoy their own religious holidays (Art43), and the League of Nations was determined as the international body for the resolution of disputes between the minority members and the state.

The first intervention in the rights conferred by the Lausanne came in 1926 with the secularization of the Turkish legal system. With the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code, the Orthodox minority, along with the Armenian and Jewish minorities were asked to voluntarily forgo their right to legal autonomy in issues related with family law.²⁴The Greek Orthodox committee reluctantly renounced it.²⁵ This aroused some discontent among several religious members within the Orthodox minority, but was offset by other members, majority of whom prioritized economic and cultural values over religion.²⁶ The rationale behind this demand was to achieve legal unity which was the key in establishment of full sovereignty.²⁷Likewise, the legal autonomy granted to Muslim minority, the provisions of Sharia, was partially harmonized with the Greek Civil Code.²⁸

A historical comparison of the treatment of the two minorities requires a concise introduction of their social structure as well. An obvious class difference

²⁰ Alexis Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-1974*, Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 2nd Edition, Athens, 1992, 87.

²¹ Samim Akgönül, *Türkiye Rumları:Ulus-Devlet Çağından Küreselleşme Çağına Bir Azınlığın Yok Oluş Süreci*, (cev) Ceyla Gürmen, İletişim Yayınları, 1. Baskı, 2007, 52.

²² 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

²³ Article 38.2: 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.

²⁴ Akgönül, *ibid*, p. 69.

²⁵ Alexandris, *İbid*, p. 137.

²⁶ Akgönül, *ibid*, p. 74.

²⁷ *Ibid*.

²⁸ Oran, *İbid*, p. 60.

between the two might have also been a determining factor in their treatment by the host states. The Greek Orthodox of Turkey were an urbanized community, members of middle class bourgeoisie, engaged in business, trade, or self employed professionals such as lawyers, doctors, etc. This placed them into frequent contacts with the local and national government. They could speak the official language Turkish. Intermarriages outside of the community or with other minority members were common²⁹. They were bearers of an ex Ottoman cosmopolitan culture and therefore, they were more prone to integrate into their new host state.

The Muslim Turks, on the other hand, were predominantly peasants who lived in villages, while only a small proportion was part of the urban small bourgeoisie. Their social status inevitably placed them in a lower socio economic level as well as in a position less prone to integrate. They did not speak the official language, Greek, as their encounters with the state mechanisms was rare due to their geographical location, and intermarriages with the Greek Orthodox were marginal.

However, the Greek Orthodox constituted a major barrier in the turkification of the bourgeoisie and trade in the important city of Istanbul whereas the Muslim Turkish minority were simple peasants settled far away from the capital as well as other important towns in Greece. The dichotomy between the bourgeoisie versus the peasantry, a primary location like Istanbul versus the rural region is important in understanding the potential implications of host state or, in this case, nationalizing states policies on the minorities. Of particular importance in this period of the nation state building after the Lausanne, is the refugee settlement problem in Greece and the discriminations against the Greek Orthodox in the process of building a national bourgeoisie in Turkey.

Refugee settlement altered the demographic structure of the Western Thrace region in contravention of the Lausanne Treaty (Articles 65 and 66), as a result of which 62.1% of the region became Greek.³⁰ Use of Muslim homes and properties in the Western Thrace region and expropriations of land for the accommodation of Greek Orthodox refugees raised complaints by Turkey to the League Council.³¹ In return, Greece also complained Turkey to the League Council in 1924 alleging that some Greek Orthodox minority property in Istanbul was seized by the Turkish authorities.³² The matter was settled by bilateral negotiations between Turkey and Greece a year later.³³

By 1928, 17,000 refugee families were settled in Western Thrace in 208 villages and an amount of 204,331 stremmata of land expropriated by the Greek

²⁹ Akgönül, *Ibid*, p. 350.

³⁰ Dimitri Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact on Greece*, Paris, Mouton, 1962, London, 136. According to Alexandris, in the period of 1920-1924, nearly 100,000 refugees were settled in the region, (Alexandris, 121), Pallis mentions 120,000 refugees (A.A.Pallis, "Racial Migrations In The Balkans During The Years 1912-1924", 1936, pp:315-331, p.319), Pentzopoulos, on the other hand, claims the number of refugees to be 189,000.

³¹ Ladas, 479. In 1923-4, 13,835 rooms in Muslim houses were occupied, together with 127 schools and mosques and an area of 100,153 stremmata.

³² *Ibid.*, 481

³³ *Ibid.*, 483. According to the official report released by the League Council in 1925, only a few thousands of the nearly 100,000 Greeks in Istanbul were given certificates of non-exchangeability (etabli documents) until the end of 1925, 488.

government.³⁴ The final settlement of 17,000 refugees in 1928 can partly be attributed to the high number of refugees and the geographical unavailability of the country. However, considering the geographical proximity of the region to Turkey, the settlement also reflects an attempt towards homogenization of the region as a precaution against perceived irredentism.

In Istanbul, on the other hand attempts at turkification of trade resulted in loss of jobs and businesses for the Greek minority members. In the initial years of the Republic, the population of Istanbul was one million, of which 44% constituted Muslims, 41% non-Muslims and 15% foreigners. While 95,3% of the civil servants were Muslims, only 24% were engaged in trade. Industry and trade was still in the hands of non-Muslim minorities and foreigners.³⁵ In order to alter this situation, several measures were taken by the state. The 1924 Law on Attorneyship required investigation of all attorneys in the Istanbul Bar according to a subjective criterion as 'good morals'. As a result, only 431 work permits out of 960 were renewed and about two thirds of the registered Greek Orthodox attorneys were dismissed from the Bar.³⁶ Article 4 of the law concerning the recruitment of civil servants, which remained in force until 1965 set the standard of 'being ethnic Turk' for the recruitment of civil servants, which meant exclusion of minorities from public service.³⁷

The 1929 law on Securities and Stock Market (*Menkul Kıymetler and Kambyo Borsaları Kanunu*) necessitated those who intended to establish brokerages to be of Turkish origin. The ownership of the Stock Market which used to be in the hands of Jewish and Greek Orthodox persons until then passed on to the Turks.³⁸ The outstanding discriminatory law was the 1932 law on Jobs granted only to Turkish Citizens in Turkey (*Türkiye'de Türk Vatandaşlarına Tahsis Edilen Sanat ve Hizmetler Hakkında Kanun*) which had immediate repercussions in excluding the minorities from the capital, trade markets as well as the public sector.³⁹ This anti-minority trend in economic realm resulted in the migration of several thousand Greek Orthodox to Greece and the USA.⁴⁰

In 1930 and 1931, the two countries established political, economic and military alliances.⁴¹ The rapprochement between the two countries in this period was positively reflected in their treatment of the minorities. Upon Turkey's demand, Greece expelled the anti-Kemalists in Western Thrace (some members of the 150s/Yüzellilikler) and allowed the replacement of the Arabic alphabet with the modern Turkish alphabet upon demand in several minority primary schools. In return,

³⁴ *Ibid*, p.494.

³⁵ Akgonul, *Ibid*, p. 77.

³⁶ Alexandris, *Ibid*, p. 112.

³⁷ Akgonul, *Ibid*, p. 80.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 83.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

⁴¹ During the Greek Prime Minister Venizelos's visit to Ankara, on 30th October 1930, three agreements were signed; a Treaty of Friendship, Neutrality, Conciliation and Arbitration (*Dostluk, Tarafsızlık, Uzlaşma ve Hakemlik Antlaşması*), a Protocol on Naval Armaments (*Deniz Kuvvetlerinin Sınırlanmasına İlişkin Protokol*), and the Convention of Residence, Commerce and Navigation (*İkamet, Ticaret ve Seyrisefain Antlaşması*). In October 1931, Turkish Prime Minister İsmet İnönü and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tevfik Rüştü Aras made an official visit to Athens.

Turkey lifted the support given to Papa Eftim, avoided interference in Patriarchate elections and in minority education.⁴² Nevertheless, the Residence Agreement precipitated a migration wave to Turkey particularly among the rich landlords as well as a reverse migration from Greece to Istanbul of the former Greek Orthodox who had to leave Istanbul in 1924. The 1930 Residence Agreement granted almost equal rights to newcomer Greek national Greek Orthodox in terms of employment and the right to property with other Turkish nationals.

III. The minorities squeezed between Turkish-Greek relations

Greece was not potent in the triadic nexus during the years of war (1939-1945). The severe economic consequences of the Second World War for Turkey and the yet uncompleted turkification of capital and trade⁴³ instigated the enactment of the Wealth Tax in 1942 (*Varlık Vergisi*) supposedly against the illegitimate trade gains. It was not only meant for the minorities but all business owners since 1939, middlemen and commissionaires, immovable property owners and salaried private employees.⁴⁴ However it was unfairly implemented to the detriment of minorities. The tax rates were arbitrarily ordered by Ankara and the non-Muslims were made to pay five to ten times as much as the Turks even in cases when income was of the same level. The Greek Orthodox Turkish nationals and the Greek national Greek Orthodox were levied incredibly high taxes, majority of whom were middle bourgeoisie or capital owners including minority schools, hospitals, priests, and philanthropic institutions.⁴⁵ Those most unfavourably affected by the Wealth Tax were the Greek Orthodox of Istanbul; nevertheless, it did not result in a significant migration to Greece⁴⁶, most probably due to war.

In the aftermath of the war, another phase of rapprochement was constructed between Turkey and Greece. Both countries became members to NATO in 1952 and the Balkan alliance in 1954. In 1952, King Pavlos and Queen Frederica visited Turkey, and in return President Celal Bayar visited Athens and Western Thrace.⁴⁷ However, the peaceful and friendly state of bilateral relations was to be reversed with the emergence of Cyprus conflict, which marks a turning point in Turkish-Greek relations and the treatment of their minorities, who would be constructed as pawns to retaliate against in bilateral disputes. Of particular significance is the 6-7 September pogrom and the 1964 expulsion of 12,000 Greek national Greek Orthodox persons.

With the outbreak of the Cyprus conflict, the anti-Greek sentiment was intensified in Turkey by the provocative circulations in the Turkish press and the declarations of several organizations and statesmen on the allegations that they were supporting Greece and providing material benefits to the guerrilla fighters of EOKA

⁴² Melek Fırat, "Yunanistanla İlişkiler", Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, 6th edition, İstanbul, 2002, 356.

⁴³Rıfat Bali, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında TürkiyeYabudileri, Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni (1923-1945)*, İletişim,İstanbul, 1999, 604, cited in Akgonul, 114.

⁴⁴ Alexandris, *ibid*, p. 212.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 226-227.

⁴⁶ Akgonul, *ibid*, p. 149.

⁴⁷ Fırat, *ibid*, p. 588.

against which the reconciliatory attitude of the Greek minority press could not make any difference.⁴⁸ On 6-7 September, during the tripartite talks over Cyprus at the London Conference, the newspaper *Istanbul Ekspres* spread the news that Atatürk's house-of-birth in Salonika was bombed upon⁴⁹ against which Cyprus is Turkish Society (*Kıbrıs Türkler Derneği*) held a demonstration on the same day. Soon the demonstration turned into a pogrom; minority property was plundered by a huge crowd when the police refrained from intervention.

4340 shops, 2000 houses, 110 restaurants, 83 churches of which 3 were burned down, 21 factories, 27 pharmacies, 12 hotels, 11 surgeries, 5 minority clubs, 3 newspaper printing houses, 26 schools and 5 sport clubs were attacked and plundered, among the most horrifying was the desecration of two Greek cemeteries⁵⁰ The material loss amounted to 165 million liras. Turkey condemned the pogrom the next day. *Cyprus-is-Turkish* Society was banned and the 87 members were arrested. However, majority of the 3,000 arrested were Turkish communists, who were held responsible for the pogrom. After ten days, a committee was established to help the victims of the pogrom that had inflicted at least 4,500 minority members, to which bankers, the Turkish Red Crescent, Turkish and minority business man made generous contributions⁵¹. Turkey also paid indemnities for the material loss later, which in fact fell short of the real damage caused.⁵²

As expected, the pogrom incited international and national condemnations. The President İnönü described the events as “ a national disaster”, accusing the Menderes government of incapacity to prevent it.⁵³ After several investigators, many observers were convinced that they were prearranged.⁵⁴ The pogrom also incited immediate panic of retaliation in the Western Thrace Muslim Turkish minority, which was cordially reflected in a minority newspaper article (*Trakya*) entitled ‘Shame’ (*Yüz Karası*).⁵⁵

The psychological costs of the pogrom on the Greek Orthodox minority probably exceeded that of the material costs. They must have lost their faith in the state to be ever recognized as equal citizens. No wonder that it inevitably engrained fear and probably triggered thoughts or plans to leave the country. However, a significant migration wave was not observed in the immediate aftermath.⁵⁶ The period

⁴⁸ For more details of excerpts from the press, see Akgonul, 184-189. For example, the 28th August 1955 dated *Hürriyet* declared that “if Greeks dare touch our brethren, then there are plenty of Greeks to retaliate upon”.

⁴⁹ The newspaper was showing fake pictures of Atatürk's house damages, windows broken. It was later found out that in fact an explosion occurred in the courtyard of the Turkish Consulate in Thessaloniki, which was adjacent to Atatürk's house, and a number of windows in the Consulate building were damaged. The Consulate watchman and a Western Thracian Muslim Turkish university student, Oktay Engin, were charged of the explosion. Alexandris, footnote 2, p.256-257.

⁵⁰ The New York Times, 17.09.1955, cited in Akgonul, 207. According to data by Alexandris, in addition to this 200 women were raped in the suburbs, the ninety year old priest of the Balikli monastery was burnt alive in the church, and several priests seriously injured. Alexandris, *ibid*, p. 257-258.

⁵¹ Akgonul, *ibid*, p. 207.

⁵² Alexandris, *ibid*, p. 259.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 262.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ The text cited in Akgonul, *ibid*, p.213.

⁵⁶ Akgonul, *ibid*, p 220-221.

after September 11 events until 1963 was relatively peaceful which would be disturbed once again with the flaring Cyprus issue in 1963.

This would facilitate another wave of anti-Greek sentiment in Istanbul. Among the many such media coverage and statements, is a declaration by the then Turkish Prime Minister Suat Hayri Ürgüplü on 16th October 1965:

I cannot guarantee what might happen in Istanbul if one Turk was killed in Cyprus. Additional security measures have been taken to prevent riots and possible attacks. Such measures, however, have been taken before, as during the riots of 6/7 September 1955.⁵⁷

Even though the statement was condemned by the then President Cemal Gürsel, it stands as a blatant signal of the reluctance of the government in guaranteeing the basic duties of equality and safety of her citizens.

The Greek Orthodox failed to prove their neutrality despite all their efforts to do so. These included the donation of 5,000 liras by the Patriarchate to the campaign organized for the Cyprus veterans.⁵⁸ Due to the failing negotiations over Cyprus, the Turkish government decided to impose a punitive sanction on Greece and thus unilaterally revoked the 1930 Residence Agreement. This meant expulsion of at least 10,000 Greek national Orthodox persons from Istanbul who had settled by the same Agreement in 1930s. Apparently, these people were 'harming the economic life in Istanbul, funding the Greek Cypriots' endeavours of unification with Greece'.⁵⁹ However, the decision did not bring the expected change in Greek policy over Cyprus, on the contrary, three days after the revocation of the Agreement, EOKA attacked two Turkish villages in Cyprus.⁶⁰

The Greek national Greeks were made to leave the country under anti-humanitarian measures. Their property was confiscated, their savings in banks were blocked by a government decision, their goods were seized, they were forced to sign a petition at the police declaring that they had involved in actions against the interests of Turkey including currency offences, funding of the Greek Cypriot terrorists, and that they were leaving the country voluntarily. They were only allowed to take 22\$ with them on the way back to Greece.⁶¹ Although Greece brought the issue of forced mass expulsions to the United Nations Security Council, no significant pressure was exerted by the Western institutions on Turkey.⁶² The mass expulsions generated a domino effect within the Greek Orthodox minority. Since the Greek nationals were affiliated with Turkish national Greeks via marriage, the number of people who left more than coupled the number of Greek nationals. Furthermore, the magnitude of fear and anxiety generated by the expulsions ignited the exodus of more Turkish national Greek Orthodox. Hence, by 11 October 1964, 30,000 Turkish nationals of Greek descent had left Turkey along with those expelled.⁶³

⁵⁷ *Cumhuriyet*, 16 October 1965, cited in Alexandris, *ibid*, p. 288.

⁵⁸ Akgonul, *ibid*, p. 258.

⁵⁹ Apoyevmatini, 29.03.1964, cited in Akgonul, *ibid*, p. 262.

⁶⁰ Akgonul, *ibid*, p. 263.

⁶¹ Alexandris, *ibid*, p. 284.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 283.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

This was the beginning of the dissolution of Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul. The later 1968-1972 rapprochement between the military government of Greece and Turkey brought about an ephemeral relaxation in the case of minorities resulting in signature of an educational protocol and exchange of teachers and teaching material. The Turkish intervention in Cyprus in 1974 almost brought the two countries to the brink of war. The population of Greek Orthodox in Istanbul continued to decline after 1974. From 1980s on, the decline was further precipitated by the 1980 military coup in Turkey versus the improvement of socio economic conditions in Greece after the resettlement of democracy following the overthrow of the military government and the subsequent European Community membership. It should also be acknowledged that state oppression remained in effect, culminating in denial of property acquisition by the minority vakifs(charitable organizations), closing of Halki Seminary due to a law putting all private educational institutions under ministerial authority. The bilateral relations would be softened by the 1986 Davos meetings when the then Prime Minister Ozal lifted the blockage on the Greek nationals' property in Istanbul. However, it did not bring about a reverse migration back to Turkey. ⁶⁴ Today the number of Greek Orthodox of Greek descent in Turkey is estimated to be 3,000.⁶⁵

The state of the Muslim Turkish minority, on the other hand started to deteriorate in mid 1970s, a period which coincides with the Turkish intervention in Cyprus, declaration of Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic, and the declining population of the Greek Orthodox in Istanbul. Until then, the minority had more or less led a peaceful life except for the repercussions of ups and downs between the Greek-Turkish relations.

Majority of the secular Turkish reforms were introduced upon Turkey's demands in times of rapprochement into the life of minority ranging from self-identification, education to clothing. On the one hand, this led to modernization and relative improvement of the socio economic life, on the other hand it created a divide between conservative Muslims and or modern Muslims, mostly represented by the secular intellectuals, nobles and teachers educated in Turkey.⁶⁶ This was reflected in the division of minority cultural organizations and press as well. The conservative faction would usually receive Greek government backing as they were against the secular reforms introduced upon Turkey's demand and content with their Muslim identity whereas the secular media and cultural organizations would be backed by the Turkish government.⁶⁷ This divide would weaken in later years as the discriminations began to equally affect both factions and as a result of the Turkish government's change of policy to embrace the traditionalists as well.

During the course of Second World War and the subsequent Greek Civil war, the minority remained loyal to the government. However, massive migrations to Turkey took place due to war conditions. In the aftermath of the war, the first secular minority high schools were built in Komotini (1949) by the then Greek King Pavlos,

⁶⁴ Akgonul, *ibid*, p. 324-340.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

⁶⁶ Adil Özgüç, *Batu Trakya Türkleri*, Kutluğ Yayınları, Istanbul, 1974, p. 50-60.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

addressed as *Celal Bayar Lisesi* among the public because the President Bayar had attended the opening ceremony. In 1949 for the first time Greek administration allowed the minority to elect the community administrative board. (*Cemaat Idare Heyetleri*).⁶⁸

However, oppressive and discriminatory measures against the Western Thracian minority escalated in late 1960s. Arbitrary deprivation of citizenship based on Article 19 began to be implemented against the minority members. Papagos law ordering the identification of the minority primary schools as 'Turkish schools' was abolished. Due to the anti-Turkish sentiment in the region, minority members would be subject to frequent interrogations by the police. Many minority members fled the country to Turkey out of mistreatment and fear. Restriction on the purchase of immovable, ban on issuing driving licenses and licenses for hunting rifles, repair of houses, arbitrary fines were all introduced in this period.

The overthrow of the junta in 1974 brought back democracy to the country; however not to the minority. The situation of the minority aggravated following the Turkish intervention in Cyprus and particularly the declaration of the Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983. Until the decentralization reforms of 1994, the minority was put under the supervision of *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* and its sub-organ called *Office of Cultural Affairs* established in the prefectures of Ksanthi and Rhodope. The state officials who were appointed by the military regime remained in charge. They were responsible for overall transactions concerning the minority and worked in close cooperation with the government-appointed prefect and prefectural administration. This state mechanism was responsible for implementing the discriminatory and oppressive minority policy; they prevented acquisition of property, bank loans and driving licenses, as well as employment of minority members in private and public sectors.⁶⁹

This network also prevented the equal distribution of European Community structural funds in Thrace post 1980s. In this period, only local Christians benefited from these funds. Investments were made in the central towns of Ksanthi and Komotini and the southern Christian-populated zones whereas the minority populated areas of northern zone were excluded.⁷⁰ Blockade of economic development made the minority more dependent on agriculture, and resulted in the transfer of savings to Turkey. Unable to invest in Thrace, people invested their money in real estate and banks in Turkey until mid 1990s. In the long term, this would lead to further 'ghettoization' of the minority.⁷¹

Consequently, until mid 1980s, migration to Turkey was intense, afterwards Germany became a more attracting spot due to economic reasons and the free movement made possible by EC membership. The minority students in Turkey remained there after completion of their studies, because their university diplomas were not recognized in Greece. This led to further division in families, decrease in

⁶⁸ Oran, *ibid*, p.280.

⁶⁹ Dia Anagnostou, "Breaking The Cycle of Nationalism: The EU, Regional Policy and the Minority of Western Thrace, Greece", *South European Society & Politics*, Vol.6, No.1, Summer 2001, pp:99-124, p.105.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.106.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.107.

minority population and human capital that could contribute to the minority's socio-economic and cultural development.

One of the most detrimental methods of oppression was the confiscation of minority land. For the people dependent on agriculture, this meant loss of their living sources. In 1978, 4,000 stremma of land was expropriated for building an industrial site in the villages of Amaranda (Yahyabeyli), Vakos (Makut), Trionion (Kafkas) and Pamforon (Ambarköy). 4,300 stremma were expropriated in Komotini surroundings for military zone and 3200 stremma were expropriated to build the Democritus University of Thrace.⁷² In the latter case, the expropriated land far exceeded the necessary land for a university; even the biggest university of Greece, the Thessaloniki University was built on a land of 640 stremma. The government did not accept Muslim villagers' offer to give the infertile land for the construction of this university. Worse than that, they were not given land in return for their expropriated property and were paid very low compensation.⁷³

In 1984 DIKATSA (Greek educational institution responsible for recognizing foreign university degrees) stopped recognizing minority students' diplomas acquired from Turkish universities. The minority graduates failed the required exams many times.⁷⁴ Most of the graduates were discouraged, gave up and migrated to Turkey or to Germany to seek employment. The remaining who stayed had to work in unqualified jobs; either as peasants or as cleaners, waiters ...etc.

The minority was denied permission to buy immovable such as houses and land, open business, build or repair houses or mosques. Those villagers whose lands were expropriated were not allowed to buy new land. This restriction was based on the law 1366/1938 enacted in 1938 before the Second World War in order to restrict sale of land to foreigners in border areas. Hence all such transactions were subject to the permission of a Commission made up of public officials. However, it was directed against the minority whereas Christians were even encouraged to buy immovable with long term bank loans.⁷⁵ Until mid 1990s, there was no factory, gas station or pharmacies owned by the minority.⁷⁶ Since people could not buy or repair their houses. Contrary to Greek settlements, the minority settlements were poor; the houses were small and in need of repair.

The villagers were denied driving licenses, especially tractor licenses, which was necessary to cultivate the land. The only way to get a license was through clientelistic relations. Generally the Greek argument would be that the Muslims did not learn Greek and were therefore unable to pass the tests.⁷⁷ However, after the issue was brought to the Parliament by the then minority MP Hasan Imamoğlu, it turned

⁷² Oran, *ibid*, p. 241.

⁷³ Lois Whitman, "Greece: The Turks of Western Thrace", Human Rights Report 1999 available online at: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/greece/Greec991-03.htm>, 05.06.2006,35. The villagers offered 500 acres of infertile land for free for the establishment of the university which was refused by the government.

⁷⁴ Oran, *ibid*, p. 152.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*.

⁷⁶ Whitman, *ibid*, p.36.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p.37.

out that there was a secret directive to approve only 5% of the applications by Muslims.⁷⁸

Of all the incredible sanctions and forms of discrimination against the minority, deprivation of citizenship was the most detrimental. It was based on Article 19 of the Greek Nationality Law No.3370 enacted in 1955, which was originally intended against the communists of Slavic origins:

A person of non-Greek ethnic origin leaving Greece without the intention of returning may be declared as having lost Greek nationality. This also applies to a person of non-Greek ethnic origin born and domiciled abroad. His minor children living abroad may be declared as having lost Greek nationality if both their parents and the surviving parent have lost the same. The minister of the interior decides in these matters with the concurring opinion of the National Council.⁷⁹

From 1960s onwards, it was applied against the Muslim Turkish minority to counterbalance the demographic decline of Greek Orthodox population in Istanbul.⁸⁰ People who were deprived of citizenship were those who worked abroad (mainly in Turkey), among whom were also those living in Greece. Approximately 50,000 persons from the Muslim minority were deprived of citizenship this way,⁸¹ among which were my father and aunt, who were among the few conscious and brave victims to file a suit against the Greek government, yet, they could only regain their citizenship after 7 years of legal struggle and the abolition of Article 19 in 1998.

Grievances against the violation of religious freedom, management of vakifs, and education are too many to mention in this paper. Nevertheless, contrary to the Greek Orthodox minority, the Muslim Turks finally mobilized in 1989, which was both a reaction to Greece and to kin state Turkey's indifference to minority matters at the Davos meetings. It was in the form of a peaceful protest march, which was commemorated a year later in Komotini. However, this time a group of Greek fanatics attacked the protesters and plundered minority-owned shops, which is considered as a retaliation for the 6-7 September events.⁸² According to the Human Rights Watch Report of 1990, twenty one people were injured, and over 400 minority-owned shops were damaged. The police watched the mob but did not interfere.⁸³

The minority mobilization, international concern for the trials of the late Dr Sadık Ahmet, who was the first independent MP to be elected to the Greek Parliament before the election law was amended⁸⁴, human rights reports of Human Rights Watch, but most prominently the indemnities the European Court of Human

⁷⁸Aarbakke, *ibid*, p. 205.

⁷⁹Whitman, *ibid*, 11.

⁸⁰ Anagnostou, Dia, "Deepening Democracy or Defending the Nation? The Europeanization of Minority Rights and Greek Citizenship", *West European Politics*, Vol.28, No.2, pp:335-347, March 2005, p.338.

⁸¹*Ibid*, p. 339.

⁸² Oran, *ibid*, 180.

⁸³ Whitman, *ibid*, p. 20-1.

⁸⁴In order to prevent re-election of independent candidates, on 24 October 1990, the Parliament made an amendment to the election law, introducing a quota of 3%, this meant 330,000 votes from a population of eleven million, while the entire minority population was only 120,000. Hikmet Öksüz, "Representation of the Western Thracian Turkish Minority in the Greek Parliament", *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, Annual 7, 2002,107-152,136.

Rights made the Greek government pay to minority members for the violation of basic human rights⁸⁵ incited a change in the Greek minority policy. These were later supplemented by the decentralization reforms, which changed the previously government appointment Prefect the Prefecture Council, so that in the region of Thrace the prefects had to obtain the minority vote and ensure a fair distribution of EU structural funds.⁸⁶

The involvement of the EU has also brought about several improvements for the remaining Greek Orthodox community in Istanbul, now a very tiny population. In the process of European integration, the 1936 ban on the acquisition of immovable by the Greek vakifs was lifted in 2002. Furthermore, the vakifs resorted to the European Court of Human Rights for some of the seized property which decided in their favour.⁸⁷ In 2006, restitution of previously seized property was recognized. Today, besides other problems concerning the vakifs, the reopening of Halki Seminary and the recognition of the Ecumenical status of the Patriarchate occupy the agenda.

IV. Conclusion

A brief comparison of the history of Greek Orthodox and the Muslim Turkish minorities shows that neither was recognized as equal citizens, contrary to the civic republican understanding of citizenship which the two countries had supposedly adopted. Brubaker's triadic nexus elucidates clearly the fates of both minorities, which were determined by Greek-Turkish relations, who were also reaped against due to the misperception of Article 45 of the Lausanne Treaty as a principle of reciprocity whereas it was just assigning parallel obligations in the implementation of minority rights.

Thus, for Turkey, memories of minority deception in the final decades of the Ottoman Empire and the fear of disintegration, the *Sevres Syndrome*, as coined by Baskin Oran, dominated the understanding of citizenship. In Greece, the Muslim minority was regarded as vestiges of a past oppressor, 'the Ottoman Empire', and a *r'asion d'etre* for a much feared perception of Turkish irredentism, and a burden particularly after the demographic decline of Istanbul's Greek Orthodox. Until the reforms undertaken in the process of EU integration, and the pressure exerted by kin state Turkey in European institutions against the grievances of the minority, the Muslim Turks suffered a number of discriminations and oppression.

The state of both minorities began to improve with the involvement of a fourth factor, in this context the European institutions. Yet this does not mean the resolution of all disputes, problems, restitution for all past wrongs. A number of issues are still in limbo; such as the reluctance to implement the verdict of the ECHR and that of Council of Europe to recognize the Ksanthi Turkish Union, which was previously outlawed sixty years after its foundation merely for bearing the title "Turkish" in its name, denying permission to any association bearing the title 'Turkish', problems related with the Turkish curriculum of minority education and the

⁸⁵ Evangelia Psychogiopoulou, "Strasbourg Court Jurisprudence and Human Rights in Greece: An Overview of Litigation, Implementation and Domestic Reform", pp:1-73, p.57, available online at: <http://www.eliamep.gr/eliamep/files/Greece.pdf>.

⁸⁶ Anagnostou, "Breaking the Cycle...", p.105.

⁸⁷ Akgonul, 376.

controversies concerning the Mufti issue. Furthermore, a novel threat for the Muslim Turkish minority is the fascist political party, the Hrisi Avgi, members of whom organize demonstrations, and acts of violence⁸⁸. As for the remaining tiny Greek Orthodox community of Istanbul today, the opening of the Halki Seminary, the position of the Patriarchate and issues related with the vakıfs occupy the agenda.

Like my colleague Maria Demesticha, I also wish that both nation states, nevertheless, internalize minority rights and that ‘we live in a world where minorities do not feel like minority and majorities do not treat them as such’.⁸⁹

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⁸⁸Cemali Mülazım, was beaten up by members of Hrisi Avgi in Ksanthi on 20th September, 2012,

“İskeçeli Cemali Mülazım Vima’ya Konuştu”, available online at <http://www.azinlikca.net/bati-trakya-haber/iskeceli-cemali-mulazim-vimaya-konustu-9212012.html>, last visited, 21.09.2012.

⁸⁹ Maria Demesticha, **Minorities In the Balkans In The Era of Globalisation: The Case of the Turks in Western Thrace**, unpublished MA thesis, Bogazici University, 2004, cited in her Acknowledgements.

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