

## **NATIONAL REPORT CATEGORY 5**

### **Autochthonous and new minorities in Greece**

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#### **Minorities in Greece**

There are two main types of socio-cultural minorities in Greece; those who belong to the minority that are Greek citizens but who do not share some of the common and significant aspects of Greek life e.g. religion or ethnic origin, and those who are of foreign origin. In the first category are gypsies, both Muslim and Christian Orthodox, Muslims, mainly of Turkish origin but also including Pomaks from Thrace, as well as various Christian and non Christian groups of co-religionists. In the National Statistics 5 per cent of Greeks, i.e. 500,000 people, are registered as non-Greek Orthodox. The total number of gypsies is estimated to be around 100,000, the major part being Greek Orthodox with the exception of those resident in parts of Thrace who are Muslim. Thus an estimate of the maximum number who belong to national minorities can be put around 600,000 people. The second main category are minorities who come from other nation states; this includes refugees, asylum seekers and legal and illegal migrants - this group is discussed first.

#### **Immigrants into Greece**

It is difficult to provide accurate figures on the total number of immigrants in Greece by national origin, since the National Statistical Service registers only those who are in Greece legally.<sup>1</sup> While for many years there have been considerable numbers of illegal migrants from many areas of the world living in Greece, in the past 10 years, particularly with the end of the various communist regimes in Europe, there has been a very large increase. However estimating the numbers in this category is very difficult given that the numbers constantly change as many re-emigrate illegally or come into

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<sup>1</sup> The National Statistical Service provides figures from the 1991 Census that included 32,600 E.U. nationals, 28,812 Asians, 20,872 Americans and 8,726 Africans i.e. a total of 167,276 foreigners. However these figures also include some people of Greek origin with foreign passport who by virtue of their family ties are given permission to live and work in Greece.

Greece seasonally. A rough estimate is that 500,000<sup>2</sup> belong in this category, at least 300,000 being from Albania<sup>3</sup>.

Albanians of Greek origin have organisations representing their interests, particularly in Albania, and increasingly with the development of good political relationships between Greece and Albania there are other organisations that seek to represent the interests of Albanian immigrants in Greece.

Among the other major migrant groups in Greece are Poles, numbering approximately 50,000 people<sup>4</sup>, many of whom came before the fall of the Communist regime. They are relatively well organised, with their own Catholic Church<sup>5</sup> and school. Initially Greece was seen as a jumping off point for further emigration into the USA and Canada; however this is now difficult and many have stayed on permanently, some hoping to obtain legal rights to residence and work permits with the possibility of eventual Greek citizenship.

There are currently estimated to be 35,000, of whom approximately half are in Greece legally as a result of the bilateral agreements in force between the two countries. The majority who are resident in Greece are women who work as housekeepers and nurses or nursing aides, while Philippino men are employed by the Greek shipping industry as seamen and merchant marine officers.

Egyptians constitute a long established emigrant group in Greece; there are estimated to be about 35,000, of whom a certain proportion (5000) have work permits as craftsmen and fishermen, again under bilateral governmental agreements.<sup>6</sup>

Sub-Saharan Africans from various countries are estimated to number 8000<sup>7</sup>; mostly these are registered as students though there appears to have been a rapid increase in their numbers in the past 2-3 years, evident as they have started working as street

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<sup>2</sup> In early 1994 Panteio University estimated that there were 430,000 persons of foreign origin in Greece and 170,000 of Greek origin, however since this time there has been further immigration from countries experiencing civil war and unrest, economic collapse and social conflicts.

<sup>3</sup> Part of the difficulty in deciding on the numbers of Albanian citizens living in Greece comes from the fact that the Albanian Greek minority is allowed to live in Greece and are not always registered as Albanians.

<sup>4</sup> INE (Institute for Labour Research belonging to the General Federation of Trades Unions) estimated in 1994 that there were probably 100,000 Poles in Greece.

<sup>5</sup> The Church was provided by the Greek Catholics but the priest is sent by the Polish Catholic church.

<sup>6</sup> A report by the Network for the Support of Migrants and Refugees reported that 70,000 Egyptians were resident in Greece.

<sup>7</sup> In 1994 the Network for the Support of Migrants and Refugees gave figures of 3000 Nigerians, 1500 Sudanese, 1700 Ethiopians, 300 Eritreans and 4-5000 other Africans.

salesmen. However at the same time many Eritreans who stayed in Greece as asylum seekers for several years waiting to reemigrate or return home have now left Greece. The Indian sub-continent (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India), particularly since the 1970s, was the origin of migrant men who arrived in Greece, originally on work contracts or as seamen off the boats, to work in factories, in the shipyards and in animal husbandry. Some of these married and “disappeared” into the population; however the recent move by the Greek state to allow for the legalisation of illegal immigrants has indicated a considerable number originating from these areas who have been living without papers for many years.

The numbers from the Near and Middle East that have arrived and live in Greece is unknown and varies but includes wealthy business people, asylum seekers and refugees, as well as struggling economic migrants. Again for many Iraqis and Iranians Greece was originally a point of departure for re-emigration to the USA. A particular mention should be made of the Palestinians who during the early 1980s were given special residence rights.<sup>8</sup>

Another small group who settled in Greece in the late 1970s were 200 Vietnam boat people; their numbers have expanded with family reconciliation but there are no studies on this group<sup>9</sup>. A major group amongst the asylum seekers and refugees in Greece are the Kurds, as well as Turks who seek political asylum. Thus in April 1997 over 900 Iraqi Kurds arrived in Greece, many moving on to Germany to join relatives, though a few remain as there is a small core of Kurds who received residence permits in 1980. Amongst other major groups that have arrived in considerable numbers in the 1990s are Rumanians, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Russians, Moldavians, and some people from ex-Yugoslavia though there are no figures available on their numbers.

The location of migrants and refugees varies though it is disproportionately based in the two major urban centres. It is estimated that over 95 per cent of all asylum seekers and refugees live in Athens since the Refugee Agencies, the Refugee reception centre at Lavrion, the Emigration organisations and voluntary organisations are all in the capital. In contrast economic migrants are found all over Greece, in small towns and villages, in

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<sup>8</sup> In 1994 INE reported that there were 600 Palestinians, 2000 Turks, 2500 Kurds from Iraq and 4-500 from Turkey, most being refugees or asylum seekers as well as 13-14,000 Iraqis and 8000 Jordanians/Syrians and Lebanese.

<sup>9</sup> In 1994 the estimate from INE was of 3-500 Vietnamese.

remote islands and at the tops of mountains, though still a large proportion appear to be in the two major metropolitan areas of Athens and Thessaloniki.

It is difficult to provide any estimate of the proportion of men and women emigrating to Greece. It appears that there are more young men emigrating from some countries and regions, such as Albania, the Near and Middle East, and Asia. In contrast Phillipino, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi, Santa Dominican, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Ukrainian and Russian migrants are disproportionately female. African migrants originally consisted of equal proportions of men and women, though more recently there are indications of a rising proportion of young men.

In the countryside the work performed is mainly seasonally agricultural: in a study by the Economics University of Athens it was found that every second paid worker in agriculture in Northern Greece was an illegal migrant worker (Lianos T., Sarris A., Katseli L. 1997) and that the major agricultural areas in Northern Greece depend on them particularly as Greek farmers are ageing and Greek young people are reluctant to undertake agricultural work. The same research showed that 56 per cent of seasonal workers are foreigners, legal or illegal. The legal workers receive 15 per cent lower wages than the Greeks while the illegal workers receive 60 per cent less (30 per cent of this is accounted for by the fact that no social insurance contributions are paid).

Migrants employed in the building trade and in fishing are probably those who have had the most direct effect on unemployment amongst sections of the Greek labour force. In other sectors of employment migrants have tended to take those jobs which are considered either unhealthy, unsafe or socially beneath Greek workers. One major area of employment for women is in domestic and care work for children and old people.

The lack of development of social welfare and care services in the public sector, as well as the entry of Greek women into the labour market in increasing numbers, has led to a demand for domestic and support services. Wages for domestic work can be relatively good by Greek standards; those living-in receive their keep and average wages equivalent to those of an unskilled worker, though without insurance. The fact of being treated as a member of the household may offer the personal protection of a Greek family, opportunities to learn the language and, since most are illegal, a lower probability of being picked up on the streets and sent back to their country. This partly

accounts for the increase in the number of women migrant workers from the ex-communist countries.<sup>10</sup>

Migrants in urban areas tend to reside in poorer areas of the city but also live in apartments in the basements of blocks of flats in all areas, since these are cheaper and less desired by Greek families. In research by the National Polytechnic University of Athens (Polyzos I., Vlastos F., Karathanasi E., Terzopoulou M., Tounda F.) it was found that although there was some tendency to live within a reasonable distance of others of the same national group, at the same time ghettos had not developed since migrants were scattered through all areas of the metropolitan districts. There is a tendency for migrants to live in overcrowded conditions, e.g. several single people sharing the same room. Recent arrivals in metropolitan areas also rent rooms with others in very cheap run down hotels in the poorest areas, or rent from their compatriots.

This recent and relatively rapid growth in the number of people arriving in Greece and looking for work who want to earn or gain money to send home to their families has had significant effects on Greek society. Competition for jobs and living accommodation in some sections of Greek society, a real increase in criminality, and stress in the mass media on the negative aspects of specific groups of foreign migrant workers e.g. Albanians and Romanians, has made many Greeks more reserved and negative towards certain categories and types of foreigners, e.g. young men with an “Albanian” appearance, and racist attitudes are increasingly common.

The role of the Greek State in relation to migrants and asylum seekers is very ambivalent. It has periodically pursued foreign policy objectives by allowing entry to certain categories and nationalities, e.g. Palestinians, Kurds, Turkish dissidents, and Poles prior to 1989. With respect to other categories it has not acted positively to help them, e.g. by conferring refugee status or work permits, but has not expelled them either, e.g. Eritreans<sup>11</sup>. There have long been standing bilateral agreements between Greece and other national governments to grant work permits for specific categories or workers e.g. nurses, fishermen, specified crafts, and sailors. This has allowed some to emigrate to Greece legally, with many then staying on illegally after the termination of their work permit. There have been few attempts to police these “over stayers” and return them to

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<sup>10</sup> Migrants with legal contracts for domestic work with a specific employer often find themselves worse off financially as well under the control of and open to abuses by the employer.

<sup>11</sup> Petronoti (1996) discusses the national policy towards Eritreans.

their countries of origin. In another category fall all those that have arrived since the end of the various Communist regimes in Europe and the corresponding economic hardships that this has conferred on many people in these countries. With respect to these groups, the Greek government had no policy; the authorities varied in their actions from 'looking the other way' and allowing migrants to work, to regularly picking them up to send them back to their own country after being held in local jails. e.g., Albanians, Serbs, Romanians, and Bulgarians.<sup>12</sup>

Discussions began in 1996 for the introduction of a "green card" specifically for foreign workers that would give them the right to work legally with a work permit for six months with the possibility of extending this for a five year period. The registration of migrants began in January 1998. In order to obtain the green card a migrant will be required to prove that he has worked at least 40 days in the six months prior to his application and has been able to keep himself and his family on this amount.

Our interviews with migrants were held before the process of legalisation of migrants was initiated and this influenced the experiences reported. It is estimated that 350,000 migrants have applied to stay legally in Greece. It is likely that those who are able to obtain a green card may begin to report rather differently on their experiences of living in Greece; however inevitably a considerable number will remain as illegal migrants in an even more marginalised situation. The necessity of registering with the police and other bureaucratic procedures is likely to make an unknown proportion of migrants hesitant to apply, especially the most socially marginalised and less educated.

### **National Minority Groups**

The two major groups with easily identifiable problems relating to social exclusion in Greece are gypsies and Muslims. Characteristics that set them apart from the rest of the Greek population also relate to lower levels of literacy and educational attainments, greater poverty, a distinctive life style, and in many cases in inadequate grasp of the Greek language. While the Muslims in Thrace are relatively isolated in rural communities, gypsies have always formed an intrinsic part of the web of Greek society.

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<sup>12</sup> Petronoti (1996) quotes the Ministry of Public Order who between 1.1.91 and 31.8.94 expelled 28,000 foreigners and deported 764,000 people from Greece, mainly Albanians.

Since the Second World War there have been attempts to settle gypsies in villages and special settlements, both in Thrace and throughout Greece. Some have settled while others continue a migratory lifestyle which is declining as gypsies participate less in seasonal agricultural work. The use of motor vehicles has also led to a change in lifestyle allowing more semi-permanent settlements. The conditions under which a majority live are still much poorer than the overwhelming majority of Greek families; these differences have become increasingly apparent since the 1960s when economic growth and the related building boom led to a rapid improvement in the majority of Greek people's home circumstances, e.g. space, standard of housing, and facilities. In relation to social exclusion gypsies are almost certainly in a much worse situation since many still live in tents and thus under very poor living conditions.<sup>13</sup>

During the 1980s there was an effort to try to improve the situation of gypsies by providing access to special education facilities, e.g. through Popular Education courses, and some health facilities and campaigns. Much of the finance for these programmes was from European funding and there were difficulties in finding regular local and central government funding to help in sustaining the programmes. Thus many have been marked by their 'stop-go' character. Many gypsies live without any information as to their rights, or the necessary documents needed to obtain licenses of various kinds. There are distinct differences amongst the various tribes of gypsies; thus the Muslim gypsies in Thrace are different from the Christian gypsies; even more distinctive are the differences between those who have settled and tend to have slightly more education and a higher more regular income - some are indeed wealthy - and those who live on the absolute margins in tents or temporary shacks on the edges of the cities and even in camps where they are under direct police control. The majority of the poorer gypsies are involved in street selling, telling fortunes, and begging, especially women and young children. The settled gypsies are also involved in sales, acting as go-betweens in finding labour, in running small businesses and practising minor crafts.

## **Anna**

### **Biographical data**

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<sup>13</sup> "The Social Exclusion of Gypsies", G. Exarchos 1997 in the periodical "Diavazo", May 1997.

1971 - Anna is born in a working class suburb of Athens into a poor family; her father completed 4<sup>th</sup> grade elementary school and her mother is illiterate. Anna is the 3<sup>rd</sup> child and the first daughter.

1972 - Anna has the first of many operations on her leg, the damage believed to have been caused at the private clinic where her mother went to have Anna.

1974 - Anna has the second operation on her leg. There are serious economic problems in the family as a lot of money is needed for doctors and physiotherapy.

1978- Anna goes to elementary school which she loves and where she is a very good student. At this time she remembers herself playing only with boys and that her friends called her “bouboulina” because she was strong and never frightened.

1978 - The fourth child of the family, a girl, is born.

1983 - Anna completes primary education and goes to high school.

1984 - A priest who was her religion teacher makes a pass at her and her brother beats him up. As a result she changes school and they all move to a neighbourhood where other gypsies live.

1987 - She falls in love with a rich young Libyan man.

1987- She wants to enrol at the Lyceum; her parents approve but her kin, especially her grandparents, reject the idea because she is not old enough to get married. She goes to the Lyceum but after the first two months stops attending regularly and fails the class. With the intervention of her mother the teachers manage to pass her.

1989 – She graduates from Technical High School where she completes an extra year and specialises in Social Welfare.

1989 - The gypsy Association ask her to help with the organisation of the Association’s elections. She does and feels proud that for the first time a great number of gypsies vote.

1989- Starts a nursery school for working mothers on a voluntary basis at the state Popular Education Centre; they give her a salary from the Prefecture of Attica when they see the good work she has accomplished.

1990- She attends a seminar for trainers of gypsies and meets a professor from Patras University who offers her work on a Program for Poverty.

1990- She gets engaged to a young man, a gypsy and close friend of one of her brothers, who had been after her for nine years.

1992 - She gets married and leaves Athens with her husband to go to Patras.



1994- She gets pregnant and has to stay in bed. She returns to Athens and her mother's home. She has a boy.

1994- While in bed she writes a book about gypsy sayings and writes a prologue for another book about gypsies.

1997- She is unemployed, working voluntarily in the local Centre for Gypsy Information. She is involved voluntarily in the Greek NGO Observatory for the Helsinki Agreement.

### **Biographical Data Analysis**

*Anna was born in a private clinic in Athens in 1971. Her family was poor and lived in a rented house in a working class area of Athens with few gypsies. Her mother was illiterate while her father had completed four grades in primary school although he then worked in the traditional work as street salesman. Her mother also helped with this work though her main concern was caring for the children and house. Anna was the third child in the family. Her mother had her first child, a boy, when she was 15, and Anna when she was 21. Anna was the first daughter.*

In the decade of the 70s there were few specific programmes to help gypsies become educated or integrated into Greek society. Most programmes of this nature happened in the 1980s and were primarily focused on reducing child mortality through inoculation campaigns, and reducing illiteracy. The area in which Anna's family settled was still receiving settlers from villages in the rest of Greece with low incomes and poor housing. Thus they would not have stood out as being much poorer than their neighbours. While in many respects Anna's is a traditional gypsy family, it is also more progressive. This is evident in the fact that her father has primary education, quite rare for gypsies of his age. The use of a private clinic, however unsuccessful, also indicates a familiarity with a wider range of choices than most gypsies. At this time hospital beds had also to be paid for but were much cheaper than a private clinic; the more affluent thus tended to use such clinics. Although Anna indicates that they were poor, the fact that they had some money to attend a private clinic suggests they were slightly better off than other gypsies. One hypothesis is that in this family setting Anna will be encouraged to go to school, although the counter hypothesis is that being the third child and female, she will follow a more traditional gypsy life pattern and marry early.

*Anna's mother had problems giving birth to her and this is the reason she went to a private clinic. The difficulties in delivery caused problems for Anna and she was born with a physical handicap. When 18 months old she had the first operation on her leg and the second when she was three years old. The family had to pay for this and financial problems resulted. As a child, Anna tries to collect money to help her family and participates in all the family's difficulties and discussions.*

The hypothesis that Anna's is a less traditional and more nuclear gypsy family is reinforced by the fact that her parents take her to the doctors for operations and obviously feel responsibility for the future health and well being of their children. One hypothesis is that the couple are very strongly attached to one another and communicate well, taking decisions together and thus sharing many common goals and values, and

that this will act as a role model for marriage and family for Anna later in her life, as well as binding her to them. One alternative would have been to let her remain handicapped so that she could be a more effective beggar, not unknown in some sections of the gypsy community. They don't make this choice but spend money on surgery and physiotherapy. This indicates again that the family holds the more general Greek contemporary values of childcare and worrying about a successful future. Handicap will either strengthen Anna's character or marginalise her even further, making her a less desirable wife. The care and support from her family will bind her to them more closely and she will be emotionally dependent on her family.

*Anna remembers as a child her mother taking her in her arms to the physiotherapist. As a child she played mostly with boys and they call her 'Bouboylina' <sup>14</sup> because she was never frightened. She went to the local elementary school, where there were very few gypsies, which she loved and where she was a good student. Anna remembers that she was not tidy with her books but only with her school uniform and that she used to attend school with a tame dove on her shoulder. When she was seven years old another baby girl was born.*

Attending school confirms the hypothesis that Anna will not follow the traditional female gypsy role. The continuing of physiotherapy, and the buying of a school uniform also confirm the hypothesis that the parents take their responsibilities to their children's future seriously. The two things Anna remembers, i.e. playing with boys and going to school with a bird indicate the need to be distinctive and set apart from other girls. She appears to be an ambitious person since she is concerned with her school grades and her uniform and this sets her apart from other gypsy girls. The birth of another girl child is likely to make Anna feel unhappy since she will no longer be the only girl in her family and the focus of attention; this may also explain her need to draw attention to herself. One hypothesis is that Anna will be a strong woman since she has the model of her mother who, despite her illiteracy and poverty, manages to offer the best possible future for her children. Another hypothesis is that given the family's and Anna's orientations and successes, she will continue into secondary education. However a counter hypothesis is that economic problems, and the traditional values of girls marrying and starting work at the ages of 13-14 years, will make her interrupt her education at times, but that her ambition will make her seek to complete her it eventually.

*Anna went to high school. In the second year a teacher who was also a priest made a pass at her the moment he realised from her mother's dress that she was a gypsy. As a result her brother beat him up and Anna changed school because the authorities didn't punish the teacher after what had happened. The family moved to a neighbourhood where a lot of gypsies lived. She attended another high school where she was the only gypsy girl and finished the first three years (compulsory education) with good marks. She had friends amongst non gypsy girls from her school who enjoyed the company of her mother*

During this time Anna has her first direct experience of racism both verbally and physically. This fact will either force her to hide her identity, which is unlikely given that her family move to a neighbourhood with a lot more gypsies, or to identify much

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<sup>14</sup> A heroine of the Greek revolution of 1821.

more strongly with gypsies in general. Nonetheless her experience in both schools with non gypsies and the acceptance of her and her mother will ensure that she does not feel alienated from Greek society as a whole. Anna's close relationship with her mother appears to continue as a strong bond. The fact that her friends admire her mother will help Anna to understand the difference between illiterate people and intelligence and she is likely to be interested in helping people to overcome their illiteracy problems and to deal with racism.

Her friendships with both gypsies and non-gypsies will make it difficult to choose a boyfriend from either side since she does not have the specific characteristics of the group. The hypothesis is that she will continue to go to non-compulsory secondary education although this is the age where gypsy norms believe that girls should marry.

*She wanted to continue into Lyceum but the kin group, especially the grandparents, rejected the idea and she began to get many marriage proposals. She did not want to get married and her nuclear family supported her. She attended the Lyceum but was not a good student and did not attend regularly. During this period she fell in love with a rich young man from Libya. She failed her class but with the intervention of her mother the teachers passed her.*

The hypothesis that Anna is an ambitious person with desires to get more education is confirmed in her attendance at non-compulsory secondary level school. In this she fits in with the more general Greek norms that perceive completion of secondary education as desirable. The hypothesis that is rejected is that Anna will not be a desirable wife because of her handicap; not only has she overcome this **but the pass from the priest** and the marriage proposals indicate that she is an attractive young woman. Her physical appearance plus her strong personality and her education make her desirable to men outside the gypsy community. Another hypothesis is confirmed in that she has a problem in choosing a boy friend; she chooses a foreigner who cannot be identified as either non-gypsy Greek or gypsy. Further reinforcement is given to the idea that they are a progressive nuclear family who stand up against the pressures from the traditional kin group, and that the abilities of Anna's mother to negotiate with the Greek authorities indicate a very targeted and united family. In the gypsy community the wishes of the grandparents are seldom ignored. One hypothesis is that Anna will always try to follow her desires and not necessarily obey the wishes of the kin group by following in the footsteps of her parents. Although Anna falls in love with a Libyan it is possible that she will not marry him but will eventually accept a gypsy so that she does not suffer from ostracism from the gypsy community and generate further problems for her family. According to Anna her initial failure at school related to the emotional pressures and fights in the wider family caused by her decision to continue her education, and this shows that the criticism of her wider kin group does have an effect on her.

*She graduated from Lyceum and specialised in Social Welfare. At the same time she helped in the elections for the gypsy association and was very successful. She started a nursery school for working mothers on a voluntary basis in the local offices of the state Popular Education centre, and managed to receive a salary from the Prefecture of Attica as her work was appreciated. In 1990 she attended a seminar for trainers of gypsies and met a professor from Patras university who offered her a job in a Program for Poverty.*

The hypotheses that are confirmed at this stage are firstly that she does complete her education and that she contributes to the gypsy community, identifying with their problems and needs, especially those of women. Despite having broken the traditions she is accepted and respected by the gypsy community since they ask for her help in the elections even though she is a woman. Her ambitions and abilities become apparent when she creates a new service and comes to the attention of the Prefecture and a university professor. Anna appears to follow the role model of her dynamic mother. She will probably leave her family temporarily and move to Patras in order to promote both her ambitions and serve the gypsy community more effectively by working on a program for them. Additionally, physical relocation to another place of work does not represent a problem for a gypsy who can rely on some support from relatives in other towns. Another hypothesis is that Anna might continue her education as she has made contacts with a university related environment.

*At 19 she got engaged to a young man, a friend of her younger brother whose 5 proposals in 9 years she had previously refused. At 21 they got married and moved to Patras where she worked in a Program for gypsy vaccination. She also started taking some university courses for which she received a scholarship.*

The completion of her secondary education and the beginning of her adult life makes her face the problem of marriage again. The non-consummated love affair with the Libyan ended a long time previously and thus she prefers to relate to a familiar person, another gypsy, whose willingness to support her in her life and choices make her accept the marriage proposal. The hypotheses are confirmed that Anna will prefer to marry a gypsy, who also happens to be a family friend, and that she will go to Patras. Given her ambitions and abilities she will complete her course at the university - she has proven so far that every time she sets herself a goal she manages to achieve it. Her employment will not be permanent since all the programmes last for a limited time period e.g. two years, and do not receive continuous government funding. Thus unless she manages to get into higher education - though even here unemployment is very high - she will have difficulties in finding employment in social welfare as a high school graduate. In any case in Greece the opportunities for full time permanent employment in the social welfare field are limited. Given these employment insecurities and her attachment - as well as that of her husband - to Athens, she will eventually return there.

*At 23 she got pregnant and the doctors told her she had to stay in bed. At this time she wrote a book about gypsy sayings and wrote a prologue in another book about gypsies. At the time of writing she is unemployed working voluntarily in the Centre for Gypsy information.*

By traditional gypsy standards Anna has delayed having children. Thus the hypothesis that she will always follow her own wishes and not that of the gypsy community are confirmed. Her ambition and dynamism are confirmed in the work she undertakes while lying in bed. She uses her gypsy identity and membership both as a way of promoting herself as well as giving knowledge about the gypsy world to the rest of Greece. It is possible that Anna will find temporary jobs again relating to gypsy issues. She will never feel excluded from the labour market or from Greek society since she is able to negotiate in both worlds.

## **Thematic Field Analysis**

The main part of the interview consists of a narration by Anna, starting from the day she was born and dealing with her life in a chronological sequence, including many single stories as examples of specific periods e.g. the time she returned from school with a high mark and lost all the pages from her note book as she waved it to her family, and the time she collected money in her money box for her operation at the age of three. These single stories throughout her narration predominantly illustrate her positive qualities and how she dealt successfully with a particular issue. She also tells single stories about her mother e.g. her mother's intelligence and the fact that a lawyer wanted to hire her for his office and couldn't believe that she was illiterate.

She started her narration with her own birth, emphasising that in the private clinic they caused damage to her, but at the same time contrasting her birth to that of her older brothers who were born at home with a midwife. Thus she is set apart and stigmatised from even before her birth. However being set apart does not come from her identity as a gypsy. She neither explains her life nor events that have happened to her in terms of social exclusion and racism by society, and in turn does not think in terms of group categories.

After discussing her birth she makes a formal argument that they were a poor family and that her disability had economic consequences since it worsened their situation. She mentions her older brother who found a permanent job at the age of 14 so that he could help the family and her. The family and the support they have consistently given to her is one of the themes running through her interview and is seen as explaining her success e.g. finishing school, having the baby, and overcoming her handicap. Throughout her narration special emphasis is placed on the figure of her mother as someone she admires although illiterate and poor. The centrality of the family also emerges in relation to her love for the Libyan since in her single story she describes in detail how she sacrificed her love and feelings for him so he could return to his family who would not accept her because she was poor.

Throughout her text she narrates using arguments to explain her current ideas and position while using evaluation when talking about her mother, her husband and herself. She tends to stress the positive aspects of her character e.g. what a good student she was,

and how successful she was every time she undertook a task. The only time she uses evaluation for a negative description is when she refers to the racist experience she had with the teacher. Thus she is positive throughout nearly all the narration.

When she refers to the gypsies and their social exclusion she turns her speech from narration to long argumentation that explain how the state and the media uses and misuses them and the reasons why some gypsies are trying to escape this social exclusion. The major part of the narration is dedicated to events that relate to her own life events and successes. However this stops and she talks relatively briefly about her marital relationship and the birth of her child.

She does not talk using the language affected by racism i.e. 'us' and 'them', since, as she states, she lives with a foot in both camps i.e. gypsy and non-gypsy. Thus Anna has an egocentric perspective in her interview despite the fact that she knew that the research was focused on minorities.

Although she mentions her parents positively and says that her husband is not a 'typical' gypsy man, she doesn't mention the roles of her parents in the family until she is asked. Again she volunteered nothing about her relationship with her mother-in-law since this was negative, nor with her siblings though she was particularly proud of her sister and identified the successes of both her and her sister with her mother.

### **Case Structure**

At 26 Anna is a dynamic and successful young woman who has already achieved many life goals e.g. marriage, a family, education, work experience, and writing. This sets her apart not only from the majority of gypsy women, but also from most Greek women of the same age who even if they have finished lyceio (secondary education) have rarely managed to have such a range of career and personal initiatives. She is aware of what she has achieved and this is why she presents her story positively and focusses on her positive achievements, though currently she has no paid employment and is having difficulty finding work.

Her initial story that revolves round her problematic birth - both economically and physically - is negative yet is used as an illustration of success, of how she and her family overcame difficulties. From the start Anna does not use discriminating arguments to explain what has happened to her and her family; thus she does not say

that the bad treatment in the clinic was the result of her mother being a gypsy. She refers to a racist incidence as the result of the prejudice of a single specific individual and does not generalise this. She generalises only with reference to the state and some of its bodies e.g. when the representative of the Ministry of Culture refuses to set a date to discuss the organisation of gypsy cultural events. Another reference to the state is when she had to change school because of her troubles with the teacher. In other cases it is likely that the teacher would have been punished. When recruited by the professor for the Poverty program she recognises that it is because she has the characteristic of being a gypsy:

*'Thus the doctors in the clinic had a 'chance' to exploit my mother's ignorance about children's births since she was only 21.'*

*'He was a priest, something else! He was making my life difficult. He had given me a low mark in religion and when I went to the Ministry and they examined my paper they gave me a very high mark. I remember only bad things from me. When he saw my mother and realised I was a gypsy, I never did anything to hide it, I never hide the fact that I'm a gypsy not even cases where it would help me. From that moment he made my life a hell.'*

She then continues talking about her positive qualities of character which appear as a very young child :

*'I discussed everything with my mother since I was three. I talked when I was seven months and at the age of three I was discussing all the problems with my mother. At seven months I could communicate with people. At three I found solutions helping my mother where we could find the money for the rent, my father coming late from work, my brother not doing well at school. We discussed all those things with my mother. I didn't go out in the yard to play. My brothers were playing, I was sitting inside with my mother to try to find solutions to different problems.'*

Anna refers to these characteristics as ones with which she was born, in contrast to her bad leg. Later her successes are clearly her own achievement:

*'The first time in the first class of primary education that we had dictation I got "Excellent" and all the way home I was waving my notebook shouting "Mama I got Excellent". My brothers were not good students. They didn't like school but I adored it.'*

*'In 1989 although I hadn't finished high school yet, the Gypsy Association asked me to help them with their elections. It was the first time in the history of the Association that was established in 1939 that they gathered so many gypsies to vote and the first time that a woman, myself, was elected with such a big difference from the rest. It was incredible. The first time such a thing had happened.'*

Anna's esteem for her family and appreciation for what they have managed to do for her is a central if indirect theme in her narration. Although her mother is the central focus, all the family members are mentioned in her narration in a positive way:

*'My mother acts as a model for me. She is a mother that nobody has understood that she is illiterate. They even proposed to her to work in a lawyers' office as a secretary.'*

*'My parents were very positive about my continuing my education. The kin which is in the gypsy society plays a significant role, their opinion counts a lot, and if it's a grandmother or grandfather it must be respected whatever their decision - my mother and my father were quarrelling with them all the time because my mother was not afraid of where I was going, I never gave her cause to worry.'*

*'My mother without me knowing anything talked to the teachers and they decided to excuse my absences and permit me to pass the class.'*

She clearly identifies with a specific section of the gypsy community; and although she is concerned and wants to improve the lot of the rest of the gypsies she does see them as different from her. Indeed she notes that they see her as set apart not only by her education but by her own family and their progressive ideas.

*'My expectation is for gypsies to be united without internal quarrels and keeping the distinctive cultural characteristics. Also not to be discriminated against, that's what I want. If one day I hear that there is no gypsy child out of school I think it would be the happiest day of my life. Happier than the birth of my child.'*

*'It was difficult to have friends. It was difficult to have gypsy friends because I was more progressive and "snob" if you want, according to them and it was difficult to have non gypsy friends because I was old fashioned for them. I was with one leg in one world and another leg in another. As if we are not all Greeks, we are not living in the same area, we are not sharing the same sky, we are not breathing the same air.'*

*"My husband is..... is not the typical gypsy. This is the reason maybe why I managed to stay together with the man because it would be very difficult for a man to be with me.*



*That is whether gypsy or non-gypsy, I have some demands to make on a man. I know what I offer him and I demand he gives something. No way, I could never be the typical gypsy daughter in law who would get up in the morning, put on her skirt, go to her mother in laws to do all the housework, to be ashamed to eat, to talk, to go out with a friend, man or woman, to be checked by mother in law in everything she does. I could never be like that.'*

Anna emphasises her independence and individuality, something that makes her distinctive from other gypsy women of her age. When she was small she collected money from kin in order to help her family financially with her operation, and when she moved to Patras with her husband to work in the Poverty program she had no money but refused to ask for help.

*'I had relatives there but I didn't want to go and stay there. If I had money and I felt financially comfortable, I would have gone. But I didn't want them to realise that I had no money. I didn't want to give them the chance to be criticised. We stayed in a hotel for two days and then the professor gave me my first salary without my asking for it.'*

Anna is currently unemployed and working voluntarily in the new Gypsy Information centre of the Local Author and at the Greek Observatory for the Helsinki Agreement which is an NGO. The fact that she considers herself as having some education and some work experience, and at the same time being unemployed, makes her wonder what the point is of attempts to try and integrate gypsies through education.

*'This is my complaint. We try and I try myself, to integrate the socially excluded gypsies. Some even talk about assimilation, something which I regret completely because I wouldn't like anyone to tell me how to be dressed, how to behave. Anyway we have to integrate them, and after that? What? Somebody doesn't need to go through the process of education, it's not only to find money. You cannot explain to them 'you have to go to school so that you broaden your horizon to see things in a different perspective.' These people cannot understand that. What they understand is that they see Anna who, for them, is an educated woman, for me I'm not - I didn't study in my opinion - for them I'm a very educated girl. And what am I now? Where do I work? Where is my money? There is a doctor, a dentist who if he hadn't opened his own surgery he would have been unemployed. Where are all the gypsy children who have received some education? They are all lost. OK they were integrated. And after that what happened?'*

For Anna the gypsy identity provides an additional and alternative set of choices; she is not diminished by her gypsy status but on the contrary strengthened.

*'I don't care if I never find a job in the (public) sector. Anyway I'm a gypsy, I could take a suitcase with goods and go out in the street. I will earn my living. I will not die from hunger.'*

It might be argued that the emphasis in her self- presentation on her successes and the positive aspects of her life, as well as her personal positive qualities, is affected by being interviewed by a non gypsy interviewer since she may have been trying to demonstrate that gypsies can be good, successful, and ambitious just like anyone else. However since she makes few general discriminations between gypsies and non-gypsies this may not be the explanation. Another explanation is that she tries to give a self-presentation that shows her in good light to someone who comes from an older age group with a high educational level; since her ambitions still partly revolve around this she may have wished to demonstrate that she could reach the same goals if she was given the opportunity. However at another level she may have been seeking approval from the interviewer since she pointed out that many of her successes were against gypsy norms and traditions.

## **Case Reconstruction**

### **Personal strategies in dealing with minority status**

Anna has used education as her mechanism for dealing with her minority situation, which is associated in wider Greek society with illiteracy and ignorance. She has seen that being intelligent, like her mother, is not enough to get out of poverty and labelling. She and her mother see education as one of the key mechanisms for avoiding discrimination and poverty. Greeks value education and career achievements, and thus one reason for the low status of gypsies is that even where they are financially well off they are still perceived as ignorant and badly educated and thus not socially successful. Anna, over and beyond education, tries in every task she takes on voluntarily and involuntarily to be 'the best'. She clearly sees the education system as a primary mechanism for social mobility.

Another strategy she partially adopts is to differentiate her family and her husband from other 'typical' gypsies. She projects the idea that her family share the same values as

wider Greek society in wishing for individual achievement, having long term plans, taking individual responsibility and developing personal abilities. In other words, her identity is not different from that of the mainstream and she treats her gypsy origins as a resource, e.g. her husband's ability to always earn their living is a source of employment but also a cultural 'extra' - the Caledonian syndrome of choosing to remember and celebrate cultural differences, e.g. her three day traditional wedding and her choice of clothes.

## **Networks**

Given that one of the characteristics of being a gypsy is that most of their lives are led with other gypsies and that relationships with others outside this are rare or left to single type transactions, then one way of overcoming this containment and isolation is through the formation of personal and social networks with wider Greek society. Anna, by being elected as a gypsy representative and acting in a voluntary capacity in many organisations, establishes a relationship between herself and wider society in which she is a power holder. She can negotiate from this strong position which gives her status and approval both from the gypsy and non-gypsy elements.

At the same time she can use her gypsy networks of friends and family while at the same time not losing face in the wider society since she is an educated and unique representative. Her work as a volunteer representative for Greece in an international human rights organisation also represents a new and international network she is creating that can be used in her negotiations with the Greek state if she stays or becomes more politically active.

## **Discrimination**

Anna has experienced racial discrimination from the state and its representatives. The first experience which forced her to change school was when she couldn't convince the state that the teacher-priest had been the cause of a quarrel with her brother. The only time she feels that she cannot fight for herself on even ground is when she has to face the authorities. She sees them as antagonistic and uninterested in solving the problems of gypsies since they want them only as election fodder and as folklore interest. It is

interesting that the racial experience she had she attributes to a specific person and she never characterises groups as being racist. This may be evidence of tolerance in the section of Greek society in which she lives, of her own ability to ‘pass’ as a non gypsy even if she never denies her origins, and the fact that she sees herself as being distinct from the majority of gypsies.

### **The role of the family in relation to minority status**

Anna’s family has been the critical source of support at all stages of her life enabling her to lead a more individualised life, make and have choices, and overcome limitations such as are related to her early physical handicap and poverty. By being progressive, her family had already prepared the ground for Anna to continue her trajectory out of the “typical” gypsy female life pattern. If her family had not supported her, e.g. in her education rather than early marriage, her life would have resembled her mother’s far more closely. Her pride in being a gypsy and wanting and marrying one might be a result of the successful parenting that she experienced and her unwillingness to go outside this model.

### **Other cases**

#### **Personal Strategies in dealing with minority status**

The individuals interviewed were either from the major national minority groups (Muslims and gypsies) or immigrants, all sharing the common characteristic of not belonging to what is defined as the mainstream. In a country which has spent its modern history incorporating different people in order to form a national identity portrayed as overwhelmingly homogeneous (Greek and Orthodox) in its make-up and self conception, these individuals developed personal strategies in order to demonstrate that they were not radically different and could stand up on equal terms with any other Greek citizen from the mainstream, and to deal with their ambivalent status as minorities.

**Maria**, who is very visibly African, discovered that being Orthodox was not an adequate strategy for acceptance into mainstream of Greek society. Thus she comes to distinguish herself in terms of class by identifying with her successful middle class

family in her country of origin and with the fact that she is still registered as a student in a Greek university. However her most interesting and core personal strategy which enables her to also deal with the lower status that her work as a nursing aide and housekeeper might confer upon her, is in her development of her identity as an artist, someone who is beyond class and national identity. The marginalisation Maria experiences by virtue of racism and low status work is turned on its head when she adopts the marginal but socially acceptable role and label of being an ‘artist’, a creative person. This personal strategy can work in so far as she finds others willing to accept her as an artist i.e. fellow artists, and eventual public recognition.

**Roland** from Albania, has to deal with a society that has come to perceive Albanians as inferior and the source of many new problems in Greek society. His name, lack of kinship and personal appearance mitigate against him using the strategy of ‘passing’<sup>15</sup> as a member of the Greek minority of Albania who seem gradually being incorporated into Greek society. Thus his strategy is to carefully distance and distinguish people ‘like himself’ who are respectable and hardworking from the ‘others’, especially the first Albanians who arrived in Greece, some of whom were criminals released from jail. He gives the example of several of his Greek employers who provide him with steady work, since he is a handyman with several skills, and try to help him stay legally in Greece.

**Vladimir**, the Russian, tries hard to not be visibly and vocally different from Greeks; he is careful what he wears and says that he learned Greek rapidly so that “they” (the authorities one presumes) could not identify him as different. To demonstrate the degree of his assimilation he declares that he is even forgetting his Russian. He, like Roland, separates himself from the “bad mafioso” Russians who have given Russians a bad name in Greece.

**Christos**, a gypsy from Athens, identifies himself as being a progressive man who works in other contexts e.g. the Communist Party which accepts everyone on equal terms. He also separates himself from other gypsies who are uneducated and stresses the fact that he was one of the first to attend school. Again he emphasises that his

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<sup>15</sup> A number of Albanians have adopted this strategy, getting baptised as Greek Orthodox, getting Greek wedding sponsors and marrying Greeks.

mentally disabled child has not been abandoned to a gypsy fate, but is being taught in a special school so he can learn skills that will enable him to live in society. He also underlines that he is unique, the only gypsy in his profession, and that few mainstream Greeks recognise that he is one.

Being unrecognisable as a member of a specific minority i.e. “passing”, is thus a strategy for all of them except Maria who is physically very distinctive. However the situation of **Ahmet** and **Ali Mohamet**, Muslims in Thrace, is slightly different since they do not use the same strategy. In great part this is the result of their living in a homogenous minority community that is quite separate from mainstream Greek society, both physically, linguistically and religiously. Their strategy is to have links with Greek employers and to pretend that everything is fine and that there are no strains in their relationships or status with respect to the “mainstream”. They avoid elaborating on those characteristics that might make them different from the main stream. Their strategy in dealing with their minority status is neither one of assimilation, nor of individual personal identities, but a pretence to the interviewer that there are no differences or issues of social exclusion.

## **Networks**

There are increasing numbers of voluntary organisations in Greece working with migrants and on human rights issues. However the lack of organised public services designed to deal with migrant and minority problems and issues<sup>16</sup> has often resulted in migrants and minorities trying to solve their own problems through self organisation. Amongst those interviewed were individuals who tried to create their own networks or be part of existing Greek organisations as a strategy for living in Greek society.

- Maria was an official representative of African students in Greece; is linked to the Orthodox Church, has Greek friends from her studies and now has an informal network of other artists who give each other mutual support in their creative work.
- Roland is relatively isolated, depending on his two brothers with whom he lives for personal companionship, but otherwise keeping away from Albanian organisations.

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<sup>16</sup> There are special public services and organisations for the settlement of people of Greek origin (Pontians, Greek minority from Albania).

Indeed he stays at home rather than walk around the streets for fear of being picked out by the authorities. His other main network is his employers and their networks, who offer protection and financial support.

- Vladimir arrived with no contacts in Greece; he made contact with Greeks from the Pontus, i.e. ex-Soviet citizens who speak both Russian and Greek. In this manner he found work and learned the language and strategies of survival in a new culture. Although there are many Russians in Greece he chose not to join these networks, e.g. the Russian Orthodox Church, or the Russian migrant association, but felt that integration into Greek society through the Greek-Russian network was a better strategy. He also has links with other immigrants which have arisen out of them working and living in the same environments.
- Christos is a member of the parents' associations at both his childrens' schools, as well as the panhellenic gypsy association in his locality. However his essential and critical membership is in the Communist Party which provides him with a political perspective on his situation and encourages and supports a non-traditional, i.e. non-gypsy, life course. His work is also an important source of information; while not a network he uses his relationships with mainstream customers as a way of getting informed and even informing others at the highest possible level. This 'network' of customers has been of particular use to him in dealing with the problem of the socialisation and education of his handicapped child.
- Ahmet and Ali Mohamet make no mention of their membership of any Turkish or Muslim associations. However given that both drink alcohol and have relationships with Greeks, it may be the case that they don't actively belong to political and religious networks. Another explanation may lie in the fact that they would not mention such membership to a Greek, especially taking into account that one interview contact was established through a Greek employer and in the other case the contact person was a Greek with useful connections in the city. Within the more traditional village and kinship context, both the Muslim men relied on family and community as sources of jobs, marriage partners and social relations.

## **Discrimination**

Each individual interviewed comes from a very different background and national or cultural group. Thus their experiences of discrimination are varied. In Maria's case she has been so impressed by the racism that she experienced from Greek people, that she feels the urge to write about it as a major life project. She distances herself from the experience by associating with those who accept her 'as she is' but identifies the major source of discrimination as coming from the authorities in the Greek state. This theme is common to other migrants who see the Greek state as the source of their major problems. Roland is visibly frightened and depressed by his fears of being expelled, which has already happened several times. However he doesn't mention having experienced personal discrimination; at the same time he has very little to do with Greeks socially. He enjoys life to a limited extent and doesn't express fear about Greeks at all; only the "authorities" are perceived as the source of his problems.

Vladimir, who can be considered as being in a similar situation to Roland, avoids physically mixing with mainstream Greek society because he is also frightened of being caught, imprisoned and then sent back. In contrast to Roland his experience of finding work is very different; he has not found employers who will sponsor him and offer some degree of protection. He does not have skills from Russia which are usable in Greece - he was a transport driver, something which he cannot be employed to do in Greece since he is here illegally.

As a child, Christos saw the effects of discrimination when the crime of one gypsy was visited upon the whole group of gypsies in the same locality when the police pulled down their homes (huts). However at the same time he also attributes some of the discrimination to the ignorance and behaviour of most gypsies, including his own father, who have a low educational level. He also describes the linguistic racism that uses the word 'Gyftos' as a way of swearing, of pointing to bad characteristics such as poverty, dirt, ugliness, bad dressing, begging, lack of generosity and thievery. These words are used in many Greek contexts. On the contrary the word 'Tsiganos' i.e. gypsy, is not used as a swear word.

Ahmet and Ali Mohamet report no discrimination, which can be interpreted in a number of ways. Firstly they could have decided not to talk about it to a young woman who was a member of the Greek majority. Secondly, even if they have experienced institutionalised or personal discrimination, they may either be unaware of it, accept it as "normal" or attribute it to differences in culture and religion. Finally their fairly low



educational level and the traditional agricultural life and community existence may not create an environment that permits them to examine such issues critically.

### **The role of the family in relation to minority status**

The family of origin of the individuals interviewed plays a vital role in understanding how they deal with and negotiate Greek society. Maria, who came from a middle class family with strong social and economic bonds, still considers them the source of emotional support and a safe refuge if ultimately she is forced to leave Greece. However she feels she cannot return to her country and her family until she fulfils the ambition of being a published writer, i.e. a 'successful' migrant who can then return home.

Additionally when talking about her siblings who are successful professionals, she identifies with a middle class upwardly mobile family, something which separates her from other migrants whose poverty and poor education puts them in a worse situation. Her ambivalence about returning home originates from the insecurity of economic and political conditions in her home country and her own as yet unconfirmed status as a 'successful' migrant, set against the strong bond she has to her now ageing parents, who she believes were very good ones. Roland both supports and is supported by his brothers emotionally and socially, since they represent his main personal social circle. However he is linked to his family further by the fact that he earns money to send to his parents who can't live on their pension in Albania. Vladimir is virtually isolated from his family; he makes no reference to sending money home and only to the fact that he sends a letter or telephones them occasionally. Even if he helped his family originally, after eight years in Greece it may be that he no longer feels obliged to help. Christos tells of how his family, through his father's commercial success, managed to raise enough money to buy land and build a small apartment block for the family, to which he contributed. However there is considerable ambivalence here. His family of birth and marriage are the source of both shame and trouble but also of social life and family gatherings.

Ahmet and Ali Mohamet have not been able to improve their social and economic situation substantively because of their poor and illiterate families. Neither have inherited significant property from their family of origin. Both men took up residence in their wives' villages and appear to have better relations with their in laws than their own

family of origin. Ahmet's children have more chances of improving their economic situation since both have learned trades which are not under immediate threat of technological advances which will make them obsolete. Ali Mohamet's daughter appears likely to simply reproduce the traditional role of a Muslim, village woman even though her father would have supported her obtaining an education..

## **Conclusions**

In studying this group it appears that the major issue relating to social exclusion arises from the lack of a consistent and enforceable policy towards either national minorities or migrants of all kinds. Thus the Greek state, represented in particular by the police and the Department for Immigration, constitute the point at which discrimination is evident. The exploitation of national minorities by politicians - as folklore, voters, 'threat', or internal 'immigrants' and cheap labour, was understood and referred to by respondents as the cause of their problematic relationship to the society. Greek society more generally has a very ambivalent attitude to both national minorities and to immigrants.

With respect to **national minorities**, there has been significant progress in acknowledging their human and citizenship rights through the provision of better opportunities in education, training, employment, health and cultural development. These will gradually reduce their current situation of social exclusion although this will not be easy given the specific cultural characteristics of the two main minorities i.e. gypsies and Turkish-speaking Muslims. However the rethinking of Greek society in terms of being multi cultural and pluralistic has begun.

The situation of migrants is quite different though equally ambivalent for Greek society. Though many migrants have lived illegally in Greece for years and play a significant and acknowledged role in some sectors of the economy thereby making their acceptance much easier, at the same time there is public fear and recognition that the lack of effective border controls, due to Greece's geographical characteristics, i.e. the very small islands in immediate proximity to Turkey, and the open mountains in all of Northern Greece, makes Greece an 'open vineyard' for further in-migration. Hence the current legalisation process for migrants is unlikely to solve either the exploitation or the lack of a well thought out European and national policy on migration and foreign policy.

The growth of unemployment in some sections of Greek society is leading to some racism and negative attitudes. On the other hand, the use and exploitation of migrants in jobs which Greeks don't want to do but need to have done makes Greeks willing to protect migrants to a considerable extent, even against the authorities. The migrants interviewed tried to individualise their position and differentiate themselves from others falling into the same category in order to deal with their ambivalent status as migrants. This general but personalised strategy depended upon a projection of the individual's positive personal qualities.

In relation to the risk of social exclusion each individual has had to find a way to preserve his own identity and at the same time be accepted and to some extent integrated into Greek society. One strategy is to retain the characteristics that are seen as positive e.g. skills, abilities, character and folklore, while trying to change or hide characteristics which may set them off in a negative way. Being accepted as an individual with local Greeks is an essential task so that they can avoid the negative labelling associated with their original group. Some are more successful in being able to make links with the mainstream - either because of their individual abilities, or by chance e.g. having a good neighbour or employer. Personal sponsorship by Greeks from the mainstream represents an important mechanism of protection and integration, e.g. through employment, adoption or baptism, all of which are traditional mechanisms of social inclusion. For a migrant, marriage to a Greek national is another strategy falling into what can be defined as a traditional mechanism for social integration, which gives rights to residence in Greece. Interviews did not fall into this category because they were chosen not to have this characteristic, but it is one kind of choice that a migrant can make in order to overcome being in a marginal situation. This strategy is available primarily to those with an education, money or exceptional good looks and is not available to those without these characteristics.

It appears that Greek society uses various and changing strategies for dealing with minorities and migrants. The most traditional one consists of dealing with them as a separate 'millet', people living in their own communities who can effectively be ignored by the mainstream. They relate to Greek society in so far as they work for Greeks, but socially they are excluded and indeed exclude themselves. For a long time many foreigners and migrants into Greece were treated in this way. There was considerable tolerance permitted by the very separatedness of the foreign or non-Greek

mainstream group. The other traditional strategy, referred to above, was that of individualising the person and through traditional community and family mechanisms turning the 'stranger' into a 'Greek'. The dimensions of in-migration as well as pressure from international human rights movements, has forced the Greek state to reconsider its policies and practices.

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