

The International
JOURNAL
of
DIVERSITY
in ORGANISATIONS,
COMMUNITIES
& NATIONS

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VOLUME 6

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF DIVERSITY IN ORGANISATIONS, COMMUNITIES AND NATIONS
<http://www.Diversity-Journal.com>

First published in 2006 in Melbourne, Australia by Common Ground Publishing Pty Ltd
www.CommonGroundPublishing.com.

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ISSN: 1447-9532 (print), 1447-9583 (online)
Publisher Site: <http://www.Diversity-Journal.com>

The INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF DIVERSITY IN ORGANISATIONS, COMMUNITIES AND NATIONS is a peer refereed journal. Full papers submitted for publication are refereed by Associate Editors through anonymous referee processes.

Typeset in Common Ground Markup Language using CGCreator multichannel typesetting system
<http://www.CommonGroundSoftware.com>.

Greek Students in the University of West Macedonia Describe Minorities

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Abstract: In the field of modern social history (influenced by Barthes, Foucault, Derrida and White) history is defined as an event in the past which is mediated by written historical records while as a form of knowledge it is special and self-contained discourse (in its own right). Our argument is based on the method of qualitative analysis of the contents (Berelson, 1971) of the lexicographic material. The semiotic methods are based on a system of rules which derives from the debate which is included in texts as a means of communication, underlining the role of the semiotic framework in the shaping of meanings. In this study we hope to combine the semiotic analysis and the content analysis (Glasgow, 1980, Kegan, 1990). Students in West Macedonia University were asked to describe minorities in written text.

Keywords: Minorities, Modern Social History, Semiotic Analysis, Content Analysis, Meanings

Introduction

IN MODERN NATIONAL or/and multinational states particular rules are imposed, which ensure the basic model for the reproduction of society.

These rules, which are established through social elaboration, but also through the historical progress of societies, usually have a limited negotiability, because their main objective is to safeguard the cohesion of society. However the principal aspect for the cohesion of society is also product of social elaboration and historical coincidence and does not necessarily reflect the aspects of societies, but the aspects of those who form politics, who acquire by specific means the possibility of determining it¹. The coexistence of planetary with national-local in the modern reality of globalisation composes a dynamic, dialectic reasoning which results in the politicization of nation - cultural identity and the configuration of counterbalancing tendencies in a world «where we cannot accept a story-our own story, by shouting louder or by muzzling those who sing a song different from ours»².

Groups of people different in nation, land, religion, language from the basic core of those societies are usually determined as minorities. The term is used in order to characterize very different groups and situations and is comprehended differently by those who use it or come in contact with members of such

groups. Different sciences and international organizations have tried to determine the term without reaching to a wide acceptable definition. The clarification of the term is principally effectuated by the political science and the law: in this cognitive field the minority is “a group numerically smaller than the majority of population, in a non dominant position, the members of which have the citizenship of the state where they live and are characterised by different national, cultural, religious and linguistic characteristics and have the tendency to transmit their values to the next generations, they are connected with bonds of solidarity between them and claim legal and real equality”³. The term minority has multiple signifiers, where individual expressions of a social reality are condensed, that often is not pleasant for the receivers. In this dimension the term is used by the social psychology and the sociology in order to indicate the deviating behaviour of particular groups, but also their differentiated needs.

Theoretically

The minority groups can be categorized with various ways depending every time on the adopted criterion. J. Ogbu separated them based on the criterion of will concerning their presence in a specific country, in voluntary and involuntary minorities, in “voluntary at choice and involuntary at imposition”. As stresses

¹ Banks, J. (1997). *Educating Citizens in a Multicultural Society*. New York: Teachers College Press, passim.

² Postman, N. (2002). *The compass of future*. (in Greek) (Trans. K. Metaxa). Athens: Kastaniotis, 139.

³ Tsitselikis, K. (1996). *The international and European regime of protection of linguistic minorities and the Greek legal class* (in Greek). Athens – Komotini: Ant. Sakkoulas, 31-33.



the scholar the volunteer at choice minorities have gone with their will in an other society, in order to search better conditions of work and more freedom. These “minorities” initially face problems because of the cultural differences they meet. On the contrary involuntary at imposition minorities are formed by populations that were installed initially in a state, because they were found in this as slaves after conquest, colonisation or obligatory work. These populations were degraded in inferior posts of helping personnel and were deprived from the opportunity of assimilation in the dominant current of society⁴.

J. Ogbu also supports that voluntary minorities are characterized by pre-existing cultural differences from the dominant group, that is to say differences that had existed before the contact of the two populations with linguistic and religious, while the involuntary at imposition minorities are characterized by cultural differences appeared later, which were presented, the time that the two groups came in contact is characterised by the domination of the numerous group over the other. So, the involuntary minorities tend to develop a confrontational behaviour against majority in order to safeguard their cultural identity, while involuntary are confronted to the dominant cultural group in order to safeguard their identity. This is also the reason why in the second case the bisector line becomes more inflexible and the difficulties appear to be greater, because this process has its roots in the relations of power and competition between the two groups⁵. Despite the fact that the discrimination between these two categories cannot always be clear, in this bipolar form we can classify in the first category of voluntary minorities the immigrant populations, while in the category of involuntary the minority populations, who have a territorial relation with the space where they live, that is to say, they are found installed enough time so that they can be characterized as natives.

In the case of voluntary minorities one could claim that the developed stereotypes and the prejudices have a mainly economic and social base and are directly related to the process of immigration, while in the second case the segregation has more historical and cultural bases, without however overlooking also in this case the economic relations that are formed by the relation between hegemony of dominant and

minority group. Such examples can be located for instance in the countries of Balkans, where the national competition has a great history and intensity, in countries such as the U.S.A, Australia and Canada, which up to a significant point were founded by colonials who pushed or even exterminated the natives. In these countries and in every place where similar controversies appear, the historical memories create a more stable background of oppositions which can be more difficult to overcome. With criterion the participation to wider cultural or other groups we can discern linguistic, religious, or national minorities.

Usually the national ideologies were constituted having as a base the rejection of the “other”, since different has always been a threat for the formation of a united and homogeneous total⁶. The homogeneity was not pursued based on the prevailing ideology in the society, but on the elites that had the responsibility for the formation of politics. Citizenship and nationality constitute two basic components, powerful and lifelong meanings of the individual and social identity. The traditional national model of citizenship is based on the structure of a state as representation of a united national group. The particular form of state self-determination presupposed the establishment of a nation which would realise the diffusion of a common culture, history, language, religion, of ancestors and/or any combination of them. The particular determination requires a kind of subjective homogenisation of the national set, which is often realised via the total of citizens, is often realised via a beneficial-hunting national hyper-structure and this is the reason why psychological terms are mainly summoned⁷. In this field we comprehend the role of education as basic mechanism, which promoted the national, linguistic and cultural uniformity and instituted the depreciation of different⁸.

Immigrants and other Minority Groups in the Greek Area

The expatriated immigrants from the countries of “former real socialism” are usually called resettles, whereas this term does not correspond to the reality. Only a small number of the expatriated who were settled in Greece from these countries had abandoned in the recent past the Greek area and then returned

⁴ For the discrimination in voluntary and involuntary minorities according Ogbu cf. Cummins, J. (1999). *Identities under Negotiation. Education aiming at the Intensification in a Society of Variation*. (in Greek). Athens: Gutenberg, 72. Cf. also Tsoumis, K. (2003). *The Little Other. Minority Groups in the Preschool Education*. (in Greek) Thessalonica: Gutenberg, 53-56.

⁵ Cummins, J. (1999). *ibid.*, 73.

⁶ Tsoumis, K. (2001). *Historical Past and its importance for the Inter-cultural Education. Thoughts based on the Greek reality*. Records of International Conference “Inter-cultural Education Groups with Cultural Particularities. (in Greek). Thessalonica, 51.

⁷ Kyridis, A. (2005). The mutations of variation from class in the cultural variation: the two aspects of the same coin. In A. Kyridis & A. Andreou (eds). *Aspects of Variation* (in Greek). Athens: Gutenberg, 103-142. Hobsbawm, E. (1983). Introduction: Inventing Traditions. In E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (Eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-14. Hobsbawm, E. (1990). *Nations and nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁸ Banks, J. (2001). *Cultural diversity and education, foundations, curriculum and teaching*. London: Allli & Bacon, London, 160.

to it. The largest part of this population was never settled in Greece, but lived out of Greece as members of Greek communities or minorities and came in the country after the events that were triggered by M. Gorbatsov's Perestroika. The most important groups that belong in this category are the Pontiac expatriated from the former Soviet Union and the Greeks⁹ from the Northern Ipirus. The reasons that led them to immigrate in Greece are numerous, and the most important of all the desire to live in the homeland of their ancestors, since they had never been able to adjust in the country where they were settled and so they always constituted a minority. The second basic reason for immigrating was the pursuit of a better luck in Greece, since the Pontiacs and Greeks in general of the former U.S.S.R. expected help from relatives and friends in a society ready to support them¹⁰. However the lack of preparation and organisation of the Greek society for an important current of immigration in combination with the economic recession in the country the period of their arrival had as a result exactly what they deprecated. Despite the professional training and their scientific specialisation the expatriated immigrants were forced to deal with jobs that had no relation with their skills and knowledge. They were installed in downgraded residences, they receive low wages and they often face the negative attitude of the social environment which resulted in marginalisation, as it is usually the case with the economic immigrants. A serious difficulty for their integration is also the important difference between social, political regimes¹¹.

The second group of expatriated immigrants is consisted of the Greeks of the Northern Ipirus. The long-lasting oppression from a "peculiar communistic regime", as was that of Emver Hotza, the deprivation of basic rights in combination with the Greeks' "ardent desire" to get integrated with Greece, the need for work, for personal and family safety, but also for better education led a big part of the Greek minority of Albany to Greece. The case of the Greeks of the Northern Ipirus is special, because the Albanian state was the last state that was founded in the Balkans. Apart from their clear historical-cultural references

the Greeks of Albany are self-determined as Greeks, which created serious problems with the Albanian state, because they did not deny their Greek national conscience and preserved their mores and customs which were common with the ones of the South Ipirus¹². The reasons of their immigration from Albany to Greece can be recapitulated: in their negative opinion for the Albanian administration¹³, in their desire to live in their mother - homeland but mainly in the lack of work opportunities and in the lack of safety in the particular country¹⁴. When the inhabitants of Northern Ipirus arrived to Greece they were initially treated just like the expatriated Pontiacs. They had to work as low paid workers, to live together with a lot of people in downgraded residences, to be faced as foreigners in Greece and to be often taken as Albanians. Among the important advantages of the inhabitants of Northern Ipirus was the knowledge of the Greek language and the sympathy with which they were treated by the Greek population. The inhabitants of Northern Ipirus had in comparison with the rest of the expatriated more opportunities to find a job and a permanent employment.

A third group of "minority" is the Muslims from Thrace, who are nowadays installed in enough regions of the country. Some families from the minority chose during the 20th century the internal immigration. A basic reason for internal immigration for the new generations is the disengagement from the minority environment, which affiliate young people in a conflicting environment¹⁵. Most Muslims are found installed in downgraded regions, they are occupied with jobs of a limited social prestige and they even face problems of survival. The professions they usually practise are those of the industrial worker, builder, vendor, cleaner, redcap, whereas their occupation with permanent jobs is more rare¹⁶. It is clear that the Muslims from Thrace face several problems during their living out of Thrace, because they are often regarded as "foreigners in their own country" and they rarely have opportunities of professional progress¹⁷. Their outlets for a better quality of life are practically limited and they end up conducting the life they would also conduct in Thrace.

⁹ Fotiadis, K. (1999). *The Greeks in the countries of former U.S.S.R. (History-education)*. (in Greek). Thessalonica: Hyrodotos, 11- 39.

¹⁰ Kasimati, K. (1998). Pontiac inhabitants in Greece and social exclusion. In K. Kasimati (ed.). *Social Exclusion. The Greek experience* (in Greek), Athens: Gutenberg, 285.

¹¹ Vakalios, Th. (1998). Cultural character and engaging representations and the tuition of Greek language. In M. Damanaki (edit.). *The education of the resettles and the foreign students in Greece. Inter-cultural Approach* (in Greek), Athens: Gutenberg, 145 & 157-160.

¹² Kallivrettakis, L. (1995). *The Greek community of Albania from the viewpoint of historical geography and demography*. In Th. Veremis, Th. Kouloubis & Il. Nikolakopoulos (eds). *The Hellenism of Albania*. (in Greek), Athens: I. Sideris, 41-44.

¹³ Vakalopoulos, K. (1992). *History of Northern Hellenism: Ipirus*. (in Greek), Thessalonica: Kyriakidis, 892-902.

¹⁴ Veikou, M. (2002). The fulfilling structure of the national identity: Greek - Albanian immigrants and their daily experience in the neighbourhood of a Greek city. In Ath. Marvakis, D. Parsanoglou & M. Pavlou (eds). *Immigrants in Greece, Company of Political Reflection* (in Greek), Athens: Nikos Poulantzas - Greek Letters, 305-327.

¹⁵ Academy of Athens. (1995). *The Growth of Thrace. Challenges and Prospects* (in Greek). Athens: Publications of the Centre of Research of the Greek Society, 49-50.

¹⁶ Mitilis, A. (1998). *Minorities in school*. (in Greek). Athens: Odysseas, 107.

¹⁷ Petraki, G. (1997). In Xanthi and in Lavrion. Class dimensions of minority in Greece (in Greek). *Modern Subjects*. 63, 84.

So, they are confined in neighbourhoods and social contacts with their co - religionists. In Athens and in Thessalonica there are “Cultural Associations of Muslims”, where Muslims can appeal to and seek for outlets of amusement with their co - religionists, while the majority of their residences have satellite dishes in order to watch Turkish channels.

In general according to estimations the legal and illegal foreign immigrants are more than 500.000 individuals: the majority of them are Albanians and then come Polish, Egyptians, Philippians, Georgians, Kurds, and other national groups. Immigrants or refugees constitute cheap workers for several jobs that are usually avoided by the Greek workers. Most of them are organised in rudimentary or even better organised communities, while Polish, Philippians¹⁸ and Egyptians have schools, but also a better internal organisation. The majority of the foreign immigrants have come in Greece looking for a job and several of them in order to get far away from fields of conflicts. In many cases the illegal immigrants become victims of callous exploitation, and they live permanently with the fear of charge, arrest and deportation. I. Psimmenos, who carried out a research for the Albanian illegal immigrants recorded pictures and situations¹⁹: the living of Albanian immigrants in parks, stations of metro and downgraded hotels, the inhuman treatment by the persons they come in contact, with the fear of deportation, the colonialist type relations with the employers, their malnutrition. In this social reality the cases of criminality in Greece but also those committed by foreign immigrants have been increased. The foreign immigrants as a total have been considered as culpable for the criminal action of a part of their compatriots, which create insecurity to the citizens, and this has as a result the increase of a climate of xenophobia in which also contributes the Mass Media and the strategies of guidance by institutors of the hegemonic group and the elite. Furthermore, the fact that the foreigners are preferred in certain jobs because of the low cost of work became the reason for the appearance of social oppositions with a part of the population which is bedevilled by unemployment. The programs of immigrant legalisation that took place the last years have partly contributed in the regularisation of the legal position of immigrants with positive results for their existence in the Greek space. However prob-

lems and frictions are still located, which are related with their confrontation in the job market, to the difficulties in the Greek bureaucracy and to the perpetuation of prejudice against them. It is indicating that according to the published elements of the second program of legalisation of immigrants a big part of them, applied for a white or they did not apply for a green card obviously, because they did not accomplish to assemble the legal requirements²⁰. The immigrants have, or they create families with which they are installed somewhere in Greece, they work permanently or seasonally, participate in enterprises²¹, they send their children in the Greek school and try to get incorporated with the Greek society. Their economic position after years of stay in the Greek space depends on various factors: the opportunities that have been given to them, their degree of activation and their labour choices. So we comprehend that it is not about a common image of foreign workers in the country, but it is about numerous different groups regarding a linguistic, national, religious variation, but also for intra-groups in minorities concerning sex, age, order.

A different case is this of “rom”²² since during the last years the voluntary network consisted of people who wish to offer help and support increases. It is well-known that the “gipsies” have historically been the “outcast” of the “civilized” world. The particular cultural values, the choice of nomadic life, their non adaptation to the social conventionalities of each place and each season are only a few from the reasons why this demographic group has suffered repeated prosecutions in many of countries all over the world²³. It is not accidental that in Greece the effort for systematic naturalization of the “roma” began in 1978 and it is not still completed. The fact that the “rom society” obeys to its own rules has influenced the relations with local societies, which accept them, only when they are useful, but they are considered to be responsible for the conditions of life and the criminality. The Greek roma live in many prefectures of the country with almost the same conditions of life. Most of them are occupied with the peddler trade and few of them with traditional professions, such as basket – weavers, blacksmiths, whereas they work as seasonal workers and musicians. There are some basic differences between those who live in tents and the romes, who are in-

¹⁸ Canete, L. (2001). *The Philippians community in Greece in the end of 20th century*. In Ath. Marvakis, D. Parsanoglo & M. Pavlou (eds.). *The Immigrants in Greece. Company of Politician* (in Greek). Athens: Reflection “Nikos Poulantzas” - Greek Letters, 277-304.

¹⁹ Psimmenos, I. (1995). *Immigration from the Balkans. Social Exclusion in Athens* (in Greek), Athens: Papazisis, 115-193.

²⁰ Kavounidi, J. (2002). *Characteristics of Immigrants: The Greek program of legalisation of 1998*, (in Greek). Athens & Thessalonica: National Institute of Work - Sakkoulas, 51-52, 81- 83.

²¹ Lamprianidis, L. & Lympiraki, A. (2001). *Albanian immigrants in Thessalonica. Ways of prosperity and blunders of the public image* (in Greek). Thessalonica: Paratiritis, 230-239.

²² Rom, Roma, Gipsies, Acigganoi, Sintides (GREECE), Tsingian, Tsiggan (TURKEY, BULGARIA, SERBIA, ROMANIA, HUNGARY), Tsiggari (ITALY), Tsigginer (GERMANY) Gkitanos (SPAIN, PORTUGAL) Aigypteranen (Holland), Gipsy (U.K, USA), Autit (ALBANY), Bohemians (FRANCE).

²³ Dousas, D. (1997). *Rom and racial discriminations*. Athens: G. Dardanos, 62-73.

stalled in permanent residences²⁴, since the romas are usually found in better condition of hygiene and economical position and are more accepted than those who live in tents, without however being really accepted by the societies where they live. On the other hand those who live in tents are scapegoats and the Greek state faces them as a particular and at the same time as a homogeneous national group, which is differentiated through time, without however connecting their “choices” with the social evolution in Greek society.

Relations between Minority and Dominant Cultural Group

The most important social elements that create difficulties in the minority groups are connected with the function of the process of their assimilation. The discriminations in the form of the downgrade of the culture of the minority have a direct effect in the prestige of the language and in the place that it has in the education and in the social life. However the most decisive factor for the prestige of a language is the position that it possesses in a particular society²⁵, which also determines the identity of a group. The depreciation of the language is determinant for the self-image of its carriers and it can cause serious problems.

The attitude of majority against minority can influence seriously the self-image of the minority. The policy of discriminations makes minority to be depreciated and to depreciate also its language²⁶. The more negative is the picture that the members of the group have for their language, the more the interaction with the official language is limited. In addition, the low socio-economical status that represents those who are «different» is directly connected with the immigration, the refugees, but also with the presence of minority in the territory of a specific state. The “foreigners” who have been invited or they have immigrated for economical reasons or those who live in a specific region are meant to practise specific jobs that the majority is unwilling to do and the wages that are offered are low.

In this point we emphasize on the attribute of citizen that is nothing more than the individual rights, which determine the position of an individual in the

production system and his capability of self-determination and of participation to the “economical cause”. K. Tsoukalas aptly remarked that the lack of basic individual rights does not allow the growth of individual autonomy, the participation to the social competition and the existence of equality of opportunities, according to a version of the reasonable trilemma of liberalism²⁷.

As it is recorded in researches²⁸ “if we accept that the distribution of population in professional occupations reflects its class stratification, today 38,3% of Greeks are occupied with professions, which traditionally are related to the superior and the middle social class, whereas the 57,4% of the same population is occupied with related to the inferior social class. On the other hand, the distribution of foreigners population is reverse: we can claim that only the 9% is occupied with professions that are related to the superior and middle social class, whereas the 86,3% of foreigners belong to the inferior social classes”. It is noticed today after 24 years a reduction of about 13 per cent concerning the percentage of population that is occupied with professions of low social prestige. The followings emerge from the research: a) the distribution of Greek citizens and foreigners who live in Greece when comes to the educational standards is almost identical and as for the acquisition of typical qualifications of education and professional specialisation there is not an important statistical difference, b) however the distribution, concerning the professional occupation going from the well paid jobs to wage jobs and generally to those that constitute the inferior social class is favourable for the Greek citizens. It is also important the attitude of minority against the majority, which is influenced by the position that the majority reserves for minority in the social life, but also by other cultural and historical factors²⁹.

Methodology and Sample of the Research

The sample of the research is texts of 138 students of Greek universities. Pedagogic departments of Florina. In order to examine the parameters of the texts we chose to use the method of the Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Content, which according

²⁴ Markou, G. (1998). *Minorities in school, a n interactive relation*. Athens, 47.

²⁵ Fthenakis, W. & Sonner, A. u. a., (1985). *B ilingual culturelle endwecklung des quindes*. Munhen, 229-232.

²⁶ This phenomenon has been recorded in the Finlands of Sweden from Skutnab-Kangas and Toukoomaa, in the Turks of Germany and in other populations. Cf. Fthenakis W./Sonner Ad. u.a., *ibid*, 233-235. Similar phenomenon we observed in installed Greek Roma as well as in foreigner parents duration interventions of inter-cultural education. In the first case the Greek Roma avoided to speak their language in front of foreigners and the children denied their cultural identity.

²⁷ Tsoukalas, K. (1999). *The power as population and as nation*. (in Greek), Athens: Themelion.

²⁸ Kyridis, A. (2005). The mutations of variation from class in the cultural variation: the two aspects of the same coin. In A. Kyridis & A. Andreou (eds). *Aspects of Variation (in Greek)*. Athens: Gutenberg, 103-142.

²⁹ Cf. Fthenakis W./Sonner Ad. u.a., *ibid*, 247-248.

to Berelson³⁰, is appropriate for the study of opinions or perceptions of an individual or of a group of individuals³¹.

The subject was set³² as a unit of analysis which has been categorized in four basic categories and these have been specialised in subcategories with the help of the data that aroused. The fact that the

sample is limited does not allow the generalisation and the presumption of conclusions, however we consider that it can constitute a base for discussion and for further research in order to determine the existence of likely problems in the function of the specific institution and the discussion about the ways of its improvement.

Table 1: Distribution of Frequencies Accordingly to Sex

SEX	FREQUENCY (n)	PERCENTAGE (%)
BOY	46	33,3
GIRL	92	66,7
TOTAL	138	100

Table 2: Percentage Frequency Distribution of Thematic Categories

Thematic categories	N	%
1. Determination of minority	588	56,1
11. Definition of minority	321	30,6
12. Kinds of minority	267	25,6
111. Religious minority	60	5,7
112. Linguistic minority	133	12,7
113. Racial minority	66	6,3
2. Minority groups	195	18,6
21. Voluntary minorities	105	10
22. Involuntary minorities	90	8,6
3. Minority policy	266	25,4
31. Policy of acceptance/integration/assimilation	99	9,4
32. Πολιτική της απόρριψης	167	15,9
Total	1049	100

1st Thematic Category: Determination of Minority

Definition of Minority

Students estimate that “in every country, in every city, in every village” minority is present and they define it as “a small number of people, with different perceptions, habits and way of life than the majority

of individuals of the region, the city or the country”. Then they define minority more specifically as the “small group of people that distinguish from the general group, because of the different opinions, ideas or visions that they might have”. More specifically they talk about characteristics, such as “religion”, “nationality”, which seem to be dissociated from the majority of a state and “they define the national identity”. These characteristics are considered by the

³⁰ Berelson, B. (1971²). *Content analysis in Communication Research*. New York: The Free Press. De Sola Pool I. (1959) *Trends in Content analysis*. Urbana University of Illinois Press.

³¹ Indicatively for the attitudes of students in the First degree and Secondary Education in our previous studies cf. Kyridis, A., Andreou, A., Tsakiridou, E., Vamvakidou, I. & Drossos, V. (Submitted). Nationalism and Xenophobia in Greek Primary Schools. *Research Papers in Education*. Andreou, A., Kyridis, A., Vamvakidou, I. Drossos, V. & Kassidou, S. (Submitted). Greek Primary School Students write on the national anniversary of March 25th. School history and national ideology. *Journal of Educational Research*. Kyridis, A., Dinas, K., Drossos, V., Kasidou, S. & Galani, A. (2001). When the internationalism trips on the neighbour-enemy. Sociological and linguistic approaches of the speaking of students of Lyceum for the Turks and instructive extensions. *Proceedings of the 3rd Congress Pedagogic in Greece and Educational Research*, Nauplium. (Under publication). Kyridis, A., Dinas, K., Drossos, V. & Galani, A. (2001). The students of the 5th class of Primary School talk about the Turks. Sociological and linguistic approaches and instructive extensions. *Proceedings of Congress: School Knowledge and tuition in the first degree education*. University of Ioannina May 2001.

³² Holsti, O. R. (1969). *Content analysis for the Social Science and the humanities*.

students as “common for all the people of minority” and they seem to conceive mono-culturally minorities in a bipolar form of opposition against majority. They also describe minority as a “social differentiation”, as «the voice of a group, which however is not heard”. They are “the few! » those “that are opposite or different than the majority!”. It is “any cultural group that has different characteristics from the majority of population”. A percentage of the subjects of the research comprehend that the element of domination and the one of possibility of enjoyment of social goods has an important role. The students also think that the factors that differentiate the minority from the majority “are more numerical” and are not based “on certain special characteristics concerning the environment where minority exists”. They point out that the term is related to “immigration”, that is to say they mean “the people that leave their homeland in order to live in another country”, “the population that is found in a foreign country” or «that was removed willingly” or “obligatorily. Students at this point focus on the diversity between minority and majority populations and they wrongly associate the minority presence with immigration.

Obviously students confuse the term minority, because they believe that it can be used for people “with different attitudes of life”, for people with body or intellectual problems such as for persons with special needs, for individuals with some particularities, such as training or with some genetic problem. At the same time, they are referred to “dope-addicts”, to “patients with AIDS”, to “homosexuals” that they usually face “individual or adaptation problems» and are “marginalized”, because of “their differences with the others”. Thus is designated the etymological approach of the term and the position of social psychology in relation to what is minority. The students write that even “a healthy person in a hospital is minority”.

Kinds of Minority

In any definition for minorities we locate apart from the quantitative/numerical factor, that differentiates the one group from the other, the involvement of the domination of majority against minority. This means that in this relation exists the numerically more powerful side, which poses the rules of the game for historical, cultural, economical reasons and then expects from the other side to adjust to them³³. Students define minority as “a group of people, who differ nationally, socially, culturally and educationally from a bigger group of persons with common characteristics”. In order to characterize “a demographic group

as minority”, this should “essentially live and act in a foreign country”. Students write that every minority group “is constituted by a different type of cultural elements”, meaning “different culture, language, mores, customs and perceptions”, because it has “different religion, different way of thinking, mores and customs”. Students correctly think that in Greece the minorities «are usually linguistic or religious”, but those who differ linguistically, nationally, culturally or religiously recommend depending on the criteria that they adopt “a divergence from the average, from the dominant nationally, linguistically or culturally group and seem to disturb the existing social balances that have been shaped”³⁴. So as a first desirable solution appears the policy of assimilation.

Religious Minority

When comes to the religious minorities in Greece, a country that has as official doctrine the Orthodox Christian religion, it is obvious that “whoever believes in Catholicism” or is “Muslim” or “evangelic” is minority. The students correctly estimate that “minority is a group of people with different religious convictions, from the people of their new area or country “. The students seem to understand the elements that characterize a group as religious minority.

Linguistic Minority

Students consider also minority, «those with different nationality”, although it is recorded that “this is not absolute”. At the same time, it is reported that “every minority group has its own culture, religion and tradition “, but” differs linguistically and culturally “by carrying” its own mores, customs, traditions that also preserves in the country of reception “. The different language they use “does not mean that their national conscience cannot be the same with the one of the country and be different in the oral communication”. In this point it is clear that the subjects of the research do not confuse the use of a language different from the official with different national conscience. They understand that the language transmits cultural traditions and patterns of behaviour: “they differ in the linguistic communication”.

Racial Minority

The subjects of the research define minority as “a demographic group that lives and works in a country of different religion or nationality” and “differs from the locals either linguistically, or in the national conscience”. They believe that this is the case also with the races of people, since “most countries are

³³ Tsitselikis, K. (1996). *The international and European regime of protection of linguistic rights of minorities and the Greek legal order*. Athens-Komotini: Ant. Sakkoulas, 52-54.

³⁴ Tsaousis, D. (1997). *Our Society*. Athens: Gutenberg, 175.

inhabited by the white race, but there is always a minority of the black or yellow race". This seems to be the comparative and not absolute definition of "racial minority", without emphasizing on the race of minorities, since it is about a wider discrimination in the mankind. In conclusion students seem to consider as minority "every small demographic group with different characteristics from the dominant population", that mostly concerns national, religious and cultural characteristics. We observe that the religious and national differentiations are presented as identical meanings, without determining the complex, the abstract or even the particular element of the terms³⁵. Researches of sociology, social history and social psychology on school students, university students and teachers have proved that the national stereotypes of foreign groups are more powerful than the stereotypes of the different character of the locals, and these results in the creation of a national prejudice within educational domain³⁶.

Minority Groups

Voluntary Minorities

In Greece as in other countries "exist minorities, of different type either on issues of religion or race" or even "minority of people who have immigrated for various reasons and lives in a region of another country". We name minority "the part of a population that is differentiated from the majority that live in a place, either because it was installed in this place later or because of its way of life". The students in this point seem to adopt the methodological discrimination that Ogbu posed in voluntary at choice and involuntary at imposition minorities.

Involuntary Minorities

The students estimate that «minority is not only the people who immigrate in another country», but minority can "also be constituted by citizens in their own country, like the Scotch in England, the Kurds in Turkey". Most students mention Roma as a "striking example of this social situation". At the same time, they mention "America", a country "where a lot of minorities live" marginalized, in "the "ghettos" of black people, which are considered to be disreputable neighbourhoods". The students comprehend better the categorisation that J. Ogbu introduced for the minority groups in voluntary and involuntary minorities. However the example of

Roma and America (Sic) as a country of minorities is not the most apposite.

Minority Policy

In order to have a group characterized as minority «its recognition by the state of reception is an essential presupposition". In order to have its existence and action recognised by the official state it must: "fulfil some presuppositions", based on international or inter-country conditions". In this point they seem to approach the dimension of minority policy, that is to say the "effort of a state to recognize officially, to incorporate or to assimilate a national or religious minority, which lives within its boundary".

Policy of Acceptance of/Integration of/Assimilation

Then they attempt to define the minority policy since it is a matter of the state of reception "to contribute in order to make the minority feel equivalent to the citizens of the country" and "to claim rights from it", recognized by the United Nations". At the same time they think that it is oxymoron to talk about a minority group", when it is really about "a demographic and cultural combination of countries with which every country borders.

This is the reason, why "many times people rival for a minority" which often "becomes object of base". Students seem to be fully aware of the fact that ensuring equal rights for the minorities is a matter of political will of the authorities of the country where they live even if they are recognised by the United Nations. It is obvious that in this point the subjects of the research are focused on the adjacent demographic groups, which are removed during war, displacement, economic immigration. Based on what they register an effort to balance between humanism and policy of correctness is noticed, as at least it is expressed by the proper authorities in the Greek space. They show insufficient knowledge or even confusion concerning the terms, and that leads them to contradictions.

Students write that "efforts are made occasionally aiming at the smooth integration of minorities", but "unfortunately sometimes unsuccessfully". However they estimate that nowadays "minorities have almost been regularly integrated in the society of place" and "they enjoy various privileges". Characteristically they report that "they maintain their own schools, where teachers from their country can even teach". It is a fact that there are cases of minorities "which

³⁵ Cf. Vamvakidou, I. & Tsakiridou, E. (2005) Patriarchal Correspondence, Circular General/20 August 1902/No registry 3986 quantitative analysis and socio-semiotic reading of historical testimony. *Congress of Historical Company, Imposition of power and international right*. Aristotelio University of Thessalonica. (the reference here is wrong)

³⁶ Esses, V. M., Haddock, G. & Zanna, M.P. (1993). Values, stereotypes, and emotions as determinants of intergroup attitudes. In D. M. Mackie and D.L. Hamilton Eds. *Affect, Cognition and stereotyping*. N. York: Academic Press.

regard their new place of stay as their real homeland and they fight by any means for it”, whereas other times “they do not accomplish to get integrated in the total when there is no racism” and “the different mentality of these persons makes their adjustment to a new place of stay difficult”. The subjects of research have probably comprehended the efforts made for the integration of minorities in the social life, but also the existing difficulties for the real realisation of this objective. Despite the fact that they run to generalisations, the individuals of the sample seem to have a basic image on what it is minority education and on the effect of racism in the process of social integration of minorities. They are only allusively referred to the development of an inter - cultural identity and to the respect of the country of stay³⁷. There is also awareness of the difficulties created by cultural differences in the adjustment of minorities³⁸.

Nevertheless they consider that a minority can “be organised with its own rules”, while the minority members develop “new codes of communication and of behaviour” and “become receivers of all foreign elements they meet”. At the same time, “they also try to preserve their cultural identity”, “by preserving the cultural, the linguistic and the religious characteristics”, but “also by being influenced by the culture of majority”.

Policy of Rejection

Minority “expresses a small part of population, which because of social, financial, political and cultural conditions has been forced to remain neglected” and usually with a retrogressive course”, “without many rights” and “voice in order to claim”. These groups are “usually socially excluded”, live “marginalized”, “isolated”, “meaning that they live in specific areas of the country”, constituting “a relatively” confined “group”, that is to say “they act as if they lived in a ghetto” and that is why “many times they become victims of racism” and “of unequal treatment”. The particular terms of living and their confinement in specific areas reinforce their social exclusion. In this

point the subjects of the research show that they comprehend that the minorities are rejected and absolutely marginalized, but they deal with the epiphenomenon without really examining the reasons, although they point out that the reasons are economic, social, political, cultural. However they seem to consider this phenomenon normal and legal and so they tend to accept it.

Then they regard critically the minority policy, since minorities “are not faced in every area with the same way”, most of the times “are not treated equally”, “occupying the socially inferior places” and “disdained posts”, while at the same time “they are excluded from the social, economical and cultural profits”. The country of reception is responsible for this», and more specifically “the political power of the country”, which does not always allow to them to be respectable, with result the maltreatment of these groups which aims of course to their alteration”. For this reason, the word minority is many times «synonym to racism”, “to social particularity” and “to social differences”. The “xenophobia” and “the ethnocentrism that characterize our country” have contributed in facing minorities as “something ugly”, as something “that simply we do not want to be assimilated by our society, as something that we wish to stay as far as possible from us.” The students recognize the ethnocentric characteristics of greek society and they understand the way with which is faced the presence of minorities is faced based on experience of the 20th century³⁹.

Remarks

The perception of “the other as a carrier of a particular attribute, as a member of a specific social category can be named as categorical perception of the other”⁴⁰. However the transformation of social categories to social groups, constituted by people being different the one from the other in important points includes the danger of oversimplification the result of which is the appearance of stereotypes⁴¹ and prejudices⁴². The stereotypes are the result of a way of

³⁷ Fthenakis, W. et al (1985), *ibid*, 250-252.

³⁸ Bloch, M. & Swadener, B. (1993). Relationships between home, community and school: Multicultural considerations and research issues in early childhood. In C. Grant (ed.) *Research & Multicultural Education. From Margins to mainstream*. London Washington D.C.: The Falmer Press, 165-183

³⁹ For indicative elements concerning the way of confrontation of minority phenomenon in the greek space cf. Divani, L. (1995). *Greece and Minorities. The system of minority protection of the society of Nations*. (in Greek), Athens: Nefeli. Iraklidis, A.I. (2003). *Greece and the danger deriving from East*. (in Greek), Athens: Polis. Tsioumis, K (2003). *History and Education of Minority Groups in Greece*. Thessalonica: A.U.T. - Zygos, *passim*.

⁴⁰ Gkotovos, Ath. (1996). *Racism. Social, Psychological and pedagogical aspects of an ideology and a practice*. Athens: Ministry of Education and Religion.-G.G.L.E., 7-9.

⁴¹ Kalantzi-Azizi, An., Zoniou-Sideri, Ath. and Vlachou, An. (1996). *Stereotypes and Prejudices. Creation and confrontation*. Athens: Ministry of Education and Religion - G.G.L.E., 20-23. Gkotovos, Ath. (1996). *ibid*, 17-19. Cambell, T. (1996). “Stereotypes and perception of differences between groups. In: St. Papastamou (epjm). *Group relations*. Athens: Odysseus, 55-63.

⁴² Tsiakalos, G. (2000). *An antiracist education guide*. (in Greek). Thessalonica: Ellinika Grammata, 124-125, 145-146.

thinking, which by having as a starting point a classification of the individual in a specific social category is led to unproved generalisations about the characteristics of the person. Prejudice⁴³ describes the attitude of people towards the “collective other”, that is to say his positive or negative disposal towards him and it is connected with the social identity of the other. Prejudice activates negative or positive sentiments, which can influence the tendencies for his corresponding confrontation. The policy of discriminations, either legislated or informal usually affects the populations that differ from the majority are connected with the racism. This term has been widely used for the racial discriminations, but according to Tsakalos⁴⁴ “it is related with the depreciation and the aggressive behaviour toward groups of persons at infringement of rules applied to our societies and arises from the perception of majority that it defends its individual and social rights⁴⁶”.

The students of the sample, who have taken courses of inter-cultural education in the Pedagogic Departments of Florina of P.D.M. and have listened proposals about “minorities” seem to be able to sketch out when a group can be characterized as minority. The main characteristics of their description are mainly those that can be realised objectively just

like the different cultural characteristics and the not dominant position of the particular populations (which means the limited participation to the enjoyment the social and political goods). What one can notice based on the analysis of content of their opinions is confusion concerning the question of citizenship of the specific individuals. It is also obvious that the students sometimes accept the deontology and the humanitarian principles taught in relative courses and sometimes legalise discriminations using the criterion of the national interest.

Concerning the comprehension of the terms, the level appears satisfactory with regard to the relation meaning/ word, but also to the degree of semblance with reality. The way of understanding the other⁴⁷ determines the communication structure of a society since it is the identity that defines the dialectic of the one and of multiple. However identity as a term is ideologically confined in the dominant biologically and continuous through time race, whereas the term variation includes the inversion, the right of existence of the other that theoretically limits the possibilities of me⁴⁸. However future teachers do not appear to avoid the use of stereotypes in their effort to define minorities, which could have influence on their action concerning such populations.

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⁴³ For a short but comprehensive negotiation of term “Prejudice” cf. Hogg, M. & Vaughan, Gr. (1998). *Social Psychology*. London: Prentice Hall Europe, 37-38. Analytically about prejudice cf. Milner, D. “The Racial Prejudice”. In: St. Papastamou (edit). *ibid.*, 64-112.

⁴⁴ Tsiakalos, G. (2000). *Ibid*, 78

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