7 POLITICAL PRACTICES AND MULTICULTURALISM: THE CASE OF SALONICA

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'Multiculturalism' was a relatively unknown term in Greece until the mid 1980s. During the 1980s the discourse of multiculturalism was gradually introduced in Greece by the use of the term 'multicultural' in fashion magazines, in discussions about interior decoration and in articles examining new trends in music published in magazines and daily journals. In a second stage, 'multiculturalism' appeared in a number of studies conducted by sociologists, teachers and researchers within the education field. It was only in the 1990s that the word came into wider use as an analytical or descriptive term in an attempt to understand the current changes in Greek society.[1]

'Multiculturalism' (in Greek, *polypolitismikotita*) is not a native Greek concept. It has been introduced into Greece by scholars, journalists, NGO activists and policy-makers who are aware of the multicultural societies of North America, Australia and western Europe. Although it is clear that even in these societies 'there are as many multiculturalisms as there are political arenas for collective action' (Werbner 1997: 264), a number of commonly accepted features are related to the various discourses of multiculturalism both as an analytical category and a political project. To start with, multiculturalism is strongly related with the flow of ideas, images, people, finance and commodities embodied in the globalisation process of late modernity. Second, multiculturalism recognises the coexistence of different cultures in the same society (Kahn 1995). Third, societies which embrace multiculturalism as a political project actively encourage, through specific social, cultural and educational policies, the reproduction of the various cultures (Rex 1995).

Multiculturalism acquired a significant importance in public discussions among intellectuals and policy-makers in Salonica in the late 1990s. Various factors contributed to this phenomenon:

- the arrival of a great number of immigrants, mainly from Albania but also from other Balkan and eastern European countries, created new social and educational policy issues

- the undertaking of the 1997 Cultural Capital of Europe (C.C.E.) by Salonica encouraged discussions regarding multiculturalism in the past and the present of the city
- the emergence of a discourse about minorities inside Greece, supported by groups of Greek citizens who describe themselves as culturally or nationally different, contributed to the development of questions regarding the issue of multiculturalism.[2]

This chapter examines the development of the discourse of multiculturalism in

Salonica during the last decade and the challenges it raised for Greek society and the Greek state. I will focus my analysis on two main factors that contributed to the development within Salonica of the discourse of multiculturalism: the 1997 CCE activities and the national policies towards illegal migration. I do not disregard the importance of the minorities discourse in the process of identity politics in Greece and in the Greek diaspora. However, I consider the influence of the minorities discourse to operate at the local level of specific regions (Thrace and some areas of western Greek Macedonia), in parts of the Greek diaspora (in Canada and in Australia) and in the think-tank centres working on foreign policy issues in Athens. In that sense, it is mainly an external factor to the development of the local discourse of multiculturalism in Salonica. Furthermore, I consider its influence to be rather limited compared with the grandiose 1997 CCE activities and the phenomenon of 100,000 immigrants currently living in the city.

Arguments and hypotheses put forward regarding the discourse of multiculturalism in Salonica can, to a certain degree, be generalised for the whole of Greece. Nevertheless, such a task is beyond the limits of the present analysis.[3] It should be noted that this study focuses mainly on the discourse of multiculturalism as perceived and presented by intellectuals, politicians, journalists and policy-makers. The various versions of multiculturalism among intellectuals and policy makers are interpreted within the framework of a still dominant, and still hegemonic in Greece, value on national homogeneity. Focusing the analysis at this level does not limit our understanding of the subject. As already explained, the introduction of the discourse of multiculturalism is strongly related to discussions among intellectuals and policy makers.

A central aspect of the 1997 CCE agenda was to expose and celebrate 'the multicultural character of Salonica'. In order to succeed in this endeavour, the 1997 CCE promoted a specific perception of the city's past and present as multicultural. Emphasis was given to the coexistence of the 'different' populations of the city during the Byzantine and the Ottoman periods. It is beyond any doubt that cultural plurality, in its broad definition,[4] has been a dominant characteristic of the population of Salonica throughout the previous centuries. However, I will argue that the coexistence of what some intellectuals today consider as culturally different populations does not, in itself, permit us to posit a multicultural domain in

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Salonica's past. Multiculturalism is only a historically recent and quite specific form of organising cultural plurality.

An examination of the process of multiculturalising the city's past also has two important purposes. First, it highlights the essentialism inherent in the dominant version of multiculturalism. Such a version of multiculturalism basically accepts the common-sense view that 'each culture has a unique, fixed essence that can be grasped independently of context or intercultural relations and which makes an ethnic group act the way it does' (Modood 1997: 10). I suggest that embracing this understanding of multiculturalism contains the danger of an institutionalisation of cultures in the public spheres, a freezing of cultural differences and a reifying of cultural 'communities' (Caglar 1997: 179). Second, an examination of the multiculturalising of Salonica's past contributes to an understanding of the various ways the pre-existing forms of political, social and cultural pluralities, such as the Byzantine and Ottoman eras in this case, shape particular representations of present-day multiculturalisms (Samad 1997: 241).

The case of illegal and legal immigrants who settled *en masse* in the city, as in the rest of Greece, during the last decade, is investigated in order to emphasise that the form cultural pluralism takes is connected to issues of political order (Grillo 1998). The mere fact that 100,000 immigrants settled in the city during the last decade does not in itself make Salonica 'multicultural', contrary to what is often claimed by the media. Nevertheless, I will argue that the presence of immigrants raises political questions regarding the basis on which the Greek society and the Greek state are

constituted.

CULTURAL PLURALISM IN SALONICA'S PAST

The Byzantine and the Ottoman administrations in the Balkans stimulated various people and cultures that were previously separated and produced an amalgamation of populations out of which new social groups emerged. The present population of Salonica is mainly the result of population movements and population exchanges that occurred in the context of the Ottoman Empire, during and soon after its dissolution. In the Ottoman state the administration of non Muslim populations was organised according to the *Millet* system. Non Muslims were divided into religious communities comprising Orthodox Christians, Armenian Christians, Jews and, after 1849, Orthodox Christians followers of the Bulgarian Exarchate. Each *Millet* had its own organisation under its religious leaders and bodies. The *Millet* was defined by religious affiliation, but its autonomous administration was concerned with secular matters, such as the allocation and collection of taxes, education, and intracommunal legal matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance (Petrovich 1980: 385). Until 1849, all the Orthodox Christians inside the Ottoman Empire, irrespective of cultural background, constituted the Orthodox *Millet*.

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In the context of the *Millet* system, as in other pre-modern states, culture rarely assumed any political significance at all (Gellner 1983: 75). Grillo calls such societies patrimonial and points out that although 'cultural and ethnic difference was not absent from these societies, it was never crucial to their operation' (Grillo 1998: 3). In the context of the Ottoman state, religion was the main determinant of identity (Kitromilides 1990: 25; Kofos 1990: 104). Religion may be considered as a cultural idiom itself but obviously it was not the only one available.[5] The Ottoman *Millet* system, which Kymlicka calls 'the most developed model of non-liberal religious tolerance' (1995: 158), produced in Salonica some very interesting, extreme and (with respect to our modern standards) peculiar phenomena. The amalgamation of linguistic, socio-economic, kinship, political and religious domains led to unique forms of syncretism. The existence of Greek speaking Muslims and the existence of a Ladino-speaking (Judeo-Spanish) Muslim community (former Jews who converted to Islam in 1666, the *Donmedes*) are among the most striking cases. We should also note the existence of populations which cut across the *Millet* divisions, such as the Muslim Gypsies and the Orthodox Christian Gypsies.

It is obvious that in this context any classification of the city's populations according to a single cultural criterion, as in the case of modern multicultural societies, is an arbitrary one. Defining Ottoman Salonica as a multicultural society implies projecting our own modern standards onto a society that was organised on a different basis. The multiculturalisation of Salonica's past fails to take into account the various forms that cultural plurality took in history.

The situation in Ottoman Salonica changed under the influence of the various nationalist movements in the early nineteenth century. Modern nationalism requires the existence of exclusive and unique identities (Gellner 1983). The Greek nation, as other eastern European nations, mainly developed on the basis of what Anthony D. Smith calls 'ethnic nationalisms' (1986). In this model of national ideology, cultures are nationalised and culture becomes a criterion of national identification and mobilisation. However, models of cultural nationalism failed in their attempt to divide the population of Salonica and Macedonia in general into well-defined nations according to their criteria. This became evident when politicians, policy makers and state officials attempted to use sociocultural, linguistic and historical criteria in order to divide the population into distinctive national groups. They failed

to understand that at the local level, the decision to embrace a nationality during the late nineteenth/early twentieth century was a political choice very often irrelevant to the sociocultural identity and linguistic practices of those who took this decision.[6] The inability of policy makers and state officials to comprehend the national identification process led to the problematic practice of imposing cultural nationalisms over local populations. As a result, they forced the silence and the assimilation of those

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local identities that could not comply with the national homogenising process (Agelopoulos, 1997a; Cowan, 1997; Karakasidou, 1997).

CULTURAL PLURALISM IN THE 1990s

The end of the Balkan Wars and the First World War established the present day northern frontiers of Greece. As a part of the Greek state territory, Greek Macedonia experienced all the significant social, demographic and political changes that took place in the region. Until 1922, when the compulsory exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey took place, the society of Salonica was composed of a variety of populations: Jews, local Greeks (including Vlachs), Turks, small numbers of other Muslim populations, Bulgarians and Gypsies. Macedonian-speaking populations were not settled in the city, since they lived exclusively in rural areas.[7] The departure of the Muslim (mainly Turkish) population in 1922 was followed by the arrival of almost 200,000 Greek Orthodox Christian refugees of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds[8] from Turkey. As a result of all these population movements, Salonica ended up having a variety of people living inside the city or in the nearby villages. The Jewish community of Salonica, which comprised at least one-third of the city's total population before 1922, was deported to concentration camps during the Second World War. Only a small number of Jews returned to the city in the late 1940s. Parts of the small Bulgarian community of the city were assimilated into the wider population and some left for Bulgaria.

   These movements did not influence the ideological basis of the Greek state. The Greek state remains a national state following the ethnic model of nation-states established in the nineteenth century. The range of strategies adopted by some state institutions towards any kind of 'difference' remained the same, although their intensity varied according to international and domestic political developments. They include assimilation, incorporation, the imposition of silence, yet also a narrow recognition of 'difference' in response to obligations imposed by international treaties (as in the case of the Muslims in Thrace). It is widely accepted that the large majority of the population of Greek Macedonia has been assimilated into the Greek national ideology (Cowan 1997; Danforth 1995).

   The above mentioned policies aimed at homogenising diverse local population within the Greek state. However, since the mid 1980s Greek society has experienced a new situation: the sudden arrival of a great number of immigrants as well as political and economic refugees. The first immigrant communities were established in Athens during the early 1980s from workers coming from Egypt, Pakistan and some Asian countries (Iosifides 1997). Their numbers were limited and the first significant migration movement was the 'repatriation' of Pontic Greeks from Russia, Georgia, Kazakstan, Armenia and other former USSR Republics (Voutira 1991).[9]

Most of them settled in Athens and Salonica. The post-1989 political changes in eastern Europe escalated the migration process and within a few years about 700,000 immigrants had settled in Greece.[10]

Enormous differences exist between illegal and legal immigrants. Until 1997 the only legal immigrants were the Pontic Greeks from the former USSR. They have been acknowledged as Greek nationals; consequently, they have been able to follow a repatriation process, in which they receive a certain degree of state support and are given Greek citizenship. Thus Pontic Greeks are usually legally employed and receive salaries equivalent to those of local Greeks. On the other hand, most illegal immigrants work in dirty manual jobs and are poorly paid (King, Iosifides and Myrivilli 1998: 169 - 170). According to Lianos, the wage of an illegal migrant worker is 60 per cent of that of a native worker (1998: 541). This situation has created a number of social and educational policy problems. Until recently, illegal immigrants were not able to register their children in schools and were not eligible for any kind of social protection provided by state institutions. It became obvious that to prevent serious social problems a new legal context was necessary (Karydis 1996; Sitaropoulos 1992). Two ministerial decrees were issued in 1997 and 1998 (359/1997 and 358/1998) and a new migration law has been announced as under preparation for discussion in parliament (February 2000).

The two ministerial decrees established specific registration procedures for all those immigrants living in Greece but, as a result of this process, new problems have arisen. The registration mechanisms proved to be rather slow and bureaucratic. According to the latest available data of the Greek Organisation for the Employment of Human Resources (*OAED*) reported in June 1999, about 370,000 immigrants applied for a Green Card (legalisation certificate) and 225,691 of them submitted all the necessary documents. By the end of June 1999 about 40,000 applications were reviewed by the Greek state authorities. Out of the 40,000 reviewed applications a total number of 35,000 Green Cards were issued.

Many immigrants were not able to register because they had been convicted for crimes in Greece.[11] In addition, the registration process does not guarantee legalisation for those who have been registered. This is due to the various preconditions required for the completion of the legalisation process. Immigrants are required to have 40 day's worth of social security stamps[12] in order to complete the legalisation process. Since most employers prefer to have immigrants as a workforce precisely in order to avoid the registration process -and thus payment of taxes and social security contributions- immigrants face a dilemma. In order to acquire a permanent legal working permit they need to be legally employed but most employers do not offer them jobs on that basis. This is what King, Iosifides and Myrivilli call 'the complex relationship between their illegal status, their exploitation on the labour market and their social and spatial marginalization' (King, Iosifides and Myrivilli 1998: 171). In addition, the ministerial decrees have

not taken into account the fact that immigration is still continuing. In other words, the deadlines for submitting the documents necessary for legalisation have expired; immigrants who currently enter the country are thus, by definition, considered illegal. In early February 2000, the Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs announced that the new immigration law will provide a permanent, continuous operating framework for the legalisation of immigrants. Since the new law, at the time of writing, had not yet been discussed in parliament, it is not possible to predict future developments.

Meanwhile, the institutional context established to regulate the life and work of immigrants who arrived in Greece in the 1990s failed to build up an infrastructure sensitive to immigrants' social and linguistic needs. This fact became evident in the everyday life of immigrants: they have found that bureaucratic papers and documents used in hospitals, schools, police stations, municipal authorities and employment offices are rarely translated into languages other than Greek. They have found very few reception classrooms in schools that offer courses in the native languages of the immigrant children. They have encountered an absence of political representation of immigrant communities, the non-existence of Greek language courses for immigrants[13] and of specialised interpreters in courts. However, the main problem has been the legalisation process itself, since it creates an illegal status for the large number of immigrants who cannot comply with its bureaucratic procedures.

One can understand why a number of immigrant community representatives argue that the two ministerial decrees created more problems than they solved. The immigrants' problems, as well as the problems of the Greek society, obviously arise from the political management of immigration (the legalisation context) and not from the 'cultural difference' of immigrants as such. Immigrants themselves are well aware of this situation. This is evident in the fact that, as the legalisation process has continued, some immigrant communities have become divided. Legal immigrants have established their own close and well-organised communities and have differentiated themselves from the rest who failed to receive the Green Card.

Immigrant communities continue to grow. In the case of Salonica, the vast majority of the immigrants come from Albania (King, Iosifides and Myrivilli 1998). This is due to the geographical proximity of Greek Macedonia and Albania. The rest of the recently settled immigrant population of the city is mainly composed by Pontic Greeks from the former USSR. Lianos estimates that about 8 per cent of Salonica's population was composed of illegal and legal immigrants in 1993 (1998: 538). The dramatic rise in migration from Albania after the 1997 political violence has certainly increased this number. Given that the population of the wider area of Salonica is about 1 million people,[14] it seems likely that about 100,000 immigrants currently live in the city and in the nearby villages.

The presence of immigrants is more obvious in specific areas of the city. A number of immigrants from the former USSR have rented houses in the old

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centre of the city. Albanian workers and their families live in some of the working-class neighbourhoods to the east of the city suburbs, but they socialise in the streets and coffee houses around the main railway station. In 1998 the first exclusively Albanian coffee house opened up at Anageniseos street close to the main railway station. Over the past decade, though, a number of racist reactions to the immigrants began to appear. These reactions most often took the form of what is today called in Greece *Albanophobia*, that is, collectively accusing the immigrants for the increase of criminality in the country.[15] Such attitudes contributed to the appearance of police round-up operations (called *skoupa*, 'sweeps'), where special police units take into detention all immigrants walking in the streets in order to check their documents. Most racist reactions are encouraged by a few populist politicians, mainly active at the local authorities level, and by extreme right-wing groups.

Given this situation, the introduction of the term 'multiculturalism' in the political rhetoric of Greek politicians lacks any meaning and value for the immigrants. Even though the Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Simitis, in his speech on the celebration of the 1998 Year Against Racism, stated that 'Greece is becoming a multicultural society', multiculturalism has not acquired the status of a political project for the reconstruction of the Greek state institutions. Recently arrived immigrants have no alternative apart from becoming members of an expanding group of low paid illegal workers.

MULTICULTURAL REFERENCES AND THE 1997 CULTURAL CAPITAL OF EUROPE

The case of illegal immigrants coming to Greece testifies to the inability of state institutions to cope with an issue that requires that the ideological context of the ethnic model of the nation state be overcome. In Salonica the pursuit of a multicultural society was further encouraged by the activities of the 1997 CCE. The CCE is an institution sponsored by the EU and lasting one year, which takes place in a different EU member state every year. Although there is no fixed agenda of activities, each organising city is expected to promote art events related to the city's history and culture as well as activities bringing together artists and scholars from various European and non European countries. The EU provides the necessary funds to construct or reconstruct the infrastructure needed for art events.

The case of the 1997 CCE clearly demonstrates the important role that intellectuals play in the construction of culture. In order to understand the contribution of the intellectual community it is important to know the context that led the intellectuals of Salonica to produce and consume the new image of multicultural Salonica (Kahn 1995: 148). The intellectual community of the city is well aware of the cultural plurality of Salonica's past. Indeed, one of the most important characteristics of literature produced

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 by writers and poets of Salonica has been its acknowledgement of the multilingual, culturally mixed society of the city (Abatzopoulou 1997; Mackridge 1997; Yannakakis 1997). This has become a popular way to differentiate Salonica from Athens and to signify the "character" of the city. Not only in the literature but also in music and other arts, in architectural reconstructions of parts of the old city as well as in everyday discourses such as the local cuisine and night life entertainment, this unique 'character' of the city is often promoted (Moutsou 1994).

The stress on the cultural plurality of the city's past was part of the 1997 CCE agenda since its very beginnings. The 1997 CCE administration clearly stated that 'the promotion of the multicultural character of the city, which in its long history has been a meeting place for different nations, is among the basic targets of the 1997 CCE programme' (CCE 1997: 1). A great number of cultural events stressed the image of Salonica as a Mediterranean port, as one of the oldest and most important cities in the southern Balkans. Such activities included traditional dance performances with groups coming from Syria, Lebanon, southern Italy, France and Spain, literature presentations from Balkan writers, folk music concerts by ensembles from the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. However, this emphasis on what was called a 'multicultural programme' of art events coexisted with more Hellenic-oriented cultural activities such as the exhibition about Alexander the Great and the exhibition of ancient Greek technology. Indeed, as the Greek Minister of Culture Evangelos Venizelos argued, the 1997 CCE agenda attempted to find a compromise between two distinctively opposite views: the Hellenic and the 'cosmopolitan' (multicultural) one (Venizelos, 1998).

The CCE administration, composed of local intellectuals and bureaucrats, decided that a focus on Byzantium[16] was the ideal compromise between the two views for the 1997 CCE agenda. Hence, as Ioannou argues, the focus on Byzantine Orthodoxy was nothing more than an attempt to find a middle ground (Ioannou, 1999). Both the opening ceremony of the 1997 CCE and the most important exhibition of the 1997 CCE (The Mount Athos Treasures exhibition) clearly referred to the Byzantine heritage of Salonica. However, even this presentation of Byzantium was in its own way Greek-centred, since it emphasised Greek Orthodoxy as the most

important element of the Byzantine era. Such developments attracted a number of critiques.[17]

The 1997 CCE model of multiculturalism was therefore dominated by a stress on Byzantine Greek Orthodoxy and an exclusion of Islam, other Christianities and syncretisms and, to a lesser degree, Judaism. Thus, the attempt to capitalise on the cultural plurality of Salonica's past did not include a balanced presentation of the populations which created this cultural plurality in the city's history. In addition, there was very little emphasis in the 1997 CCE activities on the cultural plurality of Salonica in the present day. To my knowledge, among the few 1997 CCE activities related to the cultural plurality of the city in the 1990s were the organising of an academic conference, the publication of a pamphlet titled *The ABC Against Racism*, the

activities of the Red Thread programme[18] and the coordination of an international festival of folk music and 'traditional' food. The participation of the immigrant communities of present-day Salonica was evident only in the case of the international festival where they performed 'folk dances' and cooked their 'traditional' food. Overall, the 1997 CCE promoted representations of multiculturalism failed to fully incorporate the non-Greek elements who created the cultural plurality of the city, both in the past and in the present.

WHICH MULTICULTURALISM FOR SALONICA?

Multiculturalism has become an ambiguous term in present day social sciences as well as in many political contexts. According to Modood: 'it is only through specific case studies that we can analyse how integration and multiculturalism are worked in different ways in different local and national settings' (1997: 5). This paper has attempted to present the development of the discourse of multiculturalism in Salonica during the 1990s, and the challenges it posed for the Greek state and society. As already explained, two parallel processes were taking place in the city. On the one hand, the arrival of about 100,000 immigrants and the lack of their integration spoke to the need for the establishment of multicultural institutions or, at least, institutions able to cope with the particular social and linguistic needs of its increasingly heterogeneous populations. At the same time, the 1997 CCE capitalised almost exclusively on pre-existing forms of cultural plurality in the city's past, ignoring to a great degree this newer heterogeneity, in order to present its own version of multiculturalism. In addition to forces in the local context that have turned Salonica into a multicultural site, there are also, of course, wider influences contributing to the development of multiculturalism, such as the minorities discourse. However, what is striking here is the way the two local factors that served to establish the multicultural domain in the city were perceived as unconnected in most of the local discussions. This was basically a consequence of the refusal of the 1997 CCE organisers to make the exploration of the serious social and educational issues of the present immigrant communities part of the 1997 C.C.E. agenda. The failure to bring Salonica's past and present cultural plurality into a single framework meant that a crucial opportunity to envisage and explore, critically, the future of the city's cultural plurality was lost.

It should also be noted that the dominant discourses of multiculturalism coexist in Salonica with a less visible but developing critical approach to the present day cultural heterogeneity of the city. During the last few years, young artists and writers of Salonica have been exploring issues related with the presence of 'others' in the city. This can be seen, for example, in the work of a number of young photographers,

who participated at the 'Photo Syngiria' exhibitions in the 1990s. In such approaches, the presence of

'others' is located at the centre of everyday Salonica life, the suncretisms and social dynamics between groups being clearly manifested. An alternative critical exploration of identities may develop out of these attempts, although this is not yet clear. However, the work of most of these young local artists and writers had a limited presence in the 1997 CCE projects. Reportedly, this had to do with the agenda set by the 1997 CCE administration, which focused on well established, internationally recognised artists and their work.[19]

The multiculturalisation of the city's past, as encouraged by the 1997 CCE agenda, followed a folkloric approach to cultures. This is not a unique case, since similar phenomena have occurred in multicultural contexts in other parts of the world (Castles, Kalentzis and Cope 1990; Goldberg 1994). In such cases, cultures become commodities and there is a form of cultural difference 'to suit every taste' (Kahn 1995: 125). The consumption of cultural commodities allows us to construct our perceptions of selfhood, our relationships to the world and to 'others' (Caglar 1997: 182). This is why the presence of illegal immigrants was minimised in the 1997 CCE version of multiculturalism; illegal immigrants would create unpleasant perceptions of who we, the citizens of Salonica, are.

In order to become commodities, cultures have to be homogenised. Homogenisation is necessary in order to present distinctive cultures in dance performances, in 'traditional' food festivals and folk music concerts. Such an essentialist representation of culture is contradictory to an understanding of culture as an open ended, changing, creative and unbounded process involving relations between insiders and outsiders. In its own way, the homogenisation of cultures has significant consequences on individuals. Individuals are by definition perceived as members of cultural collectivities (Delafenetre 1997). Culture is not perceived as an outcome of social relations but as a definite and essential form of demarcation of the self (Strathern 1995: 154 - 156). Individuals are free to choose 'their culture' but this limits their ability to construct a polycentric, multiple and unsituated self beyond cultural stereotypes (Turner 199: 419).

It is not an exaggeration to argue that versions of multiculturalism, such as the one promoted by the 1997 CCE, may contribute to imposing limits on individual freedom. Under these conditions dynamic and unbounded idioms of identification created in everyday discourses will obviously continue to exist. However, in order to become established in the 'official scene', similar idioms of identification will have to abandon their open ended, continuously changing qualities. The freedom to construct identities without the limitations of stereotypes will therefore be located beyond and outside the society of Salonica. Individuals and groups following such a process will practically face the denial of their existence at the public scene. Is it possible to recognise the existence of 'others' without applying an essentialist definition of identity? This is the crucial political question that needs to be addressed.[20]

The introduction of multiculturalism in Salonica is currently posing a deeply political challenge for its present inhabitants and for Greek society and the state. The discourse of multiculturalism is now spreading and developing beyond the discussions of intellectuals. It is presenting challenges to, and highlights dilemmas of, the present situation. There are new calls for the establishment of multiculturalism as

a political project. The Greek nation-state is attempting to respond to these challenges within a context that cannot be disregarded: the wider European context in which various western European versions of multiculturalism are operating. In order to respond to all these pressures the ethnic model of the Greek nation-state will have to be revised, but it is still not clear what will succeed this model. The case of Salonica illustrates that already some versions of multiculturalism are available in Greece. There exists a Western cosmopolitan model; there is also a more native version of multiculturalism dominated by the ideology of Byzantine Greek Orthodoxy and, finally, there are fragments of native critical explorations that have not yet been materialised into an alternative proposal. Whatever the future developments, it is clear that in order to establish a democratic polity, Greek society also needs to take into consideration immigrants' views on the issue of cultural plurality.

NOTES

1. A number of papers, books and edited volumes published in Greek during the last decade examine various aspects of multiculturalism (see, for example, Agelopoulos 1997b; Chiotakis 1999; Dragona-Monachou 1999; Gefou-Madianou 1999; Lavdas 1999; Katsikas kai Politou 1999; Katsoulis 1999; Papageorgiou 1997; Paparigopoulos 1999; Skourtou 1999; Vryzas 1997). In addition, a number of well-known books on multiculturalism and multicultural education have been translated and published in Greek (for example, Cummins 1999; Modgil *et al.* 1997; Taylor 1997).
2. For an analysis on the emergence of minorities discourse in Greece, see Tsitselikis and Christopoulos (1997); Gounaris, Michailidis and Agelopoulos (1997) and Danforth (1995).
3. Although immigrants from other countries can be found throughout Greece, settlement patterns are uneven. Thus, while many immigrants in Athens come from Asian or African countries, these kinds of immigrant communities are virtually non-existent in the north of Greece. The immigrants living and working in Salonica come almost exclusively from Albania, Bulgaria and the former USSR. Furthermore, a number of populations living in the north have very little presence in the south.

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4. I use the term 'cultural plurality' following Grillo's understanding of cultural pluralism (1998).
5. The issue of the dynamics, hierarchies and syncretisms between the populations of Ottoman Salonica is beyond the limits of the present analysis.
6. For a detailed analysis, see Agelopoulos (1995); Gounaris (1993); Karakasidou (1997); Vereni (1996) and Vermeulen (1984).
7. Brailsford points out that since the years of the Ottoman empire the population of the cities of Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia was ethically different from the population of the nearby rural areas (1906: 86). The distinction between bourgeois Bulgarians of Salonica living in the urban centre and Macedonian Slavs living in the rural areas of Macedonia is important. A great number of urban Slav-speaking populations of Macedonia had acquired a Bulgarian national identity by the end of the nineteenth century. The Macedonian national movement was established in the early twentieth century, at a point when two generations of bourgeois Slavs in Macedonia had developed a Bulgarian national identity.
8. Among the Greek Orthodox refugees who settled in Salonica in 1922-3 were a number of Pontic Greeks from the Black Sea coast of Turkey (Greeks speaking the Pontic Greek dialect), bourgeois Greeks from the cities of the Turkish Aegean Sea coast and Turkophone Greeks from highland villages of central Turkey.
9. The political changes of the 1980s and the 1990s in the former USSR caused the migration movement of Pontic and other Greeks from the former Soviet Republics to Greece (Voutira 1991).
10. Estimates regarding the number of immigrants in Greece vary from 400,000 to one million persons. My own figures (700,000) represent a conclusion based on official statistics, existing studies (Iosifides 1997; King *et al.* 1998; Lianos 1998) and discussions conducted with the representatives of

immigrant communities and anti-racist organizations participating in the Network of Social Support to Immigrants and Refugees. My estimate refers to those immigrants who live and work in Greece throughout the year.

11. Non-Greek citizens who have been convicted for crimes committed in Greece prior to the legalisation process are not eligible to receive a Green Card.

12. Every full-time, legally registered worker in Greece receives a social security stamp for each working day.

13. A very limited number of reception classes and Greek language courses are established in some schools of the larger cities of Greece (*Scholeia Palinostounton*, literally, 'schools for repatriates'). These courses were initially created for the Pontic Greek repatriates from the former USSR. At a later stage they accepted immigrant children of any background.

14. According to the 1991 census, the prefecture of Salonica had a population of 977,528 persons.

15. It is beyond any doubt that immigrants have contributed to the increase of criminality in Greece. Most of the immigrants' criminal activity has to do with petty crime related to their social marginality. However, some immigrants were engaged in extreme forms of criminal activities such as the two incidents in June-July 1999 in which two desperate Albanian illegal criminals hijacked two public buses and took all the passengers as hostages. Both incidents had tragic outcomes and three persons died. In any case, it should be made clear that the majority of crimes in Greece are committed by Greeks and that the majority of immigrants are not engaged in criminal activities (Fakiolas 1994; Karydis 1996). Furthermore, as Fakiolas points out, Albanian immigrants are over-represented in the statistics on arrests due to their visibility, by police targeting of known areas of Albanian concentration (such as the railway and bus stations and specific neighbourhoods in Salonica) and by their problematic legal status as illegal immigrants (1994).

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16. The Byzantine heritage has often been proposed as a way out from the so-called 'failure of the modern Greek nation', that is, its inability to solve the Hellenic-Romeic dilemma imposed on modern Greeks by Western modernity (Herzfeld 1986). During the last decade a number of scholars have argued that the Byzantine Orthodox cultural heritage and its context (that is, the Balkans) can contribute to a postmodern construction of Greekness. Most of these scholars, such as Christos Giannaras and Kostas Zouraris, are influenced by the so-called neo-Orthodox movement. As Ziakas clearly puts it 'our country has to participate in the postmodern quest by capitalising upon its pre-modern cultural deposits', referring to the Byzantine Orthodoxy as 'our pre-modern cultural deposits' (Ziakas 1998: 52).

17. A collection of papers highly critical of the activities of the CCE was published in *Entefktirion* (vol. 42-3). *Entefktirion*, a periodical published in Salonica invited a large number of intellectuals and politicians to review the activities of the 1997 CCE and produced a special volume published in 1998.

18. The 'Red Thread' ('Kokini Klosti') programme organised a number of high quality activities (music, dance, games, story-telling, exhibitions, parties, happenings) aimed primarily at children's education and entertainment. Most of these activities incorporated strong multicultural references.

19. See the various papers at *Entefktirion* (vol. 42-3).

20. I am grateful to Sarah Green for her thoughtful remarks on this point.

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