Immigrants and Political Life in Greece: between political patronage and the search for inclusion

Ruby Gropas and Anna Triandafyllidou
Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy
ELIAMEP

Report prepared for the EMILIE project, WP5, Deliverable D6*
This version: 6 April 2009
13,000 words approx.

To contact the authors or quote this report, please email: anna@eliamep.gr, ruby@eliamep.gr

* EMILIE - A European approach to multicultural citizenship: Legal, political and educational challenges- is a three-year research project funded by the European Commission Research DG, Sixth Framework Programme (2006-2009). For more information about the project see: http://www.eliamep.gr/eliamep/content/home/research/research_projects/emilie/en/
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 3  
   1.1. Scope and aim of the paper .................................................................................. 3  
   1.2. Research methods and methodology ........................................................................ 5  
   1.3. Political participation of third country nationals: an overview of the conceptual arguments for and against ................................................................. 6

2. Immigration and participation in public life ................................................................. 8  
   2.1. Co-ethnic immigration to Greece ....................................................................... 8  
   2.2. Participation in Public Life ................................................................................. 10  
   2.3. Naturalisation ........................................................................................................ 11  
   Table 2: Acquisition of Greek citizenship by EDTO holders (1998-2007) .................. 12

3. Political representation and party politics ................................................................ 13  
   3.1. Political rights: who has what? ............................................................................. 13  
   3.2. The positions of the main political parties ......................................................... 14  
   3.3. Recent elections and the ‘migrant’ factor ............................................................... 20  
   3.4. How newer and future citizens affect the political sphere .................................. 21

4. Concluding remarks and policy recommendations .................................................... 23

5. References ........................................................................................................................ 25

APPENDIX I – List of interviews ..................................................................................... 28

APPENDIX II – Interview Guide ....................................................................................... 28  
   Interview Guide ............................................................................................................. 28
1. Introduction

Political participation encompasses rights and representation, and it constitutes a core determinant of the quality of a country’s democracy. Democracy is a dynamic concept. The ways in which it is defined depends on the processes through which it is exercised and on the degree of its inclusiveness. A core pillar of democracy is its representativeness; in other words, that all those concerned by a decision are directly or indirectly able to participate in the decision-making process by expressing their position and defending their stake. Where significant portions of the population living within a constituency are excluded from formal means of political expression and representation, this translates into a democratic deficit. In fact, The Council of Europe’s *Group of Specialists on Nationality* has argued that being excluded from the decision-making process when concerned by a decision, infringes the dignity of a person, and that the essence of democracy is its representativeness (Council of Europe 2008: 3). Thus, a fundamental aim of democratic governance in Europe is to ensure that all groups and segments of a polity’s population are included in the democratic process.

The dynamic nature of democracy is also expressed in the ways it which it evolves and changes along with and in response to its constituency’s needs. Over the past two decades, a series of migration influxes have deeply changed Greece’s demographic characteristics. The return of co-ethnic Greeks and their descendents and the migration of third country nationals have increased the population by over 10% and have subsequently raised a number of challenges relating to their integration in the social, economic and cultural spheres of the receiving society. Integration and participation in these spheres is inherently linked with political and normative choices and obligations both on the part of the receiving society and on the part of the migrants. As such, this raises entitlements and rights that are associated with the way democracies respond to change, accommodate new claims, and make space to represent and include the interests of all its constituent parts.

As the experience of older host migration countries suggests, migration causes deep and significant diversification in demographic, cultural, societal, economic and political terms. This diversity poses numerous challenges for all European democracies that are faced with rapidly changing conditions and are attempting to formulate appropriate responses aimed at reconciling respect for diversity and inclusiveness in the democratic polity. Diversity resulting from migration presents a number of opportunities and challenges. It impacts the way national identity is constructed and the way it is understood; it presents new democratic challenges for the way in which the principle of equal opportunities can be enjoyed by all. It impacts the way democracy is approached in terms of representation and participation and consequently, in terms of legitimacy and in the way in which the social contract is (re)defined. In short, it raises a set of wide-ranging political challenges for the receiving society and political system that is called to adapt to the new, dynamic reality and propose new methods of negotiation, conciliation, integration and cohesion.
In this context, the following issues have been raised and are at present being debated among Greece’s political and intellectual elites: Is citizenship required for individuals to be able to participate and have a stake in the society in which they live? Or is citizenship required only for participating in certain levels of governance and not in others (i.e. it is required for the national level of governance but not relevant for the local or the regional)? What length of legal residence is required before a migrant can and ought to have access to the receiving country’s citizenship? Is there a civic identity that can be developed in a multicultural society that encourages the participation and representation of old and new citizens and thereby enriches the quality of a country’s democracy? How participatory ought and can a democracy be? How might the inclusion of new citizens or new voters in a democratic polity affect the receiving country’s political sphere and at the same time, how might the political cleavages in a country affect the policies and positions as regards political participation, naturalization policies and democratic practice?

These are some of the debates and dilemmas faced by most European democracies regardless of whether they have an older or newer migration history. The need for current democratic processes to respond to present diversity is pressing as concerns for social cohesion, and the degree people and communities are integrated or excluded from the rest of society are high. Integration and access to equal opportunity can thus be perceived as both conditions and criteria for the quality of democracy (Council of Europe 2008: 4). Significant efforts and improvements have already been made across Europe to respond to the nature and speed of change that European societies are undergoing. Initiatives and policies aiming at inclusiveness in various sectors (education, housing, labour market, social and health services, etc) are being pursued, and the political sphere is one of these. This paper concentrates on the political dimensions of participation in the case of Greece that now counts two full decades of migration against this background.

With regard to formal participation in the country’s political life, voting and standing for elections is restricted to Greek citizens only (with an exception that distinguishes special rights to Cypriots). EU citizens may participate in local and European Parliament elections (based on EC Council Directive 94/80). There are no formal institutions or mechanisms (such as consultative committees at the city council level, etc) for including third country nationals; thus, participation in the political realm requires citizenship acquisition.

With the exception of the co-ethnic returnees and their descendants from the former Soviet republics who migrated to Greece in the 1990s and who were offered the option to naturalise upon arrival, immigrant naturalisation has effectively begun only in the past couple of years when long-term migrants have been gradually fulfilling the condition of ten years of legal residence. Debates on the political participation of third country nationals (TCN) in local level politics are a recent development within political parties; while there appears to be an in principle cross-party acceptance of the need to grant political participation to TCN for local elections, this debate has only timidly started to appear in the public domain. In addition to the procedural aspects, there are also other possibilities for TCN to be able to participate in the political debate of their country of residence. Such initiatives, as mentioned above, have not yet been developed in Greece as
there are no special consulting or other bodies at the national or local level formally including or encouraging immigrant participation. As will be discussed in the next sections, we can note a number of initiatives on behalf of the main political parties to informally and gradually also formally reach out to migrants.

This paper explores the political participation and representation of Greece’s immigrant population, and the ways in which the Greek political arena has responded to the changing societal conditions. In this context, we discuss access to citizenship and naturalization as this is understood in the Greek context and the political challenges that have arisen from the past two decades of immigration of co-ethnic returnees and third country nationals. In the following sections we explore the ways in which the mainstream political parties have responded to these political challenges. It is argued that for electoral purposes they have attempted to reach out to the (naturalized) co-ethnic communities in the first instance, and in recent years the normative debate has been moving towards the need to integrate and accommodate the political entitlements of third country nationals legally residing in Greece. We also explore the positions and claims of representatives of co-ethnic and immigrant associations; the priorities that they have set as necessary requirements and entitlements for their integration in the host society; and their perceptions of the political challenges they face in the society they reside in.

1.1 Research methods and methodology

This paper is based on a literature review of the current migration literature in Greece on immigrant integration, naturalization and the ensuing political rights. The literature on the subject of political representation and participation is scarce as most research has thus far concentrated on the social, economic and civic aspects of immigrant integration. In addition, we have conducted a web-based researched on articles in the press and on popular Greek web-portals and blogs. Here too the information gathered is rather limited. Articles on immigrants’ political rights and on the future extension of voting rights to third country nationals for local and regional elections have been published mainly in pre-election periods (local elections in 2006, national elections and party conventions in 2007); on the occasion of the revised law in 2005 that however did not include any provisions regarding political participation and representation; and recently again (2008) associated with the increase in naturalizations presented by the Ministry of the Interior.

The data collected was complemented by a number of interviews with representatives of the main political parties, and two focus groups with representatives of co-ethnic and immigrant associations, and immigrant activists in Athens. A list of all interviewees and details about the participants in the focus groups is provided in part 5 of this paper. An interview guide (see part 5 below) was used to structure the course of the interview but the questions were open-ended and tailored to the specific field of expertise of each interviewee.
1.2 Political participation of third country nationals: an overview of the conceptual arguments for and against

The normative arguments that have been put forward in favour or in opposition to the extension of political participation rights to migrants in their host society are explored in this section. These arguments have been debated rather widely over the past decade in particular during which the migration phenomenon has become truly globalised and during which migration has increased, become more diverse and has become a significant reality in all EU countries. Both sets of arguments are relevant in the Greek case as will be discussed further on.

What is frequently termed as ‘alien suffrage’ is supported by the cosmopolitan perspective of democracy and of civic inclusion, which sees political participation as a fundamental right to be exercised in a liberal, constitutionally-based polity. At the opposite end is the statist approach to political participation where national boundaries demarcate the rights that can or cannot be exercised; national citizenship is thus preferred over civic redefinitions of citizenship. But let us briefly explore each in turn.

Cosmopolitan democracy has been put forward as a political project aiming to engender greater public accountability in the ways in which the world is changing due to globalization pressures. Globalisation has placed new constraints on democratic norms thus requiring their renewal both in the way democracy is exercised and defined within states and in the global community (Archibugi, Held and Hohler 1998). Cosmopolitan democracy questions what is considered the traditional approach to democratic theory and practice by arguing that when:

“socioeconomic processes and the outcomes of decisions about them, stretch beyond national frontiers, then the implications of this are serious, not only for the categories of consent and legitimacy but for all the key ideas of democracy. At issue is the nature of a constituency, the role of representation, and the proper form and scope of political participation.” (Archibugi, Held and Hohler 1998: 22).

Thus, it is posited that political practices and institutions need to adapt to the changing realities in order for modern democracies to continue to be inspired from the core democratic principles of accountability, legitimacy and representation. This may require either the development of new political institutions and practices, and/or the transformation of existing ones by either expanding their membership or by making boundaries between in- and out- members more permeable. Migration and the rapid diversity it has provoked within European societies is one such manifestation of the changes and challenges globalization has placed on European liberal democracies. In response to the changing nature and composition of European constituencies and societies, the debate about entitlements and duties changes also in multi-fold ways. The case in favour of extending political rights to third country nationals concentrates on ‘social membership’ and the right of individuals living in a liberal democratic polity to claim a right to inclusion (Rubio-Marín 2000: 21). In effect, it is contended that with time, people who stay in a society develop moral claims and entitlements and that if they
are affected by a series of decisions then though ought to be able to participate in the
decision making process. Different approaches have been put forward in this growing
field of study. Sassens (1998) has explored the influence of human rights in transforming
the interstate system and thereby nation-state citizenship, while Soysal (1994) has
examined the transnational dimension and the limits of citizenship. Carens has argued for
the moral claims of long term residents and that voting rights may be restricted to
nationals only provided that ‘at some point, (ten years at most, probably five), citizenship
should be made available upon demand, without any restrictions or requirements’ (2001:
102). And Bauböck (2007) has underlined the universality of basic political liberties,
noting however that while political participation in national elections is relevant for
citizens, participation in the local political community should be based solely on
residency. While the academic and conceptual debate on the changing nature of
citizenship, democracy and the moral dimension of how to treat non-nationals is rich and
inspiring, as Day and Shaw have concluded:

“actual changes in the status of non-national may often owe as much to more
mundane domestic political conditions as they do to the force of grand moral
ideas about the ethical treatment of foreigners. In other words, if changes are
brought about, they may not be because the normative ‘case’ for allocating more
rights to non-national by a host polity has in fact prevailed at a domestic level, but
for much more potentially venal internal reasons as the maintenance of domestic
political coalitions’ (2002: 188).

In effect, the findings explored in this paper from our empirical research suggest that this
practical and pragmatic dimension is just as present in the on-going debate in the case of
Greece as the normative debate.

Hesitance and scepticism about the extension of political entitlements to non-nationals is
primarily based on the belief that citizenship is associated with a sense of loyalty and
belonging to a distinct or demarcated community, and multiple or transnational loyalties
are questioned.1 The argument against extending voting rights to non-citizens is based on
a republican approach to the polity. From this perspective, if a person wants to participate
in the political system of his or her place of residence then the first step should be to
apply and gain citizenship and learn and understand the host society’s political culture,
and then once formally a member of the in-group, voting rights are granted automatically.
In this sense, the interest and will to take part in the political process might also serve as
an incentive for naturalization and essentially complete the integration process.

Within the European Union there has been a trend towards extending political rights to
non-nationals. This has been to a large extent achieved through the development of the
concept of European citizenship leading to the present situation where all EU nationals
can participate in European and local elections in the EU member state in which they are
residing. At the same time, many member states have moved to extending voting rights at
the local level to long-term legal residents recognizing the entitlements and duties that are

1 For a presentation of the debate in the US and Germany see Rubio-Marín 2000; for the debate in the EU
see Faist 2007 and the works of Bosniak and Zolberg among others.
associated with residence. Equality and fair treatment principles as well as the recognition of participation as a vehicle towards further integration and as away to combat marginalisation throughout European societies have been the driving forces behind this trend. The rationale is that people living, working, contributing to the social security system, paying taxes, participating in the economy and the labour market and having their children attend the education system of the receiving society means that they are affected by decisions taken in these areas and that they have a stake. Being able to participate in the decision-making process and enabling them to defend their interests as members of this community at the local level is thus considered important for social cohesion, equal opportunities and democracy.

At present, as is indicated in the table below, there exists a very varied patchwork across the EU with different levels of political participation being made available to TCN depending both on the country of residence, but also on their country of origin (see Gropas and Triandafyllidou 2007).

**Table 2. Voting rights for third-country nationals in EU-member states**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political rights</th>
<th>EU Member States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No local voting rights</td>
<td>Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granting of voting rights but not of the right to stand as candidate</td>
<td>Belgium, Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full voting rights at the local level conditional to the fulfilment of special requirements (such as principle of reciprocity, or citizens from certain counties i.e. belonging to the Commonwealth, etc).</td>
<td>Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2007

This trend is indicative of the changing boundaries of suffrage and the evolving notion of citizenship and democracy. In the case of Greece, where citizenship is largely understood in its national dimension, the process of accommodating and responding to the political aspects of its current demographic diversity is taking place hand in hand with a redefinition of national identity and with an attempt to move towards a civic definition of citizenship.

**2. Immigration and participation in public life**

**2.1. Co-ethnic immigration to Greece**

Greece has been a reception country for almost two decades and approximately 10% of its population is composed of third country nationals (Gropas and Triandafyllidou 2007). Integration policies mainly in the fields of social security and welfare, housing, healthcare, and education were launched with a notable delay, and most efforts in the field of
migration policy consist of attempts to regularize the large portion of Greece’s immigrant population that continues to exist in conditions of (repeated) irregularity. In fact, the acknowledgment that migrants constitute a permanent reality in Greek society is just as recent. Consequently, while the public debates on the social and economic integration of migrants has been on-going over the past decade, the political dimensions of integration (political representation, voting rights and participation) represent a relatively new, yet steadily growing, trend.

A significant portion of migration inflows has consisted of ‘return migration’ of co-ethnic Greeks or immigrants of Greek descent. It is relevant to focus in more depth on this population group because of the preferential conditions that they have benefited from in terms of integration policies and access to citizenship. We have accorded special attention to this group because it is the only portion of the immigrant population in Greece which has been or has started the process of being naturalised and therefore, is the only portion which at present, has access to political rights and participates in the Greek political arena.

The main categories of returnees\(^2\) who have migrated to Greece in the past two decades consist of:

- Co-ethnic returnees, notably the Pontic Greeks, arriving from the former Soviet Republics (and particularly from Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia and Armenia). There are 155,000 Pontic Greeks according to the 2000 Special Census of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (General Secretariat of Greeks Abroad) who have in their vast majority naturalised upon arrival or shortly after;
- Immigrants of Greek descent, notably ethnic Greek Albanian citizens (Vorioepirotes). There were 185,000 holders of the Special Identity Cards for Co-Ethnics (EDTO cards) in 2007. Of those approximately 150,000 were eligible to apply for citizenship, after the change in the Greek government policy on this matter in November 2006, since they had lived in the country for ten years or more; and
- A smaller number of returning Greek migrants from northern Europe, the US, Canada and Australia.

The remaining consists of immigrants from other EU countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Poland), non EU European countries (Georgia, Russia, Moldova, Ukraine), from the Middle East and north Africa (especially Egyptians and Palestinians) and growing numbers of immigrants from sub-Saharan African countries, Southeast Asia (especially Pakistan and Bangladesh) and China (see Gropas and Triandafyllidou 2007 for details).

\(^2\) There have been a number of waves of return migration (επαναπατρισμός ομογενών και παλιννόστηση) during the twentieth century: the first consists of a refugee wave of individuals of Greek descent during the Balkan wars and the First World War; followed by a wave of 1.2-1.5 million refugees from Asia Minor in 1922; and around 400,000 individuals of Greek descent migrated to Greece during the de-colonisation period, principally from Egypt, Syria, Sudan, and the Congo, as well as from Romania, Turkey and the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s. Following the oil crises in the 1970s and a tightening of migration policies in western Europe, there was also a return migration of Greeks who had migrated to Germany as guest workers after World War II (see Emke-Pouloupolou 2007, 99-101).
2.2. Participation in Public Life

Although this paper is concerned with the political rather than the civic participation of immigrants in public life in Greece, it is relevant to note that immigrant participation in public life has been hampered and affected by the longstanding undocumented or insecure status of most immigrants due to delayed and incomplete regularisation policies and efforts on the part of the public authorities. Until the early 2000s, the institutional and legal framework of migration in Greece provided immigrants with very limited opportunities to participate in public life and to be civically active.

Trade unions have, to a certain extent, encouraged immigrant workers’ membership (for instance in the construction sector) and have supported regularisation and other initiatives aimed at encouraging formal employment conditions for migrant workers. The motives have been largely pragmatic as the underlying aim has been to regularise migrant workers in order to also secure native member’s rights and to avoid unlawful competition from immigrants accepting work for lower pay and without welfare benefits. While trade unions have contributed to including migrants in civic engagement, this is still in its early phases as leading trade union positions are held exclusively by Greeks.

Over the past 6-8 years, however, the civil society landscape in Greece has changed quite substantially. Immigrant, cultural and sports associations, women’s associations, trade unions and other professional organisations, networks of associations of immigrant and mainstream human rights NGOs, or NGOs active in the protection of refugee and asylum seeker rights, anti-discrimination, or the fight against racism and xenophobia have created a rich, active, and increasingly vocal civil society. This has benefited greatly from EU sources of funding (such as EQUAL and INTERREG) and has been a fundamental actor in raising awareness among the public and the media on immigrant integration, multi-culturalism and programmes combating, discrimination, racism and xenophobia. This growth and increased activity among the migrant population has developed in parallel to a phase of maturation of Greek civil society as well and these two parallel processes have fed into one another and in many cases strengthened on another too – particularly in the human rights and anti-discrimination field (Gropas and Triandafyllidou 2007). There has been a sort of consolidation of migrant participation in the civic sphere, while in the political sphere participation remains limited both in scope and in numbers.

A review of the current situation in Greece suggests that migrants who participate in the political realm can be broadly categorised in the following three groups:

- Individuals who take on an active role in the political sphere and who are primarily involved in advocacy initiatives on issues concerning developments in their country of origin or in another region with which there is a political, religious or cultural affinity. For instance, this is usually expressed in demonstrations and picketing or public awareness campaigns regarding developments in the Middle East, or the war in Iraq, or human rights in Tibet.
- Individuals who are political activists, these tend to be longer-term residents (mainly those who immigrated to Greece in the 1980s or in the 1990s), who are connected to Greek political parties based on ideological affiliations.
Co-ethnic Greeks or their descendants who have migrated to Greece, who *naturalised soon after arrival and were able to become politically active since citizenship acquisition formally included them in the polity*.

Thus, since the only formal type of political participation is possible through naturalisation, it is pertinent to consider the naturalisation policies in Greece.

### 2.3. Naturalisation

Integration through naturalisation is not an easy option since Greek nationality is based on the *jus sanguinis* principle and the naturalisation procedure is long and costly. Law 2130/1993 states that immigrants who wish to become Greek citizens have to be residents in Greece for more than ten years in the last twelve (previously the requirement was for eight years in the last twelve). This continues to be one of the longest residence requirements for naturalisation – together with Swiss legislation – in Europe.\(^3\) Citizenship test requirements, similar to all other European countries are based on sufficient knowledge of the Greek history, language and civilization.

Law 2910/2001 (articles 58-64) made the conditions and procedure even more cumbersome: a high fee is to be paid by the applicant (1,500 Euro) and the decision is discretionary. Furthermore, authorities are not required to reply within a specified period of time and need not justify a negative decision to the applicant.\(^4\) If an applicant is rejected, s/he may apply again after one year. The only special provisions stipulated in the relevant legislation involve co-ethnics. The naturalization procedure for immigrants of Greek descent is much simpler and less time consuming. Specifically, the repatriates from the former Soviet Union who settled in Greece mostly during the 1990s obtained the Greek citizenship with summary procedures very soon after their arrival. This was not the case however for ethnic Greek Albanians who migrated to Greece during the same period (see also Triandafyllidou and Veikou 2002), who were granted special long-term residence permits instead.

These articles (58-64) of the law have been subject to criticism by NGOs, the liberal press\(^5\) and international organisations (ECRI 2004) for being discriminatory and unfair.\(^6\)

---

\(^3\) Many European countries request five years of residence before applying (United Kingdom or France, for instance), while the more restrictive ones require eight (Germany) or ten years (Italy). It is also worth noting that trends differ. More restrictive countries moved towards more liberal regimes of naturalisation (e.g. Germany with the 2000 citizenship law) while more liberal ones, like France, adopted more stringent legislation (citizenship law of 1993).

\(^4\) A special circular of the Home Affairs Ministry (Circular 32089/10641/26.5.1993) states that such obligations are not valid when the matters treated refer to the acquisition, recognition, loss or re-acquisition of the Greek nationality, rendering thus the whole issue truly exceptional and outside the normal work proceedings of state administration.


\(^6\) Greek authorities are generally required to respond within specified time limits to applicants addressed to them and to provide justification for their decisions.
ECRI in particular has raised concerns regarding the preferential path to citizenship available to individuals of Greek origin, noting that there are subjective elements in the assessment of such origin, making the applicants liable to discrimination. Also, ECRI (2004, paragraph 64) notes that such distinctions between presumed co-ethnics and others create uncertainty among the latter and false expectations among the former with regard to the kind of rights and/or treatment that they are entitled to.

Between 1980 and 2003, 66% of the foreign citizens who obtained Greek citizenship were of Greek descent and 34% where of foreign ethnicity. The numbers altered after 1997, when the numbers of co-ethnics granted Greek citizenship started becoming smaller than those of non co-ethnics (Pavlou, 2004). In November 2006, a joint decision by the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs facilitated the naturalisation procedure for ethnic Greek Albanian citizens waiving the fee and the discretionary character of the judgment. The joint decision stipulated that holders of a Special Co-Ethnic’s Identity Card (commonly referred to with their initials EDTO) could be naturalized upon fulfilling the requirements provided in the law without paying the special fee. Basically the decision was not to exercise negative discretion on the applications but rather confer citizenship to all those who fulfilled the legal requirements. As a result, in 2007, the first year after the ministerial decision, the number of EDTO holders who acquired the Greek citizenship was almost a hundred times higher than any previous year (see table 2 below).

Table 2: Acquisition of Greek citizenship by EDTO holders (1998-2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of naturalizations of EDTO holders (per year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>5,634</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Interior, letter dated 13.3.2008 [data to be updated for 2008]

Against this background what becomes clear is that the subject of naturalisation is approached in a rather micro-management manner. Amendments to the naturalisation process are made as rushed corrective measures, and while the official discourse presents current policies as initiatives aimed at furthering integration and as regularisation measures, in effect there is an underlying effort to be as restrictive as possible in extending access to citizenship. In a recent effort to deal with the legal status of the second generation who up to now when turning 18 had to apply for a stay permit for work or study reasons or became irregular immigrants, the Parliament passed a special measure (article 41 par. 7) within Law 3731/08 which provides for the second generation the status of long term EU resident. In other words, a person born in Greece, raised in Greece fo 18 years who has attended at least the 9 years of compulsory schooling and whose parents are still residing legally in Greece, can apply, upon turning 18 for a long term EU resident status without having to go through the integration test (language and history test) foreseen for this status. They also still have to pay the relevant application fee. Thus, the Greek state turns the second generation to disenfranchised long term residents instead of making of them new Greek citizens. This is indeed one of the most rigid and exclusionary provisions for the second generation that exist throughout the EU and has been heavily criticised by opposition parties and migrant associations.
Nonetheless, it remains a fact that the Greek states show extreme reticence to include the *ius soli* principle in its citizenship definition. The above mentioned provision for the second generation is justified by the Ministry of Interior as an encouragement (sic) to apply for citizenship. The argument is that this long term resident status gives security of residence and equal socio-economic rights. The second generation has then to apply for citizenship acquisition just like anybody else, if they wish to do so. The idea is thus that law 3731/08 provides the children of immigrants the opportunity to chose and does not impose Greek citizenship upon them. Naturally there are clearly other measures, as those applied in France or Germany or Italy that would allow for the children of immigrants to chose which citizenship they want, but which would also give them the straightforward option of becoming citizens by a simple declaration of will.

### 3. Political representation and party politics

#### 3.1. Political rights: who has what?

The right to vote and stand for elections is restricted to Greek citizens above the age of eighteen. Only EU citizens may participate in local and European Parliament elections (based on EC Council Directive 94/80). All other third country nationals who are legal residents do not have access to political rights. Thus, extending these rights to third country nationals in local or regional elections requires a Constitutional reform.

There are two separate issues that arise. The first concerns extending full political rights to individuals legally residing in the country through citizenship, i.e. through naturalisation. The number of naturalisations remains extremely low (see Table 3), and by common account the process is long, costly and what is most disconcerting, not transparent. However, given that there are growing numbers of immigrants who have now fulfilled, or will soon be fulfilling, the legal requirements to apply for citizenship (ten years of legal residence, language fluency, etc) we may expect that the number of naturalisations will increase in the following years. Naturally this remains to be seen in practice since up to now the Greek state policy has been one of naturalising only co-ethnics and even those with restrictions. However, the claims and expectations of new and future citizens will have to be taken into consideration by the mainstream political parties and/or may lead to the creation of ethnic parties. In fact, since the 2000 elections we can discern a clear shift in the strategies mainly of the two larger parties who have been slowly, yet steadily, proactively reaching out - initially to the co-ethnic returnee communities and increasingly to the wider immigrant population.

**Table 3: Citizenship acquisition by third country nationals in Greece (2000-2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Interior, *waiting for data*
The second dimension concerns extending a restricted set of political rights to TCN, or at the very least creating conditions that permit, facilitate and even encourage a degree of representation and participation in the political sphere. This ranges between extending voting rights associated with local and regional elections to third country nationals who hold the indefinite duration residence cards (see Table 4), to establishing consultation committees which include immigrant representatives in city councils and prefectures.

Table 4: Residence Cards of Indefinite Duration (2005-2008)
[to be inserted here – data from YPES, Thanos]

In the next section we present how these two dimensions have been approached by the main political parties.

3.2. The positions of the main political parties

We can discern two main changes in the Greek political system relating to the need to accommodate and respond to migration-related diversity:

- The first covers the period from the late 1990s until about 2004 and is principally related to the political system reaching out to the ‘new’ voting population of the naturalised co-ethnic returnees and their descendants who had migrated to Greece from the former Soviet republics.
- The second can be discerned after 2004 and is marked by a growing debate on integration policies for Greece’s immigrant population, the extension of naturalisation policies and the question of extending voting rights to TCN in local elections. In effect, debates on the political participation of third country nationals are a recent development within political parties and have only timidly begun to appear in the public sphere. Interviews conducted with representatives of political parties have confirmed that the discussion on the need to respond to the political challenges arising from migration have intensified in the past four to five years.

Both phases are influenced by a combination of instrumental considerations, the need to respond to real changes through pragmatic measures and normative deliberations.

With regard to the first phase, as mentioned above, approximately 150,000 -160,000 co-ethnic Greeks and their families returned to Greece in a number of waves after the demise of the Soviet Union during the 1990s. This population benefited from a positive return policy from Greece and was almost immediately naturalised. The PASOK party that was in government at the time put into place a number of measures to facilitate their integration in the Greek labour market and society by offering privileged housing loans and licenses for stalls in local open air markets, kiosques and taxis. Access to such permits are considered normal small favours that MPs or local politicians concede to their

voters through personalised and clientelistic networks of patronage. Thus, while such measures aimed to promote the employment of the Pontic Greeks (as the returning co-ethnics from the former Soviet Union are commonly called) and to help their socio-economic integration in Greek society, they also placed them from the very beginning in the heart of the Greek clientelistic political system. In parallel to that, there were efforts to symbolically recognise their cultural capital by supporting Pontic-Greek cultural associations both financially and through media coverage and political patronage (I2, 16 February 2009; FG2 17 March 2009). PASOK being in government and therefore responsible for these measures was able to ‘reap’ the benefits also in electoral terms and in effect in the 2000 national elections the co-ethnic electorate population overwhelmingly voted for PASOK (I2, 16 February 2009; I4, 17 March 2009).

The dominant normative discourse during this period was that co-ethnic Greeks were returning to their ‘motherland’ and were inherently members of the polity and demos. Rapid naturalisation was based on the *ius sanguinis* principle and actually went through the so-called process of ‘citizenship confirmation’ (*διαπίστωση*) which implied that these people had Greek citizenship by right because of their Greek descent and that the Greek state came only to ratify and confirm the existence of this citizenship. Measures promoting their socio-economic and political integration were promoted by the Greek government as a service ‘owed’ to them because they had endured persecution and exile for their Greekness during the Stalin years in particular. Their integration was also seen in fully patriotic terms as an opportunity for the Greek state to reinforce demographically the Greek element in the northeastern region of Western Thrace where the Muslim Turkish minority lives (see also Triandafyllidou and Veikou, 2002). Thus, here again, Pontic Greeks were from the very beginning enmeshed in the politics of Greek nationalism, asked to settle in Thrace in exchange of housing and employment assistance. Many Pontic Greeks though did not stay in the region and rather preferred to settle in Athens and other areas where they had friends or distant relatives and/or where they could find employment more easily (Triandafyllidou 2001; Maroufof 2006). In short, while Pontic Greeks were provided with a range of services supporting their social and economic integration into Greek society, they also found themselves very quickly enmeshed in the web of Greek clientelistic and nationalist politics – following a rationale that had more to do with the presumed ‘national interest’ rather than with a realistic socio-economic planning for their integration.

During this period there was essentially no discussion about measures promoting the integration of TCNs; though migration inflows were steadily increasing, migrants were considered – across the political spectrum – as a temporary phenomenon and basically a temporary and economically beneficial labour force. Moreover, given that public opinion was not particularly in favour of this migration influx, in politically instrumental terms there was no motive for any of the large political parties to campaign strongly in favour of more holistic and extensive migrant integration policies (I2, 16 February 2009).

The 2004 elections were an opportunity for New Democracy to tap into the electoral potential of this new voting population. In the run up to the national elections, New Democracy was active in reaching out and establishing formal links with the (older and
newer) co-ethnic cultural associations that the Pontic Greeks had established. A Secretariat for Co-Ethnic Organisations became active in developing relations the co-ethnic association and the party structures and more extensive integration measures were promised (for instance, additional housing loans and access to housing facilities; additional market permits; quotas for access to employment in the public sector; preferential conditions for compulsory military service and for entrance into higher education, etc). In addition, party pamphlets were printed in Russian and some co-ethnics were encouraged to become party members and stand for election in both municipal and national elections. Accumulated disappointments on the part of the co-ethnic population with the PASOK government that had not fully delivered on its 2000 promises and the apparent possibility to achieve additional economic and political gains from the conservative party led to a shift in votes from PASOK to New Democracy. Estimates hold that up to 60% of this electoral population supported New Democracy thereby contributing to their electoral victory (I4, 17 March 2009; FG2, 17 March 2009).

During this first phase which the smaller (in electoral terms) political parties were engaged in the debate in a more detached manner, focusing more on the need to develop migration management policies than on issues relating to the political sphere. The Communist party and the Coalition of the Left, referred to migrant and co-ethnic issues principally from the perspective of class struggle rationale. Party positions underlined solidarity among workers and the need to ensure employment, socio economic rights and free education, while the security challenges raised – particularly in the employment sectors - by irregular and illegal migration waves was a matter of concern (I1, 14 November 2008).

2004 therefore marks the passing into the second phase. With the New Democracy in government and PASOK now in opposition, the Socialist Party underwent a series of changes as regards leadership, discourse and style. The new leader of PASOK, George Papandreou initiated a shift in the discourse and public sphere about democracy, participation and the changes underway in Greece. The need to increase participatory democracy and politically engage the younger generation in the political debate was prioritised through a number of symbolic measures (referendum-like vote for the party leadership, etc) and through the launch of an on-line dialogue platform attempting to make PASOK’s positions on core societal issues (social justice, exclusion, participatory democracy, youth integration and migrant integration) more transparent and interactive.

Within PASOK’s more progressive and liberal ranks, and apparently drawing from Papandreou’s personal interest, sensitivities and initiatives, measures encouraging migrant integration were explored and increasingly fed into the public debate through

---

8 The Greek Communist Party received 8% of the national vote in the September 2007 elections and just under 6% in the 2004 election.
9 New Democracy has been in government since 2004 with 45% of the national election, and confirmed for another four-year period in September 2007 with nearly 42%.
10 The Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) has been the main opposition party since 2004 (with 38% of the national vote in September 2004 and 40.5% in 2007).
articles in newspapers, on the PASOK website and in the party convention proceedings (I2, 16 February 2009). Since 2005 the party has instituted three positions in its Central Party Committee that are reserved for migrants. Even though they do not have the right to vote, this initiative provides for a direct representation of migrant groups in the main opposition party mechanism. It also provides a channel for dialogue and exchange in party and other social and political forums. This initiative has been included in the formal network of PASOK’s ‘Friends of the Party’ and though concerns have been raised with regards to the unconstitutional nature of this initiative (since according to the Constitution, political rights may only be exercised by Greek citizens), these have not been noteworthy.

Additionally, in February 2008, the Migration Working Group of PASOK’s Secretariat Central Organisation Committee for the Convention (ΚΟΕΣ) announced the party’s positions on migration issues in preparation of the party Convention (http://tm.pasok.gr/anthropina_dikaiomata?cat=330). It is relevant to note that three of the nine members of the Working Group were third country nationals and the Group was chaired by the Secretary of the Central Organisation Committee for the party Convention. Among the 20-point programme focusing on cutting red tape while improving regularization and access to social goods and services, priority was accorded to the need to institutionalize the right to vote in local elections for all third country nationals who have been legally residing in Greece for five years. Regarding naturalization, the programme proposed to extend Greek citizenship to all second generation migrants and the automatic acquisition of Greek citizenship for all minors who have been enrolled in Greek schools for three years.

This significant pro-immigration shift in the Socialist party policies and practices has been attributed to the personal views of the party leader, George Papandreou, as well as the related views of academics and other prominent figures who have been recruited to the party electoral lists (national and EP) since 2004 (Triandafyllidou, 2009; I2, 16 February 2009). These represent a segment of the Socialist party that holds views favouring immigrant integration and supportive of a fundamental reconsideration of state policies in matters of immigrant political participation. In fact, third country nationals were also invited to take part in the 2007 internal party elections. This initiative was greeted by immigrant activists in the press as a step towards societal inclusion and integration that encompasses the political dimension and as a way through which migrant-related claims were integrated in the political speeches and debates that took place (Ta Nea, 13 November 2007, www.diavatirio.net ). As part of the wider initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue on migrant inclusion, PASOK has also set up a web-based forum. Articles and comments from immigrants in Greece as well as Greek migrants abroad are hosted on this blog expressing positions on the importance of improving migrants’ rights as part of the country’s quality of democracy and respect for human rights. A number of the featured comments concentrate on the importance of politically engaging migrants in the host country’s political sphere as part of a wider effort to re-energise the political arena and broaden democratic participation (http://tm.pasok.gr/anthropina_dikaiomata?cat=330). The tone is framed in left-wing discourse terms based on equality and representing the more vulnerable population
groups and migrant are considered as one of the population groups facing insecurity, exclusion, discrimination, and in terms of active political participation as fundamental to the country’s quality of democracy. This web-based discussion that brings together references to human rights, democracy, racism, political participation and migrant inclusion constitutes an effort to raise the awareness of party members or citizens who browse through PASOK’s website. It equally suggests a dynamic in the direction of expanding the public debate on the political participation of third country nationals in the Greek political sphere.

While the pro-immigrant initiatives of the Socialist party stem from a normative position in support of inclusion and social equality, and have undoubtedly contributed to the debate in the public sphere and the recognition of the political dimension of non-citizens’ entitlements, there is also an instrumental and electoral perspective that ought not be disregarded.

Support for migrant rights also has a pragmatic and instrumental dimension. It is easier to support these positions when in opposition whereas when in government pragmatic constraints - such as the lack of public support for such measures - would temper these views (I1, I3 and I4). And, it may also be conceived as part of a longer term strategy to encourage political affiliations, loyalty and support from individuals who may in the next few years be naturalized and thus enter the electoral pool. In effect it was noted that support for the extension of voting rights to TCN can be found among members of both large parties and the smaller parties (with the exception of the LAOS party) inspired by both normative and pragmatic considerations in all cases.

The discourse on the need to encourage measures that will promote social inclusion and participation and a more inclusive democracy is framed in terms of fairness and equity; as a reasonable development given that migration is no longer a temporary, transit phenomenon, but a long-term, permanent reality and therefore raises other sorts of entitlements, expectations and obligations both on the part of the migrants and the polity; as part of Greece’s ‘catching up’ in the field of migration policy; as part of the general effort and trend in the direction of increased political participation on non-citizens across the EU; as a consequence of globalization. This discourse is certainly present among the political elites and in public statements but this does not necessarily translate into support for TCN political participation across and within the various political parties.

As we have argued in an earlier study (Gropas and Triandafyllidou, 2005) there is an increasing trend towards informally including immigrants in the political sphere. However, while in other countries this has taken place through consultative institutions (e.g. migrant local councillors without the right to vote, elections for regional migration committees, institutionalised forums of dialogue, migrant participation in leading positions in trade unions or NGOs) in Greece this trend has to date taken place more through links with individual politicians and less through the participation of immigrants as observers in party conventions and party working groups. In effect, over the past decade, a number of parliamentarians included immigrants in their office team of experts and associates, while all main political parties developed extensive networks and
informal links with co-ethnic (mainly) and immigrant associations (increasingly) (FG1). Such networks conform to the prevailing political culture in Greece marked by ‘amoral familism’ [reference] rather than by notions of civic citizenship.

The 2006 local elections provided the platform for a growing public debate on the political integration and representation of Greece’s immigrant population. Thus, all political parties have been called to address the two main political challenges resulting from the past two decades of immigration, namely whether and what sort of political rights should be extended to legal residents? and, how do they respond and ‘tap in’ to the claims and expectations of Greece’s new (and future) citizens?

In principle, there seems to be a general consensus on favour or extending voting rights to non-citizens for local elections. The governing New Democracy Party has committed itself to extend the right to vote in the forthcoming local elections (to be held in 2010) to all immigrants who will be accorded the ‘long-term residency’ permit (www.in.gr, 20/10/2006, Eleftherotypia, 06/10/2008). This is supported by PASOK and by the Coalition of the Left (SYNASPISMOS) for migrants who have been legally residing in the country for five years (11, 14 November 2008). The Coalition of the Left 11 has been publicly supporting the extension of political rights to migrants since 2005 (www.syn.gr).

It has been critical however of the government proposal to extend these political rights to immigrants holding the long-term residency permit which is currently (early 2009) being debated. The criticism is two-fold in that it is perceived as insufficiently inclusive and as potentially indifferent to the core political aim which is to expand the democratic base. Given that the criteria and requirements for the new long-term residency permit, are considered blurry and non-transparent, it is not at present clear what percentage of the immigrant population will be able to meet the requirements for this permit. Thus, granting political rights only to holders of the long-term residency permit means that essentially the vast majority of the actual immigrant population (which will not be able to acquire this permit) will be indirectly excluded from political participation (11, 14 November 2008).

In the interim, and as a minimum, the establishment of consultation committees including migrants at the level of the city council or the prefecture was noted by representatives of the Coalition of the Left and PASOK parties as a constructive and necessary measure towards immigrant participation in Greek public life. The representative of the Coalition of the Left party (11) underlined that:

“Integration goes through the local level of government as this is closest to the people and their needs, and especially to immigrants’ needs. The establishment of local councils within which immigrants will be able to participate and express an opinion about priorities and things that need to be done in the local community where they live in, is necessary for integration. Participation leads people to having a sense of having a stake in the place they live in” (original in Greek, 14 November 2008).

11 Representing 5% of the national vote in the 2007 elections and 3.3% in the previous 2004 elections.
The behaviour of all parties in both phases described above is essentially the result of reactive policies and initiatives. Both in the management of the co-ethnic migrant population, and in the present situation where the focus is on regularising and rendering more secure the de facto long-term migrants and addressing the needs of the budding second generation, the responses and proposals are characterised by a certain time-lag and delayed reaction. These translate into a patchwork of corrective measures which aim each time to approach portions of the migrant population more through the means of political clientelism and patronage than through normatively inspired debates and the promotion of notions of civic citizenship and democratic participation. Migration policy continues not to propose an overall forward looking vision of attracting and ‘creating’ new citizens.

3.3. Recent elections and the ‘migrant’ factor

Katz has argued that ‘elections are the defining institutions of modern democracy’ (1997: 1). From this perspective, we argue that two elections essentially brought the ‘migrant’ factor into the political scene. First, as explained above, the 2000 national elections in Greece underlined the importance of the co-ethnic vote. The implications were two-fold. On the one hand, the 2000 national elections experience has since determined the strategies that were drawn up by Greek political parties to represent the claims of the co-ethnic Greeks who had naturalised and who therefore constituted a significant electoral pool for these parties to tap into (approximately 200,000 individuals). On the other, it also determined the strategies of the co-ethnic associations and organisations in promoting their claims and demands through lobbying the two largest political parties. These trends were underlined by the electoral shift in the March 2004 elections. Disgruntled by the ruling PASOK party that had promised yet not delivered on the claims of the co-ethnic population, they shifted their electoral support to the New Democracy party that won the elections. According to electoral analyses, the co-ethnic vote was a significant determinant in New Democracy’s electoral victory in 2004 and again in 2007 (14, 17 March 2009).

Second, the 2006 local elections effectively opened the debate on the integration of immigrants in the political arena. The potential importance of the immigrant vote and the implications for the political sphere of migration that had thus far been considered only in its economic, labour and societal dimensions entered the public debate.

During the 2006 local elections, the developments in the electoral race in the city of Athens that attracted notable media attention and was best represented by the case of Yvette Jarvis, an African-American artist living in Greece since the 1980s. Ms. Jarvis was member of PASOK’s National Council and a city counsellor, who decided to run instead with the candidate of the Conservative party New Democracy in the local elections. The New Democracy candidate for the Mayor of Athens, Nikitas Kaklamannis, offered Ms. Jarvis a position of Deputy Mayor of the city of Athens and responsibility for
the Citizens’ Service Centre for Migrants\textsuperscript{12} along with a plan to increase the city of Athens’ services to its immigrant residents and respond to their needs. In response, the PASOK candidate (Costas Skandalides) declared an even more ambitious programme focusing on Athens’ immigrant population and included two female representatives of the immigrant community in his electoral list. One of the candidates for the city council was an economist from Ukraine and head of the Greek-Ukrainian-Russian Association, and the other was an immigrant of Greek descent born in Nagorno-Karabakh and vice-President of the Association for the “Friendship of Greeks and immigrants from the countries of the former Soviet Union” that represents Russian, Pontics, Armenian and Ukrainian immigrants in Athens (To Vima, 20/08/2006).

All parties concentrated on the need to urgently respond to immigrants’ living conditions and difficulties faced by immigrant workers and children in Greece. Concomitantly, the discussion concentrated on the current and future electoral importance of the co-ethnic and immigrant community, particularly in the Athens metropolitan area where the immigrant population is estimated at approximately 20%. As a growing percentage of this population is meeting the time requirement (ten years of legal residence) for acquiring the indefinite stay permits and also for applying for naturalisation, it constitutes an electoral population in the making. Similarly, in Thessaloniki, Greece’s second largest city, and in other large cities (Heraklion in Crete, Larissa in central Greece, Kozani in the north) the candidates running for office in the city councils and the prefectures concentrated on immigrant matters and engaged in debates with the local immigrant associations to include representatives in their electoral lists. Our informants from different parties, confirmed that a proactive effort was made to nominate naturalised co-ethnics or include them in the electoral lists, particularly in municipalities with large co-ethnic populations (I1, I2, I3, I4), and that this had been a successful electoral strategy.

3.4. How newer and future citizens affect the political sphere

There is yet no publically available survey on co-ethnic electoral trends in Greece, neither regarding voter turn-out nor voting behaviour and how this translates into party support and political affiliations. What our first findings in the research undertaken in the context of this project lead us to suggest is the following. The party that was in power when the overwhelming majority of the co-ethnic population migrated to Greece, was able to benefit in electoral terms from the management of the naturalisation and integration policy that it developed in response to this arrival. The relationships between the co-ethnic associations and the Socialist party during this period were based on practical gains for both sides. They were also nurtured by a normative-nationalist discourse of returnee-mythology (the return of the dispersed Hellenism to its motherland). It goes beyond the scope of this paper to analyse this debates and its symbolic underpinnings, it suffices though to note that the Socialist party was the first to allow for Greek political refugees of the civil war era (1946-1948) who had found refuge in Central Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union to return to Greece. It thus signalled the re-unification of the

\textsuperscript{12} Κέντρο Εξυπηρέτησης Πολιτών (ΚΕΠ) των μεταναστών.
nation and the forgetting of old political rifts between Left and Right that had marked the post war political life until the 1970s. In line with this tradition, the Socialist party adopted a welcoming policy towards the Pontic Greeks who started fleeing Georgia, Armenia and Kazakhstan as the Communist regime relaxed because they feared ethnic persecution during the process of nation (re-)building in the area.

Despite their early support for the party that they perceived as having protected their rights most, the Pontic Greeks proved to be rather mobile in the 2004 elections when the conservative party was able to attract a majority vote principally thanks to the advantageous measures that were promised to co-ethnics during the campaigning. The role however of networks of political patronage and clientelism in this relationship should not be underestimated: during those years the New Democracy party had proactively supported co-ethnic cultural and sports associations in the period 2000 – 20004. Interestingly, voting behaviours of the naturalised co-ethnics so far suggests a preference for one of the two main political parties (the conservative New Democracy and the Socialist PASOK) rather than for the smaller parties of the left or right. This can be explained by their preference to be associated with either of the two governing parties as their vote could be leveraged to acquire specific gains that would facilitate their integration in the local economy and society and improve their living conditions (see also I1).

A matter to be explored with future research in this context would be whether how this naturalised population (that has benefited from support policies by both governing parties) and its second generation (that is coming into the voting population), will behave electorally henceforward. A hypothesis to be tested is whether now that the co-ethnic population demonstrates high levels of integration in social, economic, and civic terms, their voting will ‘spread’ out among the political parties. Will the ‘normalisation’ of their socio-economic situation translate into voting behaviours similar to those of the native population which combine ideological considerations with personal interest based on the clientelistic network that they may have access to? Or will the co-ethnic population retain a feature of community voting and community networking and political patronage? In this context, it will be interesting to explore how the socio-economic characteristics of this population will affect the ideological dimension and consequently their electoral choices. For instance, given that this population is composed of a working / middle class, self-employed professions and a small percentage of public sector employees, will this translate into an ideological affiliation for the left of centre parties influenced by a class-struggle perspective? And how might the political capital/experiences from the Soviet Union legacy affect this? Or, alternatively, might the ideological affiliation draw from a different set of values and specifically from more conservative social norms and a nationalist inclination as this population tends to be characterised by strong attachment to family and community values, and a concern to protect the perceived homogeneity of Greek national identity from ‘other’ migration-related diversity?

With regard to non-citizens and the way they may shape and influence electoral politics, here too there are two dimensions to consider. First, in the case legislation permitting TCN to vote at local elections is passed, then the question at hand is what factors will
affect how the non-citizen vote will be allocated across the political scene? It will be interesting to explore whether the political parties will adopt similar strategies to those used to attract the co-ethnic voting population and whether the non-citizen electoral population will instrumentalise their vote in order to achieve specific socio-economic benefits and improvements? Networks and relationships between immigrant associations and political parties are already well established providing the framework for an electoral relationship to be built. Second, as more non-citizens become eligible to apply for naturalisation, the question will be whether the political system will choose to boost the participation of new groups into the polity and the democratic process and tap into this new electorate? Much research into the voting patterns and behaviour of immigrant and co-ethnic populations has already been conducted in other, older host societies and findings suggest that measures that increase the naturalisation rates of immigrants engender higher levels of electoral participation (see Citrin and Highton 2002 for example).

While there is much room here for policy innovation and democratic regeneration, it is likely that this will be an incremental process for a number of reasons. The first aspect concerns the particular characteristics of the migration demographics in Greece. The fact that the overwhelming majority of the migrant population is from neighbouring countries with which there is a long and often tumultuous history of population movements, and more than 50% come from one single neighbouring country (Albania), poses a particular set of challenges regarding national identity, perceptions of difference and concerns for potential long term cross-border political implications (I3, I4 and FG2). The second set of factors likely to influence policies and initiatives that may encourage or discourage naturalisation of TCN has to do with exogenous conditions and more specifically, future migration trends and the direction migrant integration and multiculturalism policies will take across Europe.

4. Concluding remarks and policy recommendations

In today’s diverse societies strengthening the civic identity of its constitutive members is necessary for multicultural societies that are socially cohesive and tolerant. Political participation and representation are necessary for residents and citizens to have a stake in the community in which they live. It adds the dimensions of responsibility and obligation to that of rights and this is important for the quality of a society’s democracy and development.

Greece has matured as a host society meaning that the scope of the diversity that characterizes its new population, the length of their stay and their active participation in the country’s social, economic and cultural life has implications in the political sphere. It has implications for the mainstream political parties that are being called to respond to and integrate the claims of this sizeable and growing new population. It has implications for the migrants who are being called to express their views and positions on issues that
affect their everyday life in their society of residence and who will have to express their preferences in the political arena based on ideological and instrumental motivations.

Our study however suggests that the patterns of political affiliation, participation and patronage that we witness among co-ethnic returnees as well as among TCNs conform largely with the dominant political culture in Greece. It is thus not only native Greeks but also immigrant residents who have been socialized, for different reasons, into political systems that privileged clientelistic patronage and amoral familism. In this sense, immigrants from the former Communist countries in particular are a perfect match to the clientelistic and personalized networks of Greek party support.

Having said this, there is room and opportunity at present to strengthen civic citizenship in Greece among migrants and natives alike. This can be pursued through encouraging civic classes on constitutional values, democratic governance and human rights for all population groups within Greece. Targeted measures should concentrate on secondary education in order to educate the next generation on civic values; on classes for adult migrants who wish to apply for naturalization; on specific classes for language learning and incentives to motivate attendance of civic education classes for migrant women in particular should also be developed; and wider public information campaigns reaching out to different segments of the native population should also be developed.

The institutional and informal links that have been created through immigrant associations and political parties also offer a platform through which to mobilize civic and political activism and integrate non-citizens, naturalized citizens and natives. This mobilization will contribute to renewing the political debate, expanding the scope and breadth of political participation and enhance the inclusive nature of the democratic process and quality of democracy. In this light, it may be relevant for political parties to consider setting up consultative councils that include non-citizens in order to encourage an input into the policy and political debate.

Finally, with a view to enriching the state of democracy in a dynamic society that has already undergone substantial transformation and which is in the process of acquiring a second generation, measures should be considered that:

- facilitate access to citizenship;
- grant the right to vote at local and regional elections initially to citizens of the Council of Europe member states who are lawful residents for five consecutive years, and subsequently to all lawful residents irrespective of their country of origin;
- contribute to the establishment of consultative councils at the local and regional levels that include long-term residents; and
- concentrate on removing red-tape and other impediments placed on applications for long-term residence status.
5. References


Newspaper Articles

Eleftherotypia, 26/11/2007. ‘Μετανάστες σε «απομόνωση»’ [Immigrants in ‘isolation’], available online in: http://www.enet.gr/online/online_hprint?q=%EC%E5%F4%E1%ED%E1%E5%E5%E2+%26+%EC%E1%E8%E7%EC%E1%E4%E1&a=&id=76140248 (last visited in 15/6/2008)


Athens News, 12/01/2007, Tzilivakis, K. Ethnic Greeks of Albania start getting Greek citizenship at a rate of one every six days, Article code: C13217A152, available at


Eleftherotypia, 06/10/2008, Dama G., «Δέσμευση για συμμετοχή των μεταναστών στις τοπικές εκλογές» [Commitment for migrant inclusion in local elections], available on http://www.enet.gr/online/online_print?id=36853264 (accessed on 1 November 2008)

Websites

Website of New Democracy (ND) www.nd.gr
Website of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) www.pasok.gr
Including its Human Rights Division: http://tm.pasok.gr/anthropina_dikaiomata?cat=330
Website of the Communist Part (KKE) www.kke.gr
Website of the Coalition of the Left (SYNASPISMOS) www.syn.gr
Website of Leage for Hellenic-Albanian Friendship Sokrates: www.diavatirio.net
APPENDIX I – List of interviews

Interview 1 (I1), Member of the Coalition of the Left (SYNASPISMOS party), Responsible for Human Rights Issues and also civil servant with the Ministry of the Interior previously responsible for citizenship issues regarding co-ethnic returnees. Interview conducted at ELIAMEP in Athens on 13 November 2008. Female.

Interview 2 (I2), Member of the PASOK party, Member of the European Parliament and Member of the PASOK Political Affairs Committee active in the field of human rights, migration and integration issues. Interview conducted at her office in Athens, 16 February 2009. Female.

Interview 3 (I3), Member of the New Democracy Party, Vice-President of the Hellenic Parliament previously responsible for coordinating the Inter-Parliamentary Committee on Migration Policy in 2006. Interview conducted at the Hellenic Parliament premises in Athens, 18 February 2009. Female.

Interview 4 (I4), Member of the New Democracy Party, Secretary Responsible for Relations with Co-Ethnic Associations. Interview conducted at the Hellenic Parliament premises in Athens, 17 March 2009. Female.

Focus Group 1 (FG1), Discussion with three representatives of migrant associations: Male representative of the Migrant Forum (umbrella organization bringing together various migrant associations in Greece), male representative of the Pakistani community and female representative of the Albanian community, Discussion at ELIAMEP, 26 January 2009.

Focus Group 2 (FG2), Discussion with two representatives of a Pontiac-Greek Cultural Association: male president of the association and female secretary of the association, both naturalized co-ethnics. Interview conducted at the offices of the Association, Kallithea, Athens, 17 March 2009.

APPENDIX II – Interview Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions directed to representatives of the main Greek political parties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning the participation of co-ethnic returnees from the former Soviet republics in Greece’s political sphere:

- Has your party concentrated on the particular needs of this population group? In what ways?
- Are there members of this population group who are active in the party structures?
- What strategy has your party pursued in order to engage this community in the political dialogue?
- Has your party taken specific initiatives to reach out/ co-opt members of this community? I.e. undertaken specific policies to integrate them? To encourage and mobilize their participation in the party? Or publication and dissemination of the party programme in Russian prior to elections, etc?
Concerning the participation of co-ethnic returnees from Albania (Vorioipirotes) in Greece’s political sphere:
- Has your party concentrated on the particular needs of this population group? In what ways?
- Are there members of this population group who are active in the party structures?
- What strategy has your party pursued in order to engage this community in the political dialogue?
- Has your party taken specific initiatives to reach out/co-opt members of this community? I.e. undertaken specific policies to integrate them? To encourage and mobilize their participation in the party?

How do you assess the initiatives that have been taken by other political parties in engaging the co-ethnic communities in their structures? In the electorate? In the political debate?

In your opinion, what are the core priorities for immigrant participation in Greek public life?
Is the political rights dimension relevant? If so, in what ways? If not, why?

What sort of formal or informal relations does your party have with immigrant organizations and associations?

In a number of other EU member states, third country nationals have been granted the right to vote (and stand for election) at local elections.
- Has this matter been discussed and considered by your party?
- At what level? Is there an official party position on the extension of political rights at the local level to third country nationals/

If we assume that there is a trend across most other EU member states towards enfranchising third country nationals, do you consider that this trend will influence the respective debate in Greece on these matters? In what ways?

Questions directed to representatives of immigrant organisations

In your opinion, what are the priorities for the participation of immigrants in Greece’s public sphere?

Does the political dimension constitute a priority? In what ways? For what reasons (yes or no)?

What is your opinion regarding the participation of a particular segment of Greece’s immigrant community, the co-ethnic returnees?

Have you been in contact with organizations of co-ethnic returnees (either from the former Soviet republics or from Albania) on issues regarding political representation and participation of third country nationals?

In your opinion, how important is the acquisition of the right to vote (and stand for elections) at local elections for immigrants living in the country for 3 or 5 years? For what reasons is it, or isn’t it important? What are the principal issues that you consider could be achieved with the political participation of migrants at local elections?

What relations do you have with the main political parties?

In your opinion, have migrants’ political rights been a matter of concern for Greek political parties? How do you assess the initiatives that they have/have not taken on this matter?
Have you engaged in a political dialogue with the political parties on these issues?

Questions directed to representatives of co-ethnic migrant organizations
In your opinion, what are the core priorities for immigrant participation in Greek public life? Is the political rights dimension relevant? If so, in what ways? If not, why?

In what ways and to what extent do you participate in Greece’s political sphere? Independently? Informally? Formally connected with a political party? Which one?

What relations do you have with the main political parties?

In your opinion, have migrants’ political rights been a matter of concern for Greek political parties? How do you assess the initiatives that they have/have not taken on this matter? Have you engaged in a political dialogue with the political parties on these issues?

Have you been in contact with other immigrant organizations in order to promote issues regarding the political representation and participation of third country nationals?

In your opinion, how important is the acquisition of the right to vote (and stand for elections) at local elections for co-ethnic returnees from Albania living in the country for 3 or 5 years (regardless of whether they have been naturalized or not)? For what reasons is it, or isn’t it important?

What are the principal issues that you consider could be achieved with the political participation of migrants at local elections?

In your opinion, should the right to vote (and stand for elections) at local elections be granted to all immigrants living in the country for 3 or 5 years?