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ACCEPT PLURALISM

Tolerance and Cultural Diversity Discourses in Cyprus

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Nicos Trimikliniotis and Corina Demetriou
SYMFILIOSI

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1. Overview National Discourses Background Country Reports



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ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

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**Work Package 1 – Overview of National Discourses
on Tolerance and Cultural Diversity**

**D1.1 Country Reports on Tolerance and Cultural
Diversity Discourses**

Trimikliniotis and Demetriou

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Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion: Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century in Europe (ACCEPT PLURALISM)

ACCEPT PLURALISM is a Research Project, funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Program. The project investigates whether European societies have become more or less tolerant during the past 20 years. In particular, the project aims to clarify: (a) how is tolerance defined conceptually, (b) how it is codified in norms, institutional arrangements, public policies and social practices, (c) how tolerance can be measured (whose tolerance, who is tolerated, and what if degrees of tolerance vary with reference to different minority groups). The ACCEPT PLURALISM consortium conducts original empirical research on key issues in school life and in politics that thematise different understandings and practices of tolerance. Bringing together empirical and theoretical findings, ACCEPT PLURALISM generates a State of the Art Report on Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe, a Handbook on Ideas of Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe, a Tolerance Indicators' Toolkit where qualitative and quantitative indicators may be used to score each country's performance on tolerating cultural diversity, and several academic publications (books, journal articles) on Tolerance, Pluralism and Cultural Diversity in Europe. The ACCEPT PLURALISM consortium is formed by 18 partner institutions covering 15 EU countries. The project is hosted by the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and co-ordinated by Prof. Anna Triandafyllidou.

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Symfiliosi is a non-profit non-governmental and non-partisan organisation registered in the Republic of Cyprus in 2005 which carries out research as well as activist work. Its research interests include immigration, asylum, racism, discrimination, homophobia, sex-trafficking, nationality and citizenship and reconciliation. Its activist work is centred around anti-racism and anti-nationalism with a focus on reconciliation between Cyprus' two large communities, the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot community

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Executive Summary

The report aims at exploring the frames and themes of tolerance and intolerance dominant in the Cypriot context, using the desk research method to study the diversity challenges of various time periods and the main groups affected by intolerance. The final section attempts to provide definitions of terms and concepts which are central to understanding the challenges facing Cypriot society.

Cyprus' history of (in)tolerance is very much shaped by its geographical position at the crossroads of three continents, interventions by various other states and by its protracted ethnic conflict that has kept its two large communities apart for over 40 years now. The so-called Cyprus problem very much touches upon all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life of the country. The 1974 war and the model of rapid economic development followed thereafter have structured the economy in such a way that Cyprus had to reluctantly open its doors to migrant workers for what was thought to be a limited period, imposing restrictions and characterised by a rigidity that survived in the new millennium, in spite of the general admission that the presence of migrant workers is no longer temporary. Accession to the EU has also brought to Cyprus a sizeable amount of workers from Eastern Europe, raising the percentage of non-Cypriot workers to about 20% of the labour force.

The Cyprus problem also underlies the politics of citizenship, as the struggle between the two opposing sides for legitimacy was transformed to a struggle for control of the state. The establishment of the 'Republic of Cyprus' created a rigorous bi-communality, to which all other communities (Maronites, Armenians, Latins, Roma) had to succumb by essentially 'choosing sides'; when the bi-communal element collapsed in 1964 with the forced withdrawal of the Turkish-Cypriots from the administration of the state, what remained was a state of limbo, giving rise to both institutional and societal discrimination and intolerance. The legal vacuum created by such withdrawal was filled in by a set of laws, known as 'the doctrine of necessity' which essentially denied Turkish-Cypriots their constitutional rights *as a community* since 1964. Following a coup by the Greek junta and by Greek-Cypriot far right paramilitaries, Turkish troops invaded and have ever since occupied over one third of the country's territory. A mass forced expulsion of Greek-Cypriots to the southern part of the country and Turkish-Cypriots to the north has resulted in ethnic separation in two areas: the Greek-Cypriots reside in the southern part of the country, territory under the control of the Republic of Cyprus, and the Turkish-Cypriots in the northern part, which is an unrecognised break-away state. Very few Greek-Cypriots reside in the north and few Turkish-Cypriots in the south.

The landmark years following the war are undoubtedly 2003-2004, as the sealed border dividing the two communities was partially opened to allow movement back and forth; a year later the referendum to resolve the Cyprus problem was overwhelmingly rejected by the Greek Cypriots. A week later Cyprus entered the EU as a divided country; the border dividing the two communities inevitably became a 'soft border' of the EU. EU accession provided a new impetus for migration into Cyprus but also for certain voices and initiatives towards toleration and pluralism. In this context, a proposal for comprehensive educational reform tabled in 2004, attempting to render Cyprus' ethnocentric education multicultural, democratic and inclusive, is perhaps the most significant of such initiatives in spite of the transformations it has undergone as a result of mounting right-wing and nationalist pressure.

The various ideologies of ethnic hatred form the historical backdrop to contemporary attitudes of intolerance towards migrants and Turkish Cypriots, well documented by studies and surveys, both qualitative and quantitative, carried out over the past 8 years. Amongst the latter, a survey commissioned by the Equality Body into societal attitudes towards persons from 'other' religions interestingly revealed a degree of racism against Muslims, a rather recent feature of Cypriot society

which is perhaps adopted from ‘western’ stereotypes of Muslims, and an even higher degree of the longer-standing fear of proselytism. The media-fuelled antipathy towards migrants and the rise of the far right, with an emerging racist lobby active in the periphery of mainstream institutions, have led to the intensification of the phenomena and manifestations of racism and intolerance in recent years as well as to a policy reaction of rendering immigration control even more rigid.

Amongst the groups affected by intolerant attitudes, the Turkish Cypriots stand out due to the contradictions imported by the ever present ‘Cyprus problem’. The most hostile regime, however, is undoubtedly faced by the Roma, whose exclusion and extreme poverty pushed them to the margins. Discrimination at work and fear of deportation appears to be the predicament of migrant workers and asylum seekers, who have to struggle against an increasingly rigid immigration regime, a policy response to the rise of anti-immigrant voices within the opposition.

In defining tolerance and intolerance, the legacy of colonialism and the current institutional framework of political life in Cyprus are key to the shaping of consciousness on the issue. At the same time an ambivalence is detected within such consciousness, where the xenophobic and racist elements coexist with a solidarity-based set of values. At the institutional level, the state of exception resulting from the Cyprus problem’s legal vacuum, blurring the distinction between legality and illegality, normality and abnormality, opens up margins for those in power to extend their discretion to authoritarian statism. It is likely that the post 2004-developments and particularly the coming into light of the atrocities committed by both sides as well as the stories of self-sacrifice and solidarity during the turbulent years (1963-1974) are beginning to challenge the historical narrative about the barbaric ‘other’ and help shape a new collective memory away from the sense of victimhood, loss and sorrow upon which collective existence had been organised so far. As it will be shown throughout this report, there are significant challenges facing Cypriot policy makers, most aptly manifested in the following areas:

- In employment, where migrant workers make up 20% of the workforce and integration measures as well as protection from discrimination are lacking;
- In education where multiculturalism can give rise to language and integration problems and to intolerance towards religious diversity;
- In law where gaps have led to inadequate protection of vulnerable groups;
- In the mass media where most outlets echo the nationalist and xenophobic discourse of populist politicians;
- In the manner of (non)addressing the rise of ultra nationalist groups, an issue contextually intertwined with the Cyprus problem, as the number of racial violence incidents is alarmingly rising;
- In the weakness of NGOs to play a role in defending the rights of vulnerable groups;
- In the ramifications of the unresolved Cyprus problem on the rights of Turkish Cypriots and in general on human rights traditions.

Keywords

Multiculturalism, citizenship, diversity, identity, migration, nationalism, religion, tolerance, Cyprus, Turkish Cypriots, minority, intolerance, racism, discrimination

1. Introduction

Cyprus is the third-largest island in the Mediterranean; its geographical position, in the far eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, historically adjoining Europe, Asia and Africa has been both a blessing and a curse. Invaders and occupiers for centuries sought to subordinate it for strategic reasons, followed by British colonial rule. In an area of 9,251 square kilometres the total population of Cyprus is around 754,800, of whom 672,800 (or 75.4%) are Greek-Cypriots (living in the Republic of Cyprus-controlled area). Upon independence from British colonial rule in 1960, Turkish-Cypriots constituted 18 per cent of the population, whilst the smaller ‘religious groups’, as referred to in the Constitution—consisting of Armenians, Latins, Maronites and ‘others’ (such as Roma)—constituted 3.2 per cent of the population. Today Turkish Cypriots are estimated to be 89,200 or 10% of the total population of the island.¹

Peaceful coexistence between the island’s two communities, the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots had been short-lived. In 1963 inter-communal violence forced the majority of the Turkish Cypriots to withdraw into enclaves: over 30% of the Turkish Cypriots were forced to live in Turkish militia-controlled enclaves in isolation and squalid conditions. The economy was structured by the ethnic conflict that dominated the island since 1963 and the segregation of the two communities penetrated economy and society deeply up until 1974, when a military coup staged by the Greek junta preceded the military invasion from Turkey a few days later. Since then, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots lived apart, separated by a barbed wire with very little contact until 2003, until the Turkish Cypriot administration decided to partially lift the ban on freedom of movement and opened up a few checkpoints around the island. For many Greek Cypriots and especially for the younger generation, this development offered the first opportunity to come into contact with Turkish Cypriots, who had for several decades lived so close and yet so far apart.

Cyprus had historically been a country of emigration toward richer countries. As is usually the case in former British colonies, many Cypriots migrated to the UK, as well as to other destinations such as Australia, the United States, and South Africa in search for work. In fact, the number of Cypriots living abroad amounts to nearly half the island’s population. The military interventions of Greece and Turkey in 1974 left the country divided and the society and economy devastated. At the same time, however, the 1974 events by default created the preconditions for rapid modernisation, in spite of the severe drop in the GDP and the sharp rise in unemployment and poverty (Anthias and Ayres, 1983; Christodoulou, 1992; Panayiotopoulos, 1996). The dramatic economic growth in the 1980s and 1990s, referred to as ‘the economic miracle’ was structured by a number of ‘external’ factors such as the Turkish occupation of the north since 1974 (Christodoulou 1992). This fact, together with a concerted effort by the Government, political parties and trade unions, created the conditions for the economic growth that was subsequently experienced in Cyprus, based on the massive expansion of the model known as ‘mass tourism’ (Anthias and Ayres 1983; Christodoulou 1992; Panayiotopoulos 1995; 1996).

The Greek-Cypriot ‘economic ethos’ (Mavratsas 1992), in Weberian terms propelled accumulation, growth and commerce, but was much premised on the fact that land-ownership, commerce and trade was dominated by Greek-Cypriots. The social class structure remained essentially the same as the pyramid of wealth and income did not change dramatically after independence: the church continued

¹ This chapter will cover mainly the southern part of the country, although there will be discussion of the position of Turkish-Cypriots in the country as a whole. In particular it concentrates on their position in the Greek-Cypriot controlled southern part of the country, where a few thousand work and visit on a regular basis.

to be the largest land-owner and expanded its commercial activities, whilst at the same time there was a growth in the commercial classes.² The recent history of Cyprus has been marked by rapid economic development since 1960 and the particularly spectacular growth in the aftermath of the 1974 catastrophe. The development of Cyprus has been structured by a number of internal and external factors. For instance, the Turkish military invasion and occupation of the north and the mass expulsion of Greek-Cypriots in 1974, by default created the preconditions for rapid (capitalistic) 'modernisation', in what Harvey (2004) refers to as conditions for 'accumulation by dispossession'. In spite of the severe drop in the GDP during 1973-75 and the sharp rise in unemployment and mass poverty, cheap labour was provided by the 160,000 Greek Cypriot displaced persons, forcibly expelled from the northern part and living in government refugee camps. The conditions of the rapid development were reminiscent to the early industrialisation of western Europe. This fact together with a concerted effort by the government, political parties and trade unions created the conditions for the development that was subsequently experienced in Cyprus (Anthias and Ayres, 1983; Christodoulou, 1992; Panayiotopoulos, 1996).

The change of immigration policy in 1990 which opened up the island's doors to migrants was mainly the result of this rapid economic development emanating largely as a result of the world-wide growth in tourism, which increased the demand for labour in Cyprus.

2.1 A troubled history of post-colonial identity, state and nation formation

National identity and state formation were shaped as a result of the recent troubled history, which tore the country apart: the ethnic conflict, international interventions during the cold war, and the coup and invasion which divided the country in 1974.

Cyprus became an independent Republic in 1960. The ethnic conflict of 1963-1974 brought about a coup by the Greek military junta and the paramilitary EOKA B, followed by an invasion from the Turkish army and the subsequent division of the island. Turkey still occupies 34 per cent of the territory. Thousands were displaced: 162,000 Greek-Cypriots in the southern part of the country and 80,000 Turkish-Cypriots were forced to move to the northern part of the island. Repeated attempts to resolve the Cyprus problem spanning over 40 years have not been successful so far. The election of a pro-solution left-wing President in February 2008 has given new impetus to solving the partition problem. However, after over 100 meetings, the leaders are yet to reach a final agreement.

A crucial aspect structuring national and state identity is the presence of a large number of migrants since 1990. Cyprus was transformed from a net emigration to a net immigration country. Immigration policy in Cyprus was largely formulated in the 1990s, when the government decided to abandon the restrictive policies followed until then and allow more migrant workers into the country in order to meet labour shortages. In the post EU accession era there is an increasing number of EU citizens utilising their right to move and work freely across the EU, who come to seek employment in Cyprus.

² Particularly those who managed to obtain favourable terms from the Government through their political or economic connections as there was some growth of the industrial sector and the tourist and service industry. The 'clientelist state' was at its high point with the characteristic 'rousfeti' and 'meson', the nepotism and political patronage.

Today, the total number of non-Cypriot nationals is estimated to be about 200,000 persons, including the estimated number of irregular or undocumented migrants from third countries.³ The figures provided by the various governmental sources do not necessarily match each other; for instance, the social insurance department records only those migrants who pay social insurance and the Ministry of Labour only those who have a valid work permit. The latest figures supplied by governmental sources are as follows:

Table 1: Regular and Irregular migrants 2010-2011

Third country work permit holders*	60,550
EU citizens**	53,875
Undocumented migrants (estimate)***	25,000-30,000
Total	139,425 – 144,425

*Source: Social Insurance Department

** Source: Social Insurance Department

*** Estimate provided by Ministry of Interior in 2011.

The immigrant population has become an important component of the labour force. In October 2010, out of 376,300 employed persons, 114,425 were EU or third country nationals, comprising 30.4% of those gainfully employed. The sending countries are non-EU countries (Sri Lanka, Russia, Philippines etc) and some of the EU countries (Greece, the United Kingdom, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania etc). As of October 2010 third country nationals (TCNs) largely work in private household service (domestic workers, carers etc.) and other services. This has remained unchanged when compared to previous years, with the exception of the decline in TCN employed in construction, restaurants and the hotel sector. These sectors were among the hardest hit during the economic crisis of 2009, and although further research is needed, the decline of TCNs in construction is comparable to the decline of employment in that sector of Cypriots (Greek and Turkish) and of Europeans. Tables 2 and 3 below show the migration movement of the last decade as well as the actual numbers of non-Cypriots working in Cyprus from 2005 to 2010.

The question of tolerance/toleration is intimately connected to citizenship and economic development as construed in connection to the ever-present ‘Cyprus problem’, structured by the historical and politico-social context of the island and the wider troubled region of the Middle East. So long as the ‘Cyprus problem’ persists, the politics of ‘citizenship’, economic development and socio-cultural transformation cannot remain frozen in time, but are affected by the debates relating to the resolution of the problem. Citizenship has played a central role in political discourse, both during and following the referendum on the UN plan in April 2004. The particular construction of the RoC was such that the struggle for legitimacy was elevated to the primary struggle for control of the state. In this conflict the two communal leaderships of the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots sought to materialise their ‘national aspirations’: For Greek-Cypriots the aim for *enosis* (union with Greece) and for the Turkish-Cypriots the goal of *taksim* (partition) would continue post-independence. The very concept of citizenship was not only ethnically/communally defined by the Constitution, but it was also a sharply divisive issue between the Greeks and Turks, acquiring strong ethnic and nationalistic overtones (see Tornaritis 1982; Trimikliniotis 2000 and 2010).

³ An estimated 200,000 migrants reside in the area under the control of the Republic of Cyprus. In addition there are about the same numbers working in the northern part of the country which is currently not under the control of the Republic, where the *acquis* is suspended.

Table 2: Migration movements 2000-2010

Year	Total Immigrants	Total Emigrants	Net Migration	Net Migration Rate (%)
2000	12,764	8,804 ¹	+3960	+5,7
2001	17,485	12,835 ¹	+4650	+6,6
2002	14,370	7,485	+6885	+9,7
2003	16,779	4,437	+12342	+17,1
2004	22,003	6,279	+15724	+21,3
2005	24,419	10,003	+14416	+19,0
2006	15,545	6,874	+8671	+11,2
2007	19,142	11,752	+7390	+9,4
2008	14,095	10,500	+3595	+4,5
2009	11,675	9,829	+1,846	+2,3

Sources: Gregoriou, P., Kontolemis, Z. and Matsi, Z. (2010); Cyprus Statistical Service, Demographic Report 2008, 2009; Social Insurance Service, Statistical department. Excluding illegal immigration for which they is no yearly estimate. Immigration / Emigration as defined by the statistical service “Cypriots and foreigners arriving/leaving for settlement or for temporary employment for 1 year or more”.

Table 3: Employed non-Cypriots

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
EU Citizens	23,558	16,838	30,482	42,630	48,793	53,875
Third Country	46,225	45,868	49,560	53,693	58,243	60,550
Total	58,784	60,917	81,042	96,436	107,036	114,425

Source: Social Insurance Department, Statistical department, Statistical Branch.

2.2 Ethno-communal citizenship and the nationalising of legally divided subjects

In 1960 Cyprus became an independent republic for the first time since antiquity, albeit in a limited way (see Attalides 1979; Faustmann 1999). The anti-colonial struggle, which started in the 1930s,⁴ led to a four-year armed campaign by the Greek-Cypriot EOKA (1955–59) for *enosis* and the Turkish-

⁴ The 1920s saw the radicalisation of workers and the rise of the trade union movement on the left (largely Greek-Cypriot but bi-communal from its inception) and the radicalisation of the Greek-Cypriot right. By 1931 there were the first mass riots against the British which ended with the burning of the Governor’s residence, known as the Octovirana. In the 1940s, the left had risen as a mass movement and competed with the church for leadership of the anti-colonial movement (Katsiaounis 2007). By the mid 1950s the church re-established its authority with EOKA. EOKA (*Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston*, National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) was the Greek-Cypriot nationalist organisation which started a guerrilla campaign against British colonial rule aimed at self-determination and union with Greece (*enosis*).

Cypriot response for *taksim*. The hostility and instability generated by these developments brought about a regime of ‘supervised’ independence, with three foreign ‘guarantor’ nations (UK, Turkey and Greece). The Cypriot Constitution, adopted under the Zurich-London Accord of 1959, contains a rigorous bi-communalism, whereby the two ‘communities’, Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots shared power in a consociational system. Citizenship was strictly ethno-communally divided. Beyond the two main communities (Greek and Turkish) Cyprus has three national minorities, referred to in the Constitution as ‘religious groups’: the Maronites, the Armenians and the Latins. In addition, there is a small Roma community, registered mostly as part of the Turkish-Cypriot community, which was only recognised as a minority in 2009.⁵ The tables below indicate the ethnic and religious composition of Cypriot society as at present:

Table 4: Communities and national minorities

Community/minority	No.	% of total population
Greek-Cypriots	672,800	75.4
Turkish-Cypriots	89,200*	10
Maronites	4,800	0.5
Armenians	2,700	0.3
Latins (Roman Catholics)	900	0.1
Roma	620-650**	0.08

Source: 2009 Demographic report of the Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus (http://www.cystat.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/populationcondition_21main_gr/populationcondition_21main_gr?OpenForm&sub=1&sel=4) except for the figures for Roma which are taken from a government submission to the FCNM Advisory Committee in October 2006.

*The figure is an estimate of the Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus and refers to Turkish Cypriots residing in the area administered by the Turkish Cypriots (north Cyprus).

** The figure refers to Roma residing in the area controlled by the Republic of Cyprus. The Roma are seen as forming part of the Turkish Cypriot community and were only recently (in 2009) granted by the Cypriot government minority status under the Framework Convention for the Protection of Minorities. Regarding the Roma residing in the north (Turkish controlled) part of Cyprus, these are likely to be included in the estimate provided for the Turkish Cypriots.

Table 5: Main religious groups

Main religious groups	% of total population
Greek Orthodox Christianity	78%
Sunni Islam	18%*
Maronite and Armenian Apostolic	4%
Other (Roman Catholic, Protestant, non-Sunni Muslim, Jewish and other groups)	Less than 5%

Source: The World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=1873>

⁵ Recognition as a national minority was for the first time extended to the Roma through the Third Periodic Report submitted by Cyprus under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, received on 30.04.2009, page 23. This is a deviation from previous policy, which did not recognise the Roma as a separate community; indeed the Roma are nowhere mentioned in the Constitution and were deemed to belong to the Turkish Cypriot community, due to their (presumed) common language and religion.

*This figure presumably represents the Turkish Cypriot community, which according to this source amounts to 142,000 (18% of the total population), as opposed to 89,200 (10% of the total population) estimated by the Republic's Statistical Service. The difference in the two figures perhaps lies with the fact that the Republic of Cyprus does not recognise as Turkish Cypriots those persons of Turkish origin who were granted nationality by the unrecognised 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' in the post-war period (after 1974).

In 1963, following a Greek-Cypriot proposal for amendment to the Constitution, the Turkish-Cypriot political leadership withdrew or was forced to withdraw from the government, (depending on whose historical version one is reading). Since then, the administration of the Republic has been carried out by the Greek-Cypriots. Inter-communal strife ensued until 1967. In 1964, the Supreme Court ruled that the functioning of the government must continue on the basis of the 'law of necessity' or, better yet, the 'doctrine of necessity', in spite of the constitutional deficiencies created by the Turkish-Cypriot leadership withdrawal from the administration.⁶ The short life of consociation did not manage to generate a strong enough inter-communal or trans-communal citizenship. This brief period of peaceful inter-communal political co-existence was tentative; we cannot therefore speak of a 'citizenship policy' as such, above and beyond the politics of the Cyprus conflict and the separate national aspirations of Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, who continued to work towards *enosis* and *taksim* respectively, even after independence. Although de jure the young Republic continued to exist as a single international entity, with the collapse of the consociationist power-sharing, the Republic in practice was controlled by the Greek-Cypriots. The Turkish-Cypriot leadership exercised de facto power within small enclaves throughout the territory of the Republic. This was a situation aptly called 'the first partition' by one scholar.

During this 30-year period the de facto partition meant that in effect there were two separate 'stories': that of the Greek-Cypriots and that of the Turkish-Cypriots. Turkish-Cypriots are entitled to citizenship of the RoC and tens of thousands obtained a Republic of Cyprus passport. Up to April 2003 there were few opportunities for ordinary Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots to meet: Greek-Cypriots did not have access to the northern territories occupied by Turkey, whilst Turkish-Cypriots were prohibited by their own administration from entering the area controlled by the Republic.

In the post-1974 period the RoC attempted to reinforce its legitimacy claiming that Turkish-Cypriot citizens enjoy full and equal rights under the Republic's Constitution, such as general civil liberties and the rights provided by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) as well as other human rights, save for those provisions that have resulted from (a) the 'abandoning' of the governmental posts in 1963–1964 and (b) the consequences of the Turkish invasion. The 'doctrine of necessity' was stated to apply only to the extent that it would allow for the effective functioning of the state, whilst the relevant provisions of the Constitution would be temporarily suspended, pending a political settlement. However, Turkish-Cypriot citizens of the Republic had been denied their electoral rights since 1964, a policy found by the ECtHR to be in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights.⁷ A new law was passed in May 2006 which at least partially remedied this problem but the wide spectrum of the ECtHR decision against Cyprus was not fully addressed by the government.

Successive governments have maintained that Turkish-Cypriots are entitled to full citizenship rights and to citizenship of the RoC. The children of Turkish Cypriots who now reside in northern Cyprus or abroad and were born after 1974 are entitled to citizenship (as with Greek-Cypriots and

⁶ The case was *Attorney General of the Republic v Mustafa Ibrahim and Others* (1964), *Cyprus Law Reports* 195.

⁷ See *Aziz v RoC*(ECHR) App. No. 69949/01

<http://www.echr.coe.int/Eng/Press/2004/June/ChamberJudgmentAzizvCyprus220604.htm>

'others') but children born to Turkish Cypriots and Turkish nationals are not automatically entitled to citizenship.⁸ The bureaucratic elements involved are due to the non-recognition of any documentation (e.g. birth certificates) from the TRNC⁹ which renders the whole policy treatment of Turkish-Cypriots self-contradictory, reflecting the complexity of the Cyprus conflict and the constant contestation for legitimacy and recognition. Inevitably, 'the discourse on recognition' (Constantinou & Papadakis 2002) spilled over into citizenship politics upsetting the officially declared policy of 'rapprochement'. Ultimately, the consequences of the situation resulted in failing to properly treat ordinary Turkish-Cypriots as 'strategic allies', in the context of independence from the Turkish-Cypriots' nationalistic leadership, who are perceived as 'mere pawns of Ankara'. Even today, the RoC seems to be failing to address certain basic matters: In spite of Turkish being an official language of the Republic, its use has in RoC has been virtually abandoned, thus creating conditions of intolerance, discrimination and unconstitutionality (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou 2008).

2.3 The post-referendum and post-accession period (2004-2011)

The year of 2004 was a watershed: the efforts to reunite the country would coincide with Cyprus' accession to the EU, as Cyprus was called to vote in a referendum on a comprehensive plan put together by the UN after the two sides had negotiated it. The plan was approved by a large majority in the Turkish Cypriot community but was overwhelmingly rejected by the Greek Cypriots; this disparity added considerable tension and suspicion in the relations of the two communities which the two sides are yet to overcome. Following the referenda's failure to solve the problem, Cyprus entered the EU as a divided country in a state of limbo. This has significantly shaped Cyprus' relations with and position within the EU, as its unresolved problem and its tensions with Turkey have become a constant source of problems for successive EU presidencies.

The post accession period also saw an increase in the numbers of TCNs seeking employment or asylum in Cyprus, which in a way led Greek Cypriot society to come face to face with the new realities of cultural diversity and 'otherness' simultaneously with the new situation resulting from the opening up of the border between north and south of the country.

3. Cultural diversity challenges facing Cyprus in the last 30 years

3.1. Cyprus and periodisation

The periodisation into the Cold War era or the post 9/11 period does not necessarily fit the same pattern in Cyprus as in other countries under study, as Cyprus does not precisely fit the model of a 'western' society and the time frames and periodisations that follow from the various historical landmarks of 'western' history.

In the Cypriot context, time-wise the rise on multiculturalism, including the establishment of an institutional framework for combating discrimination and enhancing tolerance coincides with an increasing polarisation breeding intolerance. Therefore we can observe in the post-millennium period a rise in the discourse of tolerance, articulated mostly by human and labour rights supporters/groups and intellectuals; at the same time, there is a rise in intolerance and nationalism amongst powerful institutions deeply embedded within society such as mainstream centrist and right wing political parties, sectors of the trade union movement, dominant fractions within the public education teachers

⁸ For further information, see Trimikliniotis 2009.

⁹ Hence the requirements to produce documents relating to birth of their Cypriot parents prior to 1974.

and the civil service, the Church, etc. This polarisation takes place in the context of the transformation of institutions resulting from Cyprus' accession to the EU and the transposition of the EU acquis but also within the revival of the negotiations for the resolution of the Cyprus problem which occurred in 2003.

The cultural diversity challenges in the post 1980s period are shaped by the historical antecedents of the 'border society' torn by war, the cultural effect of mass tourism and the large presence of migrants. The question of tolerance of the 'other' is characterised by antinomies and contradictions, which contain both a degree of tolerance as 'philoxenia', a popular value cherished and advertised as a 'local tradition', but simultaneously xenophobia and an intolerance towards the other. This ambivalence has been structured by a series of key events.

While in the international arena the 1980s marked the closing of the cold war era, in Cyprus these were the years of the consolidation of the *de facto* partition, as the Turkish Cypriot administration declared independence of its breakaway state, the 'Turkish Republic in Northern Cyprus' (TRNC). At the same time there was massive economic growth for the RoC and economic stagnation in the Turkish Cypriot community.

The 1980s was also the period where Cyprus started receiving its first wave of foreigners, mostly affluent people of Arab origin fleeing from the wars raging in the Middle East at the time (Lebanon, Kuwait, Iraq). The potential and actual contribution of this group to the national economy was recognised and utilised from the outset and thus manifestations of racism and discrimination were fragmented and few. However, in 1985 there was the first major incident of mass violence after 1974. In retaliation of an alleged rape of a Greek Cypriot by persons of Arab origin, a riot occurred in the tourist area of Limassol directed against all persons of Arab origin found in the streets. The media took a negative view of the riot and presented it as vandalism, focusing on the fact that such incidents created a bad image for Cyprus abroad – after all the Lebanese who fled to Cyprus were people of money.¹⁰

In the 1990s and early 2000, a number of key issues emerged, opening up the question of citizenship and requiring a declared and consistent policy. First, the arrival of migrant workers in the early 1990s, who today make up over 20 per cent of the total working population of the island, and then the arrival of Roma, who are classified as Turkish-Cypriots, from the poorer north in the south between 1999 and 2002, created a panic of being 'flooded' with 'alien cultures' and 'gypsies'. In the case of the Roma and despite of the fact that they are Cypriots who simply moved from north to south of the country, the reaction of the authorities, the media and the public was that of outright hostility.¹¹ The Minister of Justice at the time alleged that they may well be 'Turkish spies',¹² whilst the Minister of the Interior at the time, in response to the racially motivated fears of local Greek-Cypriot residents,¹³ assured Greek-Cypriots that the authorities 'shall take care to move them to an area that is far away from any place where any people live'.

The advent of migrants and the Cypriot Roma (from the northern part of the country) as well as the dynamics of EU accession, coupled with the prospects of a solution to the Cyprus problem which

¹⁰ See Panayiotou (2006) “ .

¹¹ M. Hadjicosta, 'Fears over gypsy influx', *The Cyprus Weekly*, 13–19 April 2001.

¹² J. Matthews, 'More gypsies crossing from north as Koshis warns about spies', *The Cyprus Mail*, 3 April 2001. www.domresearchcenter.com

¹³ The Minister of the Interior at the time, said that he would not reveal the options discussed, because, 'in this country, when it comes to illegal immigrants or gypsies (moving into an area), everyone reacts'. See 'Our reaction to gypsies raises some awkward questions', *The Cyprus Mail*, 10 April 2001. www.domresearchcenter.com

begun to emerge in the early 2000s brought a powerful boost to multicultural ideas in Cyprus in the new millennium. This boost was met with intense polarisation which was not contained or exhausted in discourse but spilled over into policy making. The system as regards immigration control and monitoring was rigid from the beginning; in fact it had always been racially structured that assimilation was not even an option. Although the length of residence permits varied at different periods, it had always been fixed to a number of years (at the time of writing four years) leaving little possibilities for issues of integration and assimilation to apply to the vast majority of migrants. Progressively this has translated itself into an increasingly more stringent institutional approach for migrant and asylum seekers, who are faced with a hostile society in addition to a hostile immigration and social welfare regime.¹⁴ However, generally speaking Cyprus has not, in the aftermath of 9/11 developed a more stringent regime as regards security matters. Rather, these tight immigration control policies must be seen as mediated by xenophobia and racism against Muslims in particular, as well as by the irrational fear caused by the rising numbers of migrant workers and asylum seekers. At the same time, one needs to consider that the war in Iraq, a direct result of 9/11 has led several thousands of Iraqis to flee their homeland in search for a more secure future; some of these sought asylum in Cyprus where the communist government's meagre handouts have been exaggerated and amplified by the media and by right wing circles.

The two tables below indicate the main communities (both national minorities and migrant communities) of Cyprus and their dimensions of 'difference'

Table 6: Main Ethnic Communities/National Minorities in Cyprus and their Dimensions of Difference

Dimensions of difference	Citizenship	Racial	Ethnic	Religious	Cultural	Linguistic
Ethnic Communities/ National minorities						
Turkish Cypriots			X	X		X
Maronites				X		X*
Armenians						X
Latins				X		
Roma			X	X	X	X

*The Maronite language was only recently recognized as a minority language and has just started to be taught. It is not yet widely used by the Maronites, most of whom speak Greek.

¹⁴ As an example of how intolerance can translate itself into policy, after about two years of media debates over what is being portrayed as exploitation of the social welfare system by 'illegal immigrants posing as asylum seekers', two right wing MPs have recently tabled a proposal to reduce the amount of state benefits received by asylum seekers because many receive "massive funds" they said. This, in spite of UNHCR research that has shown that this is not the case and despite assurances from the Minister of Labour that the figures for the 'massive funds' alleged by the MPs are actually false.

Table 7: Main Immigrant Groups in Cyprus and their Dimensions of Difference

Dimensions of difference	C/ship	Racial	Ethnic	Religious	Cultural	Linguistic
Immigrants						
Immigrants from Middle East/Northern Africa (Kurds, Syrians, Palestinians, Egyptians, etc)	X		X	X	x	X
Immigrants from Central/Sub-Saharan Africa	X	X		X	x	X
Pontians of Greek origin (from former Soviet countries)	X*		X		X	X**
Asia (Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Vietnam etc)	X	X		X	X	x
Eastern Europe (Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Serbia, Moldavia)	X				X	X
EU nationals (Romanians, Polish, Bulgarians)	X			X	X	X

*Many Pontians have Greek nationality, so their citizenship is not perceived as a diversity trait.

** Most Pontians speak both Russian and Greek, so their language is not necessarily or not always perceived as a diversity trait.

3.2. Educational Reform

In the field of education, the issue of tolerance, maltreatment of minorities and ethnic or ‘racial’ discrimination did not, for historical reasons, receive the required attention, as the field of education was deemed by the Cypriot Constitution to be a ‘communal’ affair, to be left to the ‘Communal Chambers’ of the two main communities of Cyprus, the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots to regulate. The Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture emerged after the ‘withdrawal’ of the Turkish Cypriots from the administration in 1963-64. Education nevertheless remained ‘communal’ in character for all those citizens who were deemed to be part of the Greek-Cypriot community,¹⁵ albeit it assumed a ‘national’ character for the Greek Cypriots. Inevitably, the crisis resulted in a ‘politicisation’ of monitoring systems and the collection of data that may be deemed as ‘politically sensitive’. Moreover, the presence of (temporary) migrant labourers and other migrants in Cyprus is a rather new phenomenon that started in the 1990s, and the policy concerns as regards non-Cypriot children are rather new and undeveloped.

The debates over the comprehensive educational reform, which has been on the table for over seven years now, and the virulent reactions to it by sections of the conservative and nationalist Right illustrate the polarisation that cuts across Greek-Cypriot society. The Reform, which aspires to render Cyprus’ ethnocentric educational system multicultural, was met with strong opposition by the church,

¹⁵ This included the three constitutionally recognised ‘religious groups’, who opted to be part of the numerically larger Greek-Cypriot community (80%) rather than the smaller Turkish-Cypriot community (18%).

right-wing, conservative and nationalist sections of teachers, parents and political parties who saw this as ‘conspiracy’ to ‘dehellenize’ education.¹⁶ The issue that attracted most of the controversy in the public debates is the curriculum revision and generally the way in which the lesson of history is taught at school. The history textbook which the Educational Reform sought to revise had been criticised by scholars and by international organisations such as the UN and the Council of Europe for containing offensive references and inflammatory language.¹⁷ A new twist in 2010 has caused the reformists to water down their reformist agenda in the revision of history education: elections in the Turkish Cypriot community brought in power a hard line nationalist who immediately upon assuming office scrapped the new (revised) history textbooks which had up until then been used in Turkish Cypriot schools and replaced them with the old style anti-Greek mould. This has led the Greek-Cypriot reformers to succumb to mounting right-wing and nationalist pressure by teachers associations and parents; this time they were criticised by those who wanted to see a serious transformation towards an open, tolerant and multi-perspective history education. At the time of writing, discussions amongst stakeholders on the future of the history textbooks continued.

3.3. Debates on nation and citizenship

A crucial development was the opening of the checkpoints which allowed many thousands of Turkish-Cypriots to visit the south, generally greeted by both Turkish-Cypriots and Roma residing in the south with relief and optimism.¹⁸ However, there was a tense atmosphere generated in the run-up to and aftermath of the referendum on the Annan plan to reunite the island on 24 April 2004, the rejection of which by the Greek-Cypriots has given rise to nationalist sentiment in the south (see Hadjidemetriou 2006). The political atmosphere has drastically changed since the presidential election in February 2008 and the new negotiations to resolve the problem. Nevertheless, as long as there is no settlement, unease about the legal, political, socio-economic and everyday consequences of the de facto partition will remain. The fluidity of the situation allows greater scope for citizens’ initiatives aiming at reunification and has opened up the debate on reconciliation in Cyprus (Kadir 2007; 2008; Sitas 2008a; 2008b, Sitas, Latif & Loizou 2007; Trimikliniotis 2007; 2010). The current measures cannot be a substitute for a settlement; it is an awkward state of limbo, whereby the ‘citizens’ are divided along ethnic lines, even though all Turkish-Cypriots are entitled to citizenship in the RoC and many thousands have actually acquired citizenship and passports. The Third Report on Cyprus by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) notes that a large number of Turkish-Cypriots have been issued with Cypriot passports (35,000), identity cards (60,000) and birth certificates (75,000), all of which are relevant figures as far as Cypriot citizenship is concerned (ECRI 2006: para. 78). The lifting of the ban in movement between north and south of the island in 2003

¹⁶ Indicative of the negative climate in the education sector is a circular issued by the primary school teachers’ union POED urging its members to refuse to implement the targets set by the Ministry of Education for the development of a culture of peaceful coexistence with the Turkish Cypriots, and especially the proposed measure of organising visits by Turkish Cypriot teachers and pupils. The circular had been criticised by the Equality Body. Following this, the teachers issued another circular reiterating their position against the exchange of visits with Turkish Cypriots.

¹⁷ Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, on the question of human rights in Cyprus, General Assembly Distr. GENERAL, A/HRC/4/59, 9 March 2007 HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, Fourth session, Item 2 of the provisional agenda in implementation of General assembly Resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006 entitled “Human Rights Council”; United States Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004 on CYPRUS, Released by the U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour, February 28, 2005; Makriyianni and Psaltis 2007; Philippou, and Makriyianni 2004 .

¹⁸ They thought that they could no longer be singled out, targeted and harassed and there was a general feeling of optimism and rapprochement (Trimikliniotis 2003).

created a pattern whereby a consistent number of persons cross over for work, leisure or other activities, estimated at about 20 per cent of the population.¹⁹

The grant of RoC citizenship to children of settlers from Turkey who are married to Turkish-Cypriots has become a highly controversial issue as it brings out the conflict over the nature of the Cyprus problem. . There is a misguided conflation of the internationally-condemned policy of an aggressor country, with the fact that we are also dealing with some basic rights and humanitarian issues relating to the rights of children and individuals who marry, start families and continue with their lives. The granting of citizenship rights to children and spouses of Turkish-Cypriots is an important political issue which has taken up the headlines and has brought about accusations against the government for ‘legalising the Turkish settlers’. Moreover, the condemnation of a war crime (colonisation) must not be conflated and confused with issues regarding the conditions of sojourn and living of poor undocumented workers, who are primarily present to be exploited as cheap foreign labour (see Faiz 2008). Finally, gender has become an important issue as regards citizenship. The position of women in the processes of nation-building and nationalism raises the crucial question of a gendered Cypriot citizenship, which one scholar referred to as ‘the one remaining bastion of male superiority in the present territorially divided state’ (Anthias 1989: 150). This last ‘bastion’ was formally abolished with an amendment of the citizenship law in 1999 (No. 65/99), which introduced entitlement to citizenship for descendants of a Cypriot mother and a non-Cypriot father. The reluctance of Cypriot policymakers to amend the citizenship law, allegedly due to the concern about upsetting the state of affairs as it existed prior to 1974, cannot withstand close examination. After all, there have been seven amendments to the citizenship law prior to the amendment No. 65/99. It is apparent that the issue of gender equality had not been a particularly high political priority. Besides, in the patriarchal order of things, the role of Cypriot women as ‘symbolic reproducers of the nation’, particularly in the context of ‘national liberation’, as transmitters of ‘the cultural stuff’, required that potential association and reproduction of women with men outside the ethnic group must be strictly controlled (Anthias 1989: 151).

The specific historical context of the conflict provides the basis for understanding tolerance/intolerance in Cyprus. The Constitution provides that there are two *communities*: the Greek and the Turkish.²⁰ The rigidity of the Constitution fixes ethnic identity in such a way that the two communities *must* be kept apart. Anyone not belonging to either of the two categories, such as members of smaller “religious groups”, falls under the category defined by Art. 2(3) and includes Maronites, Latins and Armenians, who must opt to belong to either of the two main communities and be subject to the ‘Communal Chamber’.²¹ The term ‘community’ is rare in other constitutional texts but is not unique in the Cyprus constitution.²² The other minorities in Cyprus, who enjoyed certain

¹⁹ Research by the College of Tourism in April 2004 is indicative of this trend. Various research surveys since show that the actual percentages of crossing remain at the level of 15–20%.

²⁰ Art. 2(1) provides: “The Greek community comprises of all citizens of the Republic who are of Greek origin and whose mother tongue is Greek or who share the Greek cultural traditions or who are members of the Greek-orthodox Church.” Article 2(2) defines the Turkish Cypriot community: “The Turkish community comprises of all citizens of the Republic who are of Turkish origin and whose mother tongue is Turkish or who share the Turkish cultural traditions or who are Moslems.”

²¹ The Communal Chamber of the Community, which he wishes to belong, must approve this [Art. 2(5)(b)]. Article 7, contrary to any consideration for gender equality, provides that a married woman shall belong to the Community her husband belongs [Art. 2(7)(a)]. Children are automatically members of their father’s community, unless the father is unknown or he/she has been adopted to the community of his/her mother [Art. 2(7)(b)].

²² Whereas a ‘minority’ is a numerically smaller group of people in comparison to a majority in a State, who retain certain rights relating to identity, religion, schooling, language, a community is endowed with more rights. A ‘community’ in the sense employed by the Cyprus Constitution is the intermediary between a ‘minority’ and a ‘people’. A community is not

minority rights, particularly religious rights, were forced in 1960 to choose which of the two main communities they wanted to belong to.²³ Maronites, Armenians and Latins chose to be part of the Greek-Cypriot community, although still retaining their religious representatives in the House of Parliament, albeit with a mere observer and consultancy status. The few Cypriot Jews are said to have chosen to be part of the Greek-Cypriot community. The Roma population of Cyprus, which is said to have been over a thousand at the time, chose in 1960 to be part of Turkish-Cypriot community due to their Muslim faith (Kyrris 1969, 1985). A future federal arrangement can potentially accommodate different ethnic groups, women and 'minorities within minorities' by utilising the experiences and regimes developed elsewhere, without of course dogmatically 'importing' regimes that do not account for the conditions of the island.²⁴

From the research conducted over the last ten years, we can locate three types of relevant findings highlighting the problem with racial and well as other types of intolerance, including hate crimes which inform the context: (a) opinion surveys from quantitative research and opinion polls; (b) qualitative research (interviews, focus groups and ethnographic/participant observation) referring to hate crime and (c) research papers based on policy and institutional analysis. The absence of comparable reliable data covering the period under examination makes it difficult to comment on trends. Nonetheless, relying on various indicators and proxy data some conclusions are possible, even if they are preliminary and subject to further investigation.

It is safe to say that that research from the late 1990s shows a negative predisposition towards migrants, with media discourses showing a general *antipathy* towards migrants and the Cypriot Roma. Similar attitudes are often expressed against various minority and 'otherised' groups. Racial incidents recorded in the media and NGO statements and positions seem to suggest en masse violations of the rights of migrant workers, as well as racial violence and hate crimes. Of course the ethnic conflict and violence which was characteristic of the Cypriot society prior to that, forms the historical backdrop which is manifested in the continuation and perpetuation of various ideologies of ethnic hatred. Below we provide some of the key findings:

3.4. Colour as signifier of racism

Colour remains an important signifier of racism, although not exclusively or necessarily. Research conducted in 2010 confirms that colour racism and racial abuse against blacks persists. During focus groups with asylum seekers (see Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2010), Africans reported having received the worst treatment of all asylum seekers, facing more overt and acute forms of discrimination, particularly from immigration officers who have no hesitation in demonstrating racist behaviour towards them. Other asylum seekers interviewed also reported having been subjected to racial abuse but the degree of regularity, humiliation and intensity does not match the stories told by the Africans. Colour and 'race' are not the only signifiers of racial hatred in Cyprus. There is an increasingly loud and frequent public discourse, which often avoids explicit references to 'race' but

(Contd.) _____

a 'people'. The people of Cyprus as set out in the Cyprus Constitution consist of both communities and the other religious minorities. The problem of defining what is community and what rights should be endowed with each community is amongst the most bitterly contested issues in the Cyprus problem.

²³ This forced affiliation of the three recognised minorities to the Greek Cypriot community continues to be a cause for concern for the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which urges the Cypriot government to remedy this problem: see Third Opinion on the situation of minorities in Cyprus.

²⁴ Critiques of communitarian nationalism in Cyprus started from the 1970s (Kyriakides 1968, Loizos 1972, 1976; Attalides 1977, 1979; Kitromilides 1977; 1979, Pollis 1979, Anthias and Ayres 1979, 1983). Such critiques are extremely useful in the debates over nationhood, racism and identity, as diasporic perspectives that de-essentialise ethnic identity utilising the poetics of the class and the subaltern can open up stale debates and provide for alternatives imaginings and futures.

utilises other signifiers such as essential or inherent or hereditary characteristics which derive not from the blood or DNA but culture, language and religion, in what scholars refer to as neo-racism.²⁵

3.5. Rise of Far Right violence and hatred discourse

There is a neo-racism connected to the rise of the Far Right and discourses of hatred. Even though traditionally in Cyprus there was no typical far right / xenophobic populist or Neo-Nazi party, focusing for instance on anti-immigration populism or anti-Semitic politics, this is now beginning to change as these signifiers are regularly being articulated in the mainstream press and media. In the 2009 European Parliamentary elections, a neo-Nazi type of party called 'Ethniko Laiko Metopo' (ELAM)²⁶ contested the elections and received 663 votes (0.22 percent); at the time it received no media coverage. The main discussion lines of ELAM produced the usual racist slogans contained in the Greek neo-Nazi and extreme Right papers and magazines,²⁷ claiming that it is the only party that speaks for the "liberation of our enslaved lands, the ending of the privileges of the 'greedy' Turkish-Cypriots and for a Europe of Nations and traditions which belongs to the real Europeans and not to the 'third-worldly' [backward] illegal immigrants".²⁸ In the national parliamentary elections of 2011 ELAM received 4,354 votes, scoring 1,08% of the votes, the largest percentage amongst the parties that did not elect an MP. This, in spite the general admission that ELAM is behind several racist attacks against unsuspecting migrants and Turkish Cypriots and taking place in public space under broad daylight.

The recently emerging organised racist lobby, with an anti-immigration and xenophobic agenda, has found affiliates in many mainstream political parties and in media outlets. There is a number of publications and regular media discourses about the imminent and grave 'dangers' from 'Afro-asiatic', 'Muslim-Asiatic' and 'Turko-asiatic' hordes that are ready to invade Cyprus as part of a plan orchestrated by Turkey to change the demographic character of Cyprus through illegal immigration; a leaflet was also widely circulated to this effect.²⁹ Studies have shown that there are regular media discourses employing the usual racist frames comparable to those of other EU countries such as ethno-nationalistic, conflict-criminality, welfare-chauvinist, job-stealing, 'threat to liberal norms', biological racism and national specific frames.³⁰ Particular individuals within various political parties,

²⁵ See Balibar and Wallerstein (1991).

²⁶ The initials stand for Εθνικό Λαϊκό Μέτωπο (National Popular Front).

²⁷ It is a mixture of the neo-Nazi magazines and newspapers *ΣΤΟΧΟΣ*, *Χρυσή Αυγή*, *Απολλώνιο Φως* and the extreme Right magazines such as *Πεσαλτο* and nationalist/ anti-Turkish magazines such as *ΕΛΛΟΙΙΑ* etc.

²⁸ Our translation from the section of the website that refers to the ideology of the party, <http://ethnikolaikometwo.blogspot.com/2009/06/2009.html> (22.07.2009).

²⁹ For instance in July 2008 the two organisations called 'Movement for the Salvation of Cyprus' and 'Movement for a European Future of Cyprus' announced their intention to hold a public meeting to summon support for their fight against the above 'dangers'. The announcement, which claimed that the keynote speaker would be the Chief of Police, prompted the public to attend the meeting en mass. Complaints were filed with the Cyprus Equality Body (Ombudsman) against the two organising NGOs for violation of the constitutional equality and anti-discrimination principle and for stirring up racial hatred contrary to the criminal code. No action was taken by the prosecution authorities against the organisers for dissemination of racist material. Since then, more anti-immigrant marches were organised, headed by right wing MPs and attended inter alia by judges, doctors, councillors etc, and more racist leaflets were disseminated, again with no reaction from the authorities. In November 2010, an anti-immigrant march clashed with an anti-racist festival with disastrous effects: two Turkish Cypriot musicians were stabbed, several others were injured and the anti-racist festival was disrupted. In this case, the police prosecuted the festival organisers rather than the anti-immigrant marchers.

³⁰ See Trimikliniotis (2005).

including centre-right mainstream parties, various newly-formed committees for the ‘salvation of Cyprus’,³¹ as well as neo-Nazi groups argue that asylum-seekers, migrants and Turkish-Cypriots are abusing the Cypriot welfare benefit system ripping the “golden benefits”³² of “the Cypriot paradise” and making Cypriots “second class citizens”.³³ They criticise the Minister of Interior for his ‘liberal’ migration policy,³⁴ sometimes even going as far as labelling him as an agent who conspires to distort the population make-up and de-Hellenize Cyprus.³⁵ Asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants are described as “invaders”, “a fifth column against the Greek element of free Cyprus”, claiming that “Hellenism is threatened from asylum-seekers as it is threatened by colonists/settlers in the Turkish occupied territories.”³⁶ Such discourses aired regularly by the media are creating a climate which is conducive to racial hatred. Such is the influence and power of the media that when the Equality Body embarked upon the drafting of a Code of Conduct on how ethnic communities and immigrants should be portrayed in the media, the result was a watered-down non-binding set of guidelines and an extensive explanation of why ‘freedom of the press’ should not be ‘interfered with’.³⁷

3.6. Racist Predispositions and Opinion Surveys: Racial Intolerance Uncovered

The findings of a research conducted by Charakis et al on the anti-social behaviour of the Cypriot youth and racist tendencies³⁸ provide some interesting data. Methodologically the research covers a large and representative sample of teachers, school heads and deputy heads, media persons and youth.³⁹ The aim of the research was to investigate racist predispositions amongst the Greek-Cypriot

³¹In these Committees such as the “Movement of the Salvation of Cyprus” [Κίνηση για τη Σωτηρία της Κύπρου] and the Movement for the European Future of Cyprus [Την Κίνηση για το Ευρωπαϊκό Μέλλον της Κύπρου] there are various public figures such as a former ECHR judge, a former military officer and other retired politicians.

³²Term used by Christos Rotsas (2010) “Ο Μεγάλος Αυθέντης”, in: *Η Σημερινή*, 23.07.2010 <http://www.sigmalive.com/simerini/analiseis/other/295061>

³³These terms were used by the official of EVROKO and former Senior Labour Officer in charge of Migration, A. Morfitis (2010) ‘Οι αλλοδαποί και οι ντόπιοι’ in *Η Σημερινή* (23.07.2010); C. Rotsas (2010) ‘Ο Μεγάλος Αυθέντης’, in *Η Σημερινή* (23.07.2010) <http://www.sigmalive.com/simerini/analiseis/other/295061> (26.08.2010)

³⁴His reply to the Minister of Interior is hosted on the EVROKO official website <http://www.evropaikokomma.org/main/1,0,837,166->

³⁵Such discourses are normally articulated by Le Pen in France and Carantzaferis in Greece as well as the neo-Nazi group Chrysi Avyi (Χρυσή Αυγή), based in Greece but also operating in Cyprus; its ‘sister organisation’ in Cyprus is ELAM. These are repeated by a DESY official and former MP Christos Rotsas in the article with the illuminating title “encouraging our population distortion” («Ενθαρρύνοντας την πληθυσμιακή μας αλλοίωση» («Αλήθεια» 12.11.2009).

³⁶These term was used by the official of DESY Christos Rotsas (2010) “Ο Μεγάλος Αυθέντης”, *Η Σημερινή*, 23.07.2010 <http://www.sigmalive.com/simerini/analiseis/other/295061>

³⁷See http://www.no-discrimination.ombudsman.gov.cy/sites/default/files/kateythintiries_arhes_MME_kata_ratsismoy_xenofovias_diakriseon.pdf for the Equality Body’s Guidelines for the Media in Greek and <http://www.non-discrimination.net/content/media/CY-52-EB%20media%20guidelines.pdf> for an English description.

³⁸Charakis (2005) is based on the report of the research conducted by a team of social scientists and financed by the Research Promotion Institute in Cyprus; the empirical testing took place in 1999-2000. It deals with education and covers issues such as discrimination in the school system, the role of the church and religious instruction, the content of school textbooks, etc.

³⁹The sample included 39 school heads and deputy heads from all over the part of the island controlled by the Cyprus Republic; 44 teachers (aged 28 – 60); two special questionnaires for 1,242 youths, between the ages 15-23; 62 non-Cypriots who were mostly students of unspecified age; 23 persons aged between 18-52 who are connected to the mass media.

youth, referred to as *habitus* by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.⁴⁰ The research team constructed what they refer to as an ‘emotional map’ of the respondents’ dispositions of Greek-Cypriot youth between ‘two intractable extremes’. The study revealed that, in depicting the parameters of racist and anti-racist dispositions, 20 per cent belong to an intractable group which dismisses all forms of discrimination and who espouse a culture of equality and human rights; ten per cent “articulated deeply racist dispositions of a primordial sense based on the reduction of phenotype to genotype and dismissed all forms of ‘otherness’”. The scholars deduce from their empirical research that “whatever correlation is undertaken or frequencies studied, the two cohorts present an intractable boundary[:] all their responses emanate from an unwavering system of beliefs” (Charakis and Sitas 2004: 152). However, what is crucial in terms of tendencies is what happens to the remaining 70 percent in the middle and how they shift from one position to the other, depending on the issue. Charakis and Sitas argue that “if we correlate respondents with ideas that were discriminatory in the broadest sense possible, the concentration of responses would move from the intractable racist [group] ... to spread all the way up to a 79 percent but stop short of the boundary [of the other group]... If we were to correlate respondents with active derogation of the cultural ‘other’ we would find that it also corresponds with ‘xenophobic’ feelings and shrink back to 30 percent ...”

Research based on the European Social Survey, which examined behaviour towards migrants, social exclusion and national and religious identity, seems to confirm the negative predisposition of Cypriots towards immigration and towards non-Greek-Cypriots:⁴¹ On the question whether Cyprus should allow migrants to stay, 56.8 per cent answered negatively. On the question whether immigration is bad for the economy, Cyprus ranked third after Hungary and Russia: on a scale from zero to 10 (zero being the position that immigration is bad for the economy) Cyprus ranked fourth. On the question whether immigration is undermining or enriching the country, Cyprus ranked second after Russia in stating that immigration is undermining national culture. On the question of religiosity the study highlights the link between Christian orthodox religious identity and xenophobia and social intolerance, noting that Cyprus is the most religious country in Europe together with Poland, and one of the most xenophobic. These findings are in line with the findings of other surveys briefly described below.

An Equality Body survey carried out in June 2007 on the attitudes of Greek Cypriots towards other religions revealed that two out of three Greek Cypriots do not have and never had friends belonging to other religions. This appears to be the result of lack of contact or of opportunities to mix with persons from other religions, because persons with university degrees or residing in areas with high concentration of immigrants appeared to be more tolerant of other religions. Interestingly, the sentiments of the religious Greek Cypriots on a number of issues did not differ much from the sentiments of the non-religious or atheists, suggesting that the problem is rather one of xenophobia than of religious intolerance. Some indicative results of the survey are the following: About 50 per cent believe that being a non-Christian Orthodox is an obstacle to finding work; 85 per cent would not marry a Muslim; 61 per cent would be upset if their child married a non Christian Orthodox; 47 per cent would not marry a Catholic; 68 per cent disagree with the abolition of obligatory prayer at schools and in the army; 51 per cent disagree with the abolition of the obligation to declare one’s religion in public service job application forms; 50 per cent disagree with the view that the Religious Instruction curriculum taught at schools must become more neutral. On the question of coexistence with Muslims, the majority adopted the stereotype of linking Muslim faith with extremism and fundamentalism: 50 per cent believe that Muslims should be prevented from taking key positions in organisations because they tend to be religious fanatics; but the majority disagreed with the view that

⁴⁰ For more on this study see Trimikliniotis & Demetriou (2009b).

⁴¹ See Gouliamos and Vryonis (2010).

good Muslims will not go to heaven. Also the majority stated that they did not object to having a Muslim neighbour or colleague or doctor but they would have a problem if their child's carer or teacher was a Muslim, suggesting a fear of proselytism. A similar position was recorded as regards attitudes towards Jehova's Witnesses, where the fear of proselytism was even higher.⁴²

In June 2010 research commissioned by the immigration department of the Ministry of Interior on the attitudes of Cypriots towards migrants focusing on third country nationals⁴³ found the following trends emerging. The results, based on a quantitative survey (representative sample 1177 persons) and a qualitative research (5 focus groups) revealed that Cypriots have a negative predisposition towards migrants with the vast majority (between 68-85 per cent) blaming them for the rise in unemployment, criminality and insecurity, spread of diseases, causing more problems than what they solve etc. Interestingly 68 per cent thought Cypriots must adapt to a multicultural setting, 76 per cent thought that in Cyprus there is a problem of racism and 82 per cent thought that migrants are victims of exploitation, suggesting a contradiction, tension or even a polarisation within Cypriot society. Another survey carried out in July 2010 commissioned by the immigration department of the Ministry of Interior, this time on Cypriot students' perceptions of immigrants, found that 54 per cent of students have negative predispositions towards migrants, 25 per cent positive and 20 per cent ambivalent.⁴⁴

On 24.10.2010 a public opinion poll was published on attitudes towards Turkish Cypriots, recording the results of telephone interviews with 1001 Greek Cypriots aged over 18 residing in both urban and rural areas conducted between 11-17 October 2010. On the question whether they would settle permanently under Turkish Cypriot administration, 30 per cent said yes, 65 per cent said no and five per cent did not reply. Interviewees were also asked about their levels of acceptance of Turkish Cypriots as 'friends': 20 per cent said 'not at all', 19 per cent said 'a little', 28 per cent said 'sufficiently' and 32 per cent said 'a lot'.⁴⁵

Although the above polls, commissioned by the immigration department itself, show high levels of intolerance towards migrants, there has been no single policy initiative or measure adopted to address this situation. On the contrary, the immigration department's rigid immigration practices continue to attract criticisms from NGOs, the Ombudsman and Equality Body and other stakeholders.

3.7. Groups whose difference is 'difficult' to tolerate

3.7.1. The Turkish-Cypriots

In most Greek-Cypriot texts, Turkish-Cypriots are perceived either in identification with Ankara, or as a pure victim with no will or agency. This perception is at least partly premised upon the fear that if the Turkish-Cypriots are recognised as an autonomous collective political subject, then this would serve to justify and lead to the de jure recognition of the unrecognised 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' (TRNC). The dominant Greek Cypriot accounts tend to present the TRNC as a mere 'puppet' of Ankara⁴⁶ and the Turkish Cypriots are depicted as the 'the other enclave/captive persons'.⁴⁷ The

⁴² The equality body's survey is available in Greek at <http://www.no-discrimination.ombudsman.gov.cy/sites/default/files/ereyna-sxetika-me-diaforetikis-thriskeytikis-pepoithiseis.pdf>

⁴³ The research was conducted by the University of Nicosia and other in June 2010 on behalf of the Civil Registry and Migration Department - Ministry of Interior and was co-funded by the EU Solidarity Funds and the Cypriot government.

⁴⁴ The research was conducted in July 2010 by CARDET and INNOVADE LTD, co-funded by the EU Solidarity Funds and the Cypriot government.

⁴⁵ Source: Phileltheros newspaper at <http://www.philenews.com/Digital/Default.aspx?d=20101024&pn=1>

⁴⁶ See *Ioannides* (1991) ; *Gennaris* (2003).

Turkish Cypriot equivalent depicts the TRNC as a normal functioning state (Dodd 1993). This is a rather special category of vulnerable persons and perhaps the one that attracts more controversy, as result of ‘the Cyprus Problem’. The nature and levels of tolerance towards the Turkish Cypriots have changed over the decades, as the nature of the Cyprus Problem itself was undergoing transformations. One constant factor unaffected by time is, at least for nationalist circles amongst the Greek Cypriot society, the Turkish Cypriots’ perceived affiliations with Turkey. As the Turkish Cypriots increasingly asserted their Cypriot identity and rebelled against the idea of the ‘Turkish motherland’, the image of the Turkish Cypriots as Turkey’s “Trojan Horse” began to fade, but did not disappear completely; it is the card that many politicians will produce at their convenience. Instead, in more recent years, additional or other factors begun to emerge that attracted the Greek Cypriots’ resentment: the Turkish Cypriots’ claims for ending their political and economic isolation from the rest of the world were seen as claims for recognition of their break-away state, which in turn would undermine the foundation of the state managed by the Greek Cypriots, the ‘Republic of Cyprus’. This predicament quickly turned into a zero sum game endlessly generating resentment and hostility: any initiative aimed at strengthening the Turkish Cypriots’ relations with the rest of the world was interpreted by Greek Cypriots as potential recognition of the TRNC and thus a defeat; in turn, any initiative strengthening the Greek Cypriots’ relations with the world was perceived as a defeat for the Turkish Cypriots.

A crucial date in the development of attitudes towards Turkish Cypriots is no doubt the 23rd April 2003 when the Turkish Cypriot administration unexpectedly opened up the borders between north and south, which had been sealed since 1974 (some since 1964). Since then, many thousands of Turkish-Cypriots have crossed the checkpoints, either taking up residence in the Greek-Cypriot south, or simply crossing the dividing line every day to access public services or to work, where jobs are more readily available than in the north and the pay is better. This has created multiple challenges for both state and society. Keen to maintain the privilege of the only recognised state on the island, successive governments of the ROC have tried to demonstratively treat Turkish Cypriots as equal citizens, although it is inevitable that differential treatment, discrimination and prejudice often creeps in, sometimes in the conduct of policemen, health practitioners or other civil servants acting within their discretion or exceeding their authority, and sometimes as a result of the state sanctioned ‘doctrine of necessity’ which permeates several aspects of the Turkish Cypriots’ lives and results in structural discrimination against them. At the societal level, the sudden coming to face with the ‘other’ that had lived so close and yet so far for over 30 years produced mixed reactions. Alongside the encounters of old friends and old enemies, there were stories of both prejudice-turning-friendship and of ignorance-turning-anger.

The Turkish Cypriots were recognised in the Constitution as a community, rather than a minority, with equal rights as the other large community on the island, namely the Greek Cypriots. This is potentially the most contentious element of their identity.

3.7.2. The Roma

Various groups of Roma have lived in Cyprus for over 500 years⁴⁸ but their nomadic lifestyle changed with the *de facto* partitioning of the island in 1974⁴⁹ when they were forced to convert to a more

(Contd.) _____

⁴⁷ The above words are translated from «Οι Τουρκοκύπριοι: οι άλλοι εγκλωβισμένοι», which was the title of a documentary series produced by journalist Costas Gennaris «Ανοικτοί Φάκελοι», broadcasted on 11 June 2008 from the state channel CyBC.

⁴⁸ Kenrick and Taylor(1986) claim that ‘although there are no official records confirming the arrival of Gypsies in Cyprus, it has been estimated by historical calculation that the first immigrants came between 1322 and 1400, when Cyprus was under the rule of the Lusignan (Crusader) kings. These Gypsies were part of a general movement from Asia Minor to

settled existence mostly in the north. The larger groups of Roma are now settled in the Turkish controlled towns of Morphou/Guzelyurt and Famagusta in the north where approximately 600 Roma were settled. Current total population estimates for the entire island range between 1,000-2,000 Roma people. Traditionally, the Roma were Muslims with an affinity to the Turkish-Cypriots, hence the generally accepted rationale for their moving to the northern area after the Turkish invasion in 1974. Recent studies indicate that there is wide-spread resentment by the locals, both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, against the Roma and ample evidence of discrimination (Spyrou 2003; Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2009a and 2009b). The arrival of large numbers of Roma in the south in the early 2000s was greeted with fear and suspicion, particularly as the socio-economic position of this generally destitute group renders them particularly vulnerable and dependent on welfare; the rights that derive from their citizenship status were thus mediated by the way various state authorities approached them; for instance their nomadic lifestyle often means they lack the documents necessary (such as birth certificates, identity cards, and consequently passport) for claiming their civic rights.. The failure to take into account the socio-economic conditions of the Roma may result in the denial of the right to obtain a passport, as was found in cases investigated by the Cyprus Ombudsman.⁵⁰

The hostility facing the Roma communities who have been dispersed to remote locations in order to appease the hostile locals, becomes apparent when one examines the events which took place in the villages of Makounda and Polis Chrysochoos in September 2005, when the parents' association of the school arbitrarily closed it down, demanding that the Education Ministry suspend Roma pupils' attendance to the school until they received confirmation that none of them suffered from hepatitis (following some hepatitis incidents in a nearby village three months earlier). The parents' association, protesting at the large number of Roma in this school, demanded that the Roma pupils also be dispersed to other schools in the region. Overall, the authorities expressed disagreement over the parents' action and gave their assurance over the health and sanitary safety of the school. However, they did nothing to prevent the closure of the school by the parents or to support and protect the Roma pupils from this outburst. Whilst the authorities called on the parents to terminate the closure of the school and to enter into dialogue they conceded to the parents' demands to submit the Roma pupils, as well as the residents of a Roma settlement in neighbouring Makounda, to blood tests to establish whether any of them suffered from hepatitis. In an effort to appease the parents, the Paphos District Officer convinced a seven-member Roma family residing in the Roma settlement of the neighbouring village of Makounda, some of whose members had suffered from hepatitis but had successfully been treated, to move back to the village they had come from. On 26 September 2005, the parents agreed to allow the school to re-open but only on the condition that Roma pupils would not return to the school. The Minister of Education succumbed to this request. On 28 September, the blood tests showed that none of the Roma pupils suffered from hepatitis and were thus allowed to return to their school. The Ombudsman started to investigate this incident following a complaint of discrimination against the Roma pupils, but decided to discontinue its investigation, claiming that the problem had already been resolved.

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Europe. Those who landed on Cyprus probably came across from the Crusader colonies on the eastern Mediterranean coast (present day Lebanon and Israel)⁴⁹. See also: C. Kyrris (1969).

⁴⁹ See Kenrick and Taylor (1986)

⁵⁰ A Turkish-Cypriot woman filed a complaint because her application to be registered in the Republic's Citizens Record was rejected, on the basis that the birth of her mother had not been recorded in the Republic's archives. The complainant's mother had been born to Roma parents who failed to register her birth. It was also noted that the complainant was inconvenienced for several months due to bad advice by government officials as to the procedure with regard to her registration. In addition, she complained about the rejection of her application to enrol her child in school because the child did not have a birth certificate from the Republic. Following the Commissioner's report on the matter, her child was finally enrolled in school.

The spatial and social segregation resulting from the dispersment of the Roma into remote locations illustrates the marginality of the Cypriot Roma. The Ombudsman's self-initiated investigation into the living conditions of the Roma in the village of Makounda in 2003 found that the selection of the sites for setting up the Roma settlements was made in the framework of a dispersal policy intended to satisfy the demands of hostile local communities who did not wish to live close to the Roma. One scholar considers how the categorisations of cultural difference which moderate ethno-religious relations in Cyprus have never been extended to the Roma, whose 'threatening' nomadism falls foul of Cyprus border politics (Iacovidou 2008). She argues that 'their subsequent isolation in small, deserted villages that give the impression of ghettos, along with the government's arrangements to accommodate them in small houses of poor and questionable quality, prove the lack of an organised official policy to address their needs. In recent years however, the school attended by the Romani children residing in the old Turkish quarter of Limassol has adopted significant measures towards their integration and has contributed to the development of a cooperation network between parents and the local community which marks a sharp improvement since earlier studies conducted in 2004 (See Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2009).

In spite of this, the Cypriot Roma continue to live in extreme poverty and exclusion with no participation or representation in mainstream society. The perceptions and perspective of the Cypriot Roma will only become evident when the new generation of Roma, currently attending mainstream schools, will attain the requisite age and status in order to voice the aspirations of their community. However, given their strong historic affiliations to the country and to one of its two large communities, the Turkish-Cypriot, the Roma are unlikely to be content with mere toleration.

3.7.3. The recognised minorities⁵¹ (Maronites, Armenians, Latins)

The Armenians, the Maronites and the Latins have traditionally enjoyed a high degree of acceptance by and integration in Cypriot society, although there still appear to be insufficient opportunities available for them to participate effectively in decision-making on issues of interest to them.⁵² The issues which these communities themselves have raised in recent years concern measures for the preservation of their culture, language and identity, their educational autonomy and the funding of minority schools including state subsidies for tuition fees, the absence of any quotas to ensure the participation of members of the minorities in public administration, the judiciary or the executive; this latter point is particularly an issue for the Armenians who face problems in accessing jobs in the public service, the police, positions in semi-governmental organisations and the exams for reservist army cadets because, in their effort to preserve their native tongue, they inevitably speak less Greek than the majority population, as a result of which they cannot compete with the other Cypriots on an equal basis. The nature of the demands is such that clearly these groups seek not only to be tolerated, but full equality coupled with positive measures to ensure their effective participation in a non-assimilationist fashion.

⁵¹ The Cypriot government understands this term to mean those national minority groups who had a traditional presence on the island at the time of establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, and have Cypriot citizenship i.e. Maronites, Armenians and Latins: See the Third Report submitted by Cyprus pursuant to Article 05, paragraph 1 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, received on 30.04.2009

⁵² See Report of Committee of Experts on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Cyprus, Council of Europe: Committee of Ministers, *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: Application of the Charter in Cyprus, 2nd Monitoring Cycle*, 23 September 2009, ECRML (2009) 5, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4abb46510.html>. Also,

3.7.4. 'Other' religions: Islam

Greek Cypriot society is in general terms fundamentally Christian Orthodox but attitudes towards 'other' religions vary depending not only on the religion or dogma but on the ethnic origin of the person practicing it. Thus, although attitudes towards Islam appear to adopt the stereotype of the link with fanaticism and violence, this does not apply to the Turkish Cypriots whose secular traditions mean that they cannot be identified with Islam, whether 'moderate' or 'radical' Islam. The opinion survey commissioned by the Equality Body and described earlier in this chapter suggests that attitudes towards Muslims (but not the Turkish Cypriot Muslims) are permeated by fear of proselytism on the one hand and by 'Western' stereotypes linking Islam with fundamentalism on the other, rather than governed by religious intolerance.

The non-Turkish Cypriot Muslims residing in Cyprus are primarily the immigrants and asylum seekers from northern Africa and the Middle East; their history of toleration or exclusion would thus go hand in hand with the history of toleration of migrants and asylum seekers. Although research^[1] suggests that the authorities tend to treat them more favorably than immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa or Asia, this is nevertheless a most vulnerable group whose precarious position in terms of stay and work renders them at the mercy of the employers or the immigration police. Integration is a non-applicable concept in the case of the majority of these persons, who are in Cyprus for a maximum of four years or who are undocumented and thus leading an 'underground' existence for fear of being apprehended and deported. Therefore there are serious policy issues of residence and labour rights affecting them, rendering questions of toleration rather secondary, although the two are closely intertwined: migrants and asylum seekers are increasingly facing a more hostile regime, as xenophobia and far right extremism are on the rise. The rigidity of the institutional framework is not unconnected to the policy makers' intolerance towards migrants and their efforts to appease an intolerant public opinion, often stirred by hatespeech and racist discourse in the mass media.

3.7.5. Asylum seekers and migrant workers

Societal attitudes towards these two categories vary in accordance with a number of parameters, colour and nationality being the most important. Thus, whilst all these people are invariably located at the lower echelons of the socio-economic ladder, performing tasks that no Cypriot will do, the Greek-passport holding Pontians who speak Greek are tolerated more than asylum seekers who are viewed as ripping off the social welfare system. Workers from Poland, Bulgaria and Romania, who face a tough labour regime and are often victims of labour trafficking, are seen as a 'necessary evil' commensurate to Cyprus' accession to the EU, a concept falling short of toleration.

4. Definitions of tolerance/acceptance/recognition-respect in Cyprus

4.1. Sources and manifestations of tolerance/intolerance in Cyprus

To speak of tolerance/acceptance/recognition-respect in Cyprus is to locate the three levels of analysis on the question of tolerance in their specific historical context. In Cyprus, tolerance as a value is

^[1] In the framework of a transnational ERF research project completed in January 2010 entitled "Detention of Vulnerable Asylum Seekers in the European Union (the DEVAS project), the Cypriot team interviewed detained rejected asylum seekers, some of whom expressed the view that Arabs and Iranians get better treatment from the prison guards than the Asians. Also, in Trimikliniotis and Demetriou (2010) it was found that although Arabs and Iranians also received a rough treatment, the Africans were still treated worse.

marked by the political, ideological, institutional/constitutional and socio-cultural environment of a war-torn society.

It is difficult to disentangle the *sources* from the *manifestations* of tolerance/intolerance in Cypriot society. Yet, we can certainly speak of historical structures in society which have generated logics of postcolonial (in)tolerance: The historical legacy of the “*dialectic of intolerance*” (Kitromilides 1979) is partly a legacy of colonialism. Structured around the institutional framework of Cypriot political life, today it also finds expression in ‘ethnic’ intolerance. This intolerance undermined the development a strong ‘public opinion’ and debate in a ‘small society’, where education is more concerned with technical or professional qualifications, rather than the development of critical faculties. This intolerance has informed the social and political relation *within and between* the two communities; in fact it was *the* major characteristic of the political life in Cyprus. It did not enable Cypriots to debate and see the potential alternatives of confrontation, to the “predetermined route to disaster” as Kitromilides called it, such as the creation of a Cypriot consciousness, over and above their narrow racial or ethno-religious and linguistic-cultural identities/consciousness. As the most insightful analyses of nationalism in Cyprus point out, the central element in Greek Cypriot nationalism is that of *ignoring* the Turkish Cypriots (Loizos 1974; Attalides 1979; Papadakis 1993). All are in line *majoritarian thinking* and the pattern of intolerance.

The postcolonial frame has produced a somewhat *inchoate nationhood*, which (re)produces a strange duality: on the one hand it maintains “surplus ethnicities” (i.e. recognised minorities such as the Armenians, Maronites and Latins) attached to the “main communities”, i.e. Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots (see Constantinou 2009). On the other hand these very same frames and social apparatuses reproduce different kinds of *residues of ethnicities and social, cultural and political identities* (Panayiotou 1996, 1999, 2006 Constantinou 2007) as contradictions to the hegemonic national homogenisation of society, as Balibar (1991) shows. Social and historical residues are reproduced in everydayness and often in direct or indirect or subtle challenge to the ‘official’ or hegemonic line or practice. Hence local forms and instances of tolerance, co-existence, social solidarity and self-sacrifice are constantly thrown in, in parallel or as subaltern response to the abundance of the intolerance and rigidities of officialdom. We return to this later.

We are dealing here with a very ambivalent state of being. Anthias (2007: 177) aptly refers to how “postcolonial frames leave subject positionalities where indentity politics is overstressed as a compensatory mechanism for the uncertainties and fissures in society...Cypriots are ambivalent about their value, and this produces and reflected in imagining about belonging to the Greek and Turkish nation. The concept Cypriot is divested of value, and of itself; it is an apology for not being complete, and a form of self-hatred and denial is sometimes witnessed.”

Migrant workers interviewed for research purposes detect the very *ambivalence within Cypriotness*:⁵³ a contested Cypriotness, a *mixed and hybrid* experience that contains both *solidarity-based, more open and universalistic* almost set of values, in a contradictory and transient symbiosis with *exclusionary, narrow-minded* and blatantly *xenophobic and racist* elements. It is the former elements that reach out, as a kind of solidarity that migrants identify as ‘*basic goodness*’. Migrant workers seem to identify with what they perceive as ‘*basic goodness*’ of ordinary Cypriots, which may be explained as a dimension of a collective trait that generously reaches out as a sociability, collective generosity and hospitality. It may well be a manifestation of survival of a collective memory of a community of a historically oppressed and discriminated *subalternity*, or it may genuinely be a kind of good nature’, an ethics of a “common humanity”.

⁵³This is based on research drawing on the insights from focus groups and interviews with migrants and other discriminated groups, see Trimikliniotis 2004.

On the other hand, there exists a class-ridden shame, that many Cypriots would much rather forget: the fact that not many decades ago a lot of Cypriot women had to work as domestic workers in wealthy houses, hence the contradictory attitude towards domestic workers- a total *dependence* to do the ‘mothering’-and-cleaning entangled with a resentment and rejection of their descent, role and position in society. This is where certain version of Cypriotness may turn into an intolerant, exclusionary, xenophobic and racist ideology and practice.

4.2. Are the ‘Cypriot states of exception’ breeding intolerance?

One scholar aptly refers to ‘the Cypriot states of exception’⁵⁴ to exemplify the multiple exceptionalism that defines the political-legal order of Cyprus, where one exception generates another. This brings us to the heart of ‘the Cyprus problem’, which naturally intersects with the operation of the *acquis* in a *de facto* divided country. The invocation of exception blurs the distinctions between legality and illegality, normality and abnormality and opens up ‘opportunities’ for those in power to extend their discretion in what Poulantzas referred to as *authoritarian statism*. In line with the doctrine of Carl Schmitt (2005), the regimes of exception allow ‘the sovereign’ to decide *when* and *how* to invoke the emergency situation. In this sense, Cyprus is a bizarre case particularly where the distinction between the ‘exception’ and the ‘norm’ is not easy to decipher. When ‘norm’ and ‘exception’ are so intertwined and interdependent, the edges of the ‘grey zones’, or what is assumed to be the edge, becomes the core. Agamben (2005, p. 1) advocates that if current global reality is characterised by a generalised state of exception, then we ought to examine the intersection between norm and exception in the specific EU context: ‘the question of borders becomes all the more urgent’. The reference here is to the ‘edges’ of the law and politics where there is an ‘ambiguous, uncertain, borderline fringe, at the intersection between the legal and the political’.⁵⁵ The analytical insight into the ambiguity and uncertainty of the no-man’s land between the public law and political fact and between the judicial order and life, must move beyond the philosophical and the abstract to the specific legal and political context if it is to have a bearing on the socio-legal and political reality that is currently reshaping the EU.

The turbulent political history inevitably shaped the social life of Cyprus and as such the question of ethnic/ racial intolerance and discrimination during the period of independence up until 1974 is best viewed in this light. It is not surprising that the political question and widespread ethnic violence has overwhelmed the research agenda leaving little research interest for issues such as intolerance. In the case of Cyprus, the questions of tolerance, racism, racial discrimination, structural or ideological, must be linked to the long-drawn ethnic conflict, what Azar (1986) termed as “protracted social conflict”. The ‘Cyprus problem’ must be connected to the attitudes, practices and discourses in the daily life of ordinary persons, not just today, but also viewed in a historical perspective.

It is essential to view racial intolerance in Cyprus *within* the nationalist/ethnic conflict in a historical perspective in order to examine: (a) the links in the discourse of intolerance, racism and nationalism, and particularly to view how these are articulated in the political arena; (b) the way in which the discourses and ideologies of exclusionary nationalism develop over time, particularly how continuities and ruptures of belonging and exclusion materialise in specific contexts; and (c) whether there is process of ‘transformation’ of nationalism into racism and vice-a-versa.

If one is to understand ethno-racial and social intolerance in Cyprus, one must appreciate the fine linguistic and cultural issues relating to the meaning of the key terms and the extent to which they are

⁵⁴ C.M. Constantinou, 2008, pp. 145-164.

⁵⁵ Agamben here quotes Fontana (1999, p. 16).

considered to be morally, politically and socially deplorable or repugnant. The concept of *φύλη* (Greek for “race”) is not redundant in public discourses not even in the so-called ‘politically correct’ media world. In Cyprus there is little sense of political correctness in the media language and society at large. The term “race” can be and is being used without the inverted commas in spite of the fact that Cyprus has signed and ratified all the UN and other international instruments which reject the theories of race and consider the term discredited (see National Report of the RoC on the Conclusions of the European and World Conference against Racism 2002).

The issue of ethno-racial intolerance towards migrant workers was up until very recently dismissed as ‘isolated incidents’ by the authorities, a matter that attracted serious criticisms of institutional racism or at least government inaction. The racism debate with migrants at the receiving end and Greek-Cypriots as the perpetrators did not ‘fit in’ the national story of victimisation of Greek-Cypriots. Of course not all Greek-Cypriots are perpetrators and not all migrants are victims, but the power structure puts migrants at the receiving end.

A careful reading of the successive ECRI reports on Cyprus may lead to the conclusion that what we have is *institutional* racism, underlying the whole legal and administrative system. The Reports fall short of using the term ‘institutional racism’, but a careful reading reveals a resemblance with the kind of structural practices associated with the what Lord Macpherson called ‘institutional racism’ (Macpherson 1999).

4.3. Alternatives to the intolerant nation: the potential for reconciliation

Following the Greek-Cypriot ‘No’ and the Turkish-Cypriot ‘Yes’ in the 2004 referenda, and their aftermath, it is possible but not necessarily certain that Cypriots will be able to shake off their ‘idealised’ view of the self and the demonised view of the ‘other’. Some have begun to get rid of the distorted view of each other allowing viewing each other beyond the ‘ethnic lenses’. The opening of the crossings contributed to the replacement of totalising discourses about the ‘other’ by individualising discourses. Moreover, the discovery of mass graves on both sides have opened up crucial questions in the public domain about the violence and intolerance of the past. Many publications and media stories about past mistakes, crimes and atrocities committed by both sides, as well as stories of self-sacrifice, cross-ethnic solidarity and support are challenging the dominant historical narrative about the barbaric and demonised ‘other’. No community can claim to have ‘clean hands’, opening up the potential for de-communalising and ‘disaggregating collective victimhood’.⁵⁶ This is not an easy process as social subjects often organise their collective existence and justify their political perceptions precisely ‘around loss and sorrow’, which are powerful conservative forces. There is an effort ‘to energetically retain the reasons which perpetuate these or even reinvent new ones as they fantasise that only in this way they can justify their existence’ (Gavriilides, 2006). In Cyprus, ‘memory’ is organised and subordinated to the ‘national cause’ of the two opposing dominant nationalisms. Even the tragic issue of the missing persons has been used and abused by the two sides in a praxis of political ‘mnisikanein’, as Paul Sant Cassia (2005) has brilliantly shown: ‘mnisikakein’ is the Greek word for the practice of not letting go of the past evil one has suffered and is associated with a craving for revenge breeding intolerance. It is well-documented that memory is politically organised. The role of the state via education attempts to organise collective memory according to its own interests and political expedience.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ David Officer aptly made this point at the seminar titled, *Truth: The Road to Reconciliation? An Analysis of the Model and its Implementation in Countries with a History of Violent Conflict*, Forum for Inter-communal Dialogue for Active Citizens for Peace in Cyprus and the Neo-Cypriot Association, 4 December 2004, Goethe Institute, Nicosia.

⁵⁷ See Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1990; Papadakis 1998.

A study directed by Sitas on the prospects of reconciliation, co-existence and forgiveness in Cyprus (see Sitas et al, 2007)⁵⁸ revealed that the only ‘hard variables’ that were found to be significant were: class/stratification; ethnicity; gender; age; religion and refugee-status. In terms of the ‘softer’ and ‘experiential variables’ – what seemed very significant were consumptions of cultural, media-linked and symbolic goods; educational experiences; civic involvement; contact with and exposure to cultural ‘others’ and traumatic experiences of war and violence. The study argues that the distinction between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ variables is important in sociological work. The ‘hard’ variables denote those situations that people can do very little about, i.e. they are born in or are defined by them. The ‘soft’ variables are experiential and involve degrees of choice, personality and social character. Most G/C and T/C especially those who have been affected directly by the conflict, think that there are “openings” and that there are cracks in the cement of the current status quo:

- that substantive dialogue is possible between members and institutions and associations of civil society;
- there is an open-ness to some form of co-existence;
- there is an open-ness towards forgiving;
- there is a convergence about social norms;
- there is an open-ness to more economic co-operation;
- there is an open-ness towards a solution.”

The point is to realise this potential, but this is a subject to counteracting the dialectic of intolerance, racism and the various states of exception operating in this small troubled country.

5. Policy recommendations and concluding Remarks

There are various policy challenges derived from the fairly recent advent of Cyprus into the era of multiculturalism. These concern primarily the following areas:

In the field of **employment**, the inequality of power between the strong employers’ lobby and the weak representation of vulnerable groups, despite the apparent strength of trade unions, has led to serious problems of discrimination. Migrant workers are largely working in non-unionised industries (e.g. domestic work) which renders them helpless at the mercy of the employer, in working conditions hidden behind the closed doors or private households. Even in the unionised sectors, migrant workers do not necessarily find the trade union support that addressed their needs. To accentuate this problem, Cyprus has a very large Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector, whose individual members themselves lack professionalism and awareness generally on issues of labour rights and discrimination. The unionisation and professionalism of the vulnerable groups and their cooperation with trade unions must be encouraged, in order to enhance their status and representation.

In the field of **education**, the efforts which begun in 2004 towards a comprehensive educational reform, aiming at reinforcing democratic values, are met with resistance from the Church, the

⁵⁸ The study was conducted in 2005-2006 with qualitative and quantifiable themes consolidated into an open-ended and exploratory research schedule. It involved in-depth interviews which focused on the experiences, historical and contemporary, of two generations – 50 year olds who were in the prime of their youth in the early 1970s and their “children” who were born after 1974. The study consisted of 170 interviews with 100 persons aged 50 years; 50 of the generation of their children. Using the principle of “complementarity” and “proportionality”, an equal number of Greek and Turkish Cypriots, of Men and Women and of Refugees/Non-Refugees were interviewed.

teachers' unions and right wing political parties, who see the reform as a 'conspiracy' to 'dehellenise' the youth. Education remains mainly 'Christian-orthodox' with several problematic features such as confessions held at schools, church icons in the classrooms and sometimes churches in the schoolyards. At the same time, school history textbooks contain inflammatory language against certain groups (mostly of Turkish origin) whilst the history and culture of ethnic communities (Turkish Cypriots, Roma etc) is not reflected. Stakeholders must take bold steps in order to implement the educational reform, particularly its provisions on textbook revision, to free education from its religious straightjacket and to modernise the centuries' old institution of hellenocentric education so as to reflect today's multicultural composition.

Litigation is not used sufficiently, partly due to the cost and length of time involved and partly due to the lack of awareness of new laws amongst the legal profession. There is a lack of or inadequate comprehension of EU norms such as positive action intended to bring historically disadvantaged groups in equal footing with the rest of society, as indicated by the attitude of the Courts over positive measures. The ambit of the legal aid law is limited both for asylum seekers as well as victims of discrimination in general. In addition, the mandate and the sanctions of the Equality Body are too low to act as deterrent; as a result the Equality Body chooses to issue mere recommendations rather than impose sanctions which means that in practice victims of discrimination are not afforded the mandatory legal protection foreseen in the anti-discrimination Directives (2000/78/EC and 2000/43/EC). Awareness of anti-discrimination laws amongst the legal profession is very low and there is an apparent unwillingness by its members to undergo training. There is no coordination or interaction between NGOs and lawyers for effective handling of cases. Significant law reforms and awareness raising measures must be undertaken to address these gaps; particularly, lawyers and judges must be offered incentives to familiarise themselves with the concept of training into the anti-racist and anti-discrimination acquis.

The **Mass Media** sector provides one of the most serious challenges facing Cypriot society, where a handful of powerful media empires (controlling at the same time newspapers, TV and radio channels) can lead public opinion according to the political beliefs, alliances or expediencies of the media bosses. This has led several media outlets to an outright xenophobic and nationalist discourse. Having recognised this problem, the equality body tried to issue a Code of Conduct on how the media should portray persons of diverse ethnic origin; however these efforts met with the resistance of the all-powerful journalists' union which stepped in, demanding the compilation of a set of vague guidelines rather than a binding Code, explicitly opposing any efforts to regulate the conduct of journalists as 'interference with the freedom of the press'. In order to address this problem, the sector needs to be regulated with laws ensuring language and representations reflecting the multicultural composition of society, free of racist and discriminatory discourse. Regulations should also provide for minimum educational and training standards that need to be met by persons practising the profession of a journalist and a degree of independence of journalists from the owners of the media outlets must be ensured.

The emergence of **far-right** groups with fascist emblems and symbols, whose members are regularly implicated in outright and unprovoked acts of racist violence against immigrants and Turkish Cypriots, has been left unaddressed. Charges involving a racist motive have only been brought once and when the judge acquitted the assailant, prosecutions for racist crime (which are in any case rare) do not involve charges containing racist motive. As at present, there are no convictions against perpetrators in cases of racist attacks. Apart from strengthening the legal framework and offering training to members of the judiciary, combined with incentives to attend it, the police should consider the Ombudsman's recommendation to hire amongst its ranks members of migrant and minority groups.

The **weakness of NGOs** in Cyprus also presents a serious challenge as the current framework deprives them of the significant role that could play in combating phenomena of racism and discrimination. Both the state and the NGOs themselves must address this weakness and the lack of training and professionalism of NGOs, resulting from both lack of funding, outdated mentalities and media discourses leading to the marginalisation of the NGOs and their impact. There are challenges for civil society such as dealing with shortcomings in victim support, organisational problems, weak campaigns, lack of coordination and solidarity between NGOs, and weak advocacy skills/lobbying. Personal agendas, competition for funding and various other problems stand as obstacles in the way of NGOs, preventing the building of alliances and co-operations to be effected fruitfully. There is a need to develop coalitions building at national, regional and European level. In addition to funding and training programmes, the authorities must institutionalise regular consultation process with NGOs, experts, trade unions, employers and policy/law makers.

Last but not least, the national specificities of Cyprus derive from the unresolved ‘**Cyprus problem**’, creates practical discriminatory problems against Turkish-Cypriots mostly but also strangles the development of human rights traditions, all of which are deemed to be ‘subordinate’ to ‘our national problem’. The continuous application of the ‘doctrine of necessity’, by both government and the Courts which effectively suspends the Turkish Cypriots’ communal rights under the Constitution, engenders a legal vacuum within which several discriminatory policies are established and practiced. This doctrine has to be abandoned and a human rights based perspective must be adopted to alleviate the impact of the unresolved Cyprus problem on this section of the population.

In general, there is a lack of anti-discrimination tradition, owing, at least partly, to the predominance that ‘the Cyprus problem’ has enjoyed for the past forty years in the public sphere. This phenomenon manifests itself in the tendency of all branches of power, the executive, the legislative and the judiciary to ‘conceal’ problems of racism and discrimination and label as ‘unpatriotic’ any person who speaks out against racism as ‘exposing Cyprus’ to the European fora. This is a mentality that needs to be addressed through consistently repeating and extensive awareness raising and training and contact and interaction with civil society at the European level.

On a theoretical level, it is apparent that in analysing the relation between ‘nation’ and ‘state’, the ‘national question’ cannot ignore the internal configuration of social/political forces as well as the various expressions and *alternative* nationalisms, as though ‘all nationalisms are good’ as long as they are in conflict with ‘imperialism’. The outcome of the ‘national question’ is not teleological, but it is the result of a struggle between the social, economic, political, and ideological forces: The ‘ideological and political ingredients’ are in the making during the ongoing struggles. This framework can be thought of in terms of the late Althusser, ‘necessity of contingency’.⁵⁹ Cyprus is a post-colonial divided small state which has always been a *border society* at the crossroads between East and West, between Europe, Africa and Asia.⁶⁰

The island is a multi-ethnic and multicultural society in the Eastern Mediterranean that is characterised by its plurality, contrary to nationalistic and orientalist readings of a romanticised or vilified ‘Cypriot Levant’, which (re)produces ‘ancient hatreds’ of Greeks versus Turks. Cypriotness, as a political cultural space, has the potential of becoming a significant third space, which opens up the possibility for plurality, non-essentialism and authenticity of a historic bridge culture located at the crossroads of civilisations and power interests. At the same time the historical shortcomings and

⁵⁹ See Althusser (2006)

⁶⁰ Despite accession to the EU, Cyprus remains a ‘border society’ as it links these continents and it retains extremely important relations with them. Moreover, the reference to Cyprus as a border society is a sociological observation regarding Cypriot society and its challenges.

failures of such ventures cannot be overlooked, as the history of the country is far from some idyllic scenario: the short life of 'independence', which is itself a limited independence marked by a turbulent geopolitical and ethno-national conflict, a coup, and war, which has resulted in a barbed wire division across the country. In that sense it is not surprising that, at least today, Cyprus, despite its negligible size, is one of the most militarised zones on the planet,⁶¹ with four foreign armies and two large British bases to spy in the region. During an epoch marked by significant social transformations, both internal and adjacent to the Cypriot context, critical thought must rethink the current conjuncture to provide new insights in devising political strategies for transformations of the future.

⁶¹ According to point 28 of the UN Report of the Secretary-General on Cyprus 7 June 1994 S/1994/680: 'It is estimated that in recent years there have been in the northern part of island a little less than 30,000 members of the armed forces of the Republic of Turkey (Turkish Forces), making it one of the most highly militarised areas in the world in terms of the ratio between the numbers of troops and civilian population'. Available at [[http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N94/237/70/IMG/N9423770.pdf? OpenElement](http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N94/237/70/IMG/N9423770.pdf?OpenElement)].

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