



## WHO IS AFRAID OF THE GREEKS? WHAT SECOND GENERATION IMMIGRANTS WHO STUDY IN GREEK UNIVERSITIES BELIEVE ABOUT GREEKS AND THE WAY IN WHICH THEY TREAT THEM

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**Abstract:** *Over the last two decades Greece has accepted large numbers of immigrants and from a traditional country that outflow migration due to its geopolitical thesis transformed in a country that receives hundreds of immigrants daily. That phenomenon led to various reactions, reflections and numerous discussions and consultations within the Greek public sphere. Two of the main issues raised are the social inclusion and the cultural diversity of the newcomers in a homogenous society like Greece. Besides, plethora of studies has shown that the massive presence of immigrants transform the demographic composition and the institutional structures of host societies. But what defines the long-term consequences of migration inflows is mainly the integration process of the second generation immigrants. This study examines the attitudes and the opinions of the second generation immigrants attending Greek universities for the Greeks, their treatment by the official state, the process of integration in the Greek society, the country's immigration policy, etc. The survey was conducted between 2009 and 2011 and as a methodological tool was used a questionnaire with a 5grade scale (Cronbach's Alpha = 0,761)..*

**Keywords:** *immigrants, Greek universities, adaptation*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is considered by many social scientists as one of the most important phenomena of our time. Apart from the direct consequences on the size and structure of a country's population, both for the origin and the host country, there are numerous other effects of migration, either positive or negative, in the short-run or in the long-run, that need to be carefully investigated. For example, migration flows seem to affect directly each economy's output and unemployment rate, as well as, the political, social and cultural conditions of both countries. (Cholezas, Tsakloglou, 2008).

Historically, Greece has been a country of emigration rather than immigration. (King, Fielding, Black 1997). Emigration trends from Greece started diminishing in the mid-1970s. In fact, the National Statistical Service of

Greece stopped collecting data on emigration from Greece in 1977 (National Statistical Service of Greece and Lianos, 2003). However, immigration to Greece is not as a recent phenomenon as many people might think. For example, migrants from Pakistan appeared for the first time in the Greek labour market, after a bilateral agreement was struck between Greece and Pakistan during the 1970s (Tonchev, 2007). Immigration to Greece was limited until the late 1980s, at which point developments in neighbouring countries led to a dramatic increase in the number of people willing and able to cross borders to settle in Greece. The collapse of the communist regimes, the deterioration of the international economic situation and religious fundamentalism, led to dramatically increasing flows of foreigners from Eastern and Central Europe and the Third World. Immigrants cross the national borders with or without legal

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documents and settle either temporarily or on a long-term basis in national territories (Petronoti, Triantafyllidou, 2003).

Table 1. Foreign population in Greece (2001 Census)

Country of origin	population	%
Albania	438,036	57.5%
Bulgaria	35,104	4.6%
Georgia	22,875	3.0%
Romania	21,994	2.9%
US	18,14	2.4%
Russia	17,535	2.3%
Cyprus	17,426	2.3%
Ukraine	13,616	1.8%
UK	13,196	1.7%
Poland	12,831	1.7%
Germany	11,806	1.5%
Pakistan	11,13	1.5%
Australia	8,767	1.2%
Turkey	7,881	1.0%
Armenia	7,742	1.0%
Egypt	7,448	1.0%
India	7,216	0.9%
Iraq	6,936	0.9%
Philippines	6,478	0.8%
Canada	6,049	0.8%
Italy	5,825	0.8%
Syria	5,552	0.7%
Moldova	5,176	0.7%
Other	53,432	7.0%
Total	762,191	100.0%

Source: National Statistical Service of Greece, 2001 Census

According to the census of the National Statistical Service of Greece (ESYE), that took place in 2001<sup>1</sup>, there were 762,191 foreign residents in Greece. Of those, 750,000 were citizens from outside the EU-15 countries. If we also include the population of repatriated Greeks from the former Soviet Union who migrated to Greece predominantly during the 1990s, which, according to a census carried

out by the General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics in 2000, numbered 155,319 people (General Secretariat of Repatriated Co-Ethnics, 2000), the actual number of migrants in Greece in 2001 increases to approximately 900,000 (Triantafyllidou, Maroufof & Nikolova, 2009).

The repercussions of immigration on the economy and on the Greek society, constituted a subject of discussion and research. According to Robolis (2005), 13.0% of all employees in Greece are immigrants, while according to the Labour Force Surveys they have increased their share in the labour force from 3.7% in 1998 to almost 7.0% in 2004 (Kontis et al., 2006). Most of the jobs performed by immigrants are low-skilled, involving manual work, well below their level of education and typical qualifications. To this extend, it has been realised that immigrants supply and extend the activities of the country's third economy -undocumented economy- (Fakiolas, 1999), they offer their workforce with wages perceptibly lower than the equivalent of the natives (Kule at all, 1999, Lianos et al, 1996), they are distinguished by a particularly flexible labour profile and therefore, they are necessary for the improvement of the competitiveness of small to medium-sized enterprises (Karasavvoglou, 2001), they present a high degree of geographic and professional mobility (Tzortzopoulou, 1999), they improve the demographic picture of Greek society, they finance the insurance system of the country to a great degree and thus, at least for a short term, they ensure its unhindered operation (Karasavvoglou et.al., 2008). On the other hand, there is according to Lianos et al (2004) hard evidence that immigration has increased criminality to a very substantial extent in the categories of serious crimes. It is also mentioned that the integration of immigrants into the body of the Greek society is proceeding very slowly and finally that there is much talk about evident racism and xenophobia in Greece with all its negative consequences for both immigrants and Greeks.

<sup>1</sup> The results of the last Census held on 2011 are not yet published from National Statistical Service of Greece.

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Sarris and Zografakis (1999) showed already in the late 1990s that immigrants brought about a 1.5 per cent growth in the Gross National Product (GNP), and that they had contributed to lowering prices by 2 per cent, which meant that Greek products were becoming more competitive for export. They calculated that about 50,000 natives had lost their jobs because of incoming immigrant labour, and that wages had been lowered by 6 per cent in total. They also, however, showed that two categories of Greek households, those with unskilled native workers and people with average or low incomes in urban areas (accounting for 37 per cent of the total population) were in competition with or might have suffered from the impact of immigrants on the economy and the labour market. All other categories of the native population, in urban regions as well as rural ones benefited from immigrant work. The results of a research of the National Centre for Social Research (2007) do not cause particular surprise, presenting Greeks as one of the most xenophobic and racist populations in the EU. Moreover, roughly 53% of the Greek population considers that when the foreigners commit any offence, independent with the weight (*fault or felony*), evacuation is necessary. Also, 22,1% argue that the economic immigrants “*take our jobs*”, while the 78,6% of Greeks assume that the foreigners contribute in the reduction of wage and daily labour cost. Xenophobia of Greeks is also proved by the fact that they believe (59,5%) it seems useful citizens which emanate from poorer countries of EU should enter the country. Feelings of racism and xenophobia are also clear from the fact that Greek citizens believe that economic immigrants and foreigners in general, deteriorate the national economy, even if it is sure that they support a lot of sectors that Greeks do not have as a first choice to deal with, such as agriculture and auxiliary domestic work.

The challenge in a multicultural and multilingual society is not the absolute

assimilation of immigrants from the host society, namely the unconditional assimilation into behavior and action, social and ideological orientations. In this case it is the imposition of coercive power relations that exist, so the immigrant can be accepted socially. The challenge is not also the marginalization of immigrants because of their cultural and linguistic diversity. The main challenge of Greek society today is the organic integration of the immigrants into a host society that accepts cultural, social, religious and linguistic diversity (Kyridis et.al. 2011).

### 2. THE RESEARCH

#### 2.1 Scope, methodology and sample.

Given the fact that the main bulk of immigrant students studying today in Greek Universities are probably the first children of the second generation immigrants in Greece, this research makes an attempt to investigate the characteristics of that generation. In particular this research focuses on the immigrants' student population attending the first university year and later. The data were collected from immigrant students mainly in Florina, Volos, and Thessaloniki. The duration of this research expands from 2009 to 2011.

The research data were taken from second generation immigrant students. The research focuses on this particular population since it consists of children that were either born in Greece or were brought there in an early age. The sample consists of 168 people which were students at or have graduated from a higher education institute. In particular there were examined the following issues:

- The Cultural and social adaptation of second generation immigrants. To what degree have accepted and adopted the customs and values of the host country. Whether they prefer to socialize with Greeks or with their compatriots, while trying detecting their general stance against Greek reality and way of living.

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- The desire for permanent stay through the immigrants' children expectations and aspirations for the future.

- What is their opinion on the Greek institutions concerned with immigration? - What would they like to change in the ways of immigration reception, in the educational system, are they satisfied with social welfare?

- Which are their suggestions? Where would they like to raise their children?

- How the Greeks treat them?

The fact that for the selection of our data the random sampling method was used entails serious disadvantages. Thus, the drawn conclusions shouldn't be generalized since are valid only for populations having similar characteristics to those of the research's sample.

In this piece of research we have selected the questionnaire as a research tool for the following reasons: a) The questionnaire attracts the interest of the people questioned more easily and increases their participation in the research procedure (Anderson, 1990, Javeau, 1988), b) The necessity of using a large sample of subjects (Davidson, 1970), c) The questionnaire is suitable for the collection of information, such as perceptions and opinions, which cannot be easily observed (Verma & Mallick, 1999, Fraise & Piaget, 1970) and d) The questionnaire is a research tool that provides the opportunity for continuous trials and interventions, in order to be constructed in the best possible way (Javeau, 1988) The questions/ statements had

to be answered by a fixed answer on the basis of Likert's five-point scale (1: *Strongly Disagree*, 2: *Disagree*, 3: *Neither Disagree nor Agree*, 4: *Agree*, 5: *Strongly Agree*). The questions with negative implications were reversed in order to derive positive implications. The questionnaire includes 31 sentence-statements which investigate the above mentioned issues. The corpus of data was analyzed on the basis of Factor Analysis, which is widely applied in Social Sciences. Factor Analysis was employed with a view to investigating the social subjects'/ students' response motif which enables interpreting a complex set of variables, reducing them to a smaller number, each of which is equivalent to a greater number of the initial ones. In addition, Factor Analysis enables identifying the variables, which are typical of each factor (factorial axis) and conducive to its development. Finally, the specific analysis facilitates the identification of the groups of students, in terms of their attitudes/views to the phenomenon of immigration. The internal consistency of the questionnaire (that is, whether the questionnaire statements investigate the same situation, and in particular, the students' stance towards the immigrants) was estimated in terms of alpha reliability. Alpha coefficient (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) is the means of all the probable dichotomy reliability values for the questionnaire and was applied because it is not dependent on the statement layout ( $\alpha=0,761$ ).

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the sample

<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>		<b>%</b>		
Male	66		39,3		
Female	102		60,7		
<b>Fathers' profession</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Mothers' profession</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Freelancer/Scientist	22	13,5	Freelancer/Scientist	6	3,6
Private sector servant	11	6,7	Civil servant	17	10,1
Freelancer/Technician	96	58,9	Private sector servant	0	0
Trader	6	3,7	Trader	16	9,5
Worker	28	17,2	Worker	72	42,9
Farmer	0	0	Farmer	5	3,0

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			Domestic duties	36	21,4
<b>Fathers' education</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Mothers' education</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Elementary school graduate	0	0	Elementary school graduate	11	6,5
Secondary school graduate	69	42,3	Secondary school graduate	91	54,2
Technological institution degree	46	28,2	Technological institution degree	12	7,1
University degree	48	29,4	University degree	37	22,0
Postgraduate degree	0	0	Postgraduate degree	17	10,1
<b>Country of origin</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>			
Western Europe	17	10,1			
Balkan Countries	25	14,9			
Albania	97	57,7			
Former USSR countries	19	11,3			
Turkey	10	6,0			
<b>Age of migration</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>			
1-5 y.o.	90	53,6			
6-10 y.o.	40	23,8			
11-15 y.o.	38	22,6			
<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>			
18-22 y.o.	69	41,1			
>23y.o.	99	58,9			
<b>Reasons of migration</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>			
Economical	139	82,7			
Family unity	11	6,5			
War	18	10,7			
<b>Residence</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>			
Metropolitan Urban Area	100	59,5			
Urban area	23	13,7			
Town	33	19,6			
Rural area	12	7,1			
<b>Field of studies</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>			
Science and Maths	5	3,0			
Humanities	97	57,7			
Technology	12	7,1			
Social sciences	15	8,9			
<b>Year of studies</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>			
1	22	13,1			
2	29	17,3			
3	24	14,3			
4	22	13,1			
5	71	42,3			

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**3. RESEARCH OF THE RESULTS**

Table 3. Statistical analysis of the questionnaire

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
My reception by the Greeks was perfect	2,88	1,268
In Greece, I have more possibilities for economic and social development than I would have in my country	3,68	,850
I have equal opportunities in all areas with my fellow citizens	2,07	1,267
I would like to be taught the language of my parents' country in school	3,54	1,126
I have the same opportunities of accessing higher education with my fellow Greek citizens	4,09	1,142
The Greek citizens respect my diversity	1,86	,911
The Greeks treat me as second-class citizen	3,11	,925
Greeks easily integrate me to their companionships	3,94	,887
I prefer to associate with my fellow compatriots	2,93	1,148
The Greeks treat me with suspicion	2,96	,895
The living conditions in Greece for a migrant are better than I have expected	2,48	1,243
In Western Europe countries living is better for migrants	4,04	,984
I wish one day to permanently return to my parents' homeland	3,42	1,325
I would like my children to be taught in schools, the language of our country of origin	3,79	1,168
I want my kids to have Greek national consciousness	1,92	1,224
I consider that the Greeks are racists	3,61	1,099
My attendance in higher education made me more easily accepted by my Greek fellow citizens	3,79	,953
I consider the Greek migration policy correct	3,55	1,098
In Greece, my origin constitutes an obstacle to finding a job	3,35	1,296
Greece has the appropriate infrastructure as an immigrant's entrance country	1,11	,310
I have no complaints from social welfare towards immigrants	3,32	1,296
There are racist voices in the Greek Parliament	3,82	1,146
Immigrants contribute to the country's economy	4,67	,471
Societies' multiculturalism has only positive elements to contribute	3,88	1,022
The crime rate increase is due to massive immigrants' entrance in the country	2,54	1,276
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>3,0254</b>	<b>,21437</b>

The analysis of the methodological tool we used led to seven main thematic categories regarding themes like the effects of immigration in Greece, the socioeconomic factors of immigration, the treatments of immigrants by the Greek citizens etc. The thematic categories are as follows:

**3.1 Treatment by Greeks.** Answering statement 1, “my reception by the Greeks was

perfect”; immigrants in 26.7% neither agree nor disagree, 23.3% disagree, 20% agree while the rest of the sample either totally disagrees with 16.7% or totally agrees with 13.3%.

In statement 7, “the Greek citizens respect my diversity”, most of the answers are neither agree nor disagree with 50%, then with 20% agree and 13.3% disagree, whereas a 13.3% totally disagrees, and a 3.3% totally agrees.

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“The Greeks treated as a second-class citizen” (statement 9) gives a 50% neither agree nor disagree answers, followed by a 23.3% which agree, a 13.3% that disagree, and few saying that they totally disagree with 6.7%, and totally agree with 6.7%.

In statement 10, “Greeks easily integrate me to their companionships”, immigrants answer in a 56.7% that they agree, in a 23.3% that they totally agree, a considerable number 13.3% chooses, here too, not to give a definitive answer, and few say that they just disagree (3.3%) or that they totally disagree (3.3%).

“The Greeks treat me with suspicion” (statement 12), is answered by the most without taking a clear stance with 46.7% while the rest disagree with 26.7%, agree with 16.7%, totally agree with 6.7% and totally disagree with 3.3%.

In statement 18, “I consider that the Greeks are racists” the majority again prefers to be neutral with 33.3%, whereas 26.7% totally agrees or just agrees.

**3.2 Effects of immigration in Greece.** Answering to the statement 29 “immigrants contribute to the country’s economy”, a vast 66.7% totally agrees and a 33.3% just agrees while worth mentioning is the fact that there no other chosen answers.

The immigrants, answering statement 30, “societies’ multiculturalism has only positive elements to contribute”, agree in a 40%, totally agree in a 30%, some are ambivalent (neither agree nor disagree) in a 20%, few disagree (6.7%), and even fewer totally disagree (3.3%).

“The crime rate increase is due to massive immigrants’ entrance in the country” (statement 31) is answered by a 56.7% of the respondents negatively, a 30% stating that they disagree and a 26.7% that they totally disagree. From the rest 43.3% most agree (23.3%) some neither agree nor disagree (13.3%) and finally some totally agree (6.7%).

**3.3 Greek migration policy-state.** In statement “I have the same opportunities of accessing higher education with my fellow

Greek citizens” (statement 6) immigrants answer in an equal 43.3%, I totally agree and I agree, while very few (6.7%) disagree and totally disagree (6.7%).

“The Greek citizens respect my diversity” (statement 8), is answered by 40% with I totally disagree and by another 40% with I disagree. Few of the immigrant students (16.7%) are ambivalent and even less (3.3%) totally agree.

In statements “I consider the Greek migration policy correct” (statement 20) and “Greece has the appropriate infrastructure as an immigrant’s entrance country” (statement 24), immigrants answer I totally disagree in an 83.3% and a 90% respectively, some say I disagree in a 13.3% and a 10% while just a 3.3% neither agrees nor disagrees in question/statement 20.

46.7% totally disagrees in statement “I have no complaints from social welfare towards immigrants” (statement 25), and the rest of sample either disagrees with 13.3% or neither agrees nor disagrees with 16.7%, agrees with 13.3% and totally disagrees with 10%.

**3.4 Socioeconomic factors.** Most of the immigrants totally disagree (50%) with the statement “I have equal opportunities in all areas with my fellow citizens” (statement 3) while a 16.7% just disagrees. A 13.3% remains neutral, a 16.7% agrees and a 3.3% totally agrees.

“My attendance in higher education made me more easily accepted by my Greek fellow citizens” (statement 19). At this point, most of the respondents, answer that they agree (36.7%), 26.7% remains neutral while with 10% we have those who disagree and we do not find immigrants that totally disagree.

Concerning the statement “immigrants in Greece experience job finding problems” (statement 21), the highest percentage 40% neither agrees nor disagrees, followed by a 26.7% which totally agree. More than less (20%) are those who agree while a 10% disagrees and only a 3.3% totally disagrees.

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33.3% of the immigrants has neutral position concerning the statement “In Greece, my origin constitutes an obstacle to finding a job” (statement 22), a 30% agrees, a 16.7% disagrees, and from the rest a 10% totally disagrees while another 10% totally agrees.

**3.5 Multiculturalism - integration measures.** Statements 4, “I would like to be taught the history of my parents’ country in school” and 5 “I would like to be taught the language of my parents’ country in school” show that most of the immigrants with a 33.3% and a 26.7% respectively agree, with a 30% and a 23.3% respectively totally agree and a major percentage with 26.7% and 36.7% respectively neither agree nor disagree. For both statements 6.7% of the immigrants disagree while some totally disagree with 3.3% and 6.7% respectively.

The majority of immigrants (46.7%), concerning statement 11 “I prefer to associate with my fellow compatriots”, neither agree nor disagree. A 16.7% agrees, a 10% totally agrees, a 16.7% totally disagrees and a 10% just disagrees.

“I wish one day to permanently return to my parents’ homeland”, statement 15 gives us a majority of positive answers with 46.7% from which 30% are I totally agree and 16.7% I agree, then we have a 33.3% that neither agree nor disagree which are followed by negative answers with the 13.3% totally disagreeing and the 6.7% just disagreeing.

A 33.3% of the immigrants totally agree with statement 16 “I would like my children to be taught in schools, the language of our country of origin”, 30% agrees, 23.3% neither agrees nor disagrees, while the rest 6.7% disagrees and the 6.6% totally disagrees.

With the statement “I want my kids to have Greek national consciousness” (statement 17) we can see the vast majority with 53.3% totally disagreeing, a 20% disagreeing, a 13.3% staying neutral while some (6.7%) agree and same percentage to totally agree.

**3.6 Politic parties and immigration.** “The new Government will take better measures for

the immigrants” (statement 23). Most of the immigrants (40%) agree with the statement, some (20%) are unsure, a 16.7% totally agrees, an equal 16.7% totally disagrees and few just disagree (6.7%).

In statement 27, “There are racist voices in the Greek Parliament”, immigrants in an 83.3% answer that they totally agree, very few (13.3%) agree and only a 3.3% neither agree nor disagree.

While in statement 28, “the Greek Left has right views on managing the immigration issues”, most seem to totally agree (33.3%) or agree (33.3%), a 23.3% neither agree nor disagree together with a 6.7% and a 3.3% totally disagreeing or disagreeing respectively.

**3.7 Greece as a reception country.** The majority of immigrants (50%) seems to agree with statement 2 “In Greece, I have more possibilities for economic and social development than I would have in my country”, some, a lot less, totally agree (13.3%), a considerable percentage (30%) neither agree nor disagree, and very few either disagree (3.3%) or totally disagree (3.3%).

“The living conditions in Greece for a migrant are better than I have expected” (statement 13). Most of the immigrants are not so sure for the conditions that they have found in Greece, thus they answer that they neither agree nor disagree (36.7%). 30% of them totally disagree and 16.7% disagree. Here we add a 10% of those who totally agree and a 6.7% of those who just agree.

A 43.3% of immigrants totally agrees that “In Western Europe countries living is better for migrants” (statement 14). A 23.3% agrees, a 26.7% remains neutral and 6.7% just disagrees.

“Access in Greece should be free for everyone” is a statement (26) that most cannot answer decisively, thus choosing neither agree nor disagree in a 30%. 26.7% agrees with the statement, 20% totally agree, more than less (16.7%) totally disagree and 6.7% just disagree.



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## 2. DISCUSSION

Greece has experienced a sharp rise in immigration since the early 1990s as a result of social, economic and political changes in former communist countries following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The first were mostly illegal and were mainly looking for a job. Greece needed a cheap labour force in order to contain costs and price increases to accommodate her effort to meet the criteria set in order to participate in the European Monetary Union and immigrants, especially the illegal ones, provided it, since they were in no position to negotiate wages or working conditions. They would perform any job, as long as it allowed them to stay in the country, even with bad living conditions or the fear of getting deported, if arrested (Cholezas & Tsakloglou, 2008). However, the things are quite different for the second generation immigrants. Nowadays the children of the immigrants who crossed the Greek borders about 3 decades ago were born and raised in Greece. They became partakers of the Greek culture and they consider themselves as an integral part of the Greek society. Those students are the future lawyers, physicians and architects of Greece. Our research however, indicates that even though second generation immigrants attending Greek universities, a fact demonstrating their successful schooling at all levels of formal education in Greece, still feel "foreigners" and "strangers" in Greece. On the other hand it is totally true that today Greek society finds itself significantly transformed and still undergoing a transition period. The country is facing the economic and cultural tensions of globalisation, EU enlargement and economic crisis, and at the same time has become host to nearly a million immigrants in less than a decade. In such really difficult circumstances for the country few minor steps in the right direction have been made. The national education system has undergone important changes but still strives to find a new orientation towards multiculturalism alongside more effective and

efficient learning in secondary and higher education. Moreover, during the last decade, Greek authorities and citizens have made some hesitant steps towards immigrant incorporation in Greek society – e.g. the inclusion of immigrant families in state housing- (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2005). Concluding, we must note that despite the tentative progress achieved in recent years in the immigration policy of the country, many steps have to be done in order the second generation immigrants to be equally integrated into the Greek society, and definitely the strengthening of extreme racist voices, as happened in the 6th of May 2012 national elections, does not help in this direction.

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