

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The path of Intercultural Education in Greece during the last three decades: Reflections on educational policies and thoughts about next steps

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In this article, we make an attempt to categorize the different periods from which educational policies regarding intercultural education have passed during the last three decades until today in Greece. We do this by providing immigration data and policies that have been followed pertaining to the immigrant population in Greece. Another aim is to outline common axes in the educational policies that have been implemented so far in other southern European countries, which have, in the last three decades also been transformed to reception countries. The main objective of this article is to highlight that intercultural education in Greece – as in other Southern European countries – is facing now many problems, and this implies that intercultural education as a new direction in education needs to be supported and enhanced.

Key words: Intercultural education, educational policies, immigrant students, Greece.

Σε αυτό το άρθρο επιδιώκουμε να κατηγοριοποιηθούν οι διαφορετικές περίοδοι από τις οποίες έχουν διέλθει οι εκπαιδευτικές πολιτικές για τη Διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση, κατά τις τρεις τελευταίες δεκαετίες έως σήμερα, παρέχοντας, επίσης, χρήσιμες πληροφορίες που αφορούν στατιστικά στοιχεία για το μεταναστευτικό πληθυσμό και για τις πολιτικές που έχουν ακολουθηθεί για τους μετανάστες στην Ελλάδα. Ένας ακόμα στόχος είναι να περιγραφούν ορισμένοι κοινοί άξονες στις εκπαιδευτικές πολιτικές που έχουν εφαρμοστεί μέχρι τώρα και σε κάποιες άλλες δυτικο-ευρωπαϊκές χώρες, οι οποίες κατά τις τρεις τελευταίες δεκαετίες έχουν επίσης μετατραπεί σε χώρες υποδοχής. Κύριος σκοπός του άρθρου είναι να δείξει ότι η εκπαίδευση μεταναστών μαθητών στην Ελλάδα, όπως και σε άλλες ευρωπαϊκές χώρες, αντιμετωπίζει πολλά προβλήματα, κάτι το οποίο υποδηλώνει

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ότι πρέπει να ενισχυθεί και να υποστηριχθεί η Διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση ως μια νέα διάσταση στην Εκπαίδευση.

“We become just by performing just actions, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave actions.”
Aristotle, 384 -322 BC

1. Introduction: Migration in Modern Greece

It has been fifteen years since the establishment of Law 2413/1996 entitled “Greek education abroad, Intercultural education and other provisions” and the relevant implementation of educational policies for immigrant students² in Greece.

Today, the social composition of the country is very different compared to the 1980s and 1990s, when massive waves of immigrant populations entered Greece. During that time the first influx of migrants were mainly Greek co-ethnics coming from former Soviet Union republics/countries and Northern Epirus, called respectively “Pontic Greeks” and “Voreioepirotēs” (Emke-Poulopoulou 1986; Moussourou 1983).

Since that time the situation changed dramatically, it seems that today this ‘repatriation cycle’ has been completed; especially, due to the current economic crisis that Greece faces, also many immigrants have started to return to their places of origin because they lose their works and become unemployed. In this direction, according to estimates from the Labour Force Survey in 2010, “while immigration to Greece has contributed to population growth in the past decades, this influx has come to a halt, mainly attributable to the difficult economic situation” (OECD 2011, p. 284).

Though recent data on immigration in Greece are differentiated according to the source of origin, “the principal official sources available suggest a decline in the stock of immigrants in 2010, and an even sharper decrease in 2011. According to the Labour Force’s Service (LFS) data, in the fourth quarter of 2010 there were 810.000 foreigners living in Greece in the fourth quarter of 2010, a 4% decrease over the corresponding figures for 2009. According to the Ministry of Interior permit data (2010), the number of non-EU permit holders (non-seasonal) at the end of 2010 stood at 567,000, a decrease by 20,000 compared with the previous year. Preliminary figures for the end of 2011 suggest that the total number of permit holders was down by 100,000. In 2010, the largest groups of non-EU citizens with permits came from Albania (491.000), Ukraine (20,500), Georgia (16,500), and Pakistan (16,300). The largest groups of EU nationals in Greece come from Bulgaria and Romania” (OECD 2012a).

In 2010, there were about 1.2 million legal immigrants were living in Greece (OECD 2012), compared to 974,000 immigrants in 2008 (table in Wikipedia). This number does not include those residents who are European Union citizens living in Greece. It is estimated that 10% of Greece’s population are legal immigrants. Compared to the national Greek population, this equals to 8.6% of the state population (ibid.). According to various sources, there are also about 200,000 to 700,000 illegal immigrants living in Greece.

² Note: in the current paper the term ‘students’ is preferred, since ‘pupils’ usually refers to small children.

According to recent official data (Ministry of Interior 2010), 58% immigrants in Greece are coming from Albania, and the remaining 42% are coming from Bulgaria, Ukraine, Romania, Georgia, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Moldavia, Iraq, and Egypt. The majority of immigrants, 56%, are young people, between 19 and 40 years old, and 17% were children, named the “second generation”³, between 1 and 18 years old. Among adult immigrants, 59% are graduates of secondary education, and 13% are university graduates.

According to Drettakis’ (2011) statistical analyses based on Eurostat’s recent estimations for the number of population in the fifteen member-countries, nowadays in Greece are living 11,305,118 people (including immigrants). Taking into consideration the current rate of immigrant influx, the population in Greece will be 11,294,664 (including immigrants) by the year 2060. In other words, while some 2,400,00 new immigrants are expected, the population will most likely decrease by slightly more than 21%. Also, according to Eurostat, in the year 2060, without the immigration population, the index of aging will be more than 100 in all the fifteen member-countries, while in some countries it will be more than 300. For example, in Greece this index is expected to be 292, while in 2010 it was 132. With the presence of immigrants, the index of aging is expected to be 231. In general, with the participation of immigrants, the aging index, in all member-countries, will exceed 100 but remain less than 300, which can be attributed to the younger average age of the immigrant population.

The above data indicates that the presence of young immigrants is an important factor to balance a swiftly native population in EU member-countries, where due to an increase in pensions and to a low birth rate, the aging index in the native population is high. All the above statistical data also outline the multicultural mosaic of modern Greece, with significant impacts on the country’s societal synthesis. Undoubtedly, a new socio-political situation, which includes a significant number of immigrants, has impacted the educational domain. Hence new educational policies have been established to address the new needs that have arisen.

In order to gain more insight into the new societal situation in Greek society, in terms of Education, we believe that it would be interesting for the international readership of this article to be given an overview of the different phases that intercultural education has passed through in Greece rather than providing specific information concerning the policies that have been followed. At the same time, important legal changes have been implemented recently in the social domain in Greece, amongst which, the acquisition of Greek nationality to those legal immigrants who meet certain criteria, which has caused reactions from certain political parties concerning the constitutional legibility of the recent migration law, which was voted in 2010.

2. The Path of Intercultural Education: Thresholds of Important Changes

Intercultural Education in the Greek educational system has mainly been framed by passing of Law 2413/96 and later precedential decrees (Palaiologou 2004). In the late 1990s and early 21st century, the official political discourse referred to “repatriated and

³ Palaiologou, N., Kyridis, A., Gialamas, V., Evangelou, O. 2010. *The education of ‘second generation immigrant students’ in Greece*. Official report submitted to the former Hellenic Institute of Migration Policy.

foreign students”, while during the last four years reference has been made to “immigrant students”.

Interesting debates have ensued regarding the content of the term “Intercultural Education”. The main line of reasoning has been that the adjective ‘intercultural’ is a polysemic notion (Dervin & Liddicoat 2013); the same holds for the term “multicultural education”, since in the content of the term ‘multicultural’ there is a “tendency for multiculturalism to be appropriated to as a *‘portmanteau term’*, one that encapsulates a variety of sometimes contested meanings” (Bhadha 1998: 31). In this respect, Meer and Modood (2012: 179) argue that “Multiculturalism as a concept is like very many others ‘polysemic’ such that multiculturalist authors cannot be held entirely responsible for the variety of ways in which the term is interpreted.”

In this paper, we use the term “intercultural education” to refer first to “the interaction amongst different socio-cultural groups of students, i.e. immigrants and natives” and, second, to “the educational policies that are followed within formal education, addressed to immigrant students” (a recent publication for the epistemological content of the term, see Portera 2008). Also, at the same time, to give emphasis on equity and social justice issues.

Taking into consideration the different chronological phases that the Intercultural education in Greece has passed through and the educational policies that have taken place, we could allege that the following three periods are the most important, which could be considered as thresholds in the path that IE has taken so far:

1. The decade of the 1980s until the mid 1990s: Tutorial and Reception Classes were established according to relevant Presidential Decrees and later with the Law 2413/1996 (Palaiologou 2004).
2. From 1997 until 2010: The application of Law 2413/96, and further provisions for the operation of Tutorial and Reception Classes according to the Presidential Decree in 1999. Also, the implementation of community funding programs on Intercultural education which were appointed to Greek Universities.
3. The beginning of a new era: Since 2010, with the establishment of Law 3386/10, important modifications have been made in the direction of the migratory educational policy. Henceforth, with this new Law, the Greek citizenship can be attributed to legal immigrants who meet specific criteria.

This new societal situation points to the need to redefine the content of terms like ‘belongingness’ and ‘citizenry’, which refer to rights and obligations in a democratic society. In other words, it raises the question: “*Who are the citizens of modern Greece?*”.

Due to the new Law, an increasing number of immigrants have obtained Greek citizenship in the past years. According to data presented by the Ministry of Interior, Secretariat General for Population and Social Cohesion, in its draft report on “Migrant Social Integration” for year 2011, the number of immigrants who received Greek nationality were 7,500 in 2010 and 7,000 during the first eight months of 2011. These data highlight a new social reality, compared with early 2000s, where 66 immigrants had

acquired the Greek citizenship, 58 in year 2001, and 52 in year 2002 (Ministry of Interior Affairs).

More than expected, the new 'citizenship law' has sparked reactions from mainstream society and right wing political parties, as well as fears among the general populace, often provoked by mass media. In the Greek case, the public opinion has been divided concerning the attribution of Greek citizenship status because of the fear that Greece is a small country with a population of 11 million Greeks, which means that the ratio between immigrants and the native population must be secured. On the other hand, the uncontrollable entrance of illegal migrants to Greece because of its geographical position has strengthened the existing fears. As a result, there is growing discourse that speaks of Greece remaining Greek and not allowing immigrants to redefine who is Greek.

Section IV of the State's Council, recently decided that the new Law is against the Hellenic Constitution⁴ (decision no 350/2011), since the right to vote and be elected is attributed only to Greek origin citizens (*jury of blood*), thus legal immigrants who receive Greek citizenship do not have these rights and will not gain these rights unless this specific regulation in the Constitution changes. This issue has been taken up by the Plenary Supreme Court and a decision is expected to be announced in the near future.

Another important change with the new law is that the Greek citizenship status is automatically granted to migrant children who are born in Greece. This also applies to migrant children who were not born in Greece but who fulfil certain criteria (e.g. the successful attendance of Greek school for six continuous years). Onwards, Greek citizenship status could be attributed to those immigrant children that are called "second generation immigrant children". The new law provides for children born in Greece of foreign parents to become Greek citizens through a simple declaration of their parents, provided that both parents meet the criterion of living in Greece legally for at least 5 years. If one of the parents does not fulfill this requirement, the declaration can be made and the child may obtain the Greek citizenship as soon as the second parent satisfies the requirement. The "second generation immigrant children" until now were living in Greece under a hostage status, without belonging to any home, onwards, can receive the Greek citizenship when they become eighteen years old.

Let us compare this for a moment with the situation in Italy. When a child is born in Italy from parents who are not Italian citizens, the child is considered a foreigner until the child can apply for citizenship at the age of 18 years. However, citizens of other

⁴ According to Triantafyllidou (2012), expert in Migration Policy studies, "The State Council's decision to consider the citizenship law as anti-constitutional is actually against the current EU trend for a stronger territorial and civic element in citizenship legislation. It reintroduces a particularly strong *jus sanguinis* requirement to Greek citizenship disregarding the fact that Greece has been de facto converted to a country that is culturally and religiously diverse". Retrieved from: <http://www.rscas.org/accept/blog/?p=182> (Title: "Greece belongs to the Greeks" – but who are the Greeks that it belongs to? Date of access 7th December 2012).

countries, who can prove that they have a relative who had Italian citizenship (*jury of blood*), can acquire citizenship rather easily, even if they don't speak Italian. But while knowledge of Italian is not a prerequisite for acquiring Italian citizenship for those with Italian roots, language is now a prerequisite for the long-term legal status (Lakhous 2010; Marinaro & Walston 2010).

With respect to the phases mentioned above, we can say that the first two refer to *a premature period*, while from the third period onwards, we are witnessing *new needs, a more mature period*. Societal changes and innovations are usually accompanied by social reactions, since they require a change of mentality and mindset.

The path that intercultural education has taken in Greece, as is the case in other Southern European countries, seems to be following the path of intercultural education in other North and Central European countries, albeit with a delay of approximately one decade.

The decade 2010-2020 is expected to be an intense period of development with respect to the migratory policies of Greece. The key priorities will most likely be controlling legal migration and discouraging 'illegal' immigration.

In the next section, the aim is to present some common axes in the educational policies that have been addressed to immigrant students. We will also examine developments in other Southern European countries during the last two decades.

3. Common Dimensions in Educational Policies

The cultural composition of European societies is continuously changing as a result of increased migration. Xenophobia and nationalism constitute a serious threat to the dignity (and sometimes the lives) of many migrants. The right to education is a fundamental human right, and a high-quality education without discrimination is essential for the future well-being not only for the migrants themselves, but also for the reception societies.

Migration flows and increased globalization since the 1980s have impacted most Southern European countries, which have been confronted with increasing ethnic, language, religion, and identity diversity (Arango 2003). During the last three decades Southern European countries have been transformed into host countries from traditional emigration countries.

A careful examination of the educational policies and measures which have been applied since 1980s in some Southern European countries, specifically by comparing policies and measures in Spain (see Peña-Ramos, Medina & Vargas 2012; Aguado & Malic 2001), in Italy (Portera 2012; Gratoggi 2010, Liddicoat & Diaz 2008), in Portugal (Maiztegui-Ónate & Santibáñez Gruber 2012), and in Greece (Palaiologou & Evangelou 2011), we can easily shed light on some common characteristics in these countries' educational policies.

Below we shall present a few common axes in the policies that have been followed so far. To start with, during the first decade of immigration in Portugal (see Maiztegui-Ónate & Santibáñez Gruber 2012; Tereshchenko & Araújo 2011, in Spain (see Peña-Ramos, Medina & Vargas 2012), in Italy (see Liddicoat & Diaz 2008) and in Greece (see Paleologou 2004), appropriate infrastructure did not exist to meet the educational needs of migrant students and the social needs of their families. As a consequence,

negative reactions were commonplace at multiple levels, including the school community and the parents of native students. The arrival of immigrant families and departure of natives transformed some public schools into ghettos (in Italy, see: Valentini, 2005). The presence of immigrant children created new challenges for the national school systems in all these countries. There were many new challenges with respect to teachers' professional experience, knowledge, ethic and values (in Spain, see Pinson, Aicot & Candappa 2010).

During that first period of migration in these new host countries, migrant children faced many social difficulties. Key challenges were school adjustment processes, as well as learning domain difficulties, due to a lack of knowledge of the official language of education and cultural shock. Particularly in larger rural cities, the arrival of relatively large numbers of immigrant families and a related influx of immigrant students into mainstream schools usually led to school failure at multiple levels, especially during the first two decades (Palaiologou & Evangelou 2011).

Where classrooms gained large numbers of immigrant students, educational functioning of the class declined for all students (Palaiologou 2007). In Italy, for example, there has been a tendency to control the ratio of immigrant students in mainstream classrooms. According to the Gelmini Law (2009)⁵, the number of immigrant students (i.e. non-white students) is limited to 30% in each classroom (see Grattoggi 2010). This appears to represent an attempt to guarantee that these students are exposed to what they believe are native Italian speakers to facilitate standard language acquisition. This law has raised many objections because it labels immigrant children as a problematic group whose presence must be regulated by the law.

During the first two decades, the policies that were followed regarding migration in the social and educational domain were aimed at the assimilation of immigrants, even while referring to 'integration'. Racist demonstrations also took place, especially during the celebration of National Days (in Greece).

Educational and linguistic policies seem to have followed the same path: an initial attempt to assimilate immigrant students, so as not to interfere with native students. In the following years, their aim was to improve the opportunities of access for migrant students by implementing Redeem Education measures and policies (such as: reception and tutorial classes, special education classes, see Palaiologou 2007).

There has been a rise in the immigrant student population during the last decade in the three southern European countries: Spain, from 63,044 immigrant students in 1997, to 733,993 during the academic year 2009-2010 (Ministerio de Education 2010); Greece, from 67,210 immigrant and repatriated students (21,239 and 45,971 respectively) to 109,482 immigrant and 20,880 repatriated students during the academic year 2006-2007 (former Institute of Education for Homogeneous Students and Intercultural Education, IPODE 2008); Italy, according to the *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione* of Caritas/Migrantes (2011), foreign students made up 7.9% of the total

⁵ Gelmini Law (2009): Students, professors, researchers and civil servant have been protesting against the passage of Law 133, the so-called Gelmini reform. The decree will lead to at least 87,000 teaching jobs and 44,500 administrative posts being lost at state schools over the next three academic years to 2012. Universities face the threat of privatisation.

number of enrolled students (709,826 students in total) in the Italian K-12 school system.

According to the Eurostat's Statistics (2009-2010), the percentage of immigrant and native students that do not complete the compulsory Education in Southern European countries is higher than in Northern European countries. In Greece, the proportion of immigrant and native students who abandon compulsory studies is 44% and 10% respectively and in Italy, the proportion is 42% and 17% respectively, while in Sweden is 15% and 10%, and in Denmark is 16% and 10% respectively. The total general ratio in European Union countries is 26% and 13% for immigrant and native students respectively. Thus, the aforementioned statistics show that there is a need for supportive educational measures for immigrant students, especially in Southern European education systems.

Though, in principle, the educational and linguistic policies have been based on democratic principles aiming at reinforcing the educational opportunities of immigrant students and pluralistic models of co-existence amongst different students, everyday school practice shows a significant lack in their implementation. It also reveals that schools face problems pertaining to appropriate educational materials, textbooks and engagement of schoolteachers.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) - the Council of Europe's independent human rights monitoring body specialized in combating racism, racial discrimination and intolerance - has issued a series of recommendations⁶ focusing on the educational integration of immigrant students and for the teachers' education and training. The matter of raising intercultural awareness in teacher training programs is seen as a priority to support changes towards an intercultural school.

Most teachers in Spain and Portugal have positive attitudes towards their immigrant students, especially those coming from Eastern European countries (Aráujo 2006; Terrén 2004). In Greece, a recent study shows that primary education teachers' attitudes are more positive towards immigrant students while secondary education teachers are less accepting of immigrant students (Palaiologou et al. 2010). In Italy, the religious factor seems to have an important influence on teachers' behaviours to the immigrant students with other religious beliefs (Galioto 2008).

Educational policies during the second period supported the bilingual model. In many countries, measures that supported the first language (i.e. home language) of immigrant students were implemented, especially for those immigrant groups that were well represented within schools. In school practice however, bilingual measures in Greece were only implemented in a few schools, upon the school's initiative. Such measures were hardly commonplace. Likewise in Italy, language education policies do not require schools to provide mother tongue teaching, but allow the implementation of such language policies depending on the needs and initiatives of a school.

⁶ The study conducted by Maiztegui-Ónate & Santibáñez -Gruber (2012) analyzing the ECRI's reports from 1998-2007 for three European countries (Italy, Portugal and Spain) is very informative about the issues which have been of first priority in these countries (e.g. teachers' education, language policies, curriculum etc.). Information about the Programme "*Education of immigrant and repatriated students*" at its website: www.diapolis.auth.gr The project is funded by The National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2007-2013 and national resources.

Current educational policies have changed and are being continuously revised. The main language policies during the most recent period focus on teaching the language of the host country (like TESOL programmes). Thus, the language of the host country becomes the tool and the means for the social mobility and educational success of immigrant students.

Formal national statistical data concerning the representation of different immigrant groups (especially during the first period) is lacking, as well as statistical data concerning the school attainment of immigrant students in most Southern European countries. On the other hand, Northern and Central European countries do provide analytical data and reports.

Assessing equity issues and how they relate to the situation of immigrant students is another important issue (OECD 2012, 2011, 2010).

The foregoing leads to several trends that can be identified regarding educational policies relating to immigrant students. First of all: a) immigrant students usually do not receive sufficient additional learning support within mainstream schools, especially in their first language b) they are not assessed on an equal basis with their native peers. We also see that immigrant students usually experience prejudice - either from their classmates or their teachers. Though educational policies in Southern Europe resemble each other in many ways, there are also differences, primarily related to the following dimensions:

1. The *history* of the Southern European countries. Though they have all experienced some political upheaval (juntas, coup d'états), each country has its own unique historical memory, fears and needs. Notwithstanding a common intercultural path, the national historical pathways in these countries' pasts are different, but the problems these countries face today are fairly similar, especially in the field of education.
2. Teaching immigrant students' *first language*. In Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal, mother tongue teaching is something that could be provided, but has been rarely implemented in practice.
3. *Equality of opportunities* for all students. When the language of the host country plays such an important role in the school success of students, this creates significant problems for immigrant students.
4. In Greece, the collective character of education implies that all educational policies and measures are exclusively designed and directed by the Ministry of Education. Local educational authorities have little power. As a result, the educational needs at local level, as well as the needs of certain school units are hardly taken into consideration.

The Council of Europe has stated in imperative terms that all manifestations of xenophobia and discrimination should be eliminated. The role of intercultural education in fostering tolerance has therefore been dramatically growing. Intercultural education is seen as one of the most powerful instruments in assisting the process of social cohesion.

Elsewhere in Europe, the experiences of the Northern countries that have faced the migration phenomenon at earlier stages should not be ignored. It is useful to

examine immigration-related policies— both effective and ineffective— that other European countries have followed in different sectors (economic and labor markets, health, and education) to inform future policies.

The integration of immigrants continues to be a matter of major importance for modern multicultural nations and is closely related to citizenship policies for new immigrants. In practice, this means effective social and educational measures in the frame of an overall effective migration policy. This new societal situation pushes policymakers to review and re-evaluate their approaches to immigration.

During the last three years, there has been intense reflection from the academic and scientific community in Greece regarding the country's educational policies. The focus has been on what steps can be taken to improve the educational situation of immigrant students so that all students have equal opportunities, regardless of their socio-cultural background, language and religious differences, the social and economic background of their families, etc.

If priorities of the educational systems found in modern multicultural countries are to include an inclusive school that would embrace all students, then the direction of Greek educational policy must change. On the other hand, we must take into consideration the current economic crisis that Greece faces, which calls for cutbacks and reductions in the field of education, and in the case of immigrant students less educational provisions. Mono-cultural and ethno-cultural schools have little credence during periods of intense multiculturalism. They constitute an obstacle to the progress and school success of immigrant students, they enhance social inequalities and, finally, they reflect societal pathogenesis.

The above observations confirm that intercultural education in Greece – as well as in other Southern European countries – is currently facing many problems, and this implies that intercultural education has to be enhanced. An important drawback that sets barriers in the implementation of educational policies is the centralized character of the educational systems, which does not take into consideration the local needs of different socio-economic areas where schools are situated. As Gundara & Jones have stated, “decentralisation can often be intended to meet minority demands for greater control of their educational futures, although few states are yet prepared to move beyond the educationally less significant” (1994: 13-14). Reality shows that nation states have effectively enforced their ideas and structures on different ethnicities through their educational systems (Schleicher 1992).

In Greece, for example, “the ethnocentric character of knowledge and traditional forms of educational policy formation and control still persists” (Zambeta, 2000: 63). Though important changes in the direction of providing education to all children have taken place, the question of school provision based on equal opportunities remains the main issue.

At this point, in an attempt to provide a few critical suggestions, we will categorize the two aforementioned prevailing tendencies concerning the educational support policies that are addressed to immigrant students today:

1. Educational policies that support the *Bilingual Intercultural Education* model through suitable educational programs within the school or in the wider community, addressed to immigrant students and their families.

2. Educational policies which support the *teaching of languages of countries of origin of immigrant students as a second language, particularly for new-comer immigrants*, through suitable school textbooks and educational programs within the school for the immigrant students and also in the wider community for their families.

These tendencies are also included in the current programme “Education of immigrant and repatriated students”⁷, which is currently being implemented in Greece by the Aristotle University, intended to last from 2010-2013.

The first tendency has been taken into consideration by the legislative regulations for the implementation of intercultural education in most Southern European countries. In practice however, bilingual supportive measures have not been applied in most schools. On the contrary, immigrant students facing difficulties with their schoolwork are usually labelled and treated as students with special needs and are referred to special classes.

As far as the second tendency is concerned, modern reception countries could partially support bilingual education measures, through the application of relevant educational provisions according to which immigrant students could be taught the language of their country of origin. Immigrant students could attend afternoon bilingual lessons. For example, such a measure could be applied at certain schools that are situated in regions with high percentages of immigrants, which could function as language centres for teaching immigrant students’ home/minority languages. Alternatively, the teaching of home/minority languages could be offered as an optional subject, i.e. “teaching of a third foreign language” in those public schools that have a high percentage of immigrant students, with the option of free choice for native students, if they wish to do so.

Of course, this tendency presupposes the design of suitable Curricula and school textbooks, where interculturalism can pervade all school subjects. It also implies adequate teacher education and training regarding methods and techniques for teaching in multicultural classes. Furthermore, in a more general frame of support measures, the role of supportive language teaching during afternoon hours could be enhanced, as an additional measure for reinforcing the teaching addressed to immigrant students.

Another important dimension in the education of immigrant students is associated with equality of opportunity. Educational reality shows that in Greece, even today, immigrant children do not have the same educational experiences as their native Greek peers. Second language competence of the reception country (i.e. Greek in this case), which is also the official language of teaching, constitutes an important factor that impacts immigrant students’ school success in significant ways.

In practice, education for immigrant students in Southern European countries in what are called “common public schools” runs contrary to the principles of intercultural education, which emphasize equality and respect for all cultures and language. Public

⁷ Information about the Programme “*Education of immigrant and repatriated students*” on its website: www.diapolis.auth.gr The Programme is funded by the European Union financial support framework. Its outcomes will be examined upon its completion.

schools tend to adhere to an assimilative perspective, since the conditions that prevail in public schools enhance the social exclusion of immigrant students. Especially, today, the main question that is associated with the implementation of intercultural education is: *Can modern multicultural reception countries afford the cost of educational provisions and additional measures that could be addressed to immigrant students?*

Summarizing the above thoughts, the issue of integration of immigrant families and the educational support of their children in the host country constitutes a core issue of major importance, which in practice hardly interests the governments of Southern European countries. Successful migratory educational policy trends over the last twenty years can be divided into four types of measures:

1. The effective integration of immigrant children in the educational system of a host country is better achieved in younger age groups, particularly through the attendance of preschool education provisions. This means that the state would support immigrant families through suitable measures such as the one-day kindergarten and institutions of early childhood education, which play a compensatory role for children coming from families with low socio-economic status, as well as a very important role for students' social integration in the school environment.
2. Improvement of school quality and teachers' work, which means that the state should take care to distribute more resources, to engage better educated teachers, or teachers with a migration background for the teaching of home languages of immigrant students.
3. In-service training seminars on intercultural education and on teaching a second language, with emphasis on practical and methodological issues, which would empower teachers to improve their knowledge and abilities.
4. School systems which adopt policies that fight prejudice, discrimination and combat racism, increase immigrant student academic achievement and produce an effective school that promotes social integration.

From the above, we can realize that especially the issue of the integration of second generation students in the educational systems of Southern European countries represents a new challenge. For successful educational policies, the following dimensions could constitute fundamental axes:

1. Targeting the improvement of school attainment for all immigrant students.
2. Targeting the prevention of school drop-out.
3. Implementing innovative strategies with intercultural dimensions within the school community.
4. Establishing new roles in schools with high percentages of immigrant student population, such as the "intercultural mediator" or the "intercultural counsellor".
5. Promoting the use of ICTs and Internet as well as the use of networks of long distance collaboration amongst students coming from different countries or remote areas.
6. Reinforcing parental involvement of immigrant parents and cooperation with teachers, native parents and the whole school community.

7. Targeting at raising immigrant students' self-esteem.
8. Taking advantage of immigrant students' "cultural chapter".
9. Using new cross-thematic teaching methods, project method, group collaboration amongst mixed students' groups.
10. Supporting the multicultural classroom and teachers, with collaborative programs between the teacher of the mainstream class and bilingual teachers.

The above axes are also included in the recommendations in the recent report by OECD (2012b: 10) where it is pointed out that "the successful integration of the children of immigrants is a key benchmark of success for social, education and migration policies".

4. Concluding Thoughts and Reflections

The aim of this article was to present some common characteristics which have influenced the design and implementation of educational policies in Southern Europe, with the Greek case as an example. The study of different countries, especially a comparative approach on educational and language policies which have been followed in Northern and Southern European countries could be a next interesting approach. Also, a comparative study of the curricula that are used in different countries can shed light in the rationale that underlines the policies that are followed (Faas 2010).

In this section, we present some concluding thoughts with regard to the policies that will be designed onwards in the mature period.

To start with, the educational policies that have been designed so far are exclusively associated with the aims underneath migratory policies. In other words, different educational measures are designed when the aim is the whole assimilation and very different ones when the aim is the graduated integration of immigrants and the maintenance of their first languages and cultures.

The educational policies are more effective in praxis when they function sufficiently at three different levels: a) at national level, by accomplishing certain actions and activities action with the economic support of the government, b) at local level, where it is essential to adapt some general principles and norms according to the particular needs of each country and c) at the level of the school unit, where the general aims should be transformed to certain educational programs with continuity at all levels of education.

In Europe, but also in other continents, the governmental policies addressed to immigrant students range from assimilation to pluralism and multiculturalism (Palaiologou & Dietz 2012). The application of tough assimilation policies prompts immigrants to exert political pressures and create networks of social interaction for the maintenance of their cultures and their first languages. As a result of the above pressures, the governments of the reception countries adopt progressive approaches that appear to be more pluralistic, though finally in practice pluralism can constitute a more elaborative approach for the achievement of assimilation.

The ideological nature that is behind the migratory policies influences the attitude of the state towards the other, non-official languages. The type of bilingualism that is applied within public education is indicative either of the assimilative or pluralist

orientation of the state policies. In other words, the assimilative migratory and educational policies have the tendency to adopt the models of transitional bilingualism or mono-literate bilingualism, while the pluralistic ones are more likely to encourage mainly the partial bi-literate bilingualism. The latter is an exception, since most states prefer 'controlling' immigrant students' school attainments with relevant policies.

In addition, one issue we would like to mention here is that especially today it is very important to give priority in comparative studies between different immigrant students' sub-groups and natives to depict the needs of each different group. The usefulness of such data is of major importance. One issue that we would like to stress here is that immigrant students do not have special needs or any disadvantage compared to their native peers, this old-fashioned idea and prejudice has been abandoned long ago. Thus, an urgent need for the educational systems of Southern European countries is to find new flexible policies to better educate, assess and integrate immigrant students in public schools, policies that can survive in times of economic crisis and very limited resources in the education field.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned thoughts, the philosophy, principles and aims of intercultural education for the equality of opportunities and the mitigation of educational and social exclusion in modern multicultural societies, we could claim that its route in Greece until today is moving around the space of theory and it is not implemented through interventions and practices that promote equality of opportunities and social justice. This has been expressed explicitly in the thought of the key actors and policy makers (Palaiologou and Faas 2012).

Especially today, during hard times of economic crisis it would be difficult to design and implement intercultural policies which would take into consideration the needs of immigrant students. Unfortunately, the strict economical measures which have been imposed to Greece are not a good omen for the next years with regard to the general provisions that are addressed to *all* students.

On the other hand, the route that the intercultural education has taken from the 1980s until today in Greece can provide useful lessons for the design of next steps in the forthcoming years. Nowadays, the needs for the second and third generation of immigrants are very different compared to the first and second period.

One thing is certain: that the design and implementation of the intercultural education onwards presupposes the cultivation of a school ethos that will support diversity. This means that intercultural education has far to go. In this direction, radical educational changes, well coordinated actions and decisions, as well as diverse pedagogical approaches are required so that intercultural education can be transformed and its principles could be diffused within the curricula of modern multicultural schools.

In conclusion, we would like to present some reflections concerning the role of education for the development of a new type of citizen today, by making a few connections between the notion of *Paideia* (Education) with those of multicultural and intercultural education, at a global level.

First, at the global level, it is evident that, on one hand, the practice of multicultural education unfortunately does not benefit different socio-cultural groups to the same extent, which is contrary to its ideology that it incorporates equally the needs and identities of different societal groups, whether because of their language, skin color, traditions, culture, or due to personal preferences.

On the other hand, the way multicultural education has been implemented until now through school curricula and textbooks does not teach students how to acquire those skills which are essential to become active citizens. These would be individuals who participate actively in the societal arena and take active steps to acquire better life conditions and work for equal treatment. They are not satisfied with the promises contained in abstract documents but want to see these promises translated into real life conditions for real people.

As Gibson (2010) has argued, “multicultural education has not yet critically “read” the effects of globalization. As a result, internalization/globalization policies are supporting different forms of injustice around the world with minimal impunity” (p. 129). Thus, the study of educational policies and practices which would connect ‘issues of citizenship, democracy and multiculturalism’ should enrich the social agenda of the state in the direction of educational issues (Torres 1998, p. 14).

Second, one could argue that the notion of intercultural education today is at a crucial stage, since dialogue between different societal groups and equality is to a large extent absent from the current international societal and economic agenda.

It is of major importance to create and ingrain the notion of ‘belongingness’ to students from their early school years. As Gundara has pointed out, the notion of citizenship can be understood as “belongingness” to a community (Gundara, chapter 2, in: Palaiologou & Dietz 2012; also, Gundara 2001b: p. 51-52, in: Gundara & Jacobs 2001). “Positive secularism entails an understanding of all citizens of our shared “belongingness” in a complex society of shared rules and values. Secular collectivism moves towards the notion of belongingness” of all groups in society” (Gundara 2001a: p. 154). According to Gundara “the major issue is how the education system can legitimize this belongingness for diverse groups in society, particularly if dominant groups reject it” (cited, as above). Banks (2007) has also highlighted the importance of the concept of “multicultural citizenship”, especially when envisaging the impact of cultural diversities on modern states and the need to establish new rights that include all subordinate groups (Banks, chapter 1, in: Palaiologou & Dietz 2012; also in: Banks 2009, p. 305).

Unfortunately, the reality on the ground shows that the dichotomy between poor, subordinate groups and the rich ones is growing and becoming more apparent than in the recent past, both in overtly and subtle ways. Education today should target at the “integration of *everybody* in the classrooms and in society demands, above all, a *change in attitudes*” (Ortega Ruiz, P., Romero Sánchez 2011: 4).

As Coulby (2011) has stated, “Intercultural education needs to reformulate itself so that it can play a part in the urgency of the current debate. It is essential that schools and universities address the crisis we face nowadays as a matter of utmost curricular priority” (p. 260). Coulby’s critical remark underlines the important role that intercultural education can play in the direction of enriching the societal agenda of modern states with the issues and needs of subordinate groups: of groups that are excluded or disenfranchised, and are invisible in the current socio-political debate.

Undeniably, intercultural education at a global level has an important role to play in the education of students. It is important that students learn to respect their peers and people, who are different from themselves, learn to interact with each other, exchange ideas and suggestions, collaborate effectively together and live in harmony.

According to Banks (2004), “schools should help their students to understand how *cultural, national, regional, and global identifications* are interrelated, complex, contextual, and evolving” (see also Banks 2012, p. 471). “These identifications are interactive and interrelated in a dynamic way. Each should be recognized, valued, publicly affirmed, and thoughtfully examined in schools. Students should be encouraged to critically examine their identifications and commitments and to understand the complex ways in which they are interrelated and constructed” (ibid.). Such interactions, which promote dialogue, strengthen democratic values and ‘build’ the personality of active people by transforming them into *new personas-citizens*.

Such an education, which is constructed upon human values, with respect to people’s traditions, customs and roots which makes connections between the past and the present and learns from the past, is an education that cultivates the notion of citizenship and social cohesion in modern states. In other words, such an education is interrelated within the Greek notion of Paideia.

Modern societies need to realize that intercultural interaction and collaboration are required preconditions for making the various societal systems co-exist and work together effectively.

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