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The Muslim Communities in Kos and Rhodes: Reflections on Social Organization and Collective Identities in Contemporary Greece

Kos and Rhodes are the main islands of the Dodecanese. They are home to a Muslim minority who have been present there since 1522, as subjects of the Ottoman Empire. During the Italian administration, the Muslims were recognized as a religious community. The incorporation of the Dodecanese into the Greek state in 1947 and the Cyprus conflict, which took the form of a military confrontation in 1974, pushed large numbers of Muslims into Turkey. Among those who left, many were deprived of their Greek citizenship and property. Among those who stayed, many abandoned the Turkish language and Islam. Property, which had formed an important part of the community, was then sold or rented. The political changes in Europe in the late 1980s led to the arrival of large numbers of migrants from the Balkans, Asia and the Middle East. These political events, in tangent with pressure from various EU institutions and the recent rapprochement between Greece and Turkey, have resulted in changes for the Muslim population. Today, the Greek Orthodox and Muslims of Turkish origin in Kos and Rhodes live in the same neighbourhoods, do the same jobs, and all pupils attend Greek public school. Religion, however, remains a distinctive feature. On the island of Kos mixed marriages between Greek Orthodox and Muslims remain rare. The Muslim population also remains less visible within the public sphere than their Greek counterparts. The aim of this paper is to reflect on the social organization of Muslims in Kos and Rhodes, the relationships between Muslims and Christians and the Greek state in two island communities in contemporary Greece.

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Introduction

According to one of the founding myths on which the history of modern Greece is based, the establishment of the Greek state in the 19th century illustrated the atemporal continuity of a nation, the official history of which goes back to the foundation of the first cities in antiquity. In official Greek historiography the superiority of Hellenism and its continuation throughout the centuries are constant themes.[2] Meanwhile, the influence of the Ottoman Empire, the Balkans and the Middle-East on contemporary Greek society is presented in a negative manner, denied or omitted, and there is no reference to the multiethnic past of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires (Clogg 2002; de Rapper & Sintès 2008, 10).

The perception of Turkey, in particular, is strongly influenced by collective perceptions of Ottoman Turkey, 'Tourkokratia', which in collective Greek imagination starts in 1453 and ends in 1821. In popular speech and imagination, this period is perceived as a time when the Greeks were persecuted, denied an education and reduced to slavery while their children were taken away from their families and transformed into Janissaries who became enemies of their own families and countrymen (Kirtzoglou & Sistani 2003, 194). Historical facts such as the existence of the *millet* system, the power and privileges granted to the Orthodox Church and the Greek domination of the *millet-i-Rum* (the Orthodox population of the Ottoman Empire) are often omitted.

The perceptions of the past tend to organize and construct the present (Tonkin, McDonald & Chapman 1989, 4–5). This is particularly true in the case of the Greeks where the past is present in the everyday life and experiences of its people (Sutton 1998, 4). In popular discourse the beliefs concerning the Ottoman past tend to define and justify the attitudes and perceptions of contemporary Turks as expansionist, and capable of both harassment and brutality (Just 1989, 74; Sutton 1998, 38; Hertzfeld 1985, 19). The present is not only informed by the past, it also informs the past with which it has a dialectic relationship (Tonkin, McDonald & Chapman 1989, 5; Sutton 1998, 16). Here, we are considering two countries whose

[2] School programs, especially Greek language, and history and geography school books are important conveyors of official ethnocentrism; this has been demonstrated by recent research. Cf. E. Avdela, Η συγκρότηση της εθνικής ταυτότητας στο ελληνικό σχολείο: «εμείς» και οι «άλλοι», in A. Fragkoudaki & Th. Dragona (eds.), *«Τι ειν' η πατρίδα μας;», Εθνοκεντρισμός στην εκπαίδευση*, 1997. Athens: Alexandria, 2nd ed., 27–45.

recent past is marked by military conflicts, namely the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922, the Cyprus conflict which took the form of a military confrontation in 1974, and the events of Imia *(Kardak)* in 1996. Since 1999 there has been a rapprochement between Greece and Turkey, and between the European Union and Turkey more generally (Grigoriadis 2008; Kurban, Tsitselikis 2010, 5). Minority politics, especially in the Balkans, are often influenced by broader issues in international relations. Ethnic policy is heavily conditioned by the initial conceptualization of the relationships between various groups, and between groups and the state (Horowitz 1989, 48). This paper will reflect on the Muslims in Kos and Rhodes, the social organization and the collective identities of this particular ethnic group in two island communities within contemporary Greece.

Methodologically, this research is based on ethnological fieldwork, semi-structured conversations and interviews with members of the Muslim communities in Kos and Rhodes,[3] representatives of the Orthodox Church in Kos and Rhodes, local authorities and the Turkish state. In my research, I adopt an approach 'from below'. This approach emphasizes the experiences of individuals, and attempts to understand the meaning that people attach to events, ruptures and actions.[4]

The Many Faces of Kos and Rhodes: Official Homogeneity Versus Actual Diversity

Kos and Rhodes are the most important islands of the Dodecanese from an administrative, demographic and economic point of view. Because of their geopolitical location, history and diversity of cultural and religious influences throughout time, this island group is a particularly interesting

[3] Amongst my interlocutors, some are personalities in the local Muslim communities. Age and the level of education vary and both genders are represented. However, most are adult men. With some interlocutors several meetings took place. These enabled me to go back to some questions in more depth and also to raise new themes. In total, semi-structured conversations and interviews were conducted with twenty Muslims in Kos and Rhodes; ten on each island. Four interviews with Muslims whose roots go back to Kos were conducted in Bodrum. Most interviews and conversations were conducted in Greek; interviews with representatives of the Turkish state were conducted in English.

[4] My first period of field research in Kos (October 2008) was enabled by a grant from the French School of Athens. Later field research in Kos (September 2010, May 2011), Rhodes (September, November 2010) and Western Turkey (May 2011) has been carried out in the framework of the BALKABAS project, supported by the 'Young Scholars' programme of the French National Research Agency (ANR) since January 2009 (ANR-08-JCJC-0091-01).

place for fieldwork. In the Middle Ages, the Dodecanese belonged to the Knights of Saint John (1309–1522) and from 1522 to the Ottoman Empire. In 1912, after a war between the Ottoman Empire and Italy, the Dodecanese were under Italian administration (1912–1943). During the Second World War, they were occupied by Germany and then subjected to British control. The Dodecanese island group was the last region to be incorporated into the Greek state in 1947.[5]

There are, however, substantial differences in the manner that these islands have developed during the course of the 20th century. The Italians undertook important infrastructure work on the main islands of Rhodes and Kos, created a naval base, and installed 14,000 colonists in Leros. Nonetheless, they did little to retain the inhabitants of Kalymnos, Symi and Kastellorizo after prohibiting sponge fishing on the Libyan coast, and when the cultivation of land in Asia Minor, where many had their fields, was no longer possible. As a consequence of these events, many inhabitants (in particular from these islands) emigrated overseas. According to Emile Kolodny, the Dodecanese is the only Greek island group where internal migration between the islands can be observed (Kolodny 2004). From the smaller islands, many find seasonal work in Kos and Rhodes. Emigration from this region has mainly been directed to continental Greece, Egypt, North America and Australia. After the incorporation of Kos and Rhodes into the Greek state, migration has also been directed to Western Europe, South Africa, and in the case of some Muslims, to Turkey.

During the last few decades, Rhodes and Kos have mostly followed a development pattern that has responded to the demands of the tourist sector. Both islands have an international airport and have been reachable by international charter flights since the 1970s. The other islands have followed a different development pattern in the field of tourism. Patmos is mainly known as a place of pilgrimage for Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics. Kalymnos is the only island where sponge fishing is still practiced, and it has gained international fame as an important meeting place for rock climbers.

A fair amount of literature has evolved around the Dodecanese, Rhodes in particular. Henry Miller's 'The Colossus of Maroussi' and Lawrence

[5] After the War of Independence, the Greek Kingdom was recognized by the sultan by the Treaty of Adrianople of 14.9.1830. The Greek state then acquired the Ionian Islands in 1864, Thessaly in 1881, Epirus, southern Macedonia, Western Thrace, Crete and the Aegean Islands in 1913, and finally the Dodecanese Islands in 1947.

Durrell's 'Reflections on a marine Venus', which is named after one of the 4th century B.C. statues in the local archeological museum called 'the Aphrodite of Thalassia', stand as seminal classics in foreign travel literature. Recently, a documentary film was made on the practice of *kamaki*[6] in Rhodes during the golden years of mass tourism. This film was 'The colossi of love' by Maria Koufopoulou.[7]

In 1988 the old town of Rhodes was classified as a part of UNESCO World Cultural Heritage and ever since this event important restoration work has been undertaken which mainly uses European and private funding. What we see today is a mesh of Byzantine, Ottoman and Latin architecture. During the Ottoman era many churches were converted to mosques and many more were built from scratch.[8] The most notable of the functioning mosques in Rhodes is the newly renovated Suleiman mosque *(Süleymaniye camii)*, erected soon after 1522 on the site of the Church of Apostles and rebuilt in 1808. Opposite is the Hafiz Ahmed Aga Library *(Hafiz Ahmed Ağa Kütüphanesi),* which was founded in 1793 and contains Arabic, Persian and Ottoman manuscripts. A little farther away are the Turkish baths, the mosque of Sultan Mustafa *(Sultan Mustafa camii)* which was built in 1765, and the Redjep Pasha mosque *(Recep Paşa camii)* from 1588. The Redjep Pasha mosque is considered to be the most notable mosque built by the Ottomans in Rhodes. This mosque has Persian faience decoration, but today the mosque is in very bad shape. Also nearby is the Ibrahim Pasha mosque *(Ibrahim Paşa camii)* from 1531. In Kos there are five mosques, four of these are in Kos town. The two most notable mosques are the Gazi Hassan Pasha (Lontza) mosque *(Gazi Hasan Paşa Lonca camii)* from 1786 which is situated opposite the plane tree where Hippocrates[9] supposedly used to teach, and the Ibrahim Defterdar mosque *(Ibrahim Defterdar camii)*, situated in the main square of Kos town. All these mosques as well as the

[6] The term *kamaki* literally means 'harpoon' or 'fish-spear', but is colloquially used for 'gigolo'. On kamaki in the Greek context, e.g., S. Zinovieff, Έλληνες άντρες και ξένες γυναίκες: το «καμάκι» σε μια επαρχιακή πόλη, in E. Papataxiarchis, Th. Paradellis (eds.), *Ταυτότητες και φύλο στη σύγχρονη Ελλάδα*, Athens: Alexandreia, 1998, 3rd ed., 251–276.

[7] The titles of several of these works are a tribute to the Colossus of Rhodes which was destroyed by an earthquake in 225 B.C..

[8] In the Late Ottoman era there were twenty-three functioning mosques in the old town of Rhodes (Savorianakis 2000, 53).

[9] Hippocrates is considered the greatest physician of antiquity and was born in Kos in 460 B.C.

Ottoman library and baths in Rhodes are sources of pride for the local Muslim populations.

The rich and culturally diverse histories of Kos and Rhodes are reflected not only in their monuments but also in their populations. Today, the great majority is Greek Orthodox but there are also Muslims, Roman Catholics, Lutherans and a small Jewish community. The Jewish community consists of all in all seven families in Rhodes and one in Kos; most are Greek Jews from continental Greece. The synagogue, located in the old town of Rhodes and restored in 2003, has a commemorative plaque to the many members of the Jewish population who were sent to Auschwitz during the Nazi occupation. A commemorative service is held every year on the 23rd of July. On this day, which marks the date of the deportation of the Jews of Rhodes, descendants of the Jews of Rhodes, better known as *Rhodeslis* or *Rhodites*, who are today scattered all over the world, gather in Rhodes (Sintès 2010). More recently, Rhodes has also become a home for large numbers of foreign residents, as well as economic migrants and refugees. The foreign residents are mainly Western and Northern Europeans, whereas the economic migrants and refugees mainly come from Eastern Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

In the Greek context where considerable emphasis is put on the cultural and linguistic homogeneity of its population, the religious diversity we find in Rhodes, and to a lesser extent, also in Kos is a rare phenomenon. Nevertheless, here as elsewhere, most public attention seems to be channeled to cater to the majority of the population, neglecting the linguistic and religious minorities present in the region.[10] For example, official tour guides rarely (if ever) mention events or sights linked to the Ottoman past or the once significant Jewish community. This tendency is also visible in the case of Greek diaspora tourism, promoted in the Dodecanese by an association called *the Dodecanesian Dream*. During the first meeting of the International Dodecanesian Diaspora which was organized in Rhodes in August 2008, not a single event was organized to commemorate the ethnically, linguistically and religiously heterogeneous past of this island (Sintès 2010, 44).

[10] Internationally, Greece has the reputation of a country that does not recognize the existence of minorities on its territory with the sole exception of the Muslim minority in Thrace. France is another example. EUMC, *Les Musulmans au sein de l'Union européenne. Discrimination et islamophobie* (2006, 13).

The Muslims in Rhodes and Kos: From Ottoman Subjects to Greek Citizens

The ethnic Turks or the 'Muslims', according to the official Greek terminology in use today,[11] have been living in Rhodes and Kos since 1522, as subjects of the Ottoman Empire.[12] In the late 19th century, significant numbers of Muslim Turks from Crete settled on these islands (Savorianakis 2000, 88). During the Italian administration, the Muslims were recognized as one of the three existing religious communities with the right to elect their own councils. After the incorporation of the Dodecanese into the Greek state, the great majority automatically became Greek citizens.[13] Although the Dodecanese Muslims were not recognized as a minority, because they were deemed as not falling under the protection of the Lausanne Treaty,[14]

[11] In this paper, I use both terms in parallel.

[12] According to the Ottoman population census of 1884–1886, Rhodes then had a population of 30,606 inhabitants, out of whom 20,711 were Christians, 6,467 Muslims, 2,690 Jews and 738 were 'foreigners'. Kos had a population of 12,965, out of whom 10,449 were Christians, 2,439 Muslims and 67 were Jews (Savorianakis 2000, 74).

[13] In 1912, when the Dodecanese island group was ceded to Italy, these islands had an estimated Muslim population of 11,000, the great majority of whom resided in Kos and Rhodes. During the Italian administration, the Muslims had a choice between three different citizenships: Turkish, Italian and Aegean. According to estimations from some members of the local Muslim communities, approximately 1,000 chose Turkish citizenship, 100 chose metropolitan Italian citizenship, whereas the vast majority of 10,000 chose Aegean citizenship. When the Dodecanese were incorporated into the Greek state, those who had Aegean citizenship automatically became Greek citizens. Those with metropolitan Italian citizenship left for Italy. The Turks were allowed to stay but remained Turkish citizens who were obliged to renew their residence and work permit on a regular basis. This last category of persons was exempted from military service in both countries. Usually, the choice of citizenship depended on different family traditions and decisions. There are still approximately 50 persons in Greece with Turkish citizenship since the Ottoman period. Information concerning the Turkish citizens was provided by Mr. Ihsan Yücel, Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Rhodes, in November 2010. According to figures presented by K. Tsitselikis, after 1943, there were 9,000 Muslims in the Dodecanese (Tsitselikis 2006, 379).

[14] The Lausanne Treaty sets the legal framework for minority protection in both states regarding 'non-Muslims' in Turkey, and Muslims in Greece. The Treaty does not enumerate the 'non-Muslim' minorities in Turkey and the 'Muslim' minorities in Greece. It grants legal protection to all non-Muslim communities in Turkey and all Muslim communities in Greece. In practice, Turkey has limited the protection of the treaty to Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Jewish communities. Likewise in Greece, Muslims of the Dodecanese Islands have been deemed not to fall under the Lausanne protection system (Kurban, Tsitselikis 2010, 7).

special status was acknowledged for the waqf and the Turkish schools (Georgalidou 2004).

The Muslim population in the Dodecanese is, today, estimated at 5,000, out of which 3,000–3,500 are in Rhodes and 1,500–2,000 are in Kos.[15] In Kos the Muslims mainly live in Kos town and in the village of Platani *(Gkerme/Kermentes)*. The latter is situated a few kilometres outside Kos town; it is the last village before the archaeological monument of Asklipeio. This monument is one of the most important tourist attractions on the island. The Turkish name of the village, Gkerme/Kermentes most probably derives from the homonymic place of origin of its inhabitants on the other side of the Aegean, who settled there in the 16th century (Savorianakis 2000, 58). Today half of the population of Platani is Greek Orthodox and schools are mixed. All teachers are Greek Orthodox. In Rhodes, the Muslims are not concentrated in one particular place but scattered all over the island. Many live in the old town of Rhodes, others live in Iyalissos, Kandili, Sgouros, Salakos, Lindos and Katavia. Since the 1970s all pupils attend Greek public school. The Turkish language is mainly used for purposes of oral communication within the communities. In practice, there are important differences as far as the level of maintenance and knowledge of Greek and Turkish languages are concerned; these differences are explained by age, origin, place of residence and participation in different social networks (Georgalidou 2004).

A community, according to Dortier, is 'a group of people who are united by relatively close ties of sociability, a common sub-culture and the feeling of belonging to the same group' (Dortier 2004). Despite the existence of a community it is only recently that the Muslims in Kos and Rhodes have attracted the attention of researchers. In 1997 an article on the school education and social integration of Muslims in Rhodes was published by Stelios Chiotakis.[16] More recently, socio-linguistic research on the Muslim community in Rhodes has been carried out by a team of scholars from the University of the Aegean in Rhodes, where one of the members is a member of the local Muslim community (Georgalidou 2003; Georgalidou 2004; Georgalidou, Spyropoulos, Kaïli et al. 2011). In 2008 a book on Rhodes and its Muslim community was published in Turkey by Sadi Nasuhoglu, who is

[15] S. Chiotakis, Σχολική εκπαίδευση και κοινωνική ενσωμάτωση των μουσουλμάνων της Ρόδου, Σύγχρονα θέματα 1997, p. 63–64 and p. 79–83.
[16] Sadi Nasuhoğlu, *Rodos (Anılar ve Tarihçe)*, Muğla 2008.

also a member of this community.[17] In many ways, the Muslims in Kos and Rhodes are still 'a people without history' according to the denomination proposed by Eric Wolf (1982). This particularly concerns the Muslims in Kos.

The incorporation of the Dodecanese into the Greek state and the Cyprus conflict, which took the form of a military confrontation in 1974, forced large numbers of Muslims to leave their native islands and migrate to Turkey. In many cases migration was motivated by economic considerations. In connection with the Cyprus conflict, migration was largely a reaction to the discrimination that Muslims in Kos and Rhodes faced in Greece. Field research suggests that the 1960s and the 1970s were particularly difficult years for the Muslims in Kos and Rhodes, marked by sabotage of shops, fields and cattle; discrimination in the fields of education and health continued even later. One informant said the following:

> During those years, especially after 1974, we were often attacked in different ways. From our fields, they stole our aubergines and our cows, from our shops they stole products. They broke our shops. In our fields, we have seen our cows and sheep slaughtered. I have seen this with my own eyes. To me they said that they would slaughter me too. […] People got scared. […] In the Greek public school we were not encouraged to continue our studies. There were teachers who told us to go back to the cows, who asked us what we were doing in school. If somebody managed to continue his studies at university he was asked what he was doing there and told that no matter what … there was no position for him afterwards, that he was a Turk. […] Everything was more difficult for us. We are subjected to compulsory military service but in the army we were not given arms. We did the work of a servant. Even in hospital, when somebody got ill, we had to pay important sums of money to get attention, to be taken care of. [...] Things were difficult here, life was difficult. A lot of people left for Turkey, mainly for Izmir. Later most stayed there.

Usually, those who left Greece were deprived of their Greek citizenship, and in many cases, also of their property. According to Article 19 of the Greek Nationality Code, established by Legislative Decree 3370 in 1955, 'A Greek citizen of non-Greek descent who left the Greek territory with no intent of return may be declared as having lost his Greek citizenship'. This provision explicitly discriminated against minority members compared to citizens of Greek descent whose citizenship could not be removed on that basis. Article 19 remained in force until 1998 and served as the legal basis for the removal of Greek citizenship from approximately 60,000 citizens, the

[17] Sadi Nasuhoğlu, *Rodos (Anılar ve Tarihçe)*, Muğla 2008.

vast majority of whom were members of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace (Grigoriadis 2008, 25–26). According to estimations by some Muslim community members, approximately 4000 Muslims in Kos and Rhodes lost their Greek citizenship in this manner.[18] Not everyone acquired another nationality, some remained stateless.

Until the late 1990s, and even later in Greece, the respect for minority rights used to be seen 'as a burden imposed by the Treaty of Lausanne',[19] which was bound by the principle of reciprocity. In other words, the respect for the rights of the minority of Western Thrace was conditional upon Turkey's respect for the right of its Rum minority in Istanbul, Imvros *(Gökçeada)* and Tenedos *(Bozcaada)*,[20] especially as far as waqf foundations, schools and religious leadership were concerned (Grigoriadis 2008, 30; Tsitselikis 2006, 383–384; Tsitselikis 2008, 72, 79, 96; Kurban, Tsitselikis 2010, 8). It has been suggested that the Muslims in Kos and Rhodes, who are not protected by international treaties, have been the most severely affected by tension between the two countries.[21] As I will argue further on, *de facto*, today it seems that the Muslims in Kos and Rhodes are better integrated into the surrounding Greek society and economy than the Muslims in Western Thrace who are protected by the Lausanne Treaty and benefit from formal minority rights.

In practice, the recognized minorities – the Rum in Istanbul, Imvros and Tenedos on the one hand and the Muslims in Western Thrace on the other hand –, became hostages to alternations in Greek-Turkish relations as the management of the minority populations by the two states was dependent on larger geopolitical issues, international relations and domestic politics in Greece and Turkey (Hirschon 2006, 170–171; Tsitselikis 2008, 75; Kurban

[18] According to oral testimonies, the vast majority of Muslims who left their native island and migrated to Turkey were from Rhodes.

[19] In Greek historiography, the exchange of populations has been presented as a success story that made the population of Greece ethnically, culturally and linguistically more homogeneous. It has also been characterized as 'the greatest peaceful achievement of the Modern Greek state' (Mavrogordatos 1992, 9; Voutira 2006, 240). On the other hand, it has also been suggested that the separation of people who formerly lived together diminished social contact between them and as the shared lived experiences diminished, ignorance of the 'other' followed. Thus, the understanding of difference and respect for the other was replaced by doubt and continuous anxiety, which then lead to alienation. The case of Cyprus where a *de facto* exchange of population took place in 1974 provides another example (Aktar 2006, 149).

[20] In the interest of readability, from here on, reference will be made to Imvros and Tenedos.

[21] PACE on Turkish minorities' rights in Greek Aegean islands, 12 August 2008.

& Tsitselikis 2010, 5). For 80 years, the states on whose territory they lived, never considered the minorities as their own people; usually they were obliged to live separately and were subject to persecution. The negative attitudes of the Greek and Turkish states with regard to their minorities have not changed over time. On the contrary, with the Cyprus issue in the 1960s, the lives of the minorities became even more difficult and pushed great numbers to leave their homes and migrate to their national homelands. Some became refugees and stateless persons (Oran 2006, 294–295). In Kos and Rhodes, the Muslims have not been subjected to political objectives linked to Greek-Turkish relations to the same extent as those in Western Thrace (Tsitselikis 2010, 243).

Three different types of Muslim communities emerge, each with its own specific traits and integration agendas. For example, in Western Thrace, which has been the subject of much study and falls beyond the scope of this paper, there are special minority schools and the Muslim law, *sharia*, is observed. In Kos and Rhodes the marital strategies observed are not the same; there are also differences as far as knowledge of the Turkish language and Islam and the maintenance of ethnicity is concerned.

In Turkey, most Muslims from Kos and Rhodes settled in Bodrum, Izmir, Marmaris and Nazilli. Some also settled in Istanbul. In the 1960s and 1970s, when the economic and political situation in Greece was difficult some others migrated to Western European countries in search of work or study. Eventually the Greek authorities encouraged the Greek Orthodox migrants to return to Greece, e.g. economic subvention was available for those who wanted to open a hotel. This was not the case for the Muslims. Many lost their Greek citizenship and others were turned away by the Greek consular officers when they tried to register their children who had been born abroad as Greek citizens.[22] Amongst those who stayed, especially in Rhodes, many abandoned the Turkish language and Islam. Mixed marriages with Christians became common-place. One informant said the following:

> After the Cyprus events, in the 1960s and especially after 1974, the situation was difficult […] A bomb was put in the mosque […] People got afraid. […] Little by little, mixed marriages with Christians became common. Now we already have the second round of mixed marriages.

According to estimations by some local Muslims in Rhodes, during the last thirty years in Rhodes approximately 60 mixed marriages have been

[22] Later most returned to their native island (Rhodes) either with Greek or foreign passports. Some remained in their new host countries or migrated to Turkey.

concluded between Greek Muslims and Greek Orthodox or foreigners, – mainly British, German and Scandinavian citizens.[23]

In terms of state policy the elimination of minority protection started in 1964, in connection with the Cyprus crisis and the expulsion of the Greeks from Istanbul. The Turkish schools in Kos and Rhodes were closed in 1971 as a counter-measure against the shutting down of the Greek schools in Imvros and Tenedos in 1964 and the Greek Orthodox seminary of Chalki *(Heybeliada)* in 1971 – all were links in a chain reaction to mutually repressive measures (Tsitselikis 2008, 80, 93). There have also been restrictions in the religious field. Over the years a number of mosques have been transferred to the Greek Orthodox Church in Rhodes and have become churches. Others have been rented and have become storage spaces or are slowly turning into ruins. From the twelve mosques still in existence on Rhodes, only one, the Ibrahim Pasha mosque, is open for prayer on a daily basis. A religious service is held every Friday. The recently restored Suleiman Sultan mosque opens only on special occasions. The private visit of the Turkish foreign minister Ahmed Davudoglou to Rhodes in August 2010 and the celebration of Kurban Bayram in November 2010 were such occasions. In this context, the opening of the mosque can be considered as part of a joint agreement between Greece and Turkey regarding the celebration of religious services in Orthodox churches in Turkey and mosques in Greece. The celebration of an Orthodox service by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos in the monastery of Panagia Sumela on the Turkish Black Sea coast on 15 August 2010 for the first time in 80 years is yet another demonstration of this new policy of rapprochement between Greece and Turkey. A third mosque, the Sultan Mustafa mosque, is used for wedding ceremonies.[24] In Kos two out of five mosques are operational and open for prayer on a daily basis: the Defterdar mosque in the main square of Kos town and the Gazi Hasan Pasha mosque in Platani. The latter opens five times a day and prayer is assured daily.

On both islands, there are also Muslim cemeteries. In Rhodes the contemporary Saint Dimitri cemetery is located outside the town of Rhodes and has four different sections: Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Jewish and Muslim. In some villages there are also old Muslim cemeteries. In Kos

[23] Some other local Muslims estimate the number of mixed marriages in Rhodes at 300. However, this seems to be an overestimation.

[24] Until 1974, the Sultan Mustafa mosque was a functioning mosque. In the late 1970s, it was reopened for the administrative registration of wedding ceremonies. In the Islamic world, mosques are not used for the celebration of wedding ceremonies.

there are two functioning Muslim cemeteries, both are located in Platani. These Muslim cemeteries cater to the needs of the local Muslims and the recent migrant population of Muslims. This is noteworthy as the capital of Greece, Athens, which is home to the great majority of the country's Muslim immigrants, estimated to be 250,000 excluding the Albanians, still does not have a Muslim cemetery (Tsitselikis 2010, 234–235).[25]

This brings us to yet another important institution within the Muslim community, the waqf foundation. This is an organization for the management and restoration of Muslim community property. The waqfs in Greece (in Thrace and in the Dodecanese) are regulated by special laws that are part of the broader minority protection measures designed for Thrace.[26] However, in practice, the established laws have not always been implemented. Over the years and even today, the waqfs have often been subject to mismanagement and un-transparent practices which had political goals. Since the military coup d'état of 1967, members of all waqf boards in Greece have been appointed by Greek authorities. The new law on waqf foundations, adopted by the Greek Parliament in February 2008 (Law No. 3647), allows the election of board members. However, this law only applies to Western Thrace. In the Dodecanese, where the Italian laws have been retained in force until now, there are no provisions for the election of waqf foundation members (Kurban, Tsitselikis 2010, 9–14).[27]

According to a general pattern, the state attempts to control the internal organization of foundations and the management of their property as tightly as possible. This is at the expense of the autonomy granted to minority communities under the Lausanne Treaty. In Turkey the situation is no different (Kurban, Tsitselikis 2010, 9). As a consequence, during the past decades, an important part of real state that once belonged to the community has been sold or rented. In Kos and Rhodes many properties have been turned into storage spaces, shops, cafes or playgrounds. Others have become dilapidated or are turning into ruins. In Katavia, a village in southern Rhodes, the mosque has been turned into a café. In Kritika, outside Rhodes

[25] The construction of a Muslim cemetery on the outskirts of Athens is planned, following the donation of a plot of land by the Church of Greece (Tsitselikis 2010, 240).

[26] Under the Lausanne Treaty, as well as the national laws of Greece, minority foundations have a fundamental right to possess property and to dispose it for their benefit. Acquisition of property takes place through purchase or donations by members of the community.

[27] Decree No. 12, 1925 has been retained in force by Article 7 of the Royal Decree of 9 May 1947, Official Gazette no. 97 A 1947.

town, the minaret is about to fall down.[28] In this respect the situation in Kos is a little better. Evidence suggests that pressure on the local Muslim population has been particularly strong in Rhodes where the Muslims were more numerous and the waqf property more important in terms of quantity and wealth. It has also been suggested that in Kos the Muslims were better organized and the community more united. It may also be suggested that their leaders were stronger and managed to defend their cause better.

During the Italian administration the Italians nominated the 'mufti', the president of the community, and the president of the waqf. The mufti made decisions about marriages and the court of justice, about divorces. There was no sharia. Until the mid-1980s, there was a formally recognized Muslim community in Rhodes. Since that date the Greek authorities have not nominated a new president. The last mufti of Rhodes died in 1974 and no mufti has been nominated since.[29] For its religious needs today, the Muslim population in Rhodes is served by an imam and a muezzin. In Kos, where the population is smaller there is an imam, a vice-imam and a muezzin. Both imams are Muslims from Western Thrace whereas the vice-imam and the muezzins are local Muslims.

The non recognition of the institution of the mufti of Rhodes by the Greek authorities is a part of larger inconsistencies in the functioning of the Greek state with respect to minorities. Despite formal provisions given by the state after the exchange of populations the muftis in Greece have never been elected by the people. As a rule, they are nominated by the Greek authorities. From the mid-1980s, this practice has been contested by the Turkish state, and also by a part of the minority population. As a consequence, in Komotini and Xanthi (two of the three existing mufti institutions in Greece) there are two muftis – one that is nominated by the Greek authorities and one that is elected and recognized by the people. Finally, in Didimoticho, the institution of the mufti does not work appropriately (Tsitselikis 2006, 383).

[28] According to the President of the Association of Muslims in Rhodes, Mr. Mehmet Samantakis, in Rhodes, out of 600 waqf properties only 35 are left today. Interview in November 2010. In the PACE report from 2008, reference is made to 450 properties out of which 40 are left. PACE on Turkish minorities' rights in Greek Aegean islands, 12 August 2008.

[29] Oral communication from members of the Muslim community in Rhodes.

Developments in the Muslim Communities in Kos and Rhodes Since 1990

After the political changes in Europe since 1990, in tangent with pressure from various European institutions[30] and the recent rapprochement between Greece and Turkey, the situation of Muslims in Greece is now changing. There is also a new sense of vitality in the local Muslim communities in Kos and Rhodes. In 2000 local Muslim associations were founded in Kos and Rhodes; both bear the name of 'Muslim Brotherhoods' (*Musulmaniki adelfotis*). These are cultural and educational associations of Muslims of Turkish origin whose main aim is the maintenance and promotion of their culture and traditions. A first attempt to organize local associations on these islands was made in the late 1980s. In 2000 the associations were recognized by the Greek authorities. Meanwhile, the active members of the communities engaged in an informal exchange of information and manifestations of solidarity under the vigilant eye of the authorities. According to their representatives, the Muslim association in Rhodes now has 650 registered members and the one in Kos has 890 members. In the framework of these associations, the celebration of various festivities and Turkish language and dance classes are organized.[31] One of the latest initiatives of the Muslim association in Kos concerns the opening of a private, bilingual Greek-Turkish kindergarten.[32] Both associations also organize excursions to Turkey. Usually these excursions are organized in cooperation with Turkish associations in Bodrum and Izmir; occasionally they are organized with the

[30] In 2009 a motion for a resolution on 'the situation of the Turkish minority in Kos and Rhodes' was presented by Mr Andreas Gross to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) (Doc.11904, 6 May 2009). In 2010, the PACE criticized 'the recurrent invoking' of the 'principle of reciprocity' by both Greece and Turkey and pointed out that it is 'first and foremost the countries in which the minorities live that are responsible for their own citizens, including the members of the respective religious minorities'. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, *Freedom of Religion and Other Human Rights for non-Muslim minorities in Turkey and for the Muslim Minority in Thrace (Eastern Greece)*, Resolution 1704, 2010, paragraphs 5 and 8, quoted in Kurban, Tsitselikis 2010, 8.

[31] In Rhodes, Turkish classes are organized throughout the school year. All in all, approximately 10% of the local Muslim school children of Turkish origin take part in these classes. In Kos, Turkish classes are mainly organized during the summer months. The teachers are from Western Thrace or local Muslims who have studied in Turkey. As far as dance classes are concerned the situation is the opposite. In Rhodes, Turkish dance classes are organized a few weeks before an important community holiday, whereas in Kos they are assured throughout the school year.

[32] The difficulty of finding a suitable kindergarten teacher has prevented the project from materializing.

support of the Turkish Consulate General in Rhodes. In 2004 an association of friendship and cooperation between Bodrum and Kos was founded in Bodrum.[33] In practice, we could also speak of a form of educational exchange; offspring of Dodecanesian Muslims who have settled in Turkey come to Greece to see Kos, Rhodes and other islands whereas Muslims in Kos and Rhodes send their offspring to Turkey to see the Turkish coast and various historical and cultural sites. Izmir, Ankara, Bursa and Cappadocia are usually part of the programme. However, the organization of these excursions is not free from problems. Field research suggests that difficulties arise in connection with the visa applications of the Turkish guests.[34]

Recently, the associations in Kos and Rhodes have strengthened their communities with new *Hocas*[35] from Western Thrace. The latter assist the official imams and the vice-imam in Kos in their duties. They also hold Koran classes. Both *Hocas* have received their theological training in Turkey (and Saudi-Arabia) and read the Koran in Arabic and Turkish. The new *Hocas* are paid by the local Muslim associations and recognized by the people but not by the waqfs or the Greek authorities.

Today, the main issues on the agenda of the associations concern the institutionalization of Turkish language and religious education in Greek public schools in Kos and Rhodes with a large number of Muslim pupils. According to the representatives of these associations, 'the problem, especially in Rhodes, is that the younger generation no longer knows its language, culture and religion'. Over the years, the associations in Kos and Rhodes have presented several formal requests to the Greek authorities (the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs) for Turkish language and classes in Islam to be made part of the regular school programme.[36] In one of their latest petitions the association in Kos asked for two hours of Turkish

[33] Oral communication: Ms Güler Birol, President of the association of friendship and cooperation Bodrum – Kos, Bodrum May 2011.

[34] According to the President of the association of friendship and cooperation Bodrum-Kos, in 2007 when their association was invited to Kos, several persons who were included in the delegation did not receive a visa from the Greek authorities. Thereafter, the association has not organized excursions to Greece.

[35] 'Hoca' is a Turkish term for teacher and in this case, religious instructor.

[36] Rules relating to education in the minority's mother tongue are provided under international human rights laws such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 27) ratified in 1997 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 30) ratified in 1992, by which Greece is also bound (Tsitselikis & Mavrommatis 2003, 9).

and two hours of Islamic religious instruction to be introduced at primary school level in the village of Platani on a weekly basis.[37] In Rhodes the association has asked for office space from the waqf. Other requests concern the opening of mosques and the nomination of new *Hocas*. Most of these requests have not received any attention. In many cases it seems that the requests of the associations are not supported by the waqfs.[38] At the waqf in Rhodes, the recent interest in langue and religion is seen as something which is confined to a small minority of Muslims, whose aim is to introduce the 'regime of Western Thrace' in the Dodecanese. In Western Thrace Muslims have official minority status; in minority schools Turkish language and Islam are part of the school programme. In 2006 the Turkish language was introduced as a foreign language in certain Western Thracian public schools. Nevertheless, evidence proves that the number of Thracian minority Turkish speakers is also declining. In the wider Greek society, until recently, Turkish was not perceived as a prestigious language like English, French or German (Tsitselikis & Mavrommatis 2003, 7–8). Slowly the situation is changing. During the last fifteen years, in local communities in Western Thrace, the presence of the Turkish language in public sphere has increased in a significant manner (Baltsiotis, Tsitselikis 2008).

In Rhodes another topical issue concerns the restoration of the Murad Reis cemetery complex in the Mandraki harbour. This is an important historical site with tombs dating from the 16th century.[39] Until 1974 the Murad Reis complex also housed the residence of the Mufti of Rhodes. Two preliminary scientific studies of the cemetery complex have been made: one in Greece, which was commissioned by the municipality of Rhodes, the other in Turkey by a research team from Ankara University. However, collaboration or dialogue between the two sides has not been institutionalized. Recently, the territory has been rented to the Municipality of Rhodes for the construction of a music school.

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[37] Oral communication: Mr. Mazloum Païzanoglou, President of the Association of Muslims in Kos, May 2011.

[38] Conversations with representatives of the waqfs in Kos and Rhodes; 'Σύλλογος Μουσουλμάνων με Δημοσιογράφους για: Μουφτή Ξάνθης (παρερμηνεύτηκε), Σχολείο Τουρκικής γλώσσας (κανείς δεν νοιάζεται) ΒΑΚΟΥΦ (καμία συνεργασία), Aegean News, 7.6.2011, http://www.aegeannews.gr/default.asp?id=27&lg_id=1&Records=Details&_id=38165 (24 August 2011).

[39] Tens of thousands of Ottoman soldiers were buried here after the siege of Rhodes in 1522. However, a significant number of these tomb stones were removed by the Italians in 1928 (Savorianakis 2000, 54–55).

Another future project, relevant to the current study, concerns the establishment of a museum of Ottoman history in the clock tower of the old town of Rhodes *(Fethi Paşa Saat Kulesi)*. This is an initiative of a Turkish foundation based in Istanbul.[40]

In total, the Greek ICOMOS has registered 2,300 Ottoman monuments and public buildings (minarets, mosques, Islamic schools, bridges, fortifications, fortresses, irrigation channels) in Greece without taking into account churches and monasteries built during that period. Today 90% of the Ottoman monuments belong to the Greek state. In addition to this figure, 8,500 private buildings which were once inhabited by Ottomans have been registered. Today most public buildings are in a bad state of preservation. In comparison with the situation in mainland Greece, in the Dodecanese and Crete, the Ottoman buildings are rather well-preserved. It has been suggested that both the Greek and Turkish governments are at fault for the current situation due to both sides counteracting every effort to study or restore monuments belonging to the 'other' culture (Agriantonis 2006, 457–460, 465).

Migration and Transnational Livelihoods: A Consequence of Discrimination or a Choice?

In the past, the decision to move to Turkey was often motivated by economic and sociolinguistic considerations. In connection with the Cyprus crisis, departures were mainly motivated by the insecurity that Muslims faced in Greece. Among the wealthier social strata, a certain number have invested in land and property in Turkey since the 1970s.[41] Many families sent their children to be married in Turkey. Others sent their children to Turkey for their secondary and university education. Few returned to Greece after the completion of their studies. Partially, this can be explained by the non recognition of Turkish university diplomas in Greece until 1994,[42] and also, by the difficulty of finding employment befitting their qualifications (Oran 2006, 301).

[40] Oral communication: Mr. Ihsan Yücel, Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Rhodes, November 2010.

[41] Oral communication: Mr. Ihsan Yücel, Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Rhodes, November 2010; members of the Muslim communities in Kos and Rhodes.

[42] This practice, pursued by DIKATSA (the Greek institution for the recognition of foreign university diplomas) was abolished in 1994, with the exception of two disciplines: Turkish language and theology.

Since the mid-1990s, important changes have taken place in Greek society and state policy with regard to the Muslims in Western Thrace. These changes are reflected in the situation of Muslims in Kos and Rhodes. Over the years, entrance to Greek universities has been facilitated by laws and quotas of positive discrimination. Since 1997, 0.5% of student places in universities are available to Muslims from Western Thrace and the Dodecanese (Tsitselikis 2010, 240; Notaras 2008, 75). As a consequence of these measures, an increasing number of Muslims pursue their education in secondary schools in Greece, and later in Greek universities. In parallel, studying in Turkey is not incompatible with further career opportunities and a good life in Greece.

During the last decade, there have been a few cases of young people, both males and females, who after completion of their university training in Turkey have returned to Greece and found a place at their level of qualifications in the context of the wider Greek society and economy. According to the estimations of the local Muslim community members in Kos, among the thirteen Muslim students from Kos enrolled in a university during the academic year 2010–2011, three studied in Greece and ten in Turkey. Earlier, mainly boys and young men pursued their studies in Turkey. From 2000 Muslim girls have also been documented as continuing their studies in Turkey.[43]

Generally speaking, the Muslims in Kos and Rhodes now wear the same clothes,[44] do the same jobs and take their children to the same schools as their Greek Orthodox brethren. All in all, the Muslims constitute a young population. As a rule there are 1–3 children in every family.[45] Young men are subject to compulsory military service in Greece. Since 1998, like the ethnic Greeks, they too bear arms. Lately, they have also been allowed to serve on their native island. However, it seems that they are not recruited to the Military Academy.[46]

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[43] In 2010 four students (two from Rhodes and two from Kos) were selected to pursue their University studies in Turkey. All four were female.

[44] Atatürk's reforms, in particular with regard to clothing ad secularism were implemented in Kos and Rhodes in the 1920s. This was not the case in Western Thrace. In Western Thrace the head scarf is widely worn by women.

[45] Oral communication: Mr. Mazloum Païzanoglou, President of the Association of Muslims in Kos, May 2011.

[46] Until the late 1990s, the Muslims were not exempt from military service. They were, however, discriminated against in various manners. For example, they had to serve unarmed and were mainly asked to carry out auxiliary tasks.

Locally, the Muslims have a reputation of being hard workers. One of my Greek Orthodox informants in Kos said the following,

> […] here in Kos, the Muslims are not marginalized like in Western Thrace. They are rich. […] Here, people live from tourism. Here, money is all that counts.

Traditionally, many Muslims used to work in agriculture and cattle-breeding. Today, the great majority are self-employed and work in the agricultural or tourist field. Many occupy professions such as mechanics, technicians, shop and restaurant keepers or specialists in the construction field. Businesses are usually passed down from father to son. Some work in the lower categories of the public sector. Among those who have finished university, a few occupy positions in public administration or in education. Some others have opened their own businesses: for example, a female Muslim university graduate opened a private language school in Kos.

As far as the rather successful integration of Muslims in Kos and Rhodes into wider Greek society and economy is concerned, this can partially be explained by economic development, in particular the expansion of the tourism sector and the effects of globalization which have benefited the entire population on these islands. However, what seems equally if not more important is the fact that the Muslims in Kos and Rhodes pursue their education in Greek public schools together with the majority population. The public school is, here, identified as an institution which provides the pupils with Greek language instruction. They are also exposed to Greek national consciousness**.** However, as the Turkish minority schools in Western Thrace have shown, in these schools pupils usually acquired a Turkish national consciousness which facilitated their socio-economic integration in Turkey. In these schools the pupils did not always acquire the necessary skills to facilitate their socio-economic integration in Greece, which was their country of citizenship (Mavrommatis 2006, 365–366). Moreover, often the level of education and the level of knowledge of both Greek and Turkish in these schools were low.

Since 1997 increased attention has been given to Greek language education through different state programs. With the change in attitude of the authorities, there is also a change in the attitude of the minority population. Today, an increasing number of West Thracian Muslims send their children to Greek public schools from an early age. In parallel with this, there is an increasing tendency for minority kindergartens and primary schools to operate in two languages: Turkish and Greek. This is easily explained: competence in Greek is perceived as the main means to social

integration and mobility in Greek society (Notaras 2008, 75–76; Baltsiotis, Tsitselikis 2008). Nevertheless, recent research shows that, generally speaking, the level of education, socio-economic status and level of integration within broader Greek society and economy of Muslim minority families in Western Thrace all remain low (Baltsiotis, Tsitselikis 2008; Notaras, 2008).[47]

As far as the Muslims in Kos and Rhodes are concerned, ironically, their improved social status is also explained by the consequences of the political changes in Europe since the late 1980s, in particular, the arrival of migrants from the Balkans, Asia and the Middle East who do the 'worst' jobs. With the increased crime rate, the migrants have become the scapegoat for all evil. In Kos and Rhodes, the reputation of Albanians and Bulgarians seems particularly bad. On a national level, it has been suggested that the Albanians in Greece are now being accepted; it is the Muslim immigrants from the Middle East and south-east Asia that have become the 'disturbing other' and 'a cultural threat' to Greece (Tsitselikis 2010, 243).

Reflections on the Meaning of Identity in the Context of Today

Identity, according to Stuart Hall, is a process of identification: 'something that happens over time, that is never absolutely stable, that is subject to the play of history and the play of difference'. In addition, identity is also and partly 'the relationship between you and the Other', hence the construction of difference, which is an unfinished process that happens over time (Hall 1996, 344–345; Ting 2008, 473). As far as the collective identity of the Muslims in Kos and Rhodes is concerned, Marianthi Georgalidou writes: identity appears as a dynamic process 'which is not shaped only on the basis of the bipolar conception of us and the others, but also on the basis of dynamic internal processes in the framework of the in-group, which though aware of its specificities, in no way constitutes a static entity of people with fixed world views that are shared by all its members to the same degree. Development processes involve dynamics that develop inside and outside the group continually redefining the identities of its members and their

[47] Concerning the situation of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace, namely the marginalized position of this group in the wider Greek society and economy, see e.g. *The ECRI report on Greece, the fourth cycle of monitoring*, 2009.

relations with their environment; this is expressed in the minority discourse'[48] (Georgalidou 2004).

Language and religion are important elements of identity. With regard to language, recent sociolinguistic research shows that the language spoken by the members of the local Muslim community in Rhodes is a Greek-based pidgin variety of Turkish (Georgalidou, Spyropoulos & Kaili 2011). According to Hasan Kaili, Vassilios Spyropoulos, Marianthi Georgalidou et al., 'older speakers use a contact vernacular of Greek, based on the local Greek dialect of Rhodes with substantial interference of Turkish. Later generations use a variety of Greek with less interference' from Turkish whereas the younger generations speak near or completely native varieties of Greek. As far as the Turkish varieties spoken by the community members are concerned, interference from Greek is noteworthy and direct translations of Greek idioms to Turkish are common (Kaili, Spyropoulos, Georgalidou & Celtek 2009). Thus, in the last 50 years, almost the entire Muslim community has shifted from near monolingualism in Turkish to bilingualism in various types of Turkish and Greek (Georgalidou, Spyropoulos & Kaili 2011).

In addition to the local Muslims who have their own dialect, there are also other groups of Muslims and/or Turkish speakers in Kos and Rhodes. There are Cretan Muslims, among whom the great majority were Greek speaking already in the 19th century, a small number of Muslims from Western Thrace, Greeks from Istanbul and Imvros, as well as recent migrants from Turkey. The latter are mainly spouses of local Muslims who work in Kos and Rhodes.[49]

However, not everyone has come to terms with their double linguistic and cultural identity. Some see their Greek Turkish identity as a burden, thinking that it diminishes them in some way. They would prefer to have

[48] In the original: «η αξία της θεώρησης της ταυτότητας ως ενός δυναμικού συνόλου στοιχείων που συχνά ετεροκαθορίζονται αλληλοσυγκρουόμενα είναι ακόμα περισσότερο προφανής στην περίπτωση της συλλογικής μειονοτικής ταυτότητας, η οποία δεν διαμορφώνεται μόνο με βάση το δίπολο εμείς και οι άλλοι, αλλά και με δυναμικές εσωτερικές διαδικασίες, στο πλαίσιο της ενδο-ομάδας, η οποία έχει μεν συνείδηση της ιδιαιτερότητας της, αλλά με κανέναν τρόπο δεν αποτελεί ένα στατικό σύνολο ανθρώπων με παγιωμένες κοσμοαντιλήψεις της οποίες μοιράζονται στον ίδιο βαθμό όλα τα μέλη του. Διαδικασίες εξέλιξης οι οποίες αφορούν δυναμικές που αναπτύσσονται εντός και εκτός της ομάδας διαρκώς επανακαθορίζουν τις ταυτότητες των μελών της και τις σχέσεις του με το περιβάλλον τους, γεγονός, που γίνεται εμφανές κατά την εκφορά του μειονοτικού λόγου.»

[49] According to the Immigration Service of the Greek police in Kos, in September 2010, there were 15 Turks in Kos with a valid residence permit.

just one identity, usually to be 'pure Greeks'. In Greece, as in all Balkan countries, bilingualism was for many years considered a handicap rather than a merit or advantage, since the 'other' language was considered to be a link with the national culture of a neighbouring and not always friendly state, and a potential conveyor of an antagonistic national ideology that might threaten territorial integrity (Tsitselikis & Mavrommatis 2003, 24).

Those who have worked or studied in Turkey often consider the years spent in Turkey as 'a rite of passage' which enabled them to improve their knowledge of the Turkish language and to reflect on identity issues, to understand who they are. One of my informants summed up his reflections in the following manner:

> I am not Turkish, I am not Muslim. I am not merely Greek either. I define myself as Greek-Turkish […], officially I am Muslim. However, if somebody congratulates me for my good knowledge of Greek as if I was a recent immigrant here, then I get angry.
>
> When I was in Turkey, there were a lot of small things that bothered me. Some people would have liked to hear 'how we suffer here in Greece because of discrimination'. Our situation here is not that bad. In the end, I prefer to be different here than an ethnic Turk from Greece in Turkey. After all, we have more democracy in Greece even if there are problems too.

Many watch Turkish satellite television and read Turkish newspapers. Visits to Turkey are frequent whether for personal, professional or recreational purposes. Some also have their medical doctors in Turkey, usually in Izmir, a city with two university hospitals. Field research suggests that consulting medical doctors in Turkey is common not only for Muslims but also for Greek Orthodox. This practice is, in part, explained by economic considerations, and particularly concerns ophthalmologists.

As far as religion is concerned, the celebration of Ramadan[50] and Kurban Bayram[51] as well as the five *kandils* (*ragayip, mevlut, berat, miraç* and

[50] Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and lasts up to 29 or 30 days. It is the Islamic month of fasting in which participating Muslims refrain from eating, drinking and sexual relations from dawn until sunset. Fasting is intended to teach Muslims about patience, humility and spirituality.

kadir),[52] are important events in the local Muslim communities and attended by large numbers of people. The Friday midday prayer, however, is mainly attended by migrants from Egypt, Syria, Pakistan and Albania and a small number of older men from the local Muslim communities. Women attend the mosque less frequently and mainly during the bayrams. As a rule, male children are circumcised; this practice is considered to be an important element of their Muslim identity. To this end, some travel to Turkey to perform the rite, while others wait for a Muslim doctor to come from Western Thrace. Mixed marriages are not very common. In some cases, problems arise with the birth of children. In Rhodes there have been several cases where the Greek Orthodox parent secretly took the child to the Orthodox church to be baptized. In parallel with this, the Muslim parent secretly took the male child to Turkey to be circumcised. In some cases, children grow up with no religion.[53] When they reach adulthood, they are free to decide for themselves. The more conservative members of the community show a fair amount of scepticism with regard to mixed marriages. According to them, the current trend is to marry within one's own religious community. In Kos, mixed marriages with Greek Orthodox and other Christians are relatively rare. In the case of Muslim women they are considered socially unacceptable.[54]

According to most of my interlocutors, the ideal case is marriage within one's own community. It is considered easier as far as the education of children is concerned. Marriage with a Christian, with a person of another religion, or an atheist is a less desirable solution. Marriages with Turks are relatively rare in Rhodes; usually this is explained by the absence of a common language and by differences in mentality. In Kos marriages with

[51] Kurban Bayram is an important Islamic holiday celebrated by Muslims worldwide. It is also known as the 'Sacrifice feast' and commemorates Ibrahim's (Abraham's) willingness to sacrifice his eldest son Ishmael (Ismail) as an act of obedience to Allah and Ismail's acceptance of this command, before Allah intervened to provide Ibrahim with a ram to sacrifice instead. During Kurban Bayram, the custom is to sacrifice a goat, sheep, cow or camel. Traditionally, the meat is divided into three parts; the family retains one third, another third is given to relatives, friends and neighbours, and the last third to the poor and needy. Today, it is also common to send money to a developing country; locally this practice is justified by the fact that there are no poor people on Kos and Rhodes anymore. Field work suggests that one third of Muslims in Rhodes and the great majority of Muslims in Kos celebrate Kurban Bayram.

[52] These are festivals of Ottoman tradition.

[53] Oral communication: Father Emmanuel, Metropolitan of Rhodes, and Hoca Ilter, Rhodes, November 2010.

[54] Oral communication from members of the Muslim community in Kos.

Turks are more common. Whereas marriages with Turkish women started in the 1990s, nowadays there is also a demand for male spouses from Turkey. Migrants from the Balkans, Asia and the Middle East usually get married to their countrymen, to other migrants or with Greek Orthodox people. In the eyes of the local Muslim communities they are 'foreign' *(xenoi)* and not acceptable as marriage partners.

We could argue that, in the context of today religious practice and Turkish language are loosing their importance amongst the younger generations, especially in Rhodes.[55] Nevertheless, most seem to think of themselves as Muslims and ethnic Turks, and also as members of a specific Muslim community. Donald Horowitz observed a similar phenomenon in a different, multiethnic and assimilatory context of the United states in the 1980s. Horowitz writes: 'So, as ethnicity is drained of cultural content, as pluralism is accepted, as barriers to intermarriage fall, as minorities fast learn English and improve their material conditions – as all of these things happen – ethnicity nevertheless becomes more important' (Horowitz 1989, 53). As far as the relationship between ethnicity and culture is concerned, the case of Muslims in Kos and Rhodes also proves the thesis of E. K. Francis, according to whom 'an ethnic group can modify and change its culture without losing its identity' (Francis 1947, 396).

Concerning Relations Between Christians and Muslims and the Greek State

As far as neighbourly relations are concerned, many Muslims in Kos and Rhodes emphasize that with their Greek Orthodox co-islanders, *today*, they live like brothers.[56] Some others claim that 'their best friends are Christians'. Their children go to school together, they are invited to each other's marriages and respect each other's religious holidays. Official relations between the confessional groups are mutually qualified as very good and, in some cases, as excellent. In Rhodes, large celebrations of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Jewish community are attended by the Muslim

[55] Field research suggests that this loss is a consequence of the social and economic pressures that have been put on the Muslims since the 1960s. It is also explained by the dispersion of the Muslim population in Rhodes. In Kos where most Muslims are concentrated in the village of Platani, the latter have remained a relatively united and conservative social group which has maintained its distinctive beliefs, language and social norms.

[56] On relations between Christians and Muslims in Rhodes, see also Georgalidou (2003; 2004).

representatives. Representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church mainly come to musical and philanthropic celebrations organized by the Muslims. [57]

Moreover, some Muslims of Turkish origin told me that their best friends are Greek Orthodox. Some others maintain colloquial social relations with each other. In the end, it seems that relations between members of different confessional groups and people *per se* are characterized by a *savoir-vivre* where everybody knows his/her place. Adults and older people, who have experienced the difficult years and the discriminations of the past, often make a point by saying that they have always maintained a low profile in their relationships. Others go a little further, emphasizing the fact that their problem is not with individual people but with the Greek state. Often the representatives of the Greek state in local public administration are not locals but people who have been sent over from other parts of Greece and are unfamiliar with the local history. In parallel, evidence proves that in every-day life discrimination still goes on, namely in the fields of administration and taxation, reminiscent of the measures taken by the Turkish state with regard to its Greek Orthodox population.[58] An older gentleman who lives in an Ottoman house said the following:

> One day, the tiles fell down from the roof; so, I wanted to repair the damage. Very soon the archaeological services intervened; they asked me what I am doing and pointed out that it is a historical building that is concerned. They said that they would come and see, also that I must pay taxes. Next door from me there is a similar house where the owner is a Greek. He has bought the house little by little and thus he has been able to enlarge his domain. Nobody ever stopped him … It is not quite the same if you are a 'Greek' or a 'Turk' even today.

Among those who have settled in Turkey, many are now coming back to visit family. In Rhodes, a few people have come back after their retirement, ostensibly as citizens of another country. In Kos there are some cases where Muslims who migrated to Turkey have married their daughters back to men from Kos. Attachment to the native island, either Kos or Rhodes, is strong.

[57] Oral communication: Mr. Serif Damadoglou Sükri, Imam of Platani; Mr. Ismail Tsakir Samoglou, Imam of Rhodes; Father Emmanuel, Metropolitan of Rhodes and Father Vasileios, Metropolitan of Kos, Septemer 2010–May 2011. It is worth noting that in the Dodecanese, the Orthodox Church is under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. According to K. Tsitselikis, there is no inter-religious dialogue between officials of the Greek Orthodox Church and representatives of the Muslim communities (Tsitselikis 2010, 243).

[58] On the Turkish state and its Greek Orthodox population, e.g. the collection of essays edited by K. Tsitselikis (2006), in particular the contribution by B. Oran; also the work of A. Alexandris.

An older gentleman, who returned to Rhodes after his retirement in Germany, said the following:

> Our home is here. I was born here. I love Rhodes. I lived ten years in Turkey, in Istanbul. There I did not feel that I was at home, in my country. I am from Rhodes. I was born here and went to school here and it is here that my parents are buried. […] In Turkey I had a good life. I know a lot of people who left Rhodes 40–50 years ago. Even after such a long time, they are nostalgic. Their country, their home is here in Rhodes.

Others emphasize that their homes, their roots, their lives and their achievements are linked with Greece, and in particular, with their native island.

> It is not that we don't like Greece. Greece is unjust towards us. We live, eat and drink here. It is here that we have constructed our homes, our businesses. This is our country. Our clients are Greek. This is where our grandparents are buried. I have buried my child here. Our roots are in Kos. Our only hope is that Greece and Turkey get along.

As these examples show, home (and homeland) is defined in terms of family history, belonging to a community and locality. Home-making is the result of family reunification, safe life circumstances, and self-made achievements. The feeling of being at home also stems from contacts with other community members, the exchange of information, mutual aid, and maintaining and performing old traditions and remembering the past. These practices contribute to a kind of 'homely' feeling which is rooted in 'the celebration of small nationalisms and regionalisms' according to the definition of David Morley and Kevin Robins (1993, 8), and more specifically, in 'the celebration of localism' as proposed by Jasna Čapo-Žmegač (2010, 190).

Among those who have lost their Greek citizenship there is a strong feeling of *Heimatlosigkeit*. Today some people do try to retrieve their lost Greek citizenship and their property. After difficult and expensive bureaucratic and legal procedures a limited number of people have been able to get back their Greek citizenship.[59] The restitution of property seems to be a more complicated matter. If this was to happen, a number of requests from Muslims, Jews and others would follow. Though the situation is difficult there may be some hope. In this context the current crisis, which is not only economic but also a crisis of values, concerns everybody and may contribute to greater social cohesion, at least on a local and regional level.

[59] The laws in Greece and Turkey allow double citizenship.

The relatively recent decision of many EU countries, including Greece,[60] to allow Turkish citizens with Green passports *(Yeşil Pasaport)*[61] to travel to EU countries without a visa is a positive step that facilitates border-crossing between the two countries. In the summer time Greek and Turkish excursion boats and private yachts are frequently seen in local harbours on both sides of the Aegean. These are some signs of new dynamics in border-crossing that are economically beneficial for both sides. As these examples show, globalization has had an effect on people's minds contributing to the openness towards 'otherness'. This should be seen as a positive step away from the reciprocity principle which has never been limited to the legal framework only. As a matter of fact, the reciprocity principle is frequently referred to in political debates and media coverage (Kurban, Tsitselikis 2010, 22), and also in colloquial discussions with state officials at different levels of governance as well as ordinary citizens.

Conclusion

The Muslims in Kos and Rhodes are part of a historic minority, present on these islands since 1522 as Ottoman subjects. During the Italian administration, the Muslims were recognized as a religious community. The incorporation of the Dodecanese island group into the Greek state and the Cyprus conflict, which took the form of a military confrontation in 1974, pushed many to leave their homes and migrate to Turkey. Usually, those who left Greece were deprived of their Greek citizenship and their property. Turkish schools on these islands were closed by the Greek state in 1971 as a countermeasure against the closure of the Greek schools in Imvros and Tenedos in 1964, and the closure of the Greek Orthodox seminar at Chalki in 1971. The last mufti of Rhodes died in 1974 and no mufti has been nominated since. In many fields, discrimination against the Muslims continued even later.

Since the mid-1990s, the situation in the Muslim communities in Greece (Thrace and the Dodecanese) is changing. An increasing number of Muslims continue their secondary and university education in Greece. Article 19 (Law 3370/1955) which formed the legal basis for the elimination of Greek citizenship from Greek citizens of non Greek origin was abolished in 1998.

[60] In the case of Greece, this decision came into force on 28 July 2010.

[61] The Green passport allows its bearer to travel visa-free to some countries. It is issued to 1) former members of the National Assembly; 2) first, second or third grade public servants; 3) pensioned first, second or third grade public servants; 4) mayors; 5) spouses of special passport holders; and 6) unwed children of special passport holders who live with their parents until they turn 25.

In the same year the situation of Greeks of non-Greek origin changed in the Greek army; until then they were subject to compulsory military service but had to serve unarmed. In 2000 local Muslim associations were founded in Kos and Rhodes. These are cultural and educational associations of Muslims of Turkish origin.

As far as settlement patterns and marriage strategies are concerned, there are some differences between Kos and Rhodes. In Rhodes, the Muslims are dispersed throughout the island and mixed marriages with Greek Orthodox and other Christians are not uncommon; marriages with Turks are relatively rare. In Kos, the Muslim community is smaller, more united and more conservative. Mixed marriages remain rare and are socially unacceptable, especially in the case of Muslim women. On the other hand, marriages with Turks are more common. As a consequence, there is also a better command of the Turkish language.

Notwithstanding some differences between them, in comparison with the Muslims in Western Thrace, the Muslim communities in Kos and Rhodes are smaller and their incorporation into the Greek state more recent. They also seem to be better integrated into the surrounding Greek society and economy than the Muslims in Western Thrace. This can be explained by the economic development of the region that has benefited the entire population of these islands. However, it is also explained by a different education policy in comparison with that pursued in Western Thrace. Muslim pupils in Kos and Rhodes have pursued their education in Greek public schools together with the majority population since the 1970s; this has not been the case in Western Thrace. The cost of the integration process, especially in the case of Rhodes, has been the loss of language and religion. Moreover, there is a dependency on the Muslim community in Western Thrace; the imams in Kos and Rhodes, the medical doctors needed for the performance of certain religious rites (circumcision) as well as language teachers often come from Western Thrace.

Relations with Turkey have always been important, whether for economic, security, linguistic or religious reasons. In the past the difficulty of securing one's livelihood and constructing a meaningful life in Greece were the main reasons to move to Turkey. Today, visits to Turkey are frequent and are mainly for personal, professional or recreational reasons. Some Muslims also watch Turkish satellite television and read Turkish newspapers, usually online.

Among those who have settled in Turkey, some come back to visit family, in most cases in the capacity of tourists with a visitor's visa. Today, some try to retrieve their lost Greek citizenship and also their property. All in all, the developments in the Muslim communities in Kos and Rhodes over the last decades show that 'ethnic groups, their self-definitions, their claims, their aspirations and expectations are not, after all, foreordained. They are the product of complex interaction between group members and their environment; and they are not static – they change. Some of the most important features of this interaction are official conceptions and governmental policy' (Horowitz 1989, 58).

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