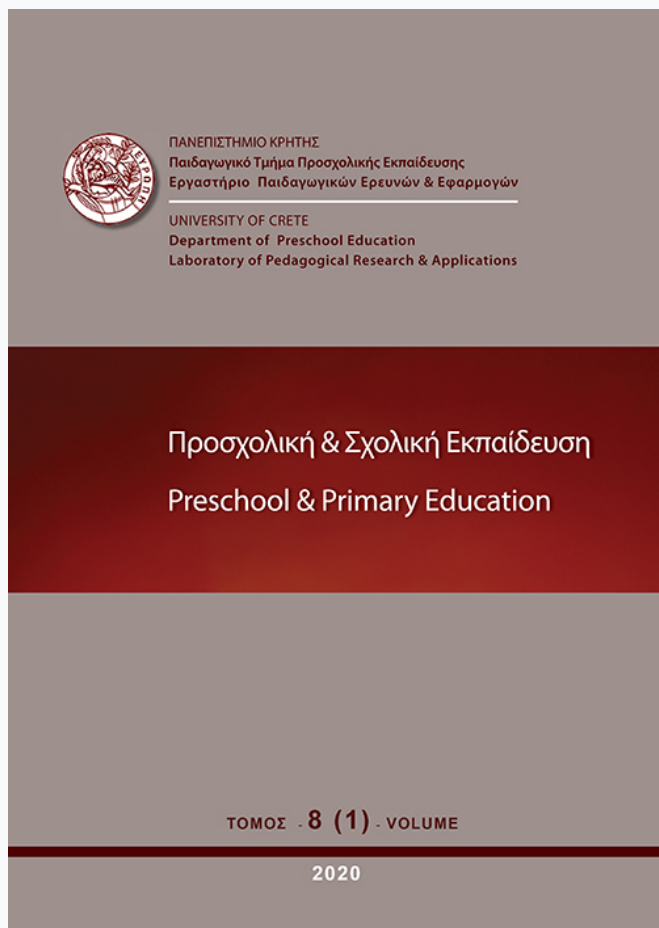


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### Policy on refugee education: Textual discourse and educational structures

Ευαγγελία Καλεράντε

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# Policy on refugee education: Textual discourse and educational structures

Evaggelia Kalerante

*University of Western Macedonia*

**Abstract.** This paper is an attempt to illustrate the education policy developed from the advent of the economic crisis until today. The reason for choosing this time period is that it reflects major events relevant to the continuation of local society. In this respect, reference is made to the migrants' presence in Greece prior to the economic crisis migrants' conditions throughout the economic crisis and the arrival of refugees in recent years. At the same time, the corresponding legislative texts and the political discourse developed throughout this period are critically analysed. The socio-political and economic conditions of this time period have been crucial to generating political discourse, social meaning and eventually shaping new identities, especially regarding migrants and refugees. Based on critical discourse analysis, it can be argued that the legislative administrative regulations have served the dominant political system, while on-going conservative attitudes and emerging far right anti-democratic trends have operated in a segregating, rather than a unifying, manner for the entire population. Education seems unable to operate as a unifying factor, leading to limited opportunity structures, exclusion and marginalisation for specific population groups, namely migrants and refugees. Therefore, given the socio-political and cultural challenges emanating from expanded migrant and refugee communities, education policy must definitely be revisited. A renewed and updated educational discourse should be developed and put forward towards harmonising and unifying models, embracing all citizens, namely natives, migrants and refugees. This way, humanism and democracy will be perceived in their true dimension, while intercultural education will acquire its substantial dimension within the expanded multicultural societies.

**Key words:** democracy, interculturalism, migrant – refugee education, policy of rights

## Introduction

The focal point of this paper is the development and approach of Greek policy towards the migrant and refugee issue. To this end, an analytical pattern is proposed, in which three distinctive historical periods are showcased, as analysed below. These economically, historically and politically-shaped periods form corresponding political approaches and socio-cultural viewpoints. The diversity and complexity of the migrant – refugee issue cannot be scrutinized within a unifying frame, since historical time mirrors dissimilar, versatile discourse – analytical political conceptualisations and social meanings.

The segmentation of studying the migrant – refugee issue in different periods is apparently operational, as the focal point is the reality determined by educational political discourse and

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Correspondent Author: *Evaggelia Kalerante*, Thrakis 4, Lykovrysi, 14123, e-mail: [ekalerante@yahoo.gr](mailto:ekalerante@yahoo.gr)

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meanings. Differentiations and transformations of practices and articulating political discourse are concurrently highlighted. At the same time, as historical time evolves, the true and fake elements are showcased through knowledge resulting in competitive and opposing discourse rejection. The “imaginary” interconnection with the representational knowledge – authority relation lies at this point. “Political rationality” is consequently imposed so that what is perceived as different is put forward as “irrational” (Hugo, 2005).

The content of knowledge is determined by education policy which is actually concerned with social definitions and circumscriptions tied to reproducing socio-political privileges through the educational capital. Based on its socio-political effects, knowledge predetermines expectations for social action and shapes roles accordingly. Therefore, the perception of equality or inequality is determined by knowledge, arranged by legislation and depicted in social organisation norms. Education is of utmost importance in defining knowledge, because what will be taught or rejected depends on educational choices. What is taught and what is distinctive of educational culture stems from educational policy and it is directly tied to other political structures (Chitpin, 2019).

The three periods to be examined are: a) the migrant issue prior to economic crisis, b) the migrants’ condition during the economic crisis and c) the advent of refugees. These three periods include different contents of knowledge determinant to social identities. Knowledge emerges from the official education carriers, educational establishments, the media and social networks. It is conducive to shaping attitudes and behaviours towards the “other”, migrants and refugees, in particular. Thus, the social field is interactively reshaped, as legislation and regulatory informal norms determine the social space through reformed discourse and meanings.

During the first period of studying the migrant issue prior to the economic crisis, reference is made to migrants choosing to live in Greece as their reception country. Therefore, migrants’ – citizens of this country- ability to choose was of primary importance. In political and democratic terms, the implementation of the policy of their rights in the reception country should be anticipated. This means that in political, neoliberal terms – even within a structured inequality system determined and reinforced by capitalist, economic and political organisational structures – the basic principles of rights should be abided by. Reference can be made, *inter alia*, to different kinds of rights implying the political signified and determining the democratic systems operation, theoretically transcending formulated interests. Despite the ideological and political contradiction in these policy objectives (Ahad & Benton, 2018; OECD, 2018; UNESCO, 2019a) that highlight international organisations’ policy criteria, social justice based on meritocracy and humanism could be referred to as central values. International Conventions and Declarations are included in this symbolic legislative setting: The Convention against Discriminations in Education (UNESCO, 1960), Recommendation on Intercultural Education with Universal Perspectives (UNESCO, 2006), International Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (United Nations, 1990), Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (United Nations, 1992), European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights (Council of Europe, 2000). The common themes of the aforementioned guidelines highlight citizens, children and adults’ policy of rights so as to illustrate the dimension pertaining to the necessity of implementing national policies, namely legislation, of nation states based on political humanism and political morality.

It can be said that the migrants’ presence in Greece challenges the Greek democratic system. Based on the combined arguments that migrants are citizens and Greece is a democratic country, their inclusion in Greek society and acceptance as citizens of Greece should have been anticipated. However, a closer look at the politically irrational development of the migrant issue is necessary.

Ever since 1990, Greece has been a reception country for migrants mainly from Balkan countries (58% of the total migrant population comes from Albania) (ELSTAT, 2011)<sup>1</sup>. This

population gradually increased up until 2008 when negative economic conditions lead to the corresponding crisis (Manos, Papadopoulou, & Makrygianni, 2017). The migrants' presence in Greece originated processes for socio-political circumscriptions (indicatively one could refer to the legalisation procedures under the P.D. 358/97 and 359/97 and L. 2910/01). Throughout different time periods successive governments, distinctive for their conservative political orientation, have shaped the field of political verballity towards regulatory policies that could control migrant communities (Lazaridis & Psimmenos, 2000).

The basic content of legislative regulations focuses on compliance policies in the sense that the migrant policy of rights is selectively evaluated and utilized. At the same time, within the far right political space, the competing and opposing discourse is reinforced (Georgiadou, 2008), while defining the anti-democratic content around the concept of migrant – the other – and the simultaneous composition of “we”. This way, marginalisation and social exclusion are naturalised. Besides, in the international political setting, migrant control policies are expanded. An example exhibiting the nationalised far right orientation is that of S. Bannon movement (Dela Baume & Borrelli, 2019) that apparently co-ordinates far right political parties upon a reinforced far right political discourse.

The post-fascist phenomenon is gradually formulated, as defined mainly by Traverso (2019), based on the distinctive features of nationalism and xenophobia. Social tensions are reinforced even if they are politically illustrated as an anticipated condition. The Greek far right attitude along with the gradual conservatism of the right political wing pertaining to migrants is enhanced by a selective lapping to the past. This is actually the alignment of the far right with more general European far right trends that put nation states against globalization, the migrant and refugee issue, by underlining the purity of the native population (Psarras, 2012). The present is apparently put forward as decadence, while the past is showcased as privileged historical time. This political turn towards the ideal past is called “retrotopia” by Bauman (2017).

As already discussed, developing legislation pertaining to migrant rights is confined to administrative regulations and practical interventions that serve the dominant political system. Political discourse on education cannot be diversified. Education, as an institution of propagating the existing system contributes to this distorted perspective of piecemeal social subjects and identities. Finally, even if the right to education, as well as the right to migrant education, is stated in the Constitution, the state's essential obligation to educate members of the migrant community is not established at all. Despite the existing policy of intentions and the corresponding legislation, it seems that the laws are not applicable when it comes to refugee education, their integration into Primary and Secondary Education in particular. In terms of migrants, according to the IEP report (2018), there is on-going school dropout by migrant students and decreased access to Tertiary Education. These phenomena bring about the issue of social equality and the migrants' limited on-going social mobility (Institute of Education Policy, 2018).

Within the educational environment, persons are typically included without recognising migrant male and female students' deficiencies in terms of education as well as the broader inequalities faced on the socio-political level (Gropas & Triantafyllidou, 2011).

Education apparently follows an administrative policy emphasizing inclusion – regular presence of migrant students in schools. A distorted image is actually created about the concept of multiculturalism based on the construction of the signified about intercultural education. Education, as an institution, is based on a different educational discourse and it could contribute to a new social paradigm according to which the “foreigner” is not the “other” and the migrant would not be perceived as a threat. Education policy could co-formulate a democratic condition of attributing rights to migrants regarding their actual inclusion in the civil society. It could also be conducive to redistributing opportunity structures by providing the right to upward social mobility. At the same time, it could lead to a democratic policy against stereotypes. In this sense, the democratic policy along with intercultural education could be conducive to building a theoretical structure about the real meaning of multiculturalism as a maximising condition of

societies. Broader social groups of natives and migrants could collectively focus on real contemporary social problems, such as social inequality in terms of social class, climate change, gender inequalities, etc (Palaiologou & Faas, 2012).

During the second time period regarding migrant presence throughout the economic crisis, the political, social and cultural areas were affected accordingly. Negative socio-political convergences have been generated due to the negative economic situation. The migrant presence has been part of the distorted representation of the true economic crisis causes. As a result, the developed opposing political discourse has been based on dynamic anti-democratic definitions (Psimmenos, 2017).

The economic crisis has generated intensifying conflicts in relation to the migrant issue. This should have been anticipated because educational meanings tied to the migrant policy of rights, social co-existence and actual social inclusion had neither been previously drafted nor re-interpreted by the educational community. Within this negative economic context, the accentuated discourse production has showcased segregating patterns and different interpretations between natives and migrants (Gropas & Triantafyllidou, 2012).

The period prior to the economic crisis apparently did not work constructively towards processes of actual migrant inclusion in civil society. Civil society, in democratic terms, presupposes education for democracy and understanding the citizens' political power. Rosanvallon (2014) found that migration tarnished the feeling of solidarity because this was confined to the idea of homogeneity. Therefore, re-interpretation is necessary, as the discussion is centred round the political and moral deficit.

Educational legislative interventions in democracy conducive to shaping the social and political capital are distinctive of interpretative polysemy. It seems that education policy cannot be diversified from broader ineffective policies stemming from other institutions. They are all piecemeal legislations that do not develop a complete democratic policy on the prevalent political issue of co-existence pertaining to broader groups of citizens that could be enriched by migrants' presence. The economic crisis along with the naturalizing migrants – natives' differentiation reinforces theoretical discourse on their segregation. Different representations of the migrants' socio-political role are shaped, along with the refutation of their political status as social subjects and citizens of the reception country. At the same time, amidst the economic crisis period this inner conflict between natives and migrants apparently disorients all non-privileged classes from the actual economic crisis causes. This way, any collective resistance and action movements are enfeebled (Maroukis, 2013).

The third time period is characterized by the refugees' arrival. The cultural environment has been enriched with various population groups coming to Greece; yet, not due to personal choice. They regard Greece as a place of transition towards the country of their choice. Whether this is a transitional period or they will end up as permanent citizens in Greece, the humanistic and democratic content of political discourse should pertain to welfare policies on their inclusion. Besides, their right to structural benefits and access to political operation, as citizens, should be emphasized.

As regards the previous time periods, they should be viewed as those of organizing an effective socio-political plan for inclusion. In this sense, the new knowledge should be organized towards social co-existence and operational social osmosis of various social subjects and citizens. Diversity, in terms of social identities, leads to system renewal. On the other hand, it presupposes knowledge about diversity as well as knowledge about equality and the policy of rights. Therefore, the role of education is important to produce knowledge, interculturalism and male – female students' political socialization within the dynamic context of multicultural reality.

To sum up, this paper focuses on education and the challenges faced due to the expanded cultural fields shaped by the presence of diversified migrant communities. Especially during this

period, distinctive of the prevalent migrant issue, revisiting the discourse of the previous period on education policy is more than necessary. Social harmonization, the visibility of the “other” as fellow citizen and fellow traveller to vindicate labour rights, welfare policies and socio-political equality are a matter of knowledge. Socio-political awareness is primarily shaped through education. Socio-political meaning-making as well as all alternative manners of interpretation, either positive or negative are the outcomes of education.

At this point it can be argued that – besides Greece, other European countries and the USA, too – make meanings about political and social discriminations based on processes developed in the educational context. Criticism against the enhanced far right political discourse, patterns and meanings of far right policies should spark an enlightening exploration on how the co-articulated anti-democratic discourse is imposed. One could indicatively refer to the escalating racism against migrants and refugees, as well as to recent incidents against Jews. Therefore, the far right political discourse has been developed into a new form of discourse enhancing racism and violent contradictions (Polyakova, 2015).

Therefore, should political questions include considerations about the failure of education to encourage democratic political socialisation? Moreover, broader questions arise about the role of international organisations in political meaning-making as well as the role of broader political carriers involved in verbal and non-verbal political practices towards the democratic organisation of nation – states.

## Methodology

In order to study the migrant and refugee-related education policy, emphasis was placed on the main legislative texts. In particular, Greek legislation from 1992 to 2019 about migrants’ education was utilized. Emphasis was placed on the legislation tied to Reception Classes (RC) and Tutorial Departments (TD) about Intercultural schools and the policy on Educational Priority Areas (EPA). In addition, the recent legislation from 2015 until 2019 about refugees’ education was emphasized. The legislation pertaining to Reception Structures for Refugee Education (R.S.R.E.) was studied along with the legislation on educational work coordination delivered by the Coordinators of Education (C.E.). The general education policy was also comparatively studied, as this is illustrated in legislation and political practice. As regards the issue of political practice tied to refugees’ education, the role of NGOs was also taken into consideration in terms of providing basic education to refugees, namely children and adolescents to help them learn the Greek language (Ministry of Education, 2017). More specifically, content analysis for basic laws was applied so as to determine the political content of various governmental intentions. Besides the policy of intentions, the pedagogical, sociological, and psychological approach is sought to highlight, apart from political discourse, the scientific discourse that rationalizes and justifies political decisions. The comparative approach of various legislative texts provides the possibility to showcase the social, economic and political context that apparently goes beyond simplified approaches of governmental single-sided intentions (Krippendorff, 2018).

The content of changes and re-definitions highlighting continuation or discontinuation, contradictions or identifications is unfolded, along with the evaluation of the specific legislation. In this sense, education policy is illustrated as a complex condition which combines different elements stemming from the national, European and international level. Legislation content analysis enables highlighting meanings through argumentclassification. The arguments are meaningful ideas symbolized by legal terms and, at the same time, specialized in educational terms tied to educational bureaucracy. Based on content analysis the law is broken down to corresponding symbolic fields, that is, society, the educational environment, the educational community and even education policy recipients, such as migrants and refugees (Neuerdorf, 2016).

Over the past years, the instrumental use of content analysis in education policy has been very common. In this respect, the legislative content is emphasized by the meaningful analysis of: 1) linguistic code, 2) political interpretations and 3) scientific terms. As regards complex meanings, the individual terms and concepts are correlated with the conceptual content corresponding to: a) political discourse (national, European, international), b) social discourse (social cohesion, social regularity, anomy avoidance, etc.), c) policy of rights (right to education, right to life, right to social inclusion) and d) education (self-fulfilment, inclusion in the social and political whole, occupational roles, etc.). In other words, the political discourse in all its aspects was used to highlight practices of meaning-making about migrants and refugees' education towards the exploration of objectives and strategies about education in combination with the broader migration policy. In other words, these special categories are not differentiated or analysed separately, as this would lead to fragmentation and loss of meaning. The method of co-articulating various elements is utilized in order to underline the complete critical approach to the political text without deconstructions (Young & Harrison, 2004).

Content analysis in education policy, especially with reference to legislation, apparently allows the reconstruction of political thought and the intentions of political carriers to intervene, either by monitoring or directing policies to be implemented in education through the classification of terms and meanings. At the same time, through legislation content analysis, policies tied to migrants and refugees form the breeding ground for developing political and educational discourse on migrants and refugees at a different level, regarding what is eventually implemented and what remains as single-sided element within the policy of rights (Van Schooten, 1998).

### **Migrants in Greece: Emphasis on education policy**

The migrants' presence in Greece was an issue of negotiation for the education system. The vague definitions of equality, solidarity and citizenship were articulated through the corresponding policies. Therefore, besides generalised ideas about the policy of rights, a model for migrants' access to education had to be developed by education policy, with regard to expanded opportunity structures. Throughout the time period under exploration, migrant education has been referred to by the Intercultural Education Law (L. 2413/G.G. 124/1996, articles 34,35,36 and 37). The same law stipulates the establishment of the Expatriate Education and Intercultural Education Institute which assumes substantial responsibilities, while its pivotal role is to organise and operate intercultural schools. At the same time, the Centre for Intercultural Education established in 1996, in the Department of Philosophy, Pedagogy, Psychology at the University of Athens, is a University Department concerned with intercultural education issues on the national and international level. This is a workshop of intercultural pedagogic thought that combines education, policy and interculturalism. In other words, it is conducive to formulating educational discourse enriched by the dynamic socio-political environment, while depicting the developments in the socio-cultural field tied to migrants – refugees' presence.

In the first place, in terms of education policy, the political linguistic code used for legislation does not coincide with basic concepts such as multiculturalism, understanding, harmonisation, segregation and marginalisation. Legislation content analysis emphasizes assimilation, meaning that a policy of personal attitudes and behaviours emulated the native domineering culture. Additionally, the terms assimilation and inclusion are selectively and alternatively used intending to silence the concept of social harmonisation. Interaction and feedback among various social subjects emanating from different cultural settings are not taken into consideration. The negative effects of migrant non-intercultural education and lacking understanding about their culture are underemphasized. Thus, the political consequences of segregation and marginalisation, implying intensified exclusion both individually and collectively, are overlooked. On top of that, the interconnection between intercultural education and democracy

is explicitly or implicitly silenced. As a result, intercultural education is put forward more as a problem-solving process, rather than a democratic responsibility to functionally harmonise the natives – migrants' co-existence.

It could be argued that the legislation is deficient. However, this is not true, as there is a vast array of laws; yet, they do not have operational interconnection and lack explicit objectives. Various migrant-related legislations are developed, but their content is unrelated to corresponding political procedures and, consequently, to their transformation into educational practices. Successive laws, supposed to align the Greek and European legislation or international organisations' recommendations, are included in the piecemeal projection of these laws. The provision of L. 3304/2005 G.G.16A/27-1-2005 about the "Implementation of the principle of equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age or gender orientation" is a typical example. An alignment of the Greek legislation and the general principles of the European Union and international organizations is observed, yet there are no transformations into educational practices within the educational context. In this respect, despite the discourse on migrants' and refugees' rights, their mother tongues are not taught. As regards the Albanian migrant community in particular, this is a very important observation because, as from 1990, teaching and learning Albanian could have been incorporated schematically in schools, so as to increase opportunity structures for Albanian male and female students to develop a deep understanding about their culture of origin.

As regards educational implementation, multiple discriminations were reinforced mainly by Special Programmes tied to Greek language learning, which is legislatively and scientifically correct; yet, its implementation should have been based on systematic work produced by the educational community so that the difference could be perceived in the form of enrichment and not of deficiency. The educational environment could work as a breeding ground for all natives, migrants and refugees to socialize. In this sense, attending different subjects, when necessary, is not perceived as weakness, but rather as a necessity for interest and optimization.

Based on an abstract and non-inclusive procedure, migrants were diversified from natives, attributed with the quality of being of different or inferior entities when attending Reception Classes in schools. Eventually, Reception Classes operated as autonomous spaces of cultural reformation, in the sense that programmes about native students' interaction with the migrant culture were not enhanced. Discrimination issues are generated due to weak operation of intercultural practices, along with rigid legislative regulations. Based on the current refugee issue, it is obvious that intercultural education should undergo changes within the educational context, both in terms of bureaucratic structures and the educational community. Teacher training and curricula reforms are imperative in an attempt to resolve any emerging issues in education. Therefore, the alignment of the Greek and European Union legislation along with the adoption of international organizations' guidelines are not enough. The Greek education policy should be reinforced in terms of monitored implementation, and at the same time, enhanced by the educational and scientific capital. What is more, the continuous training of the educational community is more than necessary.

A symbolic discrimination between strong and weak students gradually emerged. Within this symbolic frame of inferiority, the weak students were none other than the migrant students. Even though there seemed to be some sort of communication between the Reception Classes and other school classes, the educational structure has not managed to unify communicative patterns between native and migrant students. The single-sided deficient procedure of migrants' education tied to language learning ended up in a dramatic process of students moving around classes within unrelated educational environments. The non-utilized scientific capital, along with the deficient policy of intentions, resulted in deepening migrant students' exclusion and marginalisation. In these cases, legislation, educational choices and educational space should interact within a scientific setting in which educational practice could be led by pedagogic, sociological and



psychological principles. In political terms, the right to migration and democratic definition of a normal social life was definitely negated (Kalerante, 2018; Nikolaou, 2011).

It is noteworthy that there has been an increase of Albanian students succeeding in tertiary education, while the rate of school dropout among the same migrant community has also increased. According to the Report of the Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in South-Eastern Europe, the Albanian migrant family in Greece invests in education as, proven by the increasing number of Albanian university students (Manos et al., 2017). This is a rather selective interpretation though. It is actually the “shrewdness” of a system highlighting individual cases of migrant social mobility, while the majority of migrant life scenarios, still characterised as the “others”, are concealed. According to the recent survey by the Institute for Education Policy (Reference Framework 2013-2016 of Institute of Education Policy, 2018), school dropout persists despite the highlighted policy on the right to education, school dropout of migrants in all educational grades, namely primary school, high school and lyceum. It should be stated that school dropout does not refer only to the migrant community, but the native population as well. In this respect, certain considerations arise as to whether compulsory education, both for natives and migrants, is actually effective. Furthermore, the PISA report of 2018<sup>2</sup> indicated that 15-year-old native and refugee students at Greek schools scored low in maths, physics and reading comprehension compared to their counterparts in other countries. Furthermore, it is questionable whether these findings have been utilized to spark further considerations within the educational community towards a revised education policy. Therefore, besides operational illiteracy, in the form of migrant deficient school attendance, the right to childhood is negated, due to increased child labour. Another issue of consideration is the migrant students’ over-concentration in vocational schools. Despite the legislative regulations to reinforce vocational education in Greece, it seems that general education is more appealing to good students. Consequently, general education graduates are faced with more educational and professional opportunity structures (Karatzogianni & Pantazi, 2014). This means that the majority of migrant students abstain from the privileged general secondary school system. The argument about migrant students attending secondary education is meaningless if the type of school (general or vocational) and their school performance are not referred to (Damanakis, 2005). The deficient education policies on migrants’ education have also been highlighted by the recent UNESCO report (2019b). Based on the data provided by different countries, the report underscored the deficiencies and put forward the political and scientific argumentation about the necessity to develop an effective refugee-related education policy.

All things considered, the education policy was not differentiated from other policies on migrants, as it emphasized migrant students’ placing in order to install a panoptic system supported by fast process and occupation policies. New knowledge for native and migrant students, the need for their communication and their infiltration with each other’s cultures, were not emphasized. In other words, education policy was rather coincidental, based on generalised views and practices, unable to evolve within time. Inter-educational interactive processes were not revised, despite the fact that they were gradually changed and reformed. A different education policy should comparatively evaluate issues tied to educational practices and study more special aspects emerging from comparative studies so that the migrant and refugee-related education policy is reformed and altered. The refugee issue, in particular, should be of primary concern in the sense that the scientific community should commence a new discussion regarding new populations’ social inclusion and broader social cohesion.

It is scientifically accepted that when one refers to education policy, it is theoretically based on beliefs about a unifying education policy tied to symbolic representational views, norms and principles defining the relation between education and society. This means that the content of intercultural education should be new knowledge based on the new condition, that of migrants’

presence. This way, natives and migrants could initially include principles toward co-existence. Secondly, natives' single-sided view of an "imaginary community" could be transformed into a dense description of multiculturalism on the basis of accepting citizens with a different culture. According to Stanley's terms (2018), issues of democratic culture must be revisited, meaning issues of natives and migrants' citizenship, focusing on equal human dignity.

The basic factor shaping positive social feelings of solidarity and humanism should be determined by education policy. Universal solidarity is interpreted in terms of democratic ideals and is reproduced through educational interactive models. The aim is to prevent negative distorting models and competitive discourse reinforcing conflicts, differentiations and inequalities due to race, language, nation, etc. The association between education and democracy underscores the need for social self-fulfilment according to which individual objectives are transformed into social intentions. Education policy, in the sense of a privileged space to practice a knowledge-related policy, could be conducive to a thorough plan of migrants' real inclusion in civil society. In particular, diversity could be showcased as advantage, paving the path for other institutional carriers to develop policies towards recognising the "others" and their social inclusion. At the same time, the concepts of freedom and humanism could be put forward as suggestive values of democratic political truth.

### **Developing the migrant-related educational institution throughout the economic crisis**

Based on the evaluation of legislation from 1990 until 2000, it can be argued that the formulated symbolic institutionalisation helped meet temporary operational system needs. Migrant children were "placed" in education, while being perceived as a "foreign body", both for natives and migrants. Within the educational environment, migrants were portrayed as the "others", the other culture and other identity. Instrumentally speaking, natives did not acquire substantial knowledge about the "other", since the natives were not introduced to examples of the "other" culture; thus, social variety was not feasible. The "other" becomes the "foreigner" and is classified within the unfamiliar and obscure frame of vague threat and danger, enhancing the already existing feelings of uncertainty and insecurity. The identification of the terms "other" and "foreigner", as inferior entities and threat, are part of the politically-oriented racist vocabulary, while enhancing the community with the cultural awareness of "we" – the natives (Lazaridis & Wickens, 1999). Throughout this period, theoretical interpretative patterns tied to the natives' social reactions mainly focus on their lack of previous experience about migration in the sense that Greece had never been a reception country before regarding migrants transfer for economic reasons. The interpretations about the necessity for an education policy conducive to incorporating migrants in the Greek society presupposes a changing content of knowledge that depicts the social and cultural reality highlighted by the migrants' presence (Govaris, 2011). Based on the combination of the two interpretations about the migrants' policy of rights, Greek education policy moved towards forming structures, in order to directly provide solutions to problems due to the presence of the "others" (Pavlou & Christopoulos, 2004). At this point, the correspondence between political intentions and educational implementations was almost expected throughout the first years. Nevertheless, the discussion on intercultural education and the necessity to reform the education system is a positive sign (Syrri, 2011).

Within the long period from 2000 until 2008, when the economic crisis commenced, the migrant-related education policy did not focus on democratic objectives, and the theoretical fields of truth related to Migration Studies were not intertwined with policy formation. Finally, education policy focused on a limited discourse, evaluated as irrational institution, through rational criteria. This education policy was apparently conducive to the political construction and, perhaps, to the legalised and naturalised far right political trends. Centres for knowledge generation existing off the educational setting take advantage of this educational ineffectiveness. Furthermore, far right

political trends are enhanced and enriched with “knowledge” relevant to biological, social and cultural diversity features. In this sense, education policy contributed, either explicitly or implicitly, to gradually showcasing a reinforced racist discourse against migrants due to the deficits in the students’ democratic political socialisation. The significant element of this period is that the legislative readjustments in migration policy did not develop and the political structures about the migrants’ protection were not formed, resulting in reinforced hybrid racist trends against migrants (Kontiadis & Papatheodorou, 2007). At the same time, the far right political space was reinforced toward forming anti-migration political discourse. In other words, instead of an enhanced democratic discourse on migrants’ social inclusion and society’s enrichment with different cultures, a fall back in national identity ideologies of previous years emerged (Georgiadou, 2008).

The following period commenced with the economic crisis which deteriorated the conditions of migrants because the economic effects brought about negative effects in the social and cultural environment. Migrants experienced tremendous problems due to the Greek economic crisis. Ever since the previous time period knowledge about the migrant issue was lacking and its symbolic acceptance was not realised; thus one could refer to a developing tolerance. Therefore, structures were not institutionalised towards the migrants’ recognition, understanding and welfare. Migrants and natives operated differently in terms of real social fields. The institutional representation, having been unfolded since the previous period, reinforced simple processing policies. As a result, there were unstable legislative frames towards effective intercultural education. The economic crisis was defined as a reversal and refutation of normality. According to Epp & Bongetto’s survey (2018), reinforced economic inequalities form economic elites that interfere in the political system and reject income redistribution policies and social inequality mitigation. As already foretold, the prior-to-crisis normality was unable to shape a model based on standpoints, predispositions and educational practices towards migrant inclusion.

What was put forward as the migrants’ success should be taken into consideration in the sense that their completion of university studies and, generally, their attending different educational grades was a fact that actually concealed the sociological analysis of success. In this respect, the migrant families’ educational capital was not defined as a reinforcing factor towards their offspring’s positive attitude to education. Therefore, the Greek education system was unable to provide opportunities for all migrants. The only thing achieved was the success of a limited group of migrants, whose families had a high educational capital. They were rapidly incorporated in society and set high objectives for their offsprings’ upward social mobility. The issue of upward social mobility through education is not a matter of migrants only. Yet, for the purpose of this paper, it is studied as a general theoretical pattern in order to reinforce the sociological perspective that the families’ high educational capital, migrants in this case, can be conducive to forming objectives on the basis of which the individual can eventually transcend hardships and set new goals and perspectives through new life scenarios both in the reception country and the country of origin or even further to other countries (Zachou & Kalerante, 2007).

The education system, generally, managed the migrant population initially to be included in primary education, yet without a plan. Thus, one could refer to persons’ “distribution” within an educational environment, emphasizing adaptive upgrading processes. In this respect, learning the mainstream language along with the gradual disengagement from the mother tongue was deemed necessary. When one refers to language, it should be taken into consideration that emphasis is placed on the cultural content. Therefore, the enhanced language of origin is related to shaping social identity and, at the same time, to increasing opportunity structures for the individual interacting with both cultures, that of their country of origin and that of the reception country (Flaitz, 2006). Language serves as a means by which the artificial process of disclaiming values, attitudes and behaviours is realised. Individuals were deprived of their culture, their

country's historical course and maintaining memory by not familiarising themselves with their language of origin. It is noteworthy that, at the same time, pedagogical and sociological principles about the need to teach the mother tongue were not utilised. This means that learning the language of the reception country was conducive to "subtractive bilingualism", according to which one language works at the expense of the other. On the other hand, according to the "principle of language interdependence", "additive bilingualism" presupposes learning the mother tongue as the primary procedure upon which the new language must be added (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Scientific views on broader cultural issues (Cummins, 2005) are indirectly ignored or rejected. Bilingualism is not an exclusive concern of Greece only. There have been previous writings and views tied to linguistic multiformity – dimorphism, distinctive in contemporary societies (Shin, 2017).

Adaptive educational practices were constructed and revised by institutional operation. Educational Priority Areas that recognise social inequality and areas of different anthropogeography can be included in the theoretical piecemeal model of policy formation. Theoretically speaking, schools in various areas are not considered independent establishments, but rather included within the social web and the corresponding narrative about unequal privileges and unequal opportunity structures. One can indicatively refer to the M.D., nr. F.I.T.Y.809/101455/G1/7-9-2011 (G.G.2197, Vol. B'/30-9-2011) on Educational Priority Areas. More specifically, intervention policies are foreseen in the form of Educational Priority Areas, as this is underlined in the introductory text preceding the justification of articles "[...] *the necessity to coordinate partly implemented Programmes and actions to support students, aiming at creating a supportive framework against school dropout, for all students' equal integration, without discriminations, into the education system within a frame of thorough approach [...]*". The political discourse emphasizes the democratic organization of education, while it underlines the social inequality effects. In other words, education is put forward as an institution of rights redistribution within a structural economic system that reinforces inequality. These kinds of discussions and considerations are being developed in other fields, too, in which the acute social inequalities and negative effects for states and societies are the focal point (OECD, 2016). Thus, this policy seemingly continued in terms of legislation. Yet, it was virtually a void of legislation, because educational bureaucracy focused on its typical implementation without emphasizing the actual exploration of social conditions. As a result, no objectives were set, while the assessment of instructional work was absent. Later, in 2015, the draft was brought back based on the M.D.170829/D1/26-10-2015 (G.G.2388 Vol. B'/6-11-15) about Educational Priority Areas and Reception Classes Regulation. Given the inertia of the previous period, the piecemeal and incomplete educational intervention continued. More specifically, within Educational Priority Areas (EPA) it was foreseen that intervention structures were reinforced towards empowering education "[...] *of the students who do not possess the required level of Greek language, a flexible pattern of institutional and instructional intervention is established with intercultural education, by which, having evaluated the students' real educational needs and potential, the school can choose the most appropriate pattern to provide further instructional support towards their adaptation and full integration into regular classes, for which they have been enrolled, according to applicable legislation [...]* Art.3".

The lacking humanistic capital tied to migrant communities' acceptance and democratic co-existence within a frame of common expectations and vindications was further reinforced throughout the economic crisis period. Acute social inequalities as well as social groups, democratic principles and multicultural exclusion contributed to an exemplary stigmatisation of migrants along with simultaneously enhanced far right political attitudes and behaviours. The grounded far right political role goes beyond the close pattern of political parties representation in the sense that far right narratives can be traced in other political parties, too. Thus, one could refer to complex narratives that lead to naturalised and legalised normative – legal arrangements on migrants' exclusion (Kasimis, Papadopoulos, & Zacopoulou, 2003).

Migrant marginalisation was further reinforced during this period due to their insufficient education given the absent opportunity structures. Lacking communication with the country of origin must be underlined at this point because migrants were not taught their mother tongue and their culture was not included in cultural narratives resulting in further cultural deficiencies and consequent limited economic opportunities in their country of origin. In sociological terms, the educational “games” and institutionalised norms were conducive to limited choices for migrants (Song, 2018). At the same time, both within education and the broader society, negative predispositions and standpoints against them were shaped because of the lacking positive attitudes, particularly developed throughout the crisis.

Migrants, as a vulnerable group, have been gradually marginalised. The economic crisis has led to a policy emphasizing effectiveness and choices based on the economic paradigm. The welfare state has shrunk and welfare policies in the sense of a “political gaze at the others” have been decreased. On the other hand, “human waste” has been increased and the political responsibility for operational illiteracy and impoverishment has been silenced, while “neo-racism” has been established as “different” racism (Balibar & Wallerstein, 2017).

Migrant-related educational arrangements from 2000 until today have been confined by the educational legislation. This implies a system that moves on through exclusions. Some individuals are regarded as “incompatible population” within the dominant economic model. It should be noted that, based on the structural hermeneutics of the economic crisis, the unemployed or marginalized individual is perceived as a personal failure rather than political system failure. In this case, unemployed migrants are further stigmatized because their social identity is tied to the status of migrant, signifying the competitor, the dangerous, the “other”.

## **Refugees in Greece: Educational legalizing interventions**

Not having utilized the previous period regarding policies for migrants’ rights and the creation of opportunity structures in the economic, social and political field, the entire system is unprepared to handle refugees’ presence in Greece. Migrants had never become equal members of the civil society. In particular, the educational system was limited by an education policy of abstract values, not corresponding to practical educational discourse. As regards the refugee issue, a “distribution of persons” has been taking place symbolically in the outskirts of cities and the broader country, in general. Butler (2011) calls them the invisible populations, as they have been neither lost nor disappeared. They “reside in a lost and destroyed livelihood”. Arendt, Agamben and Traverso’s (2015) experiential narrative of a previous era (1941) on the meaning of the term “refugee” and their lost social identity is very interesting: Loss of everyday life, of self-confidence about a person’s usefulness, of language depicting familiar responses and implying emotions.

Refugees have experienced ruptured relationships and violent disconnections from their livelihood in their homelands. This displaced population receives the Non-Governmental Organisations’ (NGOs) social care and educational services. They are nothing more than the “relics” of political arrangements, negotiations and circumscriptions, so that any political ignorance and decline of responsibility is justified. Social care provided by NGOs refers to forms of segregated philanthropy, actually a deconstruction of the democratic political right to protect the citizen and the operation of the welfare state. This social care underestimates the refugees’ policy of rights, while making a non-political process meaningful because non-political carriers assume a performing role. It is actually a political ingenuity that disclaims political roles and reduces the possibilities of democratic resolution (Evangelinidis, 2016).

The legislation of the period 2015-2017 has included systematic procedures for refugee students’ inclusion in Primary Education. Based on the previous Educational Priorities Areas plan, the social reality formed by the refugee presence and the consequent awareness of their prolonged

presence in Greece has been taken into consideration. In terms of refugee childrens' education in Greece the provisions of the Ministerial Decision nr. 131024/D1/8-8-2016 (Government Gazette 2687/B/29-8-16) have been theoretically in effect, stipulating their inclusion in the education system. The education provided to refugees has been actually based on learning the language of the reception country, through educational practices carried out by non-educational conventional structures, resulting in uncontrolled educational form and content. The policy tied to Educational Priority Areas has been the continuation of an education policy about refugee students' educational integration. More specifically, it has been foreseen that "[...] *The establishment and operation of Reception Structures about Refugee Education EPA (R.S.R.E. – EPA) aims to support refugee children's education through learning Greek as a second / foreign language and organizing programmes, educational interventions and activities [...]* Art. 2".

Theoretically speaking, the legislation originates from the need to prioritize refugees' education; therefore, to include them in formal education (M.D., nr. 166172/D1/7-10-2016, (Government Gazette 3270/B/11-10-16). Respectively, the Ministerial Decision nr. 180647/GD4/27-10-2016 (Government Gazette 3502/B/31-10-2016) has been the continuation of the previous administrative legalised regulations, stipulating more special refugee-related educational issues. According to this Ministerial Decision, these are special structures for refugees, emphasizing the children and adolescents' right to education, because refugees' Primary and Secondary Education has been foreseen through special provisions for: "[...] *The establishment, organization, operation, coordination and educational programme of Reception Structures for Refugee Education (henceforth R.S.R.E) [...]*". It is noteworthy that, according to law, these structures belong to "*formal education [...] within schools of Regional Directorates of Primary and Secondary education across the country, in the areas where there are accommodation centres [...]* Art. 1".

The policy of the period 2015-2017 has been somehow differentiated in the sense that the state's role has been promoted, while the political system has been disengaged from NGOs and other non-institutional carriers. NGOs' role in education remains open to exploration. Recent research is particularly interesting, as it illustrates Greek citizens' questioning of NGOs' role in addressing and dealing with the refugee issue in Greece. In particular, only 27% are positively disposed to NGOs' role (diaNEOsis, 2020). In any case, when reference is made to education policy, it concerns only formal education provided within organized educational structures.

Official policy interventions are slow-paced, rather procedural and conventional, and put into practice only when necessary. However, the criteria in terms of necessity are ambiguous. In general, the refugee issue was perceived by education policy as that of temporary management because refugees are the "passers-by", as portrayed in literature by Erbenbeck (2017).

The concept of time is central to educational discourse formation. Refugees' presence was believed to be temporary. This concept of temporariness contributed to educational inertia. The expanded formal education system was regarded as non-operational to include refugees in a fast pace. Their non-inclusion in education gradually rescinded their right to childhood and adolescence, the right to define themselves as members of the society, the right to create their personal life scenarios in their own terms. Refugees' presence in Greece was unable to put forward the policy of their rights as a dynamic factor to form policy on all levels towards their harmonious inclusion in the system. The political system and corresponding political institutions were disengaged from operational prerequisites conducive to creating a continuation of citizenship from the country of origin to the reception country because of the belief about their temporary presence (Kourachanis, 2018).

The positive thing is that the educational legislation gradually underscores theoretical interpretations of terms relevant to intercultural education. It should be pinpointed that any policies whatsoever are not enough, in case they do not target the reformed content of knowledge, namely a reinforced humanistic capital, toward individuals' socialisation with values such as solidarity and cooperation within a multicultural environment characterised by globalised values and democratic political principles. However, the fact that the general theoretical framework

follows all regulatory educational practices is rather an oxymoron. This is, perhaps, a post-awareness stage. A broader theoretical composition should originate from a textual cultural content. It seems necessary for the educational community to promote this type of education and build stable conditions of acceptance through dialogue. Theoretical considerations are associated with the specific time coincidence in which the natives and refugees' communities experience competition and rivalry conditions. On an evolutionary stage, the articulated educational practices have been increased (M.D. nr. 181801/GD4/31-11-2016, G.G. 3598, Vol. B'/4-11-16). In particular, it is foreseen that "[...] *the institution of Reception Structures on Refugee Education in schools* [...]" can be expanded.

In this respect, Basic Education is not provided by non-educational carriers, while formal education is adapted to receiving refugees at schools (M.D. nr. 1400/GD4/3-1-2017, G.G. 6 Vol. B'/9-1-17) even if the refugees' rights to education have not been visible yet. According to this Ministerial Decision, the Reception Structures for Refugee Education have been increased. This policy has been further reinforced by special Ministerial Decisions defining teachers' seconded as well as the organization and coordination of teaching work for refugees. More specifically, coordination issues for refugee education have been regulated with the Ministerial Decisions M.D. nr. 158682/E2/22-9-2017, M.D. nr.100106/E2/18-6-2018, M.D. nr. 150854/E2/13-9-2018 and M.D. nr. 126272/E2/7-8-2019.

The education policy on refugees' education is distinct for its compromises, redefinitions and lapping because of racist reactions in the form of escalated tensions of social intimidation. Phenomena of not accepting refugee students at schools or, generally, refugees in local communities indicate the natives' lacking knowledge and lacking cultural awareness. Natives' reactions are proof of the broader intercultural policy and education failure. Throughout a period of increased refugee flows and having experienced the previous migrant communities, institutional structures and interactive practices should be enhanced, so that the migrant or refugee is not perceived as the "other". The education system can formulate standpoints, attitudes and behaviours, while defining corresponding social symbolic constructions. Thus, education policy has not worked towards developing narratives on multiculturalism, whereas intercultural education has not been developed after all (Vertovec, 2010).

The negative attitude against refugees in Greece has been associated with the broader economic crisis and the simultaneous negation of native citizens' rights, namely labour rights and the destabilised welfare state. Refugees have replaced the previously deemed "sub-humans", namely migrants, Rom, etc., characterised by natives as heathens, a threat to the "white Christian Greece". These social constructions have emerged throughout an economic crisis period and reinforced oppositions to "others". At the same time, the current far right political discourse supports exclusions and makes the social environment more conservative. Thus, the solution to this issue is rather political regarding knowledge construction; it is rather the political humanism that can reinforce democratic principles and support the association between social subjects and the policy of rights (Boswell, 2017; Kury & Redo, 2018). Lack of confidence in the political system and the corresponding institutions reported in surveys (Georgakopoulos, 2018; Kroustalli, 2017) is conducive to reinforcing horizontal dispersing fear by encapsulating false narratives. The concept of foreigner, as threat, is enhanced by the "alleged science" on increased criminality due to the refugees' presence [a survey conducted by EKKE (2016) reports decreased criminality rates throughout 2013-2016].

Finally, the lacking political capital, humanistic predispositions and knowledge on multiculturalism probably internalise negative social feelings, which are, later, externalised against the "others", namely migrants and refugees. In some European countries, there are significant institutional dynamics to this end. This means that the political system and its structures are either at the expense of migrants, presumably included in societies, and displace them or develop

permanent expulsion-related threats. Thus, the phenomena reported in Greece are part of a post-modern political de-ideologised condition generating political and social exclusions through macro-institutional bodies. It is noteworthy that despite the highlighted policies on migrants' inclusion, these people have never been systematically integrated into structures, namely education, labour, social and political life, resulting in reinforced exclusion attitudes by natives who consider them as the "others" since migrants and refugees cannot follow the dominant values. Eventually, racism and any occurring violent incidents should activate education in terms of knowledge production about humanism and the dynamics of multiculturalism. At the same time, the political institutions should systematically integrate migrants and refugees into the normality of social and political life.

### **Concluding remarks - Considerations**

The issue of migrants and refugees' education virtually poses the question whether there is education for democracy. Despite the fact that migrant and refugees' communities are the focal point of this paper, due to operational reasons, value generalisations on democracy, equality and humanism are not self-evident for the native population in any case. Unequal access to education, intrinsic social inequality and different class privileges are inherent in a capitalistic organisation system and a broader neoliberal policy (in which the state's role is limited, while the economic elite's influence is increased) resulting in a discussion on capitalist realism (Fisher, 2009). Even neoliberal intellectuals, like Rawls (1999), regard inequality (the principle of difference) as necessary, provided that privileged entities benefit from it in the course of time. Eventually, within the macro-narrative on democracy, the main issue of consideration is to develop policies tied to extended equality and opportunities for the socially "weak" persons, migrants and refugees included. Therefore, democratic education presupposes a policy which, explicitly or implicitly, would enhance political rights for non-privileged social classes, as well.

The piecemeal migration policy has been developed apparently towards administrative discourse on selectively adaptive processes, given that these individuals are not considered "full members" of societies. Thus, a new group of non-privileged persons is formed, stigmatised as the "others" even by the non-privileged native social strata. Social field formation includes multi-dimensional processes of exclusion and inclusion, therefore, of equivalence and difference, determinant to shaping contradictions. It can be said that each time one refers to the concepts of inclusion, social co-existence and citizenship, two perspectives arise. The first one pertains to the existing political system management based on welfare interventions (opportunity structures and social mobility). The second one presupposes increased democratisation processes through disseminating social rights along with negated social inequalities. Both perspectives highlight a different political paradigm based on different institutional structures that would be the outcome of broader socio-political developments.

Perhaps, the second perspective, tied to negated social inequalities, is based on social subjects' awareness of the differentiation between the privileged and non-privileged groups of people. The difference can be better understood when taking into consideration the corresponding development of discourse, namely knowledge. At the same time, the structural conflict between non-privileged natives and non-privileged migrants and refugees can be mitigated. Reinforced democratisation trends can be prolific for the entire system. By means of political revisions, theoretical determinations on the substantial persons' interaction are expanded along with meaningful progress. This could work as the symbolic feature, the political product of democracy, namely equality and humanism.

Beyond the expectations created by the conventional political system, it is necessary to interpret issues tied to migrants and refugees, within a period of reinforced far right political constructs, enhanced symbolic and non-symbolic violence constructions, lack of confidence in political institutions and broader activation of anti-democratic socio-political mechanisms.



Population mobility is a reality since people migrate in an attempt to avoid authoritarian regimes, civil conflicts, wars or environmental crises. In this sense, their migration is a necessity both for economic and demographic reasons. Systems updating is necessary in the globalisation era. The survival of close and homogeneous societies, in ethnic and cultural terms, is not feasible any more.

The accentuation or mitigation of co-operative or conflicting relationships among social groups and citizens is a matter of institutions, education in particular. Justice, truth, equality, solidarity and democracy are inherent values in nation-states, aiming at monitoring instincts and improving social self-fulfilment conditions. Education works as a space in which identities are shaped, privileges are reproduced and inequalities are naturalised or legalised. Extreme contradicting, opposing and anti-conventional phenomena, as those manifested in neoliberal societies, are even the primary concern of neoliberal intellectuals. This is so because the conditions formed by the capitalist system underline reinforced inequalities, political rights refutation, emerging social conflicts and political hybrid constructs (Tooze, 2018). Migrants and, especially, refugees' limited education is determinant to their future, since unequal access to opportunity structures and the consequent social mobility are reinforced by education. According to Goodhart (2017), the "Anywheres" are privileged given their characteristic features, mainly their high educational capital. On the contrary, the "Somewheres" characterised by a limited educational capital or illiteracy, experience insecurity and uncertainty.

To recapitulate, according to the above-mentioned remarks, the educational community, as public intellectuals, should intervene in formulating a differentiated educational discourse towards new knowledge through inclusive educational apparatuses in an attempt to reinforce the scientific community's role. The policy of rights to education is associated with societies' democratisation, exclusions refutation, and political formation based on supra-national principles. All these can determine justice, freedom, equality and solidarity as democratic values towards balanced relationships among individuals. The discussion on democratic culture includes disapproved racist forms against migrants and refugees, enfeebled political violence and the cancellation of the "coming back to the roots" model. Perhaps, Beck's political narrative could be meaningful in a different way regarding the necessity to associate cosmopolitanism with supra-national patriotism in an attempt to refute uncommon nationalistic versions (Beck & Cronin, 2014). On the basis of this consideration, the educational discourse is transformed into productive discourse emanating from the relation between knowledge and democracy. Besides, a diversified model about individuals' equal socio-political position and the political "truth" of transformed societies can be developed.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> ELSTAT census, 2011, <https://www.statistics.gr/immigration-data>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/>

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