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**Ambivalent immigration policies, uncertain outcomes:
Children of immigrants in Greece at the crossroads**

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Introduction

The issues that this paper attempts to explore are relevant to the children of immigrants that came to Greece after 1990 and their adaptation into the host society. The adopted theoretical approach is the one formalised by Portes and his colleagues (1993; 2001). This body of scholarship studied post 1965 immigration to the United States and argued convincingly against a homogeneous and linear understanding of immigrants' adaptation process. Instead they draw attention to the fact that the progress of assimilation today is no nonlinear and that possibly the overall process of adaptation leads to segmented outcomes (Portes and Zhou 1993; Rumbaut 1997; Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

Following this approach the central question that concerns this paper is to assess how likely is for children of immigrants to be incorporated into various segments of the Greek society. Specifically is examined the extent of immigrant children's integration to the mainstream institution like school but also to the deviant inner city underclass.

In order to avoid the extremes of either an unfounded optimism about the prospects of the immigrant second generation or the stereotyping view that reifies the vulnerabilities and pronounces them pathologies, the following pages juxtapose stories of immigrant children's "successes" and "failures". The former concerns educational achievements and the latter engagement with the system of Criminal Justice. The data that this presentation employs are drawn from official statistics, secondary sources and preliminary findings of my doctoral research. This research, includes a school survey and in-depth interviews with a large sample of foreign-born adolescents (70 interviews), in the Juvenile Court of Athens and inner city secondary schools.

The entrants of the 1990s

The collapse of the Balkan absolutist regimes in the 1990s had critical importance for the development of new migration flows towards the European South and Greece in particular (Fakiolas and King 1996; Anthias and Lazaridis 1999; King, Lazaridis et al. 2000).

At the beginning of the 1990's, immigrants from non-European Union countries accounted for a three or four percent of the Greek population. But at the end of the same decade, according to estimation based on the 2001 census, their number was close to 1.15 million,

which comprises 10,3 percent of the national population (Baldwin-Edwards 2004). Thus in a decade Greece has jumped from being one of the world's least immigrant-dense countries to being nearly as immigrant dense as the United States (Papademetriou 2002).

Approximately a 56 percent of these immigrants are Albanians but there are also present significant numbers of Bulgarians (4,7%), Georgians (2,9%), Rumanians (2,9%), Russians (2,3%), Ukrainians (1,8%), Polish (1,7%), and Pakistanis (1,4%). All the other immigrant groups are much less numerous (Baldwin-Edwards 2004).

Albanians' great exodus started in mid 1990 some months before the country's first democratic elections (March 1991), in the midst of economic collapse, civil unrest and the relaxation of border controls. The Albanian government in order to ease social pressure turned a blind eye to the massive exodus of young people to Italy and Greece. In a speech at the end of 1990 R. Alia, E. Hoxha's successor in the post of Secretary of the Albanian Communist Party, declared "Now every citizen has a passport, nobody raises objections to seeking work outside the country" (Nicholson 2004). Large numbers of Albanians had already started to cross the mountainous borders and entered neighbouring Greece, as illegal immigrants (Vickers and Pettifer 1997). The first amongst those who left were the ethnic Greeks who lived in the southern part of the country.

Later, in the spring of 1997, the bankruptcy of Albania's informal investment schemes (pyramids) (Korovilas 1999), which nullified savings equal to half of the country's GDP (cited in King and Vullnetari 2003), sparked the outbreak of arsenal lootings, armed riots, and finally the dismantling of the police and armed forces. New waves of desperate emigrants escaped from a country that seemed to be on the brink of civil war.

Another important immigration influx that occurred during the 1990's was that of the Greek origin Pontians who were living in the former Soviet Union and in particularly Georgia, but also Kazakhstan, Russia, and Armenia. Between 1989 and 1999, more than 150,000 Pontians fled to Greece, forced by war, social upheaval and poor living conditions. (Fakiolas 2001). The peak year for Pontians' immigration was 1993 and their immigration faded out after 1999. In Greece the official term referring to immigrants of Greek origin is "*omogeneis*" or "palinostoudes" (repatriated). Despite the fact that the majority of Pontian *omogeneis* (103,573 individuals) had applied for, and received, Greek nationality by February 2001, and thus obtained access to labour market, social and health security, their integration into the Greek society is still difficult and they continue to face linguistic, cultural, social and economic problems (Fakiolas 2001) (Halkos and Salamouris 2003).

Greece's response to the demands for reform in the area of the immigration law was rather slow. This was partly due to the magnitude of undocumented immigrant stock. Since in 1997 only about 78,000 foreigners had valid residence permits, the regulation effort in Greece had to start from a very low baseline (Fakiolas 1999). In a first attempt at legalisation, starting in 1998, 370,000 non-legal workers applied for work permits, a 60 percent of whom were successful. In 2001 a new law passed and to the 365,000 people who applied this time, were given temporary work permits.

Children of immigrants in Greece

Today 15 years after the turning point of 1990, the Greek academic community started to explore the issue of the so-called second generation. A clarification is necessary here: since most children of immigrant parentage were born abroad, strictly speaking, they cannot be defined as a second generation. The term technically refers to children of immigrants born in the host country. In the case of children of immigrant parentage who were born abroad but socialised in the host society, Rubén Rumbaut has proposed as most appropriate the term one-and-a-half generation.

However, sometimes many refer –in a loose way- to the children of immigrants by using the term second generation. At any rate, today it seems that the majority of these children can be found either at school or have just left it.

Statistics regarding children of immigrants

All estimations of the population of immigrant children start from the last census, which took place in March 2001 and recorded almost 150.000 persons belonging to the age bracket 5 – 19 years old. This figure comprises the eight percent of the population of the same age bracket (Table 1). But it is widespread the view that the census under-recorded immigrants, especially those without valid permits. The consensus amongst scholars is that foreigners represent more or less a 10 percent of the total population (and not the 6.7 that census recorded) (Baldwin-Edwards 2004). Based upon this assumption and after a linear correction we reach the rough estimation that the children of immigrants are today around 200,000, and represent an 11- 12 percent of the same age population.

Table 1: Greeks and Foreigners age 5 -19

<i>Age</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Foreigners</i>	<i>Percentage of foreigners</i>
5-9	546,014	42,814	7.8%
10-14	587,802	45,842	7.8%
15-19	728,918	59,635	8.2%
<i>Total of the 5 to19 group</i>	<i>1,862,734</i>	<i>148,291</i>	<i>8.0%</i>
<i>All age groups</i>	<i>10,964,020</i>	<i>762,191</i>	<i>6.7%</i>

Source: National Agency for Statistics, 2002 Table is constructed by P.Papandreou)

More reliable are the data concerning the immigrant youth who attend primary and secondary schools. Both the Institute of Cross-Cultural Education and Education of the Repatriated (IPODE) and the National Agency conducted relevant school censuses for Statistics (ESYE). An attempt to assemble a time-series out of these data is illustrated at Table 2.

Table 2: Foreign and Omogeneis Students

<i>Level</i>	<i>1995–1996*</i>	<i>2001–2002*</i>	<i>2002–2003**</i>	<i>2003–2004**</i>
<i>Nursery</i>		11,083	9,341	12,700
<i>Primary</i>	35,049	67,149	67,337	67,933
<i>Lower secondary</i>	9,281	33,385	32,965	33,850
<i>Upper secondary</i>	3,336	18,497	18,210	22,316
<i>Total</i>	<i>47,666</i>	<i>130,114</i>	<i>127,853</i>	<i>136,799</i>

*Source: *ESYE, **IPODE. Table is constructed by P.Papandreou)*

The problem with this compilation is that information coming from censuses conducted by different agencies is not completely comparable. Despite these hopefully small-scale inconsistencies Table 2 illustrates clearly the trend of the growing presence of foreign students in all levels of education. The academic year 2003 - 2004 students of immigrant background represented an 8.9 percent of the total school population (IPODE). The overwhelming majority of them are Albanian a fact reflecting their large proportion amongst the immigrant stock but also their higher rates of family reunification and settlement.

On the other hand the exact number of children not attending school is not clear. The rough estimation presented previously about the size of the “second generation” allows the

assumption that those who never attended or quitted school prematurely constitute a minority. All available data indicate that the dropout rate is higher for male immigrant students since the latter are frequently under pressure to enter the labour market after the completion of one or two classes of the lower secondary school.

The fact that most children of immigrant parentage are in the state school system constitutes an achievement of the Greek polity and the educational system in particular. It is worth noting that children’s school enrolment is not any more contingent on parents’ legal residence in Greece. The acceptance of all children of immigrant parentage into the state school system was denied by the Ministry of Interior Affairs and was implemented only after recommendations from many independent human rights bodies such as the Greek Ombudsman. It seems that the forthcoming new immigration law guarantees the immigrant children’s entitlement to education irrespectively of their parents “documented» or “undocumented” status. (Preamble to the immigration bill, Minister of the Interior).

**Table3: Foreign students’ length of residence in Greece
2002 – 2003**

Years of residence	N	%
1	7,731	8.7
2	8,386	9.5
3	9,272	10.5
4	12,521	14.1
5	12,848	14.5
6 - 13	37,798	42.7
Total	88,556	100.0

(Source: IPODE 2004: 105)

The data of Table 2 also allow an estimation of the size of the strictly speaking second generation. The 2001 – 2002 ESYE census enumerated 10,000 foreign pupils born in Greece. The next academic year IPODE’s census elevated the estimated size of the second generation to 15,500.

Although the majority of immigrant children are born abroad a significant 42.7 percent of them is living in Greece for six years or more. (IPODE, Table 3).

Academic performance of immigrant students

Well-known studies of early immigration to US highlight the central role that education occupied in certain ethnic groups strategies for upward mobility. For many immigrant children the field of education offers the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to the goal of integration and their ambition for a better life.

This seems to be the case of immigrant students in Greece and especially students of Albanian origin. The issue attracted attention when the media recorded cases of distinguished Albanian students and the fierce reactions that were denying to them the right to carry the Greek flag in the parades (Kapllani and Mai 2005). The only positive consequence of these incidences is that they made the academic achievements of immigrant students widely known.

Table 4. Average grades of foreign students by selected countries of birth

Country of birth	B´ Gymnasium	C´ Gymnasium	A´ Lyceum	B´ Lyceum	C´ Lyceum
<i>Albania</i>	14.0	13.9	15.3	13.6	12.2
<i>Russia</i>	14.2	13.8	14.7	13.1	11.8
<i>Georgia</i>	13.6	13.7	14.5	13.0	11.8
<i>All countries</i>	14.0	13.9	15.2	13.5	12.2

(Source: IPODE 2004:128)

Apart from journalistic accounts the only data regarding the academic performance of immigrant students are coming from IPODE census and are presented at Table 4. A significant limitation of this dataset is that it does not include academic performance information for the Greek students and thus doesn't allow any comparisons. However the most significant findings are the following:

- A significant share of immigrant students in lower and upper secondary schools excel.
- The proportion of failings is small.
- Girls do better than boys.
- Performance is positively related to the length of stay in Greece.
- Albanian students that stay on in school eventually outperform other immigrant students.

(IPODE 2004).

Immigrants and crime

Concern about immigrants and crime, is not a novel phenomenon. It was already an issue in 1876, when Pike examined the effect that migration had on crime in the context of Britain (Pike, 1971). At that time it was the migration of Irish labourers into Britain that was widely considered as responsible for an increase in criminality. Pike's conclusion is that 'in the counties into which there is most immigration there is most crime, and in the counties where is least immigration there is least crime' (Pike 1971). Although he links mobility with increased criminality, his study avoided either supporting or rejecting the attribution of crime and other urban pathologies to the Irish immigrants.

However, on the other side of the Atlantic, the prolonged and massive immigration into the United States made the subject of migrants' criminality a major area of criminological enquiry during the first half of the twentieth century (Mears 2001). One of the initial discoveries of the American scholars was that immigrants exhibited higher rates of serious crime in comparison with they compatriots at home. The explanation that Sutherland offered is in line with the argument of Pike: any form of mobility tends to increase criminality (Sutherland 1934). The reasons are related to (a) the fact that mobility offers increased opportunities for contact with divergent value systems, (b) leads to the weakening of social control mechanisms, and (c) to the decrease of the value placed on 'reputation' (Clinard 1963). This explanation is suggested to hold true for both internal and external migration (Sutherland 1934).

However, as early as 1911, the US Immigration Commission, which examined the issue of crime committed by immigrants, clarified that the foreign-born persons commit –in general- fewer major offences than native-born persons of the same sex and age. In short, although mobility and poverty tend to increase offending by immigrants, the aggregated crime rate of the latter is still lower than that of the natives (US Immigration Commission 1919; Sutherland 1934). Nevertheless, when various immigrant groups are examined independently a great deal of variation in the rates of offending and imprisonment is revealed. Sellin's later careful examination of the Wickersham Commission report (1931) as well as a number of other studies, allowed him to conclude that "while most foreign –born groups do not come in contact with the law as frequently as the native-born, some have much higher rates of crime than the latter" (Sellin 1938 : 78). Not only do crime rates vary widely among different immigrant groups but also the types of crimes committed vary according to the nationality of immigrants. Furthermore, even when one group has low rates for most offences, its

engagement with specific types of crime might be extremely high. (Sellin 1938). According to Sutherland (1934) the reason that certain types of crime are characteristic of certain national groups is that these crimes also tend to be characteristic of their country of origin.

This body of scholarship led to the conclusion that the foreign-born people were on average committing fewer major offences than the natives. At the same time, an important distinction that was made by them, was between the criminality of the foreign born and their children. Although statistical evidence was rather weak it was generally believed that the second generation of immigrants had - for some offences- higher crime rates than did the American-born children of American-born parents (Tonry 1997). The explanation given was that the latter, for not being able, as their parents, to make comparisons with the country of origin, focus their concerns exclusively to their current living conditions. Alienation, blocked opportunities, lack of role models, are among the causes leading the second generation to increased delinquency.

Again, a careful examination of the available data avoids the demonisation of the second generation. The statistics indicate that the highest rates of criminality were found among second generation immigrants who had grown up in urban ghettos and were in contact with delinquent subcultures (Sellin 1938). In such cases the second generation not only appeared to exceed the crime rates of the natives but also had the tendency to be similar to them in terms of the kinds of crime committed (Sutherland 1934). For example, the American-born children of Italian immigrants committed mostly property offences whereas their fathers exhibited high rates of violent crimes (Mannheim 1965).

Limitations of the traditional model

The rich body of research that American criminology produced from 1920s to 1940s, is frequently reduced to a simplistic postulate arguing that the foreign-born immigrants are not responsible for increases in criminality, but their children might be so. In several cases the credibility of this simplistic explanation has been challenged by empirical findings (Waters 1999).

- The low criminal involvement of the first generation is true only when aggregated data are examined.

- Some first generation immigrants expose extremely high crime rates.
- There is a great deal of variation among immigrant groups in terms of arrests or incarceration. Despite the ominous predictions of the traditional model, subsequent generations of Asian migrants, in US and Europe, continue to demonstrate lower crime rates than the native population (Tonry, 1997).
- Nowadays immigrants of first and one-and-a-half generation are more likely to be engaged with criminality than the immigrants of older, more prosperous times. They have less to hope.
- The illegal entrance and the undocumented status of immigrants could also have long-term consequences for their engagement with crime. Huge numbers of immigrants, in order to enter illegally into the host country, are relying on criminal networks. This is especially true in the case of Southern Europe for its extended and porous borders. These criminal networks are rarely limiting their activities to the trafficking and exploitation of immigrants and refugees. They are also connected to circuits of prostitution and drug smuggling (Lazaridis, 2001)
- The new immigrants of the 1990's who left en-masse their home countries because of war, discrimination or upheaval are encountering limited prospects of integration in the host countries. Thus, their first generation seems to be more likely to engage with criminality than the immigrants of older, more prosperous times (Marshall 1997). It is likely that differences in the reasons leading to migration have a bearing on crime, concludes Tonry (1997).

Children of immigrants in contact with the Greek system of Criminal Justice

The last two decades due to a new phase of mass population movements towards developed countries (Castles 2000) immigration and immigrants have become a perennial cause of public anxiety all over Europe, particularly in relation to crime and disorder. Right wing political forces that exploit the xenophobic feelings of large segments of the population and build on crime fears, have gained considerable political sway.

It is difficult to overestimate the role that media play in the process of inflating crime fears and the scapegoating of the soft target of immigrants or minorities (Cohen 1972; Young 1974; Hall 1978; McRobbie 1994). In Greece the ethnic group that media usually depict as inherently criminal are the Albanians (Spinelli, Vidali et al. 1993). Because of this stereotype victims are usually keen to accuse Albanians when the perpetrator is unknown. Even petty offences are more likely to be reported to the police when foreigners are engaged. Moreover law enforcement is proactive when it deals with immigrants and their communities. Those tendencies lead to the inflation of immigrants' crime statistics, which by its turn fuels the xenophobic attitudes. Thus the typical labelling dynamics eventually leading to the criminalisation either of minorities (Girloy 1987) or of immigrants (Karydis 1998; Melossi 2003) is fully deployed.

Police records

I have chosen to start the examination of immigrant youth crime statistics from the police records. Although these statistics reflect to a certain degree the priorities and prejudices of the police, they are more reliable than Courts or Prisons statistics which are the accumulative result of the attrition process (the "Sellin principle" cited in Sutherland and Cressey 1978).

Data on juvenile arrests came from the Greek Ministry of Public Order and concern children and teens between 7 – 17 years old. In reality children of the age bracket 7-12 years old commit few offences (Spinellis and Tsitsoura 2004). Thus it is especially useful to examine the development over time of the delinquency reported by the police of offenders 13 – 17 years old (Courakis 2004). The data presented in Table 6 cover the period 1989 - 2002 during which the phenomenon of immigration was deployed in Greece.

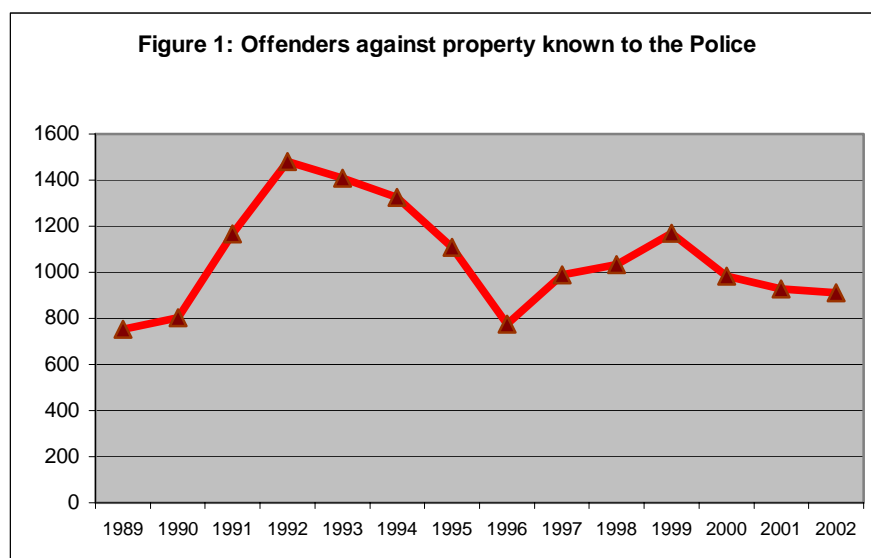
**Table 6. Juvenile Offenders 13 - 17 years old known to the Police
Selected offences only**

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
<i>Serious¹</i>	62	93	81	117,6	122	95	126	127	144	159	193	130	103	116
<i>Against Property</i>	754	804	1,167	1,480	1,407	1,325	1,107	774	990	1,032	1,169	982	927	910
<i>Special Laws</i>	6,705	13,220	16,107	17,544	16,111	13,857	14,674	15,816	17,760	17,730	19,130	21,174	23,206	21,964
<i>Total</i>	8,217	14,844	18,125	19,961	18,377	16,085	16,633	17,468	19,639	19,619	21,148	22,721	24,553	23,202

Source: Courakis 2004

The offences of Table 6 are those with the most interest for this research and represent the vast majority of all recorded offences. The cases not included in Table 6 represented in 1996 a 1.3 percent of the total number of offenders. In order to answer the question of juvenile delinquency's overall trends it is useful to discern periods of growth and descent. According to Table 6 the first period of increase peaks in 1992. Next to that appears a period of mild decline that lasted until 1994. It is followed by a phase of steady increase until 2001. The next period seems to be characterised by a tendency of de-escalation.

But the bulk of offences that Police statistics record belong to the category "Special Laws". The category mainly refers to traffic law violations (in 1995 the 95.2 percent of all special Laws violations) and therefore has little criminological interest.



Source: Courakis 2004 (Figure is constructed by P.Papandreou)

¹ Murder by intent, rape, intentional bodily harm, robbery, and handbag snatching.

Thus it is necessary to turn to the other categories of the Table 6. The vague periodisation – described above- seems to hold true when “against the property” offences are examined (Figure 1). Despite of the known limitations of the Police statistics that have been analysed previously, it is difficult to reject any association of the fluctuations observed in Figure 1 with the concurrent developments of the immigration phenomenon. The first sharp increase of the “real” or “amplificated” crime against property occurred during the years 1990 – 1992 when the first wave of immigrants crossed the borders. The second increase emerged during 1997 – 1998 when the country received a new wave of desperate immigrants who fled from Albania after the bankruptcy of pyramidal investment schemes and the chaotic situation that ensued. After the climax of 1999 either “real” crime rates declined or law enforcement policies became more relaxed.

Table 7. Juvenile Offenders Known to the Police

	All violations				
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Greeks	20,811	22,461	24,459	24,373	18,762
Foreigners	1,435	1,600	1,716	2,016	1,919
Percentage of foreigners	6.5%	6.6%	6.6%	7.6%	8.8%

Source: Ministry of Public Order, (unpublished data, Table is constructed by P.Papandreou)

Last, but not least, is the examination of the over the time change of the reported more serious offences like murder by intent, rape, intentional bodily harm, robbery, and handbag theft. Although there is significant variation in the number of recorded serious delinquents, it is clear that there is a trend of steady growth by an annual increase of almost 10 percent, which lasted from 1989 to 1999. After 1999 the number of the known to the Police serious delinquents started to fall.

Do nationality matters?

Since the data presented in Table 6 don't offer information on offenders' nationality it is impossible to explore the relation of juvenile delinquency and nationality by using this time series. Therefore, it is necessary to turn to a smaller but richer and more reliable dataset that keeps record of the distinction between children of Greek and foreign nationality aged 7 – 17 years old (Table 7). After 2001, according to Table 7, Greek adolescents' engagement with

delinquency follows a trend of sharp de-escalation. The corresponding trend of foreigners is more or less steady. The combined effect is a de-escalation of all recorded offences by almost 17 percent from 2002 to 2003. A careful examination of the data reveals that both tendencies are mainly due to the decline of the traffic law violations, since the category represents the 90% of the recorded offences. It seems that the traffic violations are no longer a top priority for law enforcement agents and thus recorded violations declined 16.3 percent from 2002 to 2003.

As far as the contribution of the foreign youth to the overall problem of juvenile delinquency is concerned we see that their share ranges from 6.5 percent to 8.8 percent (Table 7). These figures are below the foreign youth's share of the corresponding age bracket of the general population, and thus provide no ground for "crime hysteria».

However, a different picture appears when analysis focuses on the representation of foreign adolescents among those having committed the more serious offences (Tables 8 to 10).

Table 8. Offences against property (attempted theft, committed theft, serious theft, accomplice to property offences and robbery)

<i>Offenders known to the police</i>	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<i>Greeks</i>	819	695	796	939	758
<i>Foreigners</i>	367	255	276	275	275
<i>Percentage of foreigners</i>	30,9%	26,8%	25,7%	22,7%	26,6%

Source: Ministry of Public Order, (unpublished data, Table is constructed by P.Papandreu)

A clear finding of Table 8 is that the absolute numbers of foreign minors committing property offences declined by 30 percent from 1999 to 2000 and then remained steady. On the other hand the numbers of the Greeks committing the same type of offence fluctuate but on average exhibited an increase of 12 percent per year. Also clear and consistent over the examined period is the overrepresentation of foreign juveniles amongst those having committed offences against property. The average share of foreign minors is 26.5 percent, which is twofold the figure representing their share in the general population of the particular age bracket.

As Karydis (2004) seems to argue, an overrepresentation of this magnitude cannot be the sole outcome of the amplification-of-crime-process and is rather the result of elevated rates of offending on behalf of foreign youth and especially those of Albanian origin. Examining similar questions in his study of the Italian case, Mellosi (2003) concludes that the

amplification of immigrants' involvement with crime is "neither a simple 'matter of fact' nor a merely ideological construction" but rather the result of the two processes' interaction.

Available Police statistics (Table 9) does not provide a sound basis for the examination of the hypothesis that immigrant youth are more prone than natives to violent crimes, although the foreigners' contribution to grievous bodily harm offences is elevated (35.6 percent). However, a known shortcoming of the Greek Police statistics is that they only record offences that came to their attention within a month after the commitment of the felonious act. Therefore, Police statistics underestimate the actual figure of perpetrated offences of bodily harm by intent (Courakis 1999).

More elucidating were the accounts offered by the juvenile court and secondary school immigrant interviewees that revealed core elements of self perception revolving around themes of masculinity, pride, toughness, and physical strength. Since the employed interview schedule had a section devoted to violent fights, I had the opportunity to realise that the level of these teens' engagement with violent behaviour and offences is clearly escalating to levels unseen before in Greece.

Table 9. Bodily harm

<i>Offenders known to the police</i>	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<i>Greeks</i>	49	26	32	46	29
<i>Foreigners</i>	5	18	5	5	6
<i>Percentage of foreigners</i>	9,1%	40,9%	13,5%	9,8%	17,1%

Table 10. Drug offences

<i>Offenders known to the police</i>	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<i>Greeks</i>	316	220	130	121	114
<i>Foreigners</i>	49	23	13	19	36
<i>Percentage of foreigners</i>	15.5%	10.5%	10.0%	15.7%	31.6%

Source: Ministry of Public Order; (unpublished data, table is constructed by P.Papandreou)

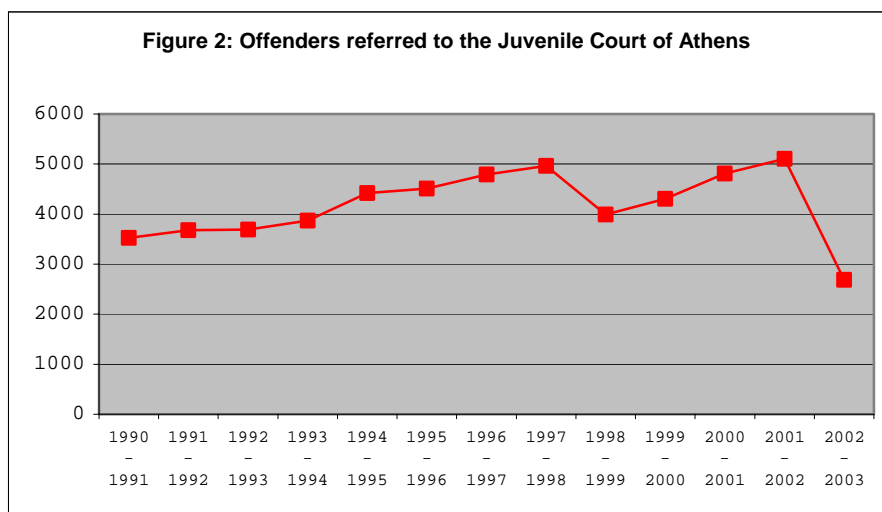
Overall juvenile arrests for drug law violations² decreased 59 percent from 1999 to 2003 (Table 10). The observed decline of drug law offences mainly concerns Greeks violators and one can assume that it reflects a policy of looser law enforcement practice. Such a change of policy reflects a climate of relaxation of the punitive stance against drug users that eventually led to the reforms of the Drug Law (Law 2721/1999 and 3189/2003). Although the number of

² Unlawful sale, purchase, possession or use of prohibited psychotropic substances.

the foreign violators of the drug law kept following -until 2001- the de-escalation trend of the Greeks, after this year started to grow. However, the small size of the sample of foreign violators of the drug law renders any inference drawn from it rather premature.

Juvenile Court Statistics

The data presented below come from the Juvenile Court of Athens, which is central to the Juvenile Justice in Greece since it handles large numbers of juvenile offenders. The time series presented in Figure 2 outline the evolution of Court’s number of handled cases during the years of mass immigration. It is important to note the almost linear grow of the number of referred offenders, from the judicial year 1990 – 1991 to 1997 – 1998, that resulted in 40 percent additional cases.



Source: Ministry of Justice, Juvenile Court of Athens (unpublished data, Figure is constructed by P.Papandreou)

Figure 2 also suggests that the de-escalation of crime rates or the de-criminalisation tendency that occurred around 2001 – 2002 also affected the system of Juvenile Court of Athens. The judicial year 2002 - 2003 the numbers of juveniles referred to the Court dropped significantly. However it is very difficult to compare the over the time changes of Police records with the corresponding ones of the Court. An overburdened Juvenile Court system entails significant time intervals during which young offenders have to wait before adjudication. Since a waiting interval of 12 months or more is not rare, to compare the same year Police and Court statistics is impossible (Courakis 2004). Another very important reason for the interests of this study is that large numbers of arrested minors of foreign nationality, predominately Albanians, are deported. In 1994, for instance, the prosecutor ordered the deportation of 407 minors of foreign nationality (55.5 percent of all cases) (Nova-Kaltsouni and Koutouzou 1995).

The question of whether foreign delinquents are facing discriminatory treatment by the system of juvenile justice is a difficult one to answer. Still it is a pressing issue that demands investigation, for the majority of the inmates of juvenile detention institutions are of foreign nationality. For instance, on 16 July 2002, in all “Special Detention Institutions for Youngsters” 540 juvenile offenders were detained. Only 263 of them were of Greek nationality (48 percent of the total). Out of the 277 detained foreign children and adolescents 93 were violators of the drug law.

In order to explore what fuels the striking feature of disproportionate confinement of immigrant juveniles we turn our attention to statistics concerning adjudicated juveniles and the detention court orders. The detention figures for Greeks and foreigners presented in Table 11 are very suggestive. Although foreign youth are a minority among both the general and the delinquent population they represent the majority of those adjudicated to confinement. Only the last examined judicial year this pattern was inverted. The explanations usually offered for the much higher incarceration rates of foreigners and especially Albanians are (a) that they engage more often with serious offences, (b) that they don’t appear at the court or (c) that they have inadequate legal representation.

Table 11. Detained Offenders by nationality

	1996 - 1997		1997 - 1998		1998 - 1999		1999 - 2000		2000 - 2001		2001 - 2002		2002 - 2003	
	Foreign	Greek	Foreign	Greek	Foreign	Greek	Foreign	Greek	Foreign	Greek	Foreign	Greek	Foreign	Greek
Incarcerated	231	47	233	54	174	32	145	92	127	73	52	43	22	30
Adjudicated	2,505		2,673		2,114		1,869		2,248		1,952		1,756	

Source: Ministry of Justice, Juvenile Court of Athens (unpublished data)

However during the period 1996 - 1998 foreigners were more than 80 percent of the adjudicated to detention. After four years they were 40 percent of the detained. It is difficult to attribute this dramatic decline only to the over the under examined period reduction of foreign juveniles’ involvement with serious offences. It seems that the under question change in the Court’s disposition outcomes needs also to be attributed to changes in the court’s philosophy regarding the penal treatment of foreign juveniles. It seems that after an initial “tough on foreign crime” stance, the Juvenile Court adopted a more appropriate to its role rehabilitative approach.

It is worth noting that even in the “least punitive” judicial year 2002 – 2003 the rate of the confined among Albanian minors treated by the Court was 2.7 percent, while the corresponding rate for Greeks was 1.7. However, further research in this field is much needed.

Ominous tensions: ethnic identity, racism and conflict

Immigrants mainly live in inner city middle and working class boroughs of Athens where they represent a 17 percent of the residents. But they can also be found almost everywhere in Athens. Journalistic accounts of urban life frequently refer to urban ghettos, but it is difficult to trace the clear-cut class or ethnic boundaries, which are evident in other major European metropolitan conurbations in the dense urban nexus of Athens. Young people from all walks of life frequent the same inner city schools, squares, cafes, and clubs. The social context of the immigrant youth is also that of the school and the neighbourhood. Therefore students of all ethnic backgrounds are spending a lot of time together and adhere to a common cultural orientation in terms of music preferences, dressing codes, leisure time activities.

Since teens are influenced by the wider societal dynamics, discourses of racism and segregation are evident in their milieus and they are occasionally the locus of conflict along ethnic lines. In part this reflects feelings of resentment on the part of the Greek population, which are organised around themes of “crime”, “neighbourhood degradation”, and «unemployment”.

Thus the question concerning this research is the one posed by Les Back in his book “New ethnicities and urban culture” (1996): “what is the impact of racism on the lives of young people growing up in urban contexts?” There is neither a simple nor a certain answer to this question.

The reason is twofold: first –as we have seen- young people share many aspects of a uniform youthful culture but not the same socio-economic conditions; secondly they try to sound politically correct and are influenced by the multicultural discourse that the school curriculum fosters. At the same time the line that separates natives and foreigners is always present. The football game between the National teams of Greece and Albania that took place in October 2004 offered a yardstick to gauge the salience of ethnic identifications amongst youth. My understanding of what followed this sports event is that it not only operated as an incidence that allowed the emergence of the latent ethnic conflict but that it also marked a critical turning point for the formation of ethnic identities.

At this match the Greek national team, which earlier that summer had won the Euro-cup, was defeated by Albania. From the outset the game had gained symbolic significance that extended far beyond the Tirana terrain. At that time Greeks were eager to defend the precious national football achievement against an opponent that was perceived as inferior and

underdeveloped. Albanians on the other hand had seen in the game an opportunity to get even with the arrogant and exploiting employers of so many compatriots of them. Moreover, according to many Albanian boys I had interviewed, some of them probably seized the opportunity to reassert their national superiority in the field of physical strength in which, according to them, Greeks had become soft.

At any rate, immediately after the end of the game Albanians celebrated at the centre of the city of Athens and the neighbourhoods in massive demonstrations of immigrants unseen before in Greece. They were not only celebrating a volatile football victory but they were also claiming the right to be visible in the centre of the city. They were confronted by a rampaging mob of Greeks the gamut of which included from hooligans to the fascist group “Golden Dawn”. The night was rough in many Athenian neighbourhoods and especially in the centre where pogrom-like attacks against isolated Albanian youngsters took place. The tragic climax was the murder of an Albanian man by a Greek-American in the island of Zante.

An Albanian student reports the situation he encountered in an inner city neighbourhood of Athens: “A group of twenty men attacked a young Albanian. They continued to hit and kick him despite the arrival of the police. The policemen shot to the air to make them leave him. I made my escape by running towards my house”. Another account is telling about the subtleness of the situation “I watched the game in a friend’s house. On my way home I crossed the America Square. There were a group of Greeks shouting against people and attacking passing cars with Albanians. Among them I recognised a mate from school. He just shouted out “hi” to me. Of course he knew that I am Albanian”. The school context and everyday close association moderates the tensions that nationalistic discourses produce.

What is the importance of incidents like the one described above for the future of inter-ethnic relations? Most Albanian respondents tend to downplay the importance of the event and even emphasise that it was only a game and that hooligans in Tirana were also responsible for being offensive when the Greek anthem was played. Others avoid talking about it. Nevertheless some revealed that since then the feeling of anxiety and cautiousness has been elevated among their community.

Besides for many inner city schools this was not the first outburst of ethnic conflict being experienced. Many students of Greek and foreign origin offered stories of street-fights. The pretext is usually an argument between two students in the schoolyard that continues outside with the engagement of many friends of the same ethnic origin. Other accounts insist that the fight between rival ethnic gangs usually takes place at least once a week. It seems that a

version of turf war is also present: in different school settings either Greek or Albanian youngsters claim that the school belongs to them and emphasise that they are ample to push back invaders.

In a way of addressing the Back question one can only hope that eventually for the majority of children the results of coexistence in school and neighbourhood will prevail over racist discourses and the dynamics of ethnic conflict. It is not certain that we will see the emergence of “hybrid identities” and “new ethnicities” in Greece, but hopefully we will not witness the awakening of Balkan ghosts in the inner cities.

Conclusions

The majority of children of immigrant parentage attend state schools and in general perform well. Frequently they are outstanding students. However, these achievements are mainly due to the many immigrant students’ motivation and determination. On the other hand, significant numbers, mainly boys, leave school prematurely in order to enter the youthful labour market. Since the initial immigration drive, which is behind of many immigrant students’ educational success, is destined to fade away soon, multicultural educational policies supporting these children’s integration are urgently needed.

The extension of the engagement of immigrant minors with delinquency does not justify the stereotype that exclusively attributes the rise of criminality to foreigners. However, the prolonged presence in the country of large numbers of undocumented immigrants, with literally no civil or social rights, is not only morally problematic, but also dangerous. It forces vast numbers of young people to the margins of society and renders them vulnerable to poverty-driven delinquency and crime. Thus a minority of immigrant youth exhibits elevated levels of delinquency mainly engaging with property offending.

The “zero tolerance” initial response to immigration and the prolonged punitive reaction of the Juvenile Justice system contributed to the amplification of the problem and resulted in juvenile prisons overcrowded with foreign inmates. It is worth noting that over the decade 1989 – 1999 the budget of Greek Police showed a nominal increase of 102.4 percent while the budget of the Correctional Institutions, Juvenile Detention Centres etc. increased by 144.2 percent (Lambropoulou 2001). It is not difficult to imagine the role that this “great confinement” period had for the development of a cadre of career criminals within the immigrant communities. Thus the recently observed signs of a de-escalation and de-

criminalisation turn in Police and Juvenile Criminal Justice practices are very positive developments.

The experience of many immigration countries underlines the importance that societal reception has for the newcomers' adaptation pathways (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). In Greece, the ever-present dynamics of racism, discrimination, and ethnic tension are significant adverse determinants that endanger immigrant children integration and increase the likelihood of a downward mode of assimilation.

The still under revision new immigration law offers the opportunity to build upon the positive developments and to address known problems. The main problem of the country is that there still exist large numbers of undocumented immigrants. The government distanced itself from previous narrow and outdated views that perceive immigration as a temporal phenomenon and declared that the new bill's aim is to foster immigrants' social integration. Unfortunately the bill does not foresee special provisions supporting the integration of children of immigrants. (Apart from the bill's explicit reference to their entitlement to state education). In order to foster immigrant children integration, the government should examine the possibility to grant unconditional long-term resident status to those children that either had attended school in Greece for -let say- at least six years.

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