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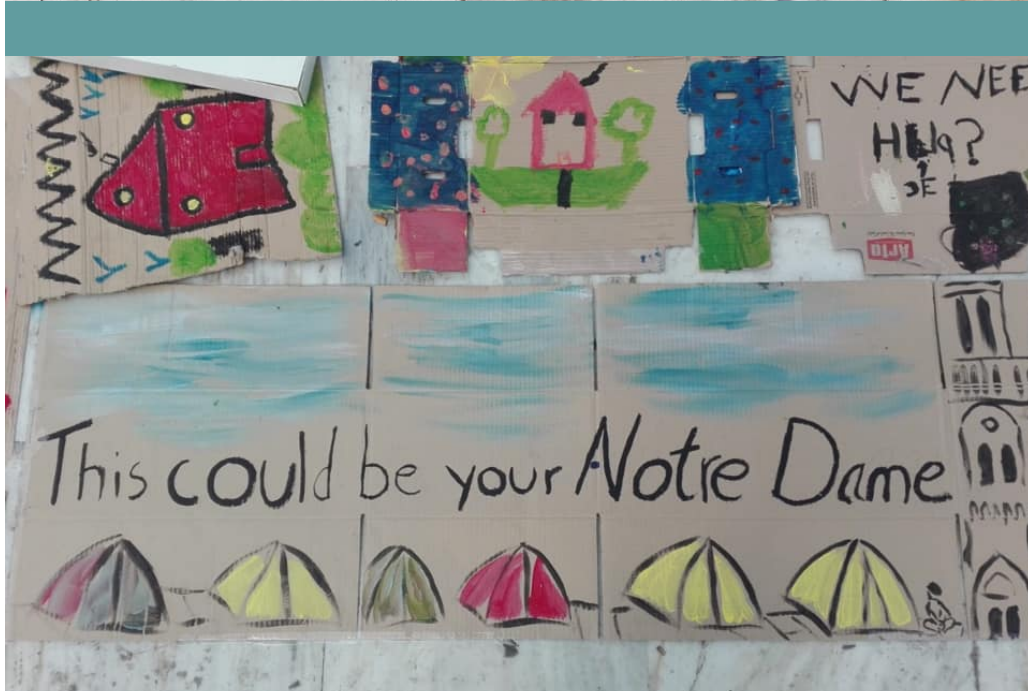
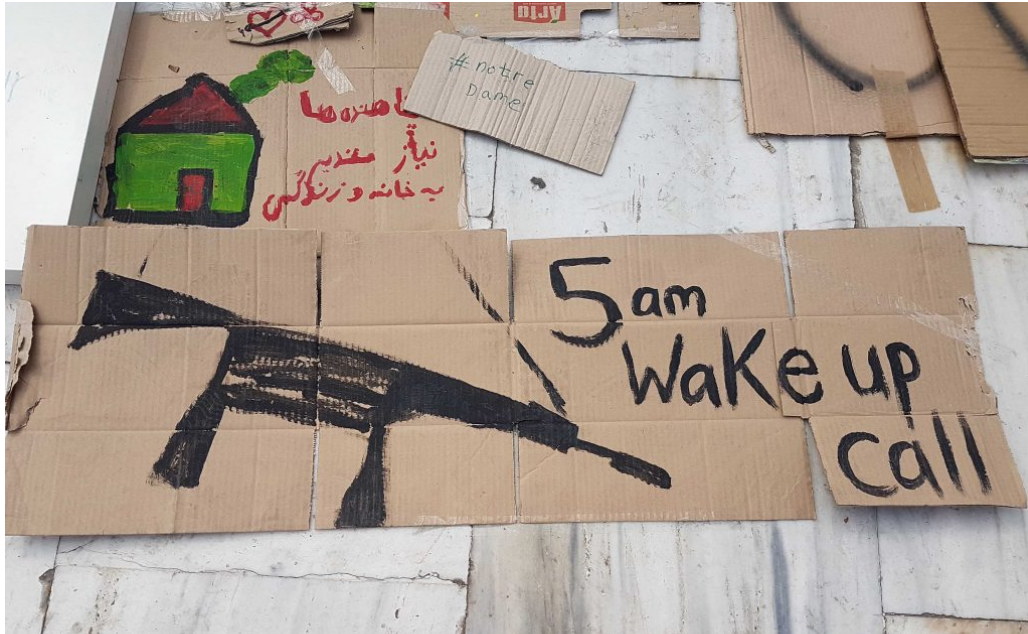
Refugees, Othering, and Acculturation in Athens:

How Can the “Other” Possibly Integrate?

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List of Abbreviations

ACCMR	Athens Coordination Center for Migrant and Refugee Issues
EC	European Commission
ECB	European Central Bank
ESTIA	Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation
EU	European Union
GD	Golden Dawn (political party in Greece)
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RVRN	Racist Violence Recording Network
SYRIZA	Abbreviation for left-wing political party coalition in Greece
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—The UN Refugee Agency
US	United States



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Abstract

In the past ten years, Greece has been hit by two “crises”. The first, an economic crisis in 2009, which consisted of a series of bailouts from the European Commission, European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, leading to a trend of anti-Greek sentiment within the EU. The second, the Syrian refugee “crisis”, beginning in the fall of 2015. At the start, Greece was simply a transit country as first-point of entry to the EU. Four years on, the tensions of both “crises” are still palpable in the Greek capital.

The case study research is framed under these preconditions in order to evaluate the role of othering of both Greeks and refugees, and how this affects the acculturation strategy in the urban city center of Athens. Acculturation and integration theories (Berry, 1997; 2001), philosophical and race-based interpretations of othering (Hegel, 1977; Stasak, 2008), vertical social segregation (Maloutas & Spyrellis, 2015), and situated solidarities (Routledge & Derickson, 2015) theoretically situated the empirical findings in an interdisciplinary context.

To analyze this phenomenon, the primary empirical research included interviews pursued with both refugees and Greeks, an online survey focusing on Greek perceptions of refugees in Athens, and observations in neighborhoods in the city center. Supplementary evidence was provided through document, including policy papers, research reports, new articles, and EU level ad hoc queries, all of which provided support to the overall aim of the research. In this paper, I argue that the othering of Greeks on the EU level, has impacted the othering of refugees and their pursuance of integration into Greek society.

Keywords: integration, othering, uneven geographies, Athens, refugees, acculturation strategies



1. Introduction

Sitting on a balcony in the neighborhood of Politechneio, bordering Omonia, and Exarchia, there is an unmatched mix of bustle and serenity. Motorbikes weave in and out. An ambulance raises its siren in an attempt at passing cars, that somehow don't seem to care about the emergency vehicle. People either walk in groups or not at all. There are mainly men out and about, most speaking Arabic. The low, near-constant hum of passing cars leaves the unmistakable smell of car exhaust at all hours of the day. Greeks will say 'it's an unsafe area,' and to be very careful at night. And to a certain extent, they're probably right. As a cisgender, white female from the United States, my existence comes with a level of freedom and privilege that is too often overlooked. The perceived levels of violence and "unsafe-ness" of a place, means something different to me, compared to Europeans. When I first moved to Athens, Greece, and would give my address to a taxi driver, more often than not, the Greek man behind the wheel would stare at me questioningly, with an almost petrified look. Now, after eight months, I can understand their hesitation—but at the same time, I have come to question the impact of their words and perceptions.

Pushing past first impressions, my neighborhood is primarily migrants from the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Central Asia. Knowing this, I can't seem to shake the questions that have arisen—Is it possible that Greeks have an ingrained sense of xenophobia and that is the reason why they consider this area unsafe? And if so, how does this affect the integration of a continuous flow of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from refugee camps on the islands, into Athens?

When considering refugee and asylum seekers in the world today, there are heated debates, acts of violence, outpouring of support, the rise in nationalist ideals, and new "integration" policies contrasted with bolstered "security" and border policies. Western media is flooded with images of children dying in the Mediterranean, families being separated at the United States-Mexico border, and account after account of firsthand knowledge of the situations in Syria, Guatemala, and Afghanistan, amongst many others. And still—people argue the



legitimacy of seeking asylum. The fact of the matter is this: asylum seekers will continue to exist regardless of their acceptance by a host society. People will still be forced to flee from persecution, violence, and environmental crises, and until we resolve global warming, dictatorial regimes, and the continued effects of colonialism and wars, asylum seeking will persist.

That being said, one of the main concerns within refugee research is *integration*. Thought to be one of the leading ways of accepting asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants of any sort, into an already established society, the word integration has been muddied in recent years. Instead of being a positive mechanism of how to include new citizens into Western societies, it has lost the original definition in many cases in the real world. Interestingly, most studies fixated on applying integration as a tool, focus on the concrete, quantifiable outcomes such as education, housing, or healthcare. While these are, of course, imperative in terms of refugee response, little research has been focused on the qualitative, social aspects of integration.

Therefore, the main research question of this study is this:

How does ‘othering’ affect the acculturation strategy of refugees in the urban city center of Athens, Greece?

This is a theoretically complex and multidimensional issue because it is based on the assumption that due to a number of factors, refugees are more often than not, the ‘othered’ members of society. The selection of Athens, Greece as the case study focus is decidedly context-specific and historically centered. The refugee “crisis” hit the already economically challenged Greek state, even harder than most EU countries, due to its geographic positioning as first-entry point for refugees. This leads to the aim of this research: to discern the ways in which Greek society is influenced by othering and how this affects their overall acculturation strategy of refugees.

To begin with, there must be an established understanding of the terms: *acculturation strategy*, *refugee*, and *asylum seeker*. **Acculturation strategy**



refers to the concept made popular by psychologist John W. Berry, where there are four possible strategies concerning the larger society (i.e. Greece) and four possible strategies for ethnocultural groups (i.e. refugees in this case)—one of which is integration. The strategies of the larger society include multiculturalism, melting pot, segregation, and exclusion and those of the ethnocultural groups include integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 2001; 1997). This case study has been designed to uncover the acculturation strategy taken up by both the dominant society and the ethnocultural society, and the definitions and requirements of each will be discussed at length, in Chapter 3.

EU and Greek policies may not overtly exclude refugees (socially, religiously, or economically), but in uncovering processes of othering, what is applied in practice, may not result in overall inclusion. The term **refugee** is adopted from the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* that states, “A refugee is a person who has fled their country of origin and is unable or unwilling to return because of a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” (UNHCR, 2006, p. 17). Whereas, “an **asylum-seeker** is an individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. **Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum-seeker**” [emphasis added] (UNHCR, 2006, p. 4). Based on these definitions, the focus of this paper is on refugees and asylum seekers, as opposed to any other type of immigrant, and their role in the urban city center of Athens, Greece.

The word *integration* has been highlighted due to its prevalence in policy documents and its normalized discussion in the media, amidst the ongoing situation in Syria. This case study intends to understand the complex components that affect the integration acculturation strategy in the real world, with the understanding that not every country is systematically utilizing the objectives of Berry’s integration. Therefore, the research is used to determine which



acculturation strategy is applied in Athens. Integration is a multi-faceted, extremely complicated construct that involves a variety of factors that are interconnected and constantly transforming, including *economic, health, educational, political, cultural, and social* contexts (Robila, 2018). It should be noted that I have chosen to separate social and cultural integration due to the negativity associated with cultural integration practices. In most cases, ‘cultural integration’ asks for total assimilation into the host society, promoting the idea that refugees cannot and should not hold onto their home country’s culture. This is a very narrow understanding of integration and points toward an entirely separate acculturation strategy. Simply put, “immigrant integration refers to the incorporation of new elements (immigrants) into an existing social system” (Robila, 2018, p. 10).

In order for steps to be taken within the integration acculturation strategy, we first must evaluate if a host society is capable of multiculturalism. The EU evaluates and informs the 28 member states of acceptable tactics of integration, with little consideration of the differing cultures within the member states and those of the refugee community. Historical implications, economic and political context, as well as the situated geography, all contribute to the othering that may occur in society.

This will not be a policy paper but instead, a social urban research project focusing on how othering of certain groups contributes to overlooked aspects of the acculturation of refugees in Athens. It is not intended as an overarching assumption on refugee acculturation for the whole of Europe, rather it is a hyper-focused view on Athens as a case study. The research is focused on how interactions between those in the host society (Greeks) with those of a refugee background occur, through empirical evidence, leading the research to draw theoretical conclusions, rather than amended EU or Greek policies. The research does not focus on the logistics of asylum seeking, finding housing, obtaining education or healthcare, or what refugee camp life looks like. Instead, it is intended as a tool for further research in refugee studies and why ‘othering’ must be addressed, in the Greek context, in order to pursue integration in the first place.



In order to empirically assess how othering affects the social ties in everyday life in Athens, my field research includes semi-structured and unstructured interviews, observations of different neighborhoods throughout Athens city center, document analysis, and a survey carried out with the Greek population living in Athens. Due to the nature of this study it became unrealistic to rely solely upon structured interviews and therefore I turned to more detailed and coded observations in the field, as well as extensive field notes and a research journal completed after every day in the field. Along with this, after attending various events regarding refugees and refugee integration in Greece, observations and field journal notes reflect these occasions as well. The interviews carried out with refugees of varying backgrounds, provided direct insight into the reality of life as an outsider in Athens. Explained more in depth in Chapter 4, the methods designated, facilitated valuable insight on the feelings of refugees and asylum seekers, rather than just quantifiable statistics about their status in Greece. Additionally, since many refugees and asylum seekers are hesitant to risk their status in Greece, I decided against recording in many cases and have relied heavily upon my research notes and field journal.

Regarding the layout of this paper, Chapter 2 focuses on the recent historical background of Greece and Athens. The historical background includes a brief overview of the Greek perspective of othering, focusing on the political and economic implications resulting from it, followed by the current situation for refugees in Athens today. This chapter also includes a short synopsis of the policies of migration and asylum in Greece, to provide context for the analysis and conclusions. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework and is broken down into four sub-sections, bringing in philosophies from a variety of backgrounds. The four main components of the theoretical framework include (1) acculturation strategies, (2) othering, (3) uneven urban geographies, and (4) situated solidarities. This foundation will be considered and referred to throughout the analyses and conclusions in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 4 lays out the four components of the empirical research, (1) survey, (2) observations and field journal, (3) interviews, and (4) document analysis, and its resulting research



design, benefits, and limitations. All of which sets the scene for Chapter 5, to critically analyze the results of the field research and offer answers to the research question. Chapter 5 also includes a final discussion on the acculturation strategy that is carried out in Athens. Finally, Chapter 6 will conclude by summing up the evidence and analysis, as well as critically assessing the shortcomings within this study to allow for suggestions on further research within the field.

In light of the inherent complexity involving acculturation strategies and defining the parameters of integration, as outlined above, the following chapters are structured to be able to reflect upon the many facets of Greek society whilst pinpointing the geographic and othering processes at play in Athens city center. In this way, the layout of this thesis is not written in a particularly traditional manner, with no self-evident Literature Review or Discussion sections. Instead, Chapter's 2 and 3 seek to assess prior literature through the Historical Background and Theoretical Framework lenses. Similarly, Chapter 5 weaves the findings, analysis, and theoretical framework into a hybridized analytical discussion in order to lead into the Conclusions.

2. Historical Background

To start off the chapter, the recent Greek history and the ways in which Greeks have been subject to othering processes themselves must be established first. Following and related to this, we uncover the instability of the Greek economic system and the resulting urban uprisings in the capital. This is to say that the Greek economic crisis and the othering of Greeks within the EU, are related and interconnected and have affected the overall acculturation strategy within Greece. Succeeding this, we establish a brief overview of the relevant historical underpinnings of refugees in Greece and the current national and urban policies in place on migration and asylum. The last section will explore the current conditions for refugees in Athens, and the resulting new waves of protests in the capital city.



It is necessary to consider these components of recent Greek history and its effect on the political and societal outlook, so that we can better understand how this impacts refugees in Greece in the present day. While this chapter is not a comprehensive and exhaustive description of recent Greek history, it is intended as a canvas on which the theoretical and analytical discussions may take place

2.1 Othering of Greeks

The Greek State, as it stands today, was established in 1832, after a 10-year battle for independence from the Ottoman Empire, also marking the beginning of the Empire's decline. Starting at this point in Greek history is symbolic, to establish that Greeks never started out as 'Western', 'European', or 'white', as many would label them today. In the early 1900s, Greeks were marginalized, exploited, and discriminated against throughout the Western world but particularly in Australia, the United States, and Canada (Bitzes, 1970; Grammenos, 2018; Piperoglou, 2018). For example, in *Is Hellenism an Orientalism?* (2014), Anna Caratathis writes, "Throughout its contemporary history since its foundation as a nation-state, Greece has been subject to indirect western European rule, and U.S.-supported dictatorships; the west's 'sympathy' for Greek culture extends only to its whitewashed ancient form, not its ineluctably premodern contemporary underdevelopment, due to which it required political 'stewardship' by western powers" (p. 4). Evidently, this 'stewardship' only goes so far as to valorize Greece—ancient Greece—as a symbol of the origin of democracy. Nonetheless, the Western view overlooks the many dimensions of current Greek society, in favor of the revolutionary ideals of ancient Greece that seemingly situates Greeks within the Western realm.

The distortion of Western views on Greece and its Europeanization has left a number of Greeks to wonder, at what point in time they became white and/or Western citizens of the world. And due to austerity measures put in place by the 'Troika' (defined in the following section), the divide continues, albeit less apparent, into present day. "Greek man' is loaded with racially defined notions of laziness, misogyny, perverse sexuality, aggressiveness, danger and duplicity"



(Kapetopoulos, 2016). Statistics coming out of Pew Research Center also support this notion. “Among the major European countries, Greece is clearly the least popular. And its reputation is slipping. In no country, other than Greece itself, is there a majority with a favorable view of Greece” (Pew Research Center, 2012, p. 36). While this topic could be an entire dissertation in its own right, I present this research and data as a means to establish that the concept of ‘othering’, is not merely in reference to refugees and migrants, but also directed at Greeks themselves.

2.2 Instability and Uprisings in the Capital

Mentioned in the previous section, much of Greece’s political instability and economic woes can be traced back to the Troika. The Troika, comprised of the European Commission (EC), European Central Bank (ECB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), offered Greece a series of bailout loans as a way out of the economic turmoil after the economic crisis that began in late 2009 (Vradis & Dalakoglou, 2011). The neoliberal austerity measures imposed by the Troika and other global lenders has irreparably damaged the Greek people’s faith in both EU and national political leaders, pushing Athens to become the site of numerous urban uprisings, demonstrations, and riots, that continue to affect the Greek capital today (Clements, Nanou, & Verney, 2014).

The loss of sovereignty felt by the Greek public has resulted in three main uprisings in Athens: The Revolt of December 2008, the Syntagma Square Movements of 2011, and the Riots of February 2012 (Vradis, 2016). The first, was a result of the murder of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos by two Greek police officers in Exarchia (Vradis, 2009). To the Greek people, the death of an unarmed young man by special force police officers, was the last straw in their qualms with police corruption. The Syntagma Square Movements in 2011 were a direct result of the austerity measures imposed by the Greek government and the Troika (Vradis, 2013; Vradis & Dalakoglou, 2011). These demonstrations lasted for many months and were significant due to the fact that they were organized independent of any political party affiliations. Lastly, the



Riots of February 2012 were, again, related to the Troika bailout, and occurred just days before Parliament passed the newest round of austerity measures on 13 February 2012 (Vradis, 2013)

To be sure, there have been many movements and marches since 2012 however, the three widely studied and recognized movements in Athens, catapulted Greek despair to international prominence. Resulting from these mobilizations by Greek citizens of every race, age, and sex, two sides to Athenian society emerged. The first: vulnerable, young, uneducated Greek men started investing their time and anger in populist, nationalist, and radical political voices, in direct contradiction with the second: leftist movements focused on anything from, unfair austerity measures, to the undignified actions against the refugee “crisis” (Ellinas, 2015).

2.3 Refugee “Crisis” in Greece

The so-called refugee “crisis” is indeed rhetoric that has been produced by the mainstream Western media. Contrary to this dialogue it should be noted that “although migrants’ arrivals to Europe exceeded one million in 2015 and 2016, a closer look shows that the net migration rate to the EU during those years closely mirrored the net migration rate of many years between 2000 and 2010. And, while the 2015 arrivals prompted panic at various levels, they equated to only about 0.2 percent of the total EU population” (IOM - UN Migration, 2018).

In Greece, there are already over 21,000 recognized refugees with more than double that number still awaiting a change in their application status within the asylum-seeking system (Tsitselikis, 2019). As of 31 March 2019, there was a count of approximately 76,000 refugees and migrants in Greece (UNHCR, 2019). Additionally, UNHCR’s key achievements for March 2019 include “69,050 eligible asylum-seekers and refugees this month, and 111,500 since April 2017 received cash assistance” (UNHCR, 2019, p. 1). There is discord between registered numbers and the actualized, due to illegality, family reunification, and few official reports on refugee numbers coming from the Greek government.



Another concern for refugee integration comes to light when looking at The Racist Violence Recording Network's *Annual Report for 2018*, that was released in April of this year. The results have found that of 117 incidents of racist violence, "in 74 incidents the victims were migrants or refugees on grounds of ethnic origin, religious, color, associations of third country nationals, human rights defenders due to their connection with refugees and migrants" (Racist Violence Recording Network, 2018, p. 8). In addition to this, recorded racist motives within police violence went from 10 incidents in 2017 to 22 incidents in 2018 (Racist Violence Recording Network, 2018).

The disconnect between policy measures, UNHCR (United Nations Refugee Agency) assistance, and funding, with the reality on the ground, is palpable. Unfortunately, "the non-regulatory provisions of the Greek Migration Law regarding integration (Law 4251/2014) and the lack of cohesive policy during the last 25 years [have] prevented the introduction of solid social integration conditions (on education, employment, housing, connection to local communities, family, etc.)" (Tsitselikis, 2019. p. 169). With few measures put in place before the "crisis", Greece's government has since scrambled to accelerate implementation of concrete measures for the integration of refugees.

2.4 Greek Migration and Asylum Policy

Greek policy on migration and asylum has transformed, mainly out of necessity, over the past five years. Beginning at the end of 2016, the Ministry of Migration Policy reorganized into three primary branches: (1) the General Secretariat for Migration Policy, (2) the General Secretariat of Reception, and (3) the Asylum Service, which also houses the Appeals Authority. "Although Greece accounted for the majority of arrivals in 2015, only 1.5% of those transiting, claimed asylum in the country as other European countries were their target destinations" (Triandafyllidou & Marouf, 2017, p. 23). However, with the closing of the Balkan route in 2015, many of the asylum seekers were left stranded in Greece which resulted in a higher number of asylum applications in both 2016 and 2017.



On 18 March 2016, the EU and Turkey agreed upon terms set out in what is called the *EU-Turkey Statement* which intended, “to end irregular migration flows from Turkey to the EU, ensure improved reception conditions for refugees in Turkey, and open up organized, safe, and legal channels to Europe for Syrian refugees” (European Commission, 2019, p. 1). Following the establishment of the EU-Turkey Statement, Greek authorities adopted a new law (Law 4375/2016) that falls in line with the standards of the Statement. “In effect, this means that asylum seekers who have had asylum claims pending for over five years at the time the law was published, automatically received a two-year residence permit on humanitarian grounds. This aimed at easing the backlog of 18,500 cases pending under this ‘old procedure’” (Triandafyllidou & Marouf, 2017, pp. 22-23). This change was highly contested by Greek Parliament but has ended up remaining in place through present day.

Regarding policies that reflect integration into Greek society, “Law 4375/2016 allows asylum seekers access to the Greek labor market, [but] asylum seekers are often unable to acquire a Social Security Number (AMKA), without which they are unable to access regular employment as it has been recently reported through a formal letter-report by 25 organizations” (Triandafyllidou & Marouf, 2017, p. 32). Significantly, looking at longer term integration into Greece, second generation immigrants only obtained the right to acquire Greek citizenship in 2010 and the first time the word “integration” appears in Greek policy measures was in 2005 (Maloutas, Souliotis, Alexandri, Kandylis, & Petrou, 2014). Specifically in Athens, “The City’s integrationist approach draws upon the *National Strategy for the Integration of Third Country Nationals* as it is formulated by the Ministry of the Interior (GSPSC, 2013, respondent d, interview 29/11/2013). In this official document, the central government defines the ‘structural integration’ (*domiki ensomatosi*) as the main strategy of the Greek state towards ‘legal’ immigrants” (Maloutas et al., 2014, p. 20). The term *structural integration* is essential for our analysis and will be revisited later in the text, in Chapter 5.



2.5 A New Wave of Movements

Living in Athens since August 2018, I have borne witness to no less than fourteen separate protests in the city center, each varying in cause and degrees of peacefulness. It is essential to mention that the preconditions for this research, lies in the wave of protests that began in January 2019. There are varying accounts of these movements, but it must be noted that with little national or international media coverage and the incredibly recent onset of these events, I have no credible academic sources to cite for this section, only word of mouth, information provided by NGOs based in Athens, and a variety of social media feeds.

In late January 2019, it was announced by Greek and UNHCR officials, that funding would end for the ESTIA program by the end of March. ESTIA, the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation program, was a collaborative project between UNHCR, the Greek government, local authorities and NGOs providing both urban accommodation and cash assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers. Initially intended as a six-month program, it has been renewed continuously since its implementation in 2017, due to the sustained need of this assistance. The sudden announcement of the elimination of this program came as a shock to both humanitarian organizations and refugees themselves, leaving many recognized refugees with less than two months to find new housing, at the risk of becoming homeless. Of the official counts on refugees, asylum seekers, and those still awaiting their status, “15,750 people will face eviction from their homes or container boxes [with] the eviction process set to continue indefinitely until the program ends” (Chrysopoulos, 2019).

Additionally, in 2017, Athens Mayor, Giorgos Kaminis, and his municipality office, calculated that between 2500-3000 refugees and migrants live in squats within Athens city center, due to the evictions and lack of adequate housing for refugees (Georgiopolou, 2017). All things considered, this has created tremendous turmoil within Athens, causing refugees and humanitarian aid workers to take to the streets, protesting these measures about once per week since the initial announcement of the termination of the ESTIA program.



In April 2019, things took a momentous turn for the worse. In the span of a little over one week (11-19 April 2019), the Athenian police force raided four refugee squats in the Exarchia neighborhood, leaving hundreds of refugees homeless (an estimated 300+) (InfoMobile, 2019). Approximately 90 of those caught in the raid were arrested, detained and transferred to Amygdaleza, a pre-removal detention center, widely considered a modern-day concentration camp by refugees and humanitarian aid workers.

In response to the evictions, more than 60 of those that were evicted, mainly children, pregnant women, and families, staged a camped protest in the upper part of Syntagma Square in Athens, just across the street from Greece's Parliament building. Portrayed in Greek news outlets as raids on drug traffickers and the Mafia as a way to clean-up the streets of Athens, within the humanitarian aid circles, it is thought of as nothing more than a political move by the left-wing, SYRIZA led government to boost poll numbers for the forthcoming EU Parliamentary elections in May, and national elections later this year. This can also be seen in a statement made on 19 April 2019, by Greek Minister of Migration, Dimitris Vitsas, as he urged the refugee protesters to leave Syntagma Square because "they are creating a negative image about themselves in the Greek public opinion" (Keep Talking Greece, 2019). On 20 April 2019, the refugees agreed to be relocated to the only refugee camp located in the city center of Athens, Eleonas (Kampouris, 2019).

3. Theoretical Framework & Literature Review

Creating a theoretical framework specifically focused on the effects of othering and acculturation strategies has required combining theories across disciplines, namely, *integration* from psychological foundations of acculturation (Berry, 2001; 1997), *othering* from philosophical origins (de Beauvoir, 1952; Hegel, 1977), *vertical segregation* and *ethnic residential segregation* from geography (Maloutas & Spyrellis, 2015; Semyonov & Glikman, 2009; Zill, van Liempt, Spierings, & Hooimeijer, 2018), and *situated solidarities* from scholar-activism,



which typically cuts across subjects (McDowell, 2006; Routledge & Derickson, 2015). The theoretical framework, itself, follows such interdisciplinary approach, mirroring Berry's (2001) Psychology of Immigration Theory with specific additions to account for the Athens case. The framework was deliberately chosen in order to reflect upon Greek experiences in recent history, in combination with EU, national, and municipal integration policies of refugees, while grounding and situating the study in the geographical context of Athens. The four theoretical foundations also make up this chapter's main sections, acculturation & integration, othering, uneven geographies of Athens, and situated solidarities, followed by reflections on choice of theoretical framework.

3.1 Acculturation & Integration

The main component of my theoretical basis relies upon psychologist John Berry's research, analyses, and theories of acculturation and integration (Berry, 2001; 1997). Widely looked at as the most inclusive and overall best practice of acculturation within immigration studies, integration has been studied at length and is now utilized in many policy papers regarding every type of immigrants. However, we must first establish the differentiation between acculturation strategies, in order to understand the true definition of integration and the ways in which the EU and Greek society implements (or doesn't implement) this definition in practice.

In *Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation*, Berry (1997) outlines four separate approaches to acculturation that have since been elaborated upon. The four basic strategies Berry outlines for ethnocultural groups are (1) marginalization, (2) separation, (3) assimilation, and (4) integration (Berry, 2001; 1997). Marginalization is the most extreme example of negative acculturation of migrants, where "there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination)" (Berry, 1997, p. 9). Instances of populations experiencing ethnic cleansing can be attributed to this variation of acculturation. An unfortunately common acculturation strategy,



separation is the choice of migrants to exclude themselves from the dominant society and remain in their own ethnocultural group only. The assimilation strategy is defined as “when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures” (Berry, 1997, p. 9). Last, and of utmost importance to this study, is the integration strategy:

Integration can only be ‘freely’ chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups [i.e. refugees/asylum seekers in this particular context] when the dominant society [i.e. Greece] is open and inclusive in its orientation toward cultural diversity... mutual accommodation is required for integration to be attained, involving *the acceptance by both groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different peoples*. This strategy requires non-dominant groups to adopt the basic values of the larger society, while at the same time the dominant group must be prepared to adapt national institutions (e.g. education, health, labor) to better meet the needs of all groups now living together in the plural society.

—(Berry, 1997, pp. 10-11) [*emphasis added*]

Contrary to EU or national policy papers, integration is not an easily presumed acculturation strategy because, as Berry points out, “obviously, the integration strategy can be pursued only in societies that are explicitly multicultural, in which certain psychological preconditions are established... Just as obviously, integration (and separation) can be pursued only when other members of one’s immigrant group share in the wish and have the vitality to maintain the group’s cultural heritage” (Berry, 2001, p. 619). This is to say that each immigrant group within Greece, maintains distinct strategies of acculturation. Similarly, the same can be said about Greek’s and their perception of and toward different ethnic immigrant groups. The utilization of the word integration and the false ideology surrounding it in present day, has led to a detachment between true practices of integration and the actualization of other strategies of acculturation and intergroup relations.



In Figure 1, taken directly from Berry's *A Psychology of Immigration* (2001), offers a flipside to the acculturation coin, including the four strategies of the dominant society: (1) exclusion, (2) segregation, (3) melting pot, and (4) multiculturalism. The differentiation amongst these two sets of terms, is vital in understanding the roles each group plays in the larger pictures of acculturation. The strategies of the larger society, presented in the circle on the right, is to show that it is not always the case that "immigrant groups and their individual members have the freedom to choose how they want to engage in intercultural relations" (Berry, 2001, p. 619). Thus, the introduction of the concept of *mutual accommodation* is presented, where each circle informs the other in terms of which strategy either group could or *should* adopt.

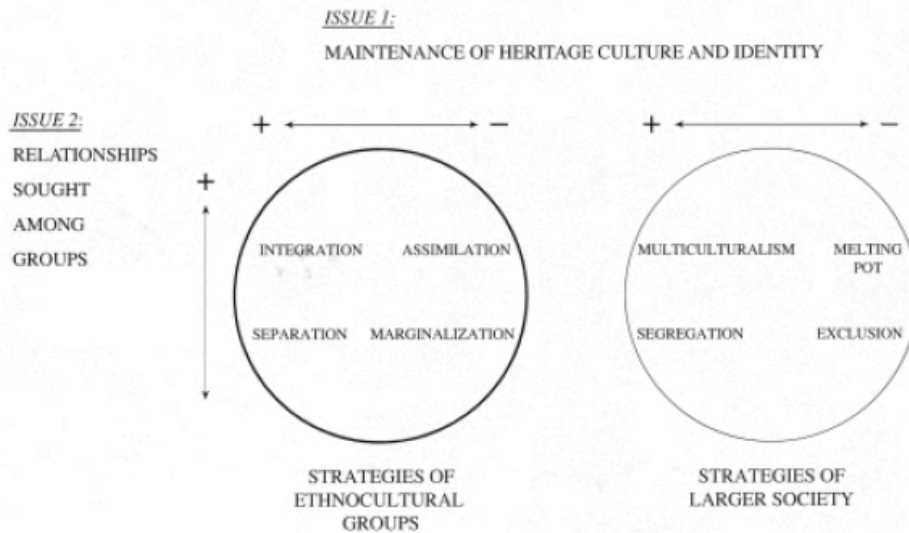


Figure 1 "Varieties of intercultural strategies in immigrant groups and in the receiving society" (p. 618)
 Source: Berry, J. W. (2001). *A Psychology of Immigration*. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(3), 615–631.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00231>

In Figure 2, from the same article by Berry, of which Figure 1 is sourced (2001), the Psychology of Immigration Framework presents the duplicitous factors concerning immigrants and their interactions within a host society. Separate from Berry's understanding of acculturation, Figure 2 considers the many components that contribute to how we classify any given immigrant and dominant group's ability to adapt, or not. The degree to which each aspect within the framework is pursued, influences the opposite group, and informs us of the



overall fulfillment of mutual accommodation. Broken down into observable details, an understanding of the meaning behind Berry's terminology must be conveyed first.

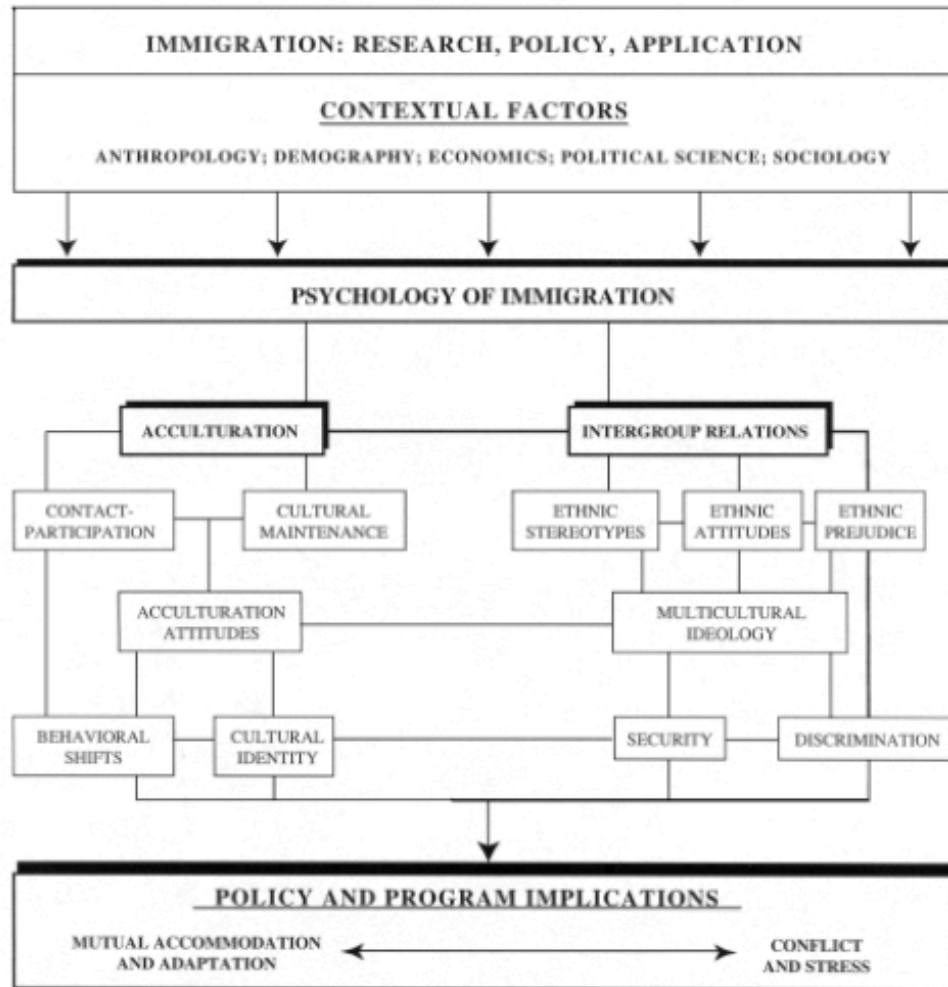


Figure 2 “A framework for understanding psychology of immigration, linking acculturation and intergroup relations research to background context variable and outcomes” (p. 617). *Source:* Berry, J. W. (2001). *A Psychology of Immigration*. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(3), 615–631. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00231>

To begin with, **acculturation** is “a process that entails contact between two cultural groups, which results in numerous cultural changes in both parties” (Berry, 2001, p. 616). **Contact participation** and **behavioral shifts** go hand in hand. **Contact participation** evaluates the degree of contact immigrants have with the host society, influencing the behavioral shifts that dictate which behaviors change, shaped by immigrants’ contact participation with the host



society. Intrinsically tied into these two concepts, **cultural maintenance** explains to what degree the immigrant group remains culturally distinct from the host society. Contact participation and cultural maintenance informs the **acculturation attitudes** of immigrants, which gauges to what extent immigrants wish to have contact with others outside of their group, whether that would be other immigrant groups or those of the host society, and to what extent immigrants wish to maintain their cultural attributes. And lastly within this track, **cultural identity** “refers to a complex set of beliefs and attitudes that people have about themselves in relation to their culture group membership; usually these come to the fore when people are in contact with another culture, rather than when they live entirely within a single culture” (Berry, 2001, p. 620).

On the opposite side, **intergroup relations** refers to the ways in which the host society establishes and view immigrants within their own society. **Ethnic stereotypes, attitudes and prejudices** all feed into the larger picture of multicultural ideology. **Multicultural ideology** is a concept “[that] attempts to encompass the general and fundamental view that cultural diversity is good for a society and its individual members (i.e., high value on cultural maintenance) and that such diversity should be shared and accommodated in an equitable way (i.e., high value on contact and participation)” (Berry, 2001, pp. 622-23). Of particular importance is the understanding of **ethnic prejudice**, and how these prejudices inform the levels of **discrimination** of immigrants from the host society. “Ethnic prejudice is universal (i.e., all groups and all individuals evidence it), but it is highly variable across groups and individuals (i.e., there are large group and individual differences” (Berry, 2001, p. 622).

Considering all of this, Berry’s Psychology of Immigration framework and strategies of acculturation, have primed the proposed theoretical framework for this research. While Berry’s framework is reliable and proven trustworthy, it is incomplete for study on refugees in Athens because of the added dimension of the EU, and lack of consideration of geographic preconditions. Presented in Figure 3, additional factors must be considered when looking at the phenomena of social integration in the Athenian context. This comprehensive framework



expands upon the basis given by Berry with added interpretation of the intergroup relations between the EU and Greece within that fabric. This is where the historical background from Chapter 2 comes into the fore with the proposed theory.

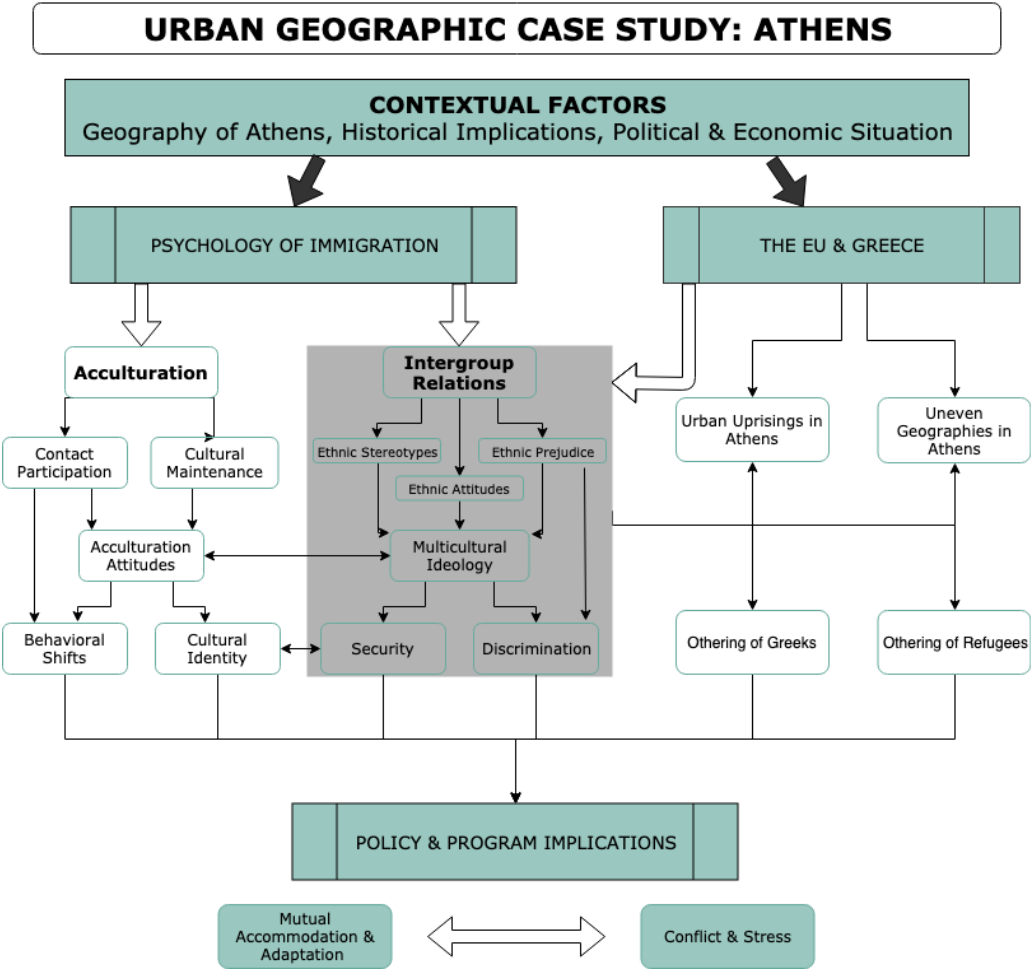


Figure 3 Main Theoretical Framework for Case Study on Refugee’s Acculturation Strategy in Athens, Greece; Source: made by author, inspired by Berry, J. W. (2001). A Psychology of Immigration. Journal of Social Issues, 57(3), 615–631. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00231>

The Greek perception of immigrants is shaped by their history and how the EU perceives Greece. The Greek ethnic stereotype, attitudes, and prejudice within EU member countries, influences and shapes the political and urban climate within Athens city center. Likewise, the larger picture of the EU as an institution and its views on ethnic stereotypes, attitudes, and prejudice of refugees, has an impact on the Athenian model as well. For all three tracks of the framework, there



are both external (observable) and internal (feelings, opinions, etc. that are not easily observable or measured) factors that should be studied.

This interdisciplinary approach to the theoretical framework is necessary because the psychological factors behind how groups form, think, and view the other, is integral for our understanding of acculturation practices in Athens. This theoretical model is focused on the social, observable facets of acculturation, suggesting that if Greece is a multicultural society, they can more easily accommodate high levels of integration of refugees and asylum seekers. The focus on the social is pertinent because if a dominant society is segregated or exclusionary in practice, there is little possibility of integration of immigrants—even if political policies “support” refugees. The current policy approaches taken by the EU and Greece are political or economic first, hoping to influence and change the social realm of interactions between a host society and their new refugee residents. However, throughout the analysis I will argue that we must first approach the social side of acculturation because the economic, health, educational, and political aspects of this framework, would naturally follow. This involves adjustments to policy and its implementation through increased multiculturalism, so that social integration of a given population of refugees may occur in the first place.

In the realm of refugee and/or migration studies, NGOs, the Greek government, and the EU are consumed by the economic and political effects of immigration and asylum seeking. My proposal is that, instead, we should first evaluate the refugee, Greek, and EU groups within the framework presented in Figure 3, so that we can discover if both the EU and Greek society is multicultural, in order for integration to be accomplished. A fundamental component of the framework, and particularly the multicultural ideology portion, is the concept of multicultural assumption. **Multicultural assumption** “asserts that only when people are secure in their own cultural identity will they be able to accept those who differ from themselves” (Berry, 2001, p. 623). Research on this concept has proven that “*there is little doubt that there are intimate links between being accepted by others [with] accepting others*” (Berry, 2001, p. 623).



3.2 Othering

Othering and its many theories, debates, and works, grew from philosophical origins with the first mention by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in his first work, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). The concept of ‘self’ cannot exist without an ‘other’—meaning that in its philosophical form, othering is not entirely negative (Hegel, 1977). Once feminist theory, decoloniality, and critical theory entered the conversation in human geography, the recognition that the *practice* of ‘othering’ is a constructed idea of what is dangerous and unacceptable within society began to occur—but from an entirely Western epistemology. Othering is tied into Berry’s interpretation of ethnic stereotypes, attitudes, and prejudices of refugees’ integration into Greek society, as well as the stereotypes, attitudes, and prejudices held by other EU member states of Greeks. “Otherness is the result of a discursive process by which a dominant in-group (“Us,” the Self) constructs one or many dominated out-groups (“Them,” Other) by stigmatizing difference—real or imagined—presented as a negation of identity and thus *a motive for potential discrimination*... the asymmetry in power relationships is central to the construction of otherness” [emphasis added] (Staszak, 2008, p. 2). In Western societies, otherness and identity are based upon binary logic and colonization, which allowed the West to export its values to most of the world, creating a power hierarchy of existence (Staszak, 2008). Therefore, it is important to note that my usage of the terminology “othering”, is situated in the Western classification of such.

Refugees and asylum seekers are forced into immobility through space because their very existence is a political statement against European ideology. “Carving humanity into races and the world into continents is the third and most recent template that Europe has used to create a spatial form of otherness” (Staszak, 2008, p. 4). This Westernized version of otherness is firmly rooted in geographic contexts. Both the othering of Greeks and the othering of refugees is a geographic bordering process that first happens on maps—with arbitrary lines demarcating differentiation between countries, states, or regions—and now, has



seeped slowly into the subconscious of all of those that consider themselves “European” or “Western”.

Greece joined the EU in 1981, shortly after the fall of the military junta of 1967-1974. They subsequently joined the Euro currency in 2001, but due to fallacious economic numbers



Figure 4 Political Cartoon by Unknown Artist

presented to the EU, Greece sunk into heavy debt and to the bottom of the EU hierarchy by the time the economic crisis hit in 2009. Whether the economic crisis caused othering of Greeks or vice versa, mainstream media presented the negative image of Greeks to the rest of the EU and the world. In such depictions, Greeks are seen as lazy, stubborn, greedy, ungrateful alcoholics who are unworthy of EU funds, and should not have been on the Euro currency to start off with. Through an announcement from Brussels and flash-election called by Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras on the Troika austerity measures, every online outlet, from BBC to Twitter, was overrun with anti-Greek sentiments. A simple Google search for “lazy Greek” brings up thousands of articles and images, with Figure 4 being a primary example of this.

Up until 200 years ago, Greece was still part of the Ottoman Empire, which cartographers now classify as Turkey. Additionally, only about half of what is considered present-day Greece was independent from the Ottoman Empire as late as 1915. This is of note because one of the common arguments “against Turkey’s recent claim to being integrated into the European Union is that this country does not belong to the European continent. Legitimized by the so-called evidence of (physical) Geography, this tautological statement seems not refutable, unless one acknowledges that continents are fictions produced and used by colonial ideology” (Staszak, 2008, pp. 6-7). Moreover, the years Western Europe spent colonizing the rest of the world, Greece remained as a colony (or



part of) the Ottoman Empire, and somehow still remained culturally distinct with the ability to claim independence. Herzfeld (1987) and Bozatzis (2016) emphasize the point that “[the Greek] cultural lineage, as it were, was deemed to be symbolically ‘tainted’; the lands that were to become modern Greece and their populations had a long history as part of the Oriental Ottoman Empire and, before that, of the Byzantine Empire, always somewhat extravagant for Western European tastes” (Bozatzis, 2016, p. 53).

“By looking at Europe as an idea—a construct created and maintained through narrative and discourse—we can study not only what Europe is, but also how its meanings change over time, and the process and practices used to create and maintain it” (Chalániová, 2013, p. 21). Greece is closer in line with Eastern European Orthodoxy in terms of religious similarities, while culturally (music, social interactions, food, etc.), Greece is quite similar to Turkey and other parts of the Middle East. This tension between upholding democracy, a supposed European identity, their Orthodox religious beliefs and other cultural factors, has led to an utter misinterpretation of Greek’s and their ‘belonging’ within Europe. Being an outsider of the EU myself, I cannot claim to know the collective feeling amongst Greeks and their feelings or definitions of “European-ness”, but it is clear that history, colonialism, and the recent Troika bailout of Greece have affected the view of Greek’s, in most international perspectives. The othering of Greeks in the sphere of EU and their portrayal in the media, is essential to call attention to for our point of departure, because as stated previously, integration cannot exist without multiculturalism. Therefore, the question is not if Greece or Turkey fits into Europe, but whether European society and ideals are multicultural in nature, in order to accept integration of “others”?

Similar to other race-connected studies and practices, refugee studies also must be understood and situated historically, as opposed to remaining ahistorical. Thus, the background of Greece within the EU is imperative, so that we may be able to accurately analyze how the historicity affects the root causes of xenophobia, racism, and othering of refugees within Athens, rather than merely dealing with the symptoms of a supposed refugee “crisis” (Wilson, 2002). “Race



was (re)constructed at different historical moments of periods of social upheaval—e.g., Reconstruction, post-Reconstruction, the Great Depression, and so on—that shaped what happened in the 1960s” (Wilson, 2002, p. 281). Much the same, Greek identities and European identities of the ‘other’ have created a world in which Greeks, themselves, are reconstructed as a different race than they were previously assumed to be.

Throughout Europe overall, the immigration policy is as follows: “all persons from third countries that want to enter the EU—immigrants, asylum seekers and visa applicants—have been put in a single category...Combining immigrants, asylum seekers and visa applicants into one group could be seen as a form of non-EU stratification or ‘othering’. Most illustrative here, is that the European Commission has compiled two lists: one list of states whose nationals do not require a visa and another list of countries whose citizens require a visa to enter the EU” (Geisen, Plug, & van Houtum, 2007, p. 82). Remarkably, the 134 states requiring a visa, are Muslim and/or considered ‘poor’. Once the logic of visa and refugee status becomes binary, the obvious and inevitable result is othering, in an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ tactic. The EU and its border control system, Frontex, develop new securitization techniques and rules that are for European’s ‘protection’ but instead, reinforcing Western ideology of othering, causing the inability for multiculturalism and acceptance of the ‘other’. “Binary oppositions constantly simplify complex situations, whether in debates about terrorism, which invokes the other as evil, or about refugees, which reach back to colonial representations of non-Western populations as duplicitous and dangerous to Western values” (Guedes Bailey & Harindranath, 2005, p. 277).

In the case of refugees in Greece, “the asymmetry in power relationships is central to the construction of otherness” (Staszak, 2008, p. 2). Refugees, both in the context of Greece and in Europe, are unable to prescribe their own norms due to being part of the ‘out-group’. Whichever factors that caused them to become a refugee and asylum seeker in the first place, the fact remains that most remain in limbo, in cases of statelessness, loss of belonging to any one nationality, and/or immobility once these people step foot into Europe. “Mobility



works to extend the privileges or reach of some bodies into spaces that are already marked out as having global value”(Ahmed, 2004, p. 37). Since many refugees are contained in camps or even worse, detention centers, the utilization of space serves to duplicate and maintain a relationship of otherness between Europeans, Greeks, and refugees, at differing levels within the hierarchy.

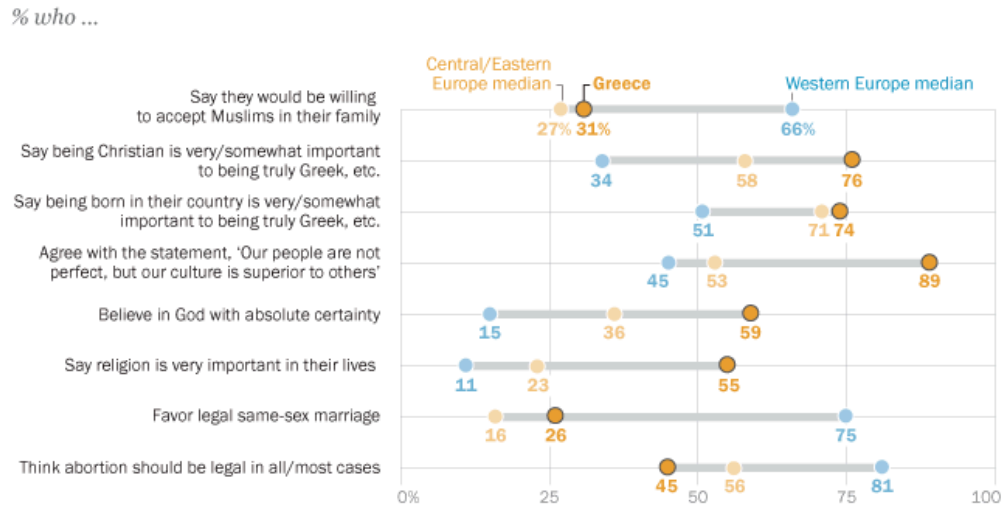


Figure 5 “Pew Research Center’s findings on religious and social issues, with special emphasis on Greece’s alignment with Central/Eastern European ideologies over Western”;

Source: Lipka, M. (2018). Greek attitudes toward religion, minorities align more with Central and Eastern Europe than West. Retrieved May 8, 2019, from Pew Research Center website: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/31/greek-attitudes-toward-religion-minorities-align-more-with-central-and-eastern-europe-than-west/>

“Generally speaking, studies that examined individuals’ attitudes toward ethnic minorities... have consistently observed that prejudice and discriminatory attitudes tend to be more pronounced among individuals with low socio-economic status (e.g. low education, low income, unemployed) and among older persons and those holding conservative ideologies (e.g. religious, right-wing political orientation)” (Semyonov & Glikman, 2009, pp. 695-96). Examining Figure 5 created by Pew Research Center’s, Michael Lipka, we can observe that of the Greek’s surveyed, 69% would not be willing to accept a Muslim into their family, 76% think that being Christian (Greek Orthodox) is important to being truly Greek, and 74% think that to be truly Greek, someone must be born in Greece. All of which is remarkable in reference to the Semyonov & Glikman’s understanding of prejudice and discrimination. This also reinforces the idea that Greek’s may not necessarily fall into the Europeanized ideal of Western.



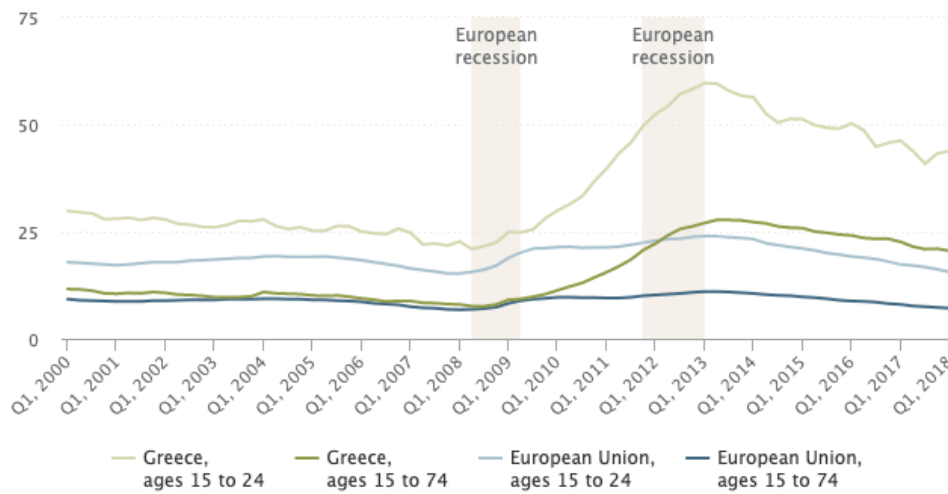


Figure 6 Unemployment rate in EU countries, 2000-2018: Greece; *Source: Pew Research Center. (2018). Unemployment rate in EU countries, 2000-2018: Greece. Retrieved May 4, 2019, from Pew Research Center website: <https://www.pewglobal.org/chart/unemployment-rate-in-eu-countries-2000-2018-greece/>*

To add on, Figure 6 (produced by Pew Research Center), is evidence of an extremely high unemployment rate, especially for the Greek youth population, lending to another possible indicator of prejudice and discrimination of ethnic minorities in Greece. The 2011 Greek census found that 91% of the population, were of Greek citizens, with 5.1% claiming Eastern European origin (particularly, Albanian (4.5%), Bulgarian (0.7%), and Romanian (0.4%)), and the remaining populations a mix of other ethnic minorities (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019). With a highly homogenized population, conservative religious and social trends, and high unemployment, the foundation for prejudice and discrimination against ethnic minorities is possible.

The political repercussions of the economic crisis and later, the refugee “crisis”, created a climate within Greece, and especially Athens, that has resulted in violence, arrests, and homelessness. Leading the political party of anti-immigrant rhetoric and action, Golden Dawn (GD), “refers to itself as a popular nationalist party that supports an ethno-culturally homogenous state and defines nationality in terms of ‘race, blood, and ancestry’” (Lazaridis & Veikou, 2017, p. 4).



Then the problem in Greece, is the replication of the ‘other’ mirroring the European model. With a government pushed close to its breaking point, under economic and societal stress—especially due to the pressure coming from the supranational level—pro-refugee and anti-discrimination initiatives are not led by the government in Greece, and instead have had to rely solely upon civil society organizations. Othering and the processes of it within Europe, produce a modernized version of Western oppression, that is then translated over to Greek society. The EU supranational influence must be studied in every case of integration of refugees in each member state, in order to understand how to reach an integration acculturation strategy and multiculturalist intergroup approach. “While it is usually thought that immigrants’ exclusion in Athens is due to the conditions that forced them to migrate (or, in an openly racist variant, to their unquestionable cultural difference from the native population), the risk of exclusion is primarily produced in the ‘host’ society, through political decisions that regulate the legal aspects of residence, the attribution of rights and the general conditions of acceptance” (Kandyliis, 2015, p. 833).

3.3 Uneven Geographies

Staszak (2008) also describes that “confining Others to community life amongst themselves in a degraded ghetto—where the concentration of poverty and exclusion compounds their effects—creates favorable conditions for the development of visible misery and a specific culture” (Staszak, 2008, p. 5). Through geographic norms and urban planning, the othering of certain groups of people also occurs on a geographic level. To assess validity of the element of “uneven geographies” referenced in our theoretical framework, first, evidence of ethnic residential segregation and vertical segregation in Athens city center must be measured. The uneven geographies in Athens are stoked by geographic stereotypes, attitudes, and prejudices, similar to and influenced by, the ethnic stereotypes, attitudes, and prejudices found in intergroup relations.

Within the context of uneven geographies, there is little evidence of residential segregation for immigrants in Athens. “[This] is mainly due to the



dispersal of Albanians who reside in various parts of the metropolitan area and consequently are not particularly different from Greeks in their spatial distribution” (Kandyliis, Maloutas, & Sayas, 2012). We must take note that, the published and accessible literature and research on ethnic residential segregation in Athens, is from before the refugee “crisis” began (see: Kandyliis, 2015; Kandyliis et al., 2012; Semyonov & Glikman, 2009; Semyonov, Gorodzeisky, & Glikman, 2012). “To a large extent, the spatial distribution of risk of social exclusion is created by exclusionary processes in the housing and labor market. However, it is practically impossible to separate these mechanisms from either explicit or hidden institutional arrangement and political decisions, whether these concern area-based policies (such as regeneration projects, construction regulations, intense policing etc.) or people-based ones (such as legalization, detention, welfare provision)” (Kandyliis, 2015).

While there is no evidence of ethnic residential segregation, we can find significance in the vertical segregation of non-dominant ethnicities in Athens municipality. The social geography of Athens rapidly transformed between 1950 and 1980, where “approximately 35,000 buildings with five or more stories were built, where prior to this period the total number build did not exceed 1,000 buildings” (Maloutas & Spyrellis, 2015). This was accomplished through a **flats-for-land system** that is essentially a barter system agreed upon between the land owner and a builder or contractor, where the builder constructs the apartment (or shop/office), and then afterward, the land ownership is split between the two. However, due to this uncontrolled development, the effect on present-day Athens has resulted in significant disparities in the city center. **Vertical segregation**, in this context is the idea that Greeks and those who are economically well-off, are typically on the upper floors of apartment buildings, leaving the basement, 0, or 1 levels of the apartment buildings for third-country nationals and lower professional categories. “Vertical segregation is largely due to the better conditions in the upper floor apartments (better view, less noise, more light, better ventilation, usable balconies...). In addition, upper floor apartments are usually larger. The difference in living conditions quality among different floors of the

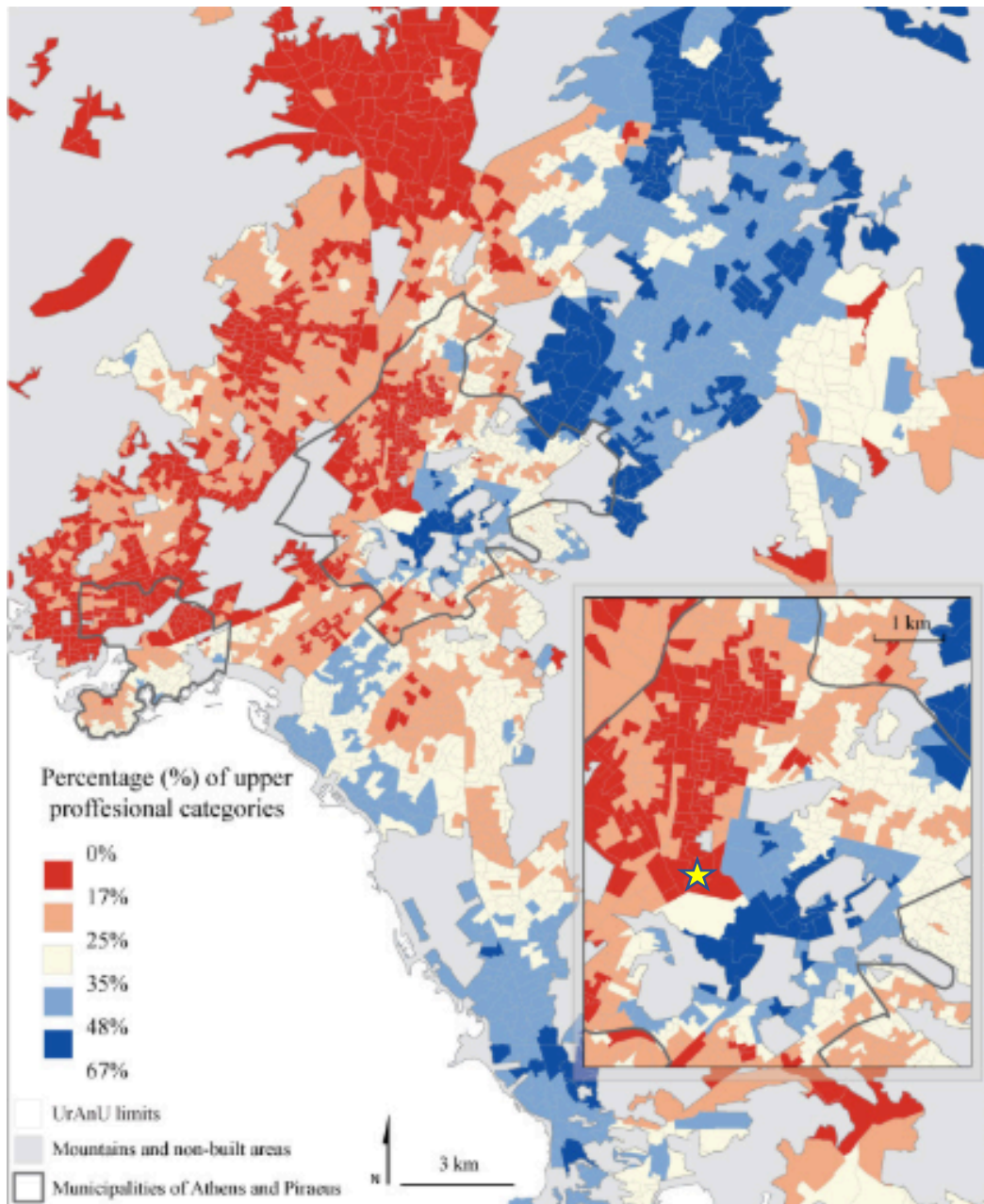


same building weighed more heavily for residents as building density increased” (Maloutas & Spyrellis, 2015).

Maps 1-3 are sourced from *Vertical social segregation in Athenian apartment buildings* (Maloutas & Spyrellis, 2015), and will also be an integral comparison component within the Analysis in Chapter 5. In Map 1, the outlined areas are the municipalities of Athens (northeast) and Piraeus (southwest), that are connected by bus and metro. Originally thought of as separate entities in the 1900s, when referring to Athens today Piraeus is not mentioned separate from it, even though they have different voting measures and municipal offices. This first major discrepancy lies in the urban sprawl that has occurred over the past fifty years, leading to the economically well-off to reside in the suburbs, specifically the Eastern and Northern suburbs of Athens, with the lower classes left near the city center in rapidly depleting living conditions. Piraeus is lumped into the working class economically due to the post-industrial nature of the Piraeus port. For reference, the neighborhood I live in, Politechnio and/or Omonia, is marked with the yellow star in the inset map of the city center. This is necessary to note because, evidenced by the ESTIA program, refugees are unlikely to have a high wage, especially in their first years of settlement in Athens considering the need for cash card assistance.

On their own, the economic disparities of Athens are not enough evidence of discrimination or segregation against refugees and immigrants. However, the rate of vertical segregation that takes place in similar neighborhoods of those listed in Map 1, proves substantial for our case study. In Athens, vertical segregation is only possible in the apartment buildings that were built before 1980 due to their flats-for-land internal design.



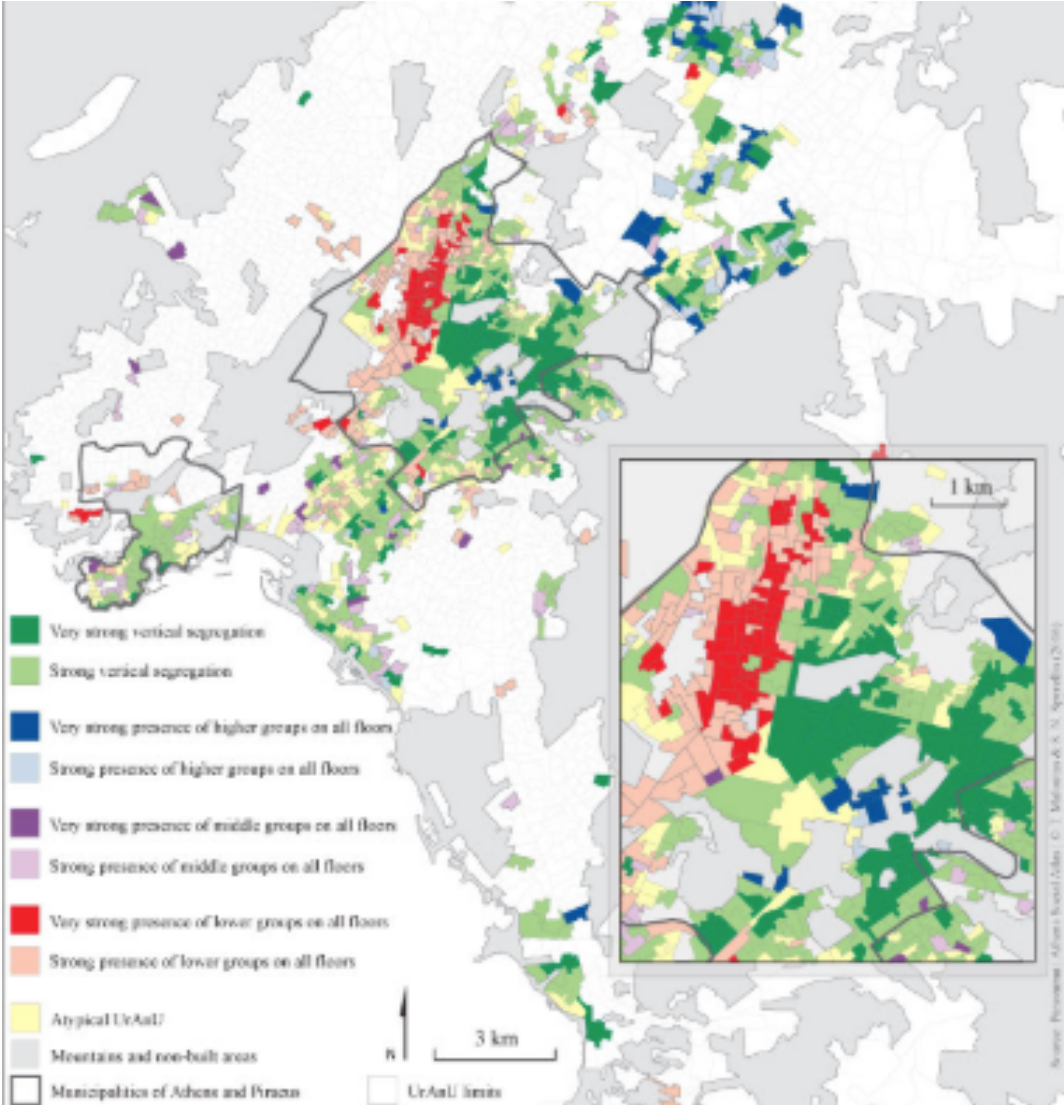


Map 1 Percentage of Upper Professional Categories in Athens, Greece; *Source:* Maloutas, T., & Spyrellis, S. N. (2015). Vertical social segregation in Athenian apartment buildings. *Athens Social Atlas*, online. Retrieved from <https://www.athenssocialatlas.gr/en/article/vertical-segregation/>

Looking at Map 2 and Figure 7, we can see the distinct connection between earned wage, ethnic minorities, and vertical social segregation. In Map 2, the red areas signify a very strong presence of lower groups on all floors, while the surrounding areas, namely the neighborhoods of Exarchia, and Kypseli, have



either very strong or strong vertical segregation—significant to note for our analysis in Chapter 5.



Map 2 Vertical social segregation and socially homogeneous areas in Athens (2011 Census); *Source:* Maloutas, T., & Spyrellis, S. N. (2015). Vertical social segregation in Athenian apartment buildings. Athens Social Atlas, online. Retrieved from <https://www.athenssocialatlas.gr/en/article/vertical-segregation/>



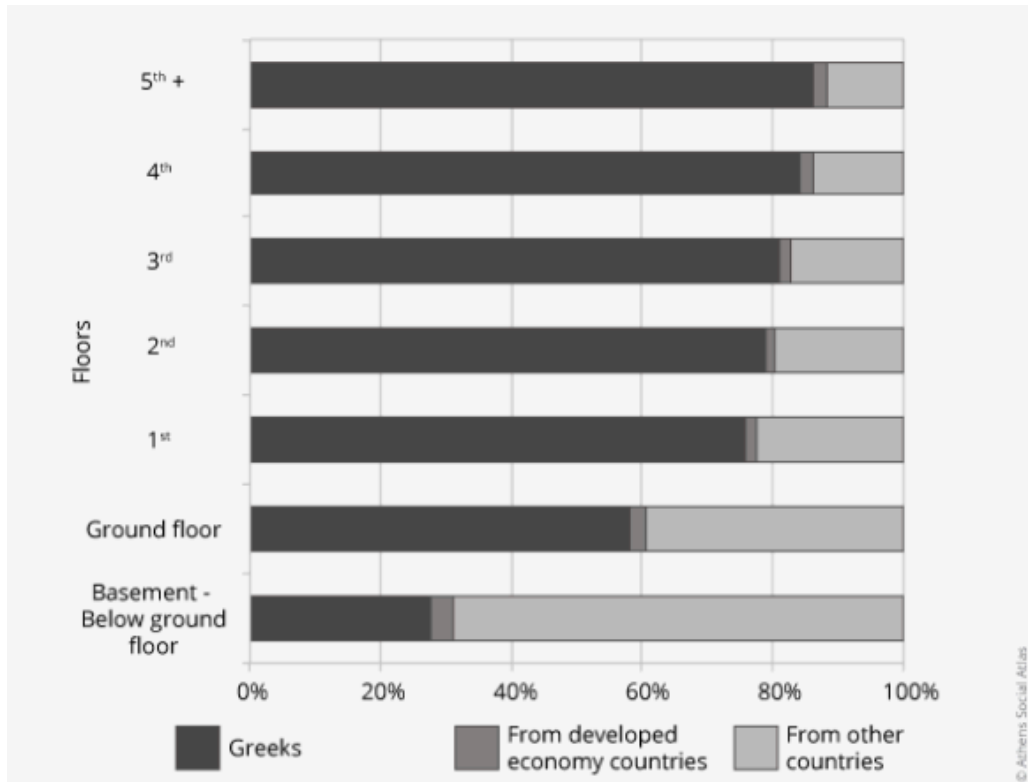
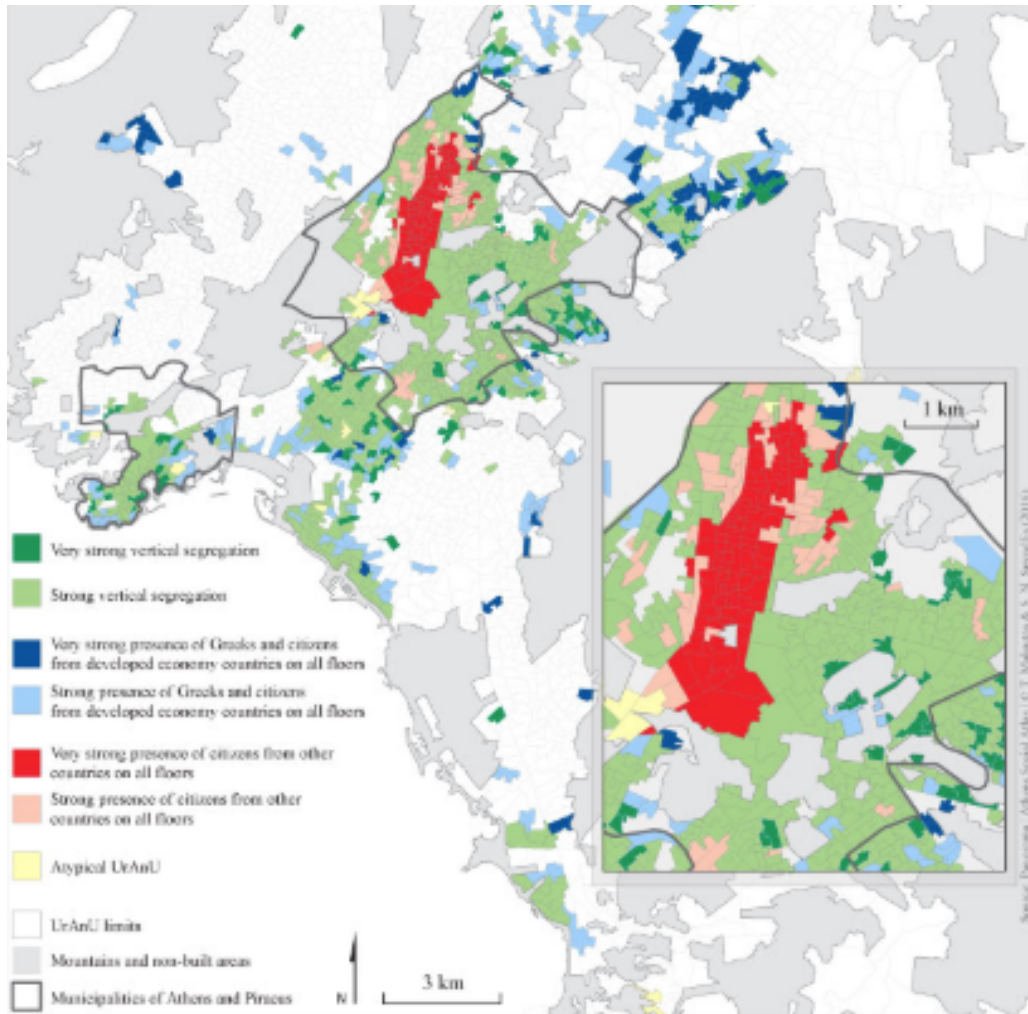


Figure 7 Percentage of individuals according to their nationality by floor in apartment buildings in the Municipality of Athens (2011 Census); Source: Maloutas, T., & Spyrellis, S. N. (2015). Vertical social segregation in Athenian apartment buildings. Athens Social Atlas, online. Retrieved from <https://www.athenssocialatlas.gr/en/article/vertical-segregation/>

Map 3 combines the findings from Figure 7 with Map 2, clearly illustrating “vertical ethnic segregation [in reference] to the over-representation of migrants on lower floors... Notwithstanding the differences between the two maps, their similarities leave no doubt about the strong correlation between social inequality, ethnicity, and floor of habitation, especially in central regions” (Maloutas & Spyrellis, 2015). The red areas in Map 3 display very strong or strong presence of citizens from other countries on all floors, in contrast with the blue areas that display very strong or strong presence of citizens from Greece or other developed countries on all floors. The large block of red in the center of Athens covering, Omonia, Politechnio, Victoria, Patissia, and other neighborhoods proves validity for further research in this case study.





Map 3 Vertical social segregation and ethnically homogeneous areas in Athens (2011) (residents of buildings constructed between 1946 and 1980); *Source*: Maloutas, T., & Spyrellis, S. N. (2015). Vertical social segregation in Athenian apartment buildings. *Athens Social Atlas*, online. Retrieved from <https://www.athenssocialatlas.gr/en/article/vertical-segregation/>

3.4 Reflexivity & Situated Solidarities

Particularly when it comes to research regarding refugees and asylum seekers, it has been paramount for me to continuously reevaluate my research proposal and reflect on the appropriate verbiage to highlight within this multidimensional research topic. Inspired by the likes of Gillian Rose and Kim V.L. England, it is crucial to note that a portion of the methods utilized throughout the field research and analysis can also be attributed to more abstract realities of theories within qualitative research. Continuously acknowledging my privilege, has resulted in near-constant deliberation in an effort of not appropriating the refugee voices that



I intend to uplift. This has required utilization of reflexivity in my words, actions, research, and analysis (England, 1994; McDowell, 2006; Rose, 1997). “Reflexivity is self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher. Indeed, reflexivity is critical to the conduct of fieldwork; it induces self-discovery and can lead to insights and new hypotheses about the research questions” (England, 1994, p. 82).

Tied in with this, are the principles of situated solidarities and positionality, which in the case of this study, go hand-in-hand. Beginning this research was a struggle for me—I know that refugees have something to say, but due to their ‘struggles of becoming’ in a completely new and foreign society, they are systematically silenced—in and by—a powerful institutionalized hierarchy. Entering this field with previous knowledge as an activist and volunteer in the humanitarian aid community in Athens, has helped position my findings and stance, however it has also led me to question my intentions and the possible outcomes in the real world. My research is situated in an extremely polarizing field that has the possibility of affecting how refugees move throughout their everyday life in Athens—both positively and negatively. Grappling with this fact, the eventual acceptance came to light in discovering the concept of situated solidarities within scholar-activism (Maxey, 1999; Routledge, 1996; Routledge & Derickson, 2015). “Situated solidarities are intensely relational and concerned with the struggles made possible by the solidarities and associated research practice, rather than the fetishization of the essentialized social location of the knower in relation to an essentialized subject of research” (Routledge & Derickson, 2015, p. 393). Simply put, reflexivity and positionality are a start but due the nature of activist work, many factors beyond simple self-reflection are at play and are in conjunction with each other. The production of knowledge in refugee studies is fundamentally unbalanced, and this must be acknowledged.

However, “those of us who believe that the intellectual and political value of engaging in fieldwork across borders, outweighs its problematic context (global capitalism, northern imperialism, structural inequalities), are responsible for developing critical analyses of our multidimensional struggle with such



crossings” (Nagar & Geiger, 2007, p. 271). Working through scholar-activist accounts, it has become apparent that no amount of reflexivity can make up for the power imbalance in my relationship with the refugees I interact with. But, so long as I continue to ask the difficult questions, challenge my own intentions and feelings, and engage in meaningful conversations, I can begin to analyze the reasons why this power imbalance even exists in the first place.

3.5 Reflections on the Theoretical Framework

Due to the nature of this study, the theoretical basis and corresponding analysis of such, will decidedly focus upon the external factors. Every portion of the framework in consideration to external observations, will be touched upon within the both the Intergroup Relations and the EU-Greece tracks, since there have been previous studies, research, and supporting literature on these topics. The Ethnocultural acculturation track is slightly more complicated in that, refugee studies in Greece are focused on the logistics of accepting refugees upon first entry (typically on the islands), rather than the implementation of appropriate acculturation strategies due to infrastructural shortcomings within the government and the asylum-seeking process. Particularly, cultural maintenance, contact participation, behavioral shifts, and cultural identity are highly internal, qualitative factors within the framework, and thus must be explored on a deeper level in subsequent studies. This is not to say that the external observations of these factors should be dismissed, but due to the nature of this study, the results analyzed will be unable to offer a complete understanding of the internal factors, heavily relying upon the external to offer suggestions and informed assumptions for further research.

Tied into this theoretical framework are a number of additional components such as: identity politics, sense of belonging, sense of self, ‘refugeeness’, agency of refugees, bordering, securitization, spatiality of refugee camps, and political subjectivities. To become a generalizable body of research, these also must be considered, but is out of the scope of research for this case study.



4. Research Design & Methods

Reflexivity led to a cyclical process, allowing for the utilization of each method to inform and influence the other. In this way, every piece of empirical evidence filtered through the theoretical framework to allow for coding and analysis. The research design, in case study format, involved an inductive approach once data collection was finalized, and ultimately employed four methods: an online survey, semi-structured interviews with refugees, document analysis, and observations in Athens public spaces (Figure 8). The use of the four methods was vital to establish a pattern within Athens, while also utilizing the different components within the theoretical framework. Initial research on the topic had shown the occurrence of racist attacks in Athens (Racist Violence Recording Network, 2018) along with othering of both Greeks and refugees (Geisen et al., 2007), leading to many preliminary problem statements. However, the consistency of othering, in both the case of Greek's within the EU, and refugees, led to the proposed research question.

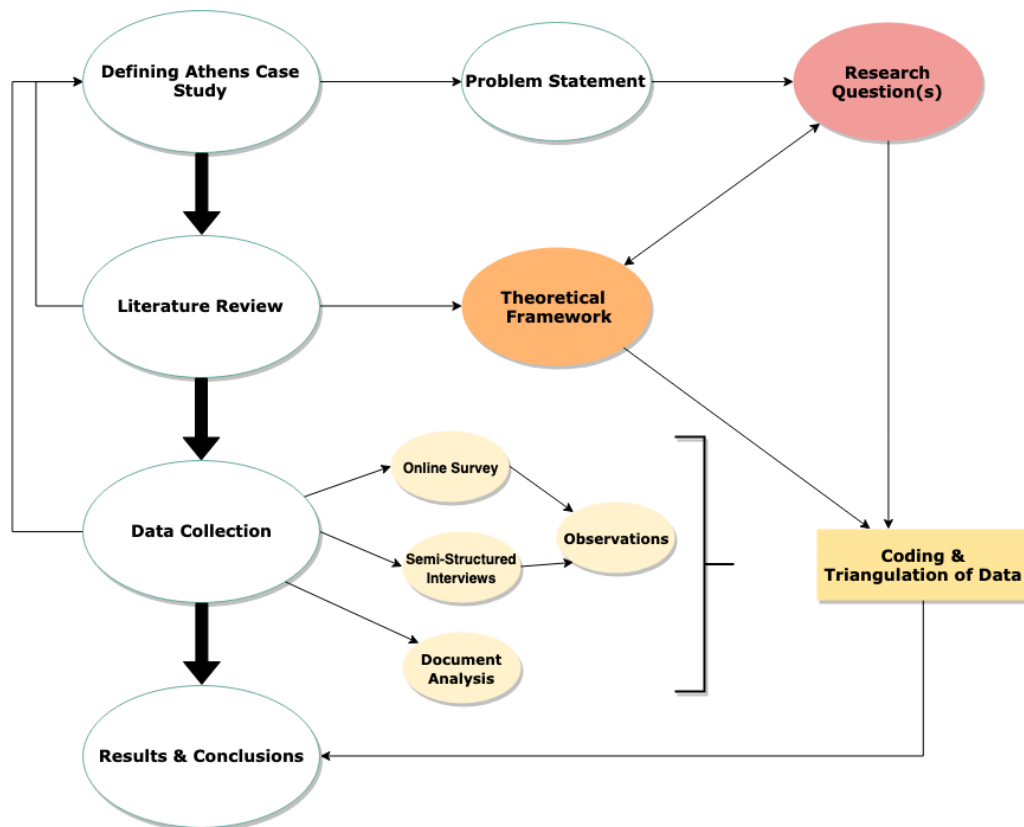


Figure 8 Research Design



Methodologically situated in grounded theory, this viewpoint has allowed for critical qualitative inquiry and reflexivity (Charmaz, 2016; Hense & McFerran, 2016). Grounded theory was chosen because of its ability to be utilized in feminist and critical researches. “Grounded theory is a method of knowledge discovery that can be conducted from a feminist perspective... the key to ensuring that the basic assumptions of both traditions are respected lies in reflexivity... this ongoing reflexivity through all stages of the research process, including the writing of the report, facilitates implementations of the research within the traditions of both approaches” (Wuest, 1995, p. 135). The grounded theory methodology is commonly construed as reductive due to its constructivist epistemology, however by combining feminist thought and the situated solidarities theory component with this methodology, the results reveal the ability of in-depth critical inquiry.

The design of this research reflects the notions of reflexivity by a constant checks and balances process from the start of this research, until the final comments. Suited by the constructivist epistemology in which grounded theory is situated in, the case study approach is able to thoroughly answer research questions concerned with the “how” or “why” (Yin, 2003). “Here two points can be made. First, the case study produces the type of context-dependent knowledge which research on learning shows to be necessary to allow people to develop from rule-based beginners to virtuoso experts. Second, in the study of human affairs, there appears to exist only context-dependent knowledge, which thus presently rules out the possibility of epistemic theoretical construction” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 222). Concerning the case of othering, refugees, and acculturation strategies in Athens, the context is precisely the reason the empirical results and analysis are significant. Flyvbjerg continues on to say that a common critique of case study based research, is the inability to generalize the findings. However, when considering acculturation strategies of ethnocultural groups and those of the larger society, it is dangerous to generalize terms and



policies, even if they attempt to emphasize integration. This point will be elaborated upon in the following chapters.

4.1 Methods for Data Collection

4.1.1 Survey

The utilization of a web-based survey informed the three remaining research methods and allowed for careful reflection upon the original research objectives within the analysis. The questionnaire itself consists of six questions with a seventh optional section allowing for comments, questions, and other opinions from the respondents. The content and phrasing of the questions were deliberately chosen to incite participants to add comments and opinions to the seventh question, as well as questions that contained an ‘other’ option. Following the four distinct question types proposed by De Vaus (2014), all six questions ultimately cover the four categories: (1) attributes, (2) behavior, (3) attitudes, and (4) beliefs, with some questions doubling in their intention and outcome.

The first two questions were simply *attribute* questions, aimed at establishing if the respondent was of Greek nationality, and more specifically, how long they have been living in Athens. Questions three and four were a bit more complex and allowed open-ended answers, which led to a variety of responses indicating both the *behavior* of the participants, as well as their *attitudes* towards specific neighborhoods within Athens city center. The last two questions were concerned with their interactions with refugees, since it was already established if they were Greek and living in Athens. Question five focused on *behavior* through their social interactions, specifically if they had a relationship with refugees or asylum seekers. Question six was the only question concerned with the *beliefs* of Greek nationals, and their personal views on policies supporting refugees and asylum seekers. Question seven and the “other” option for question six, posed some intriguing comments by the respondents that were added into the qualitative coding analysis. The survey resulted in 177 participants and after filtering the respondents to fit the requirements of “Greek nationality” and “living in Athens”, 155 responses were recorded.



4.1.2 Interviews

The two conducted interviews were semi-structured and informal. The type of interview modeled was discursive so that I would be able to reflect upon the power structures through my analysis. The interview stance was responsive in order to establish trust and so that the interviewee would know that I would not take their words for granted or utilize them in a malicious way (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This stance was also taken because “the researcher and the respondents work together to create the narrative in a way that can benefit the group” (Tracy, 2013, p. 142). The interview guide was meticulously produced and edited with insight from an Arabic-speaking colleague, in order to formulate the questions in a way that would make the most sense to a non-native English speaker.

There was also the consideration of interviewing other sources, such as Greek government officials, humanitarian activists, or NGO leaders, but since the intention was to understand the refugee’s point of view, this was rejected after the preliminary research design. Refugees are always overlooked, and people tend to speak for them, telling them what they need, rather than *asking* them what they need. This is another reason why I only relied upon the two quality refugee sources I was able to obtain. Looking back upon the methodology, it may have been more useful to employ the unstructured interview method instead of semi-structured because in both cases, the conversation after the ‘actual’ interview was more informative (less pressure, no recording, establishment of trust, etc.). Both Interviewee A and B, are male refugees, originally from Syria. Interviewee B requested for an unrecorded interview, resulting in extensive notes and a lengthy field journal entry achieved immediately after completion of our session.

4.1.3 Observations and Field Journal

“In grounded theory, observation allows the researcher to see how social processes are constructed and constrained by the physical and social environments in which they are practiced” (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). The observations were informed by the results from questions three and four of the



online survey. The initial observations were done during the week of 10-17 of March, with follow-up observations completed between 21 April—11 May.

The raw records of this research method are equivalent to the initial observations on the ground that include “a range of pertinent data such as activities, stories, conversations, maps, photos, brochures, or electronic and mediated messages” (Tracy, 2013, p. 65). When referring to field notes, this is interchangeably referenced as ‘field journal’. This aspect of research allowed for reflections upon the limitations, research questions, and theoretical framework on a near constant basis. The format of the field notes was partially inspired by Tracy (2013) but end up taking on its own form, being informed by the results previously gathered.

It was imperative for me to pick up on the tacit knowledge through the observations, in order to reveal the structure of power relations in Athens. My ability to do so, can be attributed to the fact that I have been a student for the first eight months of my experience in Athens, allowing for the subtleties in body language to be extrapolated upon. Although inherently filled with contradictions of too detailed versus making assumptions, this is how I knew the observations would lend to the analysis and discussions. As Tracy (2013) states, “ambiguity and confusion are clues that you are doing something right” (p. 123).

4.1.4 Document Analysis

The method of document analysis was chosen in order to situate the research within the current context of policies and the implementation of those in Greece, and specifically in Athens. It began with a literature review and after refining the scope and research question, the document’s selected include, official reports, online newspaper articles, policy papers, and public press releases. The usage of online news articles is highly contested for academia purposes; however, I would argue that for this case study, they were an essential component of the research in order to interpret the portrayal of Greeks in the EU, and if they result in the othering of Greeks.



Drawing directly from Bowen (2009) and Charmaz (2006) the purpose of analyzing these documents was to supplement my research data and as a way to verify and corroborate findings and evidence. As stated previously, the inaccessibility to the field, led to the application of document analysis as a source of supporting evidence. Document analysis was chosen due to efficiency, availability, cost-effectiveness, lack of obtrusiveness, and exactness (Bowen, 2009).

4.2 Methods for Analysis

In analyzing the interviews conducted, I utilized Loubere (2017) in order to provide more informed analysis, both regarding the interviews, as well as in the observations. “Ultimately, the attempt to pin down the interview through its transformation into text leads to an epistemology that sees truth and the resultant knowledge as emanating from words that have been textualized—a process that necessarily strips away some of the context. This proves problematic for open-ended and flexible research that seeks to interrogate the continuously unfolding dynamics between researchers and research participant, and sees the research project as a co-production, which is replete with different meanings and understandings that need to be interpreted critically, reflexively, and iteratively” (Loubere, 2017, p. 8). Systematic interview reports (SIRs) as well as preliminary analysis reports (PARs) were included in the process of analysis as laid out by Loubere. SIRs and PARs were included in my field journal entries and later utilized in the coding process.

The process of analyzing the documents, skimming, reading, and subsequent interpretation, laid out by Bowen (2009) was followed, along with codification of values extracted from relevant documents utilizing the grounded theory methodology, to lend to the analysis. The first step in the process, skimming, resulted in the examination of 53 documents, followed by the second step of reading, that narrowed the scope of the document analysis to 41 sources. Combined with transcribed dialogue from the structured interviews, as well as 18



field journal entries, the last step of interpretation was completed by coding key aspects of the text.

The codification of the qualitative empirical data, adhered to the grounded theory methodology where, “a constant comparison of coding and analyzing data [was done] through three stages: open coding (examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data); axial coding (reassembling data into groups based on relationships and patterns within and among the categories identified in the data); and selective coding (identifying and describing the central phenomenon, or “core category,” in the data)” (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). Open coding resulted in a plethora of distinctions that were all completed before solidifying the theoretical framework. Axial coding began to reveal specific truths within the data, with 45 categories. Finally, the selective coding was completed in corroboration with the theoretical framework, resulting in 14 theory-based codes. The selective codes included (1) acceptance, (2) accessibility, (3) acculturation, (4) contact participation, (5) security, (6) cultural identity, (7) cultural maintenance, (8) discrimination, (9) diversity, (10) ethnic prejudices, stereotypes and attitudes, (11) miscomprehension, (12) othering, (13) systemic, and (14) uneven geography.

4.3 Reflections on Methods

First and foremost, access to refugees in this fraught time, did not allow for the desired number of interviews with refugees and asylum seekers to take place. The most obvious limitation was language barriers. I do not speak Arabic or Farsi and my knowledge of Greek in academic terms, is inadequate. While the intention was to garner five or more interviews, two interviews were nonetheless enough to record significant empirical data. However, the interviews and multiple unstructured interviews recorded in the field journal have left out one of the most marginalized groups: refugee women. This is crucial to point out in order for future studies on the subject to be more inclusive and eliminate the possibility of research and sample size bias.



Concerning the survey method, while the results were randomized as much as possible, we can assume that it is not inclusive of the entirety of the Greek population based on accessibility to the internet. Both the observations recorded in the field journal and the document analysis were subject to my personal selection leading to possible bias. However, this was sought to be overcome by utilizing the tactics of reflexivity and situated solidarities, mentioned in the previous chapter. Considering the document analysis method, the limitations include, accessibility to Greek language documents, resulting in low retrievability and possibility of biased selection.

Reflecting upon the case study design, two common misconceptions are (1) the subjectivity and bias toward verification of researcher's beliefs, and (2) the difficulty in summarizing the results in order to create generalized theory. However, Flyvbjerg again counters in stating, "The case study contains no greater bias toward verification of the researcher's preconceived notions than other methods of inquiry. On the contrary, experience indicates that the case study contains a greater bias toward falsification of preconceived notions than toward verification" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 239). In regard to the second misconception, summary of case studies is, indeed, often difficult but, "often it is not desirable to summarize and generalize case studies. Good studies should be read as narratives in their entirety" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 243). This statement will be approached again in the final Conclusions chapter.

5. Analysis & Discussion

Results from the coded analysis, confirmed the validity of the interdisciplinary theory approach, with 11 of the 14 selective codes directly related to the Theoretical Framework (Figure 3). Therefore, the following chapter expounds upon the findings and analysis in collaboration with the theoretical framework, leading to an integrated discussion throughout. The four primary sections of this chapter utilize the selective coding by grouping together relevant categories. The first section, *Othering*, is the most complex, bringing together the selective codes



of othering, miscomprehension, ethnic prejudices, diversity, levels of acceptance vs. discrimination, cultural identity, cultural maintenance, and contact participation. The second section recognizes the commonly cited issue of the Greek system, with support from the accessibility and systemic selective codes. Subsequently, the uneven geography section contextualizes the selective codes of security and of course, uneven geography. And finally, the last section, *Discussion on an Athenian Acculturation Strategy*, is the final reflective discussion determining the actualized acculturation strategy in Athens.

5.1 Othering

In this case study, established in the historical background and theoretical framework chapters, there is the need for verification of two possible levels of othering: the first, by EU member states and their perception of Greece and the second, by Greeks in relation to refugees. The first component focuses on the othering of Greeks, followed by the connection of Greek cultural identity and cultural maintenance with that of the refugees. Following this, the othering of refugees came in four main parts, the selective codes of miscomprehension, ethnic prejudices, diversity & multi-culturalism, and levels of acceptance vs. discrimination.

5.1.1 Othering of Greeks

To begin with, both semi-structured interviews and one unstructured interview, implicitly indicated the othering of Greeks.

I think there are so many type[s] of ‘European’, and Greece doesn’t really fit that. So, we kind of understand each other so there are similarities between Arabic and Greece [cultures] so that’s a good point but I don’t understand the Greek language, so I don’t understand the talk about the culture.

—Interviewee A

Greeks became “white” recently. We never historically were white.

—Interviewee E, from Field Journal, 3 April 2019



Interviewee B requested that his interview not be recorded, however extensive notes were taken during our session and the field journal notes state:

He thinks that the average Greek is prejudiced against someone who is non-Greek—even those from other European countries or the US. Maybe not in the same ways, but he thinks that most believe that Greece and Greek culture is superior to everything and everyone else. I remember distinctly, he said, “Athens is sometimes Europe and sometimes Arab. [It's] like can't decide what [they] want.”

—Interviewee B, from Field Journal, 4 May 2019

These comments made by two refugees (Interviewee A & B) and one Greek (Interviewee E) show that Greek's are commonly associated with being European. In these three perceptions, the interviewees sentiments reflect the notion that Greeks do not fit into the definition of “European” in practice.

While academic and institutional documents (EU and Greek) in the document analysis, did not reveal any noteworthy confirmation of the othering of Greeks, online news sites identified the opposite. It was noted that, “in visual representation and political cartoons in the UK, France, Austria and Slovakia, Greeks were often depicted negatively as poor, lazy and in danger, or dehumanized as animals while European leaders were depicted as orderly, powerful, and in control” (Dixon et al., 2019, p. 57). The news sources accessed, were typically of German origin and mainly referred to political and economic problems within Greece. In one of the more extreme cases, a lead editor for the German newspaper *Die Welt*, Berthold Seewald, expressed extreme distaste for Greeks in a show of anti-Greek racism, going on to say that Greeks are not really Europeans (Stern, 2015).

Tracing back to Chapter 3, this study's understanding of othering is epistemologically centered in Western European terms, interpreting the “other” as an outsider who is primitive and/or barbaric. The othering of Greeks, exhibited in the views of Interviewee's A, B, E, and Seewald, lies in the association of the entire nation as un-European. In this context, the un-European claim pushes



Greek society to the margins and results in Greeks becoming the “other” of the EU.

5.1.2 Cultural Identity and Cultural Maintenance

The othering of Greece, has inadvertently spurred Greeks’ to reevaluate their social and cultural norms, resulting in the view that Greek society is (or should be) homogenous, indeed further ideating the need for Greek cultural maintenance and a unified cultural identity. There is recognition that young Greeks emigrate from Greece to other parts of the EU, in order to obtain better education or job opportunities, commonly referred to as the Brain Drain. The Brain Drain, along with a low fertility rate (1.4 in 2017, according to the World Bank), leaves the population who are remaining Greece, to strive for a common understanding of Greek culture with the perception that Greek culture is being left behind. In the quest for a Greek cultural identity that ought to be maintained, Greeks have had to evaluate the effect that refugees and migrants have on their social and cultural norms. All of which has been reinforced by the othering of Greeks within the EU.

Evaluating the empirical results, there is a strong connection between cultural identity and cultural maintenance. Both concepts revealed themselves through the refugee and Greek groups and are connected to each other.

Concerning refugee cultural identity and maintenance, in the semi-structured interviews, both interviewees expressed the sentiment that they do not understand Greeks society’s expectation of them. Interviewee A stated that “[Life has been] better now that I’ve been accepted [as a refugee]. Also, I have a job. I should say I’m fine, but I don’t understand the connection to the community. Both the Greek and refugee”. Later Interviewee A also stated that he knows his position in Greek society is better than those who are extremely religious, and especially for refugee women who wear a hijab or khimar. This is the first indication of an assimilationist expectation by Greeks, of refugees.

Cultural identity for Greeks resulted in three main components: (1) distrust in governmental institutions (both Greek and EU), (2) importance of



religion, and (3) pride in their history and identity. One of the supporting documents revealed, that “only 9% of Greeks say that they are not proud of their Greek identity” (Dixon, Hawkins, Juan-Torres, & Kimaram, 2019, p. 57). The same supplemental reported that Greek Orthodoxy is important for an overall Greek identity and 57% of Greeks agree with that statement that Islam and Greek society are incompatible (Dixon et al., 2019). Greeks do not believe that refugees will be able to integrate on account of their religion, leading to an expectation of refugees and asylum seekers to not pursue their own cultural maintenance. This exacerbates the point that refugees are expected to conform to the norms of Greek society, especially in religious terms, disallowing cultural maintenance of refugees, and therefore devaluing the cultural identity of those that are different from Greeks.

5.1.3 Othering of Refugees

The first noticeable components in analysis, were the many misconceptions related to refugees, and an overall miscomprehension of what it means to be a refugee. For example, one survey respondent stated, “It’s complicated. Of course, I support refugees, but there are also a lot of illegal refugees and the EU has to do something.” Another respondent said, “My political point [of view] depends on the reason one becomes a refugee or asylum seeker.” There is a clear miscomprehension of the definition of a refugee in Greek society, with many statements claiming illegality of refugees. Contrary to this belief, and in reference to the UN’s definition of ‘refugee’ or ‘asylum seekers’, it is impossible for a refugee to be in the country illegally.

In the secondary analysis a report, *Attitudes Toward National Identity, Immigration, and Refugees in Greece*, stated that, “both migrants and refugees are frequently seen through the common lens of ‘the other’, rather than as two distinct categories... [One respondent stated], ‘We feel more compassion for refugees. But I cannot tell the difference in the street. If I want to offer help, I don’t know if the person I see is a refugee or migrant,’” (Dixon et al., 2019, p. 64). This statement is problematic in that, it creates a hierarchy of othering that



decides which migrants are acceptable to be part of Greek society based on their individual circumstance. The same study also found that “just over half of all Greeks question whether those arriving in their country, are genuine refugees” (Dixon et al., 2019, p. 64). Related to their economic woes, Greeks tend to question the distinction between refugee and immigrant, leaving an economic immigrant at the bottom of the othering hierarchy.

The discussion of immigrant vs. refugee in Greece, is linked to the economy and the belief that immigrants are taking their jobs. This is problematic because looking at the distinction between immigrant and refugee, the tendency toward discrimination is clear. In another survey response it was stated, “Of course many of them are fleeing war and they need our help and I’m very much in favor of helping them. But then again, many more have taken advantage of the situation in Syria and are flocking from countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan illegally. There should be limits. You’re walking in downtown Athens nowadays and it doesn’t feel like you’re in Europe anymore”. Since most people, worldwide, are aware of the war and situation in Syria, there is a sentiment of acceptance toward Syrians. However, this acceptance is conditional. The belief that migrants coming from Afghanistan or Pakistan are illegal, bypasses the possibility that they might also be a refugee or asylum seeker. Associated with American political and media rhetoric, disbelief on Afghan refugees may be due to lack of media coverage on the war in Afghanistan, even though the war has been continuous since 2001. In Pakistan, there is no recognition of an official war, however many Pakistani’s are registered as Internally Displaced People (IDP’s), as a result of uprisings and wars occurring in the North-west, on the border with Afghanistan (Spaak & ur Rehman, 2018). In half of all of the survey comments, there was a mention of creating limits in regard to refugees and asylum seeking. Evidence shows that at least a portion of the Greek population have only conditional acceptance of refugees, which in reality, is not actually acceptance at all.

The conditional acceptance is also tied in with the second component of othering: ethnic prejudices, attitudes, and stereotypes. Ethnic prejudices became



a major component of the analysis and coding of the empirical data with 49 entries coding ethnic prejudices, attitudes, and stereotypes as their primary theme. In Greece, “the common denominator across ideological categories seems to be the association of Islam with extremism violence, and non-assimilation/non-integration” (Chatzipanagiotou & Zarikos, 2017). This is significant because out of the top ten asylum application origin countries in Greece, nine of them are predominantly Muslim countries (Hellenic Republic Asylum Service, 2019).

When considering the promotion of a multicultural or diverse Athenian society, urban policy does not typically use the term diversity—only in reference to EU funded research, “and, in fact, reproduces discourses promoted by EU institutions in a rather ritualistic way” (Alexandri, Balampanidis, Souliotis, Maloutas, & Kandylis, 2017). It is apparent that Greek policy on refugees and asylum seekers, is not amended to fit the Greek or Athenian situation, and instead, tends to replicate the supranational policies. The economic crisis in Greece has irreparably harmed the concept of diversity because as one survey respondent put it: “First of all, you have to ensure the bliss of the natives. After that, you can deal with the refugees.” The sentiment is that the EU is using funds that should be for the Greek population, on refugees instead. Again, this is related back to the first component of Greek identity: mistrust in institutional power.

Levels of acceptance versus levels of discrimination are the last component of othering, and perhaps the most nuanced. There is an obvious disconnect in Greeks feelings about Islam as a religion with the actual levels of acceptance toward the refugee population. When asking Interviewee B about how he thinks Greeks view him in everyday life he replied, “Well, bad. I don’t put myself in a position to allow someone to hurt me. But also, sometimes I feel like if I do try with them, I don’t feel like they will accept it.” In an unstructured interview, a Greek respondent said, “Support for refugees happens in the NGOs. The government is useless. They like to pretend they have handle on the situation, but they don’t. If the government doesn’t accept them, [how can we] expect the rest of Greeks to do the same?” Strengthened by the RVRN 2018 Annual Report,



13 of 17 origin countries of victims of racist incidents are predominantly Muslim—significantly, almost half of the attacks were carried out on people from Afghanistan (Racist Violence Recording Network, 2018).

Racist police violence is far too common as well. “Victims [reported] that they sustained physical violence in public space or inside police departments in Athens” in 19 of the 22 incidents (Racist Violence Recording Network, 2018). In the Annual Report by RVRN they also explained that the incidents that were actually reported to the police, were done so by legal immigrants and refugees. Many unreported attacks happen against asylum seekers as well, but due to possible detainment, risk of their asylum status, illegality, and distrust in the Greek government or police, they are less likely to report if an incident did occur. It is likely that both the recorded and unrecorded racist police violence is one of the causes of refugee distrust in the Greek government.

The scale of acceptance—discrimination is a paradox of sorts. Greeks actually find refugees to be quite similar to themselves (Dixon et al., 2019) but fear instilled in them by Western media, leaves them questioning the peacefulness of Islam, how Muslims can integrate into Greek society, and the possible criminality and/or terrorism Muslim outsiders can bring into their country. These feelings result in the Greek public misunderstanding of what being a refugee actually entails a creating a hierarchy of immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and ‘genuine’ refugees. The survey results show evidence of this in the following answers:

It’s very divisive, because even if you are supportive, it doesn’t mean everything is all honey and cookies. A lot of refugees have, after a while, partaken in illegal action because Greeks don’t take them seriously. So, the only way to go is there, at the underground scene of Athens. you can say that ironically, even if we push for diversity, racism makes people go with their own color because supposedly same color means friend.

—*Survey Respondent #13*

The fundamental query lies on the bidirectional relationship between the integration potentials of various refugees in local societies and the



“willingness to accept” of the locals, thus the proper preparation of both sides.

— *Survey Respondent #59*

I support the such policies but under the condition that asylum centers and hotspots must be in better conditions and accept only refugees seeking asylum, like Syrians.

— *Survey Respondent #50*

I support policies in favor of refugees and asylum seekers, as long as those policies do not have a negative impact in the socio-economic well-being of the native people.

— *Survey Respondent #100*

From these responses as well as support from the document analysis, the question of whether or not Greeks accept refugees lies in the verification of someone being a genuine “refugee”. With Greeks suspicious of EU and Greek governance, refugees who have been approved by these institutions, still leaves Greeks with little proof to determine legitimacy of refugee status. Thus, Greek perception of the reliability and trust in supranational institutions is harmed by the EU member states othering of Greeks and in turn, affects the perception of refugees as the other as well.

5.1.4 Contact Participation

Result from the survey also revealed the levels of contact participation of refugees within the surveyed Greeks in Athens. As we can see in Figure 9, out of the 155, only 27 respondents said that they know a refugee personally, considering them a friend. Related to the idea of mutual accommodation explained in the theoretical framework, acceptance and integration of refugees into Greek society can only occur if *both* groups make the effort to remain in contact with each other.



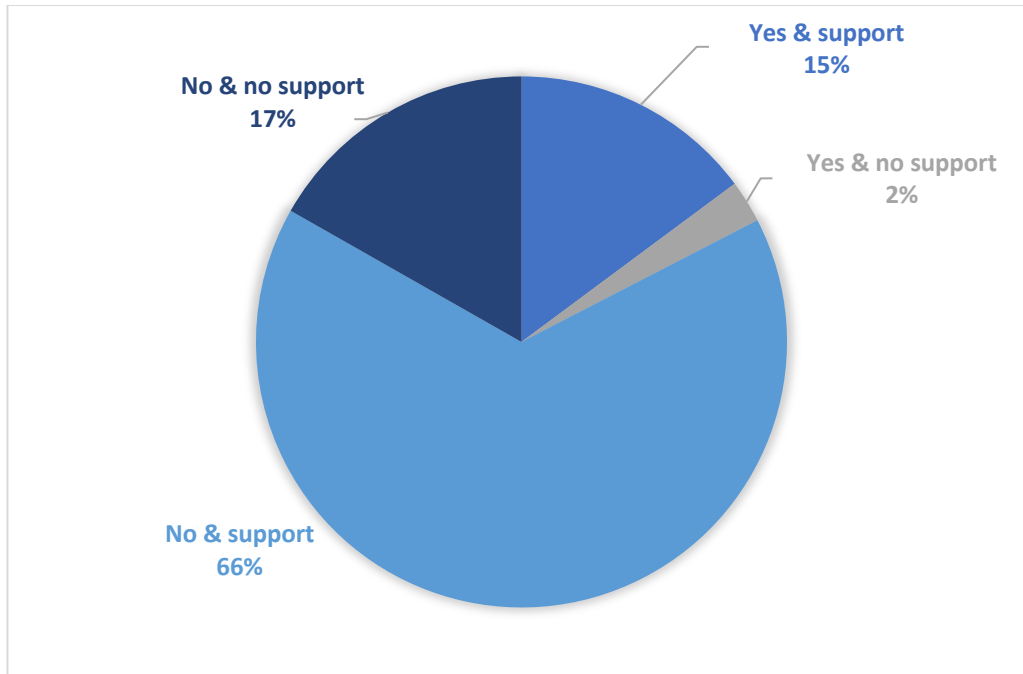


Figure 9 Results from Survey Questions: Do you know a refugee or asylum seeker personally (as in, you would consider them a friend)? and Do you support policies that are in favor of refugees and asylum seekers?

In addition to these results, both interviewees commented on the lack of contact they have had with the average Greek in Athens. Of the cited barriers to entry, language inaccessibility is the main issue, along with feelings of resentment and lack of trust coming from the Greek population. Interviewee A stated that Greeks only trust refugees or people who look like outsiders when they have a good job or are able to associate them with work saying, “They see you with your work badge, where they see that someone else trusted you to give you this job, so they can trust you as well.” Interviewee B explained similar situations stating that “The Greek friends I have, I met through my volunteering and work... Outside of them, I don’t know any [Greeks].” An occurrence noted in the field journal also states:

One of the Greek women I talked to, answered this question [about contact participation] in our conversation tonight. Her answer was that basically, Greeks don’t interact with refugees. They see no need for it and stated that the average Greek has an ‘ignorance is bliss’ policy when it comes to anything regarding refugees. Anyone not within the general



population concerning the political center about refugees [i.e. Greeks working or volunteering with humanitarian aid organizations, or on the opposite side, far-right or Golden Dawn supporters], just don't really care about them unless they directly impact their lives.

—*Field Journal Entry, 4 April 2019*

Additionally, both interviewee's lack Greek language skills minimizing their ability to maintain and communicate with Greek friends. There are quite a few programs in place to ensure that refugee children are equipped with Greek language skills, even before they enter into the Greek school system. Yet, the same cannot be said for adult refugees. "A number of Greek language classes are provided by universities, civil society organizations and centers for vocational training. However, as noted by UNHCR, "the lack of Greek language classes, which most perceive to be required for integration, was a commonly referenced issue'. A pilot program of Greek language courses funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) announced in January 2018 had not been implemented by the end of the year" (Asylum Information Database (AIDA), 2018, p. 188).

5.2 Systemic

Much of the root of the problem concerning othering, integration, and refugees in Greece, is manifested in the system it is founded upon. Throughout the research and analysis, it became clear that the refugee policies implemented in Greece, were close to exact replicas of those that come from the supranational level. In part due to the austerity measures imposed upon them, Greek government officials were left with no choice but to follow EU policies, or otherwise risk their own economic status and the economic capital for refugees coming from EU-funded projects.

One of the major problems in Greece, faced by Greeks and refugees alike, is the inaccessibility to the job market. Although refugees are at a disadvantage, mostly due to lack of Greek language acquisition but also, "[refugees] attributed this to a lack of information, high unemployment rates, lack of required



documentation (e.g. residency permits, passport)... and lack of job advice and placement support” (Asylum Information Database (AIDA), 2018, p. 135). The process of othering refugees in Greece is then also attributed to economic woes, and not simply placed on ethnic stereotypes. The mistrust in the Greek government by both Greeks and refugees can be partially attributed to the unreliability of the system.

Economic constraints do not only lie in the job market but also within EU regulated budgetary constraints. In Greece, the only source of public funding for refugee support, comes from the EU. “According to IMF estimates, both Italy (in 2016) and Greece (in 2015) showed a sharp increase in short-term costs as a percentage of GDP to a level well above the EU average” (Samek Lodovici et al., 2017, p. 14). With short-term costs above average and no estimate on the long-term costs or benefits of integrating refugees into Greek society, Greek citizens are faced with a dichotomous view on refugees: on one hand, wanting to help refugees from a moral perspective, but on the other hand, having the inability to do so because of the current state of the Greek economy.

The inaccessibility of the housing system for refugees is also apparent considering the ESTIA evictions and Athenian squat populations. UNHCR and EU reports claim that in Athens, “some of the numerous empty housing units in downtown Athens belong to the municipality, private and faith-based organizations. The municipality is seeking investments for mapping this stock and refurbishing them” (OECD, 2018b, p. 170). However, by the end of the year (2018), there had not been any progress for development or refurbishment, leaving those within the ESTIA scheme without housing or cash assistance. Additionally, there are only four shelters for homeless people in Athens that houses both Greek citizens and refugees alike. “At these shelters, beneficiaries of international protection can apply for accommodation, but it is extremely difficult to be admitted given that these shelters are always overcrowded and constantly receiving new applications for housing” (Asylum Information Database (AIDA), 2018, p. 185). Even with safeguards in place for recognized refugees, the Greek system still fails them, leaving the large number that are homeless, to fend for



themselves and attempt to settle in squats. This disproportionately creates micro-segregation within specific neighborhoods, which will be addressed in the next section (5.3).

Revealed in the Historical Background chapter, the recent evictions of four squats in Exarchia, led to a week-long protest in Syntagma Square. Most protestors were families with children and were eventually convinced into relocating to Eleonas refugee camp, located in the western part of Athens. At the offset, Eleonas was intended as a ‘temporary accommodation site’ (Dimitriadi, 2015). But since it opened on 16 August 2015, one could argue that the ‘temporary’ aspect of the camp, has since been outlived. The rhetoric surrounding refugees in Greece by politicians and the EU, and the lived reality of those refugees in daily practices, do not match up. Short-term solutions are just that— solutions meant to last for a short amount of time. Eleonas camp, squats in the city center, and the ESTIA program were all intentioned as a short-term solution. The Greek political and economic system is not equipped, as it stands today, to provide dignified and humane conditions for the refugee population in the long-term.

There is evidence within the healthcare structure of systemic shortcomings, as well. “In spite [of] the favorable legal framework, actual access to health care services is hindered in practice by significant shortages of resources and capacity for both foreigners and the local population, as a result of the austerity policies followed in Greece, as well as the lack of adequate cultural mediators” (Asylum Information Database (AIDA), 2018, p. 190). While refugees have the ability to access the public healthcare system in Greece based on their status, many of them opt to put their trust in civil society organizations instead. On Wednesday’s and Sunday’s in Athens city center, a coalition of non-profit organizations come together for an event called STEPS. At STEPS, while it is targets at refugees and asylum seekers, anyone can participate. The NGO’s provide a mobile laundry washing service, a hot meal, free doctor’s check-up’s (provided by NGO DocMobile), amongst other necessities for dignity and care of those that may be homeless or without food.



To reconcile the gaps within the refugee services, the municipality of Athens has taken a number of steps toward improvement of the system. A City of Athens approved project, in collaboration with private donor, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, the Athens Coordination Center for Migrant and Refugee issues (ACCMR) was established in the summer of 2017. In January 2019, it was announced that The City of Athens has ratified two proposals presented by ACCMR: (1) Strategic Action Plan for the integration of migrants and refugees and (2) the Preparedness and Response Mechanism for the management of potential refugee crises. The promise of these two proposals *seem* encouraging, however if the strategies are not fulfilled in everyday practice of Athenian's, the two proposals will suffer the same fate as the many proposals that have come before them.

5.3 Uneven Geographies of Athens

In order to assess the unevenness in the urban geography of Athens, analysis from the online survey, observations, and selected documents were included in the coding. As noted previously, ethnic residential segregation is not apparent in Athens, but there is significant evidence for vertical segregation throughout the city center due to the flats-for-land scheme. Map 3 uncovered that in the neighborhoods of Omonia, Victoria, Politechnio, Patissia, and segments of other neighborhoods, leading to the survey question focused on Greek perceptions of safety within Athens city center. The analysis focused on the geographical stereotypes of each neighborhood based on 'safe' and 'unsafe', thus bringing in elements of security as well. In Figures 10 and 11, we can see the results of the survey responses.



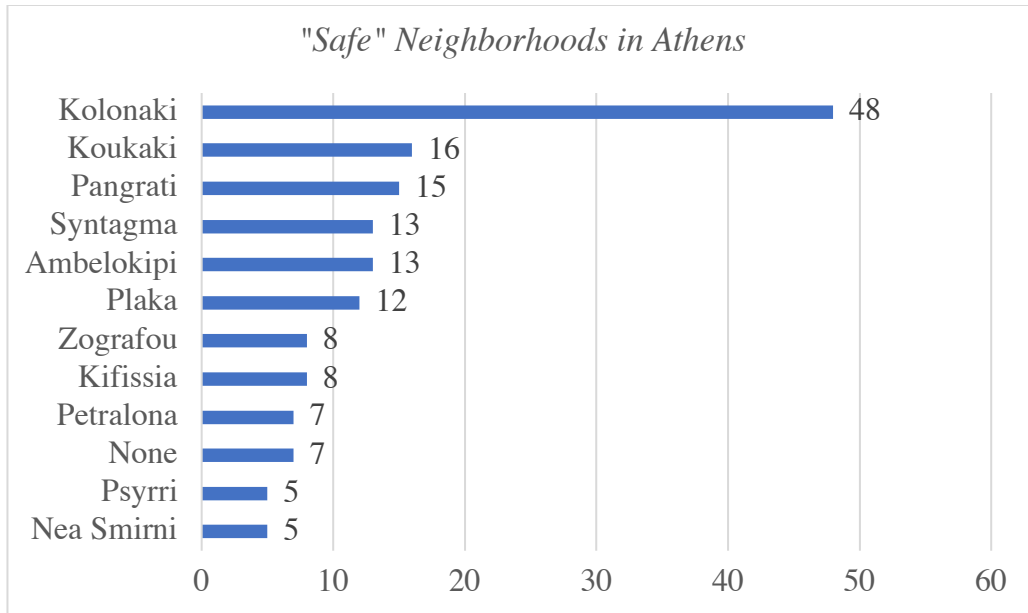


Figure 10 Survey Results for "Safe" Neighborhoods in Athens

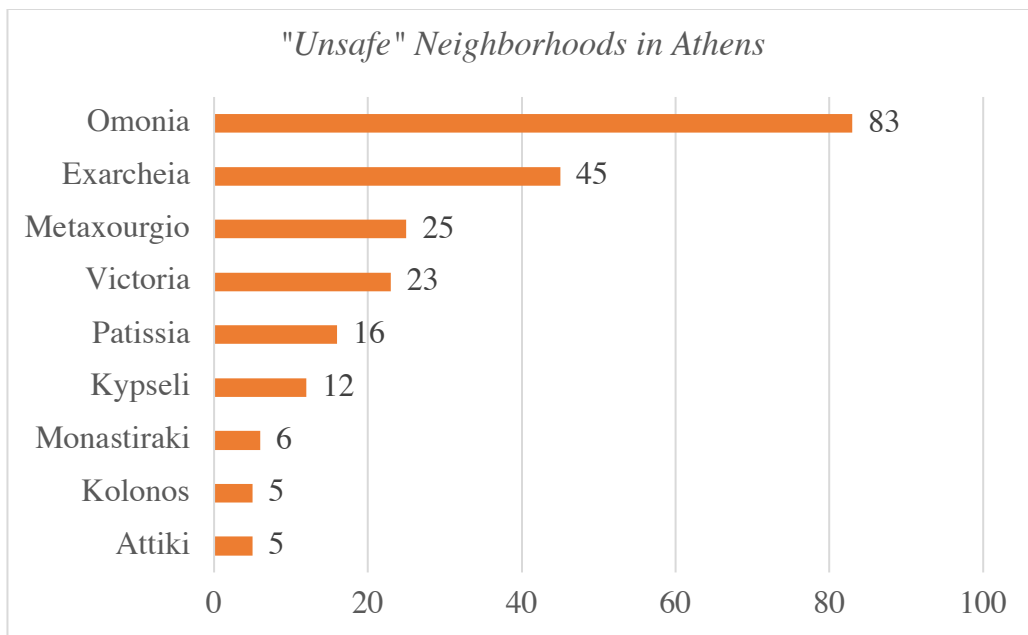


Figure 11 Survey Results of "Unsafe" Neighborhoods in Athens

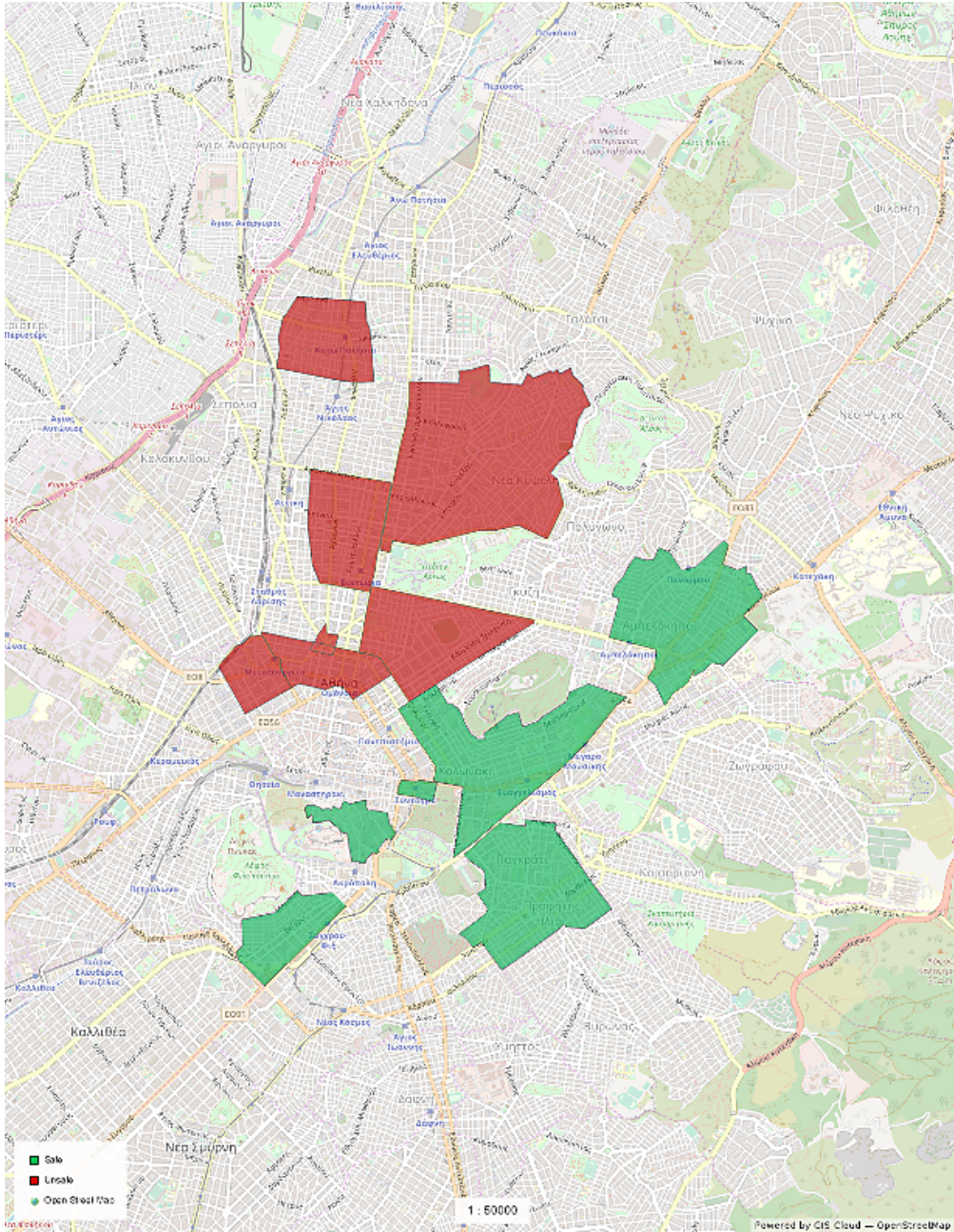
It is significant to note that there were more total entries for unsafe neighborhoods with 252 answers from the 155 responses, resulting in 29 neighborhoods listed. On the contrary, the total entries for safe neighborhoods culminated into 226 answers with 52 neighborhoods labeled listed, 25 of which only received one vote. This demonstrates a more shared agreement on the neighborhoods that are considered unsafe in Athens.



Drawing from these results, Map 4 displays the neighborhoods with 10 or more survey entries, with the red areas demarcating the ‘unsafe’ and green areas demarcating the ‘safe’.

The results of the survey provided insight into the basic perception of security that Greeks feel in Athens. In comparing these findings with Map 1, found in the Theoretical Framework chapter, we can see that the safe neighborhoods are also the same neighborhoods in which higher percentages of upper professionals live. In comparison with the findings in Map 2, the unsafe neighborhoods in Map 4 tend to overlap with the areas that signify very strong or strong presence of lower [earning] groups on all floors. Lastly, in comparison to Map 3, the unsafe neighborhoods displayed in Map 4, also tend to overlap with the areas that have very strong or strong presence of citizens from non-developed countries on all floors, while the safe neighborhoods overlap with very strong or strong presence of vertical segregation. These findings are significant because the same neighborhoods that were labeled unsafe by survey respondents, are also the neighborhoods with higher levels of vertical segregation *and* a stronger presence of non-European undeveloped countries populations.





*Map 4 Results of Survey on Safety of Neighborhoods in Athens;
Map created by Katie Dyas using giscloud.com*



Table 1 Unsafe Neighborhood Observations

Neighborhood	Taller than 5 floors	Prevalence of non-Greek speakers	Micro-segregation of groups
Omonia	Yes	Very High	Very High
Exarchia	Yes	Very High	High
Metaxourgio	Yes	High	High
Victoria	Yes	High	Very High
Patissia	Yes	High	None observed
Kypseli	Yes	Normal	High

In addition to this, the observations completed in all of the neighborhoods that garnered over 10 entries through the survey, revealed compelling insight as well. The unsafe areas had similar attributes based on the observations, seen in Table 1. Every unsafe neighborhood was taller than 5 floors with numerous abandoned buildings, even within close proximity of the main neighborhood square. Most of the buildings had graffiti tags but minimal street art, with the exception of the National Technical University of Athens building in Exarchia. Seven separate entries recorded in my field journals (since 22 February 2019), listed an interaction with a Greek who stated that neighborhood where I live (Omonia), is unsafe, while also mentioning that very few Greek people live in the area. “The relationship between public spaces and diversity is more ambivalent. Natives, migrants and minorities frequent different spaces. However, even when they coexist in the same public spaces, they develop parallel activities that reconfirm relationships that are created in institutional settings and in homes in the first place. In this sense, public spaces are rather places of micro-segregation rather than social mixing” (Alexandri et al., 2017, p. 139). Micro-segregation was noted more frequently in the observations from Omonia Square and Victoria Square.

Supported by public record for American tourists, press releases coming from the United States Embassy in Athens declares, “American citizens should exercise caution in Exarchia Square and its immediate vicinity” (United States



Department of State, 2017) while also cautioning against Omonia and Syntagma during protests. These comments line up with the observations recorded, as well as evidence from Maps 1-3.

Additionally, all of the “safe” areas have similar attributes to each other as well: higher prevalence of Greek being spoken within groups, higher prevalence of white tourists, many people out and utilizing the public spaces, little police presence, and well-known European or American stores in the area. Although most buildings are still around 5 floors, exhibiting their inclusion in the flats-for-land scheme, the buildings look like they have been renovated recently, or at least maintained with paint or frequent cleaning.

A report from REACH, an international humanitarian initiative, collected data on the Refugee and Migrant Squat Population in Athens. REACH identified 11 squats in central Athens and collected data on nine of them. There are six squats in Exarchia with a population of 1199 people, one squat in Victoria with a population of 400 people, one squat in Vathi Square (Omonia neighborhood) with a population of 300 people, and one squat in Amebelokipoi with a population of 215 people (REACH, 2017). Comparing this to Map 4, Exarchia, Victoria, and Vathi Square were all identified by the Greek population as being unsafe neighborhoods. Ambelokipi was identified as a safe neighborhood. With eight of nine squats identified in unsafe neighborhoods, there is a substantial association between refugee squats and feelings of report unsafeness by Greeks.

Another statistic coming from the REACH report, is the data from the six Exarchia squats—68% of the population is from Syria (REACH, 2017). If all of the Syrians in the squats have officially applied for asylum, we can safely assume that their asylum claim was accepted since Syria has the highest overall recognition rate in Greece with 99.6% acceptance as a refugee (Hellenic Republic Asylum Service, 2019). From these results, we can interpret that safety and security from the Greek perspective is tied in with their perception of refugees. The empirical data suggesting micro-segregation, vertical segregation, and labelling of ‘unsafe’ areas, all correspond with areas with high concentrations of refugees, furthering the othering of refugees in Athens as well.



In relation to uneven geographies affecting the refugee acculturation in Greece, it must be noted that Athens has become a destination for refugees—but not necessarily by choice. “As the capital and largest city of Greece, and because of its harbor, Athens attracts refugees *stranded* in Greece. This new role as a city of forced destination and the shift from state actors’ and civil society’s approach of short-term assistance in transit to long-term responsibilities, has challenged state and city officials to provide broader based support and accommodation” [emphasis added] (Kreichauf, 2018, p. 6). Due to asylum and refugee management in other EU countries, the countries of first entry (for the EU), Greece, Spain, and Italy, have all been left with the task of managing refugee acculturation in their countries with refugees who may not necessarily even want to be acculturated into their society in the first place. This was noted by survey respondents as well:

There should be a balance between the refugee’s needs and the country/community’s abilities

—*Survey Respondent #103*

I support policies in favor of refugees and asylum seekers [but] only if those people are equally parted in countries that can support them.

—*Survey Respondent #145*

This brings up an interesting point regarding the uneven geographic practices within the EU. While many countries have accepted a large amount of asylum seekers and refugees, they are not necessarily faced with the on-the-ground dilemmas of dangerous sea crossings, island refugee and detention camps, and an inaccessible over-land Balkan route, closed in the summer of 2015. Athens is then left with disproportionate population levels of refugees, especially when in comparison with their economic situation.

5.4 Discussion on an Athenian Acculturation Strategy

Considering the four acculturation strategies, the most commonly referred to as the best practice has been integration. In order to analyze if Athens fits such acculturation strategy, we must evaluate “certain psychological preconditions”



(Berry, 2001, p. 619). The preconditions that Berry lays out include: (1) presence of a multicultural ideology by Greeks, (2) widespread acceptance of the value of cultural diversity, (3) low levels of ethnic prejudice and in turn, low levels of discrimination, (4) no intergroup hatred amongst differing immigrant groups, and (5) a sense of attachment to Greek society by *all* groups, including immigrants. Furthermore, it is important to note that, “individuals and groups may hold varying attitudes toward [the] four ways of acculturating, and their actual behaviors may vary correspondingly” (Berry, 1997, p. 12).

Concerning the first two preconditions, there is little evidence of a multicultural ideology shared by Greeks nor a widespread acceptance of the value of cultural diversity. The third precondition is contradicted within each method source, displaying at least medium to high levels of ethnic prejudice leading to medium to high levels of discrimination in Athens. This is particularly evident in the results from the Annual Report by RVRN on Racist Violence in Athens in 2018. The fourth precondition did not result in evidence for, nor against the presence of intergroup hatred amongst differing immigrant groups in Athens. However, there we have found evidence that there is not necessarily a sense of attachment to Greek society by *all* groups, including immigrants. This case study is not the first to acknowledge this, with supporting analysis in a report for the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy which states:

The Strategy emphasized what it calls “structural integration” as the preferred model of incorporation. While integration is a common European standard in regard to the immigrants’ relationship with the host societies, the prerequisites for achieving it, as outlined in the Strategy, are so thorough and substantive, that *they make one wonder how different it is from assimilation...* In pursuit of the ‘structural’ kind of integration, immigrants are expected to demonstrate ‘a positive’ and ‘active’ will to adapt to the dominant political and cultural frame of Greece, an adaptation that is seen to contribute to ‘the necessary social cohesion and *cultural homogeneity*’.”

—(Anagnostou, 2016, p. 30)



Based on the evidence of vertical segregation in Athens, ethnic prejudices resulting in both the othering of Greeks *and* of refugees, flaws within the political, economic, and asylum systems in Greece, I would argue that othering has a profound effect on the implementation of an acculturation strategy in Athens, and throughout the whole of Greece. The systematic devaluation of Greeks by European Union member states was imposed upon them in the same way that the stringent austerity policies were imposed—both reinforcing a Western European norm. Reflecting upon the presented empirical evidence through the theoretical framework, there is little confidence in the way Greek society is presented and presents itself right now, that points to the mutual accommodation and adaptation required for integration of refugees. Instead, the evidence points us to an expectation of an assimilation strategy by refugees, from the Greek point of view. However, the strategy is mismatched with the empirical evidence pointing toward the practice of the separation strategy coming from the ethnocultural groups. The analysis and empirical findings also suggest that the intergroup strategy practiced by Athenians is that of segregation.

The clear evidence pointing toward a hierarchy of power, within the immigrant population of Greece must be mentioned as well. The question of who is a ‘genuine’ refugee and who is not, is volatile rhetoric that attempts to dictate whose trauma is worse. It also delegitimizes immigrants who are seeking job opportunities in Greece or are denied asylum, leaving economic and illegal immigrants at the bottom of the acceptance hierarchy. These types of immigrants are typically assumed to be of Pakistani, Turkish, Iranian, or Afghan origins which is related to Greeks strong biases against these particular populations. We can conclude that these are ethnically based prejudices because there is evidence to support that there is Greek acceptance of economic migrants from other EU and Western countries. This hierarchy of ethnic prejudices results in the conditional acceptance by the Greek population of refugees and immigrants, which was displayed in the results of the survey. Empathy for the situation of an asylum seeker or refugee does not necessarily translate into acceptance of *all* ethnicities in practice.



With Greece still suffering the consequences of an eight-year long economic crisis, the ability to accept refugees instead of othering them, lies in acceptance based on ethnicity and culture, but also acceptance economically speaking. “International protection status in Greece cannot guarantee a dignified life for beneficiaries of protection and is no more than protection ‘on paper’” (Asylum Information Database (AIDA), 2018, p. 187). Unfortunately, this is not enough. The expectation of assimilation on the part of the Greek government does not ensure the multicultural ideology defined by Berry. To restate for clarity and emphasis, *multicultural ideology* is a concept “[that] attempts to encompass the general and fundamental view that cultural diversity is good for a society and its individual members (i.e., high value on cultural maintenance) and that such diversity should be shared and accommodated in an equitable way (i.e., high value on contact and participation)” (Berry, 2001, pp. 622-23). Instead of assimilation, an integrationist approach in Greece would focus on mutual accommodation, allowing for the combination of Greek cultures with Syrian, Pakistani, Afghan, and others. This would allow maintenance of each culture, but also fostering a new multicultural, Greek identity. Integration could be the ability for all refugees to have access to Greek language courses, but also, the ability for all Greek citizens to have access to learn Arabic, Urdu, or Dari. Integration would be a decrease in race-based violence and attack in Athens. To most Greeks this may seem like a fantasy world, and maybe it is. Even most Europeans would probably argue the same. Although, then it could be argued that if any given place (society, city, country, etc.) truly embraced the multicultural ideology, then this type of mutual accommodation could be utilized. Although Athens, and most likely the rest of Greece, does not display this, does not mean that the integration acculturation strategy and mutual accommodation cannot be accomplished at all. It would, however, require the continuous questioning of prejudices in every facet of society, in order to truly present a diversity-rich community founded on the principles of acceptance and multiculturalism.



6. Conclusions

The case study approach for this research, focusing on Athens, Greece, was an endeavor to define the actualized acculturation practice in the Greek capital and how othering, in its many forms, affects such practices. Based on a number of factors, this research aimed at scrutinizing the ways in which Greeks and refugees have been othered, and how othering has influenced interactions between refugees and Greeks, in the Athenian context. The theoretical framework, relying heavily upon John W. Berry's understanding of acculturation, resulted in an interdisciplinary approach, emphasizing the significance that psychology, geography, historical and political contexts, and the Greek economy has on the integration of refugees into a host society. The methods included an online survey, semi-structured interviews, observations, unstructured interviews, field journal notes, and document analysis, all of which were integral to support the analysis of the effect of othering on the acculturation strategy applied in Athens.

The research resulted in several significant findings. Athens was prepared for short-term stays of refugees, the initial expectation of the “crisis”, labeled Greece as a transit country, with most asylum seekers hoping to pursue a life in other, more economically well-off, European countries. Athens turned into an unmistakable *forced destination* for refugees, resulting in short-term spaces and programs failing under the need for long-term solutions. This led us to assume that uneven geographies affect more than just the neighborhoods within Athens, but also the unevenness between Greece and the EU. While slightly deterministic in nature, the geographic positioning of Greece as country of first entry into the EU for many immigrants, cannot be disregarded as unimportant. With the unemployment rate still firmly above the EU average, and with the worst youth unemployment rate overall, the refugee “crisis” affected Greece disproportionately in comparison with other EU member states. With people from Syria still seeking refuge, almost four years since the start of the “crisis”,



and the current war and famine in Yemen, the situation for the countries of first entry will not change unless long-term solutions are implemented and enforced.

In relation to the main research question, the acculturation strategies in Athens, have been deeply affected by processes of othering. Outlined in the Historical Background, Greeks have gone through many phases of systematic othering, reaching back to their Ottoman Empire roots. The othering of Greeks has impacted the many uprisings in the capital, and how these are portrayed in the media, as well as in politics. Right-wing, nationalistic groups gained traction and notoriety in Greece following the economic crisis. Especially, far-right wing political party, Golden Dawn, experienced a massive increase in votes in 2012, despite the fact that they have been an established political party since 1993. The resurgence in nationalist ideology acceptance, also established the validity for ethnic prejudice and discrimination against minorities. Hence, there are links between the economic crisis, othering of Greeks, and increase in ethnic discrimination of minorities, resulting in the othering of refugees, both on economic and ethnicity related terms.

While on the surface, Greece promotes integration policies, the reality is an adoption of the segregationist acculturation strategy (Figure 1). Furthermore, the dominant society's expectation of ethnocultural groups, is that they embrace the assimilation acculturation strategy, masked by the name "structural integration". Because of this expectation on the part of Greeks, ethnocultural groups fluctuate between the assimilation and separation strategy's, depending on which ethnic group (or specific situation) one refers to.

Situating this case study in Athens is significant as well. Based on the empirical evidence and analysis, vertical segregation, ethnic prejudices, historical background, and the recent economic pitfalls resulting in Greek institutional systemic shortcomings, all have an influence on the acculturation strategy, and the subsequent integration policies, in Athens. Consider this: Sweden, Jordan, Kenya, and the United States, are all countries experiencing and inflow of refugees, however all four are dissimilar in historical background, culture, governmental systems, and societal norms. Moreover, the populations seeking



asylum in these countries are varied as well. Therefore, the acculturation strategy of refugees and the dominant society must be varied based on the norms and expectations of the host nation, and those of the refugee populations. All in all, leading to the conclusion that place-based investigation (i.e. culture, history, political rights, etc.) is pertinent to establishing the ability for integration and mutual accommodation to occur *and* be carried out in national and local policies. Layered within this, are the levels of othering that each society experiences. Each dominant society or ethnocultural group may not experience high levels of othering, however legislators and academics alike, must evaluate these experiences in order to assess if a place truly values diversity.

To fully realize the extent of these results, further research should be carried out with more in-depth interviews with refugees, asylum seekers, and other immigrants who are attempting to settle in Athens. The lack of agency given to those who are going through the asylum process, and those who are rejected (typically resulting in illegality), is a common issue that must be addressed both nationally and internationally. Instead of academics, humanitarian workers, government officials, EU officials, and the like, suggesting the needs and wants of asylum seekers and refugee, I offer that we should simply ask them ourselves. To eliminate the refugee voice from the process of asylum seeking, integration, and naturalization into a host society, is contributing to the problem of othering and extending the effects of coloniality.

Concerning further research in Athens, there is also little information known on the situation of refugees that remain in Greece from before the “crisis”. To fully grasp the acculturation strategy implemented in Greece, we must also understand the situation and acculturation strategy of refugee’s who have been in Greece for longer periods of time. Another intriguing point that came about when reflecting on the data in conjunction with the theoretical framework, is that the geography of Athens and the survey completed, touched upon the issue of security in terms of the in-group, Greeks. However, apart from the data collected by the Racist Violence Recording Network, there is little focus in any reports or research on the security of refugees and asylum seekers. In order to seek a fair



and honest approach to Berry's acculturation strategies, the Psychology of Immigration theory must be amended to include and ensure the security of the ethnocultural group's as well.

After pursuing this research over the course of the last five months, the most general recommendation I can make as an informed researcher in acculturation practices and refugees, is that policy and acculturation approaches must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and therefore, are fundamentally ungeneralizable.



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Appendix

Documents Used in Analysis

The following documents include online reports, presentations, press releases, as well as ad-hoc inquiries, published reports, books, and other academic sources.

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Working Group of the European Law Organization (EPLO). (2017). *The changing influx of asylum seekers in 2014 - 2016: Member State responses*.

Ziomas, D., Antoinetta, C., & Danai, K. (2017). Integrating refugee and migrant children into the educational system in Greece. In *ESPN Flash Report* (Vol. 67).

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

The following is the interview guide utilized in the two semi-structured interviews. The format was loosely followed and served as a jumping off point for a more in-depth discussion with the interviewees.

1. How long have you been in Greece?
2. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience of arriving into Athens?
3. Do you feel that you have been supported in your resettlement in Athens, Greece?
 - a. Which organizations, people, or groups do you feel have supported you the most?
4. How easy do you feel it was to access housing, job opportunities, education, or medical care when you first arrived?
 - a. How do you feel now?
5. Specifically, in Athens, how was your experience in building a new community of friends and/or acquaintances?
6. The definition I am choosing to work with for my thesis for the term 'integration' is:

integration can only be 'freely' chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups (i.e. refugees/asylum seekers in this particular context) when the dominant society (i.e. Greece) is open and inclusive in its orientation toward cultural diversity... mutual accommodation is required for integration to be attained, involving the acceptance by both groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different peoples. This strategy requires non-dominant groups to adopt the basic values of the larger society, while at the same time the dominant group must be prepared to adapt national institutions (e.g. education, health, labour) to



better meet the needs of all groups now living together in the plural society, (John W. Berry, 1997, pp. 10-11).

- a. Knowing this definition, do you feel that Greek's and Greek society is open and inclusive to refugees and asylum seekers?
 - b. Do you think Greek society values cultural diversity?
 - c. In your experience, do you feel that Greek society is prejudiced against non-Greeks?
 - d. Do you feel included and engaged in Greek society?
 - e. Do you feel that you have or that you can adopt the basic values of Greek society?
 - f. Do you think that Greece has adapted or changed their institutions (of education, labor, health, etc.) in order to make it easier for refugees and asylum seekers to be included in society?
7. If you could tell the Greek government what refugees and asylum seekers need, what would you tell them?

Online Survey Questions

The online survey can be found at:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdWZ8_vR-tlUhjEb1JhYSsFK_qvQsVSzkOPYj5nVsJOdBdSHA/viewform?usp=sf_link.

1. How would you identify yourself? (*multiple choice*)
 - a. Greek nationality
 - b. Another EU nationality
 - c. Non-EU nationality
2. How long have you been living in Athens?
 - a. Under 1 year
 - b. 1-5 years
 - c. 5-10 years
 - d. 10-15 years
 - e. 15-20 years
 - f. I'm from Athens
 - g. I don't live in Athens
 - h. Other: (*open-ended*)

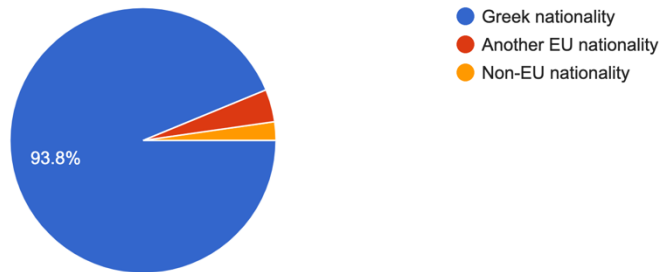


3. In your opinion, what would you consider to be the most SAFE neighborhood(s) in central Athens? (*open-ended*)
4. In your opinion, what would you consider to be the most UNSAFE neighborhood(s) in central Athens? (*open-ended*)
5. Do you know any refugees or asylum seekers personally? (you would consider them a friend) (*Y/N*)
6. What is your political point of view regarding refugees and asylum seekers?
 - a. I support policies in favor of refugees and asylum seekers
 - b. I do not support policies in favor of refugees and asylum seekers
 - c. Other: (*open-ended*)
7. Comments/Questions/Opinions? (*not required; open-ended*)

Results of Survey Questions

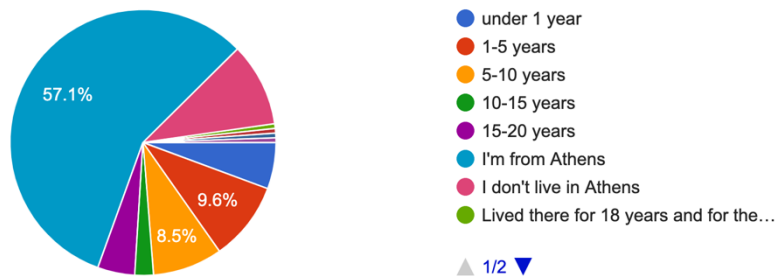
How would you identify yourself?

177 responses



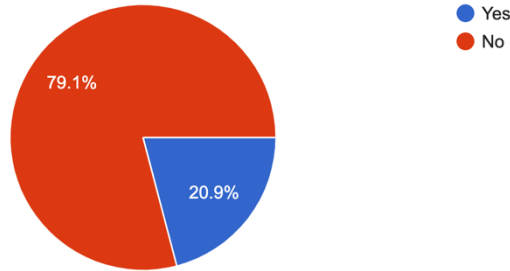
How long have you been living in Athens?

177 responses



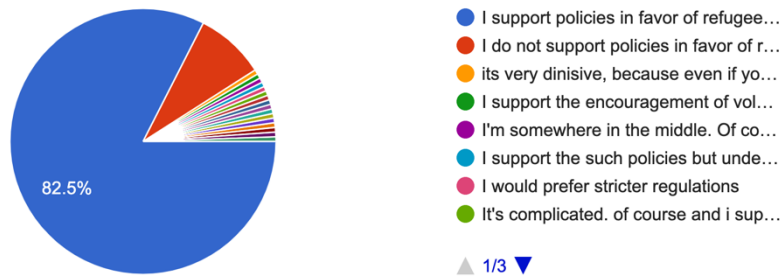
Do you know any refugees or asylum seekers personally? (you would consider them a friend)

177 responses



What is your political point of view regarding refugees and asylum seekers?

177 responses



Answers from Question 1 revealed responses from non-Greek people and therefore not part of the target population. This resulted in only 155 of the 177 respondents being selected for usage in empirical results findings.

Responses from Questions 3 and 4 were recorded in the Analysis Chapter. All Greek responses in the open-ended sections, were translated by the author.

